

## **Is ‘the gamer’ still a white young male? A survey about changing gamer stereotypes**

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Stereotypes reduce complexity and offer opportunities for identification. They are not simply labels – rather, they include assumptions about behaviors and traits that people in the labeled category are believed to possess. And they can change over time: As a result of the negative image of digital games in the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s a strong and negative stereotype of a ‘gamer’ evolved that partly continues to resonate today: The picture of an isolated young male nerd in the basement playing video games all day - the term ‘gamer’ used to be purely negative and was considered an insult. In the last years digital games have become mainstream, being regarded as objects of cultural value. Therefore, it can be expected that stereotype content and differentiation has changed as well. The aim of this paper is to identify current stereotypes about ‘gamers’ and analyzing them with regards to diversity, identifying relevant subgroups and similarities and differences between the different groups and their intersections. In a survey of University students we identify and examine subgroups of ‘gamers’. Preliminary results of an exploratory study show a move away from the negative stereotype of the unpopular, overweight and socially inept white male towards a more positive and more diverse representation of ‘gamers’.

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