I've Baked a Cake for You
The Portrayal of Women in Video Games

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Introduction

Super Mario 64 begins with Princess Toadstool writing a letter to Mario. "Dear Mario, I've baked a cake for you. Please come to the castle. Yours truly - - Princess Toadstool, Peach." By the time Mario arrives at the castle, he finds that Bowser has imprisoned Peach using the power of the 120 Power Stars. Mario must recover the stars, and free Peach. Once the game is completed and Mario has rescued Peach, she bakes him a cake. Super Mario 64 is a classic game where the characters conform to their traditional gender roles. Peach, as a female, is a damsel in distress, and a homemaker, and Mario is her rescuer. This report will show how women are portrayed in video games. It will discuss their physical appearance, as well as their personalities, and skills. I have found that women in video games generally conform to two main stereotypes: they are either hypersexualized, or victimized. For the purpose of this paper, I am choosing to define hypersexuality as a depiction of overtly sexualized characters. As well, I am defining victimized as exhibiting a need to be rescued or protected.

Since the emergence of new media, there has been a concern that children will be influenced by what they see in the media. Consistent with this research, video games should magnify the potential to learn and enact behaviours witnessed/produced in video game environments because they are interactive in nature (Downs and Smith 2009). Essentially, video games have an extra interactive facet which is not present in movies. Because you need to give more of your attention to video games, you are likely to focus more and absorb more of the content. According to the American Psychological Association, video game players may pick up cues from video game characters that create or strengthen cognitive scripts about gender roles and sexual objectification (Miller 2007). Because video games are an increasingly popular media pastime, it is important to know how male and female characters are portrayed. After extensive research, I have decided to present findings from the articles that I found the most relevant, as well as my own observations and conclusions based on these. These research studies were most often conducted using content analysis. This is the ideal type of research for this topic, as it is based on turning the observable game content into factual statistics.

Keeping Abreast of Hypersexuality: A Video Game Character Content Analysis (2009)
Edward Downs and Stacy Smith

For this study, the researchers took the top 20 best-selling video games from 2003 for each of the Nintendo GameCube, Sony PlayStation 2, and Microsoft Xbox consoles. These games are listed below in Table 1. Three undergraduate students with gaming experience were randomly assigned 20 games and played each game for 20 minutes in single player mode. The playing was recorded, and at a later date, three coders were randomly assigned to code the character attributes they found in the tapes.

Nintendo GameCube	Sony Playstation 2	Microsoft Xbox
1. Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee	1. Grand Theft Auto III	1. World Series Baseball 2 K3
2. Animal Crossing	2. Midnight Club II	2. MVP Baseball 2 K3
3. Super Mario Sunshine	3. Hack: Infection	3. Midnight Club II
4. Luigi's Mansion	4. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	4. Project Gotham Racing
5. Sonic DX Adventure	5. Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	5. Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon
6. NBA Street Vol 2	6. Def Jam Vendetta	6. NBA Street Vol. 2
7. Enter the Matrix	7. Enter the Matrix	7. The Sims
8. Def Jam Vendetta	8. NBA Street Vol. 2	8. Wolfenstein: Tides of War
9. Super Smash Bros Melee	9. NBA Live 2003	9. Dead or Alive Extreme Beach Volleyball
10. Sonic Mega Collection	10. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	10. Enter the Matrix
11. Sonic Adventure 2	11. Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	11. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003
12. James Bond, 007: Nightfire	12. Xenosaga Episode 2	12. Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus
13. Star Fox Adventures	13. Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	13. Max Payne
14. Lord of the Rings: Two Towers	14. ATV Offroad Fury 2	14. Halo
15. Mario Party 4	15. MVP Baseball 2003	15. Unreal Championship
16. Metroid Prime	16. SOCOM: US Navy SEALS	16. Brute Force
17. Resident Evil: Zero	17. Dynasty Warriors 4	17. Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
18. Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker	18. Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	18. X-Men: Wolverine's Revenge
19. Wario World	19. Yu Gi Oh!	19. ATV 2: Quad
20. The Sims	20. The Getaway	20. The Hulk

Table 1: Top 60 console games in 2003

This study followed the advice of earlier studies, and only looked at characters that were primary (the player could control them onscreen) and secondary (characters immediately tied to game play by interacting with the primary characters). The characters were judged on six criteria: (1) sexually revealing clothing, (2) partially or totally nude, (3) unrealistic body proportion, (4) small waist, (5) breast size, and (6) inappropriateness of attire. Sexually revealing clothing is defined as any garment that was worn in order to enhance, exaggerate, call attention to, or accentuate the curves or angles of any part of the body (from the neck to above the knee) and which, by design, would arouse interest of physical intimacy from others. Partial nudity was defined as exposing skin in an area that should be covered by clothes. Some examples are exposed midriffs, cleavage for women, shirtless males, exposed thighs, and/or buttocks for men and women. Inappropriateness of attire is defined as the degree to which garments worn by a character were suitable and functional with respect to the task at hand. For example, a woman wearing a bathing suit on the beach is appropriate, but a woman wearing one while competing in a dirt bike race is not.

The images above are screenshots from two of the video games that were tested, Dead or Alive Extreme Beach Volleyball and NBA Street: Vol. 2 respectively. The image on the left, Lisa, displays at least four of the hypersexuality indicators. She is partially nude; she has unrealistic body proportions, and a large breast size. While her clothes are sexually revealing, they are not considered inappropriate, as she is playing beach volleyball in the game. The basketball player sporting number 23, probably Michael Jordan, is wearing shorts that reveal a lot of his thighs – this is sexually revealing clothing. His companion is also wearing sexually revealing clothing, as his tank top dips low and shows his pecs.

Of the 60 games in the study, they managed to isolate 489 primary and secondary characters. 419 (about 86%) were male, and 70 (14%) were female. As well, 88% of the primary characters were male, and only 12% were female. Secondary characters were also more likely to be male (85%) than female (15%). It can be stated with certainty that female characters appeared less frequently than male characters.

The results of testing the characters for hypersexuality indicators are shown below in Table 2. A higher proportion of female characters (41%) were portrayed in sexually revealing clothing than males (11%). A higher proportion of women were depicted partially or totally nude, with unrealistic body proportions, with a small waist, and with inappropriate attire. As well, 26% of the women shown in the games had a voluptuous chest. It can be stated with certainty that female characters would appear more sexualized in nature than would male characters.

Hypersexuality Indicator	Women	Men
Sexually revealing clothing	41%, n=28	11%, n=45
Partially or totally nude	43%, n=29	4%, n=16
Unrealistic body proportion	25%, n=17	2%, n=7
Small Waist	40%, n=27	1%, n=4
Breast Size (Voluptuous)	26%, n=17	
Inappropriateness of attire	16%, n=11	2%, n=6

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of characters showing hypersexuality indicators

While I did not focus on this aspect of the study, the coders also broke down the statistics by ESRB ratings. However, there was a result of those tests that really resonated with me. They found that for women, games rated E (for everyone) featured the highest proportion of unrealistic body proportions (44% of coded female characters with an E rating) and females with small waists (56% of coded female characters with an E rating). The conclusion drawn from this study was that not only are women under-represented, but when they are shown, it is often in an overtly sexualized context.

An Examination of Violence and Gender Role Portrayals in Video Games: Implications for Gender Socialization and Aggressive Behavior (1998)
Tracy Dietz

I included this study in my report as it was the study with the earliest date. It was published in 1998, and it seems to be the study that other studies were based on. I thought it would be interesting to compare the study with the Downs and Smith study presented above.

The study consisted of 17 popular Nintendo games and 16 popular Sega Genesis games from spring 1995. Dietz purposely chose popular games, as she felt that was an accurate representation of what children are actually playing. These games are listed below in Table 4. The study does not describe how the video games were examined for content analysis. However, it does mention that she used a coding sheet to assign values to the games.

There were seven criteria that tested how women were portrayed: (1) no characters in the game, (2) women portrayed as women, (3) no women characters, (4) no human characters, (5) women portrayed as victims, (6) women portrayed in traditional roles, and (7) women portrayed as sex symbols. A woman portrayed as a hero describes the situation where a woman character could win the game. A woman portrayed as a victim describes a woman who is kidnapped, or assaulted. A woman portrayed in a traditional role describes a woman who plays a supporting role to a dominant male character, or who is represented wearing traditional clothes. The description of a woman portrayed as a sex symbol is based on her clothes, and body type, and whether she is a reward to a male character. Their numeric values are shown in Table 3 below.

Number	Portrayal
1	No characters
2	women portrayed as heroes
3	no women characters
4	no human characters
5	women portrayed as victims
6	women portrayed in traditional roles/appearance
7	women portrayed as sex symbol

Table 3: Numbers that represented characteristics of how women are portrayed

The images above are screenshots from two of the video games that were tested, Paper Boy 2 and Adventure of Bayou Billy, respectively. The image on the left displays a paper girl riding past a girl sun tanning on her lawn in a bathing suit. The paper girl is portrayed as a hero; however, the woman on the lawn is portrayed as a sex symbol. As well, the author makes a point of noting that the game title, Paper Boy 2, is exclusionary to women. The paper boy/girl will also be awarded extra points for hitting the woman on the lawn with a newspaper. I do not find either of those points to be offensive, especially since

points are awarded for hitting anyone with a newspaper, not just that woman. The image on the right shows that Annabelle, a busty woman in a revealing red dress, is being kidnapped. She is portrayed as a victim, and as a sex symbol.

Name	Type of Game	Portrayal of Women
Adventures of Bayou Billy	Nintendo	4, 7
Base Wars	Nintendo	3
Blades of Steel	Nintendo	3
Double Dragon	Nintendo	2, 5,
Dr. Mario	Nintendo	3
Earthworm Jim	Sega	2, 5, 7
King of the Ring	Nintendo	7
Lion King	Sega	4
Madden 95	Sega	2, 7
MegaMan3	Nintendo	3
Mickey Mania	Sega	3
Mighty Morphin Power Rangers	Sega	2
Mortal Kombat2	Sega	2, 7
Mutant League Hockey	Sega	4
NBA Jam	Sega	3
NBA Live 95	Sega	3
NFL 95	Sega	3
NFL Quarterback Club	Sega	3
NHL 95	Sega	3
Paper Boy 2	Nintendo	2, 5, 7
PGA Golf Tour III	Sega	3
Ren and Stimpy	Nintendo	4
Road Rash	Sega	2
Sonic and Knuckles	Sega	4
Sonic the Dolphin	Sega	4
Super Mario 2	Nintendo	2
Super Mario 3	Nintendo	6
Super Tecmo Bowl	Nintendo	3
Tetris	Nintendo	1
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Nintendo	5
Tiny Toons	Nintendo	7
X-Men	Nintendo	2
Zelda	Nintendo	5

Table 4: Results of content analysis

Only 15% of women were portrayed as heroes. And even then, these women were usually depicted in stereotypically female colours and clothing. For example, the female power rangers are wearing the soft colours, yellow and pink. As well, Princess Peach from Super Mario is wearing a long pink dress. This was not the most shocking finding, however. Of the games that had characters, 10 of them (30%) did not have any female characters. In 21% of games, the women were depicted as damsels in distress or victims of violence and abuse. In five games, women were portrayed only as spectators or in other roles that were supportive to the male character. Only Madden 95 had a female reporter. In the game Road Rash, there was a female police officer, however she is frequently unable to complete the duties of her job because she wants to go watch *Oprah*.

The conclusions drawn from this study were very alarming. Many of the games neglected to include women as characters at all. When female characters were depicted, they were often presented in supporting roles to the men. They were frequently presented as sex objects or were depicted as contributing less than men. The first home video game console, the Magnavox Odyssey, was released in 1972 (Wikipedia). But it was not until the turn of the century that any research studies highlighting problems with how women were represented were published. This study was conducted a little roughly; recent studies seemed to have more of a fine-tuned methodology. I also felt that Dietz was sometimes seeing stereotypes where none existed. Despite her bias, her statistics more than support her. The portrayal of female characters is overly stereotypical. Even the women who were primary characters were negative role models for girls: they represent a heroine who is weaker and subordinate to men.

"You Shoot Like A Girl!": The Female Protagonist in Action-Adventure Video Games (2003)
Sara Grimes

      This study presented an in-depth look at three popular Gamecube console games from 2002 that featured either a protagonist or a primary character who was female: Metroid Prime, Resident Evil, and Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem. While it is another content analysis study, I have included it because it focuses on three female characters in great detail. This gives the researcher the opportunity to focus on the protagonist's roles and functions, their actions, as well as the beauty ideals that they present. All three main characters were avatars. These three games were played from start to finish in their entirety: games with multiple storylines were played to completion in each of the possible storylines.

Samus: Metroid Prime

      The two images above depict Samus, the heroine of Metroid Prime. Samus is an intergalactic bounty hunter. This game is partially a first person shooter, and partially a third person shooter. Because so much of it is done in first person style, it doesn't matter what sex the avatar is – since you can't see her anyway. Samus plays a dominant role in the game – she is the focal point of every scene, and drives every aspect of the gameplay. Often, she was the only character present on the screen. She is a strong, independent woman. Along her journey, she fights very aggressively. Her appearance challenged Western beauty conventions: she is hidden beneath a space suit for the entire gameplay. Her suit is necessary for survival in the toxic atmosphere in the game setting. It is bulky and androgynous. She certainly does not fit the mould of a stereotypical woman.

      Despite her empowering appearance and role within the game, she has one great flaw: she is an empty vessel. She lacks any form of personality and emotional depth. In actuality, she is an avatar for the player to appropriate, and doesn't seem to be a female, excepting her eyes that peer through her visor. Her femininity is only expressed at the end of the game, when she removes her helmet to reveal a beautiful face and blonde hair. You have completed the game, and you are being rewarded with seeing her beauty. Metroid Prime 2 presents multiple endings. Depending on how well you do in the game, you are rewarded with seeing more of Samus' body. If you play the game extremely well, she will remove her armour, and the player will see her voluptuous figure in her tight fitting zero-suit, shown in the image below.

Jill: Resident Evil

Resident Evil is a third person shooter, so Jill is always seen on screen. Jill is an interesting protagonist, as she alternates between the roles of heroine and victim. She is a member of the Raccoon Police Department's Special Tactics And Rescue Service. This sounds like an empowering job, but at the same time, she is a low ranking officer. She is constantly taking commands from her superiors (who happen to be men).

Jill is depicted in the image above, alongside her co-worker Chris. When the user is playing the game, he has the option to play as either Jill or Chris. There are some differences in gameplay depending on which character you choose. It is important to note that even if you play the game as Chris, you still have the trait of sometimes being a victim and sometimes being a hero. Despite this, their characters are completely different. Jill is portrayed as emotional and dramatic. But in the instances where she is weak, Chris is strong. She spends a large portion of the gameplay in a weakened condition, running from enemies instead of fighting them. As well, she is regularly rescued by male companions, and physically abused by them. In fact, when she needs to be rescued, it is Chris who rescues her. Along the way, Jill needs help solving a problem and turns to her partner. However, when Chris is the avatar, he faces the challenge by himself. Jill is portrayed as being extremely vulnerable.

There is also an inconsistency in terms of appearance. Jill's physique is aesthetically shaped and underdeveloped for her occupation. She looks more like she practises aerobics than she does shooting and fighting. She is much less bulky than all the men on her team. She is physically weaker than Chris, and all the other men on her team. As well, she is in tight-fitting clothing, and is the only member of her team without a bulletproof vest.

Alex: Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem

Eternal Darkness is also a third person shooter. Alex is the central character, but often takes on a passive role as a witness. In fact, her only real action sequence is the final battle, in which she beats the enemy by assuming the form of male characters. She is a graduate student in Advanced Mathematics. She

is emotive, as women stereotypically are, but she is also stable. She manages to keep her cool and handles stress and fear appropriately. As can be seen in the images below, Alex is a very attractive woman. She has a slender, yet athletic, build and soft features. Compared to how skinny she is, she is quite well endowed. Since she is a graduate student, and not a professional fighter, her appearance is appropriate. She is dressed in casual clothes that are tight, but not very revealing. They seem to suit the mood and activities of the game.

While she is a female avatar and primary character, she is certainly not a protagonist. Her character development is defined by her relationship with male characters. She is in a world of almost all males. Her decisions are based on her desire to meet her grandfather's expectations of her. This motivation seems to devalue her heroism. Once again, she is dependent on men.

The study presented some interesting insights. All three of these female avatars were sexualized. By sexualizing a hero, it makes her less threatening to the gender status quo. As well, the study concluded that women were more likely to perceive female protagonists as a hero if she is good looking. The ideal female avatar must have balance: she should have traditional beauty, while performing non-traditional actions (such as fighting).

The Lara Phenomenon: Powerful Female Characters in Video Games (2007)
Jeroen Jansz and Raynel Martis

In this research paper, Jansz and Martis established the "Lara Phenomenon," which is the appearance of a tough and competent female character in a dominant position. They aimed to ascertain that women exist in video games in a leading role. Table 5 below lists the 12 console video games that were used in the study. In choosing games to use, the researchers made an interesting choice. Past researchers have used popular games; however, these researchers narrowed the games down with more criteria. They ensured that the games they selected had diversity among the cast of characters. For example, sports games and racing games were eliminated because they usually only have male characters and do not develop the characters. For the same reason, games without a narrative storyline were eliminated.

Charlie's Angels	Devil May Cry 2	Enter the Matrix
Final Fantasy X	GTA Vice City	Metal Gear Solid 2:
Parasite Eve 2	Shadowman 2:	Sons of Liberty
Tomb Raider:	The Second Coming	Silent Hill 3
Angel of Darkness	Primal	Splinter Cell

Table 5: Popular games used in the study

Since analyzing the complete content of the video games would be very time consuming, the researchers chose to analyze them based on the introductory videos. Their reasoning was that the introduction provides an outline of the game, the main characters, and the dominant storyline. Table 6 shows their content analysis results.

Variable	Category	Leading character			Supporting character		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Overall		6	6	12	7	3	10
Race	White	4	5	9	5	1	6
	African	1	1	2	1		1
	Latino/a					1	1
	Asian	1		1	1	1	2
Position	Dominant	6	6	12	3	2	5
	Equal				1	1	2
	Submissive				3		3
Role	Hero/in	5	6	11	1	1	2
	Friend				3	1	4
	Villain				1	1	2
	Tough	1		1			
	Victim				2		2
Attire	Sexy	1	4	5		1	1
	Ordinary	3	2	5	6	2	8
Body	Heavy				1		1
	Normal	2	2	4	4		4
	Thin	4	4	8	2	3	5
Build	Muscular	5	2	7	3	2	5
	Normal	1	4	5	4	1	5
Breasts	Large		5	5		2	2
	Normal		1	1		1	1
Buttocks	Large	2	5	7	1	2	3
	Normal	4	1	5	6	1	7

Table 6: Results of video analysis

The results to their study were very interesting, as they did not agree completely with past studies. They found no difference between male and female leaders – there were six of each and they were all dominant characters. Female supporting characters held either a dominant or an equal position in the game. But, three male supporters (43%) were observed in a submissive position. They functioned as a helper, or a friend, but not as a victim. In the sample of games they used, the two victims turned out to be male, and they were characters that held a dominant position in the game. They found that sexy attire was mainly worn by female characters. And that most of the female characters had a large chest and buttocks.

They found many more results that I will not write about because I do not find the study very valid. For starters, they were working with a very small sample size. As well, this was not a random sample. The 12 games they chose were games which had dominant female characters. There is an obvious bias in their selection, and I believe it has skewed their data more than they realize. I do not think that 12 hand-picked games can be representative of the content of games in general. They do admit that games are dominated by male characters. While they understand the bias, they still believe that there are far more female characters in recent games. They believe that quite a few women became leaders in the games, but they are still presented in a sexualized way. Despite this, they find Lara Croft, and other strong female characters, to be empowering to female gamers.

I do not agree with most of their points. I am particularly disappointed in their use of Lara Croft as an archetypal woman role model. It is inspiring that she is independent, and can fight as well as a man. However, she is too sexualized to be taken seriously. Her chest is extremely voluptuous, and she has a very fit body. She has a stunning face, and unnecessarily small clothes. She is the male's fantasy: she is certainly no role model for women. She reminds us that being talented is not enough, you must also be beautiful.
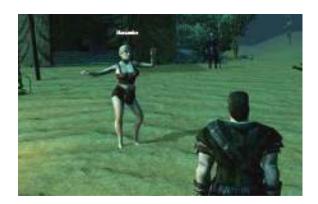
"We don't want it changed, do we?" - Gender and Sexuality in Role-Playing Games (2008)
Arne Schröder

This study examined the content of the Gothic series of RPGs. Not much about the methodology is discussed in Schröder's paper; however, I would consider it to be an in-depth content analysis of the game world. The protagonist of Gothic is a nameless male. He is your avatar, and he is not customizable in any way. Even more unique, is the apparent absence of female characters.

The two screenshots above depict females in the game Gothic 1. The game world contains 101 named characters. Of those 101, only six of them have a female name and appearance. Compared to the men in Gothic, these six women are also scantily clad. They either belong to the harem of the religious leader in the sect camp, or they live in the castle of the political leader in the old camp. The women fall into traditional gender roles. The men do the hard labour, and the women are used predominantly for reproductive work. The screenshots above are two of the women who live in the castle. The woman in the image on the left is doing menial labour and scrubbing the floor. The woman on the right is fanning the throne of the leader. Even after the leader has been killed, the woman still remains in the same position, fanning the empty throne (as seen above). This portrays her as a subservient woman. She is lost without the man there to guide her and cannot function without him. When the primary character tries to interact with any of the women, he will always get the same response; he is not allowed to talk to them. The subservient women are not allowed to talk to men. They must remain silent and submissive. They are merely decoration.

Gothic 2 was a slight improvement over Gothic 1 in terms of women and gender equality. Of the 197 human characters in the game, 18 of them were women. It is possible to talk to most of them. As well, their roles are a little more diverse. Most of the women are housewives, or do paid labour as a cook, an herbalist, or a merchant. There is even a female character with a higher ranking, Cassia, the leader of the thieves' guild. However, she is set in a part of the game which is hard to find, so most players never even encounter her. Some of the female characters are involved in sub-quests, but they all take a stereotypical nature, such as buying a pan for Hilda, or talking to Gritta who has spent all her money on clothes.

Gothic 3 was an upsetting reversion back to the gender roles of the first game. Gothic 3 was released with absolutely no female characters. On a discussion board, one of the developers explained that the lack of women was due to 'technical difficulties with the graphic engine and problems with time management during game development.' Apparently, the graphics engine could not handle the long dresses and complex hairstyle of the female models. A later patch did include women. The woman depicted above is from Gothic 3. She does not appear to have a complex hairstyle, or a long dress. These women who the developers have added to the game, probably at the request of users, are also not allowed to converse with the male character.

The Gothic series is an ever-present reminder that even though people are now aware of the gender stereotyping in video games, and there is factual evidence, there is still a problem. Gothic presents a society in which almost no women exist. They show that women are not needed in a functioning society.

Conclusions

In Beasley and Standley's 2002 article, they concluded with a hopeful message:

> *"Clearly, there is room for improvement in the area of video games as it relates to gender role stereotyping. Continuing study should be conducted to watch the video game market for improvements. As more girls and women begin to play video games, one hopes more female characters in a variety of clothing styles may be seen in these games."*

That was eight years ago, and we still have not come far enough in eliminating gender stereotyping. While we have seen an increase in the presence of women in video games, this is not necessarily an improvement. The women fighters in Namco's Soulcalibur, shown below, serve as a constant reminder of this. They are caricatures of women: they are hypersexualized to the highest degree with revealing non-functional clothing and exaggerated body proportions.

In searching for images of Samus, I came across a database of girls in video games. There is an entire site dedicated to pictures of female video game characters. The webmaster's tagline is "Video Game Girls Database - A fansite about video game hotties, babes, and vixens." The images on the site depict the attractive and hypersexualized characters that have now started to fill the void of females on screen. Below is the url of the website. It is sites like this that make me realize that we have much farther to go.

http://www.videogamegirlsdb.com/gamegirl/Girls/GameGirlsPreview.aspx

I would not like to conclude on such a morose note. As Beasley and Standley stated, there is hope for the future. I believe that as more women join the game development process, the portrayal of women will start to shift. Tanya Jessen is the producer of Epic Games. In 2011, Bulletstorm, a first person shooter with a female protagonist, is going to be released. Below is an excerpt from an interview Jessen gave with an interviewer from Techland.

> **Tanya Jessen, Epic Games:** *Trischka's character is very much a product of me because I wanted a strong female character that wasn't stereotypically hot. But still, obviously had a*

way about her that implied sexiness. You know, [sarcastically] the fight for boob size was an awesome one. It was probably a week of back and forth, like…

Techland: *From B to D cup?*

Jessen: *It was everything imaginable. It was width. It was the cleavage showing. It was height, from top to bottom. It was the level of bounciness. It was all of that. I'm in Adrian's office, like, "Adrian, come on. No! Are you crazy? Trischka, she's our badass. She's going to kick your ass and take no prisoners! She's sexy because she has the confidence. She doesn't need to have giant breasts!" Adrian is like, "She's so hot, she needs to have a giant rack. I love chicks in video games that have giant boobs." I could see his face was kind of sad. I think we came to a good middle ground. He genuinely wanted what he considers the most beautiful looking woman in the game. What I wanted is a believable, strong, not-stereotypical fighter chick.*

Tanya is talking about a conversation that she had with Adrian Chmielarz, the game's creative director. She used her authority to make sure that the female protagonist was a realistically proportioned woman. Shown below, Trischka is an attractive woman, with an average sized chest. She is a dominant, independent woman, and perhaps the Lara Phenomenon should be renamed the Trischka Phenomenon.

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Further Reading

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