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## **World of Warcraft: Creating a safe and secure place for an entertaining war**

MMORPGs as "World of Warcraft" can be understood as interactive representation of war. Within the frame provided by the program the players experience martial conflicts and thus a "virtual war" (e.g. MacCallum-Stewart 2007). The game world however requires a technical and as far as possible invisible infrastructure which has itself to be protected against attacks: Among this infrastructure are counted e.g. the servers on which the data of the player characters and the game's world are saved, as well as the user accounts, which have to be protected, among other things, against "identity theft" (e.g. Bardzell et al. 2007). Besides the war on the virtual surface of the program we will therefore describe the invisible war about the infrastructure, whose outbreak is always feared by the developers and operators of online-worlds and at least requires adequate precautions.

Furthermore we would like to pick out „virtual game worlds“ as a central theme as places of complete observation. Since action in these worlds is always associated with the production of data, complete observation is at least possible and given in reality by the so-called „game master“.<sup>3</sup> Observation of different communication channels (inclusive user forums)<sup>4</sup> as well serves for channeling the sojourn in the virtual battlefield properly, without the player feeling apparently limited in his freedom. Finally we would like to compare the fictional theater of war of "World of Warcraft" with the vision of "Network-Centric Warfare", since already many a time it was affirmed that the analysis of MMORPGs could be useful for the real trade of war (cf. e.g. Sarasin 2004, p. 24). However, we will point out what an unrealistic theater of war "World of Warcraft" is.

### *Bibliography*

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. < <http://www.wow-europe.com/en/support/gm-article.html> >

<sup>4</sup> Cf. < <http://www.wow-europe.com/en/policy/> >