

## **Where Is the Queerness in Games? Types of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Content in Digital Games**

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With increasing popular and academic attention being paid to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) content in video games, the time has come for a thorough account of the history of this content in this medium. In the project reviewed here, we have documented more than 300 games and more than 500 examples of LGBTQ content spanning 30 years. Using a grounded theoretical approach, we were able to classify this content into nine large categories—characters, relationships/romance/sex, actions, locations, mentions, artifacts, traits, queer games/narratives, and homophobia/transphobia—each of which contains several subcategories. In outlining our classification system here, we will demonstrate the myriad ways queerness in gender and sexuality have been integrated into digital games.

*Keywords: video games, LGBTQ, queer, gender, sexuality, representation*

Digital games, played on handheld devices, personal computers, arcade cabinets, and dedicated consoles, have been around as commercial products in the United States since the 1970s. During the same period, the American gay and lesbian liberation movement, bisexual activism, transgender activism, and (starting in the 1980s) queer activism have gained popular visibility. Although historical overviews have been written about both sex (Brathwaite, 2013) and gender (Graner Ray, 2004) in digital games, a comprehensive analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) content in games has yet to be performed. To redress this oversight, we have built a public digital archive of LGBTQ game content: <https://lgbtqgamearchive.com>. At present, we have amassed a list of more than 300 games with more than 500 examples of LGBTQ content created between 1985 and 2016.

By offering examples of the wide range of types of LGBTQ content available in games, we demonstrate that work done on LGBTQ content in games has only scratched the surface of what might be

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analyzed. The common sentiment in the existing literature is that games are rarely able to subvert normative gender and sexuality, but if improved, they might be able to do a better job. The structure of the game industry and process of commercial game design tends to reproduce more problematic or marginalizing forms of representation (Shaw, 2009); thus, independent game development is identified as a key site for creating new forms of LGBTQ representation (Conn, 2015; Harvey, 2014). Without a proper historicizing, however, claims of industry trends lack adequate empirical grounding.

Much of the existing scholarship focuses on sexuality and rarely addresses transgender, nonbinary, or genderqueer representation. Prior research also tends to focus on a relatively narrow set of games, including *The Sims*, a life simulation game that allows for same-sex pairings (Consalvo, 2003); massively multiple player online games such as *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, *Second Life*, and *World of Warcraft*, which allow for LGBTQ community building and can be sites of online homophobic harassment (Brookey & Cannon, 2009; Brown, 2015; Chang, 2015; Condis, 2015; Pulos, 2013; Schmieder, 2009; Sundén & Sveningsson, 2012); role-playing games (RPGs) and action games with same-sex romance options such as *Bully*, *Mass Effect*, *Dragon Age*, and *Fable* (Greer, 2013; Kelly, 2015; Krobová, Moravec, & Švelch, 2015); non-digital RPGs (Stenros & Sihvonen, 2015); specific games with queer or potentially queer characters such as *Persona 4* and *Gone Home* (Conn, 2015; Youngblood, 2013); and games by indie designers such as *Dys4ia*, *Lim*, and *Mainichi* (Juliano, 2012; Ruberg, 2015). Little of this work considers LGBTQ game content comprehensively, so we do not yet know how these games connect to a broader history of representation in the medium.

Communication scholars have analyzed LGBTQ representation in a variety of other media (Benshoff & Griffin, 2006; Gross, 2001; Russo, 1987; Sender, 2004). In doing so, they offer a contextualized, historical accounting of representation. We hope that our archive can serve as a jumping-off point for future LGBTQ game studies in this respect. Before describing the construction and content of the archive, however, we should be clear that it is not an archive in the traditional sense, but a heavily curated site of knowledge production about this kind of game content. As Kate Eichhorn (2013) described in her book on feminist archives, "Rather than a destination for knowledges already produced or a place to recover histories and ideas placed under erasure, the making of the archives is frequently where knowledge production begins" (p. 3). In addition to documenting content, this project maps the various ways LGBTQ representation exists in games.

Our analysis of LGBTQ video game content demonstrates that it includes more than same-sex relationship options and explicitly named LGBTQ characters. As a first step toward accounting for the complexity and depth of LGBTQ game content, this article offers an overview of the many forms LGBTQ content takes in games and explores some of the challenges in classifying game content as LGBTQ relevant. We conclude with a discussion of what these findings mean for LGBTQ game studies and outline possible next steps for research in this area.

### **Building an Archive of LGBTQ Content**

To compile our archive, we began with existing lists of LGBTQ characters in games.<sup>2</sup> The earliest games we have found are from 1986, but we continue to add games as we learn about them. The archive includes explicit LGBTQ content and implicitly coded or queerly read content for two reasons: First, given the long history of queer readings being a key form of resistant reception for LGBTQ audiences, it felt proscriptive to limit ourselves to explicit content. Second, we felt it was important to see whether explicit or implicit representation was more common at different points in time in games as it was in other media. In the end we compiled a list of 351 games across all gaming platforms that had some sort of LGBTQ content broadly defined according to at least one source. From those games we have documented 550 examples of LGBTQ content so far.

For each game, we began with the original source that listed the game as having LGBTQ content and followed any citations for that claim. When those links were exhausted we used search engines to track down any additional information about the LGBTQ content in the games. We also dug through game wikis and walkthroughs, watched videos of gameplay posted online, played games ourselves, and looked for academic and popular articles or books that addressed the games' LGBTQ content.

Throughout this process we created a coding system using a grounded theoretical approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006) to provide a conceptual map of LGBTQ game content. We classified this content into nine categories: characters, relationships/romance/sex, actions, locations, mentions, artifacts, traits, queer games/narratives, and homophobia/transphobia. The characters category was further parsed into specific types of identity and whether the characters' genders or sexualities were explicit (clearly and easily read) or implicit (having signifiers of LGBTQ identities but not explicitly stated as such). The remainder of this article provides a detailed description of our categories and their subcategories and includes examples for each. By using these categories as a starting point, we and other researchers can offer a more nuanced and situated understanding of LGBTQ game content and contemporary shifts in how that content is being included in games.

### **What Does LGBTQ Content in Games Look Like?**

#### ***Characters***

Characters includes playable characters (PCs),<sup>3</sup> and non-playable characters (NPCs) whose sexuality is not primarily defined by whether they are a romantic options for the PCs. Within this category we use the following non-mutually exclusive subcategories: queer women, queer men, bisexual, lesbian,

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<sup>2</sup> These lists were primarily from pages on Wikipedia, TV Tropes, GayGamer.Net, and the "Can I Play Gay?" Tumblr and were cross-referenced with articles from *IGN*, *Huffington Post*, *The Daily Dot*, and many others.

<sup>3</sup> *Playable characters* are used here as distinct from *avatars*. Playable characters have set identities and backstories, whereas avatars are typically created by players and are ostensibly blank slates in game narratives.

gay, asexual, transgender, intersex, non-binary/genderqueer, and gender nonconforming. Assignations are largely based on how our sources have defined those characters. In many cases, whether representations of the characters in the game were enough to affix sexual or gender identities to them was very much up for debate: For example, that two women are in a relationship is not evidence of either identifying as a lesbian. In many cases games do not explicitly define these characters' sexualities, and the process of untangling implied sexuality is a contentious one. In the examples that follow, we explore the complicated nature of sexual and gender identity in games by making sense of how we as researchers might categorize specific characters and what our sources point to as evidence of a character's gender identity or sexuality. In the spirit of Russo's (1987) *The Celluloid Closet*, however, we think operating with a more inclusive and fluid understanding of queer identities allows for a more thorough mapping of how non-heterosexual and non-cisgendered representations have permeated games all along.<sup>4</sup>

### **Character Sexuality**

Explicitly LGBTQ PCs are rare. Exceptions include Trevor Philips in *Grand Theft Auto V*, Curtis Craig in *Phantasmagoria: A Puzzle of Flesh*, and Hana in *Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix*, all of whom are bisexual. However, Trevor and Curtis are only explicitly shown to have sex with women, and Hana's relationship to her partner, Rain, is only hinted at in the game. Other characters' categorizations are based on intertextual references. For example, Korra is revealed to be bisexual in *The Legend of Korra* television series, but the game with the same title does not mention her bisexuality. Similarly, the WWE wrestler Darren Young is an out gay man, and he appears in the game *WWE 2K14*.

Most of the LGBTQ characters in our archive are NPCs, appearing as everything from major to minor to background characters. In some cases their sexuality is only knowable if one plays the game as a female PC and then again as a male PC. The character Frigidazzi (female) in *Ultima VII Part II: Serpent Isle*, for example, attempts to seduce the avatar regardless of gender. Only if a player goes through the game twice, however, will it be possible to see Frigidazzi's apparent bisexuality. Other times NPCs' sexualities are revealed through dialogue options. In *Vampire: The Masquerade—Bloodlines*, for example, a vampiress character briefly mentions a relationship she had long ago with Pisha (female). In some cases sexuality is only revealed if specific in-game conditions are met. For instance, Tommy in *Indigo Prophecy* makes comments about homophobia in the workplace and gay acceptance only if the PC Carla asks him specific questions during their exchange. These examples, like a great deal of LGBTQ content, as Chang (2015) points out, are largely "inconsequential" to games' progress.

Other characters are identified as homosexual through unambiguous signifiers drawn from stereotypes using the same sorts of visual cues of dress, mannerisms, and voice as Dyer (1977/1999) has identified in film. These are usually paired with attempts to seduce the PC, often in a manner that is coded as unrequited in the game, regardless of the PC's sexuality. Alfred Horner, a co-owner of a bookstore in

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<sup>4</sup> We are grateful to one anonymous reviewer for reminding us that Russo documents the history of homosexuality in the movies in *The Celluloid Closet* without ever defining homosexuality. This allows the book to be as much a queer history of film as a gay history.

Dracula Unleashed, for example, dresses as a dandy and gives the PC lecherous glances. Go!Go!Ackman features a police officer whose attire (black leather jacket and underwear) combined with his repeated attempts to kiss the game's male PC, a young boy, mark him as gay and a pedophile. Women aggressively flirting with female PCs are less common. A rare exception is Corporal Betsy in Fallout: New Vegas, who, following PTSD from a rape by an enemy leader, has begun to aggressively flirt with women.

Implicitly gay characters' markers are a bit more ambiguous. Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within, for example, features a historian who helps the two lead characters. At one point, the historian mentions that he identifies with King Ludwig II (known to be gay) in certain respects but is glad he lives in a more tolerant time. The game also features a secret society of male werewolves and draws parallels between werewolves and homosexuality. Implicitly lesbian female characters are read by players as homosexual when they flirt with other female characters. For example, in Red Dead Redemption an NPC woman dancing with a female sex worker in a bar has been read as potentially a lesbian by many players.

Some characters are portrayed as homosexual through relationships. Explicitly named lesbian couples in games include Bobbi and Kalalau in Leisure Suit Larry 3, Carol and Greta in Fallout 3, Ellie and Riley in The Last of Us, and Fiona and Mickey from The Longest Journey. Gay male couples also appear in some games, though often one of the partners is not actively present in the game or their relationship is only heavily implied. In general, women's homosexuality seems to be more often marked through relationships to other women and men's homosexuality appears to be marked more often through stereotypical signifiers. This may tell us more about how play communities have read this content (and thus added these games to various lists), however, than about how games have represented queer men and women.

Adding to the complications of implicit and contingent forms of representation are characters whose gender and sexuality representations differ by market. When the Japanese game Streets of Rage III was adapted for U.S. release, a sub-boss named Ash was removed (though he is still accessible with a cheat code). One game wiki describes Ash as "a very stereotypical homosexual character, with a very feminine run, a little 'laugh' taunt and tons of female mannerisms" (Ash, n.d., para. 1). Similarly, when Vendetta was released for the Sega Genesis, minor homosexual enemies were censored. In the original version they were dressed in black leather pants and had naked torsos, and their attacks consisted of dry humping the PC.

Finally, there are some characters who are rumored to be queer or who are read queerly (Doty, 1993). This is common with characters from Japanese games, such as those featured in the Final Fantasy series whose gender presentations are read as effeminate (and in turn gay) by American audiences but who fall into particular tropes of Japanese aesthetics such as *bishonen* ("beautiful boy") (Belmonte Avila, 2015). Some other characters that appear on fan lists of gay characters are Zangief in Street Fighter, Billy and Brad in Wild Arms II, and Dante in Devil May Cry. However, in none of these cases did we find much evidence that these characters were clearly coded as gay in the games.

### ***Character Gender***

Representations of explicitly transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, and intersex characters are less common in games than of homosexual and bisexual characters, and most of them appear in more recent games. For example, the only explicitly intersex character we could find is Kainé in *Nier*. This character is described on various fan sites as intersex, possessing male sexual organs but otherwise having female characteristics and performing her gender as feminine. Many more characters are coded as non-binary or genderqueer, like such as Flea in *Chrono Trigger*, Eater in *Blaze Union*, and Quina Quen in *Final Fantasy IX*.<sup>5</sup> Leo in the *Tekken* series was originally coded as genderqueer, or at least ambiguously gendered, but later game makers "revealed" that Leo is a woman (Onizuka4ever, 2011).

Explicitly transgender male characters are not common in games. A rare example is Cremisius "Krem" Aclassi in *Dragon Age: Inquisition*, who openly discusses his identity as a transgender man. There are many more transgender women in the games we have researched, though in many cases their gender is treated as a problem to be dealt with by other characters. The PCs in *Leisure Suit Larry 6* and *7 Sins*, for example, can unintentionally sleep with transgender women in the games. In the former, the PC spits upon the ground in disgust and it is implied that the woman rapes him. In the latter, sleeping with the transgender woman leaves the PC "stressed out." In addition to how they are treated narratively, the production of these characters is also often problematic. For example, transgender men and women are often voiced by actors whose gender is the opposite of their own (e.g., transgender women are voiced by male voice actors) to emphasize that they are transgender.

In some cases it is difficult to define characters as transgender, in large part because the localization process sometimes changes how their genders are described. For example, Birdo in *Super Mario Bros. 2* was described in the original instruction manual as thinking "he" was a girl. Most later games simply describe her with feminine pronouns and make no mention of her being transgender. In one game that Birdo appears in, however, a trophy states that she has an "indeterminate gender." Moreover, in a game released only in Japan called *Captain Rainbow*, the player must free Birdo after she has been put in jail for "using the wrong bathroom."

In addition, games feature a great deal of gender nonconformity, which sources often misclassify as transgender representation. For example, *Police Quest: Open Season* and *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* feature murderers who are portrayed as cross-dressers. However, it is unclear if either actually identifies as transgender. Gay male characters, such as Howard in *Harvest Moon: A Tale of Two Towns* and Marian in *Story of Seasons*, are also often shown as enjoying gender non-conforming activities or performing their gender effeminately.

### ***Relationships/Romance/Sex***

Much of the existing scholarship on LGBTQ representation in games focuses on relationship options (Chang, 2015; Consalvo, 2003; Greer, 2013; McDonald, 2015) in games that allow players to

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<sup>5</sup> For a through exploration of Quina Quen as a queer figure, see Belmonte Avila, 2015.

romance, have sex with, or marry NPCs. The first example of this was 1992's *Great Greed*, a Game Boy game at the end of which the PC is supposed to pick one of the king's five daughters to marry. Players discovered, however, that they could propose to anyone in the room including the king, and an end scene would play reflecting that final pairing.

In other games, NPCs' sexualities are more explicit. Juhani in *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* was written to be an overtly lesbian character, though players only hear this from Juhani's longtime companion if they kill Juhani. If players help Juhani, however, she becomes a romance option for a female PC. Yet in the sequel to this game, it is assumed that the female PC had a relationship with a male NPC. Thus, whereas the game allows for same-sex relationships as an option, the narrative arc of the series is heteronormative. Although games with same-sex romance options allow for players to make their avatars homosexual or bisexual, the backstories of these characters rarely suggest they are. In games like such as *Fallout 4* and *Fable III*, the PCs' backstories implicitly code them as heterosexual, despite the fact that the games allow for same-sex romance options later. These narratives, like *The Sims'* manuals in Consalvo's (2003) analysis, reinforce heterosexuality as the norm in games.

In some games NPCs' sexualities are context dependent. *Temple of Elemental Evil* was praised for offering a gay marriage option (Thompson, 2004), when players could rescue and then have one of their male party members marry Bertram the pirate. There are actually two Bertrams in the game, however, and meeting one removes the other. One appears outside, is gay, dressed in purple, and flirts with male party members before asking the players to save him. The other is inside a tavern, is straight, wears a red bandana, and will only ask to be saved if spoken to by a female party member. As others have pointed out (Chang, 2015; Greer, 2013), there are many limitations to how same-sex romances are allowed for in games. The extent of these limitations is even more obvious when looking across games and genres. There are myriad problems with this form of homosexual and bisexual representation, from the number of same-sex relationship options vis-à-vis heterosexual options, to the otherwise heteronormative worlds these same-sex relationship options exist in, and the treatment of same-sex relationships as inherently interchangeable with heterosexual relationships.

Finally, in many games same-sex relationship options include sex workers who are available for hire by PCs regardless of gender. It would be wrong to code these characters as bisexual, however, as doing so would conflate sex work with sexual identity. In some cases it is clear that NPCs are not attracted to the gender of the PC. For example the "bad gypsies" in *Ultima VI* can be hired for sexual encounters by the male PC, though the male gypsy will say he does not normally have sex with men but will do so for money. *Fallout: New Vegas* features one male sex worker who can only be hired by male PCs, but no female sex workers who can only be hired by female PCs. Sometimes sex workers in games are also represented as gender nonconforming, such as the "drag queen" character Serendipity in *Dragon Age II*, or transgender, as in the case of *Grand Theft Auto V*. The danger of conflating sex work with sexual identity speaks to the larger issue of portraying same-sex relationships in games as somehow representative of LGBTQ people. For one, such representation reduces sexuality to sex, and for another, it rarely makes sexual identity a key component of game narratives or interactions.

### **Actions**

LGBTQ activities in games, excluding relationship/romance/sex options, include everything from homoerotic finishing moves to cross-dressing quests. The latter appears in the fighting game *World Heroes*: The implicitly gay PC Rasputin has a special move to pull other male fighters into the bushes (from which hearts emanate). In other games players must cross-dress to complete particular challenges. The earliest example thus far is from 1991's *Space Quest IV*: The player has to dress up as a woman to access an ATM with a found card. More famously, Cloud in *Final Fantasy VII* has to dress up as a woman to gain entrance to a brothel. Other games, such as *Fable II*, allow players to cross-dress, though not necessarily as part of any required in-game activities. Cross-dressing was actually such a dominant theme in our coding process that we made it a separate subcategory of in-game actions.

Other games include what we call *gay game overs*. For example, in *Leisure Suit Larry 6*, if the PC flirts with the gay towel attendant, Gary, the game ends with an image of the two walking off into the sunset and the following text: "What an ignominious end to a sterling career as the ultimate swinging single!" In the game players are tasked with helping Larry pick up women, so there is apparently no worse ending than his finding love with another man. Similarly, in *Plumbers Don't Wear Ties*, if the PC, John, ends up romancing the man from whom he is trying to save a woman named Jane, the game ends with the two walking off together.

Cross-dressing and *gay game overs* are typically used for humor and are represented pejoratively. More positive actions include quests or missions where the player helps LGBTQ characters. *Grand Theft Auto IV* and *Grand Theft Auto: The Ballad of Gay Tony* are rife with examples (detailed in Shaw, forthcoming). In *Divine: Dragon Commander* one of the policy decisions the player can make is whether or not to allow gay marriages. Although these games are otherwise very heteronormative in their plot lines, these rare exceptions show that there are ways to include LGBTQ content into the ludic and narrative possibilities of games in less marginalizing ways.

### **Locations, Mentions, Artifacts, and Traits**

Aside from one study (Schröder, 2008), few scholars have looked at LGBTQ representation through in-game locations that are coded as queer. None discuss minor forms of representation, such as mentions of LGBTQ people or atmospheric LGBTQ themes and content. In *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude* players can visit Spartacus gay bar, the site of several minigames and some main game missions. In the *Fable* series the player can gain a Potion of Transmogrification that changes the PC from male to female or from female to male. In *Rogue Legacy* the player periodically has to choose between three possible PCs called "heirs" based on their traits. There are currently a total of 37 known traits, one of which is "gay." All of these are very minor forms of representation, but they demonstrate that LGBTQ representation in games can exist outside of same-sex relationship options and the sexuality or gender identities of named characters.

### ***Queer Game/Narrative***

The final, and rarest, category in the archive is queer narratives. This refers to games that are centrally about experiences of LGBTQ people or representing queerness, and these are largely produced by LGBTQ designers. The earliest recorded is 1988's *Caper in the Castro* by CM Ralph. This was a murder mystery puzzle game distributed over an LGBT network on a bulletin board system as "charityware" (the designer asked anyone who downloaded it to donate money to an AIDS charity). Later Ralph changed the names and locations and sold the game as *Murder on Mainstreet*. More recent examples include Anna Anthropy's *Dys4ia*, merit kopas's *Lim*, and Mattie Brice's *Mainichi*, which deal with the daily struggles of being transgender women and gender passing. Another is *A Closed World* by Team Fabulous, in which the player is a youth fighting to regain a lost love in a world that rejects the youth's sexuality. *Gone Home* by The Fullbright Company is a more mainstream example: It follows the story of two young teenage girls navigating their first relationship together through the eyes of one of the girls' older sisters. As detailed above, there is certainly a lot of LGBTQ content in games not specifically about LGBTQ people. Queer games with queer stories, however, are able to explore the lives of LGBTQ people in ways incidental representation simply cannot.

### ***Homophobia/Transphobia***

An analysis of LGBTQ content in games would be incomplete without some discussion of homophobia and transphobia. These references are an integral part of how LGBTQ people are represented in games. In some games characters are chastised and called gay if they do not display the proper interest in the opposite sex or if they hang out with LGBTQ people. In *Plumbers Don't Wear Ties*, for example, John's mother accuses him of being gay because he does not have a girlfriend. *Dragon Warrior III* features a sexual activity called puff-puff. In the game a woman NPC offers the male PC a puff-puff. If he refuses, she replies: "Hmph! What?! Not another homosexual . . ." In *Fable 2* if the PC drinks the *Potion of Transmogrification*, some NPCs will ask: "Didn't you use to be a woman/man?" Our archive presently includes only games with LGBTQ content. A more complete accounting of all homophobic and transphobic content in games would likely present a much more comprehensive, if distressing, account of how LGBTQ content appears in this medium. These moments are perhaps the most intriguing in an analysis of LGBTQ content because they belie claims that games are fantasy environments in which real world political concerns should not matter (a claim used readily in the industry and in gaming subcultures). Casual homophobia and transphobia in game texts demonstrate that it is not difficult for game makers to see the relevance of LGBTQ content in these texts. The challenge moving forward is to see if casual inclusivity is as possible as casual offensiveness.

### **Conclusion**

In recent years, more researchers have turned their attention to LGBTQ representation in video games. The *Queerness and Games* conference at UC Berkeley is going into its fourth year, as is the *Different Games* conference, both of which feature the work of queer game scholars and designers. In 2015, *QED: A Journal of GLBTQ Worldmaking* published a special issue on queer game studies, and two edited volumes on games studies featuring analyses of LGBTQ game content, players, and designers have

been or will be published (Ruberg & Shaw, forthcoming; Wysocki & Lauteria, 2015). At the same time, increasing popular and industry attention is being paid to LGBTQ issues in digital gaming (reviewed in Shaw, 2015), and an independent queer games movement is growing (see, e.g., Anthropy, 2012; kopas, 2015). In the process of building an archive of 30 years of LGBTQ game content, however, we have discovered that existing research has only scratched the surface.

LGBTQ content exists in video games in many different forms. It is not only characters who are implicitly or explicitly LGBTQ but also locations players can visit, actions they can engage in, and artifacts encountered in games. Non-normative gender and sexuality can be also referenced through mentions, often in passing, and traits that PCs can acquire. Some games have LGBTQ narratives at their cores, exploring lives and experiences of LGBTQ individuals. Others feature homophobia and transphobia.

In addition to simply exploring more games, we suggest that LGBTQ game studies must consider representation much more expansively than it has done already. Research on homophobia in online gaming, for example, would be better contextualized if scholars also account for the amount and types of homophobic content in games generally. Discussions of same-sex romance options in games can better account for the extent to which LGBTQ representation is (or is not) explicitly represented in other ways in the game. Research on new games with LGBTQ content must be better contextualized within the history of this content in digital games, as scholars of other media have done. Even game design could benefit from this research, as examining what has been done offers examples for how queerness can be integrated into all aspects of games.

Future research with the archive might also analyze trends in LGBTQ representation over time or differences among game genres. Quantitative research could complement qualitative research in analyzing patterns in representation and how they have or have not changed over time. Interview projects could use conversations with game makers and producers to explore why specific games include LGBTQ content in the manner they do. More specific research could seek to discover why apparent patterns in representation occur. The archive discussed above is only the starting point in what could become a much more substantial body of LGBTQ game research.

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