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By:

## [A Short Insight On Massive Multiplayer Online Games](#)

### *Concept, present and future trends*

Looking back on the history of gaming, we can't help but notice that one of the most successful concepts ever created was that of multiplayer. Gamers were not satisfied to play just against a computer, they wanted real challenges. And the biggest challenge of them all was to fight against other real people. And they got it, the games beginning to include multiplayer modes, which at first were used only within relatively small-sized networks. But then came the Internet, and things were never the same. Thus, the concept of MMOG (massive multiplayer online game) was born. First, let's see what a MMOG is. A massively multiplayer online game (MMOG) is a type of computer game that enables hundreds or thousands of players to simultaneously interact in a game world they are connected to via the Internet, according to the Wikipedia definition. However, nowadays, MMOGs can also be played via a mobile device, generally a cell phone (Mobile MMOG or 3GMOG), or, in the case of consoles (at least in the case of the Xbox console), by logging in to the Xbox Live service. The whole action of the game takes place in an imaginary, virtual world, hosted on the game developer's servers, large areas of the game being interconnected within the game such that a player can traverse vast distances without having to switch servers manually. For example, the game Tribes comes with a number of large maps a server plays in rotation (one at a time), but in the MMOG PlanetSide all map-like areas of the game are accessible via flying, driving, or teleporting. We generally associate the concept of MMOG with the image of a huge RPG game, allowing a large number of players to interconnect. This is because the genre has been pioneered by the so called MMORPG games, as for example Ultima Online and Everquest. However, this is not the only category of MMOGs available out there. There are also the MMOFPS (first person shooters providing large-scale, team-based combat), and the MMORTS (an attempt to bring real-time strategy games into the MMOG fray). In any case, the MMOGs are quite different from other online games. Leaving aside the huge-scale worlds and the enormous number of players, most MMOGs charge the player a monthly fee to have access to the exclusive servers, the game state in a MMOG rarely resets, and MMOGs often feature in-game support for clans and guilds, such as the ability to manage an association with in-game tools. However, there are quite enough free MMOGs out there, and their number is growing fast. But what are the most popular MMOGs out there? It's very hard to draw up a top 10, because the boundaries between different classes of games are quite often blurry, and gamers do prefer the free multiplayer games to the subscription-based ones. In any case, according to gameogre.com, currently, the most successful MMOG's is the already famous World of Warcraft, one of the all-time best sellers from Blizzard, who has millions of subscribers and has generated an all-out frenzy amongst gamers. Quite surprisingly (or not), the second place is occupied by a game called Guild Wars, which requires no subscription, thus probably representing the future leader of FreeMMOGs for the years to come. Another interesting entry in the top 10 is The Matrix Online, occupying the 5'Th position, a game that offers in-game events that advance the story of the Matrix after the three movies. If you want to check out the entire top 10, please visit <http://www.gameogre.com/topmmorpgs.htm> Whole articles could be written on this subject, seeing that is quite a vast one, but I'd rather focus on something else, namely the future of these games. Thus, according to Dave Kosak, who writes about MMOGs for Gamespy, the current trends in massive multiplayer online gaming are:

- \* 1) Simpler economies and game mechanics (City of Heroes virtually does away with the economy. World of Warcraft simplifies most every element of MMOGs)
- \* 2) Experimentation with new pricing models (EQ2's downloadable adventures,

Sony's package deal with several games, Guild Wars and its no-monthly-fees-but-lots-of-expansions model, etc.) \* 3) The rise of socially-oriented content (There, Second Life, Tale in the Desert are more about players than about game play. Who knows what else the future might bring, especially considering the latest developments in this area (Microsoft's deal with Marvel, for example), as well as the increasing importance of MMOGs developed for gaming consoles. We'll probably have online tournaments offering substantial cash prizes, more and more news about gaming, and so on. Actually, gaming is likely to become something as important as sports, and with the same media coverage. And why shouldn't it, considering that there are more people playing on their computers than people practicing some form of sport nowadays.