

OVERVIEW

The RPG Research Project consists of a series of multi-stage, and multi-variable scientific studies using various formats of role playing gaming (tabletop, live-action, and virtual).

The purpose of the project is to determine the **causal** influences of role playing gaming on participants, rather than relying only on meta-research and correlative data as most of the other studies on the subject have done in the past. The first stages of this project began in 1985, with an active revival in 2004 through interaction with various universities and organizations. The project has been incrementally progressing each year since.



MISSION

To determine the **causal** therapeutic characteristics of role playing gaming through the development of a large scale, multi-phased, longitudinal, multi-variable, double and triple-blind series of research studies.

To date approximately 80 studies have been published related to participation in role playing games and their effects on participants. Most of these studies have relied solely on meta-research, correlative data, or individual case studies, and do not clearly prove causality. This lack of causal research increases the difficulty in developing possible therapeutic modalities using participation in role playing games. The meta and correlative data currently accumulated potentially indicates many *possible* areas of benefit to participants, but this has not yet been clearly delineated through extensive experimentation, observation, metrics, and longitudinal tracking. The RPG Research Project attempts to address these issues.

VISION

It is hoped through the efforts of the RPG Research Project to clearly define the **specific causal therapeutic characteristics of role playing gaming** with the eventual possibility of developing the most effective therapies possible using role playing games

PROJECT

There are many sub-projects contained in the overall RPG Project, from demographics gathering and case studies, to small shorter term research projects, building towards a larger body of data planned over the next 20+ years of research efforts.

The overall project is dedicated to ascertaining by means of the use of various metrical and scientific methods the therapeutic aspects of role playing gaming. Considerations include cognitive, behavioral, biological, humanistic, sociological, cognitive-neuropsychological, psychodynamic and other relevant perspectives.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered, potential therapeutic implementations may become apparent. Therapeutic recreation techniques in conjunction with role playing gaming activities may be used to meet client needs either as a standalone tool or to work in conjunction with other treatment modalities for various population groups.

HISTORY

The project project founder, W.A. Hawke Robinson, first began formally researching the educational and social impacts of role playing games in 1985 as a response to the barrage of

negative press and public misinformation about role playing games popular in the 1980's. Further development in consideration of broader psychosocial impacts from role playing games resumed with an essay written for the Therapeutic Recreation Department at Eastern Washington University in 2004, followed by a number of successive documents and publications continuing to develop more detailed hypotheses, theses and series of research projects.

There are scores of existing RPG-related research projects, but most are either just using meta research, correlative data, too few individual case studies, are narrow in data-set scope, very small in scale, and/or only over a very short time line.

GOALS

The intention of this series of studies using many different population groups is to:

1. Determine and differentiate between correlative demographic variables found between role playing gamers and role



playing gaming forms such as classic paper and dice tabletop RPGs like Dungeons & Dragons, live action role playing games (LARP), and computer-based role playing games both solo and Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG) types, virtual reality and similar immersive technologies integrated with RPG.

2. Determine what, if any, are the causal influences on those who participate regularly in role playing gaming recreational activities.
3. If data indicates potential causal effects, clarify the variables and look for any differentiations in results between the different formats (paper & dice, LARP, computer-based, etc.).
4. Attempt to determine if there are any differentiations in impact on test subjects between "Heroic" and "Evil" gaming single sessions or longer "campaigns" over short and long time periods.
5. Determine differences between various populations and cultures in impact and response to participating in

role playing games. For example the significant gender differential in participation with tabletop RPGs.

6. Determine what (if any) "positive" or "negative" statistically significant characteristics can clearly be defined and might be most useful as therapeutic treatment options either separately or in conjunction with other treatments.

7. Adjust various hypotheses and theories according to the data gathered, and further ascertain the possibilities of developing effective therapeutic approaches using role playing gaming for the treatment of various clients' needs.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It is hoped that over time others around the world with similar interests in role playing gaming research will consider coordinating and/or pooling their resources through this website and it's many features, to create a central repository where professionals, researchers, therapists, media, and laymen alike will be able to find all the information they need on this expansive topic.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

If you are interested in participating in the RPG Research Project, you may fill out the online registration form at:

<http://www.rpgr.org/registration>

Or you may fill out the enclosed application form, add a postage stamp, and mail it to:

RPG Research
1312 North Monroe Suite #114
Spokane, WA, 99201
(509) 252-0800

<http://www.rpgresearch.com>

RPG
RESEARCH
LOGO HERE

