



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# Gamergate: friend or foe?

BY [ROBERT BETT](#) • NOVEMBER 3, 2014

Over the past few months, a line has been drawn in the sand. On one side of that line are the gaming press and on the other are the proponents of a very loosely defined movement – operating under the hashtag ‘GamerGate’ – campaigning for greater transparency in the dealings of the media.

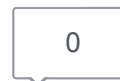
Can gaming publications be trusted to be unbiased if they make a great deal of their ad revenue from games publishers? Can writers be trusted to be fair when writing about games made by people with whom they have a personal relationship? Are these conflicts of interest disclosed effectively enough? These are valid concerns and



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they should be considered and discussed freely.  
Regrettably, it doesn't look like that's what's happening.

GamerGate is an incredibly diffuse movement. Indeed, the extent to which it is a 'movement' at all is debatable since it lacks any sort of formal organisation or cohesion; anyone can use a hashtag or leave posts on a forum. Consequently, the vilest elements of the gaming community have taken up the hashtag to bully and harass women working in the games industry. Sexism in the industry is a well-documented and heavily debated issue and female game developers and critics have faced continual abuse and harassment for a long time but this has exploded in recent weeks.

The sort of repulsive abuse that many have been subjected to is truly beyond the pale. Threats of physical violence combined with incidences of 'doxxing' (researching and publishing personally identifiable information about an individual) have forced many of those targeted to leave their homes out of fear for their safety. No doubt many women working in all parts of the games industry are wondering if it's worth it and some – like freelance writer Jenn Frank – have already decided that it isn't. This is abysmal news for all gamers.

We need unique and varied voices in the games industry to create unique and varied content; this is true of all forms of artistic expression and entertainment. Take the 2011 film *Bridesmaids* as a case in point. It's hilarious and easily one of my favourite comedies of recent years but if women had been hounded out of the film industry then it wouldn't exist. If it did, it would likely lack authenticity and believability in its writing and execution.

Additionally, having more diverse voices in films hasn't stopped the testosterone-fuelled action genre (look at *The Expendables*) and nor will it in games. If people keep buying games like *Call of Duty*, developers and publishers will keep making them. Nobody is coming to take your games.

If you disagree with an opinion, you have every right to speak your mind and, even better, if enough people share your views then you may have just discovered a gap in the market. Careers have been built on a lot less. You do not, however, have the right to threaten someone with physical, sexual, or psychological violence. You do not have the right to publish someone's address and contact information on the internet to further this harassment. You do not have the right to perpetuate a culture of fear that prevents people from speaking their minds and drives them out of the industry. Everybody needs to step away, take a deep breath, and regain some perspective. Maybe then we can begin to move forward.

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This article is biased and misrepresentative of the movement. There is an agenda by games journalists to try to pin the actions of a few onto the whole movement and as they have acres of space to push that and the average gamer does not, the result is a false depiction in the media. And this site now joins in. The movement is aimed at games journalists, of course they will try to discredit it. Should all muslims be tarred with ISIS, - no. The same with #GamerGate. Please write another article and DO SOME RESEARCH.

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