

ABSTRACT

Online games are entertainment-oriented Internet-based information systems. Unlike traditional personal computer or console games where usually one person plays, online games bring people together using communication technologies to access not only the games but other people. The availability of online games has grown rapidly since 2000 and the rapid growth of the Internet has made the game industry a highly profitable e-commerce application and they are regarded as one of the most addictive activities on the Internet.

Many researchers studied online game in diverse of perspectives: as virtual worlds or artificial environments; as online communities; and as social activity networks. Those previous studies of online game have identified factors that influence the acceptance of online gaming technologies. Based on those findings a theoretical model of the determinations of the acceptance of online game technologies was formulated, tested using data collected by questionnaire from 413 experience online game users, and developed to arrive at a final model. The determinants includes factors related to online game usage, flow experience, perceived security, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, attitude toward online game play, and intention to play online game.

From a theoretical perspective the findings show the predictors of Actual Use are Perceived Behavioral Control, Intention to play online game and Flow Experience. Actual Use measured the amount of time an individual spends each time they play an online game and the most important influence on it was the extent to which individuals believed that they had control over their own online gaming behavior (Perceived Behavioral Control) including the decision to play or not and the resources, knowledge, and ability needed to play. The next two most important almost equal influences on actual use of online games were the individual's perception of the likelihood that they will play the game in the future (Intention) and the extent of involvement they experienced when they were engaged in the virtual environment created by online games (Flow Experience). The finding also confirmed result in previous studies that the main determinate of Intention is Attitude. In this research the

most important influences on an individual's attitude to online games were their perceptions about the security and trustworthiness on online games (Perceived Security) and the extent of involvement they experience when they were engaged in the virtual environment created by online games (Flow Experience). The next most important influences were the extent to which they believed that they had control over their own online gaming behavior (Perceived Behavioral Control) follow by the amount of support for playing online games that they received from friends and associates (Subjective Norms).

Based on the characteristics of the respondents, there were significant differences between males and females concerns with Attitude, Perceived Security, and Subjective Norms. Females were significantly less convinced than males that online games were trustworthy and secure. The view that families did not support online game playing was held more strongly by females than males. On the other hands, the view that online gaming was supported by friends was stronger among males than females. Not surprisingly, individuals who played online games either frequently or for longer periods of time had very positive attitude to online games, strong intentions to continue to play them, strong feelings of flow experience, strong beliefs that their friends and family supported their playing online games, and strong beliefs that they were in complete control of their playing habits. As a result, male was found to be significantly more positive to online game play and female was found easier to exert control over the online game playing behavior comparing to male.

The practical implications of the findings contribute to two particular groups who have contrasting interests in online gaming. The first group includes those who want to increase online game usage, such as online game venders and developers. The second group is those who foresee that pathological use of online games leads to behavior disorders and so they seek strategies to limit the use of online games. For those who want to limit the use of online games the most effective means is to reduce the extent to which players believe that they have control over their own online gaming behavior (perceived behavioral control) including the resources, knowledge, and ability needed to play and particularly the decision as to whether to play or not. This study found that online games are played predominantly at home or to a lesser extent at Net Cafés because access to online games is normally not allowed from

schools and universities in Thailand. A significant amount of online gaming occurs at home where it is possible for parents and guardians to exert control and not allow children to make their own decisions about whether or not they are going to play online games. Those who wish to promote the use of online games may focus on creating a positive attitude among users, convincing family members and peer groups to support and join the game, increasing game security system and eliminate any possible obstacle of online game playing.

