

# Chapter 16

## Fiero and Flow in Online Competitive Gaming: The Gaming Engagement Framework

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper explores the concept of fiero as it relates to online competitive gaming, resulting in a framework focused upon levels of fiero and flow, labeled as the gaming engagement framework. More specifically, the paper describes this framework and its supporting methods as can be applied to measure perceived intensity and engagement levels leading to fiero, and concentration and collaboration levels leading to flow, giving an overall prediction of the level of fiero and flow that a game is capable of eliciting. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data in support of the framework offers a mixed-methods approach towards discovery of both weak areas and strong areas of fiero and flow, along with a collection of literal user perceptions. This framework can be applied at the prototyping phase during game development as well as at incrementally advancing levels of product development through pre- and post-production.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

An online competitive video game player can be fully engrossed, fully focused, and all synapses firing while in the flow of online competitive gaming engagement. There can be an intensity often not seen in the day-to-day activities of real life, motivating the player in ways that may have been previously unrealized. Observations of online competitive video game competitions reveal players in intense competitive

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states while participating in games. Many require high levels of engagement with the game including concentration and collaboration as well as enjoyment. The authors hypothesize that highly successful and highly engaging games are those that require of players high levels of intensity, collaboration, concentration, enjoyment. These traits directly result from game play and are significant factors in determining what makes online competitive video gaming so attractive and popular. There can be other motivations for gameplay deriving from reported benefits from game playing which this article briefly discusses in order to present a larger picture of gaming motivations. These observed traits of intensity of a game, its collaboration required as well as its concentration and enjoyment are contained in the notions of fiero and flow. The authors assert it is a game's fiero and flow that contribute greatly to a game's attraction and engagement ability and present herein a framework which allows for the levels of fiero exhibited by a game to be measured, and to a lesser extent flow. The focus of this paper is the presentation of a theoretical framework for the measurement of this engagement termed fiero, along with an example to illustrate how the framework can be applied in practice.

The concepts of fiero and flow are central to an understanding of what makes games so popular and therefore central to our framework is the concept of fiero; as such, these concepts are specifically focused upon as foundational points of discussion.

The paper briefly describes the benefits of computer games with a focus upon online competitive gaming. Understanding these benefits provided a partial basis for determining measures and traits for this engagement framework, as well as provides indications for future expansions of the framework to assess the levels of some of the benefits noted.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Benefits Online Competitive Gaming**

The social benefits of online competitive gaming are real and important as they provide gamers who may be socially awkward and isolated at school or work and outlet for human engagement by utilizing online computer games to interact in real-time with hundreds or even thousands of like-minded human players on a regular basis. This sense of community, camaraderie and even the competition and team building are all important self-reported social benefits to avid gamers.

Video games have also been reported to help with learning, as well as provide high levels of motivation for learning (Sharritt & Suthers, 2011). Online competitive gaming has been reported to be used to promote second language skills, particularly in MMORPG (massive multiplayer online role-playing games) environments (Dixon & Christison, 2018). Such learning was reported to be a result of inherent collaboration and co-construction activity requirements and partly driven by a participant's high motivation to engage with the game in the required languages (Peterson, 2010, 2016). Such reports provide indications of both a social and cognitive benefit of online competitive gaming.

For online competitive gaming, physically disabled players can compete equally well if they are able to use upper body functions to operate the computer controls and their eyes and mind to think quickly. As quoted within Baig's (2019) article, "Barlet of AbleGamers describes video games as 'the great equalizer. You don't know if I'm disabled. You just know that I'm an ogre or whatever character or manifestation I am in the game. To me, games are about community, about connecting with a shared experience.'" (para. 39). This last statement further illustrates the social benefit of games, but the most far-reaching

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