

Gaymers, Rise Up!

With the power of “video games,” we can cast magic spells, battle monsters, and save the universe itself. No matter the game, there is no denying that a gamer’s adventure is full of freedom, fun, and imagination.

The best part, though, is the feeling of unity that stems from such a diverse spectrum of gamers. Naturally, there have been many incredible developments so far; nonetheless, there’s still progress to be made. For LGBTQ individuals, good representation in video games is crucial to achieving unity among gamers.

There is no denying that the effects of LGBTQ video games on the market have issued a whole new era of gaming. The creation of the LGBTQ game archive, with over 1,200 games and counting, allows the public to access and learn about these games. Here’s a breakdown:

From “The Legend of Zelda” to the “Persona” series, LGBTQ content is readily apparent. Not all representation is in the character, though, it also includes locations, items, Easter eggs, and mods. The LGBTQ video game archive covers everything, no matter how small.

The most well-known game from this archive, though, is the “Grand Theft Auto” Series. Known for its characters and romancing options, “Grand Theft Auto” takes the cake for having the most LGBTQ content of any game. Of course, GTA isn’t the only game series to include this kind of content. Fallout’s romancing options, the character of Strangelove in “Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker,” and even Isabelle’s crush on the player character no matter their gender in “Animal Crossing: New Leaf” are just a few examples.

Unfortunately, not all LGBTQ characters are given the spotlight. Most of the characters are non-player characters (NPCs). Because players can’t control their actions, an NPC is a character mainly used to further a story and often isn’t given a large role.

Surprisingly, despite its extensive nature, the task of uncovering the history of LGBTQ games has proved difficult. With problems such as resources taken down or localization changes, things became obscured.

Tons of research was conducted in order to obtain information for both the archive and Rainbow Arcade: a catalogue of the entire known history of queer gaming.

Much of this research stems from fab labor: this includes sites like Tumblr and Reddit, fan wikis, and long-play videos on YouTube.

Even today, people continue to suggest new games for the list. With both the archive and the catalogue together, this project has become far more than a hobby; it is the life's work of Dr. Adrienne Shaw, a recent speaker on Bradley's campus, and her team. On October 7th, Shaw discussed her research and LGBTQ representation in video games. As such, her research has united LGBTQ gamers across the globe.

Despite all of the historical gaps and disconnects in its history, these kinds of video games are empowering to members of the LGBTQ community and could easily issue in a new era of gaming. If there's one thing that's clear, the representation of LGBTQ gamers should, and will, continue to grow.