

About Wendy Kays

Author of *Game Widow*



Several years ago, when Wendy Kays suddenly realized she was more familiar with the back of her husband's head than the front of it, she knew there was a problem. And that problem rested inside a computer monitor.

"I knew when I married him that my husband made video games for a living and played them as research for his work. But at the same time, a lonely marriage is not an option for me," says Wendy Kays, who has been married to leading Sony Playstation2 game designer Graham Kays for seven years. So when Wendy found herself becoming a "game widow" soon after their wedding, she decided to do something about it. The result? An in-depth (and sometimes, undercover) research endeavor that led to her new book *Game Widow* (Synergy Books, September 2008, ISBN 978-1-934454-26-8, \$14.95).

To understand what made video games so absorbing, Wendy spent thousands of hours on experimental game play, conducted hundreds of interviews with developers, researchers, academics, psychologists, medical personnel, and other game widows, and even snuck into a few professional game conferences. Her discoveries were surprising: game developers are not evil, but actually highly underpaid and overworked. Game widows aren't few and far between, but a large demographic actively trying to figure out how to win back their spouses, kids and friends. Most importantly, the players themselves are not lacking real-life social skills, but simply have great incentive to develop relationships, gain virtual assets and achieve power and status on their game of choice.

"There is a simple answer to why elves, gangsters, and digital environments are grabbing and keeping people's attention away from real life," says Wendy. "They are made to appeal to the gamer not just because they are fun but also because the gamers feel as though video games themselves can fill deep human needs."

While writing her book, Wendy amassed a wide circle of professional gaming and mental health experts, several of which have endorsed *Game Widow*. These include Nick Yee, founder of the Daedalus Project (an ongoing study of MMORPG players, or "massive multiple online role-playing game" players), Dr. Kimberly S. Young, director of The Center for Internet Addiction Recovery, Dr. David Walsh, president of National Institute on Media and the Family, Jason Della Rocca, executive director of the International Game Developers Association, and Erin Hoffmann - formerly known as ea_spouse - celebrity blogger and quality of life activist.

Today, Wendy is a public speaker and media consultant on gaming culture and media addiction, and has shared her insights with several news outlets including the *Seattle Times*. In her personal life, she and her husband reached a "gaming compromise" that is outlined in *Game Widow*, and now work alongside each another to keep tabs on the latest gaming news and trends. They live in the Pacific Northwest software development hot zone near Microsoft, Nintendo and a myriad of small independent game studios, and in [month, year], they welcomed their new baby [name]. Learn more at www.gamewidow.org.

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To request a copy of *Game Widow*, or to set up an interview with Wendy Kays, please contact Tolly Moseley at (512) 478-2028 ext. 213 or tmoseley@phenixpublicity.com.