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THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2013

How #SaintsRowIV is the Answer to #Sexism in Gaming

Posted by Anthony Accinelli

Saints Row IV was the last place in the world I expected to find the solution to sexism in gaming. After all, who honestly thought a game about shooting aliens as the President would be so aware of gender equality?

I certainly know I didn't. And I highly doubt you did.

Volition games has eliminated all gender inequalities in *Saints Row IV* through one simple convention: no boundaries based on sex.

The first thing you do in *Saints Row IV* is create your character. Of course you have to choose between 'Male' and 'Female', but that's where the distinction ends. You can choose any voice-personality combination you want. Both sexes also have a 'sex appeal' slider which grows their appropriate pieces to absurd sizes (and lengths), and every hairstyle is available to wear.

Even the make-up options are available for both.

I always play as a female character when given the opportunity. There's just something about saving the world as a strong female. Sticking it to the man... literally. One of the first missions of the game is to find some new clothes. I soon realized that you don't have to wear clothes at all. Shooting aliens in the face while completely nude?!

Yes please! That shit's hilarious!

It wasn't until I stepped outside and the option to Streak became available that I realized one thing - I made a mistake. I should have been a male. Streaking just isn't as



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impactful unless you have a shlonger floating about. A little advice to future party animals out there: the helicopter is key to a successful streak.

I considered restarting the game and choosing a male character at this point, of course assuming I was locked into the sex I had chosen.

I was wrong.

One trip to "Image as Designed" and I was able to change *everything*. My sex, hair, body type, and personality included. This was *huge* for me. I couldn't wait to go streaking through the quad to the gymnasium!



I finished my tweaks to my new male character (southern belle voice included) and stepped outside. The black dress I had been previously wearing was still on, and "The Boys are Back in Town" by Thin Lizzy was blasting throughout. I tell you what, that's a seriously epic moment. Not only does it not matter what sex I have chosen, *Saints Row IV* doesn't care what I wear while being it.

That's a rare thing in video games. Hell, that's a rare thing in *real life*.

Saints Row IV you run into all kinds of characters. Men and women dressed in bondage, business suits, whacky costumes, dresses on dudes, and everything else in between. The point here is simple: **it doesn't matter what sex you are, do whatever the fuck you feel like doing.**

It doesn't stop there mind you. As you cruise around the streets of



For myself, sexism isn't a one-sided gig. Yes, there are clearly more issues in relation to sexism against women in the industry. Yes, video games tend to be built for a male audience and as such carry certain mechanics to appeal to them. Yes, men are sexualized in video games as well.

And no, it's not a "male power fantasy" to look like Nathan Drake, or any of the other ridiculously good-looking, buff men out there. It's sexualizing men, and it's really not a big deal to me. In either case, male or female.

The sexism that *Saints Row IV* tackles isn't of the "her boobs are huge" and "his abs are ridiculously cut" fashion. It's the dress how you want, act like you want, and be who you want fashion. There is no slut-shaming. There is no male power fantasy. Every person is equal, and every person can be who they want.

That is the key to solving sexism in gaming. It's to stop worrying about a Sorceress with large breasts and start realizing what the real issue is: condemning someone for showing off their body. Sexism isn't creating a character with large breasts, abs, biceps, or buttocks. Sexism is noticing these things and automatically pinning it as an issue.

Saints Row IV doesn't do that. I can run around the world as a naked woman with bigger gajungas than the world has ever seen, and no one gives a shit. On the same note, I can hang out in a group of people as a male with a tanktop, no pants on, a massive bulge, and a female voice - and still, no one has any fucks to give.

Saints Row IV is the shining beacon to gender equality and sexism in gaming. It should be looked at as the next step to solving the *real* issue - chastising a character or individual for behaving or looking a certain way.

I just wish the real world was this way. A summer dress would be a blessing in those hot summer months...

at 12:10 PM 15 Comments

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BoltSmarts · 15 days ago

most of this was possible in The Third ...They have just added a few tiny additions..not trying to bring the game down (obviously, its a masterpiece) ..great article tho :)

5 ^ | v Reply Share >



anthonyacc Mod → BoltSmarts · 14 days ago

I guess I never noticed in The Third? Perhaps the issue wasn't one the forefront of my mind like it is today. Either way, good to know. The Saints franchise is doing it right, that's the important thing!

^ | v Reply Share >



Ronald Myroup · 14 days ago

Well written observation on gaming. Good job.

3 ^ | v Reply Share >



MithranAkanere · 12 days ago

This does not stop with character customization.

The game has a "romance" option with 7 of the player's homies, which is a parody of romance options in games like Mass Effect and Dragon Age.

That also ignores gender. Male or female, you can press R to do stuff like helping Matt lose his virginity, passionately kiss Gat, get it on with Pierce, practice the horizontal dance with Asha or dangerously dive into Kinzie's kinky S&M tendencies.

And there's even an achievement for playing at least 2 hours as each gender.

So they do not just let you choose the gender you want, they are also giving you a reason try both instead just get one at the start and sticking to it.

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Niki ES · 15 days ago

Great article! Most of my guy gamer friends usually prefer choosing girl characters as well....which is weird because I normally create guy characters. Maybe it's out inner subconscious wanting to be the opposite sex for a day? Who knows!

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anthonyacc Mod → Niki ES · 15 days ago

Thanks Niki. Yeah, I think it has something to do with video games being an escape. A fantasy. I'm a guy all the time, it's nice to be a girl sometimes haha.

1 ^ | v Reply Share >



Ryan Deadpooln → anthonyacc · 15 days ago


I heard from a lot of guys the reason they choose a girl is because they don't want to look at a dudes backside the whole time. I guess that makes sense... but I am never staring at my character, usually too busy keeping my eyes on enemies and obstacles. Whatever floats your boat I guess. Personally, I try to create myself in that world. That or a badass looking character. I've never been much for creating the goofiest character ever either, never saw the appeal in that.


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
...plaining about Lightning Returns would read it, especially

 your accurate definition of sexism.
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 **Julia Thompson** · 14 days ago
Can you get away with wearing a kilt in the summer? Some cotton kilt from one of several utility kilt manufacturers might be just the thing for you in summer.
1 ^ | v Reply Share >

 **Nobilis** · 14 days ago
Hallelujah, sibling.
Halle-fucking-lujah.
1 ^ | v Reply Share >

 **anthonyacc** Mod → **Nobilis** · 14 days ago
Haha thanks? :P
^ | v Reply Share >

 **咒純討厭** · 4 days ago
You didn't play 2 or 3 I take it. That option has been in the game since the second entry.
^ | v Reply Share >

 **anthonyacc** Mod → **咒純討厭** · 4 days ago
I did play them both. And what's your point exactly?
^ | v Reply Share >

 **gay** · 6 days ago
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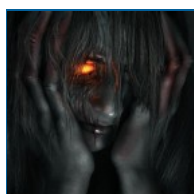
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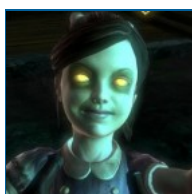
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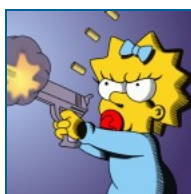
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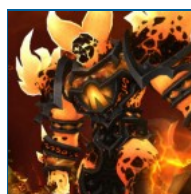
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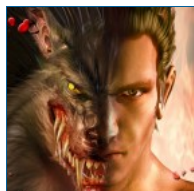
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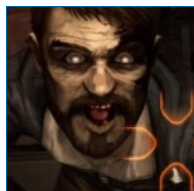
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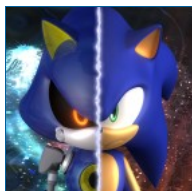
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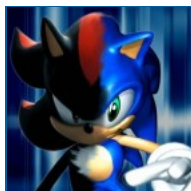
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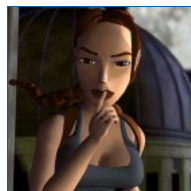
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