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Discourses of Connectedness: Globalization, Digital Media, and the Language of Community

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Discourses of Connectedness:

Globalization, Digital Media, and the Language of Community

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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by

Lisa Ann Newon

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Discourses of Connectedness:

Globalization, Digital Media, and the Language of Community

by

Lisa Ann Newon

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Marjorie Harness Goodwin, Chair

This dissertation provides both ethnographic and linguistic analysis of how translocality and transidiomatic practices intersect the ways in which people organize their social worlds in the digital and information age. I explore how translocality informs how people understand, construct, and experience a voluntary and avocational community and identity in their everyday lives, through the lens of a global, video gaming community, centered around a game called League of Legends. In this dissertation, I focus on understanding how distributed players and developers together co-construct a sense of community, belonging, and connectivity, through both language and interaction online and offline.

This analysis first discusses how players and developers co-construct community and identity through language, distinctiveness, and authenticity. The data in this dissertation is used

to highlight how players and developers use language in their everyday interactions to construct particular group identities, through specific lexical and material styles. I then discuss how a sense of community and belonging are constructed in the social network through moral participation and engagement, both institutionally and endogenously, looking particularly at stance, directives, assessments, and structure-preserving transformations. Further, I discuss how players and developers co-create community through understandings and narrative experiences of translocality and temporality that focus on empathy and the experience of playing the game itself.

At a macro level, this dissertation discusses the analytic concept of community and problematizes the multiple and varying definitions of speech community. As technology and globalization continue to impact, transform, and recreate communities, there is a great need for expanding our understanding of speech communities as one that accounts for the changing ways in which people constitute meaningful participation in a society or culture. This research provides an empirical example of how participation, fluidity, interconnectedness, and sense-making unfolds, particularly in the everyday interactions of a specific, global network of players and developers.

The dissertation of Lisa Ann Newon is approved.

Elinor Ochs

Paul Kroskrity

Charles Goodwin

Marjorie Harness Goodwin, Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

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2. **Newon, L**. "Discourses of Connectedness: Constructing the Networked, Mediated Community." Foundations of Digital Games Annual Meeting, Chania, Crete, May 2013.
3. **Newon, L**. "Digital Media and Discourses of Interconnectedness: Re-Imagining Speech Community as an Analytic Concept." Oxford Internet Institute Summer Doctoral Programme, Oxford, England, July 2012.
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ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 GLOBALIZATION, DIGITAL MEDIA, AND THE LANGUAGE OF COMMUNITY

The word *community* is derived from the Latin word *communitas*, which may be roughly translated to mean "with" or "together." It refers to the intense spirit or sense of social solidarity, equality, and togetherness that may be found within a group of people. Yet, in the social sciences today, the use of the term community is multiple and in some cases, contrasting, influenced by scholars' methodological preferences, different schools, and paradigms (Duranti 1997; Patrick 2002). In most current understandings, the concept of community is thought to be made up of "small-scale clusters of people, confined within geographical boundaries and structured by local imaginings of their social identity" (Jacquemet 2005: 260). During the French Enlightenment and German Romanticism, communities were understood to be tied to language and place, which as a result, essentially solidified understandings of localized homogeneity as being directly linked to territorial and linguistic unity. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the most common way to understand social groups, relationships, and people was according to regional territories or nations, cultural traditions and practices, and languages.

Today, communities are still, most commonly viewed and categorized according to "shared behavioral norms, beliefs, and values mediated by a common language spoken over a contiguous territory" (Jacquemet 2005: 260). Yet, with respect to globalization, digital media, and evolving communicative practices that result from the increasing mobility of people, language, ideas, information, styles, and symbols, social networks and communities need to be understood in terms of diasporic, or increasingly multiple and overlapping identities,

relationships, and memberships. And while one can argue for a scholarly trend over the past sixty years of locating community in semiotic processes, subjective histories and temporalizing regimes, and otherwise in increasingly phenomenological criteria as traditional criteria erode due to globalization, attention to language and digital technology is only now starting grow. As digital technology continues to become more widely accessible, more and more people around the world are learning to interact with geographically distant, and culturally diverse people through sophisticated Internet technologies such as games and social media, as well as newly acquired techno-linguistic skills, such as more widespread use of English on the Internet, and familiarity with interactional routines in mediated environments (Jacquemet 2005). Through digital media and these global information flows, people have access to new resources and rules for confronting and re-negotiating the construction of social identity and cultural belonging (Appadurai 1996).

The term *translocality* describes phenomena involving mobility, migration, circulation, and spatial interconnectedness, not necessarily limited to national boundaries (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). This understanding draws on *habitus* and *social fields* to address people's simultaneous situatedness across different locales (Jacquemet 2005), scales (Gal 2013; Irvine 2013; Meek 2013; Philips 2013), and social contexts (Bourdieu 1984). It refers to the complex, social-spatial interactions that occur in a holistic context. With respect to movement and material and symbolic flows, translocal networks are both structured by the actions of the people involved, and at the same time, provide a structure for these very actions (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). While translocal approaches to understanding community acknowledge that locales are important arenas of scale-transcending interaction (Casey 1996), they simultaneously break with essentializing notions of spatially bounded territorial units as a measure for

categorizing groups of people. This conceptualization is particularly relevant to understanding interconnectedness in the digital age, especially as social networks facilitate repeated flows of knowledge, communication, ideas, texts, images, and languages.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to bridging the gap between the rapidly changing ways in which people understand, construct, and experience community and belonging in their everyday lives, and the analytic models scholars, and even audiences more broadly, have for understanding and talking about these social phenomena. This is particularly relevant because by continuing to only study social communities that are bound by shared behavioral norms, beliefs, and values mediated by a common language spoken over a contiguous territory, we, as social scientists, are failing to investigate how language and interaction also occur in the multiple crevasses, open spaces, and networked ensembles of translocal spaces of linguistic, cultural, and regional contact. As digital media and technology continue to become a greater part of our everyday lives, these translocal Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013), transidomatic (Jacquemet 2005) spaces are critical to more deeply understanding the analytic concept of community in the digital and information age.

1.2 FIELDWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to investigate the notion of community transidomatically and translocally, my ethnographic fieldwork examines the concept through the lens of a video game company in Los Angeles, called Riot Games. Riot Games, which created the game League of Legends, is currently the most popular online game in the world today, with over 32 million active, daily players situated around the world. The company translates their game in over 20 different

language and has offices in more than twelve global offices, focused on translating the game not only linguistically, but also in terms of cultural relevancy. Through regular interaction on social media and at tournaments and events online and offline, players and developers around the world actively participate in a global, large-scaled networked community.

In order to understand more macro questions about community and connectivity, this dissertation primarily focuses on addressing the question:

"What is a global community and how do League of Legends players and developers co-construct this sense of belonging through language and interaction?"

Through analysis, this research seeks to (1) identify and explore the discourse and linguistic practices participants bring to bear on the notion of community as a product of both mediated and unmediated interaction, mutual repertoire, and shared norms and values, (2) investigate how that language use results in a sort of "sense of community," or feelings of connectedness, intimacy, and belonging, in spite of regional boundness, and (3) assess how people construct the boundaries of community membership, how these boundaries overlap, and how these boundaries may be constructed and maintained both online and offline.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In the next chapter, Chapter Two, entitled *Theoretical Frameworks*, I start by discussing the theoretical framework that informs my analysis throughout this dissertation. I begin by exploring the concept of community, first looking closely at writing on speech communities, then closely examining the literature on community of practice, online community of practice, and lastly, sense of community. I discuss how community is constructed through social

practices, language, and interaction, and across varying planes and modalities. I then discuss the body of literature related to social networks, defined as a theoretical construct that maps social actors in relation to the connections, social ties, and interaction between these actors. I outline the historical development of the term and discuss key theoretical influences to how we understand social networks. Lastly, this chapter briefly discusses what I refer to as the "business of community." In this section, I discuss the use of community-centric marketing, as a new strategy for bi-directional conversation, increased feedback, and ultimately, greater brand loyalty and company growth.

In Chapter Three, called *The Ethnographic Setting*, I broadly discuss the ethnographic setting of my fieldwork. I begin by discussing video gaming as a social practice to which many people around the world participate in their everyday lives. I then discuss my research methods, revisiting what it was like for me to enter the community initially, and then leaving and returning after a couple years. I briefly touch on the various sites where I collected data, both online and offline, as well as the different methods of data collection and analysis I used in the field. In addition, I also discuss my ethnographic positioning in the community and attempt to be reflexive about my unique point of view. In the next section of this chapter, I provide ethnographic context for the community I studied, by discussing the history of interactive media and the gaming industry, the company and the game itself, studio subculture and ritual practices, developers and intersubjectivity, and players and remix culture. Further, I provide a brief quantitative sketch of the community by discussing social network data collected over the course of the year of fieldwork.

In Chapter Four, entitled *Co-Creating Community Through Style and Identity*, I discuss how players and developers co-construct community and identity through language,

distinctiveness, and authenticity. I begin by discussing language and identity, with respect to understandings of sameness and difference, authenticity, and subculture and style. Looking particularly at English-speaking players in the League of Legends community, I first examine how players in the community use specialized language. Players use specific, technical registers in order to distinguish themselves as authentic League of Legends players who share common references and experiences. I then discuss how players and developers construct a sense of community and belonging through discourse practices and speech activities that heavily rely on coparticipation and building next utterances and responses by attending to coparticipants' prior talk, or previous postings written online. Lastly, I analyze how players and developers use symbolic markers of community identity, like clothing and dress, costumes, and other material objects.

In Chapter Five, called *Co-Creating Community Through Moral Frameworks,* I discuss how players and developers co-construct a sense of community and belonging through negotiating appropriate ways of being. Both institutionally and endogenously, a sense of community and belonging are constructed through moral participation and engagement. I begin this chapter by discussing the literature on morality and face, character, structures of action, structures of self-presentation online, and moral panic. Looking closely at the data, I discuss the various codes of conduct and software that are created and implemented by the company institutionally, as a means of managing disputes and inappropriate community behavior. I then examine data on endogenous dispute management, looking at how community members, outside of formal institutional structures, manage disagreement and disputes. I conclude this chapter looking closely at the various evaluative stances developers and players take against players who break negotiated social norms in the community.

In Chapter Six, entitled *Co-Creating Community Through Locality and Temporality*, I discuss how players and developers co-create community through narrative sense-making relating to understandings and experiences of translocality and temporality. Drawing from interview data collected over the course of fieldwork, I examine how developers and players talk about regional, cultural, and linguistic differences in the global network, and how they talk about and organize around the notion of calendar and seasonal time, operating on various scales, both local and global. I analyze how developers and players co-create a sense of community and belonging by making sense of how global players share both global and local experiences, as well as a range of much more complex, translocal experiences.

Lastly, in Chapter Seven, I conclude by tying together the dissertation's main themes with respect to the research questions outlined in this beginning chapter. I first summarize each chapter, focusing on the scope of each section and my analysis findings. In the section that follows, I explore future directions for further understanding the analytic concept of community in the digital and information age, as well as the questions that emerge from this particular ethnographic research. Further, I discuss how this dissertation might contribute to anthropology and the social sciences, as well wider audiences more broadly.

TWO

FRAMING THE NETWORKED COMMUNITY

2.1 COMMUNITY

In the following sections, I examine the concept of community through a specific linguistic anthropological lens. This lens begins with an analysis of speech community and ends with a discussion of a sense of community, constructed through language and interaction, as it exists across varying planes and modalities. This discussion is significant as it provides a theoretical frame of reference to understanding how the research questions outlined are approached and how the data presented in the following chapters are analyzed.

2.1.1 Speech Community

In anthropology, scholars have long made use of the analytic concept "speech community" in linguistic and social analysis. The concept is a way for scholars to draw reference to how people operate, and thus interact, within shared belief and value systems regarding their own culture, society, history, and practices of communicating (Morgan 2004: 1). Speech community, as a concept, takes as fact that language represents, embodies, constructs, and constitutes meaningful participation in a society and culture (Morgan 2013). By drawing reference to the social boundaries of speech community, and making sense of this analytical concept, scholars are able to illuminate and discuss the very ways language represents, embodies, and constitutes meaningful participation in specified cultures, groups, and societies.

The term speech community was initially defined by linguists such as Bloomfield (1933) and Saussure (1916). Bloomfield (1926) wrote that within communities, utterances are "partly alike" and that a speech community is "a group of people who use the same set of speech signals" (Bloomfield 1933:29). In a similar way, Saussure (1916:77) wrote that "in order to have a language, there must be a 'community of speakers'". Starting in the late 1960s and 1970s, the term became much more widely used and more rigorously defined. Hymes' (1974: 35) states that "the natural unit for sociolinguistic taxonomy and description, however, is not the language but the speech community." His definition of speech community focuses on beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of speaking within a community. Similarly, Labov argues that speech community is defined by participation in a shared set of norms (Labov 1972).

Starting in 1968, Gumpertz discussed speech community as a social construct in which he suggested that verbal interaction is a "social process" and that utterances are selected in accordance to recognized social norms, expectations, and ways of being (Gumpertz 1972: 219). Through his work, he suggests that speech communities involve more than just language codes and boundaries, but also values, beliefs, and practices. According to Gumpertz' definition (1972), the term speech community requires 1) frequent interaction among members, 2) a shared verbal repertoire, even though community members may not speaker the same style, dialect, or even language, and 3) a shared set of social norms regarding appropriate language use.

This framing has influenced many later scholars, including more recently, Romaine (1994), who defines speech community as "a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language." She goes on to state, "The boundaries between speech communities are essentially social rather than linguistic" (Romaine 1994:22).

Yet since the analytic concept of community was discussed by scholars in the late 1960s, definitions of community have been multiple and contrasting, influenced by scholars' methodological preferences, different schools, and paradigms (Duranti 1997; Patrick 2002). In sum, while some scholars define the speech community as a group of people who share the same linguistic features (see Saussure 1916; Bloomfield 1926), others define the term as a group of people who share the same set of norms, attitudes, and ways of speaking (see Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999; Hymes 1972; Gumperz 1962; Labov 1972). Duranti writes that speech community is "the widest context of verbal interaction" and that "any notion of speech community…depends[s] on two sets of phenomena: (1) patterns of variation in a group of speakers also definable on grounds other than linguistic homogeneity and (2) emergent and cooperatively achieved aspects of human behavior as strategies for establishing co-membership in the conduct of social life" (Duranti 1988: 217-8). He suggests that "the ability to explain (1) ultimately relies on our success in understanding (2) (Duranti 1988:218).

While historically, definitions of speech community tended to involve varying degrees of emphasis on (1) members' shared linguistic features, or (2) members' shared sets of norms and attitudes, in recent years, however, some scholars have turned to alternative analytic terms for the groups of language users they study in an effort to expand or produce new definitions as a result of the difficulties and vagueness in defining exactly what constitutes membership in a given speech community and how these members interact: speech area (Jackson 1974, 1983), speech network (Milroy 1987, 2002; Patrick 2002), linguistic community (Silverstein 1996; 1998), local community (Grenoble and Whaley 2006), community of practice (Bourdieu 1977; Bucholtz 1999; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992; Mendoza-Denton 2008), community of interest (Brown and Duguid 1991; Uimonen 2001), geographical community (Agre & Schuler

1997), and imagined community (Anderson 1983; Gal and Irvine 1995). These concepts treat the analytic concept of community not as static, pre-existing entities, but as emergent groups that are fluid and overlapping (Ahearn 2012).

Although different definitions together demonstrate the complexities of anthropological scholarship on linguistic phenomena, this diversity is also often critiqued and referred to as a "troubled term" (Rampton 2000), as it does not clearly define what is meant by speech and engagement, does not account for the fluidity of social groups, and also requires authors to individually explain their usage with the assumption that readers may not be operating from similar understandings. As migration, technology, and globalization continue to impact, transform, and recreate communities, that there is a great need for expanding our understanding of speech communities as one that accounts for the changing ways in which people constitute meaningful participation in a society or culture (Morgan 2013).

2.1.2 Community of Practice

In her 1997 article, Language and Community, Judith Irvine (1997: 124) states that communities are not givens or objects existing prior to the conduct of social life. Instead, she claims, they must be constructed, and continually reconstructed, by discursive and other interactional practice. In 1991, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger developed the term *community of practice*, as a way to account for the process of social learning and organization within communities through peripheral participation. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 434-435), "A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations- in short, practices emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor." By definition

(Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464), three constitutive components of community of practice distinguish it from other theoretical frameworks in sociolinguistics: 1) mutual engagement, 2) a joint enterprise, and 3) a shared repertoire.

There has been growing research emphasizing the importance of communities of practice as a hub for information exchange, knowledge creation, and organizational innovation (Daniel et al. 2004). Nevertheless, the use of the term community of practice has not been consistent (Hara & Kling 2002; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger & Snyder 2002). In the literature, the term community of practice is often used interchangeably with terms such as communities of interest; communities of tasks (Schlager & Fusco 2004); projects, teams, practice fields (Barab & Duffy 2000; Johnson 2001); communities of learners, knowledge-building communities (Buysse, Riel & Polin 2004; Sparkman & Wesley 2003; Scardamalia & Bereiter 1994), and communities of purpose (Schlager & Fusco 2004).

Nevertheless, the term community of practice is distinguishable from these other understandings of community through definition. Wenger (1998) used the term to mean a group of people who are informally bound together by shared expertise, interest, and passion for a joint enterprise. In his discussion (Wenger 1998), a community of practice entails negotiating joint enterprise (Wenger & Snyder 2002), function through mutual engagement (Iverson & McPhee 2002; Brosnan & Burgess 2003), and require a developed shared repertoire of communal resources (e.g., routines, values, vocabularies, styles).

Further, the process of learning and the process of membership in a community of practice are inseparable according to Wenger's definition. This concept is based on a social view of learning, developed within the theory of situated learning (McLaughlin 2003). According to this understanding, learning is not a process of transmission and assimilation of information, but

rather a social process of acculturation, socialization, and identity construction within a network of social relationships (Brosnan & Burgess 2003; Hara 2000; Hildreth & Kimble 2004; Trentin 2002; Wenger 1998).

2.1.3 Online Community of Practice

The evolution of the Internet has impacted the way individuals communicate and communities develop (Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger 2008; Preece 2001 Spitulnik, 2008; Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2003). Briefly speaking, an online community of practice is a community of practice that is developed on, and maintained, through using the Internet. This type of community may regularly engage together through social media, message boards, online videos and video-sharing, online games, and chat rooms, blogs, and other type of media.

An online community of practice, however, requires more than simply transferring a community of practice to an online environment. Online communities of practice and face-to-face communities of practice share similar characteristics as they are both learning communities with members who are mutually engaged in shared practice; however, online community of practice are operationally distinguishable as they are primarily supported by information and communication technologies (Barab, MaKinster, & Scheckler 2004). One of the major distinguishing features of online communities of practice, aside from forms of communication (i.e, text-based, computer-mediated communication), is that they are top-down in design as technological infrastructures are required to enable communication (Wallace & St-Onge 2003).

Erickson (1996) suggests that communities, including virtual communities, require 1) membership, 2) relationships and engagement with other people, 3) commitment and generalized reciprocity, 4) shared values and practices, 5) collective goods, and 6) duration. Based on these

categories, he and other scholars distinguish what defines an online community (e.g., smaller gaming groups) and what defines an online "participatory genre" (e.g., chat systems, newsgroups, message boards). Anthropologists are increasingly becoming interested in studying these virtual worlds, genres and communities, looking specifically at the content and affordances of these media (Boellstorff 2008; Ito 2010; Schieffelin & Jones 2009; Wakeford 2003; Wilson & Peterson 2002).

Wang and Wellman write, "Friendship is alive and well – and living offline, online, and sometimes in between" (Wang and Wellman 2010: 1162). As digital media is increasingly becoming integrated in our everyday lives, some scholars have suggested that it is no longer very relevant to talk about communities existing completely online or completely offline. Rather, communities may exist in a more hybrid sense, requiring people to fluidly move in and out of mediated interactions, making the online/offline distinction not particularly useful in terms of conceptualizing how we organize our social worlds in our everyday lives.

2.1.4 Sense of Community

According to Anderson (1983), the concept of *imagined communities*, similar to nationhood, is socially constructed, or imagined by people who perceive themselves as part of that group. Within this understanding, community is not necessarily based on everyday face-to-face interaction between members, but instead is constructed in a sort affinity or a conceived, mental image of deep, horizontal comradeship. Anderson explains that this constructed affinity is realized through shared interests, media, and communication.

Emerging from discussions on imagined communities, scholars are shifting their attention to studying people's *sense of community* (Forster 2004; Obst et al. 2002; Roberts et al. 2002).

Like community and speech community, there are many understandings and definitions of sense of community. One of the most prominent, however, summarizes the term as "the sense that one is part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result of which one did not experience sustained feelings of loneliness" (Sarason 1974: 1). To have a sense of community means that one has a sense of belonging, solidarity, or connection to a larger group of people.

Stemming from social cohesion theory (Durkheim 1897; Festinger et al. 1950; Piper et al 1983; Carron and Hausenblas 1998; Moody and White 2003), sense of community is understood in terms of a four-factor model. To have a sense of community, one must have 1) a shared emotional connection, 2) membership, 3) influence, 4) a sense of integration and fulfillment (Chavis et al. 1986; McMillan and Chavis 1986). According to this understanding, a person may develop a shared emotional connection to another when they have had and believe they will continue to have a group history with common experiences, places, and time spent together. A sense of community is felt by a person when they feel like they are within the boundaries of group membership, and thus feel a sense of intense belonging or relatedness. These feelings may influence a person to personally invest in the group or to make certain sacrifices for others. A sense of community is felt when a person feels like they have influence on the group and/or that the group may influence them. Further, according to McMillan and Chavis (1986), a sense of community is felt when a person believes members of the group are competent, helpful, and able to succeed. Another factor contributing to a sense of community, outside the four-factor model, is a sense of responsibility or a drive to help others in the group.

Further, Sarason (1974) suggests that other influences, outside of the four-frame model proposed, may also influence one's sense of community. Outside influences, such as economics,

government, religion, law, and social norms may also impact if and how someone feel like they belong. Sarason (1974) suggests that one's sense of belonging may also be influenced by individual motivations, personalities, experiences, and constructed identities.

2.2 SOCIAL NETWORK

A social network is a theoretical construct that maps social actors (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations), in relation to the connections, social ties, and interaction between these actors. This perspective places an emphasis on the relationships between individuals and uses social network analysis, a set of methods for analyzing the structure of whole social systems, to identify local and global patterns within these relationships.

2.2.1 A Historical Perspective

The theory behind this method emerged in the late 1800s, starting with Durkheim and Tönnies, and later Simmel at the turn of the twentieth century. Tönnies (1887) distinguished between two types of social groupings: *Geminschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Geminschaft, which can be translated to roughly mean *community*, and is understood to represent the social groupings based on feelings of togetherness and on mutual bonds, to which members must continuously work to maintain. Gesellschaft, translates to roughly mean *society*, and refers to the social groupings built through impersonal, formal, or what he refers to as instrumental social links. In a related way, Durkheim (1893) compares *mechanical solidarity*, or the feelings of togetherness people experience from having the same kind of work, lifestyle, kinship or familial networks, with *organic solidarity*, the interdependence of more specialized work, values, and interests.

Building on these theories, Simmel (1908) studied the nature of networks by looking specifically at how scale and network size effect the ways in which groups of all sizes interact. He posed that society is made up of interactions between and among individuals, and that social interaction should be studied on the level of the individual and small group.

In anthropology, the theoretical and ethnographic work of Malinowski (1913), Radcliffe-Brown (1930), Lévi-Strauss (1947), and Bott (1957) set the foundation for what is today known as social network theory. Their fieldwork looked at community networks in the context of social interaction. This method inspired later anthropologists to study networks, particularly Gluckman (1954), Barnes (1954), Mitchell (1969), and Spillius (1957), whose work today is understood to model how kinship and community networks can be studied through participant observation and ethnography. At the same time, in the field of sociology, Parsons (1937) was working towards an understanding of social networks and social network theory. His work was interested in the relationships and interconnections between various parts of society as a result of value consensus or social solidarity. Building on Parsons' research, Blau (1960) developed what he refers to as *social exchange theory*, a theory that proposes that people weigh the potential benefits and risks of social relationships and interactions and therefore build their social worlds in order to maximize benefits and minimize costs.

Beginning in the 1970s, sociologists White (1976; 1988; 1992), Tilly (1973; 1975), Bott (1971), and Milgram (1967), recognized the growing need to make sense of multiple theoretical and methodological perspectives that had emerged in the literature and study of networks. Their work and the work of their students, namely Granovetter (1983) and Wellman (1988), deeply shape how we understand and analyze social networks today.

2.2.2 Social Network and Speech Community

In the field of sociolinguistics, the term social network is used to describe the ways in which individuals and structures in a speech community are connected through a particular relationship or "web of ties" (Milroy 1987). Within this tradition, the structure of a social network is made up of both participants and relationships. Social networks are constructed around key participants or anchors. From this node, ties of varying strength connect the key individual to other people, also referred to as points, actors, or members, in the network.

The relationship between the anchor and points in a social network can be analyzed according to 1) density, 2) closeness, 3) multiplexity, and 4) orders (Milroy 1980). The density of a network can be determined by comparing the number of actors to the number of ties within the network. Dense networks are more likely to be found in smaller communities that have few external contacts, while networks that are less dense typically develop in larger communities that have many external contacts. Member closeness centrality is the distance between the anchor and the other points in the social network. The closer a point is to another point in the network, the more frequent the two points interact together. This measure suggests that the more central the point is to the network, the more pressure the person in the network may be under to maintain and reproduce the norms of the network. Points representing people that are located on the periphery of the network, however, may be more likely to act outside the established norms of the network and engage in linguistic innovation. Multiplexity is the number of relationships that an individual may have between another particular point. A relationship between two points is multiplex when they have social ties in more than one context (e.g., work, church, school). Further, order is a means of defining the place of a point within a social network. Social

networks are divided into different zones of proximity to the node, ranging from the first to the third, and correspond to social capital, status, and influence within the network.

Scholars interested in language and culture suggest that social networks, and the web of ties between members of the networks, are a driving force behind language innovation and change (Milroy 1980). These scholars use ethnographic field methods to study networks of varying scale, such as macro networks like nation states, as well as smaller networks like families, in order to empirically explain linguistic variation. According to *Strong Tie Theory* (Barnes 1969; Jacobson 1972; Mitchell 1969) and *Weak Tie Theory* (Milroy and Milroy 1983; Milroy 1987), individuals who are part of dense or strongly interconnected networks are more resistant to linguistic change, while those who are peripheral, or more weakly connected to the network, are more likely to initiate linguistic change. These theories are significant as they suggest language use may be influenced by network connections, socio-cultural contexts, identity, and social capital.

2.3 THE BUSINESS OF COMMUNITY

Although distant audiences based on shared affinities, images, anthems, movies, and texts have long existed (Anderson 1983), and mediated forms of community construction have long been developing in advertising and other modern institutions (Elliott & Davies 2006; Borgerson et al. 2006; Bergvall 2006; Brioschi 2006), the current use of social media and ICTs has influenced a new way of thinking about sociality, relationships, and communities, centered on shifting understandings of networks, interconnectivity, consumption, and the temporalities of

conversation. The following sections briefly discuss the commodifying of community and connectivity, and look specifically at how this is done on the ground, both locally and globally.

2.3.1 The Economy of Buying and Selling Community

In the gaming industry, companies engage in advertising practices (i.e. branding, product placement, social media usage, etc.) centered on creating a large-scale networked community of engaged, connected consumers, loyal to the brand and products of the company. Community-centric marketing is a strategy that involves using online social media and other community-specific tools and features (e.g., websites, video streams, additional games, social media channels) to build a network of players who regularly interact, share information, and provide feedback to developers. Unlike other types of marketing strategies, this type of marketing ultimately seeks to engage consumers in active and ongoing conversation. This model emphasizes developing long-term relationships with existing players, as opposed to solely attracting new customers.

Lee (2009), a contributor to the popular business magazine *Forbes*, writes, "Good marketing always puts people at the center. Smart marketing in tough times taps the collective power of community." According to this article, there are five major reasons why using a community-centric model in marketing is both valuable and relevant to businesses today:

1) *Community Costs Less*. Lee (2009) argues that community-based marketing costs less than traditional advertising because it is driven by customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth promotion. By requiring employees to be in regular, close communication with

consumers, market research is accomplished on-the-ground, instead of through outsourced, outside companies.

2) *Community Grows Loyalty*. Lee (2009) suggests that the community model appeals to people's intense need to be understood and feel like they belong. By appealing to this desire to feel connected, the community-centric model of marketing allows businesses to forge emotional bonds with their consumers that translates to a sense of identity amongst consumers, and ultimately brand loyalty.
3) *Community Maintains Authenticity*. Lee (2009) suggests that the products of community-centric companies do particularly well because they are able to remain relevant in a world that is constantly changing. By using a community-centric model, companies are able to adapt to the changing needs, interests, and values of people, by simply being aware of and understanding them.
4) *Community Drives Innovation*. Lee (2009) states that there is no better source of growth and innovation than a passionate brand community. By focusing on community, developers always have access to a continuous flow of new ideas and feedback.
5) *Community Supports Natural Reinvention*. Lee (2009) writes that a community-model allows companies to re-invent themselves to stay current and relevant to changing demands, technologies, and times. By engaging with community members, and allowing them to contribute ideas for growth, companies are able to better understand how to adapt.

This article is representative of a larger body of popular writing that discusses community marketing as a new strategy for brand loyalty and growth. As noted earlier, in the context of

video game studios, focusing on bi-directional conversation with players allows for increased feedback, identification of consumer preferences and affinities, and ultimately a more informed approach to game design and development. Not only does this type of bi-directional, networked conversation act as a channel for communicating news and information; it also allows players to feel a "sense of ownership" in the company. By allowing for greater company transparency and openness, this strategy allows players to feel more involved in the development process of the game itself.

2.3.2 Globalization, Markets, and Localization

Globalization, driven by international trade, investment, and information technology, is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Although globalization is not a new process, and for thousands of years, people have been buying, selling, and investing in the enterprises of other countries, free-market economic systems, international trade agreements, and the rise of digital media and information technology have dramatically transformed global economies to be dependent on a business structure that focuses on international, industrial, and financial connections. While many people suggest this dependence is positive as it allows for the creation of jobs and increased standards of living, often in less wealthy countries, others argue that globalization solely benefits multinational corporations in wealthier nations, and that this profit threatens local enterprises and cultures.

While some literature on globalization (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Featherstone 1990; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; King 1991; Robertson 1992; Rosenau 1990; Rouse 1991; Sahlins 1992) discusses the erasing or superseding of cultural, linguistic, and local differences, in favor

of the languages and cultural ways of being of more dominant nations, the framework of community-centric marketing recognizes and values that communities are constructed though diverse networks of people. As it becomes more common for companies, especially software companies, to have offices and offer services in different global regions, businesses are becoming increasingly interested in adopting a perspective that is global in outlook, while local in behavior, or in other words, "multicultural with shared values" (Hutchins 2012).

Huchins (2012) states that the dynamic of "localization within globalization" is fundamental for businesses to remain resilient in the face of globalization and digitization. *Localization* (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013) may be defined as the means of adapting computer software to different languages, regional differences, and technical requirements of the broader consumer market or product audience. Within the context of globalization, the process of making localized products and services takes place over two phases: 1) internationalization, and 2) localization. In the first phase, internationalization, developers design, produce, and test products that are built to efficiently support global markets. During this phase, developers typically produce products in the language of their business, but store language-specific and country-specific content separately, so that other languages, country, and cultural information can be applied to the larger structures of the game or product. The localization phase is a process that involves adapting software to a specific region or language, or in essence, translating text and adding regional and cultural-specific components. In terms of written language, localization efforts include adapting alphabet scripts, systems of numerals, writing direction, and grammatical changes. This process requires attention to spoken audio, graphical representations of text, and subtitling of video or other graphic features. Localization requires developers to adapt products according to cultural contexts, for instance, developers must assess the

comprehensibility and cultural appropriateness of a product in a given regional market. Common adaptions involve images, colors, names, narratives, and currencies. This process also takes into account various forms and levels of internet censorship that dictate how software is developed, dispersed, and consumed within certain nations.

2.3.3 Managing Global Communities

While localization teams are responsible for creating the software and structures that allow different audiences to engage, the responsibility of building and maintaining community networks, belongs broadly to all company developers, but in particular, to community managers. Community managers are developers who communicate and interact regularly with players through social media and company-run websites and platforms, as well as at local and international gaming events and tournaments.

While the discipline of community management is relatively new, and most of the literature that has been written about it has been from business perspectives, most sources recognize the work community managers do as being pivotal to global community development. According to *Forbes* magazine, the four pillars, or responsibilities, of community management are 1) growth, 2) engagement, 3) listening, and 4) improvement (Grayeb 2012). First and foremost, a community managers are responsible for growing the community, or in other words, getting people actively involved in the product's network or community. To do this, community managers use social media platforms to engage in conversation with existing members, in order to create "brand advocates" who attract new members through word-of-mouth, or through social media. They participate in industry-specific networking events and comment on other types of media, topics, and memes to encourage discussion. Second, community managers are

responsible for engaging with customers. They do this by moderating social media forums, replying to users' questions and threads, and by creating and distributing relevant media content. Third, community users are responsible for speaking directly with community members (e.g., email, social media, video, phone, in person), listening to feedback, and measuring the online engagement though social analytics. And last, community managers are responsible for sharing the feedback they find out with other developers at the company in order to improve the product's design and development. In order to do this, community managers must act as a sort of "middleman" between community members and the development team.

In many ways, the "middle management" role of the community manager functions as a sort of "cultural intermediary" (Bourdieu 1984) that works to represent the group of online consumers in negotiation with the company and the company's corporate goals (Banks 2002; Hutchinson 2013). Bourdieu (1984) discusses the occupation of the cultural intermediary as one who must continuously engage in presentation and representation, in the context of groups with varying symbolic goods and services. The community manager negotiates this duality by being in regular conversation (through digital media and in-person) with community members and developers across departments at the company, making sure consumer feedback is heard and developer updates are reaching players.

THREE

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

3.1 GAMING AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

The act of gaming is a meaningful social practice to which many people around the world participate in their everyday lives. Stemming from work written on *practice theory* (see Ahearn 2001; Bourdieu 1990; Castellani 1999; Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983; Foucault 1980; Giddens 1984; Jenkins 1992; King 2004; Reckwitz 2002; Stueber 2006), social practice is defined as "any pattern of social organization that emerges out of, and allows for, the intersection of symbolic interaction and social agency" (Castellani & Hafferty 2009: 38). Social practices are comprised of (1) interaction, (2) social agents, (3) communication, (4) social knowing, and (5) coupling (Castellani & Hafferty 2009). In order to understand social practices and thus human behavior, it is necessary to understand not only the structures in which individuals operate, but also expressions of agency within this structure (Ortner 1996).

This research operates from the understanding that gaming is a social practice, structured not only by game developers, socio-cultural contexts, and corporate logics (see Foster 2007), but also consumers themselves as they engage in the collaborative practice of game play. The U.S. video game industry, which has developed tremendously over the past twenty years, is quickly becoming the fastest growing segment of the entertainment industry (Donovan 2000). Although the first games were made in the early 1970s, gaming did not advance significantly until the second half of the 1990s, with the emergence of new technologies (e.g., CD-based storage,

operating systems, improved CPU speed) and the Internet. These new technologies significantly changed the industry of gaming by enabling cooperative social play and competitive gaming.

With the start of the 21st century, most online games have become multiplayer, requiring players to engage and interact with others through digital media in order to progress through game levels and tasks. Players communicate with each other in most games through textual messaging and voice-chat. They often play in banded groups that range in size from several people to several hundred people. Gaming requires players as social agents to use communication in order to engage in interaction digitally. Gaming also requires social knowing (Chomsky 2000; Ehrlich 2000; Fodor 2000; Maturana & Varela 1980) – defined here as creating, learning, adapting, discarding, or replacing the practices involved in gaming so that they pragmatically align with the needs, desires, interests, concerns, and wants of those engaged in play. Further, gaming involves coupling, or connecting to other social practices, such as discussing game strategies through social media, socializing with other players through community websites, and attending conferences where developers showcase new games and products. Participating in the sport of professional gaming is viewed as a social practice that is centered on interaction, social agents, communication, social knowing, and coupling. At eSports competitions, spectators actively participate in constructing the tournament alongside those playing the game. This research frames gaming and its coupled practices as relevant and meaningful social practices in which people engage to learn, play, socialize, and participate in their everyday lives.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

3.2.1 Entering the Community

In the June 2009, I responded to an advertisement on Craigslist for an internship at Riot Games, a start-up video game company in Culver City. Prior to reading the advertisement, I had just finished my Master's thesis research (Newon 2011), looking at how *World of Warcraft* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2004-2014) guild players use speech activities such as directives, to coordinate technical group activities and achieve collaborative goals. I was looking for an opportunity to learn more about the process of game design and community from a development perspective. Although, at the time, Riot Games did not have a game released to the public, and I was not at all familiar with their game in production, I submitted an application and heard back within a couple of days.

3.2.1.1 *The Interview*

When I first arrived at the office (*see* Figure 3.1), I had no idea what to expect. A part of me was not surprised by the built environment of the studio, which was comprised of furniture and fixtures typical of most offices. This standard set-up included cubicle clusters, whiteboards, state-of-the-art hardware, and post-it notes in bulk, on walls, desks, and on computer monitors everywhere. What was surprising to me were the other types of objects that also filled the space. On each desk, next to computer monitors and keyboards, were carefully curated collections of posed action figures of characters from comics, anime, and other video games. The walls of each cubicle were covered with vibrant posters depicting triumphant scenes from computer games, comic books, and the current video game in production. The desk-space between

collectables and toys were littered with empty soda cans, giant cases of protein powder, and half eaten snacks from the Japanese market, *Mitsuwa*, a short drive away. On an initial tour of the office, the small cluster of desks that was pointed out to me as the *Community Room*, was occupied by four young men, sitting at their desks, some working, some beta testing the game in production. On unoccupied computer, an episode of the *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* was being streamed, and every now and then, the developers broke from whatever they were doing to laugh at a line or comment on screen. In the larger office, the space was filled with voices in conversation, shouts of laughter, sound effects, noises, and music from computer speakers, and footfalls of people running and moving back and forth through the cubicles.

Figure 3.1: Riot Games Office; Culver City, CA; July 2009

The office was part of a business park that was shared with other companies and professionals, mostly in the financial and banking sector. On first arriving, it was really surprising to see just how different Riot employees dressed in comparison to the other people in suit and ties, who also shared the communal space. The Riot employees almost exclusively wore

t-shirts of all kinds, colors, and graphics. Some wore shorts and flip-flops, others wore jeans and sneakers, and further, some wore pajama pants and fuzzy bunny slippers. Some had tattoos, others had colorful dyed hair, and some wore hats and beanies with cat ears. Aside from appearances, I remember Riot employees really standing out from others for another very distinct reason. Riot employees were almost always smiling or laughing. In shared elevator rides, for example, while other employees often stared straight forward and quietly kept to themselves, Riot employees were almost always seen laughing and engaging in boisterous conversation.

The interview process was by far one of my most memorable to this day. During the beginning of the interview, I was asked questions typical of most interviews. For instance, we talked about my reasons for wanting to intern at Riot Games, my experience, and my strengths and weaknesses. We talked about my research interests and what games I liked to play. After talking to multiple developers, other interns, and even the president of the company, I was then led to a conference room decorated with a comical, inflatable dinosaur, wearing a Hawaiian grass skirt and flower lei, for one last question (*see* Figure 3.2). I was asked by another intern to tell him the rudest, most offensive joke I could think of. I laughed at the request, figuring he was kidding. But he wasn't kidding; he was in fact, testing me. While I didn't actually answer his question (I told him I'd think about it and get back to him), I somehow passed his test and started as a Community Department intern later that week.

Figure 3.2: Office Décor; July 2009

Weeks later, stories of my interview were somewhat of a known joke. After I had gained a certain level of rapport in the office, I found out that when I had first arrived, people were very unsure of whether or not I would be able to fit in. The request for a joke was a way of seeing if I could handle the casual, joking environment of the office. While I didn't exactly answer, my reaction to the request was really what they were evaluating. On first appearance, in-person and on-paper (i.e. an academic), many employees thought I wouldn't fare well with the crude humor and constant teasing that goes on in what was described to me as a sort of *fraternity* of brothers, brothers who happened to make games together. At the time, there were approximately 50 men working at the company and four women, including myself. Extra precaution was taken during the interview, not necessarily because of my gender, but because of who they imagined I was (e.g., serious, sensitive, boring) and what they imagined anthropology to be (e.g., spying, journalism, complicated).

Looking back at this interview four and a half years later, it is clear that the developers were and continue to be extremely mindful of the borders of their community. They actively police the boundaries of their studio community, evaluating who counts as an insider and who counts as an outsider. On a much larger scale, this practice also translates into the larger digital community. Through language and interaction, both online and offline, developers and players actively and regularly evaluate other community members as authentic or inauthentic. These negotiated categorizations determine the type of membership and social capital a person is bestowed in the larger Riot and League of Legends community.

3.2.1.2 *The Internship*

For the three months that followed, I spent four days a week at the office. At the studio, I spent about a third of my time beta-testing the game, a third engaging with the players through social media and through the company's early message board system, and probably a third hanging out and goofing off with the people on my team.

Back then, with the game not yet in the public domain, our role as community managers was not very clearly defined, and therefore, much of our time was spent trying to figure out how to build community by getting players together to participate and engage in conversation around ideas and products, through social media and events. We spent most days writing personal messages to players on the company's message board. We constantly read through comments and messages and really tried to distill what players wanted and how we could make them most excited about the game and the community more broadly. At gaming conventions like Penny Arcade Expo, in Seattle, we attended and talked to players about the game and taught them how to play. Operating from a relatively small booth, we handed out free beta-keys so people could go home and continue to play the in-development version of the game.

In a way, we felt a little like pioneers, working as much as we could each day and experimenting with new methods and practices we had not previously tried. To some extent, we were trying to do what no other company had yet done, on a large, global scale. We were trying to become the most player-centered company in the world. What that meant was that we were trying to become not only recognized as having the largest, expansive network of fans, but also the most engaged and connected team of developers in dialogue with this network.

In my time at the office, what initially struck me as particularly interesting was the way that many developers and players frequently use the word "ownership" to describe their participation in the studio and in the wider community. In the game studio, I noticed a strong sense of pride attached to individual contributions of work (e.g., art, narrative, new technological features) that make up the game and the community of the game more largely. This same sense of accomplishment and ownership is felt on the level of players as they too participate in activities that strengthen the gaming community (e.g., posting feedback, creating costumes, designing fan websites, organizing events). This experience highlights for me that what I refer to as *discourses of ownership.* This discourse is a meaningful way in which people make sense of community in contexts where participation, interaction and membership exist virtually.

Although I did not realize it at the time, the purpose of this initial time at the studio was twofold: (1) to make initial contact with game designers and developers, and (2) to gather relevant ethnographic information on workplace and community language and discourse from the perspective of game developers who interact closely to conceptualize and construct a connected virtual community for an imagined audience of players. This experience was important in order to identify the complex social dynamics involved in the corporate workplace of the studio and the wider global community.

3.2.1.3 *Leaving and Returning*

After working at the company for three months over the summer, I left the workplace to return to school in the fall. At the time, I did not realize that I would return to do fieldwork two years later. I thought I was interested in pursuing a different topic for my dissertation, and in particular, I thought I might study women, language, and the cosmetic industry in Bangkok, Thailand. After moving away from the idea of research in Thailand, I struggled for a short time with trying to find a dissertation topic. After completing a book chapter on my MA research that explores gaming communities (Newon 2010), and attending a dissertation workshop at the Oxford Internet Institute, I decided to return to my interests in digital media, language, and community.

Although I had never really left the larger community – I still played the game on most days, kept up with news and postings online, and hung out with developers from the company – I decided to focus my attention more closely to explore how players and developers co-construct a sense of community and belonging online through language, participation, and engagement.

3.2.2 Sites of Data Collection

Multi-sited ethnography is a method that involves following a particular research topic, community, or other social phenomenon through different field sites, which may be geographically and socio-culturally diverse (*see* Marcus 1995). For this project, I conducted multi-sited ethnography in three very diverse locations, namely with developers in the studio, at live tournaments, conventions and events, and further, online, looking at documents, websites, and social media. This method, according to Marcus (1995), is particularly useful to analytically explore transnational processes, groups of people in motion, and ideas that extend over multiple

locations. Multi-sited ethnography is concerned with the movement of ideas, people, and commodities, and allows for a macro-level approach to understanding a topic horizontally, through multiple spaces, as opposed to vertically, through one space.

Using multi-sited ethnography as a method has both advantages and limitations. It can allow researchers to understand a variety of perspectives that relate to a particular idea, community, action, or process, thus providing the researcher with a more holistic, wider understanding of the social phenomenon. In a similar way, this method also allows researchers to understand how seemingly disconnected spaces and contexts are related and interconnected through social hierarchies and systems of power. On the other hand, using multi-sited ethnography may also prove limiting because it requires researchers to divide their time at multiple sites, making it more difficult to come to know one site in the same depth as doing ethnography at a single site. Further, in using multi-sited ethnography, the multiplicity of field sites (geographic, social, virtual) poses countless possibilities for data collection and analysis, and while this is arguably an advantage, it may also prove overwhelming and challenging in focusing one's work.

3.2.2.1 *Riot Games Headquarters*

One of my fieldsites is the headquarters of Riot Games in Santa Monica. Here I conducted interviews with developers about their experiences, projects, ideas, and thoughts on topics such as community, social networks, player behavior, eSports, and global development. The studio employs approximately 1000 employees who work on all facets of game development, from production, to art, to platform engineering, programming, and design (*see* Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Riot Games Headquarters; Santa Monica, CA; April 2013

This field site, discussed in greater depth in Section 3.2 of this chapter, is organized for two purposes, namely collaborative work and cooperative play. Unlike the cubicles present in the previous Culver City office, this much larger space is filled with open rows of desks and computers. This open, almost warehouse-like feel, allows for developers to work together and engage in conversations more freely. The office has many conference rooms where teams can work and a large, open auditorium for company-wide meetings. In addition to work spaces, the built environment of the office is also designed specifically for group play. The office has a *PC Bang* (i.e., South Korean styled PC café) where developers come together to play League of Legends with their co-workers and friends (*see* Figure 3.4). This space is surrounded by large television screens where random, live streaming video of game matches from around the world are featured continuously throughout the workday.

Figure 3.4: Riot PC Bang

The office complex itself is situated in a business park that also includes several other large entertainment companies, such as Yahoo, HBO, and CBS Broadcasting. The studio is made up of multiple floors and buildings, and while it takes up a large portion of the business park, it is becoming too small to support all of Riots staff. In 2015, the headquarters of Riot will move to a 284,000 square feet campus in West LA called *Element LA*. With the added office space, Riot plans to expand by employing 500 additional developers.

3.2.2.2 *Riot Forums, Websites, and Social Media Channels*

As discussed further in Section 3.1.3.2, various websites and spaces on the Internet served as a virtual field site in this study. By collecting, coding, and transcribing data found on these websites, including news stories, game announcements, screenshots, chat logs, video, and audio, I was able to gain insight into how players and developers co-construct a sense of community and belonging online, through digital media.

I monitored and archived articles and interactions from a wide and diverse collection of websites. However, much of my time online was devoted to familiarizing myself with the content found on seven different websites and spaces, including 1) the League of Legends Game, 2) the League of Legends website and forums, 3) the League of Legends Facebook page, 4) the League of Legends Twitter feed, 5) the League of Legends YouTube channel, 6) the League of Legends Reddit subreddit, and 7) the League of Legends Tribunal website.

In the context of the game (*see* Section 3.2.2.2), I observed a messaging field built into the interface of the game, in which players use to communicate with each other. Out of game, in the League of Legends Forums, I observed how players write messages to the larger community, comment on posts, or answer questions posed by other players. The Forums are essentially a sophisticated electronic message board system (*see* Figure 3.5), in which thousands of posts are written, commented upon, and shared every day, making it one of the most interactive websites used by the League of Legends community.

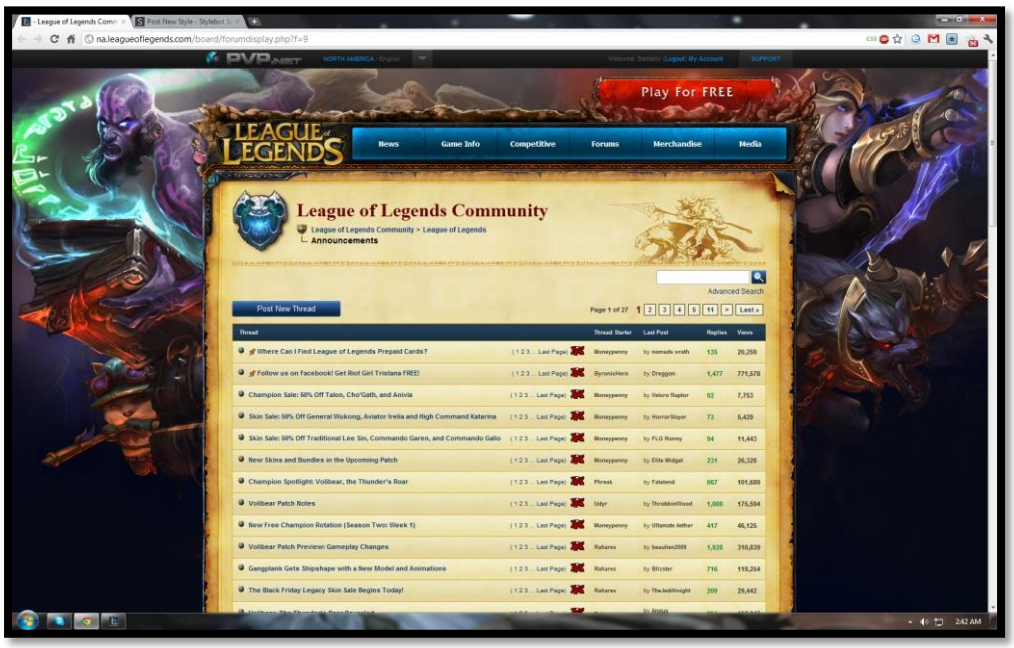


Figure 3.5: League of Legends Forums

The structures of the League of Legends Forums are similar to those found on other information-oriented, message board systems like Reddit (*see* Figure 3.6). On Reddit, 458,547 players subscribe to the channel, and every day, thousands of people post new message threads and comment on postings made by others. The most popular posts each day are featured on the first page of the website, and often have thousands of comments made in response to the original posting or subsequent sub-postings.

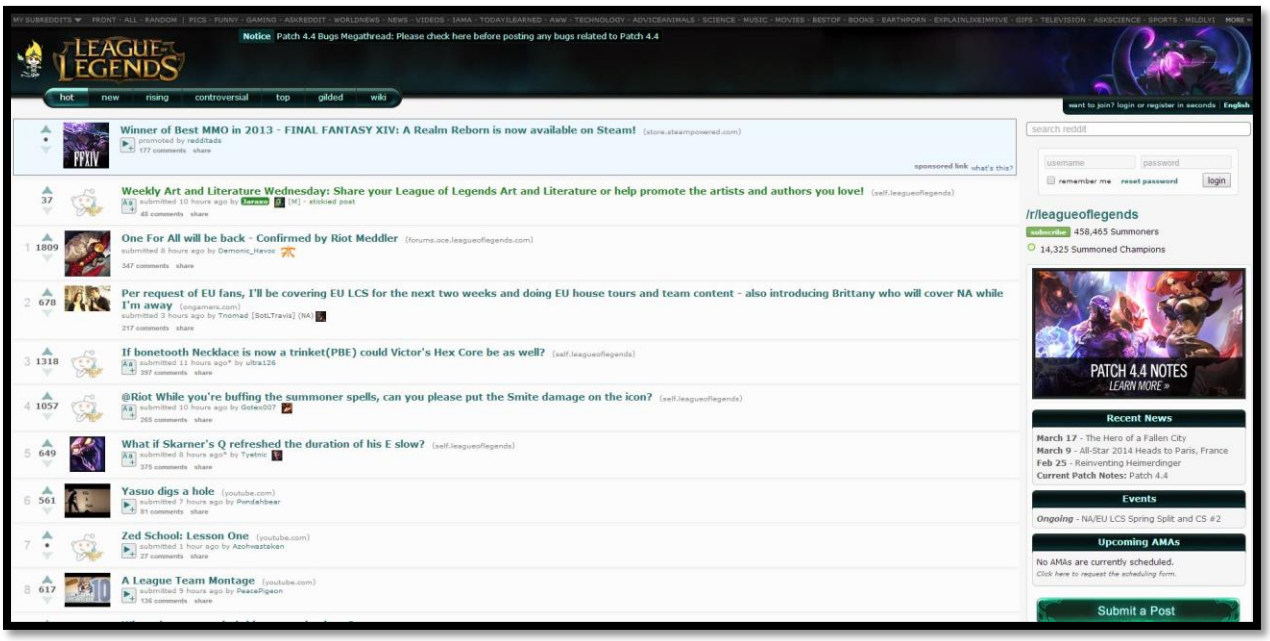


Figure 3.6: League of Legends SubReddit

On other social media websites, such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, millions of fans subscribe to specific League of Legends channels, or subsets of these websites. Through these websites, players receive game-related updates and announcements, and are able to participate though conversation on these sites through commenting and responding to posts.

On Facebook (*see* Figure 3.7), 8,801,161 people have "liked" the League of Legends page and 335,755 people are currently in conversation on the specific forum. Also found on this

website are links to other game-related pages where players can be directed to talk about more specific aspects of the game and the community. There are collections of photographs from events and tournaments, videos on YouTube created by developers and players, collections of fan art, and updated features and announcements. Visitors to the website can choose to comment on most of the shared content, and can also share these stories and updates on their own personal Facebook pages.

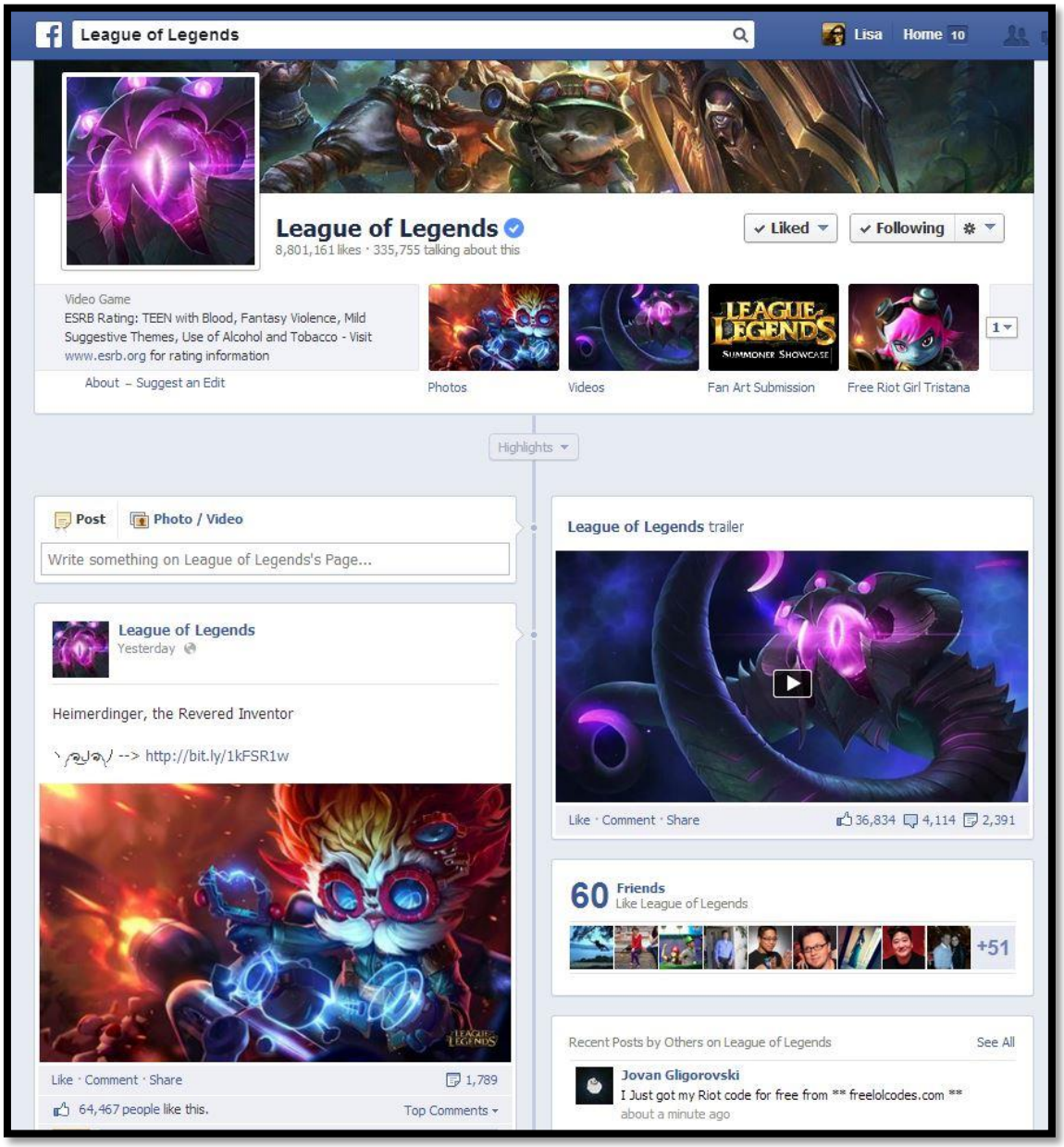


Figure 3.7: League of Legends Facebook Page

Additionally, my fieldwork focuses on the Tribunal website, a system designed by Riot developers to regulate delinquent player behavior (*see* Section 5.3). On this website, players report other players who use offensive language or violate the rules of the game in any way. The Tribunal displays the reported conversations of these players and invites others to read through the conversation transcripts. Community members read the players' text and vote as to whether or not the offenses warrant losing temporary or permanent access to the game.

3.2.3.3 *National and International Gaming Events*

I conducted ethnography at several international gaming events, conventions, and eSports tournaments, including *Gamescom* in Cologne, Germany, *Penny Arcade Expo* in Seattle, Washington, and the *Season 2 League of Legends World Finals* in Los Angeles, California.

Figure 3.8: Season 2 League of Legends World Championship Playoffs; Los Angeles, CA; October 2012

Many of the events I went to were eSports tournaments, or in other words, international competitions where sponsored teams competed in the sport of professional gaming. In Los Angeles, I attended the Season 2 World Championship Playoffs and Finals (*see* Figure 3.8), and a year later, the Season 3 World Championship Playoffs and Finals. At most of these events, players competed on a stage in front of thousands of seated fans (and millions of fans watching online). The game match was projected on the large screen as well as close up images of each player's face. Colorful lights, music, and sound effects set a tone of excitement at most e-sport events that correspond to the boisterous cheering of the crowd. Broadcasters known as *shoutcasters* often sit at desks behind the crowd and provide moment-by-moment commentary as the players progress through the game.

Some of the eSports events I went to were also part of a larger convention or trade show. Gamescom is a trade fair for video games in Germany, and is organized by the Federal Association of Interactive Entertainment Software. In addition to hosting eSports competitions, they also have massive spaces where people in attendance can test and play video and computer games (*see* Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Gamescom; Cologne, Germany; August 2012

At many of these conventions, many types of games are showcased and played, not only those that require a computer. At Penny Arcade Expo, for instance, there are beanbag chairs and entire conference rooms for people in attendance to take a break from the giant showrooms to play card games or play on their portable devices (*see* Figures 3.10 and 3.11).

Figures 3.10 and 3.11: Penny Arcade Expo; Seattle, WA; September 2012

3.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

To investigate the objectives outlined (*see* Section 1.2), I collected qualitative and quantitative data during twelve consecutive months of fieldwork (July 2012-July 2013). I used a wide range of ethnographic research methods, including participant observation, semi-structured interviewing, audio and video-recording, and analysis of digital documents found on related websites, message-boards, and social-networking platforms.

3.2.3.1 *Ethnography*

Although ethnography is broad in method, it relies largely on the practice of participant observation (Bernard 1998; Bernard 2002). Participant observation is the method of taking part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of observing and learning the explicit and unspoken aspects of their life routines and culture as they unfold (Bernard 1998; Dewalt & Dewalt 2002). This includes taking part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of observing and learning the explicit and unspoken aspects of their life routines and culture. For this project, I spent time doing participant observation in three different contexts, as described in Section 3.1.2. Over the course of a year of fieldwork, I observed at the studio, at events and tournaments, and online in various contexts.

Ethnography also includes method of interviewing, particularly open ended, semi-structured interviewing (Briggs 1986; Mertz 1993). In this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with players and developers over the course of fieldwork. In this particular process, I presented the participants involved with a list of questions and prompts in order to increase the likelihood that all topics will be covered in each interview in more or less the same way. Throughout these interviews, participants were permitted to introduce new topics, dismiss presented topics, and expand on prompts of their preference to fit the flow of the conversation. Many of the questions and topics posed addressed developers' background and experience, work practices, development concepts and influences, and workplace challenges and innovations. I asked players at conventions, tournaments, and other events similar questions, but instead of questions focused on design and work practices, I asked them to speak about their experiences playing with others, creating media, and participating in events.

Ethnography is a recursive practice in which the anthropologist may begin fieldwork with a formative theory based on literature or previous experience only to modify this theory as data emerges in the field (Schensul, et al. 1999). For this reason, throughout my fieldwork, data analysis was conducted on a regular basis. Field notes derived through participant observation were written during or after each workday and reviewed and coded for relevant, emerging themes, grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

3.2.3.2 *Digital Ethnography*

As discussed in the section above, participant observation is "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (Marshall and Rossman 1989: 79). It is "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the research setting" (Schensul et. al 1999: 91). In the contexts of online environments, multiplayer games, and social media, where community is constructed through language and interaction over the Internet, participant observation is conducted through engagement in both play and research simultaneously. Through this participation, non-elicited data is collected online, including conversations as they occur, activities, embodiments, movements through space, and formations about built environments over the Internet (Boellstorff 2012: 55). Holistic, long-term participant observation and the practice of taking detailed field notes (Emerson et.al 1995) allows the researcher, in this context, to identify the practices and beliefs of a social group connected through digital media.

During this phase of research, I collected and archived various documents: digital content featuring textual interaction between company developers and members of the gaming community. These materials include screenshots, chat logs, video, and audio captured in games

and through social media. More specifically, these documents include news articles and company announcements, discussion threads on the company's "forums" (message-boards), broadcasted question and answer sessions, and micro-blogging interactions (i.e., *twitter*). I collected weekly *youtube* videos as well as community clips made in response to these videos. I collected recorded streaming video of eSports tournaments in various countries and languages. Further, I collected conversation logs of community members participating in the company's *Tribunal* forum. These materials were collected daily for the duration of the year and archived in a database I constructed and organized according to content, document type, and date.

I also conducted various open-ended, semi-structured interviews with players and developers online. While interviewing on its own provides inadequate ethnographic context in online research (Boellstorff 2012), open-ended, semi-structured interviewing (Briggs 1986; Mertz 1993) alongside participant observation is a key method in studying language and digital communication in media communities and online multiplayer games. Interviewing, in addition to participant observation, is significant to ethnographic research as it "provides opportunities to learn about people's elicited narratives and representations of their social worlds, including beliefs, ideologies, justifications, motivations, and aspirations" (Boellstorff 2012: 92).

3.2.3.3 *Conversation and Discourse Analysis*

At the end of each Friday in the field, I reviewed the audio and video data collected both online and offline during the week. I coded portions of the data that contained relevant and emerging themes and then later transcribed and analyzed these excerpts using tools derived from discourse and conversation analysis (Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Clayman & Heritage 2002; Heritage 1984; Ochs 1979; Sacks 1995; Schegloff 2007). Conversation analysis conventions allow micro-interactions and linguistic features such as turn-taking sequence, pauses and

hesitations, overlapping speech, and affective markers (e.g., laughter, emphasis, intonation) to be documented in the transcripts (Clayman 2004; Goodwin 2006; Goodwin & Goodwin 2004; Ochs & Capps 1996). This method of analysis is particularly useful in analyzing how players and developers use linguistic, corporeal, affective, and stylistic speech forms to build their social worlds online through digital media and interaction over the Internet.

Naturally occurring interactions, elicited outside experimental or artificial setting, are revealing of how people actually behave rather than how people believe they behave or would like others to believe they behave. This record relays not only the audible utterances of participants, but also the ways in which participants communicate through bodily expression, gestures, and expressions (Duranti 1997; Keating & Egbert 2004). Further, this method is central to this proposed study as it illuminates the ways in which people construct and perform relational identities and social roles even in the most mundane everyday interactions (Capps and Ochs 1995; Kulick and Schieffelin 2004).

3.2.3.4 *Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis*

Online interaction overwhelmingly takes place by means of discourse. Computer-mediated discourse analysis is a method of analyzing online behaviors that is grounded in empirical, textual observations (e.g., characters, words, utterances, messages, threads, archives). This method lends itself to the analysis of this study as it illuminates how players shape online communities designed and built by media developers through computer-mediated interaction.

Computer-mediated discourse can be defined as the communication (e.g., by email, instant messaging, chat channels, video blogs, web discussion boards) that occurs when people interact on the Internet with one another (Herring 2001, 2004). This type of analysis uses similar methods and key concepts found in disciplines such as conversation analysis, discourse analysis,

and ethnography of communication to study how people use language and draw upon unique digital resources and environments when communicating on the Internet. Computer-mediated discourse analysis enables the researcher to see interconnections between all levels of interaction, and may shed light on participant frameworks, online identity performance, and online communities (Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger 2008).

3.2.4 Ethnographic Roles and Positionalities

My relationship with Riot and Rioters have always been somewhat multiple and intertwined. When I started working at the company, I was an intern in the Community Department and had specific roles and responsibilities in the workplace. The goal of Riot has always been to be the most player-focused company in the industry. To reach this goal, the company had to be recognized as having the best community relations compared to other similar companies and gaming networks. As an employee, I worked hard on tasks that were assigned to me. I wanted the company to succeed and helped the team build develop the department through projects and events.

Although my role at Riot started as an employee, in many ways, I entered the community as an academic with the understanding that I would be leaving after three months, to return to my school, as an academic. My resume was considered because I had previously studied World of Warcraft, a game created by Blizzard, another game studio of comparable talent and success. Everyone in the office was aware of my status as a doctoral student studying anthropology at UCLA and were curious about my research and interests. Developers in my department regularly wanted to discuss understandings of community with me and frequently wanted to talk about anthropological theories and methods.

One of the biggest roles I had to manage while doing fieldwork was a friend. When I worked at the studio, the company was very small and people regularly hung out together on most work nights and weekends. We regularly went to dinner together and had drinks at local bars on weekend nights. After work, we typically stayed at the office past midnight, and at times, MUCH past midnight, playing computer games, board games, and card games together. We went to karaoke regularly and frequented the local movie theaters. People confided secrets and personal stories to me from their past. We talked about our hopes and dreams for the future and the places we wanted to go one day. Within this close-knit setting, I was considered an authentic Rioter, and more importantly, a close friend to many, making it sometimes very difficult to maintain both an *etic* and *emic* perspective.

When I left Riot initially, at the close of my internship, I did not realize that I would return to do fieldwork two years later. In returning to the field as an academic, my role had changed. I was no longer an employee and the company had grown tremendously (from 50 to 1000+ people) that I hardly knew or recognized most people. While this distance allowed me to return to a more balanced perspective as both an insider and outsider, the relationships and friendships I made early on at the company also constantly require me to reflect and be aware of my ethnographic positioning, analysis, and writing.

3.3 THE LEAGUE OF LEGENDS COMMUNITY

3.3.1 The Industry of Interactive Media

As discussed by in *Replay: The History of Video Games* (Donovan 2010), the game industry began in 1971 with the release of the arcade game, *Computer Space*, and later the next

year with the first commercially successful video game *Pong*, made by the company Atari, Inc. By 1978, with the release of *Space Invaders*, developed by Taito, video arcade games became prevalent in mainstream locations worldwide (e.g., restaurants, convenience stores, shopping malls). These early arcade games became extremely profitable by the year 1981, around the time Atari introduced console technology, striving to construct a home video game market.

By portraying the personal computer game industry as a sort of hobby culture, the industry grew along with the advancement of computer technology. The 1980s may be referred to as the "golden age of video games," because during this time, video arcade game profits surged. The most popular arcade game produced during this decade was *Pac-Man* by Namco, selling over 350,000 cabinets worldwide. In 1983, however, the North American home computing industry of gaming crashed as a result of large quantities of low quality games. By the mid-1980s, the home game industry was revitalized by the release of the "Nintendo Entertainment System," produced by the Japanese company Nintendo, who also successfully introduced the handheld computing system "Game Boy."

Game related technology advanced significantly in the 1990s. During this time, CD-based storage, GUI-based operating systems (e.g., Microsoft Windows, Mac OS), 3D graphic technology, and CPU speed were adopted and improved. In the second half of the 1990s, the Internet became more widely accessible, enabling the use of computers for cooperative play and competitive gaming.

The sophistication of video games has continued to increase during the 2000s. Today the computer and video game industries have grown from focused markets to mainstream markets, profiting by nearly 12 billion dollars in 2008. There are as many as 600,000 professionally established video game developers today and many additional casual and indie game studios.

Technology continues to develop around consoles, PCs, and mobile devices, which thus inform innovation and new types and genres of games.

Furthermore, the industry has evolved a unique developer-player relationship based on increase feedback and interaction. Players are sometimes referred to as fourth-party developers as they sometimes create user modifications (mods), which often become just as popular, or even more popular than the original game developed professionally. The game League of Legends, for instance, was inspired by the fan-created mod *Defense of the Ancients* (DotA) for the video game *Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne*.

3.3.2 Riot Games and League of Legends

3.3.2.1 *The Company*

In 2005, co-founders Marc Merrill and Brandon Beck decided to create a start-up video game company that would develop a stand-alone game based on the mod DotA. After securing investors and initial funds to start the company, they partnered with other active DotA community members, like Steve "Guinsoo" Feak, who developed the mod *DotA Allstars*, a variant of the original DotA modified game map. Using the original map created by the player Eul as a starting point, Guinsoo expanded this template by adding additional content and making various gameplay changes. They also recruited Steve "Pendragon" Mescon, who ran the former, official, and largely successful community website, dota-allstars.com.

In 2006, Riot Games officially began production and slowly started recruiting engineers, designers, and artists. They spent several years developing and rigorously testing the structures of the game. In October 2008, they announced League of Legends to the public and began beta testing the game with a select group of invited players. A year later, in October 2009, they

released the full version of the game to the public, all the while producing update to the game every two weeks with new content and bug fixes. In 2012, a Forbes magazine article announced that League of Legends was the most played PC game in the world in terms of the number of hours played. In 2014, Riot announced that over 27 million people play the game daily, while in total, 67 million players play the game every month. An estimated 1.3 billion hours are spent playing League of Legends a month worldwide and approximately 25 million players are estimated to connect through social medial.

In the past four years, the company has grown from under a hundred employees to more than a thousand. In terms of location, the company has grown from a single office in Southern California, to having offices and teams of developers around the world. There are over eleven offices and partner offices in Dublin, Istanbul, Sao Paolo, Seoul, Moscow, Sydney, Taipei, Cologne, and Hong Kong. In the US, besides West LA, there are offices in St. Louis and New York. In many of these offices, developers translate the game and other features for specific regions and cultural regulations. Currently, the game is available in over 20 different languages.

Since releasing the game, the company has been recognized for their success within the game industry. Riot has won numerous awards including PC Gamer's Choice (GameSpy 2009), Best New Online Game (Game Developer's Conference 2010), Online Game of the Year (Golden Joystick Awards 2010), Game of the Year: MOBA (GameSpy 2011), and Best Community Relations (Game Developer's Conference 2012).

3.3.2.2 *The Game*

League of Legends, also known as *LoL*, is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) video game inspired by the Warcraft III mod, Defense of the Ancients. It utilizes a free-to-play business model, which means that players have access to fully functioning game content without

having to purchase the game or pay monthly. The company earns money through micro-transactions, or in other words, by selling premium, aesthetic game content, like character *skins*, or appearance enhancements (*see* Figure 3.12).

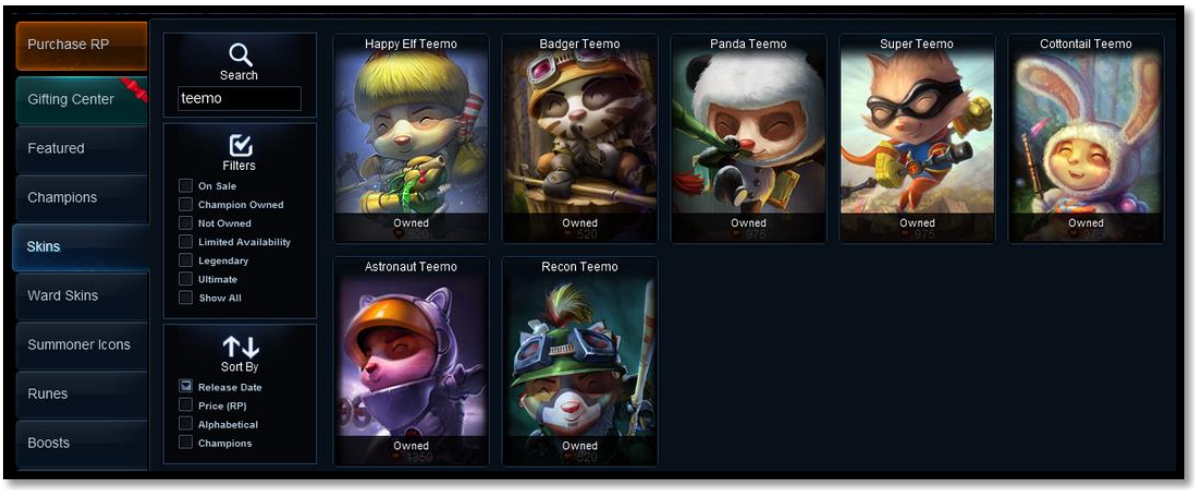


Figure 3.12: Riot Store and Teemo Skins

When starting a game match, a player must first choose a *champion* to play (*see* Figure 3.13). The role selected, for example, an archer who does fast, ranged damage to opponents, or a swordsman who blocks teammates from taking damage, must be discussed with teammates in the initial character select chat screen prior to start of the game. These specific roles correspond to in-game positions and responsibilities.

Figure 3.13: Champion Select Screen

Once selected, two teams of five players compete against each other in a match that takes on average, about 40 minutes. Each player controls a champion with special abilities, and must work together with teammates to destroy enemy towers, minions, and opposing players in order to detonate the enemies' home base. The game is a race to see which team can destroy the others' base first, loosely similar to the objectives of capture the flag. In order to gain an advantage, players try to earn more game gold than other players. This is accomplished through temporarily defeating or killing other players through skillful battle maneuvers (*see* Figure 3.14). Game gold can used to buy upgraded weapons and gear that give certain champions bonus abilities that correspond to their particular fighting role.

Figure 3.14: Playing the Game

In order to successfully strategize and coordinate with teammates, players chat with each other by typing messages in the game chat box (*see* Figure 3.15). Players can select to communicate with only teammates or with opposing players as well. Professional players and players who regularly play with friends or a regular group often wear headphones with microphones that allow them to coordinate cooperative actions through talk (*see* Figure 3.14). Using voice chat or text chat, teams must constantly monitor the built environment of the game, such as watching for opposing players on the map or being aware of how much health teammates have remaining. The statuses of these and other things are coordinated by teammates through messaging and signaling, requiring extremely efficient communication focused on shared references, terms, and understandings.

Figure 3.15: Game Interface

3.3.3 The Riot Manifesto: Subculture and Ritual Practices

The subculture at Riot Games is extremely multilayered and complex, comprised of different identities, ideologies, and practices. Yet, although developers at the company may have different backgrounds and experiences, creating multiple and overlapping ways of being, a larger studio subculture at Riot Games organizes the workplace and the ways in which developers think about and design products for global audiences.

The *Riot Manifesto* is a list of five core studio values, written by developers at the company, which employees at Riot strive to uphold. The list is posted on the studio's website, for all community members to read. These values are discussed not only when new employees are trained, but also in the everyday conversations that developers have in the workplace. They shape the ways in which the company innovates new ideas and practices, as well as how they imagine their company in the future and the ways in which they interact with their community of players. The following values are listed below:

1) *Player Experience First*

The first value stated in the Manifesto is to put *player experience first*. Riot Games aspires to be the most player-focused game company in the world, meaning not only do design products and services with players in mind, but they are focused on listening to what players do and say in order to improve how the game and related media are experienced. In preface to the Manifesto, Riot writes, "We know players form the foundation of our community and it's for them that we continue to evolve and improve the League of Legends experience."

2) *Challenge Convention*

Rioters are encouraged to imagine and pursue projects that challenge more traditional practices of game development. For instance, every so often in the company, the developers engage in a ritual *hackathon* called *Thunderdome,* where they spend 30 continuous hours in the office creating projects that they do not typically have time to pursue during normal work hours. In teams, design and build new technologies, related games, maps and new artwork, and other types of game features. While not all of the projects that are produced during this ritual practice are publically released or showcased after the event, the practice allows and fosters developers to imagine and develop, without constraint, projects that innovate and push the boundaries of what can be done.

3) *Focus on Talent and Team*

Rioters strive to continuously grow and improve as a company. They work to attract developers who are leaders in their particular fields, and they also effort to cultivate the talents and potential of all employees. Riot describes themselves as a meritocracy, meaning status and influence at the company is vested in individuals

according to merit, the quality of the work one does. Certain practices, like biweekly company *Show and Tell*, allow developers and teams to showcase their current projects to the rest of the company at large. This practice allows for other teams to recognize and appreciate the efforts of their colleagues, and also allows for feedback and further conversation.

4) *Take Play Seriously*

In addition, Rioters strive to make play a large part of their work experience. Employees are encouraged to play and beta test the game every day, regardless of what department they belong to or what role they play at the company. Rioters are also encouraged to play a wide range of other games, and are given a yearly game allowance, or *Play Fund*, to purchase the newest titles. At the office, there are arcade games, toys, board games, and console systems throughout, as well as play spaces, like the PC Bang. Upon interviewing at the company, potential employees are assessed for whether or not they would be a good company fit, in terms of values, motivations, attitude, and sense of humor. On an everyday basis, comical Internet memes are used in presentations, emails, and office pranks. Play and fun are so important to the company in part because developers are first and foremost gamers, and in order to understand what makes a game fun and exciting, they have to widely experience how these sentiments are created in other games, contexts, and genres.

5) *Stay Hungry, Stay Humble*

Rioters are encouraged to be ambitious but to also balance ambition with humility. This means that developers should be reminded that successful projects are often the result of teamwork and collective effort. This statement suggests that players

also contribute largely to Riot's success, and as such, they should be acknowledged for their feedback, dedication, and loyalty. One way that the company strives to acknowledge the value of players' feedback is through a practice called *Ask Me Anything (AMA)*. When doing an AMA, specific teams of developers or leaders of the company, answer questions that are submitted on the company's website by members of the community. The purpose of this practice is for developers to connect with players in conversation, in order to encourage feedback and acknowledge the very important role community members play in developing the game.

When development teams and individuals go above and beyond to uphold the values outlined in the Manifesto, leaders of the company acknowledge their actions by inscribing their names on the company's *Champions Cup*, a large metal trophy that is engraved with the names of developers who have contributed significantly to the company through merit. Once awarded, the cup is mailed to the acknowledged team or individual, regardless of which office they are employed. Honored employees must then drink from the cup. The employee or team is also acknowledged more widely by the rest of the company during company practices, like Show and Tell.

3.3.4 Developers and Intersubjectivity

Intersubjective experience (Husserl 1931; Husserl 1998; Duranti 2010), as discussed by Husserl, plays a fundamental role in our constitution of both ourselves as objectively existing subjects, other experiencing subjects, and the objective spatial-temporal world. Intersubjective experience is empathic experience, meaning it occurs in the course of our conscious attribution of intentional acts to other subjects. This occurs when we are able to imagine ourselves as

experiencing the experiences of another being. Husserl explains how when people are perceiving other people as being familiar to their own being, they are able to "appresentatively" (though analogy) ascribe intentional acts and experiences to others. In this way, this type of awareness is essential in the shaping of our ideas, actions, and social relations.

Intersubjectivity, briefly explained above, may be used to frame the ways in which developers think and design for their players. Game developers belong to a sort of duel community where they are both developers of and participant of the communities and games they create. Developers often spend much of their time playing their own game for fun after they have left the studio. Additionally, they frequently play and provide feedback on video games developed by other studios. In this way, there is a certain awareness and a projection of the types of game conditions, narratives, and structures which are enjoyable and those which are not. They are able to imagine what other players might enjoy by reflecting on the types of game experiences they enjoy themselves.

Developers are a general team that refers to many different kinds of roles at the company. Developers may be designers, artists, programmers, platform engineers, sound engineers, testers, community managers, and customer support. Developers belong to a sort of dual community where they are both creators and participants of the communities and games they help build. There is a certain awareness and projection of the types of game conditions, narratives, structures, and corresponding online communities which are enjoyable and those which are not. They imagine what other players might enjoy by reflecting on the types of game/community experiences they enjoy themselves in a way that often blurs the distinction between leisure and work (Negus 2002).

3.3.5 Players, Social Media, and Remix Culture

According to Riot Game's own published numbers from 2012, over 90% of League of Legends players are male and more than 85% of players are between the ages of 16 and 30. Moreover, approximately 60% of players are enrolled or have completed some level of college. Players are located all around the world and play the game in more than 20 different languages. The countries with the largest numbers of players include the United States, Canada, Brazil, Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Poland, South Korea, China, and the Philippines.

In previous sections of this chapter, I discuss the many types of digital and social media that players participate, monitor, and use to engage with one other. In Section 5.2.4, I discuss how the very public nature of social media influences the ways in which players present and formulate responses to information and postings online in the context of expansive, imagined audiences. This type of intersubjectivity discussed informs a particular type of *remix culture*, to which many League of Legends developers and players also subscribe.

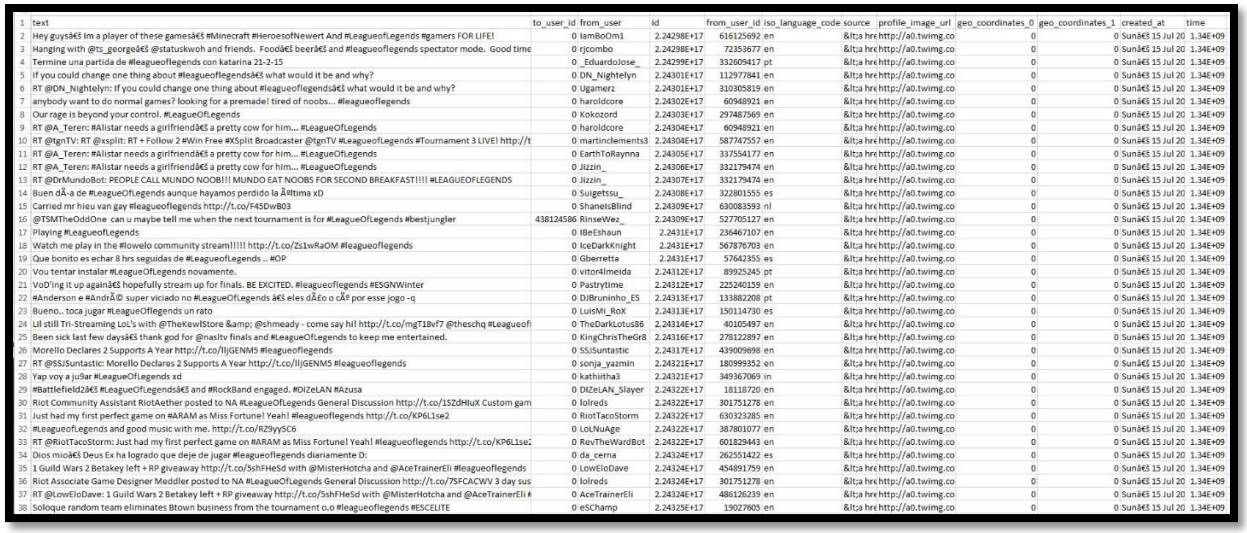
Remixing may be defined as the act of rearranging, combining, editorializing, and adding other content to original works in order to create something entirely new, through structure-preserving transformations (Lessig 2008). Growing out of mod culture, League of Legends itself is based on modifications of the copyrighted game, Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne. Remix culture, or *Read/Write culture* (RW), differs from *Read Only culture* (RO), in that it celebrates a reciprocal relationship between the producer and the consumer. In the League of Legends community, players commonly take images, sounds, texts, and video from the game and remix them with their own words, images, or music. These new videos and images are the circulated through social media to the larger community. Some of these remixes become memes and are featured and promoted by the company on its website or other media channels.

3.4 MAPPING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH QUANTITATIVE DATA

To supplement the qualitative methods used in this study, I also utilized quantitative methods to study the League of Legends community. I created a database of social media exchanges, looking at *Twitter* comments that referenced the game, League of Legends, over the course of a 12-month period. Using data analytics and visualization software, I processed these data to show how the community is constructed through a network of people using different languages and from different geographic regions. Using these data, I highlight the ways in which people are connected though digital engagement and members in the networked community.

3.4.1 Quantitative Research Methods

From July 1, 2012 to July 1, 2013, I collected 231,040 tweets that referenced the hashtag *#leagueoflegends*. In order to create this massive database, I used *TwapperKeeper*, a web service that tracks and archives Twitter hashtags. Using a modified code to export these data as a CSV file, I collected not only the textual content of each tweet, but also information on users, languages, geographical coordinates, and time (*see* Figure 3.16). I ran these data collection over a server at Queensland University of Technology, in association with ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) researchers focused on projects that study online publics (http://mappingonlinepublics.net/). Through my peer network, with particular guidance from Dr. Darryl Woodford, it was here that I learned and obtained support in capturing, processing, and visualizing social media data.



	text	to_user_id	from_user	id	from_user_id	iso_language_code	source	profile_image_url	geo_coordinates_0	geo_coordinates_1	created_at	time
2	Hey guysâ€¦ Im a player of these gamesâ€¦ #Minecraft #HeroesofNewert And #LeagueofLegends #gamers FOR LIFE!		0 IamBoOm1	2.24298E+17	616125692	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
3	Hanging with @ts_georgeâ€¦ @statuskwoh and friends. Foodâ€¦ beerâ€¦ and #leagueoflegends spectator mode. Good time		0 rjcombo	2.24298E+17	72353677	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
4	Termine una partida de #leagueoflegends con katarina 21-2-15		0 _EduardoJose_	2.24299E+17	332609417	pt	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
5	If you could change one thing about #leagueoflegendsâ€¦ what would it be and why?		0 DN_Nightelyn	2.24301E+17	112977841	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
6	RT @DN_Nightelyn: If you could change one thing about #leagueoflegendsâ€¦ what would it be and why?		0 Ugamerz	2.24301E+17	310305819	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
7	anybody want to do normal games? looking for a premade! tired of noobs... #leagueoflegends		0 haroldcore	2.24302E+17	60948921	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
8	Our rage is beyond your control. #LeagueOfLegends		0 Kokozord	2.24303E+17	297487569	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
9	RT @A_Teren: #Alistar needs a girlfriendâ€¦ a pretty cow for him... #LeagueOfLegends		0 haroldcore	2.24304E+17	60948921	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
10	RT @tgnTV: RT @xsplit: RT + Follow 2 #Win Free #XSplit Broadcaster @tgnTV #LeagueofLegends #Tournament 3 LIVE! http://t		0 martinclements3	2.24304E+17	587747557	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
11	RT @A_Teren: #Alistar needs a girlfriendâ€¦ a pretty cow for him... #LeagueOfLegends		0 EarthToRaynna	2.24305E+17	337554177	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
12	RT @A_Teren: #Alistar needs a girlfriendâ€¦ a pretty cow for him... #LeagueOfLegends		0 Jizzin_	2.24306E+17	332179474	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
13	RT @DrMundoBot: PEOPLE CALL MUNDO NOOB!!! MUNDO EAT NOOBS FOR SECOND BREAKFAST!!!! #LEAGUEOFLEGENDS		0 Jizzin_	2.24307E+17	332179474	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
14	Buen dÃa de #LeagueOfLegends aunque hayamos perdido la Ã©ltima xD		0 Suigetsu_	2.24308E+17	322801555	es	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
15	Carried mr hieu van gay #leagueoflegends http://t.co/F45DwB03		0 ShanelsBlind	2.24309E+17	630083593	nl	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
16	@TSMTheOddOne can u maybe tell me when the next tournament is for #LeagueOfLegends #bestjungler	438124586	RinseWez_	2.24309E+17	527705127	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
17	Playing #LeagueofLegends		0 IBeEshaun	2.2431E+17	236467107	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
18	Watch me play in the #lowelo community stream!!!!! http://t.co/Zs1wRaOM #leagueoflegends		0 IceDarkKnight	2.2431E+17	567876703	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
19	Que bonito es echar 8 hrs seguidas de #LeagueofLegends .. #OP		0 Gberretta	2.2431E+17	57642355	es	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
20	Vou tentar instalar #LeagueOfLegends novamente.		0 vitor4lmeida	2.24312E+17	89925245	pt	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
21	VoD'ing it up againâ€¦ hopefully stream up for finals. BE EXCITED. #leagueoflegends #ESGNWinter		0 Pastrytime	2.24312E+17	225240159	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
22	#Anderson e #AndrÃ© super viciado no #LeagueOfLegends â€¦ eles dÃ£o o cÃ³ por esse jogo -q		0 DJBruninho_ES	2.24313E+17	133882208	pt	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
23	Bueno.. toca jugar #LeagueOflegends un rato		0 LuisMi_RoX	2.24313E+17	150114730	es	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
24	Lil still Tri-Streaming LoL's with @TheKewlStore & @shmeady - come say hi! http://t.co/mgT18vf7 @theschq #Leagueofl		0 TheDarkLotus86	2.24314E+17	40105497	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
25	Been sick last few daysâ€¦ thank god for @nasltv finals and #LeagueOfLegends to keep me entertained.		0 KingChrisTheGr8	2.24316E+17	278122897	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
26	Morello Declares 2 Supports A Year http://t.co/IIjGENM5 #leagueoflegends		0 SSJSuntastic	2.24317E+17	439009698	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
27	RT @SSJSuntastic: Morello Declares 2 Supports A Year http://t.co/IIjGENM5 #leagueoflegends		0 sonja_yazmin	2.24321E+17	180999352	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
28	Yap voy a juÃ¤r #LeagueOfLegends xd		0 kathiitha3	2.24321E+17	349367069	in	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
29	#Battlefield2â€¦ #LeagueOfLegendsâ€¦ and #RockBand engaged. #DIZeLAN #Azusa		0 DIZeLAN_Slayer	2.24322E+17	18118720	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
30	Riot Community Assistant RiotAether posted to NA #LeagueOfLegends General Discussion http://t.co/1SZdHIuX Custom gam		0 lolreds	2.24322E+17	301751278	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
31	Just had my first perfect game on #ARAM as Miss Fortune! Yeah! #leagueoflegends http://t.co/KP6L1se2		0 RiotTacoStorm	2.24322E+17	630323285	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
32	#Leagueoflegends and good music with me. http://t.co/RZ9yy5C6		0 LoLNuAge	2.24322E+17	387801077	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
33	RT @RiotTacoStorm: Just had my first perfect game on #ARAM as Miss Fortune! Yeah! #leagueoflegends http://t.co/KP6L1se2		0 RevTheWardBot	2.24322E+17	601829443	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
34	Dios mioâ€¦ Deus Ex ha logrado que deje de jugar #leagueoflegends diariamente D:		0 da_cerna	2.24324E+17	262551422	es	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
35	1 Guild Wars 2 Betakey left + RP giveaway http://t.co/5shFHeSd with @MisterHotcha and @AceTrainerEli #leagueoflegends		0 LowEloDave	2.24324E+17	454891759	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
36	Riot Associate Game Designer Meddler posted to NA #LeagueOfLegends General Discussion http://t.co/75FCACWV 3 day sus		0 lolreds	2.24324E+17	301751278	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
37	RT @LowEloDave: 1 Guild Wars 2 Betakey left + RP giveaway http://t.co/5shFHeSd with @MisterHotcha and @AceTrainerEli #		0 AceTrainerEli	2.24324E+17	486126239	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09
38	Soloque random team eliminates Btown business from the tournament o.o #leagueoflegends #ESCELITE		0 eSChamp	2.24325E+17	19027605	en	<a hre	http://a0.twimg.co	0	0	Sunâ€¦ 15 Jul 20	1.34E+09

Figure 3.16: CSV Data Format of Collected Tweets (#leagueoflegends)

After processing and organizing the collected information, I used three different digital tools to analyze these data, namely *Tableau*, *Gephi*, and *Wordle*. I used Tableau to derive sets of variables from a CSV file that allowed me to visualize the relationships between various fields (i.e., text; to_user_id; id; from_user_id; iso_language_code; source; profile_image_url; geo_coordinates; date_created_at; time). I used this tool to measure the volume of tweets produced over time, the geographic locations of the most active twitter community members, the frequency of languages used, and the geographic locations of users using specific language codes. Gephi is an open source visualization tool that uses uploaded information to create network maps for analysis. I used this tool to create a map of the League of Legends network and also to identify key nodes, or key individuals who both sent and received large amounts of twitter information. Further, Wordle is a visual representation tool for textual data that typically is used to depict keyword data on websites and social media, as well as in literature and transcribed discourse. I used this tool in my analysis to create a word map that identifies the most common keywords used by Twitter users in my data. In the subsections that follow, I

discuss seven different data visualizations that together supplement my qualitative analysis of the League of Legends community.

3.4.2 Mapping the League of Legends Community

In this first visualization (*see* Figure 3.17), I created a networked map of people sending and receiving League of Legends tweets, over the course of a year. The large black dot in the middle of the map represents Riot Games, who sends and receives messages from the Twitter handle, "League of Legends." Its large size identifies it as the center of the map, as it contains the most prominent lines extending outward to other nodes on the map. The smaller nodes that surround this node are other major Twitter users in the data sample that both send and receive a large volume of tweets. In the center of the map, where the orange color is extremely dense, numerous smaller nodes exist and are linked by connecting lines, causing the blur of color. On the periphery of the map, the connecting lines are less dense and white space can be seen in the gaps of orange color.

This visualization illustrates how the shape of the League of Legends Twitter community is constructed through communication and engagement. Central to the network are those who are most frequently active in sending and receiving messages and information. These people use the hastag (#leagueoflegends) most regularly and are most often in communication with each other, meaning they respond to each other's tweets and often retweet what others have written. On the periphery of the map are those who have fewer connections and engage less frequently using the League of Legends hashtag. In addition, they may belong more prominently to other networks.

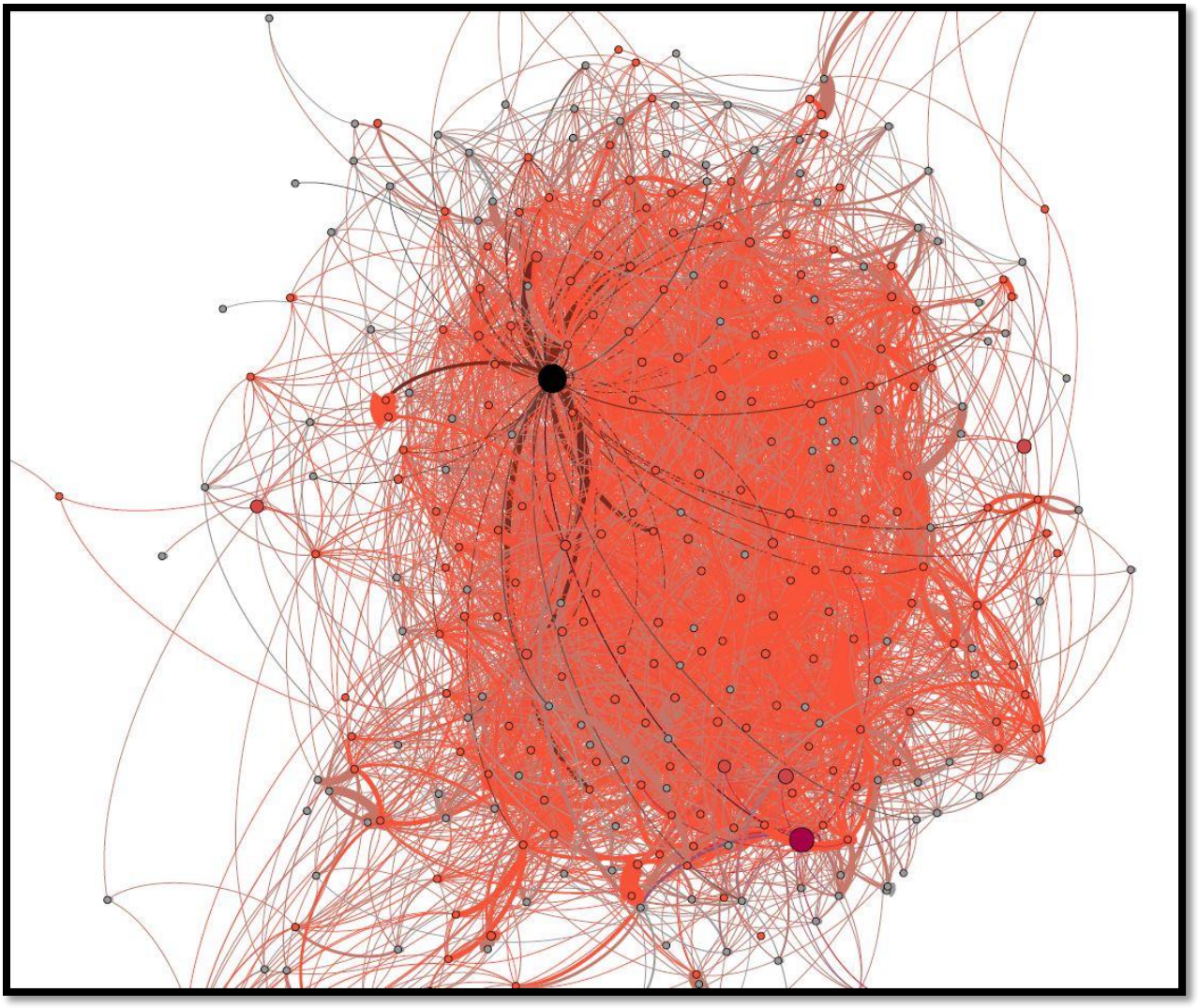


Figure 3.17: Map of League of Legends Social Network

In the next network map (*see* Figure 3.18), the network nodes are replaced with the individuals' Twitter names. Though visual analysis of the map, it is clear that many of the names that are closest to the League of Legends node belong to developers at Riot Games. A large number of these names begin with the word "Riot," thus signifying their affiliation with the development studio. For example, some of these prominent names near the League of Legends node include *riottamat*, *riotphreak*, and *riotredbeard*. Also near the node are names that belong to well-known leaders of the company, such as *brandonbeck*, the CEO of Riot Games, and

marcmerrill, the President of Riot Games. These developers frequently update their twitter statuses using the League of Legends hashtag. They have a large number of followers on Twitter, ranging on average from around 50,000 to 150,000 fans. As a result, their posts are regularly and frequently retweeted, shared, and commented on by other users around the world.

Also within the densely colored area are clusters of particular interest groups related to League of Legends. For instance, a cluster of nodes related to League of Legends eSports can be found lightly below the League of Legends node. In this region, the names of professional players and sponsored teams are located. These teams and individuals have extremely large circles of fans on Twitter, most ranging well above 200,000 followers. Many of these players, such as *teamsolomid*, *clgsnoopeh*, *oceloteworld*, and *gambiteSports*, are located below the League of Legends node, and near other larger nodes, such as *loleSports*, which is the official twitter address for up to date information on competitive gaming, and *riotdeman*, who is a popular shoutcaster that narrates games and provides expert commentary live at professional games and on streaming video.

This clustering of the eSports network within the greater League of Legends network illustrates how networks can be nested within larger, more all-encompassing networks. For instance, *razer*, located on the bottom right of the network, is a manufacturer of high-performing hardware, software, and systems. In the world of professional gaming, they often sponsor competitive teams and set up booths at tournaments to sell their products to those in attendance. In the map below, their node is located near the periphery of the network, indicating that they also belong and are in communication with many additional companies, gaming networks, and communities that are also involved in eSports outside of League of Legends.

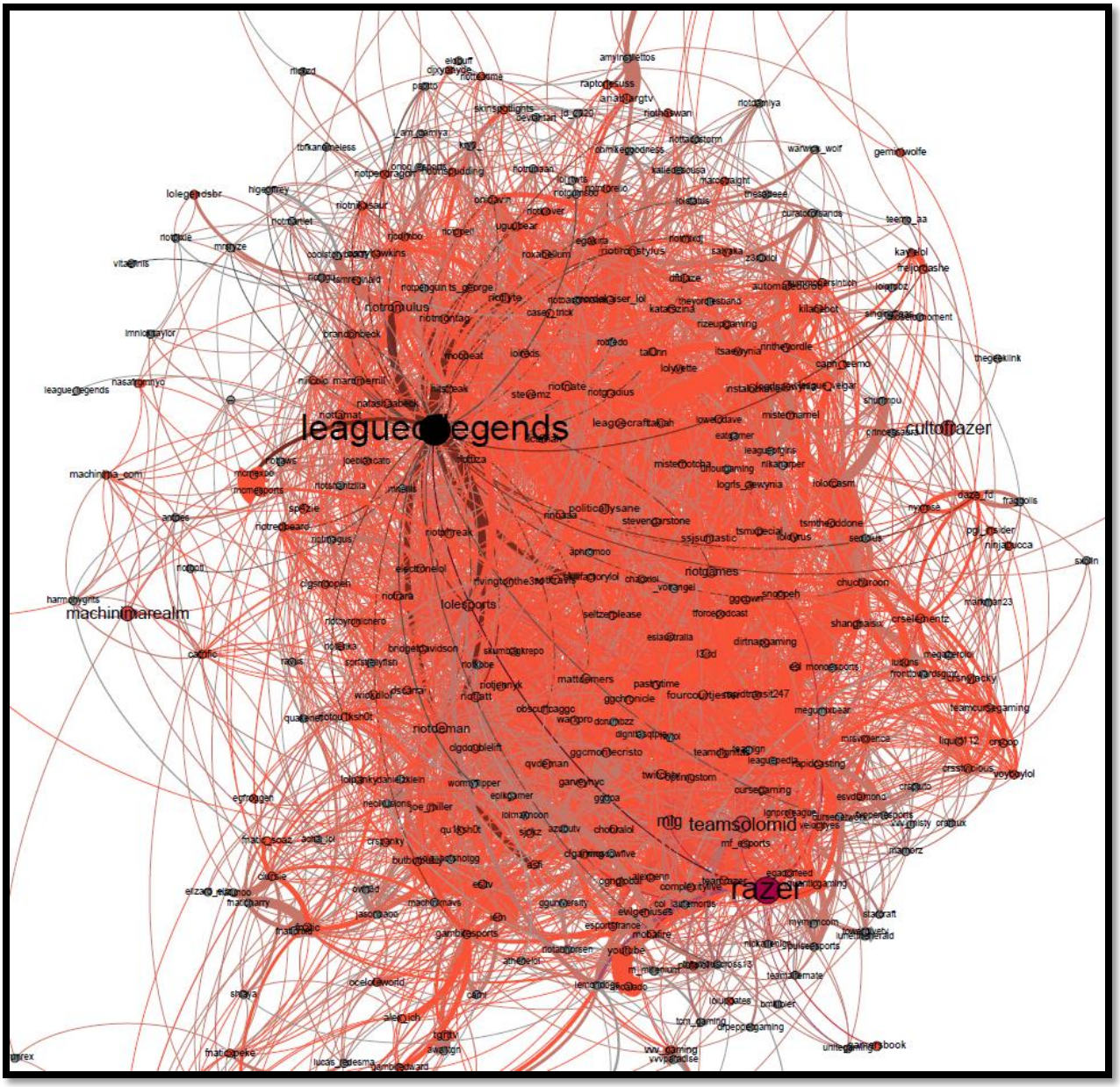


Figure 3.18: Map of Social Network with Twitter Names

In Figure 3.20, the number of Twitter records collected can be seen across time, starting in July 2012 and ending in July 2013. From the period of October 2012 to December 2012, the servers collecting these data were down and therefore ceased processing. Nevertheless, significant spikes in the number of tweets collected can be seen between September-October 2012 and then again in April 2013.

These spikes in interaction may be due to several international events that were taking place during these times. In August and September 2012, for example, professional teams of players competed at tournaments around the world in order to qualify for the League of Legends 2nd World Championships, taking place in October 2012 in Los Angeles. The Regional Playoffs at the World Championships brought together twelve of the best teams from around their world to compete for a total prize pool of $5 million USD (*see* Figure 3.19).

Figure 3.19: Season Two Regional Finals & Championship Dates and Locations

Approximately eight million people tuned in to watch the World Champion broadcast in a wide range of languages, including English, German, Spanish, French, Russian, Portuguese, Korean, and Chinese. Similarly, in April 2013, IGN Entertainment and Riot Games, held another major League of Legends tournament in Las Vegas, bringing together thousands of people at the event and millions watching online.

These peaks in the chart below are significant because they suggest that people engage more frequently with each other during what is framed as community activities or events. These events might include eSports tournaments, new game features and releases, the start of a new season of ranked competition, gaming conventions and events, and the sale of new items, character aesthetics, or holiday items. It is during these activities that participation increases tremendously and only returns to regular frequencies after the organized event concludes. This pattern indicates that there are seasonal shifts in network participation and that these shifts correspond to anticipated and ritual calendar events.

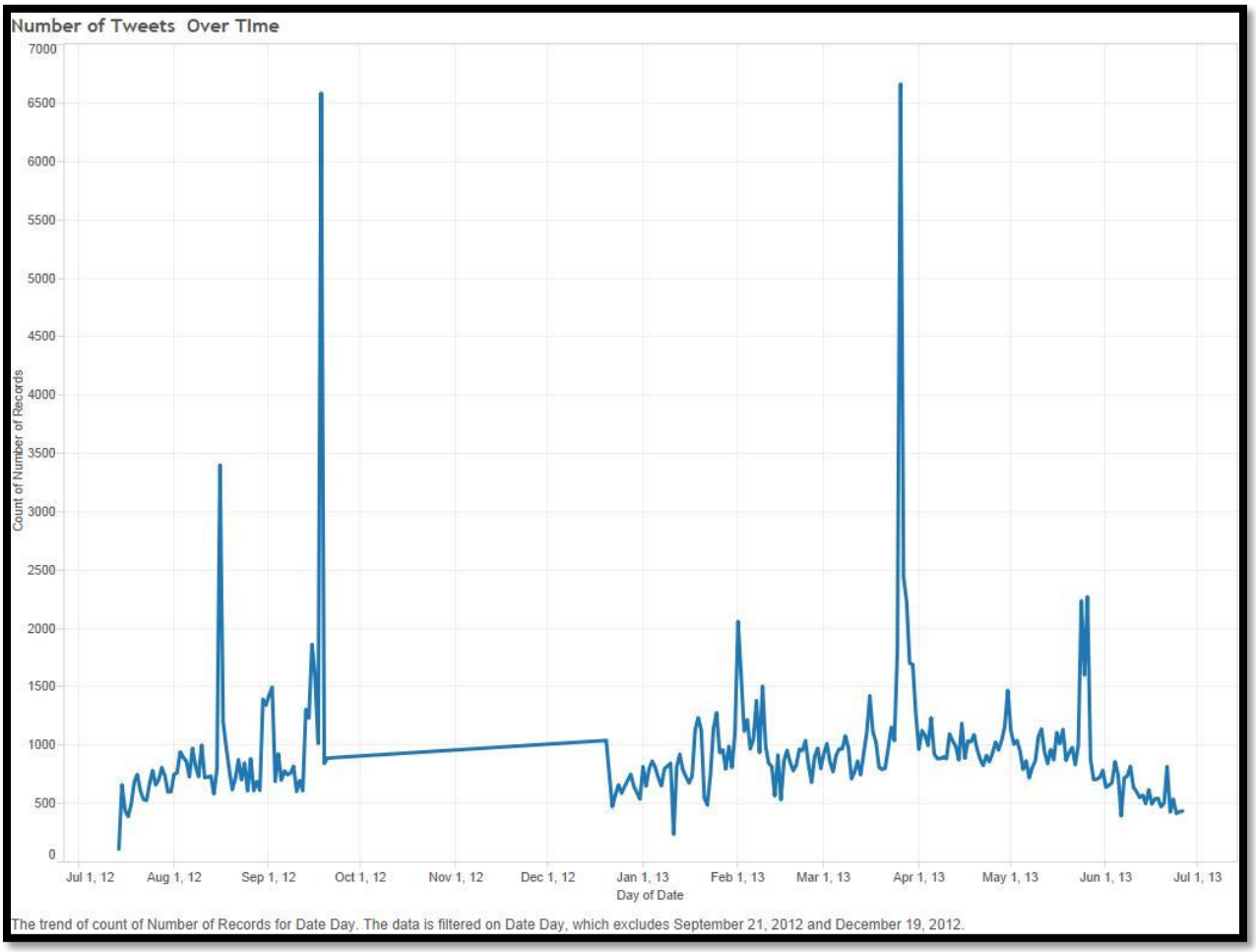


Figure 3.20: Number of Tweets Over Time

In the next visualization (*see* Figure 3.21), Twitter users are mapped according to the geographical coordinates tied to their accounts. The blue dots in the map below represent clusters of Twitter users from each region. Because some Twitter users choose not to display their geographical coordinates publically, this map does not include data points from all 231,040 tweets. Another shortfall of this map is that it does not account for the millions of active community members living in countries that regulate Internet and social media use, like China, or in places where other types of social media are more prominent, like Korea. Nevertheless, by visualizing the geographies of the network's users, we can see just how wide participation is in the League of Legends networked community.

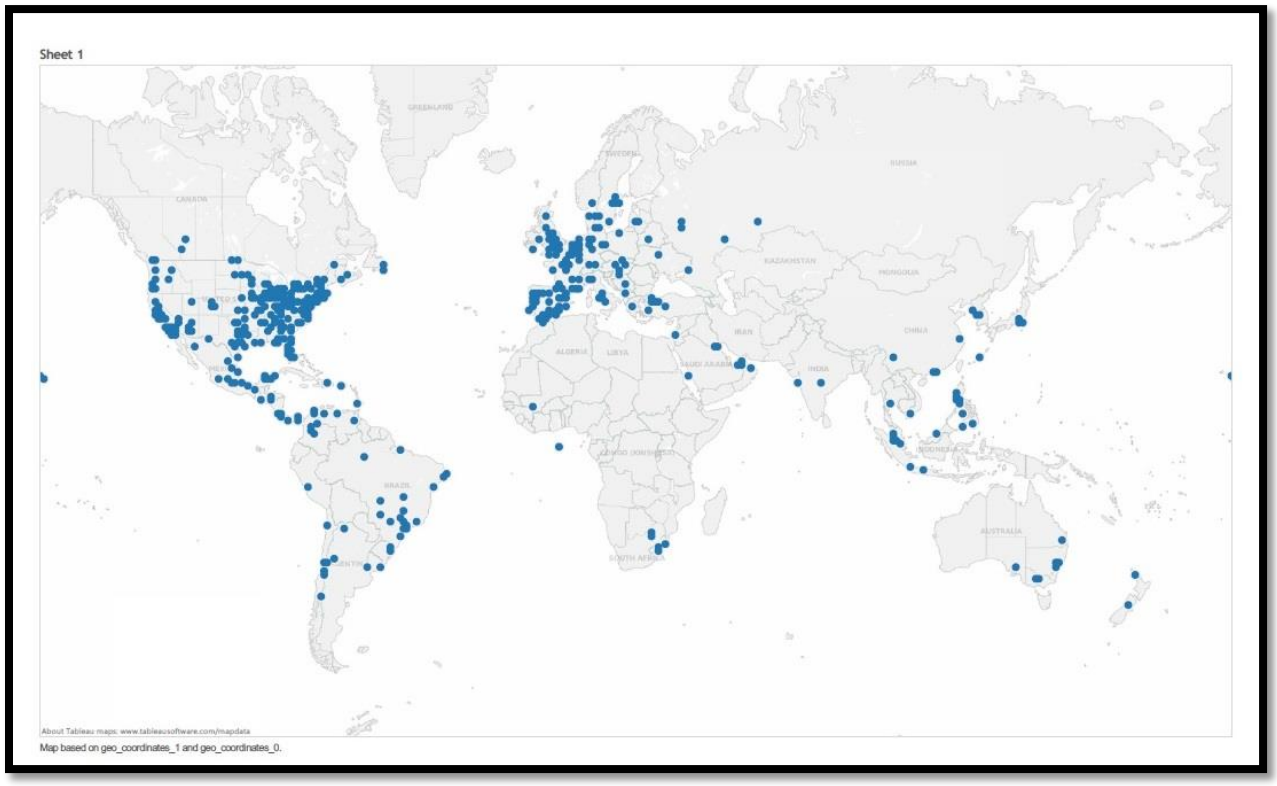


Figure 3.21: Geographic Map of User Locations

In Figure 3.22, I examine the frequencies of varying languages used in users' tweets. This language information is processed and coded in the data file and then counted through an

algorithm that sorts these numbers in relation to each other. As a result of this process, I am able to see the predominance of the use of certain languages over others languages. For example, out of 231,040 collected tweets, 208,370 were made in English. While some individual tweets may have been contained words in both English and another language, and therefore may have been counted twice, the total number of English tweets are an overwhelming majority. Again, this high number does not account for the absence of many Chinese players, or even Korean users, who often prefer other forms of social media.

In addition to English, languages that were represented in smaller, but significant numbers including Spanish (22,138 tweets), Portuguese (7,799 tweets), Turkish (5,911 tweets), French (5,676 tweets), German (4,367 tweets), Chinese (2,581 tweets), and Danish (2,325 tweets). Further, other languages less frequently used, as evidenced by the small, unlabeled colored circles, include Tagalog, Thai, Finnish, Farsi, Hungarian, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Urdu.

This visualization is significant because it suggests that English is most widely used language on Twitter in the data I collected. As represented visually, the large circle representing the volume of English tweets over the course of a year towers over the rest of the various languages circles, suggesting that English is most frequently and widely used by Twitters users in relation to the game and the community more broadly.

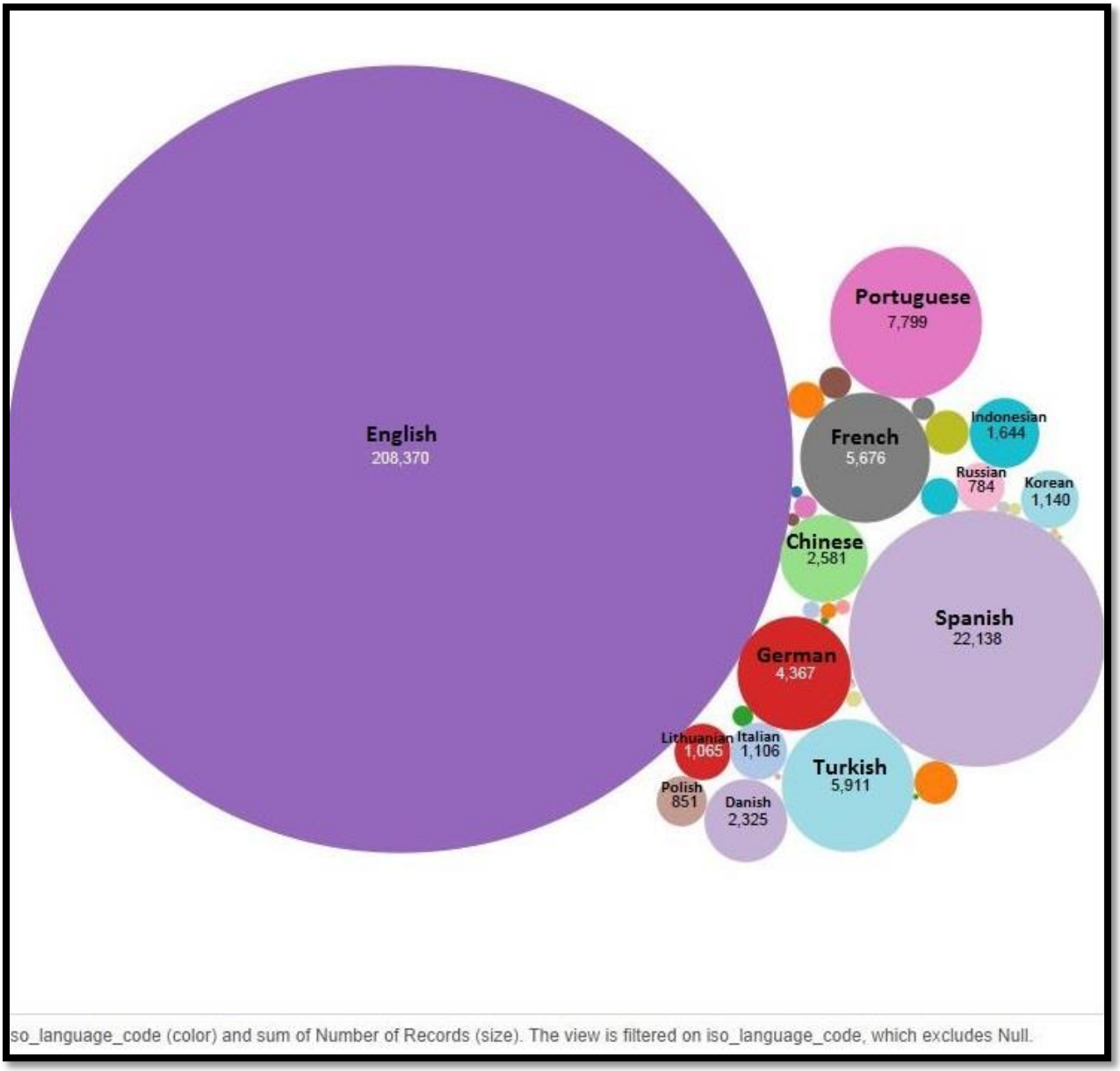
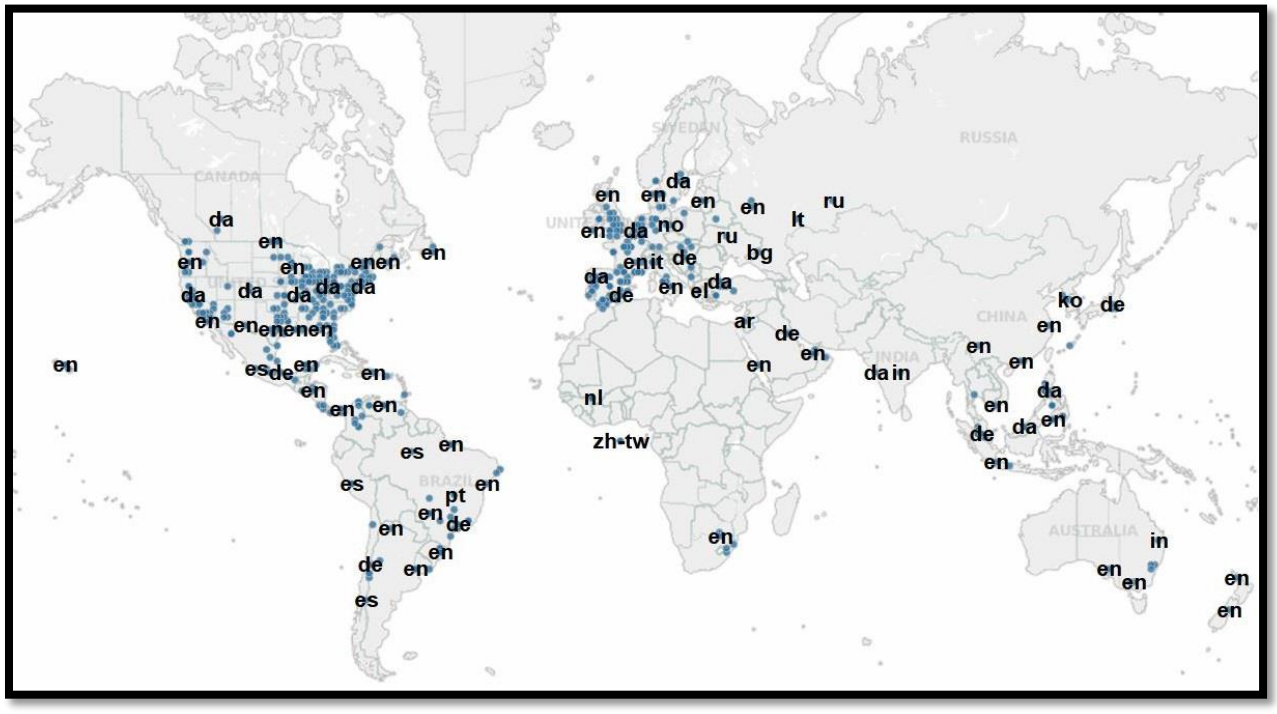


Figure 3.22: Language Frequencies

In the following visualization (*see* Figure 3.23), I map varying languages used by twitter users by their indicated geographic coordinates. From this map, one can see that it is not just that there are more people from English-speaking countries who are represented in the Twitter network, but rather, people are also selecting to use English on Twitter in countries where English is not a first language. This may be because these people are hoping their messages

reach beyond their regional networks and instead are retweeted and shared more widely, across a global network.

From this map, we can see that English is used most frequently in the United States, Central America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. An interesting thing to note is the high use of Danish throughout the United States, and other parts of the world. While some of this recorded use may in fact be Danish, it may also be a possibility that the algorithm is mislabeling English misspellings, shortened web links that people share, or some users tendencies to type keystrokes at random to display feelings of frustration or anger. In any case, what we can learn from this particular map is that although English is most widely used, participating Twitter users are not solely from English-speaking countries.



en – English	no – Norwegian	pt – Portuguese	bg – Bulgarian
ru – Russian	da – Danish	ko – Korean	it – Italian
es – Spanish	de – German	ar – Arabic	

Figure 3.23: Geographic Map of Users Languages and Locations

In the final visualization (*see* Figure 3.24), I examine the 200 most commonly used words that occur in the textual content of the 231,040 tweets collected. Using a word cloud tool that sifts through the collected messages, an algorithm then identifies and organizes words according to frequencies. In the word list that follows, common words in English (e.g., the, at, to) are excluded. In addition, the size of specific words also indicate their greater frequencies.

From this word cloud, we learn that many words used by Twitter users focus on League of Legends itself. The word *game*, *riot*, *lol* (League of Legends), *play*, *playing*, and *eSports* are all of considerable size. It is also interesting that many words in the cloud are also terms that refer to time. These words include *time*, *tomorrow*, *tonight*, *now*, *weekend*, *before*, *live*, and *night*. This suggests that these Twitter users might be using social media as a tool for coordinating play and interaction with other users. It might also suggest that players may be using social media to comment on professional eSports and discuss them with respect to tournament schedules and anticipated events.

Figure 3.24: Visualization of Top Words Used

FOUR

CO-CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH STYLE AND IDENTITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

With respect to globalization, the last few decades have seen a growth in the role of the English language around the world as the *lingua franca* for economic, scientific, and political exchange (Wu et. al 2006). In many contexts, English is used for communication between groups who have no other language in common (Matthews 2000). As illustrated though data in Chapter 2, language and interaction on the Internet overwhelmingly occurs through use of English or through use of some English words. This growth, in part, can be attributed the globalization, or in other words, the economic phenomenon involving increased interaction, capital flow, and technological exchanges across social, cultural, and political borders between nations. Looking specifically at English, this chapter examines how players and developers co-construct the League of Legends community through specialized, technical language, participation, and semiotic markers of identity. In particular, I discuss how a global sense of solidarity and belonging is constructed through particular lexicon features, speech practices like format tying and second stories, and through material style.

In his article, *Professional Vision*, Charles Goodwin (1994: 606) discusses how in most professions, specialized language and particular discursive practices shape events in the domain of professional scrutiny, and through this attention, objects of knowledge, such as theories, artifacts, and bodies of expertise, are created. These objects of knowledge are significant within a profession because they mark special and distinctive domains of competence. Looking at the professional contexts of archaeological field excavation and legal argumentation, Goodwin

suggests that participants build and contest *professional vision*, or socially organized ways of seeing and understanding events that structure their lifeworlds, with respect to the distinct interests of the professional social group. Drawing from this analysis, this chapter attempts to illustrate how through specialized language and discursive practices, League of Legends players build their identities as members of the gaming community through professional, or specialized, ways of seeing and understanding events that structure their lifeworlds.

This vision is lodged within the particular institutional and endogenous communities of practice that make up the larger League of Legends community and as such, must be discussed within the framework of language and identity. Within any community of practice, people select to emphasize certain similarities of their collective group identity, while obscuring other differences. Authentic membership involves not only a particular kind of specialized vision, but also other semiotic markers of identity, community, and belonging.

4.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

4.2.1 Language and Identity

Goffman (1967) claims that everyone is concerned, to some extent, with how others perceive them. We act socially, striving to maintain the identity we create for others to see. This identity, or public self-image, is what we project when we interact socially. The relationship between language and identity is a complex mix of individual, social, and political factors, which function to construct people as belonging to a social group or to excluding them from it.

In linguistic anthropology, identity is analyzed and discussed within a framework based on several core principles (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). First, identity is discussed as an

accomplishment rather than a predetermined state or object. It is the product rather than the source of linguistic and other semiotic practices. Second, identity is fragmentary and constantly in flux. For example, identities encompass macro-level demographic categories, temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles, and local, ethnographically emergent cultural positions (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Third, people change identities according to context, people, and situations. Identities are relationally constructed through several, often overlapping relationships between self and other. Fourth, the process of identity-work occurs through talk as well as through other semiotic material markers of the body. Identities may be linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures. Lastly, identity is complex and may be relationally constructed both intentionally and unintentionally. Identity is constructed though interactional negotiation, other's perceptions and representations, and through larger ideological processes and structures (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

4.2.1.1 *Sameness and Difference*

It is crucial to recognize that a person's identity is not singular, but instead made up of so many different kinds of identities – national, community, ethnic, religious, gender, professional, etc. This sort of multiplicity suggests that one should delimit the kinds of identity one is especially interested in, in order to identify and attain membership to certain groups, as well as move between them.

The term identity refers to the notion of sameness, and often times, community and identity are discussed in terms of homogeneity. Yet, it is difficult for researchers to classify groups and to decide on what criteria to base these categorizations. The notion of being alike is complex, because often what classifies as membership in linguistic terms may often differ from

social, cultural, historical, and political criteria (Silverstein 1996). In addition, the ways outsiders classify people may be different from how speakers and individuals understand their own identities.

Because of this complexity, identity work often involves obscuring differences among those who share a common identity, in order to manufacture or emphasize certain similarities. Often times this this perception of shared identity is constructed through an understanding of alterity, or of an Other, who may be positioned against those who are constituted, or imagined as being the same. For instance, Bucholtz's article (2001), "The Whiteness of Nerds: Superstandard English and Racial Markedness," examines the ways in which high school students in California embrace a specific type of white identity, nerds. These youth perform this identity though employing a superstandard language variety in order to reject norms traditionally tied to youth culture, like coolness and trendiness. This practice is significant because they ideologically position themselves as hyperwhite by distancing them from the African American underpinnings of European American youth culture. Bucholtz shows that while the semiotic processes of iconizaton, fractal recursivity, and erasure allow these girls to challenge local ideologies based on subcultural identity, these same processes also shore up racial ideologies of difference and division.

Through this process of differentiation, difference is organized into systemized structures, or social categories, that are often tied to ideology, power, and status. In most social categories based on difference, there are social inequalities that are associated with these identity groupings. Typically, difference implies hierarchies of power, and those groups with the highest status, order and rank other groups in terms beneficial to itself. The groups with the highest status often constitutes itself as the norm, from which other groups diverge.

For example, in Lippi-Green's article, "Teaching Children How to Discriminate: What we learn from the big bad wolf" (1997), she discusses the ways in which in many of Disney's animated films, language varieties are associated with specific national origins, ethnicities, and races in often overtly discriminatory ways. Protagonists are often portrayed with mainstream American English accents while many times, antagonists speak with racialized accents that are linked to specific geographical region and marginalized social groups (e.g., *Aladdin* speaks with an unmarked American English accent, *Jafar* speaks with a marked "Middle Eastern" accent). This article suggests what children learn from the entertainment industry is to be comfortable with *sameness* and to be wary about the *other*. Children learn that language is a prime and ready diagnostic for this division between what is approachable and what is to be afraid of.

In a similar way, Wendy Klein's article, "Turban Narratives*"* (2009) demonstrates how media coverage following the events of September 11 have reshaped ethnic boundaries and necessitated new identity practices in everyday life for a community of Sikhs in Los Angeles. The flow of media images portraying turbaned males has led to Sikh males being stereotyped as terrorists. This representation has required turbaned Sikhs to acquire the practiced ability to monitor and be wary of the ongoing attention they receive in public. The article discusses ideologies of difference within the Sikh community in relation to Sikhs as well as non-Sikhs – specifically the ways in which parents invoke Sikh material practices to socialize differentiation and community.

Differentiation and discrimination are again themes present in Valentina Pagliai's article, "Conversational agreement and racial formation processes*"* (2009). Based on fieldwork in Italy, Pagliai highlights how racial formation processes operate in face-to-face interaction. She examines the role of conversational agreement in building support and deepening racializing

statements and discusses what she refers to as the *spiral effect*, where through acknowledgements and the co-construction of utterances, racial formation processes take shape at the micro-level of everyday interaction.

Further, in "Language Socialization and Exclusion*"* (García-Sánchez 2012) and "Exclusion in Girls' Peer Groups: Ethnographic Analysis of Language Practices on the Playground*"* (Goodwin 2002), this process of exclusion, alientation, discrimination, and difference is discussed through everyday interaction in peer groups. In García-Sánchez's work, she demonstrates the differential way in which Moroccan immigrant children are positioned in the classroom by their Spanish peers and the ways in which these positionings are sanctioned passively by teachers. Through conversation analysis, she challenges assumptions about children's unsophisticated knowledge of and contributions to sociopolitical realities concerning ethnic relations. In a similar way, Goodwin challenges models of female behavior that are the legacy of a 'two cultures' perspective on moral development though her examination of forms of social exclusion in girls' groups. Using ethnography and conversation analysis, she examines the ways in which girls perform *alternate aggressive behaviors*, in particular the exclusion of other girls, through insult, oppositional sequences, and social processes at school. Her analysis demonstrates how girls delineate the boundaries of their social groups based on variables informed by social class. Morality, as highlighted in this community, is lodged within the actions and stances that the children take up in their interaction with their peers.

4.2.1.2 *Authenticity*

The notion of authenticity provides a theoretical framework for describing different linguistic orientations and the ways in which people use language to project ideologies, communities, and identities in their everyday lives. The social functioning of linguistic

authenticity is a driving force of individuals' behavior. Authenticity is evaluated according to cultural contexts and is mediated by and expressed through language. Authenticity, in the traditional sense, is comprised of five qualities (ontology, historicity, systemic coherence, consensus, value), which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Coupland's (2003) article, "Sociolinguistic Authenticities," provides a thorough theoretical overview centered on the topic of authenticity. He discusses authenticity in terms of five qualities. First, with respect to ontology, he suggests that authentic things have a real existence as opposed to a spurious or derived existence. Things that lack this quality are treated as more marginally, socially he explains. Second, things that are authentic have a certain historicity to them. Because they are not fabricated to order, Coupland writes, authentic things generally have longevity and can be described as timeless. Third, authentic things have systemic coherence, meaning they are properly constituted in significant contexts. To be authentic, a thing has to be original in some important social or cultural matrix. Fourth, to be authentic, things must have a high degree of acceptance within a constituency, and there must be a consensus that they have been properly authorized. And lastly, Coupland explains that because authentic things are ratified in the culture, they have definite cultural value.

4.2.1.3 *Subculture and Style*

According to Hebdige (1984), stylistic practice involves a process of bricolage, by which people combine a range of existing semiotic resources to construct new meanings or new twists on old meanings. This process involves adapting linguistic variables available out in the larger world to the construction of social meaning on a local level. People construct identity through not only language but also through symbolic ways of signaling membership in a particular community, such as body, dress, gesture, and other aspects of material culture (Mendoza-Denton

2008). Together, these linguistic and material practices create a specific *style* or *distinctiveness* (Irvine 2001). Irvine (2001) suggests principles of style must be coherent if they are to be meaningful, as representations of social groups, activities, practices, and selves. In consequence, she writes, it is most helpful not to try to identify style with some particular level of differentiation, but to focus on the differentiating process – or the axes of distinctiveness that organize differentiation at many levels.

A Community of Practice, as discussed in Chapter 2, is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavor (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992: 434-435). When people share a jointly negotiated enterprise, repertoire, and mutually engage, they create specific ways of doing things though the course of joint activity. Membership in a community of practice involves not only a shared orientation, but also a social sense of identity and place within the community, constructed through stylistic practice and interaction. Within the framework, people interpret the social landscape, making connections between the apparent characteristics of people out in that landscape and their own ways of speaking (Gal and Irvine 1995; Irvine 2001). Through this sense-making and by appropriating elements of style, speakers can incorporate the meanings that they associate with those elements in their practice.

For instance, In "Why Be Normal? Language and Identity Practices in a Community of Nerd Girls," Bucholtz (1999) discusses an unexamined social identity – the nerd – to illustrate how members of a local community of female nerds at a US high school negotiate gender and other aspects of their identities (like social class and race) through practice. She demonstrates how linguistics practices used by this group work in conjunction with other social practices to produce meanings and identities. Similarly, Norma Mendoza-Denton's *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice Among Latina Youth* (2008), explores how notions of power, femininity,

and ethnicity permeate the discourses of and around Latina girls involved in gangs in Northern California. Chicana and Mexican gang identity is constructed by these girls through specific symbolic markers that Mendoza-Denton discusses in detail. These markers include things like the features of the girls' language, as well as the girls' color lipstick, eyeliner application style, hairdo, music preference, and football team of choice. This article explores how the girls perform and inscribe on their bodies a specific kind of femininity that intersect wider understandings of how Latina girls should act, dress, and talk in the local community.

This symbolic marking of community is also discussed in two ethnographic articles looking at youth subcultures in Japan: "Urban Princesses: Performance and 'Women's Language' in Japan's Gothic/Lolita Subculture" (Gagne 2008) and "Those Naughty Teenage Girls: Japanese Kogals, Slang, and Media Assessments" (Miller 2004). Gagne's article discusses the linguistic strategies used in the discourse of *Gothic/Lolita*, a Japanese youth/women's subculture popularized from the late 1990s to the early 2000s in Tokyo. In this text, Gagne analyzes how girls create and sustain what he refers to as a "virtual linguistic community" through a specialized lexicon of neologisms, re-appropriated women's language, as well as identity practices (e.g., dress, makeup) that seek to define Gothic/Lolita against other youth subcultures and fashions present in the local context. In a similar way, Miller discusses *Kogals*, a subculture of young Japanese women who challenge dominant models of gendered language and behavior through linguistic and cultural innovation. To construct this female-centered subcultural identity, Kogals draw upon linguistic and material semiotic resources (e.g., masculinized registers, body, dress). Like the girls in Gagne's research, popular media comments on these women as "misbehaving" girls and places them at the center of an ongoing struggle over female self-definition and autonomy.

4.2.1.4 *Language and Computer-Mediated Identities*

The body of literature discussing language and computer-mediated identity is relatively small to date (Herring 1996; Danet and Herring 2007; Rowe and Wyss 2009; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011). However, within this work, several themes have emerged. Most relevant to the discussion on language and computer mediated identity constructions are the topics of 1) metadiscursive framings of new media, 2) style and stylization (identity play and semiotic invention), and 3) ideological position taking and social categorization (stance).

According to Jaworski et al. (2004), new media language exists as a sort of metalinguistic phenomenon. The theme of "metadiscursive framings" is mostly concerned with the topic of language ideologies (Irvine and Gal 2000; Keane 1997; Kroskrity 2003; Woolard 1998), and the ways in which new media language and language more generally are subject to a sort of disciplining gaze, as discussed by Foucault (1973). The body of work that touches on this theme suggests that language, even mediated language, is under constant surveillance and is deployed as a resource for social judgment and control (Thurlow and Mroczek 2011).

For instance, Jones, Schieffelin, and Smith's chapter in Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) documents the intertextual and multimodal co-construction of gossip by youth using IM and *Facebook*. The authors provide evidence of teens' appropriation of IM as a tool for coordinating Facebook "stalking," and for conveying moral views about *Facebook* users. They illustrate a group of youth who are both engaged in adapting new communicative resources for particular cultural ends and closely attuned to the social implications of online communicative practices (Jones et al 2011: 44). This work demonstrates the interplay of online and offline discursive practices and refutes simplistic stereotypes about new media language.

Research on language and new media identities also tends to focus on sociolinguistic notions of style and register (Bell 1984; Labov 1984). In this dissertation, I discuss style according to situation or context of use (Romaine 1994), as opposed to style according to more inflexible layers of identity (ie: ethnicity, region of origin, social class, etc.). While style operates on multiple linguistic levels (grammar, phonology, semantics, etc.), I mostly focus on the level of media users' discourse. These 'ways of speaking,' may be influenced by social factors relevant to group, including audience, topic, genre, and setting. This framework (Eckert and Rickford 2001) emphasizes style as being dialogic and practice based.

Newon (2011) illustrates some of the ways in which a self-organized community of gamers use the specific ecology of their game to perform identities informed by status and expert roles. These expert and novice roles are built through the everyday dialogic engagement of players and through attending to shared beliefs, norms, and values. Newon shows that the social function of style in the *World of Warcraft* guild serves to cohere the group as a particular community with a shared competitive identity, while also distinguishing members according to their experience and individual status as knowledgeable, expert players.

Another major theme addressed in this body of literature is that of stance, or the ways in which speakers or communicators position and align themselves vis-à-vis their speech/writing and those they are speaking/writing to/about (Du Bois 2007; Goodwin 2006; Jaffe 2009). These scholars suggest that identity work takes place inside of, or with a view to, relationships. In this way, acts of identity are ways of comparison, social distinction, and othering.

Walton and Jaffe (2011) demonstrates the ways in which language and identity online may be informed through stance. Using the blog, *Stuff White People Like*, Walton and Jaffe consider the complex formation of stances expressed by the blog's author and presumed

audience. They show how this particular digital medium foregrounds the interactional, co-constructed nature of stancetaking (e.g. reading previous commentaries). In addition, Chun and Walters (2011) discuss notions of stance and identity in their analysis of a stand-up routine by Wonho Chung on *Youtube* where he linguistically performs a fluent Arabic speaker of Korean and Vietnamese parentage. Commenters of the video analyze the clip in terms of multilingual, collaborative stancetaking regarding the authenticity of the speaker. These two studies demonstrate the ways in which social meanings online are constructed not only by the technologies themselves but also by their users and the uses to which technologies are put (Thurlow and Mroczek 2011: xxxvi).

4.3 REGISTER AND SPEECH STYLES

A speech *register* is a variety of language used in a particular social setting, or for a particular purpose. Because speakers have a range of language varieties and choices in different contexts, they must choose certain styles of language to use in particular situations. The type of linguistic features that are selected in certain situations are determined by factors like (1) field, or the total event, in which the speech is functioning, (2) mode, which can be defined as the function of the text in the event, and (3) tenor, which is the role of relevant social relations among participants involved (Halliday 1964; Halliday and Hasan 1976). With respect to these three determinants, a register may be thought of as the set of meanings and the configuration of semantic patterns that are drawn upon under specified conditions, as well as the words and linguistic structures that are drawn upon in the realization of these meanings (Halliday 1978). While some scholars discuss register as a sort of diatype, style, or genre of language use

(Gregory 1967), others talk about register mostly in terms of specific vocabulary or jargon (Wardhaugh 1986). According to Trudgill (1992), linguistic styles are language varieties viewed from the point of view of formality, while registers are specialist language varieties used during a particular activity.

Traditionally, registers are discussed in terms of levels of formality. However, because there are many different spectrums of formality discussed by scholars, there are different models that have emerged. One of the most prominent models describes five different styles in spoken English, including registers that 1) unchanging or static, 2) formal, 3) consultative, 4) casual and in-group, and 5) intimate or non-public (Joos 1961). Based on this scale of formality, a wide range of different registers have been discussed, including dialect registers, slang registers, technical registers, and taboo registers. In the section that follows, I discuss the register of the League of Legends community, by looking closely at the jargon, or specialized lexicon used by players.

4.3.1 Lexicon

In the League of Legends community, most English-speaking players share an understanding and use of common words and references. This specialized register is both spoken and written every day by players and developers, both online and live at local events. The following words and definitions were written by a wide range of League of Legends community members and we collected on a wide range of community websites over the course of the past year, including the League of Legends Forum, a player-maintained wiki of the game, and social media websites like Reddit, Facebook, and Twitter.

In Figure 4.1, I display a collection of words that are used by the community to describe different types of games and game modes that are available for players to organize and play.

Although this is not a comprehensive inventory, and the use and meanings of words are fluid, the following list represents the most popular types of gaming modes that people talk about, organize, and play.

WORDS FOR GAME TYPES	LEXICAL MEANING
1) 1v1	A custom game between two players. Usually done on Howling Abyss but occasionally done on Summoner's Rift in mid lane.
2) 3's	Twisted Treeline (teams consist of 3 champions each).
3) 5's	Summoner's Rift (teams consist of 5 champions each).
4) ABAM	All Blind All Mid: a custom game type where players pick champions in Blind Pick Mode to fight only in the middle lane.
5) ADAM	All Draft All Mid: a custom game where players fight in the middle lane.
6) ARAB	All Random All Bottom: a custom game played on the bottom lane.
7) ARAM	A matched game where players randomly pick a champion to play.
8) Classic	The standard MOBA game mode in which players focus on laning, pushing minion waves, and destroying the enemy structures.
9) Blind Pick	A type of match where all participants select their champion simultaneously. Both teams are unaware which champions the opposing side has picked until the loading screen appears.
10) Bot Game	A custom game where nearly all of the players are computer bots.
11) Co-op	Co-op vs. AI: the player versus A.I. controlled champion match mode.
12) Custom	Custom game: the match mode created by player with the freedom to determine the team size, map, A.I. controlled champion participation and install a password for limited access.
13) Dominion	A game mode that focuses on seizing capture points.
14) Draft	A type of champion selection where all participants must go through a champion banning phase & where no champion can be picked twice.
15) Premade	Multiple players, who know each other, forming a team together.
16) Ranked	Ranked competitive game.
17) Scrim	Scrimmage: two teams competing for fun in a non-tournament game.
18) Solo Queue	A mode where a player allows the automatic matching system to assign a team for them.

Figure 4.1: Words for Game Types and their Lexical Meanings

In this example (*see* Figure 4.1), players talk about game modes using technical words and abbreviations that reference 1) the number of players involved in a game type, 2) the relationship of players involved in a game mode, 3) the spatial map or location of play involved in a particular game type, and 4) the level of skill required in playing a specific game mode. Words 1-3, for example, are a short hand way of referencing specific game modes played on

different maps. Rather than referencing these modes by the strategies they require or the particular maps they are played on, players use 1v1, 3's, or 5's to describe the mode based on the number of team players required. By using words that focus on the number of people required to coordinate and play together, these terms emphasize the social and cooperative nature of all game modes.

Words 12, 15, and 18, refer to game types that reference player's relationships and positioning to other players. For example, a *custom* game is a game that a player sets up by configuring a wide range of game variables. Players organizing a custom game can select who plays in the game by using a created password, similar to the game type *premade*, where players engage with other players they normally practice and interact with. These types are contrasted with words such as *solo queue*, a mode player are automatically matched other, not-previously known players.

Words 4-7 are abbreviations for game modes that are based on locations where game action occurs. Game modes referenced by *ABAM*, *ADAM*, and *ARAM* (before the updated map Howling Abyss) take place in the middle of the game map, while *ARAB* games take place near the bottom of the map. These technical descriptions are based on long descriptions and are therefore used as more efficient way to coordinate with friends. Further, words 11, 16, and 17 reference game types that require varying levels of advanced skill, specifically *bot games*, or beginner games played again bots or non-human opponents, scrim or practice games, and ranked games that focus on more advanced, competitive play styles.

The next collection of words are terms used by players to reference specific game roles. In this list, abbreviations are used to describe types of champions allowing players to quickly

"call out" or claim certain roles during champion selection, at the very beginning of a match. Typically, whoever claims a role first (only one kind of each role is allowed in a match) is entitled to play that given role.

WORDS FOR GAME ROLES	LEXICAL MEANING
1) AD	Attack Damage.
2) ADC	Attack Damage Carry: a champion that deals progressively high amounts of attack damage.
3) Assassin	A champion who rapidly ambushes and slays enemy champions.
4) Aura Bot	A champion equipped with aura-producing items to assist teammates.
5) Bruiser/Fighter	A champion with high effective health and damage per second.
6) Carry	A champion that generally starts off weaker than other champions, but becomes more powerful as the game progresses.
7) Caster	A champion whose main source of damage is their abilities.
8) DPS	A champion who specializes in dealing steady sustained damage.
9) Duelist	A champion who excels at combating enemy champions one on one.
10) Hybrid	A champion that uses two or more build types.
11) Hypercarry	A champion that has an extremely weak early or mid-game, but scales extremely well late game to the point of being nearly unstoppable.
12) Jungler	A champion who forgoes laning to obtain experience & gold from killing creeps in the jungle.
13) Main	A player's best or favorite champion to use.
14) MM	Marksman: a champion that deals high amounts of attack damage as the match progresses, sacrificing its defensive power and utility.
15) Off Tank	A champion that has some attributes of a Tank, but lacks in some areas.
16) Party	A player can invite other players from their friend list to form a team.
17) Pub	Public player: a player that is placed on a team by the automated matchmaking system.
18) Solo	A champion that guards an entire lane on their own.
19) Summoner	A player's role as they select a champion & direct them in battle.
20) Support	A category of champions who support his/her allies' performance.
21) Tank	A champion designed to take high amounts of damage, with high CC abilities, & low damage.
22) Team Comp	Team composition: A specific champion set-up for a team in which they work together to achieve an overall strategy.

Figure 4.2: Words for Game Roles and their Lexical Meanings

In Figure 4.2, players use technical, specialized words for game roles that refer mostly to champion abilities, obligations, and responsibilities while playing, watching, or discussing the game. These words correspond to particular game references and champions that players select

and commit to playing during a match. *Team comp* (Word 22), or team composition, refers to the specific champion arrangement or set-up for a team, in which different champion roles are selected to create a group with diversified abilities, making it difficult for the opposing team to strategize against. Team comp is a difficult and technical concept to fully understand unless one is fully engaged with the gaming community through social media, eSports, and game-specific websites and wikis. This word in itself references a wide spectrum of other specialized words which are important to participating in the community.

Words such as *AD* (Word 1), *ADC* (Word 2), *Assassin* (Word 3), *Bruiser/Fighter* (Word 5), *Caster* (Word 7), *Jungler* (World 12), *Support* (Word 20), and *Tank* (Word 21) refer to particular play styles. To play the game, and to be considered an insider or member of the community, a player must know what these terms mean and what game champions correspond to what abbreviation or word. Not only must community members understand game references, but often times, players need to make these connections in a very short amount of time. For instance, in the beginning phase of the game, players have only a couple minutes to negotiate roles with other players. Abbreviated terms are used and players are expected to understand and act upon these written lexical abbreviations quickly, or they risk negative evaluation by the team and a critical disadvantage in the actual game match.

In Figure 4.3, I display a collection of words that reference a player's physical location in the game or their current playing status. These terms are recognized game places, like *Base* (Word 3) and *Field of Justice* (Word 10), or statuses like *AFK* (Word 1) or *BRB* (Word 6). Some of these references are technically monsters that players slay to achieve an advantage over the opposing team. However, in group chat, these beings, such as *Baron* (Word 2) or *Golem* (Word 13) are typed quickly in chat to reference geographic coordinates for teammates to meet as

quickly as possible. These references are made quickly in chat since typing full sentences or requests often require too much time.

WORDS FOR LOCATIONS/STATUS	LEXICAL MEANING
1) AFK	Away From Keyboard.
2) Baron	Baron Nashor: the most powerful neutral monster in League of Legends.
3) Base	The walled area where the shop, nexus and inhibitors are situated.
4) Blue	Blue Buff: Crest of the Ancient Golem.
5) Bot	Bottom lane.
6) BRB	Be right back.
7) Bush	The tall grass in which champions can hide.
8) DC	Disconnected.
9) Drag	Dragon, Drake.
10) Field of Justice	An in-universe term for a location where champions compete.
11) Fog of War	The shadowed areas of the map which aren't viewable by allies.
12) Fountain	The raised stone platforms located in each team's base, where champions respawn after death, regenerate health and mana, and can purchase items.
13) Golem	Ancient Golem: grants the Crest of the Ancient (blue buff) after slain.
14) Inhib	Inhibitor: a structure that prevents enemies from spawning superminions.
15) Inhibitor Turret	The tower protecting the inhibitor.
16) Inner Turrets	The three towers at the outer perimeters of the base.
17) Jungle	The spaces populated by neutral monsters between the lanes.
18) Lag	Slow response during the match due to high network connection latency.
19) Lag Spike	A sudden and often momentary period of severe lag.
20) Lane	The paths that allied and enemy minions follow.
21) LOM/OOM	Low on Mana; Out of Mana.
22) Map	A location where champions battle against each other.
23) MIA/Miss/SS	Missing In Action: an enemy champion who does not appear on the map.
24) Mid	Middle lane.
25) Mid Turrets	The three towers just outside the base.
26) Murder Bridge	Another name for the Howling Abyss map.
27) Nexus	Where minions are spawned. Victory is achieved when the opposing nexus is destroyed.
28) Nexus Turrets	The two towers protecting the nexus.
29) OMW, OTW	On my way/On the way.
30) Outer Turrets	The three towers furthest from the base.
31) Path/Pathing	The route that will be taken towards a destination.
32) Rdy	Ready.
33) Red	Blessing of the Lizard Elder. Also known as "red buff."
34) River	The water crossing between lanes on the Summoner's Rift.
35) RNG	Range.
36) Shop	The location where items are bought.
37) Top	Top/upper lane.
38) Tri-brush	A "Y" shaped brush near the top exit of the jungle on the purple team's side of the map & near the bottom exit of jungle on the blue team's side.

39) Turret/Tower	A stationary defense structure that guards the lanes and the base.

Figure 4.3: Words for Player Location/State and their Lexical Meanings

In this list (*see* Figure 4.3), the words listed are used by players to navigate the game map and to coordinate actions with teammates. They refer to specific game locations that vary according to which side of the map (Blue or Purple) the team gets assigned at the beginning of the game. Players regularly call out or message in text chat where they think or know other players to be hiding on the map by either *pinging* the map, meaning to use game sounds to signal other teammates, or simply by typing these location words. Players who are not familiar with these locations are at a disadvantage and are typically criticized and evaluated by other teammates as being a noob or unskilled player. Other abbreviations, such as OOM (Word 21) or OMW (Word 29) require players to understand players' current states in team-fights and other coordinated team actions. These quickly typed, technical warnings inform players of their teammates' champion status and if understood, influence next moves. For instance, if a player is fighting with an ally caster against an opposing player, and the caster writes OOM, the player may retreat, knowing that the caster can no longer fight effectively. However, if another allied player also writes, OMW, signaling he/she is coming to assist in the fight, the player may choose to stay and keep fighting.

In the following list (see Figure 4.4), I include words that describe various abilities that particular game champions possess. These abilities correspond to abilities that are used in the game frequently and which players often perform or possess without instruction from other teammates. During eSports matches, shoutcasters often narrate the action that takes place in the game by describing the various abilities champions have and what individual players are doing while playing the game. Without reference to what these words mean, watching a live-event over the Internet may be somewhat incomprehensible. Knowledge and use of these technical,

specialized words essentially distinguish players as community insiders to wider audiences and each other.

WORDS FOR GAME ABILITIES	LEXICAL MEANING
1) AA	Auto Attack
2) Active	Abilities possessed by champions and certain items that require activating to function.
3) AoE	Area of Effect.
4) AP	Ability Power.
5) ArPen	Armor Penetration.
6) AS/ATS/ASPD	Attack Speed.
7) Aura	A passive ability that usually applies to the champion and allies.
8) Auto attack	The basic attack move performed when right-clicking an enemy unit.
9) Banana	Soraka's autoattack.
10) Blind	A CC effect that causes the recipient's autoattacks to miss completely.
11) Blink	A type of movement ability, similar to the summoner spell Flash.
12) Burst	A large amount of damage being dealt in a short time.
13) Cap	A limit past which something (an ability) cannot rise.
14) CC	Crowd Control: a category of status effects which limit movement/actions.
15) CD	Waiting for an ability's cooldown to finish before commencing an action.
16) CDR	Cooldown reduction.
17) Channeling	The casting time required to perform certain spells.
18) Cupcake	Caitlyn's Yordle Snap Trap.
19) CV	Clairvoyance.
20) Disable	A form of CC that prevents the enemy from doing particular actions.
21) DoT	Damage over Time effect.
22) Dunking	To use an aerial leap ability to damage or slay an enemy champion.
23) E	The third champion ability which is bound to the "E" key by default.
24) Execute	An ability that does damage based on the missing health of an enemy.
25) Fear	A debuff which makes a champion move randomly and uncontrollably.
26) Flash	A blink-type summoner spell that activates instantly upon being cast, teleporting the champion a short distance in the direction of their cursor.
27) Gap Closer	An ability or spell that shortens the distance between the champion and the enemy.
28) Global	An ability that can strike anywhere on the map.
29) Hard CC	A crowd control effect that disrupts the channeling of abilities.
30) Hook	Ability which prevents movement and brings an enemy towards the champion's position.
31) HP5	Health Regeneration per 5 seconds.
32) Ignite	A summoner spell which deals true damage over time on one enemy target.
33) Kit	A champion's set of abilities.
34) Knockback	Pushing the target's position in the opposite direction of the skill user.
35) Knockup	Disabling the target by sending them into the air.
36) Lantern	Thresh's Dark Passage.

37) Laser	The Nexus Obelisk's autoattack.
38) LS	Life steal.
39) Mana	Resource used by most champions to cast abilities.
40) Mpen	Magic penetration.
41) MR	Magic resistance.
42) MS	Movement speed.
43) Nuke	Any ability that deals huge amounts of damage.
44) Pet	A non-champion, non-minion ally that fights for a champion on its own.
45) Proc	The activation of an effect.
46) Q	The first champion ability which is bound to the "Q" key by default.
47) R	The fourth champion ability which is bound to the "R" key by default.
48) Root/Snare/Immobilize	A debuff which prevents any movement by an enemy champion.
49) Shroom	Noxious Trap.
50) Silence	A debuff which prevents any activated abilities from being used.
51) Skillshot	An ability that requires aiming a projectile that could miss its target.
52) Slow	A debuff which reduces the target's movement speed.
53) Snipe	To shoot out an ability at long range to strike a target.
54) Soft CC	A crowd control effect that does not disrupt the channeling of abilities.
55) Soft Leash	To draw the aggro of a monster briefly before moving away.
56) Stealth	An ability to conceal the user from being seen or detected by enemies.
57) Stun	A debuff which prevents champions from moving, attacking or casting.
58) Sustain	A champion's capacity for laning/jungle without needing to return to base.
59) Taunt	A disable which forces the target to attack the taunter.
60) Tenacity	A champion stat which determines the effect duration of most cc debuffs.
61) Ult	A champion's ultimate ability.
62) Utility	Spells or abilities that have a quality of being beneficial for the team.
63) W	The second champion ability which is bound to the "W" key by default.

Figure 4.4: Words for Game Abilities and their Lexical Meanings

In Figure 4.4, words such as *blind* (Word 10), *blink* (Word 11), and *burst* (Word 12) refer to particular champion abilities. Typically these skills are so practiced by players that they are not discussed during play. However, in certain contexts, teammates may type or say *E* (Word 23), *Q* (Word 46), *R* (Word 47), *W* (Word 63), or *Ult* (Word 61), to signal to other teammates to use a specific ability or skill bound to a particular keyboard key. These directives are efficient and understood by other community members, making it excessive to say anything that expands on these types of requests. In other words, players often do not have to explain how they want to coordinate or attain assistance from particular player's skills and abilities. In the fast-paced

tempo of the game, players need only to refer to the keyboard button that is tied to these in-game moves.

This technical understanding is significant because it requires players to also know what other players are referring to, whether through text or voice chat, within the context or situation of the game. Often players will simply write the letter of the key that corresponds to the action they are requesting, without additional cues as to who they are speaking to. As such, these terms must be understood within the situational context of built environment of the game.

In the following list (*see* Figure 4.5), many of the words listed refer to specific situations or strategies, while others are words often used by players to request coordinated action by other allied players.

WORDS FOR STRATEGIES	LEXICAL MEANING
1) Aggro	The targeting priority of an A.I. controlled minion, turret, monster, etc.
2) Assist	To help an ally in killing an enemy champion, gaining a share of the gold.
3) Back	To retreat in the general direction of your base or away from the enemy.
4) Babysit	To continually assist a teammate to help them become more powerful.
5) Bait	To feign weakness in order to lure the enemy into a trap.
6) Backdoor	To attack an enemy tower/base without the support of a minion wave. Typically this is done by sneaking through the jungle and revealing one's position as late as possible, in order to delay a reaction.
7) Cap	To capture a point in Dominion.
8) Care	To be careful, implying a possible ambush or any other kind of danger.
9) Chain CC	To consecutively use multiple crowd control spells on an enemy champion.
10) Chase	To pursue an enemy champion as they're running away.
11) Collapsing	When allied players coordinate with each other to converge and overwhelm the enemy team.
12) Commit	To stay in a fight until the battle is over, or until your champion is slain.
13) Counter Gank	Setting up an ambush in immediate response to an enemy ambush with the intention of negating the advantage gained by the enemy's attack.
14) Counter Jungle	To slay monsters in the enemy's jungle, depriving them of buffs, gold, & experience.
15) Counter Pick	To choose a champion during the selection phase to oppose a particular enemy champion.
16) Cover	A player request for another teammate to hold the player's lane while they're not there.
17) CS	Creeps Slain or Creep Score, an adapted DotA term.

18) Def	Defend: to protect the tower or base without attacking aggressively.
19) DD	Direct Damage.
20) Dive	To pursue a specific target into a highly dangerous area, typically beneath an enemy turret.
21) Double Kill	Slaying two enemy champions within a certain length of time.
22) Face Check	A champion going into a brush to see if an enemy champion is hidden.
23) Farm	To seek out and kill minions to obtain experience and gold.
24) First Blood	The first kill of the game.
25) Freezing	Denying creeps to your opponent while freely acquiring CS without threat.
26) Focus	To direct a team's efforts toward killing a specific enemy champion target.
27) Forced Teamfight	When one team attempts to take a map objective in order to compel the enemy team to try and stop them, resulting in a battle.
28) Gank	To ambush one or more unsuspecting enemies with one or more allies.
29) Ghoster/Ghosting	A player who watches an enemy player's stream to gain an advantage.
30) Harass	To put pressure on an enemy champion by causing damage.
31) Hard Leash	To aid the allied jungler by attacking a monster and allowing the ally to deal the last hit.
32) Hold	To stay in a lane and protect a tower from being destroyed by the enemy. Primarily done by junglers while the laner is away.
33) Inc/Incoming	Used to warn a player that one or more champs are heading their way in an attempt to gank.
34) Initiate	A champion performing an action which signals to allies to fight.
35) Instakill	When a full health champion/monster takes lethal damage within such a short time they die instantly, with no chance to react.
36) Instalock	To quickly select and lock-in a champion to prevent someone else from getting them.
37) Invade	To go into the enemy's territory, particularly their jungle.
38) Juke	The act of feinting a pursuing enemy into chasing the wrong direction by breaking line of sight through usage of brush and/or fog of war.
39) Killing Spree	A champion who slays at least three champions consecutively without being slain them self.
40) Kiting	Continuously backing away and attacking a pursuing enemy champion in such a way that the enemy is damaged while unable to deal damage back.
41) Kill Streak	When a champion slays multiple enemy champions consecutively.
42) Laning	Staying in the minion paths in order to push or farm.
43) Last Hit	Getting the killing blow on a minion, creep, or enemy champion.
44) Leash	A tactic used to draw monster aggro, benefiting the jungler.
45) Map Awareness	To be conscious of the events occurring around the map.
46) Map Control	To have vision and influence over areas around the map.
47) Map Objective	A task that is sought after which goes towards winning the match.
48) Overextending	A champion moving too far in lane/enemy territory, which can open them up to ganks.
49) Peeling	To use CC abilities to stop enemy champions from attacking allies.
50) Pentakill	Pentakill - Slaying five enemy champions within a certain length of time.
51) Ping	To signal a "ping" noise and a mark on the map that your team can see.

52) Poach	A strategy that annihilates any monster camp of the opposite side of jungle in order to weaken the opponent team's chance on obtaining experience, gold, and buffs.
53) Poke	A form of harass which uses long ranged attacks to cause small to moderate damage to weaken an enemy, while keeping a safe position.
54) Positioning	A champion's location during a fight. Good positioning is determined by the player knowing the optimal location their champion should be at.
55) Proxy	A high-risk, high-reward strategy that involves farming enemy minions between the enemy turrets to prevent the opposing laner from effectively pushing or farming.
56) Pull	A tactic used to draw monster aggro that brings the enemy closer to you.
57) Push	To continue advancing forward in a lane, clearing it of minions and towers.
58) Queue Dodge	To shut down the game client or disconnect from the internet during the champion selection process to avoid playing the match.
59) Rambo	Diving into a fight alone, usually a suicidal tactic.
60) Shutdown	To slay a champion that is on a killing spree.
61) Smart Cast	An entry scheme of action command that allows 1-click on the keyboard (or combined with the shift key) to perform the action without clicking the mouse button on the target.
62) Snowball	Occurs when a champion/team gains an advantage, and uses the advantage to win the game.
63) Split Push	To continuously advance in one lane while the other team members advance in another lane.
64) Steal	To kill the neutral creeps that's on the enemy's side of the map, particularly their Lizard Elder (for Red Buff) or their Ancient Golem (for Blue Buff).
65) Surrender	To start a vote between teammates to end the game early and admit defeat.
66) Tanking	To take high amounts of damage.
67) Teamfight	When multiple champions, from each side, gather in one area to battle.
68) Tower Hugging	To stay near the tower to deter enemy champions from attacking them.
69) Ward Bait	To place down a ward in order to set up a gank.
70) Ward Coverage	The amount of wards placed down to give more vision around the map.
71) Ward Placement	The location in which a ward is laid down.
72) Wombo Combo	When teammates consecutively chain together their abilities on enemy champions.
73) Zoning	Tactics used to prevent enemy champion(s) from gaining gold/experience.

Figure 4.5: Words for Players' Strategies and their Lexical Meanings

Many of these listed terms (*see* Figure 4.5) require extremely specialized knowledge of the game League of Legends. These strategic terms refer to various coordinated team actions that require collaboration through voice or text chat. Most of this jargon, or specialized

language, for example words such as *poke* (Word 53) or *push* (Word 57), is common to the video game genre MOBA or Multiplayer Online Battle Arena. These words are common partly because these games (*Dota*, *League of Legends*, *Dota 2*) are derived from similar frameworks and objectives. These games also share a similar strategic register because many of the developers who design and build them are strongly influenced by the original mod *Dota*, from which many of these terms originate.

Words that refer to champions or characters in the game, as well as terms that refer to in-game items are more specific to this particular gaming community. In Figure 4.6, I list words that reference features that are more distinct to the League of Legends and community.

WORDS FOR CHAMPIONS/ITEMS	LEXICAL MEANING
1) Atmallet	A build that utilizes Atma's Impaler and Frozen Mallet.
2) Atmog's	A build that utilizes Atma's Impaler and Warmog's Armor.
3) Ball	The untargetable mobile object under Orianna's command.
4) BC	The Black Cleaver.
5) BFS	B.F. Sword.
6) Bird	The champion Anivia.
7) Blitz	The champion Blitzcrank.
8) BoRK	Blade of the Ruined King.
9) Bounty	The amount of gold a target is worth should they be slain.
10) Bruce	The champion Lee Sin.
11) BT	The item The Bloodthirster.
12) Buff	A positive effect applied to a champion.
13) BV	The item Banshee's Veil.
14) Cait	The champion Caitlyn.
15) Cap/Hat	The item Rabadon's Deathcap.
16) Champ	A champion; a particular character that the summoner controls.
17) Char	Short for "character", used to mean champion.
18) Cho	The champion Cho'Gath.
19) Cow	The champion Alistar.
20) Creeps	Monsters and minions.
21) DFG	The item Deathfire Grasp.
22) Debuff	A negative effect applied to a champion; the opposite of a buff.
23) Dog	The champion Nasus.
24) Effective Health	Health multiplied by the various damage reduction affecting it.
25) Eve	The champion Evelynn.
26) Exp	Shorthand for experience points.
27) Ez	The champion Ezreal.
28) Fid	The champion Fiddlesticks.

29) Fish	The champion Fizz.
30) FM	The item Frozen Mallet.
31) Fratmog's	A build that utilizes Atma's Impaler, Frozen Mallet, and Warmog's Armor.
32) Franky	The champion Vi.
33) GA	The item Guardian Angel.
34) Glyph	A type of rune which primarily boosts various magical stats.
35) Gold	The in-game currency used to buy items.
36) GP10	Items/masteries/runes that generate extra gold over time
37) Grag	The champion Gragas.
38) Heal Bot	The champion Soraka.
39) HP	Health, also known as "Hit Points."
40) IE	The item Infinity Edge.
41) IBG	The item Iceborn Gauntlet
42) IP	Influence points.
43) Item	An object carried/used by a champion to enhance performance.
44) Mark	A type of rune which primarily boosts various physical stats.
45) Minion	The computer-controlled unit spawned from the allied structure to march to the opposing structure along the designated lane.
46) Minion Wave	A group of minions spawned together once at a time.
47) MK	Minion kills.
48) Nerf	An official modification to the game mechanics which makes something less powerful.
49) NPC	Non-player character
50) PD	The item Phantom Dancer.
51) PFE	The champion Pulsefire Ezreal.
52) Pot	Potion(s), usually Health Potion.
53) Quint	Quintessence, the most expensive/powerful type of rune.
54) RP	Riot points.
55) Seal	A type of rune which primarily boosts defensive or utility stats.
56) Super	Super Minion: a stronger minion that is spawned by destroying an enemy inhibitor.
57) Ward	Items that reveal the Fog of War once placed.

Figure 4.6: Words for Champions/Items and their Lexical Meanings

With the exception of certain words like *buff* (Word 12), *creeps* (Word 20), *debuff*, (Word 22), *effective heath* (Word 22), *HP* (Word 39), *item* (Word 43), *minion* (Word 45), *nerf* (Word 48), *pot* (Word 52), and *ward* (Word 57), all of which are jargon typical of the MOBA genre, many of the words on this list allude to specific League of Legends references (see Figure 4.6). Knowing what these technical terms refer to and what their function or purpose is in the

game differentiates League of Legends players and community members from other MOBA players or gamers more broadly.

Lastly, in Figure 4.7, I list many words and abbreviated words that players use when describing how a certain game match is going, how a specific player is player, or other kinds of evaluations around the game the and community more broadly. These vocabulary items are shared to great extent not only in the North American and European server regions, but throughout the greater international league of eSports players and spectators. The use of these lexical terms are used not only in game play, but at live tournaments and events, streamed online, on social media, and in contexts, communicative routines, and practices unrelated to the game.

WORDS THAT COMMENT/EVALUATE	**LEXICAL MEANING**
1) BG	Bad Game
2) Broken	When something within the game is viewed as imbalanced or malfunctioning.
3) Bug	A defect in the mechanics of the game that is not intended.
4) Carry	The action of being ultimately responsible for winning a game.
5) Clutch Move	To perform a well-timed action while under pressure.
6) Elo	A mathematical rating system for a player's relative skill level.
7) Elo Hell	A perceived Elo level where it is frustrating for a player to get out of.
8) Ez	Easy
9) Fail Flash	When a player uses their Flash spell in an unintended way.
10) Fed	A champion becoming disproportionately powerful after multiple kills.
11) Feed	To repeatedly die to the enemy team, giving them gold and experience.
12) FF	Refers to /ff or "forfeit", another term for surrender.
13) FFS	For fuck's sake. An expression of anger or frustration.
14) FPS	Frames per second.
15) Game Throw	When a team with a lead makes a mistake, causing them to lose the match.
16) GG	Good game.
17) GJ	Good job.
18) GL	Good luck.
19) GLHF	Good luck, Have fun.
20) IMBA	Imbalanced: describing something as unfairly powerful.
21) KS	Kill Steal: Blaming an ally for landing the finishing hit on an enemy champion who they intended to score the kill on.
22) Leaver	Exiting the game before the match is finished, whether voluntarily or not.
23) Leech	Staying within range of enemy units to gain experience points without assisting your team.

24) Metagame	The game's current play style, consisting of lane setup, jungling, and team composition.
25) N1	Nice one.
26) NJ	Nice job.
27) Noob/Nub/n00b	Unskillful player/unexperienced beginner. Derived from the word newbie.
28) OC	New champion idea by fan who is not employed by Riot Games.
29) OP	Overpowered.
30) Pro	An act of calling someone that is very talented when playing, short for professional.
31) Pubstomp	When an organized team thoroughly defeats random players in a match.
32) QQ	Depicts a pair of crying eyes, implying that the other player is complaining.
33) Rage	To display in-game frustration.
34) Ragequit	An incident where a player quits (leaves) the game due to frustration.
35) Report	An action after each match to report a player to official for inappropriate behavior such as verbal abuse or intentionally feeding the opponent.
36) Req	Request.
37) ROFL	Rolling on the floor laughing.
38) Scaling	How a champion's efficiency increases as the game continues and as they gain levels/items.
39) Scrub	An insult indicating that the player has a low skill level for the game.
40) Squishy	A player or champion that can be killed easily due to low base health/defenses.
41) Streaming	To watch a video in "real time", instead of downloading a file and watching it later.
42) Stronk	A typo of the word "strong," mostly used sarcastically due to being a misspelling.
43) Synergy	How well two or more champions/players work together.
44) Trolls/Griefers	A person who causes acts of disruption to other players and to the community. These acts may include writing offensive messages or intentionally feeding the enemy.
45) Vent	Ventrillo: a third party voice chat software.
46) Wet Noodle Fight	Often describes a fight between two champions that are building very little damage.
47) WP	Well Played

Figure 4.7: Words that Comment/Evaluate and their Lexical Meanings

From this list (*see* Figure 4.7), it is clear that players use words such as *BG* (Word 1), *broken* (Word 2), *Elo hell* (Word 7), *flash fail* (Word 9), *feed* (Word 11), *FFS* (Word 13), *noob* (Word 27), *rage* (Word 33), *ragequit* (Word 34), and *scrub* (Word 39) to describe situations or other players who are negatively evaluated. Words such as *carry* (Word 4), *clutch move* (Word 5), *GJ* (Word 17), *GL* (Word 18), and *GLHF* (Word 19) are words that are used in contexts that

are more supportive. Words such as *GG* (Word 16) can be used in different ways. For instance, many players type GG to each other after a close match as a measure of sportsmanship. However, sometimes when a team has a particular lead or advantage in the middle or towards the end a game match, they or the losing team will type GG for the all teams to read, suggesting that the game is essentially over. This action is viewed negatively because if the winning team types this word, it implies that they evaluate the other team and their skill level negatively. However, if the losing team player types GG, it essentially means they have given up and are no longer willing to cooperate with their team.

Together, these lists demonstrate the very specialized words that League of Legends community members use while playing the game or engaging with other community members out-of-game. This particular register is based on a highly technical lexicon and casual, abbreviated terms and references. For League of Legends players, this is the variety of language used when playing or watching eSports, yet one would rarely use these terms (in the same way) in contexts outside of the community. These words essentially build a sense of community among players by marking them as community insiders, distinct from other people and gamers more broadly.

4.4 PARTICIPATION AND DISCOURSE PRACTICES

In addition to sharing common references and specialized vocabulary, players and developers construct a sense of community and belonging through discourse practices and speech activities that rely heavily on co-participation and building next utterances and responses by attending to participants' prior talk, or previous postings written online. These discourse

practices include requests and directives as well as assessments and evaluations (*see* Chapter 5). They also include forms of multimodality (Goodwin, Goodwin & Yaeger-Dror 2002), particularly semiotic tools such as gesture, prosody, eye gaze, as well as written multimodality (e.g., mixing pictures, text, website links, hashtags) and digital deictic signaling (Newon 2011). Using a rich toolkit, both online and offline, players and developers build on the prior talk of co-participants in many different ways, and in this section, I focus specifically format tying and second stories.

4.4.1 Format Tying

Format tying, or the repetition of part of the prior speaker's turn with additions or slight transformations (Goodwin 1990), is a discourse practice that is common in the League of Legends community's interactions that occur online. In Excerpt 4.1, I examine a posting that was made by a community member on the League of Legends Forum, as well as responses that were made shortly after. In this example, community member *jking104* started the post with the topic: *If you had a ranked team of yourself* (Line 1). In Line 2, the player answers the question, writing "I would probably be gold," referring to an assumed higher ranking of their current skill, if their proposed hypothetical scenario were in fact real. In Lines 3-5, *jking104* elaborates on this scenario by discussing which roles the player would potentially be good at and which roles they would not do well playing. In the postings that follow, players respond to this original message by posting responses using similar linguistic structures.

Excerpt 4.1: Format Tying Example 1

1	jking104:	*Topic*: *If you had a ranked team of 5 of yourself*
2		I would probably be gold,
3		with mid and jungle carrying
4		while bot simply tries not to feed in between ganks,
5		and top just farming until his team starts throwing.

6	Noobie Stripes:	I would be in bronze imo.
7	Moonz:	I would invent a new meta so I wouldn't have to go top.
8		Seriously.
9	Coriasies:	I would give the enemy team a level one ace
10		trying to steal their blue.
11	Splurgedd:	I would be silver because my mid and adc will be carrying
12		while my jungler camps top so he doesn't feed as hard.
13	Caekiee:	I believe I would be in diamond but then again
14		I'm kind of over confident about my own skills.
15		But then again, who isn't?
16	Kraz Kzraxus:	I would just afk farm and never leave lane
17		or jungle eventually getting to the nexus
18		while being ungankable.
19		Or at least try to then lose lane and keep splitpushing.
20		I would probably be low silver.
21	MEMEME1670:	I would practice nonstop,
22		knowing that I can improve everything that goes wrong
23		and having nobody to blame but myself.
24	Crogthefroggie:	My jungle would carry on elise/vi
25		my mid would either carry or feed
26		depending on if he got zed or fizz,
27		top lane would just farm
28		and wonder wtf he's supposed to do besides that,
29		ADC would go far too ham,
30		support would dive in to save him,
31		and then ADC me would rage at my support for feeding.
32	Commpenisator:	Bronze.
33		I have a huge ego and I'd probably spend the entire game
34		arguing with myself about which me is right about anything

Using the words "I would," in Line 6, *Noobie Stripes* begins their response in the same way that *jking104* organized his original posting. This introduction format is reused again by other players in Lines 7, 9, 11, 13, 20, and 21. In each of these introductions, "I would" is used to elaborate on jking104's posting by introducing a second story (Sacks 1995) (*see* Section 4.4.2). Using "I would," these players then assign themselves a projected skill ranking (e.g., bronze, silver, gold) based on their own imagined experience of the hypothetical scenario. Similarly, in Lines 24-31, *Crogthefroggie* uses "would" in his response to the hypothetical

scenario by talking in the third person, describing what each game champion, rather than what he would do, in each context. This format typing, or reuse of the phrase "I would," illustrates how players, in the midst of interaction, build their next postings or utterances by re-appropriating structures and words from prior talk.

In Excerpt 4.2, players again use format tying at the beginning of their responses. In this example, the player *Sweagene* poses a question to the community based on another hypothetical scenario. He asks, "If I trolled your game…would you still carry me? (Line 1). He proceeds to provide additional scenario context in Lines 2-4, explaining "On one hand there's still a potential to win the game, and on the other hand, I'm trolling." After this elaboration, he asks the community again, "So, what will it be?" (Line 5), projecting next responses as either a yes or no.

Excerpt 4.2: Format Tying Example 2

1	Sweagene:	If I trolled your game…would you still carry me?
2		To be clear, this is in ranked.
3		On one hand, there's still a potential to win the game.
4		On the other hand, I'm trolling.
5		So, what will it be?
6	Austinodude:	Yes, but I would make it so you had 9 reports at the end.
7	The Snow Guy:	Yeah, but only if you had big breasts…
8		and on rare occasions if you have a nice ass.
9	Thelone:	Yeah, since making sure you lose IP isn't enough
10		of a reward for losing IP myself, so yes.
11	Hinrone:	Yeah, if I could, I would.
12		Having you lose something which makes me
13		lose it as well is silly.
14		If your team isn't trolling or well… stupid
15		they will attempt to carry you.
16		I get the feeling that most teams would just surrender
17		then complain on here about elo hell.
18	Vivalamey:	Yeah, on one hand, I would clearly carry you.
19		I wouldn't be a loser as well just because you are.
20		On the other hand, people who "troll" any que
21		but even more in ranked should be banned
22		for at least a week
23		and have their mmr (match making rating) reduced greatly.

24		I see no reason to allow people who troll for even 1 game
25		to be allowed to keep doing it.
26	Gavrain:	Yeah, absolutely.
27		Trolls will be banned
28		no reason to throw my own games.

In Line 6, *Austinodude* responds to these two posed questions by saying "Yes, but I would make it so you had 9 reports at the end," implying that although he's willing to continue to try to win the game, *Sweagene's* unwillingness to cooperate is morally inappropriate and warrants disciplinary action. In Line 7, *The Snow Guy* responses in a similar way using "Yeah, but" at the beginning of his response, and although comical, this conditional suggests that he also believes *Sweagene's* actions are inappropriate. Following this response, *Hinrone* agrees as well, also beginning his response with "Yeah" in Line 11. He justifies this answer by reasoning that it is his own individual interest to always play his best (Line 12-15), a sentiment that is also mirrored by *Gavrain* in Lines 26-28.

In Lines 18-20, *Vivalamey* also agrees to carry him, using "Yeah" to start his response, but also repeats *Sweagene's* use of "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" in his explanation. He suggests that on the one hand, he would carry him, despite his uncooperativeness; however on the other hand, he does not approve of this behavior and believes *Sweagene* and other players who behave similarly, should be banned and subject to other negative consequences. While the use of "yes" and "yeah" in this example may be in part shaped by the structure of the questions initially asked, the repetition of "one the one hand" and "on the other hand" illustrate how participants reuse other participants' previous utterances or responses and co-produce meaning and next moves based on prior talk.

Further, in Excerpt 4.3, I demonstrate how players may repeat not only words but also different styles of commenting and interacting, including pictures and other semiotic modes. In

this example, the player *Rock1298* shares a story about slaying five opponents consecutively, a very rare and difficult accomplishment in the game. In Line 10, he writes that he will post a screenshot of his accomplishment when he is able to format the picture, and that by offering this proof, his claim to successfully getting a pentakill is legitimate (Line 8). In Line 11, he posts the actual screenshot, and in Line 12, *lightdragon188*, comments on this image by also producing a relevant image in response.

Excerpt 4.3: Format Tying Example 3

1	Rock1298:	I just got my first pentakill!!!!
2		It was in ranked.
3		With Draven.
4		And I got it by killing their support Annie
5		who dealt the 2nd most damage to champs in the game. =/
6		I don't have replay, so I didn't record it…
7		but hey, a screenshot is cool too.
8		After all, pics or gtfo, amirite?
9		Gimme a second, getting a bigger pic.
10		Will post a pic back here when I'm done.
11		
12	lightdragon188:	

Although *lightdragon188's* image is not the same as *Rock1298's* posted image, his picture states, "This is where I'd put my pentakill – If I had one!" (Line 12). This text of this image is used in response to the prior visual comment, and suggests that if *lightdragon188* had a similar story, he too would post a comparable screen-captured image. Format tying is used in this example to complement *Rock1298's* accomplishment in a way that is similar to his last posted utterance, or posted picture. This example suggests that players use format tying in their interactions in ways that are unique to the built environment of the game and social media around the game. Players co-participate in interactions not only through building on player's prior words, but also by reusing player's particular semiotic modes, like images, weblinks, and hashtags.

4.4.2 Second Stories

Sacks' (1992) concept of "second stories," describes how speakers' narratives of experience are socially organized and shaped to align with the narratives of other speakers. Second stories are produced when the hearer of an initial story produces a "systematic transformation" of this prior talk resulting in an additional narrative that displays a relevant analysis of this prior story (Goodwin 1990). In this type of interaction, the second teller "first analyzes [the first teller's] talk as providing a structured, coherent scene that links features of the setting, participants, and action to each other in a particular way, and then systematically transforms that framework to build a new hypothetical scene that supports his claim rather than [the first teller's] (Goodwin 1990: 93).

Second stories relate to discussions of language and identity because they constitute a form of exhibited understanding between speakers (Sacks 1992). These shared stories emphasize similarities, or sameness, between players, while simultaneously minimizing any

differences players may have. In the League of Legends community, players co-produce a sense of community and belonging in interaction by producing similar, second stories that illuminate understanding and shared experiences. This alignment does not necessarily mean these players always agree, but rather it demonstrates that players share certain common references and experiences, and can thus can produce relevant next moves based on this shared understanding.

Excerpt 4.4: Second Stories Example 1

1	SurrealSwervet:	I'm getting sick and tired of people complaining
2		about getting ksed.
3		This game is based on teamwork,
4		and as a team you have to make sacrifices,
5		and if that sacrifice is killing the enemy
6		to save both your asses then so be it.
7		A lot of people have a low tolerance
8		especially with competitive games like this one.
9		I think people should realize at the end of the match
10		you either lose as a team or you win as a team.
11		Don't get me wrong I get pretty annoyed
12		if I'm working my ass off to kill this guy
13		that's been harassing me the whole game
14		and the next thing I see is Ezreal's ult flying past
15		swiping ryze into oblivion.
16		Tbh all I can really think is seriously bro?
17		but in the end all I can type is GJ.
18		We should really lighten up and get our act together
19		AS A TEAM or else your team is bound to fail.
20		LETS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
21	bWitcher:	Easy solution: Just don't care, and don't respond.
22		Works every time.
23	Sonaviuse:	**When I play, as soon as I see something about ks**
24		**on the chatlog, I know my team will lose.**
25	BandaidManSteve:	**One game, someone else besides our kat**
26		**would get the last hit and she would be like**
27		**"Malphite you stole my kill again!"**
28		**I would respond,**
29		**"Bro, it's a team game,**
30		**doesn't really matter who gets it."**
31		**And then he's like,**
32		**"So you want Malphite to keep ks'ing me?"**

33	**Malphite's end game score was 1 kill.**
34	**Sigh, noobs these days.**

In Excerpt 4.4, for example, the player *SurrealSwervet* introduces a topic in Lines 1-10 that focuses on the practice of kill stealing (ks) in the game. Throughout the post, he emphasizes that the game requires teamwork and that it is not in the team's best interest when people complain about losing individual credit for game objectives. He suggests that in order to work as a team, these types of individual sacrifices (Line 4) must be made, in order to give your team an advantage and the lead during a match.

In Lines 11-20, he begins a narrative where he discusses how frustrating it can be to have teammates steal kills. He starts this narrative by stating, "don't get me wrong," in Line 11, and then proceeds to launch into a story about a time when he was working really hard throughout the game to slay a specific opponent, only to have the teammate get credit for successfully slaying him before he could get the chance to do the same. In Line 16, he comments on this scenario, by saying, "tbh [to be honest] all I can really think is seriously bro?" Although this question highlights *SurrealSwervet's* frustration in this particular situation, his next lines reframe this frustration in light of teamwork (Lines 17-20). He writes, "but in the end, all I can type is GJ," and requests that readers "really lighten up" and "get our [their] act together." He suggests that a difference can be made if players work as a team.

In response to this initial story posting, several other players comment by offering up similar stories of their experiences and opinions. In Line 21, *bWitcher*, writes "Easy solution: Just don't care, and don't respond." He goes on to write, "Works every time," in Line 22, implying that this is an occurrence that happens frequently to him as well. His suggestion to refrain from responding is a strategy that is similar to *SurrealSwervet's* way of handing this

breech of appropriate behavior, in which he "in the end" only types "GJ [good job]," to the offending player, despite his frustration.

In Line 23, *Sonaviuse* starts a second story by first stating, "When I play," and then expanding, "as soon as I see something about KS on the chatlog, I know my team will lose." This story relates *Sonaviuse's* experience of a similar situation and elaborates on *SurrealSwervet's* initial post by agreeing kill stealing is disadvantageous to the team and causes teamwork to break down, typically resulting in poorer coordinated play.

A final additional story is offered by the player *BandaidManSteve* in Lines 25-24. He begins his post by stating, "One game," and proceeds to tell a story about a player who would get upset when other teammates would slay the opponents he was strategizing against. He uses reported speech to narrate the experience, claiming this other player would typically accuse other teammates of stealing kills. He reports he would say in response, "Bro, it's a team game, doesn't really matter who get it" (Lines 29-30). This use of "bro" in Line 29, is also used by *SurrealSwervet* in his original post, "all I can really think is seriously bro?" in Line 16. This particular second story illustrates how second stories often build upon or reuse prior speech through strategies of co-production such as format tying (*see* Section 4.4.1).

In the next example (*see* Excerpt 4.5), the player *Alkhrize* launches into an elaborate initial story about how over the past two weeks, he has improved his game skills by learning from other, more advanced players. He talks about how much this has helped him, and how it's allowed him to raise his win ration from 43% to around 54% of all games attempted (Line 20). Within this narrative, he begin by talking about how in the past, he complained a lot about elo hell (Line 4), or the belief that one is somehow unfairly stuck at what is believed to be an unwarranted ability level ranking. Throughout his narrative, he explains how he comes to

believe that elo hell does not actually exist (Line 28), and that he's at the ranking he's at because he in fact belongs there, and still has a lot to learn (Line 29).

Excerpt 4.5: Second Stories Example 2

1	Alkhrize:	Over the course of the last 2 weeks
2		I've climbed up from Bronze 4 in less than 20 games.
3		I'm not gonna lie, I DID make a thread whinning about
4		elo hell and how bad it was, I got a lot of replies.
5		Some good, being able to relate to me,
6		some better constructive criticism,
7		some bad "omfg kid stfu you're so bad lol".
8		All in all I took a lot out of all the replies,
9		I decided to then seek help from higher elo players.
10		I had the pleasure to play a few games with Dreamzlol,
11		he taught me in our 1v1 that I needed to work on my
12		trading quite a bit, since them I've improved.
13		I also had the pleasure of talking with xDingwithsalad,
14		he helped me figure out what I could be doing better
15		(csing, map awareness, and decision making,
16		most importantly MAIN 1 CHAMPION).
17		Since then I've taken what I learned
18		and really raised my game level.
19		Like I've been winning games a lot more often.
20		I've gone from like 43% win rate to around 54% now.
21		The most important thing I learned though
22		was from watching Trick2G streaming,
23		at one point he said something like,
24		"If you wanna carry yourself out don't die."
25		I tried that my last few Nidalee games
26		have been with very few deaths
27		and honestly I think I carried those.
28		But yeah Elo Hell doesn't exist.
29		I'm currently in Bronze 2 because I belong here,
30		I'm still climbing don't get me wrong,
31		but wherever I stop is where I belong though.
32		I'd like to thank those kind players that helped me out.
33		The ones I named. Thank you very much.
34	Teysan:	**Exactly what happened to me,**
35		**Went from a 20% win rate to a 52% win rate.**
36	Alkhrize:	**I know how you feel being in bronze 2 as well :P**
37		**Especially so because I've been playing lots of jungle.**

38	TheRealBobDole*:*	**In the last few weeks I've gone from b5 to b1.**
39		**It does exist, because the definition is subjective.**
40		**You could say purple doesn't exist**
41		**and technically be right**
42		**because it is only purple as long as you define it as such.**
43		**For some people it exists, for others it doesn't.**
44		**It's that simple.**

In the responses that follow, other players explain how they have also improved. In Line 34, *Teysan* aligns with *Alkhrize's* original posting by commenting, 'exactly what happened to me." This response acknowledges that *Teysan* shares a similar experience, and further comments on this shared understanding by also posting that he has comparably improved, going from "a 20% win rate to a 52% win rate" (Line 35). In the two lines that follow, *Alkhrize* responds to this story by ratifying this experience, saying "I know how you feel being in Bronze 2 as well" (Line 36). Starting in Line 38, the player *TheRealBobDole* also shares a similar story of improvement. He states that "In the last few weeks, I've gone from b5 to b1 [Bronze 5 to Bronze 1]". While this comment suggests he understands *Alkhrize's* experience, he does not completely agree with his comments on the nonexistence of elo hell. In Line 39, he suggests that "it does exist, because the definition is subjective," and he later repeats, "for some people it exists, for others it doesn't," in Line 43. While *TheRealBobDole* does not completely agree with *Alkhrize's* argument against the existence of elo hell, he produces a second story that functions to co-produce an interaction, built upon perceived common references and understanding. This understanding is co-produced through interaction, and particularly through building and expanding on the talk of prior speakers in conversation.

4.5 SYMBOLIC MARKERS OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY

In her book, *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice among Latina Youth Gangs*, Mendoza-Denton (2008) discusses the ways in which gang membership is signified and differentiated by a wide range of semiotic markers that follow highly stylized rules for not only speech, but also hair, makeup, style of clothing, and even particular ways of walking. In the mid-1990s, she describes how police departments sought out youth who wore ubiquitous clothing items like hairnets, white-t-shirts, Dickies pants, and other "gang identifies." Certain colored clothing was believed to also point to gang membership. In her discussion of gang girls, she found that girls symbolically mark their membership in particular regional gang groups through differences in the semiotics of their personal appearances. For example, she describes how Norteñas differentiated themselves from Sureñas by wearing their hair long and feathered, as opposed to a smooth, high ponytail. They also symbolically marked their identities through heaviness of eyeliner and color of lipstick. Together, these semiotic markers, and their corresponding lexicon, function to make the girls noticeably distinguishable to each other, marking their membership in their respective regional groups. Yet despite all these differences, there were also similarities in general style that crossed both groups and were recognized across group boundaries and wider audiences unassociated with gangs.

In this section, I discuss how League of Legends players use particular semiotic markers to signify their community identity, and to differentiate themselves within the larger community and other kinds of gamers. I discuss the types of clothing and uniforms worn, as well as the kinds of costumes players typically create and wear at live tournaments events. Further, I discuss the kinds of training and practices that competitive players often take part in to mark themselves as serious competitors. These practices often involve their physical strength and

dexterity at local gyms, practicing together in communal gaming houses, drinking energy drinks, and building and updating gaming set-ups, like high-performing computers.

4.5.1 Clothing and Dress

At tournaments and live events, players wear t-shirts and hoodies that display game-related artwork and community-related terms and references. This apparel is specific to the League of Legends community, is typically purchased from the company, related online stores, or players themselves, who create homemade items (*see* Figure 4.8, Figure 4.9). Additionally, this apparel is sometimes distributed to players who attend major eSports tournaments and community events, and is included in the price of admission. These t-shirts function as semiotic markers that allow players to both recognize other community members and to distinguish themselves from other gaming communities, who also have specialized apparel and online marketplaces.

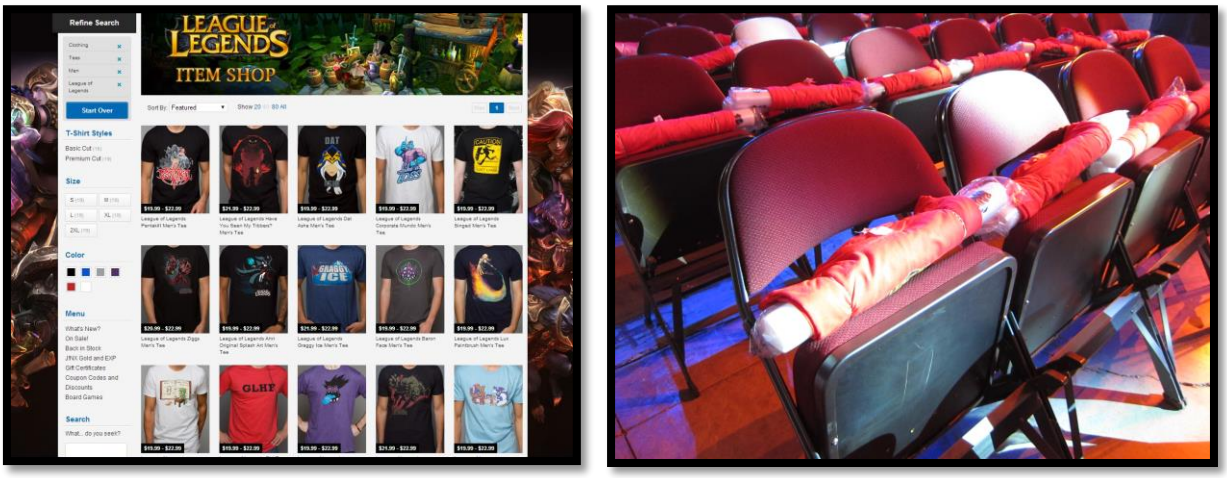


Figure 4.8: League of Legends Item Shop on Jinx.com;
Figure 4.9: T-Shirts Distributed at League of Legends Season 2 World Championship

One of the most prominent and well-recognized semiotic markers of identity in the League of Legends community is what is referred to as a *Teemo Hat* (*see* Figure 4.10). Teemo is a champion from the game who wears a bright green hat with attached red goggles. Within the community he is one of the most loved and hated characters and community members regularly engage in conversation around this divide. The hats were originally sold at live events only, and then shortly after, become available for purchase online, on the company's sponsored merchandise shop. However, since these hats have been discontinued on the company's website, they have since been popping up on more secondary markets like, ebay and etsy, all around the world, as they are still in high demand.

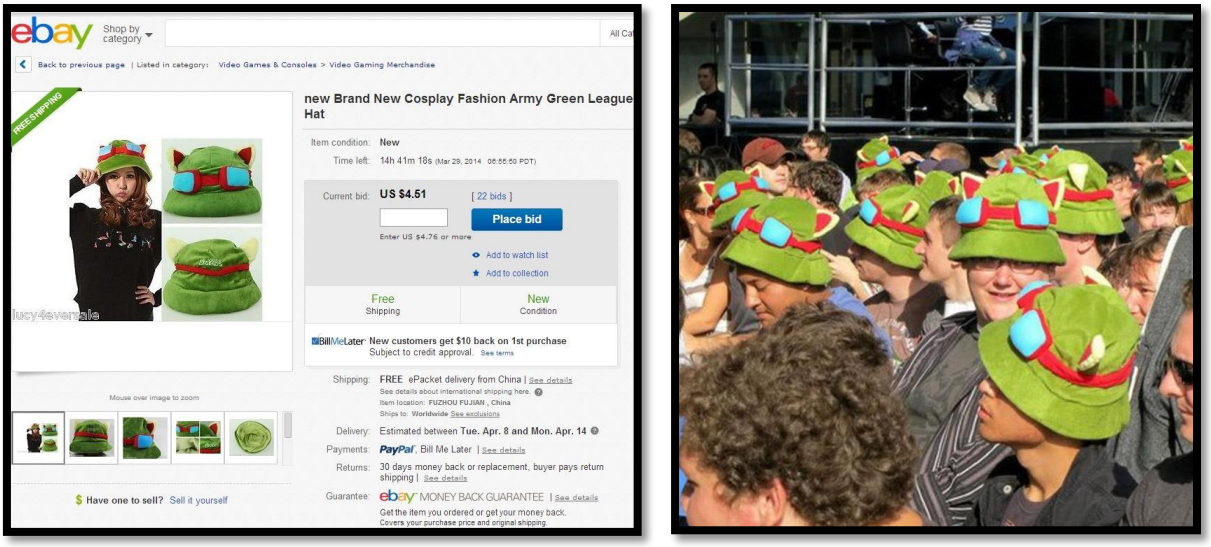


Figure 4.10: League of Legends Teemo Hats

These hats serve as material markers of identity in the League of Legends community. To other community members, they are easily recognized and function to help players identify other players of the game at large gaming events, where gamers who play different games and are part of other gaming communities are present. To members outside the community, who

might not be familiar with video games, they still function to mark individuals wearing the hat as belonging to a particular group, tied to a particular group identity.

Within the larger League of Legends community, professional players differentiate themselves from other, more casual players, by wearing particular team jerseys or uniforms. These uniforms vary greatly in style and images. For instance, as seen in Figure 4.11, Moscow Five's team uniform consists of a red and white jersey, worn casually with jeans and sneakers. A close-up of the jersey illuminates the team's logo, sponsor (BENQ), and country. On the right of the sleeve of the jersey is a small Russian flag, while on the left can be seen the Russian Imperial Eagle. These nationalist images suggest that although the team Moscow Five belong to the larger League of Legends community, they also belong to smaller niche communities like their professional team and their network of sponsors, as well as overlapping cultural, linguistic, and regional communities.

Figure 4.11: Moscow Five's Team Uniforms

In the following examples (*see* Figure 4.12), community membership is again displayed as multiple and overlapping. In the red t-shirts worn by the professional team Saigon Jokers

(left image), the yellow and red flag of Vietnam is worn on players' chests on the upper right hand corner. The uniforms of the South Korean team Abuzu Frost (right image), are noticeably similar to the uniforms worn by the country's military. This resemblance points to a gaming identity that is nested within an even larger cultural and socio-political identity.

Figure 4.12: Uniform of Saigon Jokers and Abuzu Frost

In some cases, sponsored team names are not unique to League of Legends teams. Often times, companies who sponsor eSports have teams that specialize and play different eSports games, and use variations of the same team name to distinguish between groups. These uniforms typically primarily feature sponsors names and logos most prominently. For instance, CLG [Counter Logic Gaming] has a North American League of Legends team as well as a European team (*see* Figure 4.13, left image). The colors and logos of these two teams are very similar, and

do not typically focus on regional or cultural markers of identity. In a similar way, the uniforms of the American team, Team Dignitas (*see* Figure 4.13, right image), also display mostly sponsors, as players come from a wide range of backgrounds, and sponsors prefer featuring their brands and products over other cultural or regional representations.

Figure 4.13: Uniforms of Counter Logic Gaming EU and Team Dignitas

Physical apparel functions as a material, semiotic marker of identity in the League of Legends community. From t-shirts to uniform jerseys, this apparel distinguishes community members from non-community members visually through style and reference. It also distinguishes smaller, niche groups within the larger League of Legends community, as well as larger, overlapping communities tied to regions, cultures, languages, and other identities.

4.5.2 Cosplay and Performing Gender

Cosplay, which is short for "costume play," is a performance art, particularly common in Japan, and increasing growing in popularity around the world. This role-playing practice requires participants to wear costumes and accessories representing specific fictional characters from video games, comic books, or movies. In the League of Legends community, this practice is very popular, particularly at gaming events and tournaments. Social media and the Internet have enabled many cosplayers to create social networks and websites featuring photographs of their costumes and appearances at these live events. These cosplayers attract fans from around the world, who through social media and engagement online, form niche networks within the greater League of Legends community. Cosplayers engage in this kind of performance art for many reasons, including but not limited to the desire to express adoration to a particular fictional character, to attract the attention and admiration of other community members at live events, and to gain a sense of accomplishment through art and costume design.

While some manufacturers sell packaged outfits for use in cosplay, most cosplayers create their own costumes and outfits using textiles, body paint, sculpture, woodworking, fiberglass, and paper mache. The detail and intricacy of these costumes can range greatly and may include simple ensembles, quickly put together, as well as very detailed costumes that have taken years to make by hand. Synthetic wigs and props are typical additions to most costumes, as well as body modifications like colored contact lenses, temporary tattoos, and hair coloring (*see* Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14: League of Legends Cosplayers at Gamescom in Cologne, Germany; August 2012

In the League of Legends community, cosplay is performed by both men and women at community events, as well as peoples of all ages (*see* Figure 4.15). As discussed earlier, these costumes are modeled after champions, or characters, from the game. At many of these events, cosplayers complete against each other in public costume contests. In these contests, cosplayers showcase their costumes on stage, in front of lives audiences, and are also expected to perform, to some extent, the attitude, pose, or expression of the character represented. Cosplayers may compete either alone or in a larger group, and sometimes prepare and perform skits, or short dances. Prizes are typically awarded to costumes most liked and cheered for by the audience in attendance.

Figure 4.15: Cottontail Teemo from League of Legends; Cottontail Teemo Cosplayer; PAX West 2012

In League of Legends, most male champions wear large suits of armor, carry giant weapons, or have other costumes, which for the most part, cover most of their bodies. A couple of these costumes can be seen below. In Figure 4.16, the image on the left is a picture of the League of Legends champion Garen, who is a melee fighter. On the image on the right, a cosplayer represents Garen by incorporating his large, yellow and blue shoulder armor, his draping blue cloak, and his large, embellished metal sword.

Figure 4.16: Garen from League of Legends; Garen Cosplayer, Gamescom 2012

In the next example (*see* Figure 4.17), a cosplayer portrays the League of Legends champion Mordekaiser, the Master of Metal. This cosplayer is dressed in head to toe is constructed "metal" armor. This cosplayer, later revealed to be male, is hardly visible, except for his eyes behind his mask, much like the image of Mordekaiser on the left. He carries a large, constructed mace with both hands, held to look like he is ready to engage in combat.

Figure 4.17: Mordekaiser from League of Legends; Mordekaiser Cosplayer, PAX West 2012

In Figure 4.18, a cosplay pair stands side by side. The male in the picture is dressed to represent the champion Singed, the Mad Chemist of League of Legends. He wears a suit of cloth and armor, carries a huge shield, and a tank of poison gas on his back. Across his face, he wears a gas mask. Beside him in the photograph is a woman portraying the champion Annie, the Dark Child. She wears a purple dress of modest length, a purple wig, and carries a backpack, along with a teddy bear named Tibbers.

Again it can be seen that the Singed costume is mostly full body armor, and the cosplayer has invested a lot of energy in producing props for his costume. Annie's costume mostly consists of her outfit, and since the champion from the game is a child, her created costume also appears girl-like, covering most of her body.

Figure 4.18: Singed and Annie from League of Legends; Singed and Annie Cosplayers, PAX West 2012

Yet, in many cosplay costumes worn by women at these live gaming events, which are based on game art, hemlines and necklines are cut extremely liberally to exaggerate and sexualize features of the female body. For example, in Figure 4.19, the cosplayer dresses up to resemble the League of Legends champion Morgana, the Fallen Angel, featured in the drawing on the left. In this picture, Morgana wears a form-fitting red dress that is cut to reveal her chest and midriff. To the left of this image, the cosplayer's costume matches in design. She poses in a similar stance to the Morgana drawing, holding a sphere of imaginary dark magic.

In the next example (see Figure 4.20), a cosplayer dresses up to represent Katarina, a League of Legends champion known as the Sinister Blade. This costume, like the Morgana costume, is based on game art, which depicts Katarina wearing leather armor that consists of only pants, a jacket, and a bra.

Figure 4.19: Morgana from League of Legends; Morgana Cosplayer, PAX West 2012

In this photograph, the cosplayer dressed as Katarina poses for the camera with her blades held high in a battle position. Her expression is fierce, emulating the melee assassin from the game. The purpose of this chapter is not to criticize the costumes made by women in the community, but rather to highlight various differences observed between costumes worn by men and women, and perhaps the various expectations and styles encouraged of women cosplayers in the community. These expectations are constructed not only by the art put out by the company, but also by other cosplaying women, and the larger League of Legends community more broadly, which is composed mostly of heterosexual, young adult men.

In the last example, this exaggerated feminine style is again seen in the cosplayer's selected costume. In this image, the cosplayer is dressed to represent the champion, Malzahar, the Prophet of the Void, as seen in the drawing on the left.

Figure 4.20: Katarina from League of Legends; Katarina Cosplayer, PAX West 2012

In this example (see Figure 4.21), the cosplayer chooses to wear a costume that does not completely resemble the game character's apparel. Instead of a shirt, she chooses to wear a blue bra, which exposes her midriff. This example represents a phenomenon that is somewhat common among women community members who choose to dress up at these live group events. While many women choose a female character from the game, who is somewhat sexualized already and portrayed wearing armor and clothing seemingly unfit for battle, many women also choose male champions to represent, and do so by changing their apparel in ways that match more feminine and sexualized styles.

Figure 4.21: Malzahar from League of Legends; Malzahar Cosplayer, PAX West 2012

In Japan, cosplayers refer to themselves as *reiyā,* pronounced as "layer" to describe the many layers that cosplayers "put on" to perform their chosen character identities. Cosplay photographers are often referred to as cameko, meaning "camera boy." Even in this particular terminology, gender is embedded in the various roles that men and women typically take on in the practice of cosplay. Women often perform particular gendered stylized identities, while men, more often, gaze upon or photograph these performers. Photographs of performers are often uploaded to social media after events and evaluated by both men and women. These photographs are often commented on by hundreds and sometimes thousands of people, who more often than not, highlight the sexual appeal of the performer more often than the craftsmanship of the costume. Words such as "fed," a game term used to describe a champion who has gotten so large by defeating enemies and attaining enough resources to buy powerful gear, are used by players on social media to refer to people who are overweight or unattractive.

4.5.3 Other Material Markers of Identity

In addition to linguistic and material styles, League of Legends community members also associate various products with their community identities. Although these products, particularly computer hardware, range in brand and type, players often discuss and evaluate products together. They determine what the most powerful products are to buy, and how to configure them to produce the fastest, most responsive gaming machines. Players also talk about gaming set-ups, or desks, and general spaces for gaming.

For some professional gaming teams, their "set-ups" include entire gaming houses. In these houses, entire teams live together in order to maximize gaming time. As part of their professional training, teams often participate in diet plan routines together. In order to compete at the highest level, players often train together at the gym, to increase dexterity, focus, and strength, away from the screen.

For many players more broadly, this focus and energy is often achieved through consuming and relying on energy drinks. The company *Monster*, in particular, is a prominent sponsor of eSports, and commercials regularly feature games and gamers.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed how players construct community identities through language, discourse practices, and material markers of sameness and differentiation. Players who understand and use the lexicon of the community, are viewed as authentic community members. Similarly, on social media, players display authenticity when they can relate to the stories and experiences of other players by producing their own related second stories, and by

building on the prior speech of participants in the interaction. This is achieved through co-participating in conversation and by displaying common understanding through strategies like format tying. Further, players mark themselves as authentic community members by adhering to the particular material styles of the community.

FIVE

CO-CREATING COMMUNITY THOUGH MORAL FRAMEWORKS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The analytic concept of "community" is a way for scholars to draw reference to how people operate, and thus interact, within shared belief and value systems regarding their own culture, society, history, and practices of communicating (Morgan 2004). By drawing reference to the social boundaries of community, and making sense of this concept analytically, scholars are able to illuminate and discuss the very ways language and communication represents, embodies, and constitutes meaningful participation in specified cultures, groups, and societies.

A community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991), and similarly a networked community of practice, may be defined as a group of people who share a common interest or endeavor, and through mutual engagement and interaction, create a shared understanding, based on negotiated values, relationships, and repertoires (see *Chapter 2*). As such, a community of practice may inherently have established norms, internal rules, and mutual understandings, which construct membership boundaries. While these norms are often times developed from a top-down perspective, by core community leaders and members, they are simultaneously influenced and shaped by community members, from a bottom-up perspective. These co-constructed ways of being may be formalized through written documents and structures for regulating codes of conduct, but are also negotiated more informally in the everyday interactions of members of the community.

A community member is thus one who maintains these established behavioral norms and

promotes this type of engagement within the group. A community member who behaves in ways outside established norms may be chastised or have their membership revoked by core community members. As the borders and boundaries of community membership, both symbolic and physical, can often be fluid and difficult to discern, members must continuously work to define and negotiate appropriate ways of being in the community.

Often times, this type of negotiation occurs when community members engage in face-threatening acts of conflict that requires the involved members to evaluate and access each other's misbehavior through discourse and interaction. Disputes, or disagreements, are central to the co-construction of community values and norms because they require members to discuss, analyze, and form stances on what appropriate community behavior actually entails and what types of behaviors violate these norms.

In this chapter, I explore the notion of community and how it is co-constructed by players and developers of the game League of Legends (Riot Games; 2009-2014). I discuss how players and developers together negotiate moral participation and engagement through their interactions online, in-game and over social media, and offline, at conventions, tournaments, and other live events. I begin by discussing the theoretical frameworks that this analysis is informed by, particularly Erving Goffman's discussion of face and character. I then look at structures of action and the very public structures of language and communication in online media and how this outward presentation of self can be tied to notions of moral panic involving widespread public misbehavior. The next part of this chapter explores dispute management, looking specifically at both institutional dispute management strategies, and endogenous, community strategies for resolving disputes. Within this part of the chapter, I also explore interactional data related to these strategies and the stances players take regarding other players' moral and

appropriate behavior. Further, I conclude this chapter by the discussing how the construction of values in the League of Legends community can at times be different in both theory and practice and how at times there may be a disconnect between institutional and endogenous stances of moral and appropriate player behavior.

5.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Within communities of practice, members must continuously work to negotiate not only their individual identities and public self-images, but they must also work to negotiate the identity and public image of their collective organization. This public image of community is morally built through situated activity, interaction, and engagement as members define and provide accounts for what should be valued and what is not appropriate in the group at large. This co-construction of morality in everyday interaction requires the networked community of practice to continuously define who they are in terms of who they are not, and to thus negotiate community logics, rules, and boundaries of membership, with respect to members' face needs, on an ongoing basis.

5.2.1 Morality and Face

5.2.1.1 Defining Face

Traditionally, morality is defined as a set of general and decontextualized principles, which orient both the individuals' own conduct and the interpretation of others' conduct (Sterponi 2003). While some scholars discuss morality with respect to customs and rituals

(Durkheim 1954) and others in terms of a cognitive, individual process (Kohlberg 1981), this chapter approaches the concept of morality as a situated activity within the context of social interaction (e.g., Baquedano-Lopez 1997; Capps and Ochs 1995; De Leon 2000; Duranti 1993; Goodwin 1998).

Morality is constructed in everyday interpersonal interaction through the discursive practice of *face*, meaning "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contract" (Goffman 1955: 213). Noting that everyone is concerned, to some extent, with how others perceive them, he discusses how people strive to project a positive identity for others to see. To project a negative identity is to publically suffer a diminished self-image. Goffman (1955; 1959; 1961; 1967) discusses the notion of face as the jointly constructed public image or personality that a person claims for him/herself during a particular interaction.

As such, an individual's face can be threatened or discredited when their verbal and nonverbal actions are inconsistent with their projected images of self. Goffman suggests that people engage in both corrective and preventative practices in order to perform identities, support or challenge others' claims, and to deal with challenges to identity claims in everyday social interaction. Corrective practices are the strategies people employ after there has been an attack on a person's face. Corrective practices are preventative actions employed by people to avoid and prevent threats to harming one's face or the face of others.

In this reasoning, individuals have a moral obligation to prevent defacement and are therefore compelled to engage in cooperative and considerate facework. This type of work strives to save face and the face of others through tactful and courteous behavior. In this way, people seek to avoid threats to the self and strive to maintain the ritual order (Goffman 1967).

5.2.1.2 Politeness Theory

Drawing from Goffman's analysis, Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define face as the public image every person wants to claim and discuss face as consisting of two related aspects: positive face and negative face. Positive face concerns the desire by a person to be appreciated and approved of by selected others, and negative face concerns a person's want to be unimpeded and free from imposition (Tracy 1990: 210). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these two related aspects of face are needs required universally by all people.

In everyday interaction, a *Face Threatening Act* (FTA) is an act that has the potential to damage someone's positive or negative face. These acts may be verbal speech acts (e.g., requesting, warning, recriminating, threatening, insulting, teasing), conveyed in features of speech (e.g., tone, inflection), or forms of non-verbal communication (e.g., gaze, gesture). Positive face is threatened when the another person in the interaction produces a negative assessment of the person's positive face, meaning he/she expresses disapproval by either directly or indirectly disliking the person's personal attributes (e.g., insults, accusations, complaints) or by implying that the person is irrational or wrong (e.g., contradictions, challenges, disagreements).

Negative face is threatened when one person's freedom of choice and action are obstructed by another person in interaction. In this type of interaction, damage may be done to either the speaker of the hearer, as one of the interlocutors in interaction is made to submit their will to the other, therefore threatening the interlocutor's freedom of choice and action. For example, an act that shows that the speaker is succumbing to the power of the hearer (e.g., expressing thanks, accepting an apology, excuses, acceptance of offers the speaker does not want

to do) does damage to the speaker. Likewise, an act that affirms or denies a future act of the hearer creates pressure on the hearer to perform or not perform the act (e.g., requests, suggestions, reminders, threats) cause damage to the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987).

In a similar way, positive face may also be threatened (Brown and Levinson 1987). Positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not attend to the interactor's feelings and wants, or does not want what the other person wants. Damage is done to the hearer when the speaker produces a negative assessment of the hearer's positive face or expresses disapproval by either 1) directly or indirectly disliking the hearer's possessions or personal attributes (e.g., insults, accusations, complaints) or 2) by implying that the hearer is irrational or wrong (e.g., contradictions, challenges, disagreements). A hearer's positive face may also be threatened when the speaker expresses indifference toward the hearer's positive face, the speaker indicates that he doesn't have the same values as the hearer, or when the speaker misidentifies the hearer in an offensive way. Damage is done to the speaker's positive face when he or she engages in action that portrays the speaker is wrong or unable to control him/herself (e.g., apologies, confessions, acceptance of a compliment, inability to control one's emotions).

Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss politeness as being any behavior that serves to offset potential face damage to the speaker and hearer in interaction. They discuss five major strategies for dealing with the production of a potential face-threatening act, which I discuss briefly below:

1. *By being "bald-on-record*": Bald-on-record strategies are blunt and explicit. They do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face (e.g. directives, warnings, advice), but can also be used to minimize face-threatening acts implicitly, typically when the speaker and hearer have a close relationship.

2. *Positive Politeness*: Positive politeness strategies include showing homage or respect to the face of the other. These strategies are used to make the hearer feel positively about his or her personal attributes, interests, or possessions. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these strategies may include compliments, solidarity in-group identity markers, exaggerated interest in the hearer's interests, joking, and avoiding disagreement.
3. *Negative politeness*: Negative politeness strategies orient towards the hearer's right to not be intruded upon and aim to recognize the hearer's rights to autonomy. Brown and Levinson (1987) provide examples of this strategy, including indirect speech, hedges or questions, passive constructions, using plural nouns, and apologies.
4. *By going off-record:* Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss this strategy as being the indirect politeness strategy, as it uses indirect language and uses implied, and hence deniable, language. An example of this indirect strategy might be a person who says while in conversation "What are you eating? That looks really good," insinuating that the speaker would like to have some of the hearer's food without explicitly making the request.
5. *By not doing the face threatening act at all*

As outlined, speakers have access to a wide range of verbal politeness strategies to redress loss of face. Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) further discuss the choice of strategy speakers have, and consider three sociological variables: social distance between parties, power relations between parties, and the ranking of the threat of the face-threatening act. They

suggest that speakers make strategic choices based on relationships and their social, situational contexts.

5.2.1.3 Face Constituting Theory

Face Constituting Theory seeks to address the question of how people achieve face in everyday talk (Arundale 2010). This theory is distinct form Goffman (1955) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) theoretical frameworks in two ways. First, Face Constituting Theory utilizes the *Conjoint Co-constructing Model* for human communication (Arundale 1999), which explores how meaning and action are achieved in everyday talk and associated non-linguistic conduct. Building on the work of Sacks et al. (1974), Schegloff (1992), and Heritage (1984), this model assumes three principles, including the *Adjacent Placement Principle*, the *Sequential Interpreting Principle*, and the *Recipient Design Principle*. The Adjacent Placement Principle assumes that participants interpret the utterance currently being produced, as being designed in view of the immediately prior utterance, and as such, is grounds for designing immediately next actions (Arundale 2010: 2081). The Sequential Interpreting Principle assumes that recipients interpret the utterance currently being produced using both knowledge and expectations arising in designing and interpreting prior utterances (2082). Further, the Recipient Design Principle assumes that speakers frame their utterances based on expectations arising from prior speech and thus attribute, presume, anticipate, and produce their own next moves based on these prior components. Second, this model also employs a new understanding of face as emerging from the relationship two or more persons create with one another in situated interaction. This focus on the relational connectedness between people at both the culture-general and culture-specific levels, is distinct from the understanding of face in previous theories because it diverges from

person-centered attributes like identity, public self-image, and social wants (Arundale 2006). In this way of thinking about face, the entwining of the individual with the social is framed as a dialectic or dualism in which the two phenomena function interdependently in a united, dynamic, interactive manner.

Face Constituting Theory also differs in its understanding of face threats. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) work of politeness theory, interpretings of face are understood to be intrinsically threatening or supportive, by reference to group, societal, or cultural rankings of level of threat (Arundale 2010: 2092). In this new conceptualization, face interpretings are evaluated as threatening to, in stasis, or supportive of relationships. Through the process of evaluating, speakers project recipient interpreting based on prior and current utterances of others in conversation in order to make future utterances. Face interpretings are in stasis when the speaker engages in routine speech and evaluates his/her relationship with others people in the interaction as neither threatened nor supported. Face is interpreted as supportive when the situated shift in a conversation involves convergence or divergence and the proffered shift involves the same. Further, situated shifts that involve proffered shifts which have do not have the same convergence or divergence are interpreted to involve too much separation and are thus evaluated as threatening, rude, or aggravating (in the absence of support).

Face Constituting Theory lends itself to the study of how players and developers together co-construct social norms and ways of being in that it emphasizes the complex, emergent properties of interaction which transcend the characteristics of the individuals that jointly produce it (Arundale 1987: 48). Through online interaction, players together are in continuous conversation, interpreting and evaluating prior comments and talk in order to produce further next moves. This evaluating, often done through assessments, allows players and developers to

negotiate what stasis, support, and threat are in terms of defining community boundaries, social norms, and collective ways of being.

5.2.2 Character

5.2.2.1 Character Contest

In addition to face, Goffman (1967) is interested in the action that bears on an individual's character, or moral capacity, to maintain full physical and emotional self-control under the stress of face-threatening interaction or activity. Similar to face, Goffman suggests that each interactant is concerned with establishing evidence of strong character and to protecting this evidence. However, this evidence may only be truly established at the expense of the character of the other interactant involved in interaction, meaning the very field one uses to express character is often another individual's character expression.

In everyday interaction, individuals may engage in interpersonal disputes and thus have the opportunity to exhibit composure in social situations where two interactants aggressively use each other as a field of action to express or affirm their character at the expense of the other interactant's character. In these types of interactions, or *character contests*, where people try to score points against each other (Goffman 1967: 240), interpersonal dispute becomes much a moral game of skill and cunning, courtesy and calculation. While character contests occur more explicatively in contexts of games and sports, they also occur implicitly in everyday interactions, and may include speech activities such as bargaining, threatening, excuse-making, complimenting, and promising, in order to allow an person to measure his or her self-control against another.

Although Goffman suggests that character contests are rare in everyday interactions, as people seek to maintain the ritual order, he states that they nevertheless occur as people seek excitement and aggrandizement (Goffman 1967: 240). Whereas Goffman's notion of face emphasizes that people engage in ritual respect to each other to maintain the normative order of society, his notion of character suggests that individuals are also interested in at times increasing their self worth at the expense of others' character.

5.2.2.2 Impoliteness

Within the body of literature discussing politeness, there has been little analysis of impoliteness itself. Spencer-Oatey (2000) attributes this research gap to the fact that work on impoliteness may be dependent on a view of conversation that emphasizes conversational contracts and harmonious social relations. Mills (2010: 60) argues that "rather than assuming that there is something intrinsically impolite about certain utterances or exchanges, impoliteness is attributed to a speaker on the basis of assessments of their intentions and motivations, and these assessments are informed by beliefs about gender which may emanate from the Community of Practice or from wider society." In this way, she argues that impoliteness should be examined in its own terms since impoliteness has to be seen as an assessment of someone's behavior rather than a quality intrinsic to an utterance (Mills 2010: 60).

Building on the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987), many scholars assume that impoliteness is an attack on the face of the interlocutors and that these utterances are performed with the purpose of attacking or undermining the speaker's face (Haverkate 1988: 394). Nevertheless, some scholars argue that impoliteness may be used for other purposes. For instance, insults have been observed to signal camaraderie, in-group solidarity, and close

friendship (Coates 2003; De Klerk 1997). Tannen (1981) argues that within high-involvement groups, impoliteness may be a part of social bonding. Along with these scholars, Culpeper (1996), in his analysis of the intersection of face threatening acts and mock politeness in an army training community, also suggests that impoliteness does not constitute an unproblematic opposite to politeness (See 4.4.1 *Raging*; Chapter 4).

Broadly speaking, the term impoliteness is difficult to define and is struggled over at present. Politeness and impoliteness cannot be taken to be polar opposites because impoliteness functions in very different and context-specific ways (Mills 2010). In this way, scholars of impoliteness (Bousfield 2008; Culpeper 1996; Mills 2010), argue that impoliteness should be studied in a contextualized way (even though their work does not do much contextualizing), focusing on interaction, norms, and beliefs within the Community of Practice unit of analysis.

5.2.3 Structures of Action

The structures of action, particularly directives and assessments, are particularly relevant to the study of social norms and moral community identities. By understanding the structures of action, we are better able to understand the very ways that community members build meaning in relation to their moral orders and social relationships.

5.2.3.1 *Directives*

Goodwin (1990: 65) states that a directive, or an utterance designed to get someone else to do something, is one key speech resourced utilized to coordinate the action of individuals. This definition is similar to the way in which Becker (1982:1) discusses the notion of a request as "an utterance that is intended to indicate the speaker's desire to regulate the behavior of the

listener, that is, to get the listener to do something (e.g., provide information, give permission, perform an action." According to politeness theory, requests carry a potential threat to the face of both speaker and addressee (Brown and Levinson 1987: 81).

In her book, *He-said-she-said: talk as social organization among Black children*, Goodwin (1990) reviews some of the major themes that have guided early research on directives. First, she explains that two different solutions to the question of how an utterance is interpreted as a directive have been proposed. She states that, "one describes discourse maxims and underlying constitutive rules for building speech acts, while the other focuses on the placement of an utterance within a larger sequence of action" (Goodwin 1990: 67). Instead of focusing on features of the utterance in isolation, scholars interested in interaction argue that talk should be interpreted as components of sequences or in the contexts of its sequential placement (Becker 1982; Dore 1978; McTear 1980; Wootton 1981, 1984).

The second major theme in the analysis of directives Goodwin (1990: 67) discusses focuses on ties between the shape of directives and the amount of control they propose that speaker can exert over addressee. There are different directive formats that speakers can construct which are designed to get the addressee to do something. One format suggests that the addressee has varying levels of control over whether the request will be performed (e.g., Would it be possible for you to help me fight this monster?), while other formats require the addressee to perform the action being requested (e.g., Help me fight this monster.).

Labov and Fanshel (1977: 84) argue that, "subjects may mitigate or modify their expressions to avoid creating offense." The varying ways of constructing a directive display varying degrees of aggravation or mitigation. Ervin-Tripp (1977) suggests that the degree of aggravation or mitigation in the way the directive or request is framed is related partly to the

degree of "expectancy on the part of the speaker of compliance by the addressee" (1977: 194). Direct imperative directive forms are ranked as most aggravated to addressees, while indirect forms display different levels of mitigation.

Ervin-Tripp (1977) suggests that the existing relationship between speakers and the degree of deference linked to differential power or status, may affect the ways directives are constructed. Her work proposes a slightly different typology for directives in which requests are "ordered approximately according to the relative power of speaker and addressee in conventional usage and the obviousness of the directive" (Ervin-Tripp 1976: 29). This ordering includes need statements (e.g., I need help slaying this dragon.), imperatives (e.g., Help me slay this dragon.), imbedded imperatives (e.g., Could you help me slay this dragon), permission directives (e.g., May I have help slaying this dragon?), question directives (e.g., Help slaying this dragon?), and hints (e.g., This dragon is hard to slay on my own.). This ranking implies that syntactic shape alone cannot be used to measure aggravation; a direct imperative form may not necessarily be heard as a social imposition, while an indirect form may constitute an aggravated action (e.g. hints). This discussion suggests that the ways in which a directive is formatted is closely tied to theories of politeness and that because requests impose on the addressee's claim to freedom of action, they may be seen as face-threatening acts in which speakers may be socially motivated to minimize the imposition involved in the act itself (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 201).

Further, the third theme in the analysis of directives Goodwin (1990) relates to the social frames that encompass the directive. In this section, Goodwin talks about how to account for speaker's choices in performing a directive when the same directive can also be performed in alternative ways (Goodwin 1990: 71). She emphasizes how an encompassing social field, influenced by status, power relationships, and situations, constrains the choice of directives

within it (Goodwin 1990: 71). This analytical point of departure starts from the social situation and moves inward to examine the form of directives, as opposed to beginning with the utterance and working outward to features of participants or situations.

5.3.3.2. *Stance and Assessments*

Goffman (1967) discusses the ways in which people seek esteem within the context of interaction. A person's demeanor, or the ways one acts toward other people, is conveyed through three defining aspects; deportment, dress, and bearing (Goffman 1967: 77). Others judge these behavioral qualities as being admirable or disadmirable within the context of interaction. Deference, or esteem, is received when members of a group subscribe to and perform interactional group norms, to which the group values as socially relevant and meaningful. A person who is deemed as possessing a favored demeanor is one who is typically well accepted within the interacting group.

A well-esteemed member of a group typically assumes a stance that conveys appropriate respect for others and fitting demeanor. Du Bois (2007: 163) defines stance as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically though overt communicative means (language, gesture, and other symbolic forms), through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field." According to Du Bois, "stance objects" are not just material, but include language and stancetaking itself. Other scholars build on this definition, suggesting that the display of emotion is a situated practice entailed in speakers' performance of affective stance through intonation, gesture, and body posture (Goodwin and Goodwin 2000; Goodwin et al. 2012; Ochs 1996)

Jaffe (2008) also discusses this notion of stance, giving definition to the orientations of the terrain occupied by the sociolinguistics of stance. She states that a sociolinguistics of stance (Jaffe 2008: 24) situates linguistic acts of stance within the sociocultural matrices that give stances their social meanings and frame the ways in which this kind of linguistic behavior is socially consequential. She discusses how stance explores the ways in which established sociolinguistic indexicalities serve as backdrop and resource for acts of stancetaking and the ways in which taking a stance contributes to categories of social hierarchy. She discusses stance as central to the ways in which speakers take up positions and shape their social worlds through alignment, disalignment, and the negotiation of power. Stance therefore must be accounted for in analyses of identity and performance, constituted and co-constructed across time and over encounters (Jaffe 2008: 24).

One way stance may be analyzed is through the production and study of assessments in interaction. An assessment is the evaluative classification of someone or something with respect to its worth (Pomerantz 1984). When people take part in social activities, assessments are produced as products of participation (Pomerantz 1984: 57). By making an initial assessment, the first speaker claims access to and authority over the assessed referent. Through their commentary, they aim to accomplish an action or multiple actions such as praise, complain, compliment, insult, brag, and self-depreciate (Pomerantz 1984: 63). Although first assessments allow for both agreement and disagreement with the claims stated, assessments may also be structured so that they invite one response over the other.

According to Pomerantz (1984: 81), in contexts where agreement is dispreferred, such as when a speaker makes a self-deprecating assessment, disagreement accomplishes support. Components of disagreeing to self-deprecations include partial repeats, negations, and

compliments. The use of negations and compliments disagree with the initial assessment by offering a contrasting second assessment. A speaker can disagree in this context by stating that the assessment made by the initial speaker makes no claim of access, or is faulty in reasoning. Assessments of disagreement can also be proffered through recategorizing the attribute being evaluated into something deemed positive. (e.g., "Her haircut would not work on me, but she wears it well.").

The study of assessments permits the analysis of 1) Procedures participants use to coordinate their perspectives with each other, and 2) The products of these procedures (particular agreements or disagreements about specific events and how they should be interpreted and evaluated). Pomerantz's initial description of assessment turns influenced much more research on evaluation and agreement and disagreement turns. Sacks (1987) and Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) discuss agreeing and disagreeing assessment turns as structurally different, aligning with Pomerantz's analysis. Building on this literature, Jacobs and Jackson (1989) describe the shape of opinion-negotiation, or what they term "conversational argument." They define this negotiation as "a kind of 'repair and prepare' mechanism designed to regulate the appearance of disagreement in a rule system built to prefer agreement" (Jacobs and Jackson 1989: 158). Goodwin and Goodwin (1992:166) further expand on Pomerantz's work by identifying assessments as central components in interpreting qualitative data by claiming, "Assessments reveal not just neutral objects in the world, but an alignment taken up toward phenomena by a particular actor." Drawing on Schegloff's research (1996), Heritage's (2005) work also suggests that persons in the midst of jointly evaluating states of affairs are concerned not only with agreement, but also with who is agreeing with whom.

5.2.5 Structures of Self Presentation Online

5.2.5.1 *Footing and Social Media*

In linguistic anthropology, the concept of participation has been defined as "one framework for investigating how multiple parties build action together while both attending to and helping to construct relevant action and context" (Goodwin and Goodwin 2004: 240). There are two complementary approaches to the study of participation, namely footing and stance. Footing (see Goffman 1981) represents a sort of basic typology capable of describing many different kinds of participants that could be implicated in the act of speaking and interaction. In verbal interaction, for instance, communication extends beyond the dyadic model of speaker and hearer to also account for different kinds of listeners, including ratified hearers (addressed and unaddressed recipients) and unratified hearers (bystanders, overhearers, and eavesdroppers). The speaker not only animates talk in interaction, but also does so through displaying consequential stances towards the other people in conversation and the speech in progress. Participation is not simply focused on participant roles and individual orientations, but takes into account how all speakers and hearers in conversation together build relevant action and meaning through the course of interaction.

Even though the structures of online communication are in some ways different from the structures of face-to-face communication, Goffman's interactional model may be adapted to describe the different participant roles that occur in digital interaction, particularly in the League of Legends online community. In the online community, for instance, the speaker role may shift between players in-game through use of text or voice chat. Out of game, the person assuming the speaker role may be the author of a forum posting, a youtube video, or a facebook update. The speaker, in this way, may be addressing his/her communication to a specific audience of

people (e.g., other players in the game), yet may be heard by different types of unratified hearers (e.g., developers at Riot Games, the imagined community at large, people outside the community) due to the very public and present nature of online interaction. Forum postings and responses on social media are not simply conversations between one individual and another, but conversations between thousands and possibly millions of bystanders, overhearers, and eavesdroppers. The ever-presence of the public hearer thus requires those participating in the community itself, in-game and out-of-game, to engage knowing that their actions may be viewed, discussed, and evaluated by a much wider audience. Communication in-game, postings, and other types of messaging are performed by community members with implicit understanding that their words may be re-contexutalized, on different websites and media for a completely different audience of addressees than the original intended audience.

5.2.5.2 *Moral Panic and Toxicity*

The term moral panic has been widely adopted to refer to the intense and often exaggerated feeling expressed in a population about an issue that appears to threaten the society's social order. Cohen (1972) states that moral panics occur when individuals or groups of people emerge to become a threat to societal values and interests. These people are referred to as "folk devils," as they threaten social order and generate concern, panic, and anxiety among the community or society more broadly.

Toxicity is an institutionalized term repurposed by developers at Riot Games and adopted and used colloquially by the wider League of Legends community in game and more widely on social media. Toxic community members are players who engage in negative chat, offensive language, and verbal abuse while interacting with others playing the game or engaging in social

media. The word toxicity itself implies a sort of poison. This poison conjures images of widespread infection and death, which serves as a metaphor for the serious threat these players pose to the gaming community.

Sharing several of the distinct features of moral panics, toxicity in the community and toxic players intersect widespread concern, hostility, and consensus. There is awareness in the community that the behavior of toxic players is likely to have an effect on the community at large if not eradicated. There is hostility towards the group in question and there is a clear division between toxic players and the rest of the gaming community. There is broad consensus that toxic players pose a very real threat, and although their numbers are few in scale, the action taken to address the threat of these players is disproportionately high.

Player behavior is a term used in the gaming industry, and particularly at Riot Games, to refer to the how individual players interact with others online and how this interaction contributes to either positive or negative experiences associated with the company's brand. The player behavior team, composed of mostly researchers and specialists, analyze negative, or toxic player behavior, and through experiments and implemented features, attempt to modify delinquent player behavior. While most League of Legends players engage in what Riot refers to as neutral behavior, these specialists are focused on reducing toxic behavior (e.g., negative chat; offensive language; verbal abuse) and promoting positive behavior (e.g., teamwork; helpfulness; friendliness). Features such as the *Honor Initiative*, an in-game system that encourages positive player behavior by allowing players to commend allies and opponents for excellent sportsmanship, and the *Tribunal*, which fields reports of negative player behavior for other players to evaluate and vote to discipline (e.g., formal warnings; bans), were developed and implemented by Riot to provide players with behavioral feedback that ultimately serves to

condition players to behave not just appropriately but positively in the online community.

5.3 INSTITUTIONAL DISPUTE MANAGEMENT

In the following subsections, I explore the formal, institution-implemented practices used by the company to reduce toxic behavior and to promote positive player participation in the online community. I start by discussing the written legal document distributed by the company and electronically signed by all players and community members, stating that all members will abide by certain rules and behaviors. I then discuss the *Summoner's Code*, a written document on the company's website, that outlines and strongly encourages cooperative player participation. Finally, I explain the *Honor Initiative*, the company's merit reward-system, and *The Tribunal*, the company's system for evaluating and punishing unfavorable player behavior.

Throughout this section, it is important to note that developers and players think and talk about impoliteness as being different from simply not being polite. I found that while playing the game, there was no expectation that players would necessarily be polite, but they were not considered impolite in the situations in which they disregarded another's face. Their directness was expected at certain moments and situations while playing the game and in other competitive interactions around the game that require efficient coordination. Impoliteness, on the other hand, which is discussed in the sections below, involves actions that deliberately seek to disregard another's face, through actions such as harassment, threats, stalking, and cheating.

5.3.1 Legal Codes of Conduct

The company requires all players and community members to legally agree to uphold specific codes of formal conduct. This end-user license agreement, more commonly referred to as EULA, is a legal contract between the proprietary software licensor and the software purchaser, that establishers the purchaser's right to use the software. In this textual document, containing 16 individual subsections, the company outlines their various policies regarding license uses and limitations, ownership, consent to monitoring, warranty, liability, and termination of agreement and game services (*see* Figure 5.1**)**.

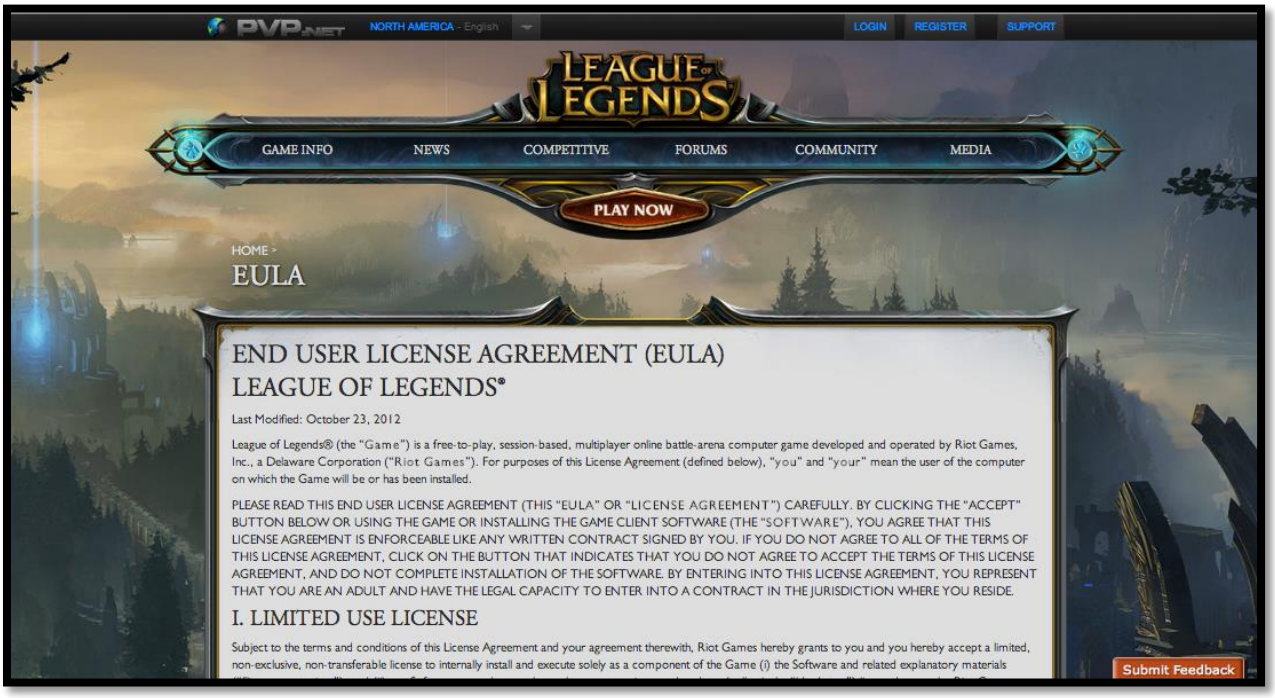


Figure 5.1 End User License Agreement (EULA)

In Section 5 of the document, the company outlines a legal *Code of Conduct* for all players and community members. In this section, twelve prohibited behaviors are stated using concise, direct written language. In the following excerpts, I will briefly discuss the content and discourse of these subsections and behaviors. As illustrated in the first excerpt below (*see*

Excerpt 5.1), the company begins this section by producing two directives in Lines 2 and 3 that are conditional on the player's use of the software and game being discussed (Line 1). When using this software, players must agree to comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. They must also agree to comply with certain additional rules that govern their behavioral conduct, as outlined in this document and other suggested documents.

Excerpt 5.1

Line 1	While using the Software and playing the Game,
Line 2	you agree to comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations.
Line 3	You also agree to comply with certain additional rules
Line 4	that govern your use of the Game (the "**Code of Conduct**").
Line 5	The Code of Conduct is not meant to be exhaustive,
Line 6	and Riot Games reserves the right to modify this Code of Conduct at any time,
Line 7	as well as take any appropriate disciplinary measures
Line 8	including account termination and deletion
Line 9	to protect the integrity and spirit of the Game,
Line 10	regardless of whether a specific behavior is listed here as prohibited.
Line 11	In addition to this Code of Conduct,
Line 12	please see the Summoner's Code for additional guidance
Line 13	on exemplary game-play behavior.
Line 14	The following are examples of behavior that warrant disciplinary measures:

The directive, "you agree," as used here, implies that community members must engage cooperatively and compliantly in order to protect the integrity and spirit of the game (Line 9). This section suggests that if the player does not follow the directives stated, the player may lose access to the game and that their account may be permanently lost. The word "protect" is used in Line 9 to distinguish toxic players from the community more broadly and to emphasize their significant threat and harm to the larger group, who as a result, requires protection and/or institutional intervention. Like any contract, this introduction excerpt states that the rules listed here are not exhaustive (Line 5) and may be revised at any time (Like 6). While not listed in this

section, exemplary behavior is referenced (Line 12) and the rest of the document provides direct examples of behaviors that warrant disciplinary measures (Line 14).

Excerpt 5.2

Line 15 A. Impersonating any person, business, or entity,
Line 16 including an employee of Riot Games, or communicating in any way
Line 17 that makes it appear that the communication originates from Riot Games;
Line 18 B. Posting identifying information about yourself, or any other user, in the Game;
Line 19 C. Harassing, stalking, or threatening any other users in the Game;

In this Excerpt 5.2, several actions are described as negative, including impersonating others players and Riot Games employees (Line 15) and posting identifying information (Line 18). Harassing, stalking, and threatening other players is also stated as an offense (Line 19). In this section, the word impersonating stands in contrast to the wording in Line 18 on posting identifying information about yourself and others. The gaming community, as outlined here, is one created on semi-anonymous created identities, where players select and engage using avatar game names. This anonymity is playful and in theory allows players to engage apart from their out-of-game identities. Nevertheless, with anonymity also comes the ability to perform the identities of other people, making impersonation a serious threat to the social order of the community.

Excerpt 5.3

Line 20 D. Removing, altering or concealing any copyright, trademark, patent
Line 21 or other proprietary rights notices of Riot Games
Line 22 contained in the Game and/or the Software.
Line 23 You also may not transmit content that violates or infringes the rights of others,
Line 24 including without limitation, patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright, publicity,
Line 25 personal rights or other proprietary or non-proprietary rights;

In Excerpt 5.3, Riot Games discusses the copyright regulations that are in place to protect company right and the property rights of other people. The words "removing, altering, and concealing" (Line 20) refer to tampering with intellectual and physical property that belongs to the company, while the word "transmit" here is used to refer to sharing copyrighted information with public audiences, which may or not belong to Riot Games (Line 23).

Excerpt 5.4

Line 26	E. Transmitting or communicating any content which,
Line 27	in the sole and exclusive discretion of Riot Games,
Line 28	is deemed offensive, including, but not limited to, language that is unlawful,
Line 29	harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, vulgar, obscene,
Line 30	sexually explicit, or racially, ethnically, or otherwise objectionable;

In lines 28-30 (*see* Excerpt 5.4), the company outlines what the company understands to be offensive behavior. This behavior, as stated, is restricted to language, and includes language that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, sexually explicit, or racially, ethnically, or otherwise objectionable.

Excerpt 5.5

Line 31	F. Transmitting or facilitating the transmission of any content
Line 32	that contains a virus, corrupted data, trojan horse, bot keystroke logger, worm,
Line 33	time bomb, cancelbot or other computer programming routines
Line 34	that are intended to and/or actually damage, detrimentally interfere with,
Line 35	surreptitiously intercept or mine, scrape or expropriate any system,
Line 36	data or personal information;

In Excerpt 5.5, the company explains that transmitting viruses and other programs that are harmful to other people's property is prohibited.

Excerpt 5.6

Line 40	G. Spamming chat, whether for personal or commercial purposes,
Line 41	by disrupting the flow of conversation with repeated postings of a similar nature;

Line 42	H. Participating in any action which, in the sole and exclusive judgment
Line 43	of Riot Games, "exploits" an undocumented aspect of the Game
Line 44	in order to secure an unfair advantage over other users;
Line 45	I. Participating in any action which,
Line 46	in the sole and exclusive judgment of Riot Games,
Line 47	defrauds any other user of the Game, including, but not limited to,
Line 48	by "scamming" or "social engineering;"
Line 49	J. Accessing or attempting to access areas of the Game or Game servers
Line 50	that have not been made available to the public;

In Excerpt 5.6, the company talks about "disrupting the flow of conversation" (Line 41) through an activity called "spamming" the text box, while playing the game (Line 40). Spamming is the act of repeating the same message in a chat service or on a social media website. This type of speech activity is a threat to the moral order of the community because it does not allow other messages to be sent or read effectively, and thus is a "disruption" to normal interaction online. In Line 43, the word "exploits" is used to describe the act of securing an unfair advantage over other users, or in other words, cheating. Cheating is described further in Lines 47-48 through use of the words "defrauds," "smamming," and "social engineering."

Excerpt 5.7	
Line 51	K. Logging out, disconnecting or exiting the Game during live game-play.
Line 52	Riot Games' automated Leaverbuster® system tracks this data
Line 53	and may issue temporary bans to users who frequently leave
Line 54	during live game-play.
Line 55	The length of the temporary ban will increase over time
Line 56	if a particular Account continues to leave during live game-play; or

Logging out, disconnecting, and exiting the game (Line 51) is outlined as an offensive and punishable behavior as it stops the flow of productive conversation in game and creates an unfair advantage for the other team.

Excerpt 5.8

Line 57	L. Selecting a Summoner name that is falsely indicative
Line 58	of an association with Riot Games,
Line 59	contains personally identifying information,
Line 60	infringes on the proprietary or non-proprietary rights of third parties,
Line 61	or that is offensive, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, sexually explicit,
Line 62	racially, ethnically, or otherwise objectionable.
Line 63	You may not use a misspelling or an alternative spelling
Line 64	to circumvent this restriction on Summoner name choices.
Line 65	Riot Games may modify any name which,
Line 66	in the sole and exclusive judgment of Riot Games,
Line 67	violates this provision without further notification to you,
Line 68	and may take further disciplinary measures,
Line 69	including Account termination, for repeated violations.

Excerpt 5.8, discusses the in-game names that community members choose for themselves. As outlined, this name should not be offensive, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, sexually explicit, racially, ethnically, or otherwise objectionable (Lines 61-62). In Lines 63-64, the company discusses spelling and prohibits community members from using alternative, offensive name spellings. If a player violates these rules of conduct regarding self-naming, the company states they may take disciplinary measures (Lines 65-69).

5.3.2 Suggested Codes of Conduct

In 2010, just over a year after the release of the game, developers at Riot Games released an online series of documents called *The Summoner's Code* (*see* Figure 5.2), which they suggest "serves as a blueprint to becoming a positive contributing member of the League of Legends community" (Posted by Administrator, 12/17/2010). Originally envisioned as the cornerstone of the campaign to increase overall player friendliness, players were encouraged to contractually pledge to abide by the Code through a pop-up agreement on the community message-board. By

agreeing to uphold the Code, community members were awarded a forum badge that displayed to others the player's commitment to positive community behavior. Their postings were also made more visible while those players who had not yet made the commitment continued to have less visible posts in grey, thus privileging players with positive behavior as core community members and less supportive players as more peripheral members.

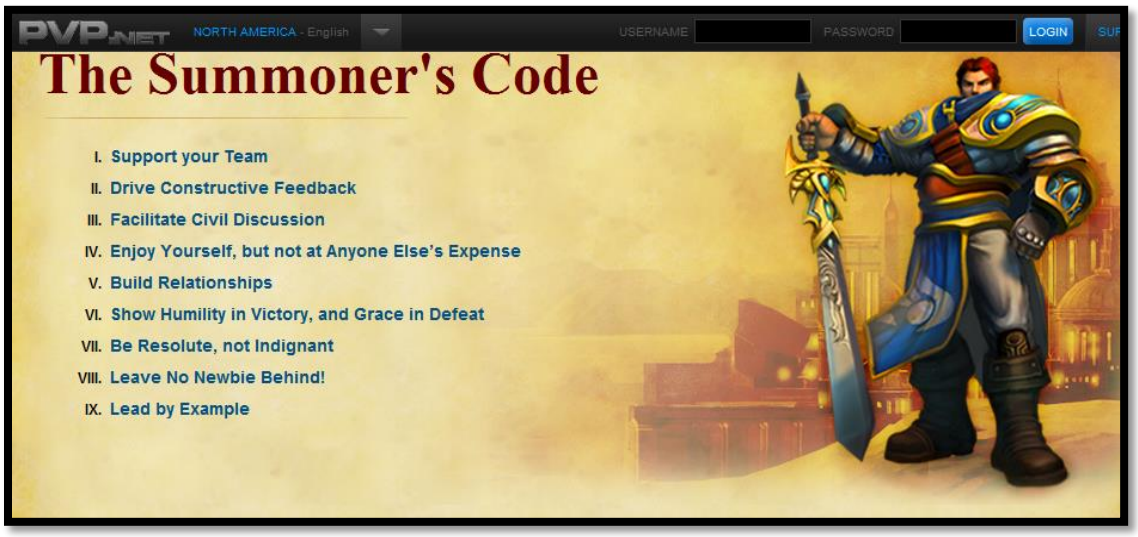


Figure 5.2: The Summoner's Code

Written by developers at the company, the Summoner's Code discusses nine behavioral directives based on company values that constitute moral participation in the online community of practice. These directives instruct players to 1) support your team, 2) drive constructive feedback, 3) facilitate civil discussion, 4) enjoy yourself, but not at anyone else's expense, 5) build relationships, 6) show humility in victory, and grace In defeat, 7) be resolute, not indignant, 8) leave no newbie behind, and 9, lead by example.

These sections are particularly interesting because they are written using language that is much more indirect than the official Code of Conduct, yet are filled with directives and commands. Politeness is expressed in these sections through the use of the pronoun "we,"

hedges, and quotes and reported speech. In addition to pronoun use, politeness is expressed through the use of hypothetical, projected, irrealis, and conditional constructions, such as "if," "when," "whether," "your may find," and "it would behoove you." In the excerpts that follow, most of the imperative constructions are mitigated in this way. These modalities in themselves render politeness. Further, politeness is manifest by casting the reader as a moral agent who cannot be coerced, through words such as "try," "remember," "have to make a choice," and "want."

These sections focus on outlining positive behavioral examples instead of negative behavior, as in the previous section. The listing of desired and undesired actions in the Summoner's Code is what Schutz (1973) calls the "cognitive style" of an actor. I briefly discuss the content and language of each of these sections below. In each of the excerpted transcripts, the directives used are underlined for emphasis. Inclusive pronouns are highlighted in bold text.

Excerpt 5.9: Section 1 - Support your Team

Line 1	*"[Teamwork] is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." -Andrew Carnegie*
Line 2	While **we** all carry a diverse set of individual ambitions and expectations
Line 3	into a game of League of Legends,
Line 4	once **we** hit the Field **we're** a part of a team.
Line 5	For better or worse,
Line 6	**our** fates are intertwined with that of **our** teammates.
Line 7	Once the game gets into full swing,
Line 8	<u>you have to make a choice between being a positive force for your team</u>,
Line 9	or contributing to your own demise.
Line 10	Being a good team player begins at champion select.
Line 11	<u>Be open minded when considering the needs of your team</u>.
Line 12	If you're the last one to pick,
Line 13	<u>try to fill a niche in your team that hasn't already been filled</u>.
Line 14	If everyone's picked and something stands out
Line 15	as a deficiency in your team composition,
Line 16	<u>try asking for another player to fill the gap</u>,

Line 17	or change roles to embrace that responsibility yourself.
Line 18	Remember, that by taking on a role you don't normally play,
Line 19	you'll learn more about unfamiliar champions and increase your own skill level.
Line 20	Once you get in game, try to keep an open line of communication.
Line 21	Warn your teammates if someone is missing from your lane,
Line 22	or if something is placing them in immediate danger.
Line 23	If they're not paying attention to chat you can always try pinging the map.
Line 24	Just remember that one ping is enough!
Line 25	Also, remember that you have to be there to contribute,
Line 26	so don't leave the game or go AFK!
Line 27	Encourage players who are having trouble,
Line 28	and congratulate those who are playing well.
Line 29	And most of all, if you're having a bad game don't take it out on your team!

Section 1 of the Summoner's Code encourages players to support their team. This section discusses the choices players must make in game to be either a positive force for their team or a negative force, which Riot suggests will contribute to less successful team strategy. The Code goes on to explicitly describe what being a good team players means: being cooperative and communicative. Players are encouraged to be cooperative at the beginning of the game when champions and games roles are chosen, by selecting a role that is needed in the team's composition or by politely requesting a different team role. While playing, players are encouraged to communicate regularly by alerting allies when enemies are nearby or missing from the map. The Code also encourages players to congratulate players who are playing well and to encourage teammates who are having trouble.

In this first excerpt, "we" and "our" are used as pronouns but later switches to "you" as directives are given (Lines 8-29). One explanation for this switch is that while the beginning of this section attempts to set a particular causal tone, informed by notions of solidarity and comradely, upholding appropriate behavior is an individual duty and obligation.

Excerpt 5.10: Section 2 – Drive Constructive Feedback

Line 1	*"When you confront a problem you begin to solve it." -Rudy Giuliani*
Line 2	Player feedback is an important force
Line 3	in the decision making process of Riot Games.
Line 4	If you want to make your voice heard,
Line 5	taking the time to let **us** know how you're feeling about the game
Line 6	is a good place to start.
Line 7	When you give feedback, make sure you take a holistic approach.
Line 8	If you only give negative feedback,
Line 9	you may find that the changes you influence
Line 10	detract from what you initially enjoyed.
Line 11	Moreover, people are simply more likely to listen
Line 12	if you present yourself in a calm, well thought out manner.
Line 13	That being said, don't be afraid to tell us if you feel strongly, and why.
Line 14	Try to be straightforward, specific,
Line 15	and always try to make your feedback direct and concise.
Line 16	For instance, saying something along the lines of:
Line 17	"I used to love playing Katarina because her skills give her high mobility in lane,
Line 18	but with the latest nerfs to Death Lotus,
Line 19	I no longer feel like I have a strong enough presence in team fights to be viable.
Line 20	I don't think that I'm going to be playing Kat in the future
Line 21	unless she undergoes some revisions."
Line 22	Is a much better way of expressing your dismay at a patch
Line 23	than beginning with an irate tirade,
Line 24	then asking for changes to be reverted
Line 25	or attempting to force an alternate solution.
Line 26	Remember that **we're** listening and making changes every couple of weeks,
Line 27	so, with a little patience, you may find that your issues will work themselves out.

The second section of the Code encourages community members to drive constructive feedback (*see* Excerpt 5.10). A positive player is one who actively participates, not only in the game itself, but in improving the game so that all players might benefit. The Summoner's Code encourages players to post feedback to the forums in what they describe as a "calm, well thought out manner," (Line 12) as opposed to what they describe as an "irate tirade" (Line 23). A brief example of feedback is given, and the section concludes with a statement that promises that developers are listening to players and are open to making regular, justified changes, based on

this feedback.

In this example, the use of plural pronouns are minimal (Lines 5, 26) and are used not as a means of being inclusive, but instead as a way to draw a clear distinction between players and developers at the company. The use of these pronouns makes sense as the section is focused on the unique relationship between players and developers, and the very ways that productive player feedback improves the game itself. Another interesting feature of this section is the use of voicing as an example in Lines 17-21. In this voicing, the company suggests a format for reporting feedback. First, the voiced player expresses a complaint by stating what they previously liked about a game character and what they currently do not like. The player then justifies their displeasure using a detailed, but concise explanation. Using the hedge, "I don't think" (Line 20), the hypothetical player then poses that they will no longer play the game character until revisions are made. This example of feedback is interesting as it illustrates a very interdependent, almost professional, relationship between players and developers.

Excerpt 5.11: Section 3 – Facilitate Civil Discussion

Line 1	*"To disagree, one doesn't have to be disagreeable." -Barry Goldwater*
Line 2	As **we** mentioned earlier,
Line 3	**we** want you to give feedback,
Line 4	but being part of the community doesn't stop there.
Line 5	Whether you're in chat, in a game, or on the forums,
Line 6	there are plenty of people to meet, and plenty of topics to discuss.
Line 7	Whether you're discussing game balance and champion viability,
Line 8	trying to form a premade team,
Line 9	or just want to express your affection
Line 10	for the legendary and infamous Gentleman Cho'gath[1],
Line 11	**we** encourage you to share your thoughts with other players.
Line 12	When you choose to participate in a discussion with the rest of the playerbase,
Line 13	always try to be receptive to another player's point of view.
Line 14	If you keep an open mind,

[1] Character from League of Legends game.

Line 15	you'd be surprised what valuable information you can glean
Line 16	from your fellow players.
Line 17	Also, be mindful of how you present your point of view.
Line 18	If a player feels strongly on a subject,
Line 19	don't get caught up trying to have the last word.
Line 20	Just state your side and exit the conversation gracefully
Line 21	rather than give them the opportunity to pick a fight.

The third section encourages community members to facilitate civil discussion (*see* Excerpt 5.11). The document promotes players to discuss their thoughts on the game with other players. Positive players are receptive to others' points of view and mindful of how they present their own opinions to others. Disputes and arguments are discouraged and community members are encouraged to exit conversations where conflict escalates.

In this example, the plural use of "we" is again used to distinguish developers from players. In Line 4, the Code states that being part of a community doesn't stop at actively engaging in driving constructive criticism. The word "encourage" is used in Line 11 to extend this willingness to engage with other players. Players are suggested to both try to "be receptive" (Line 13) and "be mindful" (Line 17) when interacting with others. When disagreements occur, players are directed to "just state our side and exit the conversation gracefully rather than give them [other players] the opportunity to pick a fight" (Line 20-21). The use of "exit the conversation" here is linked to the directive in Line 19, stating that players should not get caught up in trying to have the last word. In this way, being a moral player means avoiding disagreements.

Excerpt 5.12: Section 4 – Enjoy Yourself but not at Anyone Else's Expense

Line 1	*"Short is the joy that guilty pleasure brings." -Euripides*
Line 2	Making games is **our** business,

Line 3	so it should come as no surprise that **we** want you to have a lot of fun.
Line 4	**We** want you to get excited,
Line 5	to have tension-filled moments,
Line 6	and to celebrate your success.
Line 7	This doesn't mean that **we're** okay with you ruining anybody else's day.
Line 8	Remember, taking a jab at your friend in the middle of the game
Line 9	is a lot different than making a glib remark at a complete stranger.
Line 10	Someone who is unfamiliar with what you consider playful
Line 11	may take your comment as an attack and react unfavorably.
Line 12	If two players on a team start fighting,
Line 13	good communication and teamwork become nearly impossible.
Line 14	Once communication breaks down,
Line 15	the likelihood of victory is drastically diminished.
Line 16	It isn't uncommon for simple,
Line 17	good natured teasing to spiral out of control into a loss,
Line 18	so do yourself a favor and don't run the risk of sabotaging your own success.

Next, the Summoner's Code encourages players to enjoy themselves, but not at anyone else's expense (*see* Excerpt 5.12). The code suggests that teasing between friends and teasing remarks to strangers in-game are quite different. Positive community members must be mindful of what they say to others as comments meant to be playful may be interpreted unfavorably. Team fighting leads to communication breakdown and thus less successful game interactions.

Again, in this section, the use of "we" functions to distinguish company developers from community players. The use of the word "jab" (Line 8) and "glib remark" (Line 9) are used here to refer to a face-threatening act. Here the Code draws from understandings of interpretation and recipient design by suggesting that different types of interaction are necessary for varying levels of familiarly among players. This awareness of face is not linked to respect here so much as furthering one's own success in the game itself (Line 18).

Excerpt 5.13: Section 5 – Build Relationships

Line 1	*"No man is an island..." -John Donne*
Line 2	League of Legends is a team game, and, as such,
Line 3	familiarity and rapport with the other competitors with whom you play
Line 4	is going to be a big part of your success.
Line 5	With that in mind,
Line 6	it would behoove you to adopt a cordial demeanor and attempt to make friends.
Line 7	If you have fun playing with another player,
Line 8	make use of the end of game lobby to thank that player for the game
Line 9	and send a friend request.
Line 10	The more friendly players that you have at your disposal,
Line 11	the better your chances are of getting a good, friendly game.
Line 12	Also, if you have friends who you think might be a good fit for the game
Line 13	and community, don't hesitate to shoot them an invite.
Line 14	Not only will you earn yourself some awesome swag,
Line 15	you'll have more friends you can call upon when you're having trouble flying solo.
Line 16	Use the tools at your disposal to try and build a circle
Line 17	of other players of a similar skill level.
Line 18	If you have a relationship with a group of players that you trust,
Line 19	you are much more likely to get good feedback on how you're playing,
Line 20	receive support when learning a new champion,
Line 21	and just have a good time overall.

The Code then encourages players to build relationships (*see* Excerpt 5.13). A good community member is one who builds rapport with other players through adopting a cordial demeanor. Players are encouraged to use the game lobby and chat system to make friends, invite friends who do not already play, and to use other tools to build a circle of friendly players. Developing relationships with other players increases the likelihood that the community member will be able to construct teams that regularly play and support each other.

In this excerpt, players are directed to "make use of the end game lobby" (Line 8) and to "use the tools at your disposal" (Line 16) to create social relationships. Building rapport is discussed and examples of how to do this are outlined, including "adopt a cordial demeanor"

(Line 6), “thank that player for the game” (Line 8), “send a friend request” (Line 9), and “shoot them an invite [to play another game]” (Line 13). In all of these directives, the structures of the game and the corresponding technology are necessary to facilitate this rapport-building and thus cannot be separated, as noted.

Excerpt 5.14: Section 6 – Show Humility in Victory, and Grace in Defeat

Line 1	*"To be humble to superiors is duty,*
Line 2	*to equals is courtesy, to inferiors is nobility."-Benjamin Franklin*
Line 3	Having a great game is one of the biggest joys
Line 4	that League of Legends can bring you.
Line 5	But always bear in mind that when you're relishing that landslide victory
Line 6	there is someone on the receiving end that is probably ripping their hair out.
Line 7	While it's alright to celebrate, make sure that you keep any gloating
Line 8	(or any other mode of self-indulgence) out of all chat.
Line 9	Instead, thank your opponents for the game.
Line 10	After all, despite their best efforts, they just made you a very happy person.
Line 11	Moreover, if you've just lost, avoid pointing any fingers or deploying excuses.
Line 12	Even if you had a great game, it's not alright to blame your team.
Line 13	You had five opponents in that game,
Line 14	and - seeing as you just lost - chances are that they had something to do with it.
Line 15	**We** all know that losing can be frustrating,
Line 16	particularly if it's a close game or one that's completely one sided,
Line 17	but nobody likes a sore loser.
Line 18	Instead, thank your opponents for the game,
Line 19	and take a moment at the end of game screen
Line 20	to ask what you could have done better.
Line 21	If you're polite, you might pick up a few pointers
Line 22	that can help you counter your opponent's strategy in the future.

The sixth section of the Code encourages players to *show humility in victory and grace in defeat* (*see* Excerpt 5.14). A positive community member is described as a player who does not gloat in chat after a victory, but instead thanks her/his opponent for the game. After losing, one should not blame specific players or deploy excuses, but instead, politely ask the winning team for tips to improve in the future.

The use of plural "we" in Line 15 implies a tone of solidarity and empathy. As both developer and players engage in the same kind of game-play, together they make up the same broader community and share similar game experiences. The use of "we all know" (Line 15) suggests that feelings of frustration are shared and that despite these emotions, players must remain composed and display self-control in order to respect the face of others, and to ultimately improve one's individual skill.

Excerpt 5.15: Section 7 – Be Resolute, not Indignant

Line 1	*"It is easier to find men who will volunteer to die,*
Line 2	*than to find those who are willing to endure pain with patience." -Julius Caesar*
Line 3	Intrinsic to the idea of competition is the notion that, when our pride is on the line,
Line 4	emotions tend to run high.
Line 5	Every person that **we** encounter is going to carry a different set of circumstances
Line 6	with **them** into the game,
Line 7	and therefore is going to have a different level of tolerance for frustration.
Line 8	If you end up in a game with an abusive player,
Line 9	don't lower yourself to their level. Instead, politely ask them to calm down.
Line 10	And remember, even if you're having a bad game,
Line 11	quitting or going AFK just ruins the game for the rest of the players.
Line 12	If someone's really starting to bother you,
Line 13	the mute and ignore commands are always there to resolve the situation.
Line 14	And remember, while nobody likes being insulted,
Line 15	it pays to take a moment to consider the circumstances.
Line 16	Remember that this is a competitive game,
Line 17	and, more often than not, the other player is just venting their frustration.
Line 18	Try not to take it personally.
Line 19	Everyone has a breaking point and everyone rages sometimes.
Line 20	At some point you may find yourself in the other person's shoes.

The seventh section of the Summoner's Code suggests that players should *be* resolute, not indignant (*see* Excerpt 5.15). If a player is being abusive in-game, players are encouraged to try to take the excitement of the situation into context and to not take negative remarks personally. If a person's behavior is extremely negative, the community member can mute or

ignore the person in chat or report the player's behavior at the close of the game.

This example again uses the plural "we" (Line 5) and then switches to the singular "you" starting in Line 8 and continuing throughout. This use of "we" again establishes a feeling of horizontal comradely and solidarity by referring to experiences and contexts that are familiar to all types of members of the community, even developers.

Excerpt 5.16: Section 8 – Leave No Newbie Behind!

Line 1	*"Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee." -Ralph Waldo Emerson*
Line 2	**We** all started somewhere, and if **we're** going to do justice to the people
Line 3	who helped us move up the ladder,
Line 4	**we** have to start by paying homage to our roots.
Line 5	If you see a player having a bad game,
Line 6	or who clearly doesn't grasp the fundamentals of the genre,
Line 7	try offering some constructive advice.
Line 8	If you do so in a civil and friendly manner, it's likely that they will be receptive.
Line 9	Oftentimes they'll be downright grateful that somebody took the time
Line 10	to let them know how to improve instead of yelling at them.
Line 11	Never get frustrated by an inexperienced player's performance.
Line 12	At some point, you were just as green as they were,
Line 13	even if it was the day that you downloaded the League of Legends client.
Line 14	Have a little patience, and try and help the player step up
Line 15	to a level where both of you can enjoy the game.
Line 16	At the same time, don't be discouraged if they aren't receptive.
Line 17	Some small percentage of players will get hung up on the notion
Line 18	that they don't need anybody's help,
Line 19	and, no matter how politely you try to lend a hand, they won't want to hear it.
Line 20	That's no reason to give up on the rest of them!

The next section of the Summoner's Code urges players to leave no newbie behind (*see* Excerpt 5.16). Positive community members are encouraged to socialize new, less-experienced players by offering friendly, constructive advice. Players are discouraged from getting frustrated or angry with players who are less familiar with game-play, but are instead encourage to help them become stronger players.

Like previous sections, this excerpts begins with using the plural "we" (Lines 2-4) in an effort to generalize common sentiments and game experiences. This is done in order to establish a sort of community solidarity in spite of the directives posed and the shift to singular "you" throughout, which simultaneously work to create a distinction between the developers and the community of players more broadly.

Excerpt 5.17: Section 9 – Lead by Example

Line 1	*"Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions."*
	-Harold S. Geneen
Line 2	If you share our vision of a game where players exercise good sportsmanship,
Line 3	help each other improve and form lasting friendships,
Line 4	you've got to start living the dream before
Line 5	anybody everybody else is willing to do so.
Line 6	It's all well and good to say you're on board for the revolution,
Line 7	but if you don't first make yourself a paragon of model behavior,
Line 8	no one is going to be fooled.
Line 9	Nobody's asking you to be perfect,
Line 10	but **we** do want you to, whenever possible,
Line 11	strive to uphold the same standards of behavior
Line 12	that you expect everyone else to maintain.
Line 13	So, remember! Stay positive, remain calm, and keep to the code!

Lastly, the Summoner's Code encourages players to lead by example (*see* Excerpt 5.17). Players who model good behavior are more likely to encourage other players to uphold the same standards of behavior. If the values of the Summoner's Code are commonly modeled and practiced, they ultimately become shared norms of the community and thus create a positive experience for everyone participating in game-play.

This section explicitly encourages players to remain calm, or in other words, to exhibit self control in much the same way that Goffman talks about character contests. According to this section, "living the dream" (Line 4) entails people adhering to the moral code of conduct.

Although the Code states that "nobody's asking you to be perfect" (Line 9), keeping to the code ultimately requires one to keep their composure and to not only "strive to uphold the same standards of behavior that you expect everyone else to maintain" (Lines 11-12), but to uphold them even when others do not, as so many sections of the Code described.

The Summoner's Code is the foundation by which other formal and informal dispute resolution systems are built. The document outlines positive behavior and references inappropriate, or toxic ways of acting. Those community members who uphold the Code are awarded with in-game rewards and statuses, while those who act outside the Code are often reported to the Tribunal, where they may eventually be formally warned, banned, or pardoned.

5.3.3 Structures for Rewarding Behavior

Beginning in 2011, developers at Riot Games identified the need to provide behavioral feedback to their players whose behavior they classified as neutral. They experimented with small incentives, like in-game currency and exclusive in-game items, in attempt to induce more sportsmanlike behavior. In 2012, the Honor Initiative was introduced to players as an in-game system that incentivized positive behavior among the League of Legends community. One of the goals of this system is also to identify leaders of the community who are considered model community members.

At the end of each League of Legends game match, players are able to vote to increase another player's reputation though awarding honor points. Players can choose to award other teammates for helpfulness, teamwork, or a friendly attitude during the course of game-play (*see* Figures 5.3; 5.4). A player who is awarded the helpful award category actively shares their expertise with other players and actively helps other players in-game. A player who is awarded

the teamwork award is acknowledged for helping other teammates and forming effective team strategies. A player who is awarded with the friendly award is one who makes the match more enjoyable for all players by upholding a positive attitude. Further, players can also choose to award members of the opposing team for being an honorable opponent, or one who upholds the principles of the Summoner's Code.

Figure 5.3: Honor Categories

Figures 5.4: Honor Points

When a player has received a significant amount of honor points in the discussed categories, they are awarded an animated crest of honor on their player profile. This animation is

made visible to all players, including both the enemy team and the player's own team during in a match (*see* Figure 5.5). These crests are temporary rewards designed to encourage players to remain honorable even after receiving formal recognition. Honored players may have their crests revoked if they behave inappropriately and are reported to The Tribunal.

Figures 5.5: Honor Badges

Since the introduction of the Honor Initiative system, negative attitude reports to The Tribunal have seen a 40% combined decrease in both normal and ranked matches. Offensive language reports have seen a 55% combined decrease, and verbal abuse reports have seen a 58% combined decrease in both normal and ranked matches. This reduction in negative player behavior suggests that awarding positive behavior not only reinforces established codes of conduct, but also serves to discourage behavior that falls outside of community norms and values.

5.3.4 Structures for Punishing Behavior

In attempt to ensure that all players of the game League of Legends have a positive and enjoyable in-game experience, developers at Riot Games created *The Tribunal*, a formal system whereby all community members who qualify have the option to participate by evaluating reports and attached transcripts regarding the alleged misconduct of other players (See Figure 5.3.4.1). Qualified members include those who have reached a level of thirty, have not been previously banned by the Tribunal, and have agreed to a policy agreement that encourages members to reach a good verdict, know the Summoner's Code, understand the system, and be an impartial judge.

Figure 5.6: The Tribunal

At the end of any live game session, each user may report any other players who he/she feels have violated the Summoner's Code (*see* Figure 5.7). In the report, players are asked to choose from one of ten pre-selected reasons why the reported player's actions necessitate filing the report. Players then have the option to provide a short paragraph further describing the reasons for the report. Players that have been reported multiple times are sent to the Tribunal for peer evaluation and judgment. Players read through the accused player's chat logs and then choose to "pardon," "punish," or "skip" the case (*see* Figure 5.8). Each case is voted on by at least twenty different community members before disciplinary action is taken. The offending player must receive an overwhelming majority of "punish" votes to be formally disciplined by the company.

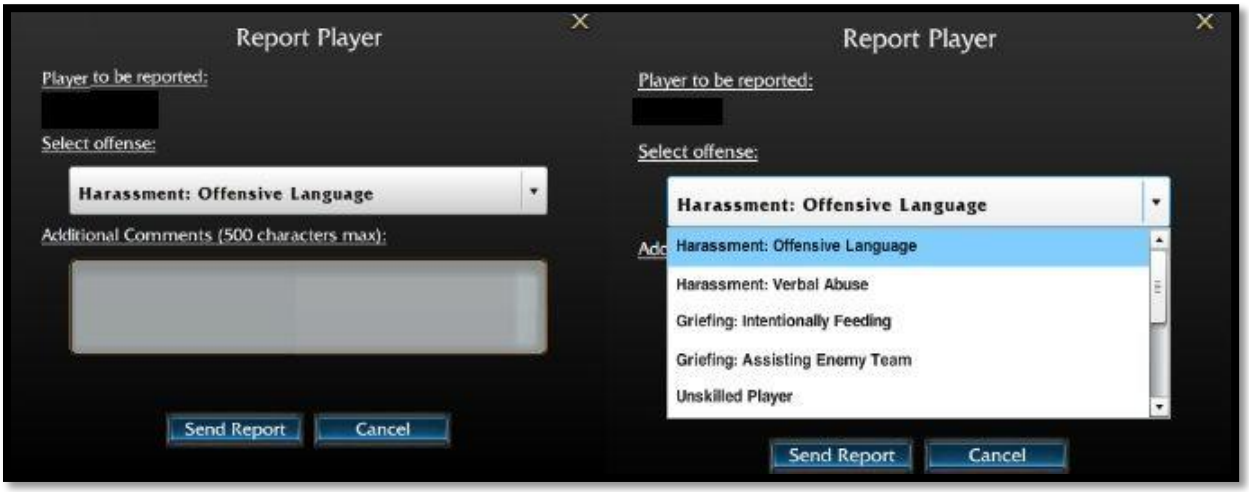


Figure 5.7: Reporting a Player

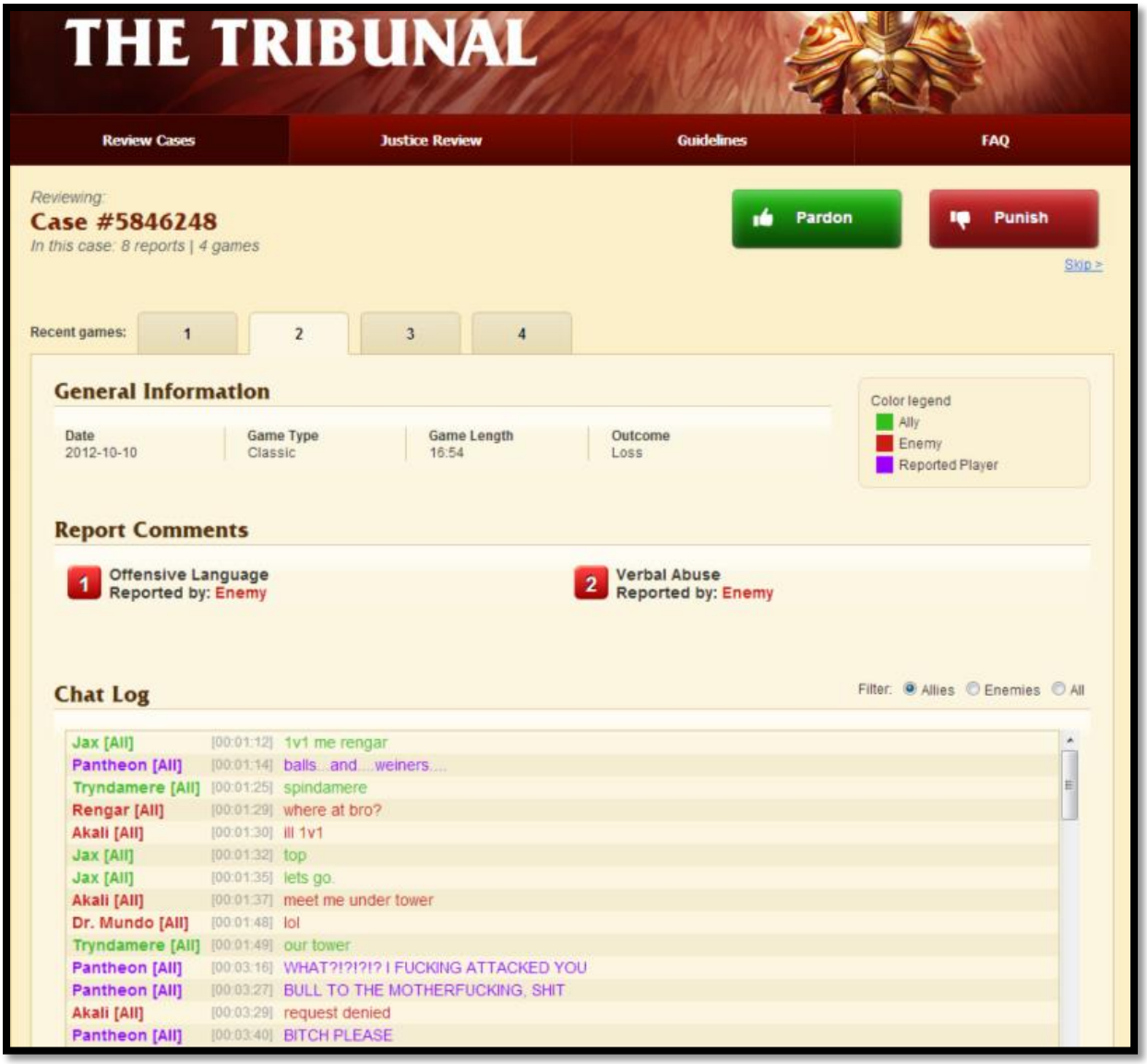


Figure 5.8: Reviewing Case Transcripts

Tribunal penalties operate on a graduated system; carrying progressively more severe penalties for repeat offenders. First-time offenders who are found guilty of inappropriate behavior may receive a warning from Riot Games requesting that the model their future behavior according to the rules and values discussed in the Summoner's Code. Players who continue to be evaluated negatively in the Tribunal are banned from the game for a set period of time,

ranging from a single day to several weeks or months. With most bans, Riot Games employees audit the Tribunal System and review particular cases.

The following three excerpts are representative data examples of the types of interactions that are reported to The Tribunal for peer evaluation. The excerpts are from the same game session, lasting nearly forty minutes. In the following case, the player playing the champion "Malzahar" has been reported to The Tribunal by other teammates in the interaction for having an negative attitude and for using abusive language. In Example 1 below (*see* Excerpt 5.18), players are in disagreement about where on the map they should focus their actions against other enemy players.

Excerpt 5.18: Example 1

1	**Malzahar**	[00:21:08]	This game is over idiot
2	Nidalee	[00:21:41]	nice flash
3	**Malzahar**	[00:21:53]	Apparently retard Nid doesn't understand what Legendary Darius means
4	Tryndamere	[00:22:13]	hoi
5	Tryndamere	[00:22:16]	less typing more farming
6	**Malzahar**	[00:22:45]	I love how no one on this team cares about the most important lane but me
7	**Malzahar**	[00:22:51]	What the fuck is even happening
8	**Malzahar**	[00:23:02]	Retard Nid catching butterflies again
9	**Malzahar**	[00:23:06]	Gonna die
10	**Malzahar**	[00:23:37]	We need mid tower NOW
11	**Malzahar**	[00:23:41]	Fucking christ
12	**Malzahar**	[00:23:47]	Bot lane ain't shit
13	**Malzahar**	[00:23:50]	We need mid tower
14	Nidalee	[00:23:58]	3 bot
15	**Malzahar**	[00:23:58]	But nid thinks bot so important
16	Nidalee	[00:24:01]	take anything
17	Malzahar	[00:24:01]	Retard
18	Nidalee	[00:24:04]	anything you like
19	Nidalee	[00:24:05]	malz
20	Nidalee	[00:24:07]	you heard
21	Nidalee	[00:24:11]	of split pushing
22	Nidalee	[00:24:14]	its where i go bot

23	Malzahar	[00:24:15]	No Nid you are bad
24	Nidalee	[00:24:16]	and 3 come bot
25	Nidalee	[00:24:23]	and you go somewhere else
26	Malzahar	[00:24:24]	You don't split until mid tower is down retard

From reading through this interaction, members of The Tribunal can see that the player playing Malzahar has adopted a negative attitude in Line 1 when he/she states, "This game is over idiot." Malzahar proceeds to continue to name-call further (see Lines 8, 17, and 26), by referring to Nidalee as a "retard." Nidalee produces an account for her strategy in Lines 16-25, which functions to defend her actions and to acknowledge her expertise. While Malzahar expresses frustration throughout the exchange, writing "fuck," "christ," and "shit," Tryndamere, another teammate, express frustration with Malzahar's unsportsmanlike behavior. He/she issues the directive, "less typing, more farming," in an effort to resolve the occurring disputes (Line 5).

In Example 2 (*see* Excerpt 5.19), Malzahar continues to devalue Nidalee though negative evaluations of her/his intelligence and skill (Line 1). In Line 2, Malzahar issues a directive, suggesting that because Nidalee is so bad at the game, she should go hang herself (Line 2), and that she would be more beneficial to the team if she quit, or disconnected from the game (Line 4). Further, in Line 11, he tells Nidalee she should "cut her own head off." Nidalee responds to these remarks by telling him to "go home" (Line 3) and by bringing to attention his equally bad playing (Line 7, Line 12, Line 20). Tryndamere and Riven, both teammates of Malzahar and Nidalee, express frustration with the fighting in Lines 16-18.

Excerpt 5.19: Example 2

1	Malzahar	[00:24:28]	Wow you are dumb
2	Malzahar	[00:24:34]	You should hang yourself right now
3	Nidalee	[00:24:44]	malz, go home

4	Malzahar	[00:24:44]	You would be more beneficial to us if you DC'd
5	Malzahar	[00:24:51]	Nid you are bad
6	Malzahar	[00:24:55]	how about pick a real support
7	Nidalee	[00:25:00]	you're fckign 2/7
8	Nidalee	[00:25:03]	stfu
9	Malzahar	[00:25:07]	And you are still bad
10	Malzahar	[00:25:11]	So fuck off Nid
11	Malzahar	[00:25:19]	Cut your own head off
12	Nidalee	[00:25:42]	better than you at least
13	Malzahar	[00:25:50]	Not at all actually
14	Malzahar	[00:25:57]	You are playing the easiest role
15	Malzahar	[00:26:03]	Badly I might add
16	Tryndamere	[00:26:04]	omg
17	Tryndamere	[00:26:07]	fuck you kids
18	Riven	[00:27:20]	fck
19	Malzahar	[00:29:09]	Retardalee
20	Nidalee	[00:29:19]	#still better than you

The interaction concludes with Malzahar engaging in wordplay to again call Nidalee a "retard" (Line 19). In Example 3 (*see* Excerpt 5.20), this action leads Nidalee to request that all players (both teammates and the opposing team members) report Malzahar to The Tribunal for toxic behavior in game (Line 1). The opposing player Janna agrees to Nidalee's request, and states that "he's a dick" and that he/she "was already going to," (Line 2, Line 4). In response to this negative assessment, Malzahar tells the other players to "go ahead" and proceeds to engage in more name-calling.

Excerpt 5.20: Example 3

1	Nidalee [All]	[00:30:00]	report this toxic malz please
2	Janna [All]	[00:30:07]	yeah hes a dick
3	Riven	[00:30:10]	but you died so not perfect
4	Janna [All]	[00:30:11]	was already going to
5	Tryndamere	[00:30:20]	did as good as you could
6	Malzahar [All]	[00:30:32]	Go ahead faggots
7	Riven	[00:30:33]	its hard to use her
8	Nidalee	[00:30:44]	there he goes

9	Malzahar	[00:31:29]	There's Nid at bot again while our team dies
10	Malzahar	[00:32:33]	Claims to be split pushing
11	Malzahar [All]	[00:32:38]	Takes nothing while team dies
12	Nidalee	[00:32:42]	is actually split pushing
13	Malzahar	[00:32:49]	Not at all
14	Malzahar	[00:33:51]	It's fucking over
15	Nidalee [All]	[00:34:16]	if this guy spent half the time learning how to play the game as he did flaming in chat, he might be a mediocre player
16	Janna [All]	[00:34:25]	nice word
17	Malzahar	[00:34:50]	If you spent half the time playing a real support as you did playing Nidalee, you might have won your lane and put us in a better position
18	Malzahar	[00:34:56]	You are mediocre too at best
19	Malzahar	[00:35:00]	Shitalee

In this excerpt, Malzahar and Nidalee further provide accounts for their actions throughout the failed game, by both ascribing negative behavior to the other. Malzahar suggests that Nidalee may be intentionally not engaging in positive teamwork by ignoring his requests and strategies. Nidalee suggests that Malzahar was not playing optimally because he was too invested in abusive communication and poor treatment of their teammates. While Nidalee responds to Malzahar's aggressive comments with unfriendly comments, Malzahar alone was reported to The Tribunal in this situation because it was only he/she who produced offensive assessments of players' worth and abusive directives throughout the entire course of the interaction.

5.4 ENDOGENOUS DISPUTE MANAGEMENT

Disputes are also managed endogenously by players outside of formal institutional structures in-game, on social media, and at in-person events. The following subsections briefly

outline the types of interactions that often take place in these contexts. In all of these representative examples, the summoners (players) do not know each other out of the immediate game. They are not using voice chat but are instead using in-game chat and pings to co-coordinate game actions.

5.4.1 In-Game Disagreements

Excerpt 5.21 is from the very beginning of a game session, when players are negotiating champions. In this example, a team composed of 5 random players negotiates individual game roles in champion select chat by calling out or reserving specific places on the game map that are associated with key strategies and roles.

Excerpt 5.21

1	Summoner 2	Bot
2	Summoner 4	top
3	Summoner 1	top
4	Summoner 4	first, too bad for you
5	Summoner 1	practicing top for ranked later
6	Summoner 1	super please, can we trade?
7	Summoner 4	you can leave noob, that's always an option
8	Summoner 1	it would be doing me a huge favor
9	Summoner 4	sure, it's fine. i was just trolling you lololol
10	Summoner 1	awesome, thanks for being so flexible

In this excerpt, Summoner 1 and Summoner 4 both select the same positioned role, of which only one player can play. While it is possible that the two players requested "top" at nearly the same time, Summoner 4's request records in the text chat box slightly before Summoner 1's request, thus privileging him/her to the desired role/champion (Line 4). In this interaction, Summoner 1 accounts that he/she is practicing a specific role in order to perform

more skillfully in future ranked, or more competitive games. He/she issues a request to trade with Summoner 4, prefaced with a polite "super please" (Line 6). In Line 7, Summoner 4 responds to this request by telling the player he/she can leave the game and re-queue for the position he/she wants. The interaction ends with Summoner 4 playfully revealing he/she was "trolling" or "teasing" Summoner 1 and that they can, in fact, trade. Summoner 1 thanks Summoner 4 and compliments their sportsmanlike behavior.

In the next excerpt (*see* Except 5.22), a different group of players dispute after approximately 18 minutes of playing together. The Summoner playing the champion "Ashe" is criticized by Summoner 1 for playing badly. Summoner 1 (Line 1) assesses Ashe as being "SO FUCKING BAD," and later writes "gg" in Line 3, implying that the game is essentially over. The abbreviation "gg" stands for "good game," which in this case, does not signal to others that it has been a close game but rather that the game is over. Summoner 1 suggests that the team should give up and forfeit, or "surrender" (Line 4) when the structures of the game allows them to at 20 minutes into the game. Summoner 1 threatens to "afk[2]" or abandon the team if they do not agree to surrendering. In response, Summoner 3 writes, "calm down and focus" (Line 5) and Summoner 4 also responds, "yeah, stop complaining " (Line 6). Summoner 4 then shares with the rest of the team, "you're 2/11/4[3]," (Line 7) implying that Summoner 1 has also died numerous times, and is thus not playing very well either. Only after Summoner 4 suggests that Summoner 1 is also not a strong player that Summoner 1 agrees to continue playing. Summoner 1 demonstrates their willingness to cooperate and continue playing through suggesting that the team works together on Baron Nashor, the next game objective (Line 8).

[2] AFK stands for "away from keyboard," and is typically perceived as unfavorable act in-game.
[3] Summoner 1 has a record of 2 kills, 11 deaths, and 4 assists.

Excerpt 5.22

1	Summoner 1	ASHE IS SO FUCKING BAD
2	Summoner 1	OMG
3	Summoner 1	gg, uninstall noob, you suck.
4	Summoner 1	surrender at 20 or afk
5	Summoner 3	calm down and focus
6	Summoner 4	yeah, stop complaining
7	Summoner 4	you're 2/11/4
8	Summoner 1	ok, fine. baron then

In Excerpt 5.23, Summoners 2 and 3 signal to the summoner playing the champion "Shen" that he is not helping the group adequately (Line 1-2). Summoner 2 states, "we can only win if we stick together," (Line 3) and then produces the directive "stop leaving the group" (Line 4). Summoner 3 supports Summoner 2's directive by upgrading Summoner 2's statement in Line 2 by saying that the team cannot win the game with only 4 teammates fighting against 5 members of the other team. In response, Summoner 1 [Shen] apologizes and including an unhappy face, agrees that he/she is indeed at fault. Summoner 3 then excuses Summoner 1, staying "it's ok" (Line 8) and directs the group to group up and get ready for the next game action. Summoner 1 later produces a friendly happy face emoticon in Line 10.

Excerpt 5.23

1	Summoner 2	shen
2	Summoner 3	shen helppp omg
3	Summoner 2	we can only win if we stick together
4	Summoner 2	stop leaving the group
5	Summoner 3	we can't fucking win 5v4
6	Summoner 1	sorry, I thought I had it
7	Summoner 1	that one was my fault :(
8	Summoner 3	it's ok, group up
9	Summoner 3	we can still win
10	Summoner 1	:)

While these examples illustrates how players resolve disputes through informal negotiation and interaction, many similar disputes go unmanaged or unresolved. In cases where compromise is not reached, the unhappy party may choose to leave the group, thus tapping into formal game structures for disbanding the team, or the player may accept the unwanted role, with either sportsmanlike, neutral, or inappropriate next actions. Disputes that occur informally in-game are wide and are not limited to specific contexts, audiences, or content.

5.4.2 Social Media Disagreements

Out of game (e.g., League of Legends Forums, Facebook, Youtube, Reddit, Twitter), community members also manage conflict using less formal, peer-driven strategies. The following excerpt from the League of Legends Community forums (April 2013), illustrates how community members negotiate moral behavior outside of game contexts (*see* Excerpt 5.24). In the original post, titled "Why is this community so cruel to me," the author/speaker discusses his/her experience of unsportsmanlike behavior and states that it is negatively affecting his/her experience of the game.

Excerpt 5.24: Forum Thread – Why is this community so cruel to me?

1	**Summoner 1: When I started out around here, people seemed to be really nice and resourceful, encouraging me to be active and enjoy the game. Nowadays, that's just a fantasy. The people on these forums view me in contempt, even though I try to just ignore it, it's actually becoming a major problem because I can't get certain answers or help to dire problems I have now.**
2	**Summoner 2**: Because the threads you create show you to be someone with... shall we say, problems. You act like an immense jerk to other players and then make threads attempting to defend yourself whilst also appearing to constantly have mental breakdowns all over your threads. It's unnerving.

3	**Summoner 3:** The majority of LoL players are flat-out jerks. Why? I'd love to know why, but there just isn't a legitimate reason to troll/be a jerk.
4	**Summoner 4:** It seems as though that's just the community in general these days. Just have to sift through the trolling and look for comments that are actually useful to you.
5	**Summoner 5:** You make awful threads.
6	**Summoner 6:** Welcome to the internet have a nice ****ing day *******
	I seriously think this is some of your guys first adcenture into interacting with people online they are anonymous so of course the nerds who get bullied in school are going to be angry little ragers when they have no repercussions.
7	**Summoner 7:** Probably due to the fact you make about 10 or so threads a day which gets on peoples nerves just a bit
8	**Summoner 8**: All of your threads are so stupid. I feel like you make dumb threads with questions about champs that you already know the answer to. And then you keep pumping out dumb threads.
9	**Summoner 9**: Yeah, you constantly make terrible troll threads. Case in point: This very thread we're posting in is a terrible attempt at trolling. You've reeled some folks in, so congrats I guess, but most of them are just here to say "you're terrible and you make terrible threads", so it doesn't really seem like a clear win for you.
10	**Summoner 10**: This guy is sitting behind his pc, laughing at everyone posting on his threads i'm sure. Fed troll is fed. 2mins till new thread.
11	**Summoner 11**: You appear to be wanting attention more than you want help, be it gaming or otherwise. That is why grand majority of forumers hate your threads.
12	**Summoner 1: I wasn't trolling, but will try to be better.**

As transcribed above, ten other community members responded to Summoner 1's original posting. In most of the responses, like in the posts made by Summoners 2, 5, 7, 8, and 9, community members criticized the content and frequency of the posts that Summoner 1 makes on the forums. They refer to his/her posts as terrible, annoying, redundant, and even trolling.

After many posts evaluating Summoner 1's character and behavior, he/she responds to all the postings by stating that he/she "wasn't trolling," or intentionally trying to behave inappropriately, and that he/she will "try to be better."

5.4.3 In-Person Disagreements

In-person disagreements happen frequently at eSports and other live events. These conflicts can often be broad in topic, scope, and context. The following examples illustrate one particular kind of in-person conflict that has occurred at live, broadcasted games. At the close of each eSports match, players from the winning team routinely approach the players from the losing team to shake hands. This act conveys respect to both teams and is a way for the losing team to demonstrate their sportsmanship. The ritual act of shaking hands after a professional match is standardized and thus often taken for granted. When it does not happen, however, it is a major source of tension for the players involved, as well as for the spectators watching over streaming video and commenting on social media.

During the group stages of the *Season Three League Championship Series World Finals Championship* in September 2013, Russia's winning team, "Gambit Gaming," went over to Korea's team, "Samsung Galaxy Ozone," to shake hands. Ozone player, Dade, notably did not shake hands with the Gambit players, and instead remained seated, with his gaze fixed on his screen (*see* Figure 5.9). After most of the team had passed him on stage, Dade eventually stood up and bowed to the last player on the opposing team.

Figure 5.9: Displaying Team Sportsmanship

This particular game was streamed all over the world, and hundreds of thousands of players worldwide watched this interaction. Spectators posted hundreds of video-clips of the interaction online and thousands of community members commented on these videos and news threads. A few days later, Dade issued a formal apology to Gambit Gaming. In response, the Russian team commented on this apology on their public facebook page (*see* Figure 5.10). In this commentary, which 3,033 people "liked," Gambit publically accepted Ozone's apology and explained that Dade was frustrated with how the game ended and that he did not realize that the players were coming towards him to shake hands. He also explained that the act of handshaking is not very common in Korea.

Figure 5.10: Apologies through Social Media

In response to this post, many community members and Facebook followers of Gambit Gaming responded with comments. Many players discussed the cultural differences between "Western" teams and Korean/Asian teams. For Instance, some people agreed that the Ozone was not rude and that they are just not accustomed to shaking hands (*see* Figure 5.11).

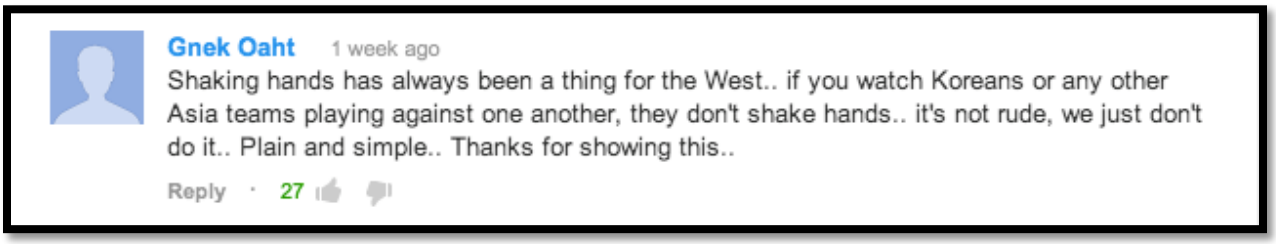


Figure 5.11: Facebook Post on Cultural Differences

Other community members commented that all professional players are socialized into a specific way of displaying sportsmanship while playing League of Legends, and as such, this behavior is not excusable (*see* Figure 5.12). Still, others suggested it was just a misunderstanding and that when Dade did notice the team behind him, he made an effort to repair his faux pas.

Figure 5.12: Facebook Comments on Handshaking

While Dade and Team Ozone managed this conflict through endogenous means, and an apology was issued and accepted in spite of community commentary, there are other instances involving face-to-face social norms that go unmanaged. For instance, on Day 6 of the *Season Three World Finals* in September 2013, members of the Chinese professional team "OMG" did not shake the hands of players from Korea's "SKTelecom T1." In the next phase of the tournament, SKTelecom 1 was interviewed by Riot Games and on film, expressed his disappointment with the other team and their breach of norms (*see* Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13: Breach of Norms - Handshaking

In this interview, the player known as "Faker," states that "OMG didn't shake our hands" and that "we weren't too happy about that" (Excerpt 5.25; Line 1-2). As such, the team discloses as the conflict was left unmanaged, they will use the tension to motivate them in their next match against them and that as a result of this disagreement they seek "revenge" (Line 4).

Excerpt 5.25

Line 1	SK Faker	After the game
Line 2		OMG didn't shake our hands
Line 3		We weren't too happy about that.
Line 4		So this time, I really want revenge.
Line 5		I don't think we'll go down as easy this time.

When conflicts and disputes go unmanaged, often rivalries and other niche boundaries are formed within the community. In these particular examples, the social relationship between Ozone and Gambit remained in tact. While some community members criticized Dade for his unprofessional behavior, most comments referred to him as "good guy" Dade, a saying regularly used in the community to refer to players and members who notably adhere to community values and sportsmanship. The rivalry between OMG and SKTelecom was strengthened by OMG's failure to shake hands. Not only did this act create more tension between players of the opposing teams, but it also contributed to the construction of more distinct factions of team/country fan supporters.

5.5 INSTITUATIONAL EVALUATIVE STANCES

As a result of the varying institutional structures put in place to manage conflict and disputes, most people think about player behavior in term of three evaluative stances: the honorable, the punishable, and the pardonable.

5.5.1 The Honorable

As discussed in the previous sections, developers and community members evaluate other players as being honorable when they abide by the codes of conduct outlined in the EULA and the Summoner's Code. On a macro level, this includes being supportive of teammates, driving constructive feedback, facilitating civil discussion, building relationships, demonstrating sportsmanship, helping new players, and leading by example.

More specifically, players evaluate each other as honorable when they engage in specific actions in game. In the following message (*see* Excerpt 5.26), posted publically on the company's message board, a community member discusses what players should do in order to be perceived as honorable by their teammates and to ultimately earn a ribbon of honor.

Excerpt 5.26: How to Get a Ribbon (Other than Honorable Opponent)
League of Legends Discussion Board; Comment by Augen; 2/10/2013

Ever since I started playing LoL, I've never consciously tried to lead a match. I sometimes get over fed, and start eradicating the enemy team, but that's it, it just happens. I also got Honorable Opponent and 2 days later Teamwork ribbon.

Easy steps towards a non-Red ribbon:

1) Do not insta-claim a lane at Champion select
This is actually one of the worst ways to claim a lane. Having your cursor at the text field, ready to write "mid", then instalocking AP ensures you will not get Ally honor unless you absolutely pwn that match. How to actually claim a lane: Patiently wait for someone to go first at claiming. If nobody does, neither should you, just quietly go to the lane you see fit (If your ADC is not very smart and tries to mid, stay in mid with him and ask him in the chat to leave for bot).

2) Do not play carry champs if you can't handle them
I'm not a very skilled player. However I do know I should NEVER get ADC's because I suck with them. If I get an ADC, I know the match is lost from the very beginning, because I won't be able to carry. Just because you just bought Draven and are very eager to test him out, don't do so if you are the only ADC in the game. Your team will be lacking an ADC, but if nobody chose an ADC up to now, means the scales are already leaning towards the other team.

3) Golden rule. Do not EVER say KS.
There is no KS. KS is a concept for extremely unskilled people that crave kills to boost their ego. Also, it's dumb. Imagine that somebody died and another person shouts "He's dead!". Useless. That's what KS is, no good for morale, no good for score. Oh and in teamfights, with all those Ultis, Ignites and CC's, everybody has a chance to get the kill, don't be bitter about it, Darius.

4) PLATINUM rule. Do not EVER say noob.
If somebody does play in an erratic way, or shows extreme lack of proficiency, help them. If they unintenionally feed, gank his lane. There are no noobs in this game, only pros and learners. If you can't assist a learner, you are not a pro either. Also, making sure the player feels bad about their actions, almost ensures you will lose the match.

5) Spam the chatbox with GJ.
If somebody does good, they know it. If somebody else congratulates them for being good, they do better. GJ is just 2 letters, but can boost someone's morale a great deal, and also relieve stress from him. Stress is actually part of the meta. A stressed player will miss skillshots, will be vulnerable to ganks and you will also be affected, because they may not notice a SS, due to their raised heartbeat and lack of focus.

6) DO NOT spam the map with pings
Does not apply to pinging routes for enemies that are going to gank an ally.
Other than that, ping once and forget its existence for some time. Ping when you die, so that people can see who killed you (and is possibly vulnerable to a gank). Ping when you need gank. DO NOT PING when your team is Aced and you are butthurt because that Ezreal is left with 1 health. Nobody wants to know about the enemies that can be easily finished with autoattack when they are dead.

7) Offer buffs to weak allies early game if you jungle.
This is some bat**** insane advice, but ask your AP mid to come get the blue you pull. Maybe you need it, but there are 2 blues anyway, and your AP mid is always in need of sustain, just as you. Then you can rape enemy mid, and everybody proceeds like nothing ever happened.

8) Do not speak in your native language; also tell that to your pre-mades.
I'm very tired of looking at the chat and reading a language I do not understand. Speaking in Polish, Russian, or any other non-English language makes me uncomfortable as you could be criticizing me or plain insulting me. If all 4 allies speak non-English and refuse to do so, I will probably block them all, and proceed to play my own game, whether you like it or not. I don't like going solo, but you made me to.

9) Optional: Socialize
I do not mean find a gf/bf in that 10 min dominion. But just say for example where you are from, what you ate for dinner, if you are high, if you are heartbroken, about a football match, or ask others. Don't spam the chat with dull stuff, because then you may get blocked.
But "I just had some divine nutella-cookie-banana crepes" is fun, makes allies see you as a person and not your champion, and may promote a friendly atmosphere.
I once had a match where we were discussing pastry recipes with opponents because we both had

afk's, while farming minions. In the end, we danced around in mid, and they surrendered because they were higher level.

10) Obvious: Be laid back
This is a game. Unless you make money off of it, you shouldn't let it get to you. Being relaxed means you will have more fun and make your teammates relaxed as well. Nobody likes a jittery Ziggs anyway.

The end
I hope you learnt something today. Many people ask why they do not receive honor, but in all truthfulness there is nothing honorable about calling everyone in the match a noob, asking for reports from the enemy team for that poor AD Teemo who just learnt to play, or ping-spamming the map because your Tank is dead and couldn't keep a gank off you.
Have fun 

In this excerpt, only one directive listed refers to actual game skill (Step 2). All other steps involve how players use language and communication while playing the game. The first step suggests that players should not instantly claim a specific role at the beginning of a match, but should wait to see what roles other players are interested in playing. Although not stated, a player who instantly types a specific character role at the beginning of the game is evaluated as demanding and self-interested, as opposed to cooperative and supportive. In Step 3, the author Augen discusses what happens when a player accidently kills an opponent that a teammate is trying to kill and is thus rewarded for the objective. He suggests that people who type KS, or kill steal/secured, in the game are petty and in some ways, selfish. Players who do not type KS are evaluated as being supportive and team-oriented.

In Step 4, players are directed to "do not ever say noob." He suggests that to some extent, all players are learning how to master the game. Calling people noobs, or unskilled beginners, is demoralizing to the player and the team. Players who refrain from calling people out on their skill level are evaluated as helpful and kind. In a similar way, players who congratulate, compliment, or spam the chatbox with "GJ" (good job) are evaluated as supportive

and friendly (Step 5). Players who direct others player strategically using game "pings" or signaling are evaluated as helpful and cooperative (Step 6). Those players who use pings carelessly and excessively are evaluated as annoying and bothersome. Moreover, players who make verbal offers to give their teammates game bonuses, as opposed to keeping them for themselves, are evaluated as generous, team-oriented, and ultimately honorable (Step 7).

The author Augen also suggests that non-native English speaking players should speak English if their other teammates are English-speakers. He explains that playing with people who do not speak English can be uncomfortable for English-speaking players because they cannot strategize together and that the other team may be speaking badly of the player. A player speaking in a non-English language on the North American servers is thus evaluated as uncooperative, irrelevant, or sometimes worthy of suspicion, while a non-English-speaking player who uses English in any grammatical form is considered friendly, cooperative, and helpful.

Steps 9 and 10 of this excerpt suggest that players should socialize with others in the game and that they should be relaxed and laid back. Augen explains that you should not share "dull" aspects of your life, but should instead try to relate to people and their identities out of game by sharing information and asking questions about where people are from, what they had for dinner, their recreational activities, their relationship statuses, and/or other competitive games they find interesting. By socializing in this way, Augen suggests that other players will evaluate you as friendly. As described, an honorable player is ultimately a person who is evaluated as helpful, cooperative, generous, friendly, and team-oriented.

5.5.2 The Punishable

As discussed in Section 5.3.4, *Structures for Punishing Behavior*, players are evaluated as toxic or punishable when they engage is unsportsman-like behavior, such as assisting the enemy team, leaving the game, or more often, using offensive language and engaging in the verbal abuse of other players. The Code of Conduct describes this type of language as all language that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, sexually explicit, or racially, ethnically, or otherwise objectionable.

For instance, in Excerpt 5.27, the player "LeBlanc" has been reported to the Tribunal for assessment and potential disciplinary action. The player calls the player "Nidalee" "trash" throughout the interaction (Line 2, Line 7), as well as "nigger" (Line 4, Line 14), and "noob" (Line 15, Line 27). LeBlanc also uses the intensifier "fucking" throughout the text to upgrade his/her assessments of the player Nidalee (Line 4, Line 14, Line 27). In response to this language, the player Nidalee uses similar language. He/she uses "trash" in Line 1, "fkin" [fucking] in Line 1 and in Line 12, "noob" in Line 12, "idiot" in Line 21, and "WTF" [what the fuck] in Line 29. Throughout the entire interaction, the player Sona attempts to mediate the offensive language of other players by stating, "now now, don't go cussin" (Line 3), "keep it cool guys" (Line 5), "chill it" (Line 13), and "no flaming [offensive language] guys" (Line 28).

Excerpt 5.27

Line 1	Nidalee	[00:20:46]	This leblanc is fkin trash
Line 2	LeBlanc	[00:20:57]	u r the trash
Line 3	Sona	[00:20:57]	now now, don't go cussin
Line 4	LeBlanc	[00:21:00]	fucking niggger
Line 5	Sona	[00:21:07]	keep it cool guys
Line 6	LeBlanc	[00:21:23]	look at ur farm, NIDAFEED
Line 7	LeBlanc	[00:22:15]	TRASH
Line 8	Sona	[00:23:48]	damn

Line 9	Akali	[00:23:57]	she too fed
Line 10	Sona	[00:24:00]	ya
Line 11	Nidalee	[00:24:03]	Whats that leblanc? I cant hear you..
Line 12			you have 0 kills. Fucking noob.
Line 13	Sona	[00:24:08]	chill it
Line 14	LeBlanc	[00:24:20]	u fucking niggger
Line 15	LeBlanc	[00:24:53]	NOOOOOOB
Line 16	Sona	[00:26:56]	we're gonna need to push towers for advantage
Line 19	Sona	[00:27:25]	gogogo
Line 20	Nidalee	[00:29:20]	ward baron.
Line 21	Nidalee	[00:32:36]	leblanc they are coming u idiot
Line 22	LeBlanc	[00:33:30]	NOOOb
Line 23	Akali	[00:34:29]	hold them mid
Line 24	Sona	[00:34:34]	will do
Line 25	Sona	[00:35:33]	regroup
Line 26	Nidalee	[00:36:32]	WOW GUYS WTF
Line 27	LeBlanc	[00:36:51]	u r the fucking noob, feeder
Line 28	Sona	[00:37:01]	alright, no flaming, guys
Line 29	Sona	[00:37:05]	we can win this

In addition to reporting LeBlanc to the Tribunal, the players involved also sent in evaluations of the reported player. One player anonymously wrote:

"*disgusting name, terrible attitude, calling me n my friends niggers (some of whom are black) trolling the entire match for no reason at all, then buys tiamats and runs around to not get leaverbustered. this kid should get his account banned*."

In this comment, the player evaluates LeBlanc as having an offensive name and attitude, assisting the enemy team by playing badly, and engaging in verbal abuse. Another player wrote:

"cursed me out in the beginning of game and then did nothing but troll the rest of it."

This player is implying that a punishable player not only uses offensive language, but does not cooperate with the rest of the team to achieve game objectives. Further, an additional player reported:

> *"was so mean throughout the entire game. player was a complete jerk who kept calling me nigger and gay. also kept insisting that i kill myself and die. i don't want to play with twelve year old boys like this. please help riot."*

In this last comment, the player evaluate LeBlanc as "mean" and a "jerk." The player suggests that this assessment is warranted because the reported player was using offensive and harassing language. In this report, the author also assumes LeBlanc is a "twelve year old boy" and suggests that his immaturity makes him unfavorable to play with. As this example as well as the examples discussed in Section 5.3.4 describe, a player is evaluated as toxic or punishable when they use offensive language while communicating with other players.

5.5.3 The Pardonable

Players may also evaluate reported, delinquent players as pardonable. As Tribunal evaluators often do not provide feedback for their "punish or pardon" choices, little is actually known about why a player may decide to pardon certain players and their actions while they may choose to punish others.

Competitive video gaming often involves a specific style of aggressive speech and teasing. Raging (*see* Chapter 4) is a ritual activity that involves displaying one's dissatisfaction with one's team and the opposing team. This type of displaying demonstrates one's

competitiveness and seriousness about the game. This type of engagement might involve using offensive language, repetitive speech, and aggressive discourse styles (caps lock, exclamation points, repeated letters and words, excessive pinging, emoticons, etc.). While this type of interaction may be offensive to some players, and thus may get reported to The Tribunal, at times it may be evaluated as acceptable, expected, or even funny to some players. As a result, the boundaries of what pardonable behavior entails is fuzzy and hard to discern.

5.6 ENDOGENOUS EVALUATIVE STANCES

Apart from discussions of honor and toxicity, players often evaluate each as being either authentic or inauthentic. Authentic players are essentially core community members. These players know the dynamics of the game, common strategies and skills, and play the game frequently. These players keep up with community news through social media and regularly watch professional eSports. They are frequently in touch with developers through social media, professional players, and other core community members. Inauthentic players are those who do not play the game as frequently, have less interest in the broader community of the game, and do not understand the game complexities, discourses, and references. These players are evaluated as being not as committed to learning and understanding the social norms and play styles of the gaming community.

5.6.1 The Authentic

Authenticity is a word that emerged in developers' and players' discourses when League of Legends started to become recognized as a legitimate competitive sport of kind, or E-sport. Starting in Season 1 and more so at the close of Season 2 in Fall of 2012, professional League of Legends gaming developed around region-based, sponsored teams (by both Riot Games and external sponsors), that regularly competed in tournaments and championships. This high level of play and recognition motivated many players to take games more seriously and to devote more time training and strategizing, much like a more traditional athlete.

An authentic player is thus evaluated as a person devoted to playing the game as a sport. These players may still be friendly and sociable while playing the game, but they also use language strategically in an attempt to coordinate and win game matches. These players practice their skills daily and regularly research cutting-edge strategies and new game characters. They often form teams of other players and practice with the same people daily. Although they may often still play the game casually, they are very aware of their game success records and work competitively to improve their individual rankings. Because they consider the stakes of winning and losing to be much higher than perhaps a more casual gamer, these players may engage in more competitive or aggressive speech while playing the game. To be authentic, one must be fully dedicated to the game itself. One must not only know about the game, they must also care solely about improving their own skill and ability.

5.6.2 The Inauthentic

An inauthentic player is a person who may play the game more casually. For these players, the sociality involved in playing often takes priority over the actual competitiveness of the game. These players use the structures of the game and other social media to harass or infuriate players in ways that do not drive team or game progress. These players may not know as much about the dynamics of the game and may not be interested in learning. They take away from the seriousness and competitiveness of the game by impeding useful conversation and often slow progress by forfeiting or refusing to cooperate.

In some cases, inauthenticity may be related to overt politeness. Typically the community refers to the term "nice guy" as meaning a friendly person who is enjoyable to play with in game. Other times, the term "nice guy" may refer to a man who is friendly yet unassertive. He puts the successes of other players before his own, provides support, and avoids confrontations. While these acts may classify this person as honorable by some measures, others might also evaluate him as inauthentic, disingenuous, or uncommitted to the sport of the game.

5.7 CONCLUSION:

CONSTRUCTING COMMUNITY VALUES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

In this chapter, I explore how players and developers together co-construct community through negotiating social norms and appropriate, moral ways of behaving. I discuss the broad range of institutional and endogenous strategies that are used by developers and players to manage disputes and disagreements using Goffman's work on facework and character. I outline

varying codes of behavior and discuss examples of the types of interactions that are deemed both fitting and in violation of these institutional codes. I also discuss examples of how players manage disagreement without institutional involvement in game, on social media, and at in-person events.

Through interaction, players and developers form evaluative stances of what appropriate player community behavior should entail. Informed by company discourse, players talk about each other as honorable, punishable [toxic], or pardonable. Community members also talk about each other as being either authentic or inauthentic. Looking mostly at interactions that occurred on North American servers, I found that the use of English is seen as morally appropriate in most contexts. A player speaking in a non-English language on a North American server is evaluated as uncooperative, irrelevant, or sometimes worthy of suspicion, while a non-English-speaking player who uses English in any grammatical form is considered friendly, cooperative, and helpful.

Developers discuss player behavior theoretically in terms of honor and toxicity, and thus design structures for managing conflict in this way. In practice, these categories overlap and at times conflict with players' own negotiations of appropriate, moral behavior. For instance, the actions of a reported, but pardoned player may also be understood as committed or competitive. While the player may have been reported for using offensive language or for having a negative attitude, others may also see these assessments as being positive or authentic.

This disconnect may suggest that the negotiation of community social norms and ways of being in the League of Legends community is fluid and evolving, rather than determined and fixed. Values in the community are multiple and overlapping, and may at times contradict or contrast with established understandings. While these values may be theoretically informed by

the codes of conduct put in place by the developers at the company, community niches or smaller community groups may also shape these values through tapping into other community or cultural norms.

While the nodes of the behavioral spectrum, both punishable behavior and honorable behavior, may be better defined and agreed upon, the inbetween, meaning pardonable player behavior, is more difficult to outline. It is in this gray space that players constantly negotiate where authentic and honorable start and where inauthentic and toxic behavior end. It is in this range that players negotiate who has core membership and who has peripheral membership. It is in this space in-between that developers and players find it relevant and necessary to the social order of the community to create structures and rules for managing disagreement. This work is constantly being negotiated in the everyday practice of these community members in order to construct and maintain a sense of community and a corresponding moral code.

SIX

CO-CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH LOCALITY AND TEMPORALITY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 1, the term "translocality," describes phenomena involving mobility, migration, circulation, and spatial interconnectedness, not necessarily limited to national boundaries (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). While scholars operate from multiple definitions, in general, translocality refers to the emergence of multidirectional and overlapping networks that facilitate the circulation of people, resources, practices, and ideas (Steinbrink 2009). With regard to scale, scholars suggest that tranlocality exists beyond oversimplified terms such as "global" and "local" and instead, these socio-spatial scales must be understood as 1) socially produced, 2) simultaneously fluid and fixed, and 3) fundamentally relational (Brown and Purcell 2005). In a similar way, Ito (2008) discusses "network localities" as the affiliation that spans geography through media technology, but which is also grounded in concrete places, practices, and material relations.

In this chapter, I examine how this notion of locality is understood and experienced through narratives produced by developers and players. Drawing from interview data collected over the course of fieldwork, I examine what developers and players mean when they use words like "global" and "local" to describe different and overlapping communities in the greater League of Legends community. I discuss how players and developer talk about co-constructing a sense of community and belonging in spite of regional, cultural, and linguistic differences in the global network. In addition, I analyze how these communities are talked about and organized

around the notion of calendar and seasonal time, which operates on various scales, both local and global.

6.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Before examining the narratives collected, I mention briefly the relevance of narrative, translocality, and temporality, to how this chapter is theoretically framed. First, as discussed below, I draw from an understanding of narrative as the ways in which people come together to build accounts and make sense of life events (Ochs and Capps 2001). Second, I discuss how narratives are very much tied to temporality, or in other words, they unfold and are made sense of through temporal sequencing of how the narrator understands the causes and effects of his/her conflicts and/or successes.

6.2.1 Narrative

Ochs and Capps (2001) describe five dimensions of narrative that emphasize how "living" narrative, or a rough story, differs from polished, rehearsed storytelling, namely 1) tellership, 2) tellability, 3) embeddedness, 4) linearity, and 5) moral stance. According to this discussion, polished narratives, rehearsed and told multiple times, or master narratives, often told by organizations, are characterized by a guaranteed tellability. Told by one active narrator, these stories have a clear beginning, middle, and end, and typically contain some sort of moral stance. In contrast to this type of narrative, "living" narrative is often nonlinear, embedded in another situation, and sometimes co-narrated. Narratives are widely variable and as such, exist on a sort of continuum that ranges from "living" to polished or rehearsed.

Nevertheless, the process of storytelling is a process of sense-making. The act of storytelling is a medium for reframing past experiences, both good and bad, in order to

understand them in terms of the present and the future. Narrating is a process of becoming, focused centrally on the act and performance of telling. Because narrative incorporates notions of becoming and sense-making, its structures may be fragmentary and fluid in time. While storytellers may strive to tell tales coherently situated in time, the fragmented experience of storytelling itself is one that demonstrates a level of narrative authenticity and experience. The notion of phenomenological modification, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity, also intersect the storytelling process (Husserl 1931).

The import of narrative in this project is particularly significant, as it allows both players and developers to make sense of their experiences in the community (Ochs and Capps 2001, Garro and Mattingly 2000). In some cases, meaning produced in the narrative process may be goal-based and purpose-driven (Ochs and Capps 2001). Master narratives of the game company's experience, for example, frame the relationship between developers and players as productive and interdependent. They suggest that players provide invaluable feedback and without their engagement, the company would not be nearly as successful. These master narratives acknowledge players and community members in order to maintain the social structure of the community and to continue fostering the built relationship. In some cases, narratives may be a source of confronting conflict and locating moral culpability. Locating culpability through storytelling may serve as a therapeutic medium, allowing those in the community dealing with conflict the means of coping with dissatisfaction, misfortune, or loss. Another topic which is relevant to narrative and community development is what is termed the "Looking Good Principle," in which storytellers narrate events, regardless of causal culpability, in a way that portrays themselves in the most complimentary light (Ochs et. al 1989: 244; Ochs and Capps 2001: 47).

These principles are relevant to the notion of how players and developers co-construct a sort of sense of community and belonging and may influence the ways in which these narratives are structured. While narrative studies are large in scope, for the purposes of this project, I am most interested in applying notions of narrative sense-making (Garro and Mattingly 2000, Ochs and Capps 2001, Labov 1972), the phenomenology of time in narrative (Ricoeur 1981, Morson 1994, Ochs and Capps 2001), narrative fragmentation (Jackson 2006, Capps and Ochs 1995, Briggs 1997, Briggs 2003) and the intersection of narrative and experience (Mattingly 1998, Kirmayer 2000).

6.2.2 Translocality and Temporality

Scholars often use the term translocality, to capture the complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-oriented, and multi-dimensional understanding (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Translocality is thought to refer to the "sum of phenomena which result from a multitude of circulations and transfers" (Freitag and von Oppen 2010: 5). This understanding poses that people are connected through processes that transgress boundaries on different scales, and that global history is constituted by processes of "entanglement and interconnectedness" between places, institutions, and actors (Freitag and von Oppen 2010:1).

According to Hedberg and do Carmo (2012), translocality facilitates of an understanding of relationships that move beyond "container spaces" and the dichotomy of "here" and "there." In this understanding, translocality refers to the emergence of multidirectional and overlapping networks that facilitate the circulation of people, resources, practices, and ideas (Greiner and Sakdapolrak: 375). Nevertheless, the term translocality both calls into question the importance of locally bounded, fixed understandings of place, while at the same time, empathizes that these places are relevant nodes where global flows converge. To further complicate this

understanding, translocality may also be thought of in terms of phenomenological place-making, in which places are defined by subjective "meaning, history, and practices" that go beyond the limits of various spatial scales (Oakes and Schein 2006).

Another layer that adds to the complexity of translocality is the concept of temporality (Morson, 1994; Ochs and Capps 2001; Ricoeur 1981). According to Ricoeur (1981), historical time is composed of both cosmic time, or undifferentiated moments in which all change occurs, and lived time, meaning the time experienced and lived in the present. People harmonize these two particular modes of time through organizing ways to measure time, such as through calendars and schedules. Further, in a similar way that people make sense of locality, they also make sense of time, often through narrative sense-making and language. Time, in this regard, is not necessarily just a linear progression of events, but instead, may be understood in terms of two subjective dimensions. Temporality, particularly in narrative, may be understood as 1) a collection of stand-alone events, and 2) the plot in which these events are organized and made sense of as a whole.

6.3 DISCOURSES OF LOCALNESS AND TEMPORALITY

Schutz (1971) argued that in everyday life and science, people rely on constructs or ideal types in order to interpret relevant aspects of reality. Through encounters with others, people experience and understand the other in terms of typification, in which people construct typical ways of acting and by assume underlying motivations or personalities of others.

Schutz argued for the existence of four basic realms of social reality, including the future (Folgewelt), past (Volwelt), Umwelt, and the Mitwelt (Schutz 1971; Uexküll 1957). The

Umwelt is one realm in which ideal types can be made to understand "we" relations, or in other words, relationships that are defined by a high degree of knowledge of those involved in the interaction. The Mitwelt refers to the realm in which people deal with types of people and social structures that are characterized by "they" relations. In this section, with respect to both "we" and "they" relations, I discuss how developers' and players' notion of empathy is based on actors and environments (the game) that mutually constitute each other. I discuss empathy throughout this chapter as "a first-person-like perspective on another than involves an emotional, embodied, or experiential aspect" (Hollan and Throop 2008: 391-392).

6.3.1 Institutional Narratives

In the following examples, I discuss examine a series of interviews I conducted over the course of fieldwork, with a developer at the company who works in the Department of International Development. In the excerpts below, I highlight eight narrative sections according to specific, coded themes that touch on how locality and temporality are understood and experienced both in the company, and in the community more broadly.

In the first example (*see* Excerpt 6.1), I explore some of the reasons why the concept of local context is relevant and meaningful to not only the interviewee, but also more widely in the company. In response to the prompt, "Tell me about what the International development group does…" the Riot developer told me a little about the plans the company had to expand development in other countries, where managers, both community and country, could more actively and deeply engage with players.

Excerpt 6.1: Why Local Context Matters

1	We just fundamentally think that, um, understanding
2	and being able to empathize with the player experience is super important.
3	So um... and specifically being able to, uh, kind of feel the wants and desires,

and pain when we cause it or when it's caused of a player.
Uh, because we ARE players of our own game, right?
Um, and so with that said, it's tough for me to understand all the nuances of what it's like
to play in an environment like Turkey, where um you know, it's a largely cashless,
uh, it's a largely cash based economy, and so there are different payment methods
that we don't even have here in America,
such as like, uh, you go and you hand a pc cafe owner cash
and he prints out a little code that's generated,
and that code is good for a certain amount of Riot points,
that you have to go put into the game.
But the weird thing is you can go resell that code because it's just a code, and it's equal.
So, just like something as simple as that, just like paying for your game,
is so different in Turkey,
and even as someone who travels around to all these regions
and tries to be really aware of this,
it's so hard for me to understand why that would be an important thing to prioritize
and build, against all the other software pieces we could build for all the players
around the world, and so somebody who can actually empathize, again,
who is that player in Turkey, can understand more what the local player desire is,
or what kind of market norms are.
Um, and really their job is to spend 100% of their time, thinking about their region.
Whereas people in Santa Monica, who are trying to build stuff globally, you know,
it's one of many other things they have to think about,
and so there's context switching and you just can't be as, um, deeply thoughtful
about problems and contexts as you can when you're focused, right?
So it's kind of like this little saying... geography creates priority. Right?
It's like if there's a hurricane, ummm or a typhoon, I guess it would be in Asia...
like everyone's like wow, that's really terrible, etcetera,
but if there's an earthquake in California,
that's obviously a much more serious problem to me, being a resident of California, right?
So it's much more urgent, it creates that priority.... it's the same thing.
Um, whereas if you're in that region, you're empathizing, uh you can hopefully um,
solve problems more effectively for those players because you understand it
on a more deeper level.

In Excerpt 6.1, particularly in Lines 1-2, the interviewee engages in a sort of sense-making before launching into the rest of his narrative explanation, stating, "We just fundamentally think that understanding and being able to empathize with the player experience is super important" because ultimately, "we ARE players of our own game" (Line 5). Using the

plural pronouns "we," the interviewee tries to make sense of why understanding local "nuances" (Line 6), including "wants and desires" as well as "pain" (Lines 4-5), are important to not just the company, but to developers as well, on a more personal level.

In Lines 7-16, he then launches into an example of how playing the game in Turkey is very different from how players play the game and participate in the community, mostly due to a different type of structured economy. In Line 17, the interview switches back to talking about his personal experiences visiting the offices around the world and trying to be conscious of cultural and regional differences. Despite these practices, he admits that these differences are somewhat hard to understand and "prioritize" (Line 19), partly because as he later explains in Line 19, "geography creates priority." He explains that the closer (physically) a person is to a particular regional community, the more likely one is to understand, on "a more deeper level" (Line 37), not only what "local player desire is" (Line 22) and what the "market norms" are (Line 23), but also "how to solve problems more effectively for players" (Line 36) in a global community.

Throughout this excerpt, the interviewee switches between pronouns that emphasize his dual membership as both a developer of the game and as a player. He uses the pronoun "we" (Lines 1, 5, 9, 20) to position himself institutionally, as a developer of the game, regionally located in California. When talking about the local economy in Turkey, he switches to use "he" to describe the PC café owner (Line 11) and "you" and "your" (Lines 13, 14, 15) to describe how a player would experience these game settings. In Lines 24 and 26, he switches to "their" and "they" to talk about developers in other regions, and then back to "you" in Lines 27, 28, 35, and 36. In Line 19, he uses the pronoun "me" to explain that it would be hard for him to understand the subtle nuances of what being a player is like in Turkey, because he does not live or work

there. Again in Line 33, he uses "me" to explain earthquakes in California are more immediately a problem to him, as opposed to natural disasters that are further away. These pronoun shifts emphasize that not only the interviewee's overlapping community memberships, but also his regional identity. In terms of ideal types, the player is both an inhabitant of a specific game world, with particular goals and actions, as well as, in some cases, also the developer. For this reason, developers may achieve empathy for players through the way in which they inhabit the same world, but through a different perspective, that allows them to change and further re-design the game.

Further, in this example, locality refers to specific regions throughout the world, connected through common practice and their relationship with the global community, or in other words, the dominant community of English-speaking developers and players, operating from the North American region. In the next example (see Excerpt 6.2), in response to the question, "How does Riot Games think about community in Santa Monica and around the world, in other global offices?" the phrase "thinking globally and acting locally" was brought up in conversation by the interviewee (Line 1).

Excerpt 6.2: Thinking Globally and Acting Locally

1	We sometimes talk about thinking globally and acting locally.
2	So this is not a phrase that we made up.
3	Um, this is a relatively common phrase in business.
4	Uhh, but really the way we think about it is, um, we want to um,
5	going back to kind of a sports analogy, there has to be some sort of level playing field...
6	**Right?** So our core game, like the core game rules are the same everywhere.
7	Um because you can't have a globally competitive sport like in soccer
8	if you had 12 people per side in Europe and 11 people per side in South America.
9	That you know, when you come together to play the world cup,
10	whose rules do you choose? Etcetera.
11	It invalidates global competitions, so the game itself and game rules are the same,
12	but all the experiences around the game are different.
13	And um, there's a certain aspect of, um, the way we think about our business,

14 and the way we think about our players that applies to everyone.
15 Right so, as an example, like we believe that fun is fun everywhere.
16 So we believe one of the reasons League of Legends has been so successful worldwide
17 is just that it's just a universally fun, appealing game. **Right?**
18 Like soccer is a great analogy.
19 It's the most played sport in the world, but it's the same everywhere, **right?**
20 Because fun, is fun, is fun.
21 And so, we really try to think about things from a global perspective
22 and be aware of our actions and how they impact all of our players.
23 Um but then acting locally tends to be kind of the execution of the various thoughts
24 and strategies that we have, uh,
25 with a local lens to be able to adjust that strategy for a local audience.
26 Um so there are a lot of varying examples, when we talk about specifics between regions
27 and the ways players interact with the game through pc cafe,
28 or the way they pay or the events offline, or etcetera.
29 But when you really kind of zoom out and look at the big picture,
30 of the divergence between regions, it's actually very narrow, **right?**
31 We don't have regions that are going and saying, you know what?
32 Um core competitive games for players aren't really our thing.
33 You know, we think our players want a really causal web based Facebook game. **Right?**
34 Like, none of our regions are so divergent in that so
35 it may seem like we're doing a lot of nuanced things, and we actually are,
36 but in the grand scheme of things we're really, um, we're executing a global set of
37 strategies with specific local context. **Right**?
38 And so thinking globally is like, you know, eSports. like that's a global initiative.
39 But how that gets acted upon is very different in each locale that you visit.

In this example, "we" is used again throughout the excerpt to discuss what a sort of master narrative, that starts with the use of the phrase "thinking globally and acting locally" in which the interviewee explains is a relatively common phrase in business (Line 3). I suggest that this excerpt may actually be a master narrative that often comes up in the workplace and other professional contexts. It is well practiced and polished, starting at Line 4 and ending in Line 20. In this section, the interviewee launches into an analogy of the game, explaining that the game is like soccer. In soccer, a global set of rules exists because without them, fair completion would be difficult. The interviewee suggests that what makes soccer different in countries around the

world are the particular [regional, cultural] experiences that players and fans have. He goes on to say that at Riot, they believe fun can be "universal" (Line 17) and that ultimately "fun is fun is fun" (Line 20).

This discussion of fun allows the interviewee to launch into the next section of his response, which can be seen to be less practiced and smooth, where he explains how the company "really tries to think about things from a global perspective" while also being "aware of our [their] actions and how they impact all of our players" (Lines 21-22). In lines 23-25, the interviewee expands saying, "Um but then acting locally tends to be kind of the execution of the various thoughts and strategies that we have, uh, with a local lens to be able to adjust for strategy for a local audience." He concludes the excerpt by stating that eSports is a global initiative, but "how that gets acted upon is very different in each locale that your visit" (Line 39).

One particular way the interviewee attempts to make sense of the phrase he brings up, "think globally, act locally," is through frequently seeking feedback from me, an observer of the community, who has also spent a lot of time thinking and trying to make sense of how global communities are co-constructed and maintained. Throughout his response, through continuously asking the question, "right?" as in Lines 6, 17, 19, 30, 33, and 37. This discourse practice suggests that although parts of his narrative may be more polished, other parts of his understanding may not be as developed, and the question "right?" may be used as both a way to monitor whether or not I am following his explanation, as well as, to some extent, encouraging feedback through regulators like head nods, and shorts sounds like "uh-huh," that display my level of interest or agreement.

In Excerpt 6.3, the interviewee discusses regional differences observed in the global community. In particular, he discusses just how important pc-cafes are in certain regions and

markets, as for example, in South Korea, where there are over 13,000 independently owned pc-bangs. These cafes have different structures for running the game, and as such the company needs to build specialized software to work in these particular regions. He also describes how the game is localized in language and cultures around the world, so that all players understand "the spirit" and meaning of written stories, jokes, and other text in the game.

Excerpt 6.3: Regional Differences

We try not to change the game too much, because again,
we want to maintain a globally competitive sport, right.
So there's two examples of regional differences that come to mind.
One is pc-cafe. Right, so um in Korea, and many other regions,
but Korea is the only region where we actually operate this, um,
the way players play is typically heavily based around the pc-cafe, pc-bong structure.
Um so, you know, there's over 13,000 pc-cafes in Korea and um,
it's just kind of a market norm for players to go play pc games in cafes
and so we had to actually build specific sets of software around the game,
to actually enable that, cause there's a whole infrastucture and in Korea that exists,
that we had to plug into, that we obviously didn't build for North America or Europe,
because it's not a prominent way of playing.
Another example that comes to mind is in the actual translation and localization, um,
of the, um, of the speech and writing for characters and voiceovers in the game.
So, um, as an example, um, every champion has uh, a little, uh, some fun emotes
that they can do in game that are unrelated to game play.
They may tell a joke, or have a taunt, etcetera, and sometimes when we write these,
because these lines are all written native, uh, based, uh, these lines are all written
um, in North America by English writing staff, sometimes we'll actually have like a joke,
for example, and we're much better at this than we used to be,
cause we pay attention to it now, but for instance, there may be a joke,
and unfortunately, I can't think of one off the top of my head that would be accurate, um,
that then we actually, um, we actually allow our regions, um, the creative freedom
to actually go, if that joke really doesn't make sense, in a particular locale,
um then they will actually re - they'll try to re-write the line,
in a way that tries to capture some of the spirit,
but maybe actually changes the cultural context to be more relevant.
Um, same things with names of champions, again this used to be much more of an issue,
but we try not to localize the names so that it's the same everywhere.
But sometimes we'll accidently pick a name in the early development process that, um,
doesn't make sense or means some other, you know,
nonsensical word in a particular language,

33	and we'll have to go back and actually change it.

In this example, the interviewee discusses and tries to make sense of different contexts in which the company has had to build new software and features for people in other regions, who have different play styles, and speak different languages. Through the practice of storytelling itself, the interviewee recalls various experiences that allow him to make sense of his explanation in the moment of his retelling. This is evidenced in the various fillers the interviewee uses throughout, like "um" and "uh" (e.g. Line 5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 23, 25, 28, 30). This sense-making can also be seen in sections of his talk where his explanation is not fully formed, like in Line 22, or in re-starts, like in Line 25.

In the next example (*see* Excerpt 6.4), the interviewee discusses locality in terms of pc-cafes around the world. He distinguishes between regions where players typically play together locally, in neighborhood locations, and regions where players typically play from home.

Excerpt 6.4: Playing Together Locally

1	So pc-cafes is kind of a general term,
2	pc-bong is just the Korean specific nomenclature we use.
3	Um but uh, pc cafes exist everywhere, um, but they're in very high abundance
4	in certain countries around the world, so uh um countries
5	that immediately come to mind for us, are South Korea,
6	which is the only place that we actually have functioning software to support pc cafes,
7	and I'll a little bit about that, umm, other large pc-cafe markets that we 're in,
8	but we don't have pc cafe functional software support are um Turkey, Taiwan, China,
9	Vietnam, um, Greece, actually, is a pretty prominent pc cafe culture,
10	and of course you can go to a pc-cafe in any of these countries
11	and it's more prominent in some Scandinavian countries, and Germany, etcetera.
12	I've played in pc cafes, uh, in quite a few countries around the world,
13	and they're all similar, yet different.
14	Um, what makes South Korea unique for us, and unique in the market,
15	is that it's so heavily driven by pc cafes and there's a lot of existing expectations,
16	because the market itself is a pc-cafe market, and so players often forsake playing games
17	from their home in lieu of going out with their friends, um and playing in pc-cafes.

18	So you go to a pc-cafe with a group of friends, you pay a small amount of money,
19	based on time, and you can play whatever game you want.
20	Um but it's culturally different because in North America and Europe,
21	and the way we tend to think about playing games is it's mostly home-based umm,
22	you know, or college based, etcetera.
23	But you play from your home pc and you, uh, if you want to play with friends,
24	you have to, uh, Skype or use the in-game chat, or whatever method of communication,
25	whereas it's much more common in a pc-cafe to go with your friends, um,
26	and actually play in person, the same match against another team,
27	or maybe you'll have a couple teams and you'll play again each other,
28	or maybe you'll even find some rivals, then you'll actually challenge them to play as well.
29	Um, so it's just a much more social experience built in by the fact that there's all these
30	physical locations and it's much more engrained in the culture.
31	Umm, whereas we tend to play games from home, in North America especially.

In this example, the interviewee describes how pc-cafes are prominent in countries all over the world, but particularly in South Korea because of how the market is structured and what he refers to as "existing expectations" (Line 15). He discusses the pc-cafe experience in South Korea, which he describes as an activity practiced locally with friends, from the gaming experience in North America and Europe, which he describes as "mostly home based" or "college based," requiring technology to connect with friends digitally (Line 22).

Throughout this narrative, the interviewee comes to make sense of the differences he states in Lines 29-31. Referring to South Korea, he explains, "Um, so it's just a much more social experience built in by the fact that there's all these physical locations and it's much more engrained in the culture." Through this storytelling, he comes to the understanding that locality and physical locations contribute to creating a richer social experience, and although the game occurs online, as it does it North America and Europe, the presence of other people in the cafe create a different experience, that is both rooted and supported in South Korea's gaming-focused culture (*see* Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: PC-Cafes; South Korea (Left), China (Right)

This example is further expanded in Excerpt 6.5, where the interviewee discusses the pc-café experience in greater detail, explaining how in spite of varying décor, most pc-cafes have many of the same features and attract a wide demographic of players.

Excerpt 6.5: The PC-Cafe Experience

1	PC-cafes differ based on the cafe you're in...
2	um it even differs in South Korea, based on the pc cafe you're in.
3	Um most pc-cafes in South Korea are actually locally owned.
4	Um which I found was really interesting.
5	I don't know the exact number, but um most are locally owned.
6	Um so players tend to gravitate towards the one that resonates with them most,
7	um but they'll be some sort of theme or décor, um,
8	sometimes they'll be very heavy gaming related, so they'll be lots of game posters,
9	and advertisements, and it feels very eSportsy.
10	um I've been in some in Korea as well that are very, you know, like almost even like
11	modern architecture, like smooth wood paneling, really nice... a little more quiet.
12	Um, almost all of them have some component of like snacks, or like drinks or food,
13	even some so far as, again, I mentioned there's a sophisticated infrastructure,
14	um but you know, I've been in some where there's software,
15	that you can actually order food and snacks and drinks from your pc,
16	and they'll actually just bring over the snacks for you.
17	Um some, um, there used to be drinking, uhh actually alcohol, allowed umm in pc cafes,
18	but that's actually outlawed now because there's such a wide age group.
19	Because it's not just kids that go into pc-cafes, it's actually adults as well,
20	cause it's just kind of been a kind of cultural norm for a long time there.
21	Umm so you'll usually see mixed age groups there.

22	So again, in my experience there's no two that are really alike,
23	it's more about finding one that you and your friends actually like that's located near you,
24	etcetera, or that there's some particular aspect that you would choose that over another.

In Excerpt 6.5, the interviewee describes the other components that contribute to pc-cafes being a "much more social experience," as he describes it in Excerpt 6.4. He describes the built environment of these locations, commenting that local pc-cafes are designed or decorated in diverse ways, and that "players tend to gravitate towards the one that resonates with them most" (Line 6). He then discusses how food and drinks contribute to the social experience, implying that these refreshments allow players to spend longer amounts of time hanging out together (*see* Figure 6.2). He continues by stating that mixed age groups play in pc-cafes, and in further conversation outside of this excerpt, he told me that players typically hang out at the same one or two cafes and these spaces become places where players typically form ongoing relationships with the cafe owners, relating around games, but also sharing news and stories about experiences outside of gaming. In concluding this narrative segment, the interviewee writes, "so again, in my experience there's no two that are really alike, it's more about finding one that you and your friends actually like that's located near you, etcetera, or that there's some particular aspect that you would choose that over another" (Lines 22-24). His use of "in my experience" in Line 22 suggest that a sort of sense-making is occurring through talking about the experience of cafes, stemming from his own particular experiences and observations.

Figure 6.2: PC Café Refreshments; South Korea (Left), China (Right)

In the next segment (*see* Excerpt 6.6), the interviewee expands on the previous excerpts on pc-cafes in South Korea, but discussing how this locality and sociality around gaming also create cliques and friendship groups outside of the pc-café.

Excerpt 6.6: Competition and Cliques

1	eSports have been popular in Korea for awhile.
2	Um actually, the original StarCraft was really popular in the late 90s there.
3	And so far I can remember, there were several large tournaments and playoffs,
4	uh, encompassing tens of thousands of live attendees, back, even before the year 2000.
5	Um, and so it's kind of engrained and there's actually at least two major television
6	networks on Korean TV, that are actually dedicated to eSports.
7	Um, and so, um, it's incredibly popular, and uh, um, often times some of the most popular
8	players, um, are household names and uh, very popular in schools.
9	Um, there's lots of you know, teen boys want to be these players,
10	and teen girls want to date them.
11	So um in Korea, there's a pretty high percentage of people who are in school who play,
12	and I haven't seen it first hand, and I haven't studied it, but I've heard from my
13	coworkers in the Korean office that, uh, there's some interesting social dynamics
14	around uh kids who are maybe more popular or less popular,
15	based on how good they are and their ratings.
16	Um because in reality, eSports is just like any other sport, uh you know,
17	there's an aspirational image that players can create in their heads, you know,
18	when I was growing up, I wanted to be Joe Montana, a famous quarterback.
19	Um however, one of the primary differences in League of Legends,
20	um, the barrier to actually participating in the game, eSports, and competing,

21	is much lower than when I tried to go out and get 11 people on one side,
22	versus 11 people on the other - it's very hard for me to practice it,
23	or even have the opportunity to get close to playing like Joe Montana in the NFL,
24	And so eSports creates this aspirational path for people, and in Korea in particular.

In this example, the interviewee discusses how eSports has had a long historical presence in South Korea that is still persistent today, through televised matches and large tournaments. As a result of this prevailing affinity and support of eSports, the interviewee explains how "often times some of the most popular players, um, are household names and uh, very popular in schools" (Lines 7-8). He goes on to explain, "teen boys want to be these players, and teen girls want to date them" (Line 9-10), and that popularity in schools is somewhat correlated to your ranking, or how well you play the game (Line 14-15).

In Lines 16-24, the interviewee attempts to make sense of these social dynamics by drawing on both an analogy and by tying it back to his own personal experience. In Line 16, he explains, that eSports is just like any other sport, and as such, athletes aspire to be as strong and skillful as possible. In the next few lines, starting in Line 18, he relates this point to his own experience growing up and aspiring to be Joe Montana, but never really getting the opportunity to practice in ways that would allow him to succeed at that level. He describes how eSports is accessible, with much lower barriers that football and other more traditional sports, and as such it creates "this aspirational path for people, and in Korea in particular," because of historical and cultural practices he describes at the beginning of the excerpt (Line 24).

In the following three excerpts, the notion of time is a concept that is focused on in the interviewees' responses. In Excerpt 6.7, when asked to describe when the most watched eSports tournaments take place, the interviewee launched into a technical explanation of eSports and calendar time.

Excerpt 6.7: eSports and Calendar Time

1	We try to have a competitive season, um roughly every year -
2	that's not always been the standard formula.
3	This is our fourth competitive season, but we're actually changing our naming
4	nomenclature from naming seasons from the lineal numerical order,
5	to the year in which they actually take place, so this is just like any other sports season.
6	So, it's the 2014 season. That's how we'll be referring to it going forward.
7	Anyway, we've actually standardized our kind of calendar over the last few years,
8	with LCS, which is our League of Legends Champion Series,
9	which runs in North America and Europe,
10	and uh it's basically divided into a spring season, that lasts, I believe 10 weeks,
11	plus playoffs, and then a European season that runs simultaneously
12	along the exact same schedule, however, they are played on different days of the week.
13	Uh so, players can actually watch both from multiple regions,
14	and so there's a spring split and then there's a break in the summer months,
15	usually around the May timeline, where we usually have sort of an All Star break,
16	where we have a small international tournament,
17	where the top teams from competitive leagues from around the world,
18	will play a small tournament, and then we'll have the uh summer split.
19	Then, that lasts another 10 weeks and then there's playoffs, and top teams
20	from each region will then go up into the world playoffs and world finals.
21	And so, uh, the the world finals, which is essentially,
22	the Super Bowl of League of Legends,
23	where the top two teams play uh a competitive match, best of five against one another.
24	And then we'll usually have sort of an off-season.
25	Now Korea actually has a season in the winter, which we typically don't for LCS,
26	but typically when we finish the competitive season, uh around late October,
27	early Novemberish, um, we'll take one or two months and then resume,
28	the competitive play for the next year.
29	But again, that's only for the North American and Europe regions,
30	where riot actually runs the leagues themselves.
31	There are competitive seasons around the world that have different schedules.
32	Uhm, but everyone participates in the world playoffs and finals,
33	so there's no other competitive uh season operating during that time.

In Excerpt 6.7, the interviewee begins by saying, "We try to have a competitive season, um roughly every year - that's not always been the standard formula" (Lines 1-2). He states that while the competitive seasons have traditionally been numbered in the past, in the future, they

will be referred to by the year they take place (Lines 3-6). In Line 6, for example, he makes sense of the organization of time in the League of Legends community by connecting seasons in the past, to the current season in the present, to how it will be called in the future. He states, "So, it's the 2014 season. That's how we'll be referring to it going forward."

In Lines 7-28, the interviewee then launches into a technical explanation of the North American and European season calendar. Using the word "anyway" (Line 7), he starts out by switching from discussing how the community talks about time meta-discursively, through naming seasons and measurements of time, to talking about the actual seasonal timelines. He discusses how the company has standardized their calendar over the last few years, mostly as a result of organizing eSports schedules in both North America and Europe. In Line 7, he begins his explanation by talking about the community's calendar in the past, or "over the last few years." In Line 10, he switches back into the present, describing the Spring Season as lasting a total of 10 weeks in North America, alongside a European Spring Season, that lasts the same number of weeks but is televised on different days of the week, so more players globally can watch. In Line 14 and 18, the interviewee refers to a "spring split" and a "summer split." Outside of the excerpted text, he explains that although these spits seem to be individual and separate seasons, they are "splits" of one larger season, or conceptual understanding of time. In Line 20, after his mention of team playoffs, he explains how top teams from each region "will then go up" into the world playoffs and world finals (*see* Figure 6.3). He switches into the future to describe the World Finals, and then again in Line 24, when he states that after the World Finals "we'll have sort of an off-season," and then, "we'll take one or two months and then resume" (Line 27). In the final part of the excerpt (Lines 29-33), the interviewee switches back into the present tense to explain how, "there are competitive seasons around the world that have

different schedules" (Line 31), but that "everyone participates in the world playoffs and finals" (Line 32).

This excerpt is not linear and switches back and forth from the past, present, and future. The interviewee switches tenses, making sense of time in the community through the actual practice of storytelling. He begins by saying that the competitive season is roughly a year, but that this has not always been the standard formula. He talks about the calendar as being "standardized" (Line 7), but also discusses how other regions have their own individual schedules. He uses words like "usually" (Lines 15, 24), and "typically" (Lines 25, 26) to distinguish between timeframes that are uncertain, and those that are more certain. In this example, the narrative is a sense-making process.

Figure 6.3: League of Legends Season 3 World Finals; Los Angeles, October 2013

In the last example (see Excerpt 6.8), temporality and locality are again common themes in the interviewee's narrative. In this excerpt, he compares the Season One World Finals with the Season 3 World Finals, and lastly projects what he thinks the Season 4 [2014] World Finals will be like in the future.

Excerpt 6.8: Different Seasons

1	Season 1 was obviously our first competitive season; we had uh very few teams,
2	the level of competition was high for the time, but compared to now, um not so much.
3	Uh the level of competition, the level of play, the level of energy and expertise,
4	and practice, and coaching that goes into teams now-
5	um the level of competition now is just so much higher.
6	Um, also the two other major things, everything is just bigger.
7	The stakes are bigger, our original tournament culminated in a 100,000 dollar cash prize,
8	which was one of the largest in eSports at the time, uh now, as of season 2014,
9	the prize pool hasn't officially been announced,
10	but season 3 world finals culminated in a million dollar cash prize for the winner.
11	Um, with much more money paid out for teams finishing in the world playoffs as well,
12	so the total prize pool was well over 10 times,
13	we'll probably closer to 25 times larger, than Season 1.
14	also in terms of viewership and venue, online and offline,
15	our first season one was at a um an existing event called Dreamhack,
16	which takes place in Sweden,
17	whereas our Season 3 World Finals too place at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.
18	Um I think around a millionish people watched,
19	actually it was 200,000 people or so watched the Season 1 Finals,
20	and 32 million people watched the Season 3 Finals.
21	So just massive, massive growth exponentially.
22	Um going forward, I would expect us to only get bigger, um as an example,
23	In Season 2014, we're having our first, um, Riot run world playoffs and finals,
24	in another country, um for the first time in 3 years...
25	obviously we had it at Dreamhack in Sweden for the first time,
26	but the scale of the operation is much much bigger now,
27	and I would assume that in Season 2015,
28	we'll try to find a viable competitive venue again.

In this narrative, the interviewee begins using the past tense verb "was" (Line 1), explaining that their first competitive season was smaller and had very few teams. Starting in Line 2, he transitions from using past tense verbs to present tense verbs, when he explains, "the level of competition was high for the time, but compared to now, not so much." In Line 4, he repeats the word "now," emphasizing how different the level of competition and sophistication of eSports is in the present compared to the past. He explains that in the present, "everything is just bigger" (Line 6). In Lines 10-20, the interviewee describes some of the differences between

the past season and the most recent full season by switching back and forth from the past tense to the present tense in most of his comparisons. He makes sense of the list of comparisons he narrated, explaining, "so just massive, massive growth exponentially" (Line 21). Starting in Line 22, the interviewee then transitions to discussing Season 2014, which will take place later this year. He beings by saying, "going forward" (Line 22), before launching into a discussion of how he "would expect us [Riot eSports] to only get bigger." A similar projection is made shortly after when he states, "I would assume," in relation to the growth of "the scale of the operation" (Line 26) and venue size, in 2015.

The topic of locality is relevant in this example, as scale and locations are discussed as indicators of growth and overall success. He talks about scale as being "viewership and venue, online and offline" (Line 14). He compares Season One, which took place in Sweden as part of another event, to a much larger Season 3, which took place in Los Angeles, to an upcoming Season 4 Tournament, that will be even more larger and located in a country other than the United States. In this excerpt, growth is viewed as becoming more and more international and global, taking into account the increasing numbers of people who watch and participate in the community through media online.

6.3.3 Community Narratives

In the following section, I discuss five narrative excerpts that I collected through interviewing different English-speaking community members located both in Santa Monica and dispersed in other regions. Using semi-structured interviewing both face-to-face and through digital media, I found that players produce stories about their experiences as community members as a means of locating culpability and agency (Bamberg 1997; 2004). For instance, players often tell stories about the company's or the game's shortcomings, how they have

individually been offended or displeased, and they deserve to be informed and a part of the decision making around certain game elements and changes. In these narratives, I also found that players produce stories that intersect understandings of entitlement and empathy, often times related to locality and temporality. In the narratives that follow, although not exhaustive of all the types of narratives I collected, I discuss how these two themes resonate in the experiences of players.

In the first community narrative (*see* Excerpt 6.9), the interviewee is a college-aged, male player, that I interviewed face-to-face in Los Angeles, after the Season Three World Finals in October, 2014. In this excerpt, he describes being disappointed in the tournament because two teams from South Korea ended up being the highest ranked, and ultimately got to compete in the final match (Lines 1-3). In Lines 4-6, he suggests that Riot is responsible for this unfair and unenjoyable experience, and then calls them to action, saying, "They need to restructure how Worlds works." He then proposes that Riot restructures the tournament to resemble the structure used by the NFL, and to have two simultaneous leagues run at the same time, that are tied to specific regional locations (Line 13). He concludes by saying Riot "really owe it to us to fix it" (Line 16) and that "maybe if we're loud enough, something will happen" (Line 17).

Excerpt 6.9: eSports and Locality

1	This past October, I honestly was really disappointed that the last two teams,
2	were two teams from Korea.
3	Honestly, it was kind of disappointing and a little anti-climactic.
4	So if Riot wants to keep calling eSports a sport, they need to take action,
5	and make it more fair.
6	They need to restructure how Worlds works.
7	So, I've been watching most games this season,
8	and if this is going to be a legitimate sport, I have to wonder,
9	why don't structure Worlds like say the Super Bowl, where everyone plays,
10	then the best two teams play for the division title,
11	then finally the two divisions play each other for the ultimate win?

12	If I was them, I would make the two divisions…
13	the Western hemisphere and the Eastern hemisphere.
14	This would make future Finals so much more interesting because it would eliminate
15	the possibility of having a double Korea finale again because of bad grouping.
16	A lot of my friends think they really owe it to us to fix it,
17	and maybe if we're loud enough, something will happen.

In this storytelling, the interviewee makes sense of two main messages. First, he implies that community affiliations outside the actual practice of playing the game, like regional affiliation, matter and should be considered in the design of the tournament. Although the game is centered on a practice that occurs digitally, physical locality and regional identities factor into how the League of Legends community, at large, is understood. Second, the interviewee views the both the company as morally culpable for tournament shortcomings, as well as himself as an agent, with the potential to influence how future company decisions could be made.

In the next example (*see* Excerpt 6.10), the interviewee is a female player from Brisbane, Australia who I interviewed over GoogleTalk. In this narrative, the interviewee discusses how the lack of servers in her area causes the game to lag, or freeze, all the time, "pretty much every game I start" (Line 3). In Lines 4-5, she discusses how this has not always been a problem, and that in the past, it was better. The interviewee states that she is aware that latency problems happen all over the world, but that "if she could have just one wish" (Line 6) or "if I [she] was in charge" (Line 13), she would get more servers set up around the world, because ultimately, the lack of servers available "sucks" (Lines 2, 14), "is not really fair" (Line 10), and "is the biggest pain in the ass" (Line 1). Here again, we can see the interviewee making sense of her conflict by locating the company as being culpable for her negative experiences and other players experiences playing the game.

Excerpt 6.10: Requesting More Local Services

1	I think the one thing that is the biggest pain in the ass,
2	is just how much the servers suck.
3	Pretty much every game I start now lags,
4	and I know how huge the community is now, but I don't know,
5	I almost feel like it wasn't this bad before.
6	If I could have just one wish, I would make it that Riot just fucking got more servers,
7	so that players around the world don't have to deal with stupid stuff like,
8	like dying because the game freezes.
9	It happens to me and my friends all the time,
10	and I know players everywhere complain about latency issues, and it's really not fair.
11	I mean, it sucks here, but I've heard it's so much worse other places.
12	So maybe I shouldn't really complain.
13	Anyway, if I was in charge, it would be first on my list,
14	cause not everyone lives in California, and I know how much it sucks.

This narrative also touches upon locality, particularly in Line 14, when she says, "cause not everyone lives in California, and I know how much it sucks." In this phrase, and in other parts of her larger interview, she distinguishes her location and experience of the game as being different from the North American, or more specifically, the Californian experience of the game, where the company is located. Line 14 implies that players in California have more servers and therefore experience lag less. The player knows "how much it sucks" (Line 14), and empathizes with "players around the world," (Line 7), who might experience this issues "much worse" (Line 11) than she does in Australia. In empathizing with players who may be worse off, she does not feel entitled to complain, but nevertheless, imagines herself as a agent in the situation, capable of bringing change if she "was in charge" (Line 13).

In the next example (see Excerpt 6.11), I discuss an excerpt from an interview I conducted with a young adult, male player in Seattle. In this narrative, the interviewee describes not being able to relate with other players in the past, to the extent he is able to currently. He tells a short story about wanting to watch a tournament live at an in-person event, but not being

able to get tickets. Instead of attending the tournament, he describes going to a local viewing event at a Seattle bar, meets new players and developers, and continues to play locally with a group of players he met at the bar.

Excerpt 6.11: Playing Together Locally

1	SO, as a player that has been playing the game since beta, four years ago,
2	I have to say, the community is so much more awesome than before.
3	It's become so much more mainstream, and I feel like I can talk about it with anyone.
4	I can just be like, hey what's your summoner name and we can start playing.
5	At PAX this year, it was really awesome cause I got to watch some matches,
6	at a viewing party organized by Riot at some local bar…
7	and while it sucked to not be able to get tickets to see it actually live,
8	I was blown away by the number of people who were there,
9	and how easily everyone bonded over the fact that we play LoL.
10	And even some of the developers showed up, and bought people drinks,
11	which is crazy and super cool.
12	In any case, turned out to be a really epic night.
13	I even remember going to some random player's apartment that night,
14	with a big group of other people I met there, and basically playing for most of the night.
15	To this day, I still play with them like all the time whenever I see they're online.
16	We've tried out their meetup site a few times to get other locals together,
17	and it's been really good.
18	I think the site is down now, but hopefully it will be up in the future,
19	otherwise, we could always get something of our own up online.

In this narrative, the interviewee engages in sense-making through the process of storytelling. He starts by discussing his past experience of the League of Legends community (Lines 1-2), four years ago, how the community is presently (Lines 3-4), and further, how he imagines it to be in the future (Lines 18-19). In Lines 5-17, he elaborates on how the community has improved by discussing a specific experience, in which he met and played with players and developers locally. The relationships he made in person that evening continue online (Line 15) as they do offline (Line 16).

The interviewee in this excerpt is also very focused on making sense of how his local experiences at the bar, and later another player's apartment, have been central to his experience of community. He references a website run by the company that allows community members to submit local community-related events online, so that players can meet up and play together locally. He states that although the website may no longer be available in the future, he is willing to initiate a similar kind of interactive website online.

The following two excerpts were responses from the same interviewee, a young, male player from Los Angeles, who I talked to online. In excerpt 6.12, he discusses the inconvenience of having to wait for posted company news when the game servers go down, causing players to not be able to play the game. In this story that examines the temporality of waiting, the interviewee both empathizes with and blames the company for these unplanned situations, saying "yeah, some things are out of their hands but at the same time, it happens a little too much and I really hope they get things working better" (Lines 13-14).

Excerpt 6.12: Temporality and Transparency

1	I think I hate more than anything, when then game goes offline,
2	like they get hacked or the game breaks, or something weird happens,
3	and I plan my whole weekend around playing some ranked, and then I can't.
4	It's like, wtf, what do I do?
5	And I end up sitting around like all day, refreshing for news updates,
6	or trying to sign on, only to get frustrated and rage.
7	And so then I go on the forums to see if anyone else has heard anything,
8	and usually it's just people yelling at Riot, and telling them how much they suck,
9	and demanding to know what happened, and when they can play again.
10	And then, after all the "Riot please" all we get is the infamous Riot "soon."
11	It's so aggravating, but honestly they know,
12	and are typically good about filling us in when they know, or want us to know.
13	and yeah, some things are out of their hands, but at the same time,
14	it happens a little too much and I really hope they get things working better.

He discusses what is commonly known in the company as "riot please," which is a phrase that is commonly found on social media and directed to the company when players request certain new features, service, or actions. In response to players' requests to know when certain game updates or features will be added or changed, the company is known to respond using the word "soon." This is in part because many times, they are not sure when certain content will be ready, and also because sometimes they do not want to, or are not ready to share certain details about the development process.

This notion of time is again discussed in Excerpt 6.13. In this narrative, the interviewee discusses the inconvenience of watching eSports online, at the same time it is broadcasted in Korea (Lines 2, 7). He discusses how playing at night, and watching late night Korean eSports has become a ritual activity in his college dorm room, and has helped his team to improve their skills (Lines 12, 16). In jest, he suggests this improvement is due to playing on "Korean time" (Line 16).

Excerpt 6.13: Training and Time

1	So, my team and I are really trying to go from gold to plat [platinum],
2	and so we've been staying up really late to watch eSports in Korea,
3	cause honestly, no one is at that level here or anywhere else.
4	And so this one time, we were hanging out at my dorm, and I think it was around 4am,
5	and uhhh, so we, me and some friends,
6	decided to get our computers and play some League.
7	At this point, we were so tired, but we were like "fuck it,"
8	and each like pounded 2 of those giant cans of Monster.
9	Ok, and so oh my god, I don't think we slept until it was nighttime the next day,
10	and then, like, we slept like for 15 hours, ha ha ha.
11	But it was worth it, cause we got to plat.
12	And so now, it's kind of this thing we do, and it's probably pretty bad,
13	but it's also pretty awesome, haha.
14	We're getting so much better, and streaming OGN helps so much.
15	Uhh, so:: ye::ah,
16	maybe the trick to playing as well as the Koreans is to keep Korean time, ha ha ha.

According to the interviewee, "Korean time" or staying up all night in California, when he should be sleeping, is "probably pretty bad" (Line 12), because it means that he sleeps all day the next day. However, he says that it's worth it because the added video watching and game playing helped him and his teammate to improve and reach their goal of achieving a higher ranking (Line 1). In this example, time is not only relational (California time vs. Korean time), but it is also malleable (Monster energy drinks (Line 8); "fuck it" attitude (Line 7)), allowing players to adjust their sense and experience of time to match that of other global community members.

6.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discuss how through narrative, developers and players co-create a sense of community and belonging by making sense of how global players share both global and local experiences, as well as experiences that fall somewhere between, existing through translocality. In the developer narratives I discuss, I found that this sense-making occurs mostly through trying to understand how global and local categories are constructed and need to be designed for within a seasonal calendar that must be managed (Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012). I found that in my data, community is perceived as linked to place. I also found that these narratives are often constructed to try to make sense of what they perceive players to experience in the regional community, including different methods of playing, different languages and texts, different social play structures, and different cultural contexts. On the other hand, I found that players often construct narratives about locality and temporality to make sense of conflict, negotiate

moral culpability, display empathy or entitlement, or to construct oneself as having agency in the community.

Although not discussed in this chapter, these narratives, produced by both developers and players outside the method of interviewing, may be in conversation with each other. When this happens, the process of storytelling becomes not only an individual process of sense-making, but a collaborative or dialogic process of narrative sense-making.

Narrative, occurring both online and offline, is particularly important to the notion of translocality and the experience of temporality, because it is through this sort of relational sense-making that developers and players come to more deeply understand their relationship with each other in the networked community, particularly in terms of intersubjectivity and experience.

SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARY

This dissertation provides both ethnographic and linguistic analysis of how translocality intersects the ways in which people organize their social worlds in the digital and information age. I explore how translocality informs how people understand, construct, and experience a voluntary and avocational community and identity in their everyday lives, through the lens of a global, video gaming community, centered around a game called League of Legends. In this dissertation, I focus on understanding how distributed players and developers together co-construct a sense of community, belonging, and connectivity, through both language and interaction online and offline.

At a macro level, this dissertation discusses the analytic concept of community and problematizes the multiple and varying definitions of speech community. Although different definitions together demonstrate the complexities of anthropological scholarship on linguistic phenomena, this diversity is also often critiqued and referred to as a "troubled term" (Rampton 2000), as it does not clearly define what is meant by speech and engagement, does not account for the fluidity of social groups, and also requires authors to individually explain their usage with the assumption that readers may not be operating from similar understandings. As technology and globalization continue to impact, transform, and recreate communities, there is a great need for expanding our understanding of speech communities as one that accounts for the changing ways in which people constitute meaningful participation in a society or culture. This research

provides an empirical example of how participation, connectivity, and sense-making unfolds, particularly in the everyday interactions of a specific, global network of players and developers.

In Chapter One of this dissertation, I start by discussing translocality as the emergence of multidirectional and overlapping networks that facilitate the circulation of people, resources, practices, and ideas (Steinbrink 2009). It is the "sum of phenomena which result from a multitude of circulations and transfers" (Freitag and von Oppen 2010: 5), which involves mobility, migration, circulation, and spatial interconnectedness, not necessarily limited to national boundaries or face-to-face contexts (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). With respect to the literature on these phenomena, I pose a series of research questions that focus on uncovering how communities are constructed through translocality.

In Chapter Two, I examine the concept of community through a specific theoretical framework. I examine (1) the concept of speech community within the discipline of linguistic anthropology, (2) the community of practice from the perspective of Lave and Wegner (1991), (3) online community of practice, and (4) sense of community (Forster 2004; Obst et al. 2002; Roberts et al. 2002). I discuss how community is constructed through social practices, language, and interaction, and across varying planes and modalities. As such, our understanding of speech community should reflect new ways of thinking about community that expands beyond definitions that simply focus on shared linguistic features, or sets of norms, attitudes, and ways of speaking. In this chapter, I also discuss the body of literature related to social networks, defined as a theoretical construct that maps social actors in relation to the connections, social ties, and interaction between these actors. I outline the historical development of the term and discuss key theoretical influences to how we understand social networks. Further, I discuss how the term social network is used to describe the ways in which individuals and structures in a

speech community are connected through particular relationships or "web of ties" (Milroy 1987). Within this tradition, the structure of a social network is made up of both participants and relationships. Lastly, this chapter briefly discusses some literature that frames what I refer to as the "business of community." In this section, I discuss the use of community-centric marketing, as a new strategy for bi-directional conversation, increased feedback, and ultimately, greater brand loyalty and company growth. I discuss how the practice of community management emerges from a history of globalization, by looking specifically at literature on global flows, markets, and localization.

In Chapter Three, I broadly discuss the ethnographic setting of my fieldwork. I begin by discussing video gaming as a social practice to which many people around the world participate in their everyday lives. I then discuss my research methods, revisiting what it was like for me to enter the community initially, and then leaving and returning after a couple years. I briefly touch on the various sites I collected data, both online and offline, as well as the different methods of data collection and analysis I used in the field. In addition, I also discuss my ethnographic positioning in the community and attempt to be reflexive about my unique point of view. In the next section of this chapter, I provide ethnographic context for the community I studied, by discussing the history of interactive media and the gaming industry, the company and the game itself, studio subculture and ritual practices, developers and intersubjectivity, and players and remix culture. Further, I provide a brief quantitative sketch of the community but discussing social network data collected over the course of the year of fieldwork.

In Chapter Four, I discuss how players and developers co-construct community and identity through language, distinctiveness, and authenticity. I begin with a discussion of how within the League of Legends community, looking particularly at English-speaking players,

specialized language and discursive practices shape the domain of the network, focused on technical expertise (Goodwin 1994). I talk about this sort of vision as being lodged within particular institutional and endogenous communities that make up the global League of Legends community, and then launch into a discussion of language and identity literature, centered on topics such as sameness and difference, authenticity, and subculture and style. I then discuss specific lexicon data collected on social media websites. From this analysis, I found that players use specific, technical registers in order to distinguish themselves as authentic League of Legends players who share common references and experiences. I then discuss how players and developers construct a sense of community and belonging through discourse practices and speech activities that heavily rely on co-participation and building next utterances and responses by attending to coparticipants' prior talk, or previous postings written online. Lastly, I analyze how players and developers use symbolic markers of community identity, such as clothing and dress, costumes, and other material objects. Through the data, I found that players who understand and use the lexicon of the community are viewed as authentic community members, central to the social network. In a similar way, players display authenticity when they can relate to the stories and experiences of other players online by participating in particular discourse strategies, such as producing related second stories, and by building on the prior speech of participants in the interaction. Authenticity is further marked in the community by adhering to the particular material styles of the community. Through this sort of close attention to linguistic, practice, and material style, players distinguish themselves as belonging to the League of Legends community.

In Chapter Five, I discuss how a sense of community and belonging are constructed in the social network through moral participation and engagement, both institutionally and

endogenously. I begin by discussing literature on morality and face, character, structures of action, structures of self-presentation online, and moral panic. In my analysis of the data, I first discuss the various codes of conduct and software that are created and implemented by the company institutionally, as a means of managing disputes and inappropriate community behavior. I then examine data on endogenous dispute management, looking at how community members, outside of formal institutional structures, manage disagreement and disputes. I found that as a result of the varying institutional structures put in place to manage conflict and disputes, most people in the community think about player behavior in terms of three evaluative stances: the honorable, the punishable, and the pardonable. In addition to these stances, players often evaluate each other as being either authentic or inauthentic. I found that through interaction, players and developers form evaluative stances of what appropriate player community behavior should entail, but that these stances overlap or contradict with established understandings. In theory, I found that players and developers subscribe to the idea that certain types of behavior warrant a person as being honorable, punishable, or pardonable, but in practice, I found that players and developers may sometimes view delinquent, but pardonable behavior as authentic or somehow more genuine to the community, although officially, this way of being may be institutionally discouraged. In this chapter, I argue that community is co-constructed by players and developers by negotiating a moral code, and through my analysis, I found that this negotiation is fluid and evolving, rather than determined and fixed.

In Chapter Six, I discuss how players and developers co-create community through understandings and narrative experiences of translocality and temporality. Drawing from interview data collected over the course of fieldwork, I examine what developers and players mean when they use words like "global" and "local" to describe different and overlapping

communities in the greater League of Legends community. I discuss how players and developer talk about co-constructing a sense of community and belonging in spite of regional, cultural, and linguistic differences in the global network. In addition, I analyze how these communities are talked about and organized around the notion of calendar and seasonal time, which operates on various scales, both local and global. In this analysis, I found that developers and players co-create a sense of community and belonging by making sense of how global players share both global and local experiences, as well as a range of much more complex, translocal experiences. I found that talking about these differences and similarities, both online and offline, is particularly important to the notion of translocality and the experience of temporality, because it is through this sort of relational sense-making that developers and players come to more deeply understand their relationship with each other in the networked community, particularly in terms of intersubjectivity and experience.

In summary, I found that within the global, social network centered around the game League of Legends, developers and players co-construct a sense of community and belonging by distinguishing themselves as a group of people with particular linguistic styles, references, practices, and material symbolic markers of identity. They also create this sense of community by thoroughly negotiating social norms and appropriate ways of being in the community. Further, developers and players co-construct community and belonging by talking about how locality and temporarily is experienced relationally, in the social network and around the world. These findings suggest that the process of community in the digital and information age is very complex and nuanced, and as such, an expanded or reimagined analytic model for understanding community is critically needed in order to more deeply come to understanding the fluid ways in which people come to experience and organize their everyday social worlds.

7.2 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Much more empirical work is needed to collaboratively work towards understanding the analytic concept of community in the digital and information age. In order to create this new model of community, more scholars need to engage in longitudinal, ethnographic fieldwork exploring digital media and communities in other regions and cultural contexts, with speakers of other languages. One direction for future work needs to examine how gaming identities articulate with national, ethnic, and professional identities. In the repertoire of identities possessed by both developers and players dispersed globally, how compartmentalized or convergent are these different identities? How do particular language and cultural ideologies factor into these different identities and how do these understandings manifest in the ways in which global players interact and construct communities?

As more and more scholars begin to investigate language and digital media from a social science perspective, researchers must continue to collaborate and work closely to discuss this topic critically from various interdisciplinary approaches. This dialogue is central to mapping a new model for understanding how digital media intersects our relational identities and practices.

7.3 CONTRIBUTIONS AND BROADER IMPACTS

7.3.1 Linguistic Anthropology and the Social Sciences

This project seeks to advance knowledge at the intersection of linguistic anthropology, communication studies, and science and technology studies, by discussing how players and developers together co-construct a sense of community through digital media and technology. The study of digital media has become a growing interest in socio-cultural and linguistic

anthropology, emphasizing the content and affordances of these media (Boellstorff 2008; Ito 2010; Schieffelin & Jones 2009; Wakeford 2003; Wilson & Peterson 2002). With respect to the global emergence of interactive media (i.e., computer gaming), in particular, the focus has been on the social identities, communities, and worlds that such media facilitate through regular online engagement centered on mutually shared passions, concerns, norms, and affinities (Nardi 2010; Newon 2011; Taylor 2006; Williams et. al. 2006; Yee 2006). These studies, however, have only briefly touched upon how interaction in these mediated communities (see Jones 1998; Malaby 2009; Preece 2001; Wallace & St-Onge 2003; Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2003) are also structured and shaped by teams of media developers (e.g., artists, designers, engineers, programmers, producers, and community managers), governed by corporate logics (see Cassell and Jenkins 1998), who make up overlapping, localized, nested communities (Santa Ana & Parodi 1998), tied to and often in communication with these same delocalized social groups.

This research contributes to the literature on speech community in linguistic anthropology as it both builds on previous definitions and contributes to new ways of understanding how people organize their social worlds in the digital and information age. Although scholars have long pointed to the necessity of this kind of scholarship (Rampton 2002), especially as digital technologies become more widely used, very small literatures exploring these types of projects exist to date. While some anthropologists have studied online communities and the affordances of new media, few have studied how community is constructed outside of dichotomous frameworks like "offline" and "online." This fluidity and interconnectedness is precisely what this project discusses and attempts to rigorously understand.

Further, this project contributes on an ongoing and evolving discussion of research methods in anthropology. This work integrates methods from linguistic and socio-cultural

anthropology, and examines language and the micro-interactions of individuals/groups in terms of larger patterns of behavior and cultural practice. As one of the first ethnographic studies of a digital community of players and developers, which focuses on language and the construction of global communities through the examination video-recorded naturally occurring data, semi-structured interviews, and online content, this project contributes to the growing body of literature on digital ethnography. In addition, this project incorporates interdisciplinary methods, such as computer-mediated discourse analysis (Herring 2001), which may be used by anthropologists more broadly in the future, as more scholars choose to investigate how people use digital media in their everyday lives. This research provides a descriptive and grounded model for how these types of methods may be used.

7.3.2 Broader Contributions

This project speaks to the extent to which online communities are shaped and regulated by corporate logics and practices. It highlights how people use digital technologies to shape collaborative communities online and offline using the types of socialized digital fluency required in mediated participatory cultures. As such, this research may be useful to both software developers and media consumers more broadly. In the tech-industry, organizations are becoming more and more interested in thinking about engagement in digital spaces. Companies are interested in learning what their consumers do and enjoy on the Internet in order design for more positive experiences online. Developers are interested in using anthropological methods to research users, communication, and communities online. They are particularly interested in learning about communities from a social science perspective in order to inform their marketing techniques, using social media and other community building strategies.

This research contributes to understanding the nuanced complexities and affordances of social relationships, communities, and social networks in the digital age. Many interdisciplinary researchers and groups are increasingly investigating how youth are organizing their social worlds though digital media (*see* MacArthur Foundation's Digital Media and Learning Initiative; Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society's Youth and Media Project; Social Science Research Council's Digital Media and Learning Program). This project contributes to this body of work by discussing how media (and media developers) impact the ways people learn, play, socialize, and participate in their everyday lives.

Further, this research is part of a much larger conversation of digital media and learning, which has the potential to significantly impact the field of education in the United States. Scholars in the field of education are finding that learning is becoming increasingly participatory (see Cassell and Jenkins 1998) and that new ways of teaching should focus on forms of connectivity, sociality, and technology-fueled information sharing (Collin and Halverson 2009; Halverson and Halverson 2011; Ito 2010; Jenkins 2006; Kafai et al. 2008; Salen 2007; Watkins 2009). Researchers and policymakers are examining how youth growing up with these tools (Prensky 2001) and socialized ways of being (competencies that include technical and interpersonal skills, particularly those related to play, multitasking, simulation, performance, judgment, and networking – see Arnseth 2006; Barab et al 2004; Gee 2004; Iiyoshi & Kumar 2008) may affect a person's sense of self, how they express themselves, and their ability to learn, exercise judgment, and think systematically (Reed et al. 2007; O'Hear and Sefton-Green 2004). Ethnography is uniquely suited to the study of digital media and learning as it allows researchers to capture a deeply contextualized ethnographic record, revealing how people actually use digital media in their everyday lives. Documenting how people form and interact through social

networks can offer insight into how people participate and learn online in their everyday lives, how digital social groups are constructed, and how new, informed policies and curricula on digital media and learning might also be created and implemented (see Bonk 2009; Brown and Thomas 2011; Rosen 2010).

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