
Online video game competitions and how they relate to mate choice and mating strategies

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Unlike most animals, direct and open competitions in humans are rare. Nonetheless, competitions still play an important role in our everyday lives. For example, students compete for marks and entrance to particular schools, adults compete with co-workers for promotions, and friends compete for access to mates. In each of these scenarios, those that succeed gain access to resources and social standing that others do not. But how individuals compete and how individuals perceive their competitive ability has changed over the last decade due to the ubiquity of online video games and leaderboards. Competition in online and digital environments has not only increased the opportunity to compete, but has simultaneously reduced the costs of competitions. I argue that this has changed our perceptions of competition by allowing individuals to more easily probe and perceive their social standing relative to others, and more importantly, allowing them a means to moderate the perception of their own social standing. In this talk, I will discuss what this means from an evolutionary perspective and how online competitions can influence offline behaviour and mating strategies. I will also discuss how individuals may be selecting particular games to moderate their own perception of their ability. I will end by discussing how online competitions have the potential to change gender dynamics and intersexual competitions as they are no longer limited by biological differences in the real world.