B.M.I.G.S.

DIDDLYSQUAT

Big Mad Irish Games Survey

2004 / 2005

The facts, the fiction, the figures and the final report from the first national survey of the Irish Role Playing Games community

www.diddlysquat.ie

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"It doesn't matter where you start, just so long as you start."

At some point during the summer of 2004 I was finally persuaded that the sci-fi/horror game that lay hidden under the bed of my imagination ought finally to be dragged from its hiding place, dusted off and assembled into some sort of a commercial product. Surprisingly, it took quite a lot of persuasion, but once the battered old shoe box had been opened there was really no way it was going to be pushed back into the shadows.

Instead, I found myself determined to construct some sort of a vehicle for the development of this new game, and as a result, members of the group I had been gaming with were conscripted and Diddlysquat was born.

Having only recently returned to gaming after some years wandering in the wilderness, I was amazed to discover that in my absence the hobby appeared to have hardly progressed at all. In a hobby still heavily populated with "geeks" and "techies", I was equally amazed to discover the absence of a really useful website promoting and serving the needs of a modern Irish gaming community. So with this as some sort of an aim, Diddlysquat.ie was thrown together very rapidly with a full list of conventions, a list of games shops, a reasonably comprehensive list of clubs (as far as I could tell) and a bucket load of links to other games resources.

Quite quickly traffic through the site began to build, and fuelled by my continued ranting and muck stirring on the iGaming mailing list, we became (for want of a better word) "famous".

The year or so since Diddlysquat first staggered forth from the shadows has seen some interesting developments. There are now several good online resources (www.IrishGaming.com, www.IrishGamingWiki.com, www.IrishGamers.com and www.PlanetIrishGaming,com to name the most important), and we finally saw some sort of national forum for the hobby at Durrow during February 2005. I am certainly not so pretentious as to claim any responsibility or credit for any of this but I am very happy to have seen it finally start happening at the same time as Diddlysquat is getting off the ground. If I can play any part in seeing such developments continue to happen in the future I hope I will continue to find the time and the energy.

"If you don't know where you are, extreme good luck and endless patience are the only things that will get you where you want to go. I possess neither."

There is very little available, reliable data regarding the role playing hobby anywhere in the world. Only Hasbro seem to have ever invested serious time or money into gathering such information, and not surprisingly, the results they appear to have gathered are heavily laced with the scent of their own products. Although I didn't search too long or too hard, I'm fairly certain that no extensive studies of the Irish gaming community have gone before.

The Big Mad Irish Games Survey was not (I'm afraid) born with the pretension of becoming some classic sociological study. Instead it had some fairly mundane commercial goals. It aimed to gather the answers to commercially oriented questions that any business might want to have answered prior to launching a new product into a market. Even so, I think some of the facts it uncovered are quite thought provoking for anyone who's interested in the hobby on the broader level.

Geoff Moore
October 2005

Introduction

"What, when, where, how, why? Ask these questions repeatedly and you will encounter the many faces of human irritation."

What is BMIGS? It's a survey of gamers, mostly tabletop role-playing gamers. If you're a wargamer, a LARPer, a boardgamer or a cardgamer you're probably not going to see too many questions that apply to you. We're looking to publish tabletop RPGs initially, so I'm afraid that's what interests us most at the moment.

When did BMIGS happen? Diddlysquat sprang from my loins during the summer of 2004, and by the time the website was up and running we were in the run-up to Gaelcon 04. As a result, the obvious decision was to use Gaelcon 04 as a platform from which to launch things, including a little market research, running in parallel with early game development through to completion prior to Gaelcon 05. Of course, it would be nice to be able to call it BMIGS 04....but it just didn't work out that way, so here we are : BMIGS 04-05. Will there be more BMIGS in the future? I don't know.

Where did BMIGS happen? The role playing hobby is a relatively invisible one, and as a result it's really hard to get at the people who play games. The two most obvious places gamers become visible are at games shops and at games conventions.

Although we could probably have chosen other ways to get the survey in front of gamers, making it available at conventions seemed to be the most effective one we could do at minimal cost, and having now tried a number of other avenues I think we were right.

As it turned out the survey bandwagon didn't make it to every convention, but we did actively gather data at the following cons :

Convention	Venue	Date
Gaelcon 04	Gresham Hotel, Dublin	October 2004
Vaticon 04	UCD, Bellfield, Dublin	November 2004
Warpcon 05	UCC, Cork	January 2005
Leprecon 05	Trinity College, Dublin	March 2005

In addition, the good people of the NUI Galway Fan-Sci society took away a whole pile of forms and filled them in independently prior to their convention in April.

The survey was also re-printed with a few small variations in the first issue of the IGA's re-vamped White Elephant magazine which was distributed free of charge on the web, at conventions and in a number of games retailers. Only one completed BMIGS form was received from this source, but I wouldn't read anything into this.

Finally, we also made the BMIGS form available for download via diddlysquat.ie, however we received no completed forms from this route.

How was BMIGS implemented? The survey was designed as one double sided A4 sheet for convenience, consisting 23 multiple choice questions. We chose to collect the names, age, county of residence and email address of each respondent. As well as being quite interesting this data also made it easier for us to identify duplicates.

As far as the collection of the actual data goes, we found that accosting people with clip board in hand worked best. Leaving a pile of empty forms on a table with a few biros and gazing hopefully at passers-by didn't work at all.

Why BMIGS? As far as I can tell it's never been done before, but in addition it was commercially important that we attempt to gather information regarding the behaviour of game consumers so that we might make better projections of how they may behave in future. Without such information it is pretty much impossible to make any sensible business decisions.

General Preamblings

"Even the longest journey begins with a visit to the toilet."

If we did it all over again would we do anything different? Well, of course. New questions that I'd quite like to have answered occur to me all the time. There were also a number of errors or anomalies in the survey that threw people off a bit and perhaps devalued the results a little, but I guess that's only to be expected in a first try.

It would have been nice to have really got to every single convention through the year, but...we didn't. We might have tried even harder to make sure that everybody at every convention actually filled out the form, but we had other distractions and so did they. We probably could have tried to encourage a few of the retailers to collect data in their shops for us, but really that's a big ask for people who're busy trying to earn an honest crust.

Will the survey run again? Well, not in its current form, and I don't think there's any value in having a rolling survey online. Any survey of the hobby can probably only ever expect to be a snapshot of the status of gaming at any one particular moment. It could, however be interesting to take that snapshot fairly frequently. At the moment, I doubt it's going to be me holding the camera though.

There were a grand total of 198 useable survey forms, with a further 5 unusable or "spoilt" responses. 24 incorrect versions of the survey formed slipped through the net, and because the questions were quite different we couldn't really use these in the final count (which was a real shame).

As far as I can tell we only had one actual duplicate (removed). Oddly enough, the person who filled the survey out answered many of the questions differently in each response.

We also had just one "comedy name".

We instructed respondents to tick every box that applied to them.

Some people's handwriting is TERRIBLE!!!

Disclaimers, Copyrights and other such Paraphernalia

"75% of all statistics are made up on the spur of the moment. The results in this report represent the other 43%"

Diddlysquat does not claim that these results are representative of the entire Irish gaming community or even representative of the convention-attending population of Ireland. They simply provide a representation of the views of those people who attended the same conventions we did, and who chose to complete the survey on the day they were asked.

As far as Diddlysquat is concerned these results belong to everyone. So feel free to copy, reproduce, re-analyse, pull apart, put together or otherwise fiddle-with in whatever way you like. but whatever you're going to do with them I'd really appreciate it if you'd mention Diddlysquat as your source.

The Results

What is your name

As far as I can tell, almost everyone got this question right…

The accidental bi-product of the question was that we were able to estimate the proportion of male to female gamers.

Gender	Number	Percentage of total
Male	148	75%
Female	32	16%
Unknown*	18	9%

*gender not obvious from name or name unreadable.

I think we're all aware of the gender imbalance in the hobby as a whole, but it does appear to be improving. Further surveys would be required to determine whether this is actually the case.

How old are you

I don't think the results for this question are too surprising, especially given that so many of those attending conventions are members of college games societies.

Average age of respondents : 24.4 years

Oldest respondent : 47 (phew…it wasn't me)

Youngest respondent : 12 (clearly that wasn't me either)

What county are you from?

This question caused a little confusion as quite a high proportion of people read it as "what *country* are you from". The hobby, and the population in general would appear to be heavily dominated by persons domiciled in Dublin, but given that the majority of the data was collected in Dublin this probably isn't significant.

County	Quantity
Dublin	56
Kildare	9
Wicklow	2
Galway	29
Sligo	6
Tipperary	5
Cork	16
Waterford	2
Laois	1
Carlow	1
Clare	1
Meath	5
Tyrone	1
Armagh	1
Donegal	1
Mayo	1

The high proportion of people from Galway in the survey is in part due to the large travelling contingency from NUIG Fan-Si but also it's because they gathered data from their membership and forwarded it on to us of their own volition.

It would appear that a high proportion of people misread the question, and as a result we had quite a few forms that simply said "Ireland" in the answer box. For those who actually weren't from Ireland these are the results

Country	Quantity
UK (country not stated)	9
Scotland	5
Northern Ireland	4
US	1
New Zealand	1

What is your email address

For obvious reasons we're not revealing the email addresses of those who completed the survey, but what is interesting is that :

    a. the vast majority of people completing the survey possess email addresses and can recite them on demand, which appears to suggest a high level of technical competency and familiarity

    b. the vast majority of people are willing to give away their email addresses to complete strangers without much hesitation

The first point supports the general image of the gamer as a "techie". It probably also makes some statement regarding the socio-economic group from which most gamers are drawn.

The second point is simply interesting from a behavioural point of view and reveals a high level of trust and possibly an ignorance of the effects of spam.

What sort of a group do you play in?

The best known gaming groups are the college based game-societies, but it has long been my view that many gamers play in ad-hoc gaming groups that are not affiliated to any larger gaming organisation.

What sort of group do you play in?

44, 17%

86, 35%

44, 17%

79, 31%

- Organised group meeting regularly
- Informal group meeting regularly
- Casual group meeting occassionally
- Not part of a group
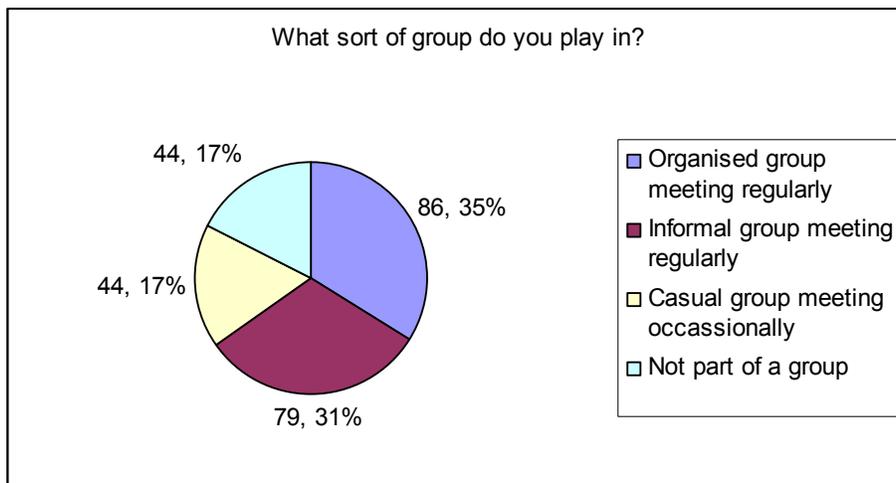
The survey results indicate that the vast majority of people are part of clubs and societies, but that there are also a significant number of people who are either not part of a group or who play on an ad-hoc basis with a few friends.

How many members does your regular gaming group have?

Yes, obvious ambiguity in this question. We realise that if you answer ">10" you cannot have "more". But you know what we meant...

How many members does your regular gaming group have?

- 34, 19%
- 69, 37%
- 30, 17%
- 48, 27%

Legend: 1-5, 6-10, >10, More
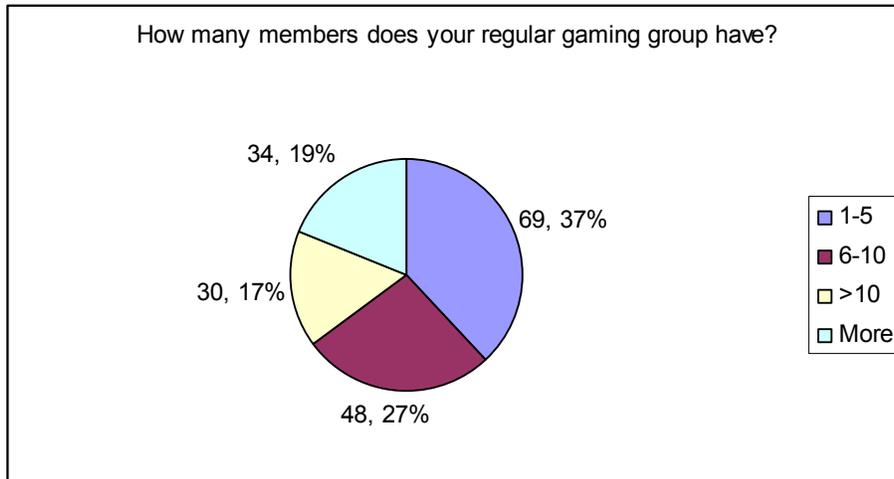
These results indicate that 36% of respondents are involved in a gaming group that consists of more than 10 members, many of them considerably larger. This would certainly support the view that the gaming society scene is strong.

How often do you play?

The tick boxes provided in which to answer this question didn't provide the flexibility required to reflect the gaming schedules most gamers seem to follow. It may have been more appropriate to ask how many times per week gamers played.

How often do you play?

- 8, 4%
- 26, 14%
- 12, 6%
- 16, 8%
- 130, 68%

Legend: Daily, Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly, Less Frequently
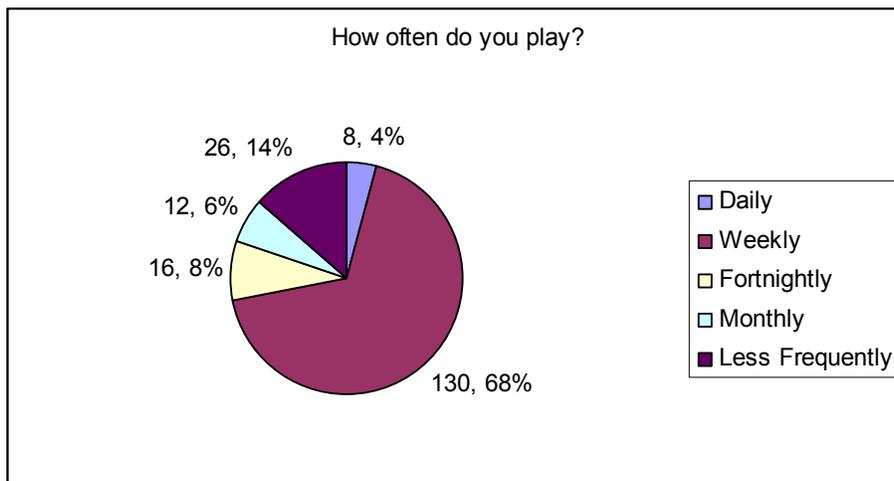
More evidence of a vibrant gaming community, almost 70% of those surveyed are playing every single week.

However, there are still plenty of people looking for a game! 14% of respondents play less than once per month.

How often do you try new games systems?

I've long been intrigued by the buying patterns of people in the games community and this question along with the next two were aimed at trying to get some sense of who buys games and when.

How often do you try new games systems?

6, 3%

41, 22%

63, 33%

79, 42%

☐ Never

☐ Less than once per year

☐ Less than once every six months

☐ More than once every six months
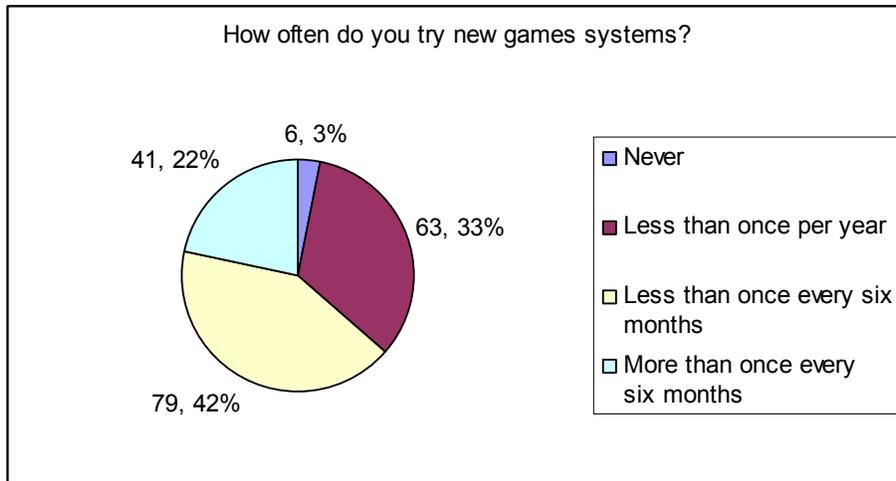
Regardless of how you interpret the wording of this question it still gives an indication that many players are trying out new games on a pretty continual basis. This is supported by a couple of other questions later in the survey, and I think it bears out the "feeling" that you get from the buzz around the trader's stands at most conventions.

How do you usually make the decision to buy a new game?

Sometimes it's something as simple as a nice picture on the cover of a sourcebook, but I suspect that more often than not people are initially compelled to buy for other reasons.

How do you decide to buy a game?

- Try someone else's copy
- Read reviews
- Listen to recommendations
- Browse shops
- Browse online

13, 5%
74, 27%
76, 27%
37, 14%
74, 27%
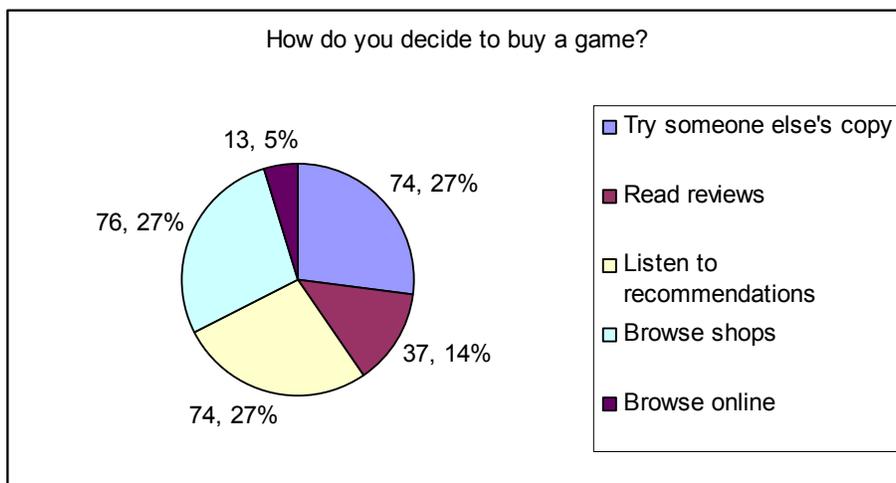
Would you buy a brand new game as soon as it is released?

Can you get a feel for a game just by flicking through it in the shop or do you need to know how it actually "plays"? If it needs a few dice rolled over it to see whether it's a lemon or not perhaps you're going to wait until someone else has given it their blessing before you shell out. After all, games don't come cheap these days with all that glossy artwork and fancy writing.

Would you buy a new game as soon as it was released?

- Yes
- If I'd seem good reviews
- If the packaging was really attractive
- If I knew the game's publisher
- No

35, 17%
49, 23%
23, 11%
12, 6%
91, 43%
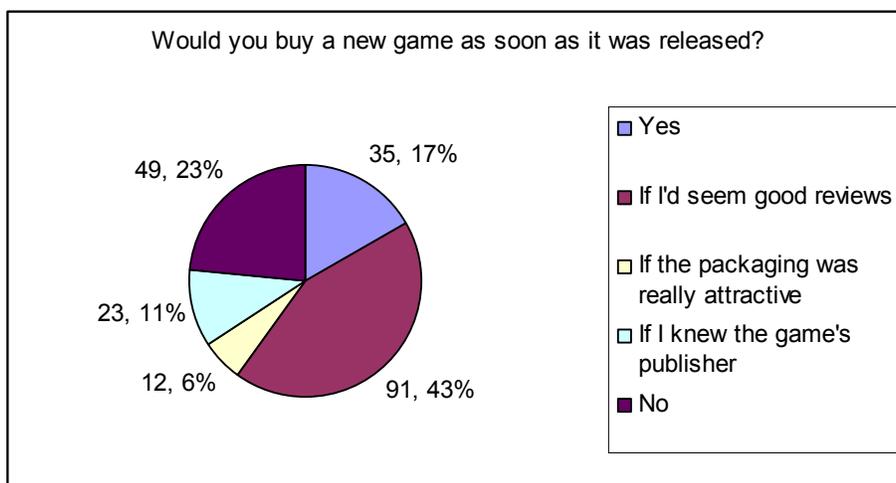
What do you do in games?

Apart from scoff popcorn? Clearly GMs have a far greater desire (and need) to purchase rules than players do, so it's important to us from a commercial point of view to know just what sort of proportion of people in the hobby actually GM games. From personal experience it seems to be quite a high proportion, but without the survey we could be clutching at straws.

What do you do in games?

- 2, 1%
- 28, 15%
- 60, 31%
- 36, 19%
- 65, 34%

Legend:
- Always player
- Usually player, sometimes GM
- Either player or GM equally
- Usually GM, sometimes player
- Always GM
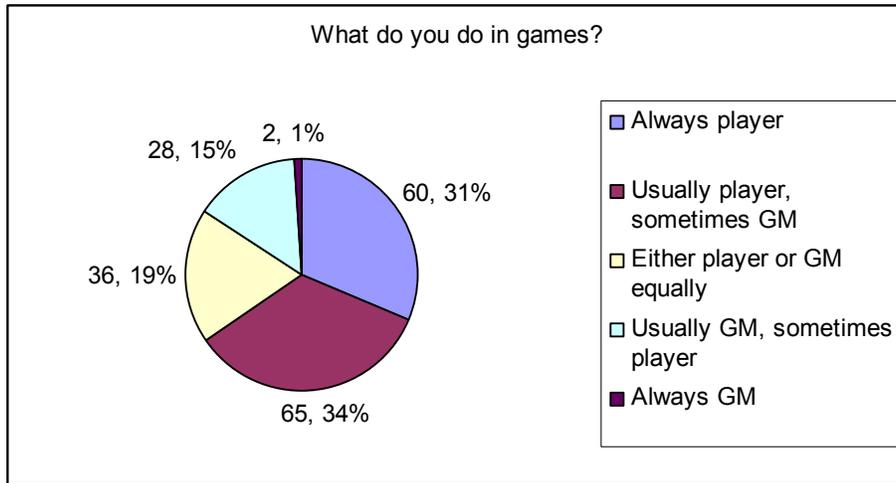
Well, it's nice to see that over 2/3 of respondents take their turn in the big chair from time to time.

What other gaming materials do you buy?

Personally, I get along with a pretty frugal selection of bits and bobs, gathered over the years and kept for special gaming occasions in an air conditioned chamber next to my oxygen tent, but what about the normal people out there? What do they all buy?

What other gaming material do you buy?

- 55, 14%
- 117, 29%
- 103, 26%
- 29, 7%
- 27, 7%
- 69, 17%

Legend:
- Dice
- Hex paper & character sheets
- Figures
- Premade maps & terrain packs
- Background material
- Prewritten scenarios
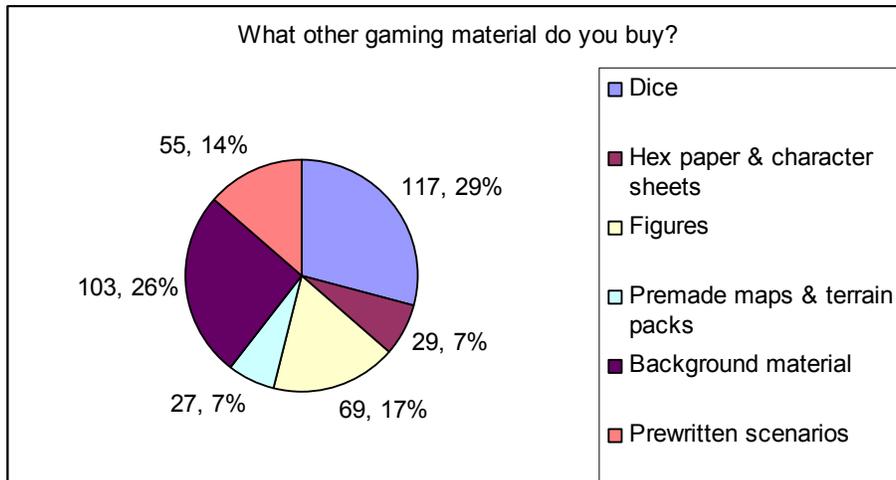
The results bear out the perception that no-one can resist pretty dice.

When you buy a new game what other gaming materials do you expect to find in the box?

It's next to impossible to actually find an RPG that comes in a box these days (ah…the old days of lovely cardboard boxes full of goodies…), so perhaps this question is a little redundant, but in a world obsessed by convenience is there still a place for a complete "out of the box" play experience?

When you buy a new game what do you expect to find in the box?

37, 8%

84, 19%

174, 39%

149, 34%

- Rules
- Background material
- Pre-written scenarios
- Dice
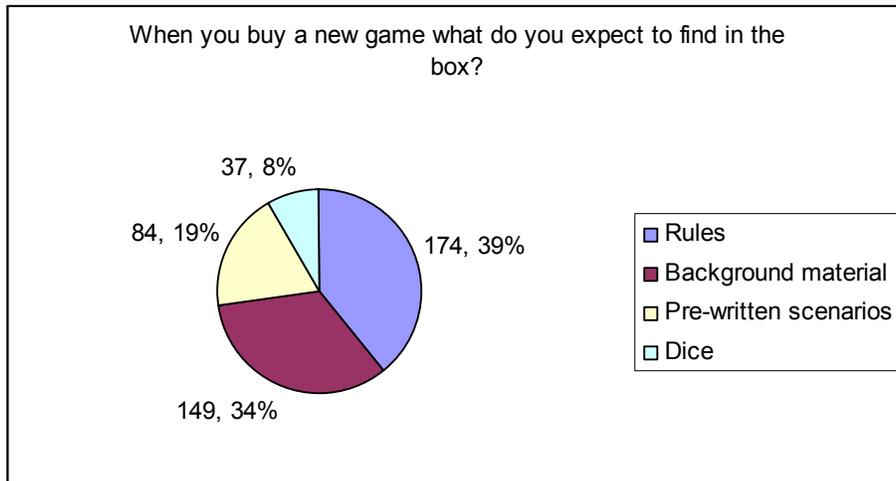
Some people think so, but on the whole it's rules, background and a few sample scenarios that folk are after. All good for the simple "book-format" games.

How much did you pay for your favourite game?

This one got a lot of ambiguous answers, and as a result it didn't yield any useful data at all. What we meant to be asking was "what did the core rule book of your favourite games system cost you?" Some people took it that we wanted to know how much they'd spent over the course of their entire lives on any particular gaming system, and as a result we got some answers with rather a lot of '0's on the end.

Even so, the average came out to €46 which isn't too unrealistic.

Twenty people answered €40, which seems to reflect the sort of price tag you see on a typical core book these days.

Do you thing it was worth the money?

If you didn't understand the previous question then this one has no meaning, but only 4 people didn't think what they'd paid represented good value for money. The other 167 who answered the question did.

Place the following components of a game in order of importance?

This was probably the most taxing question to answer as it not only required an opinion, it also required some sort of quantitative/qualitative weighting in the response.

Place the following components in order of importance

Complexity of rules	Quality of material	Uniqueness	Similarity	Artwork
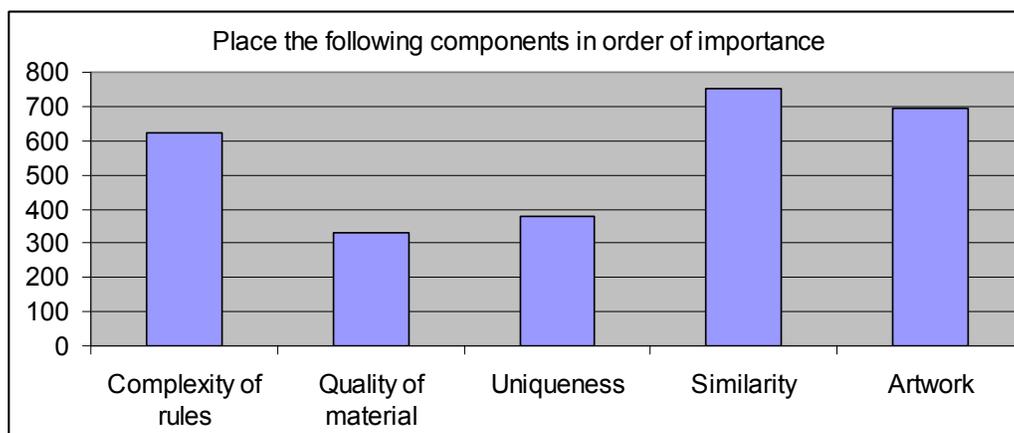
The question asked for the most important (1) to least important (6), so we'd expect the lowest score to the most important component.

The answers we received were as varied as the slogans on the respondent's T shirts, with pretty much everyone having a slightly different opinion. It wasn't at all clear from the survey itself which component was going to come out tops, and it was only when the data entry was complete and the totals were added that these results emerged.

So people are looking for quality material with a 'uniqueness' to it. After that, the are important and the artwork too, but the similarity of the game to others is not important at all.

We received a number of additional suggestions for important components, all of which are very interesting:

Component	Votes
Realism/historical accuracy	2
Price	1
Flexibility/variety	2
Fun/craic/enjoyability	8
Writing/layout	2
Simplicity	5
Background	2
Cinematic	1
PC support	1
Good mechanics/tactical	2

Which game genres do you enjoy?

Is the hobby still dominated by people who hanker for leather skirts and shiny armour or has the emergence of horror and historically based games made any impact on the types of games people like to play?

What genres of game do you enjoy?

12, 2%
67, 12%
62, 11%
163, 31%
99, 18%
140, 26%

- Fantasy
- Sci-Fi
- Horror
- Historical
- Comedy
- Other
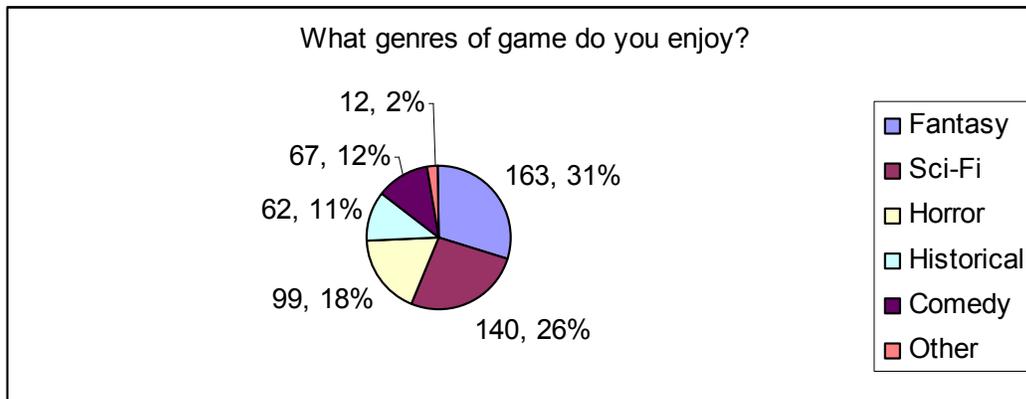
Well, there's your answer.

The 'other' category included the following :

Genre	Votes
Dark future	1
Modern	1
Military	1
Action/adventure	1
TV/film	1
Superhero	4
Ultra-realistic	1
Conspiracy	1

I'm afraid I can only guess at what some of these might refer to but clearly the superhero games are emerging as a sub-genre.

If an online version of your favourite game were available would you play it?

It's very interesting to look at the answers to this question in light of the popularity of games like World of Warcraft over the past twelve months since the survey was started. I'd be very surprised if some of those who said they'd never play such a game aren't now signed up and playing online both frequently and often.

If your favourite game were availble online would you play?

22, 11%
42, 21%
48, 24%
50, 25%
39, 19%

- No
- If it were free
- If it wasn't too expensive
- Yes
- Don't know
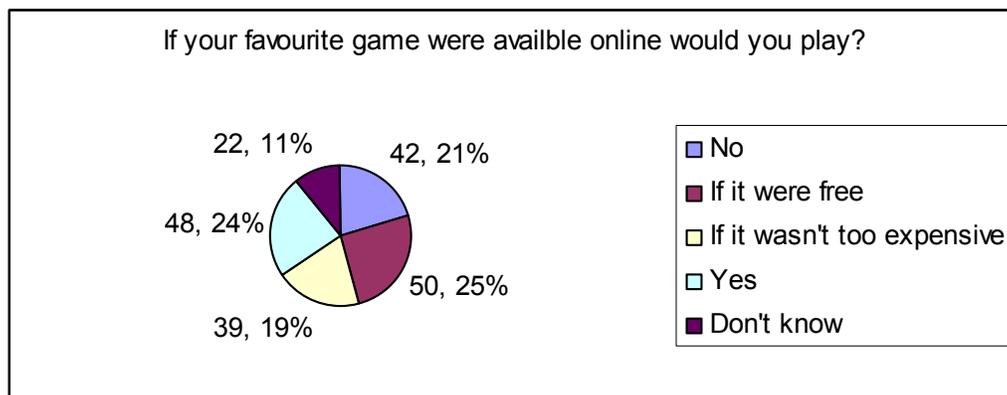
How much would you pay per month to play it?

Most people declined to answer this question, probably because at the time they weren't actually playing such a game. The "magic number" seemed to be €10 at the time of the survey.
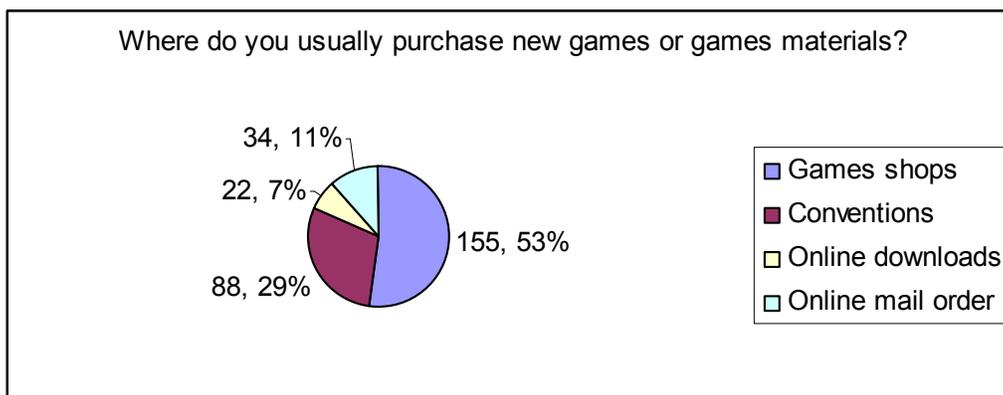
Of the 72 answers received 25 said that they'd pay €10 per month to play on line and a further 11 would pay €15. That's exactly 50% of those who answered the question.

If all those who answered were paying what they stated they were willing to pay in subscriptions it would be worth over €10,000 for the year to whomever were providing the games.

Where do you usually purchase new games or games materials?

I have to say that the results of this question surprised me a little. Given the scarcity of places to find RPG material and the ease with which we can all get access to the web these days I expected to see more people venturing beyond the high street and the convention.

Particularly having seen some of the data on downloadable and POD formats I expected to see a few more people purchasing downloads.

Where do you usually purchase new games or games materials?

- Games shops — 155, 53%
- Conventions — 88, 29%
- Online downloads — 22, 7%
- Online mail order — 34, 11%

As it is, however, by far the most popular method of purchase is at the games shop or at a convention with comparatively little being bought by mail order or on the web.

Go traders!

Do you usually buy merchandise at conventions?

In deference to the convention crews who allowed us to do our 'thang' at their events we included a few con-related questions.

Do you usually buy merchandise at conventions?

20, 11%
64, 35%
98, 54%

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No
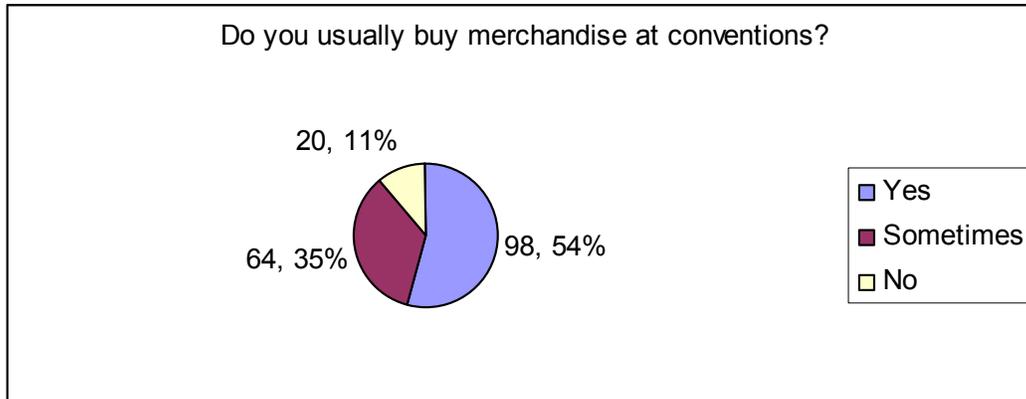
I think we already knew the answer to this question…

How many conventions would you attend in a year?

It's fairly clear once you've attended a few conventions on the circuit that there is a cohort of gamers who get to pretty much every con in Ireland.

How many conventions do you attend in a year?

39, 22%
23, 13%
24, 13%
94, 52%

- This is my first
- One local con
- Several
- Every con I can get to
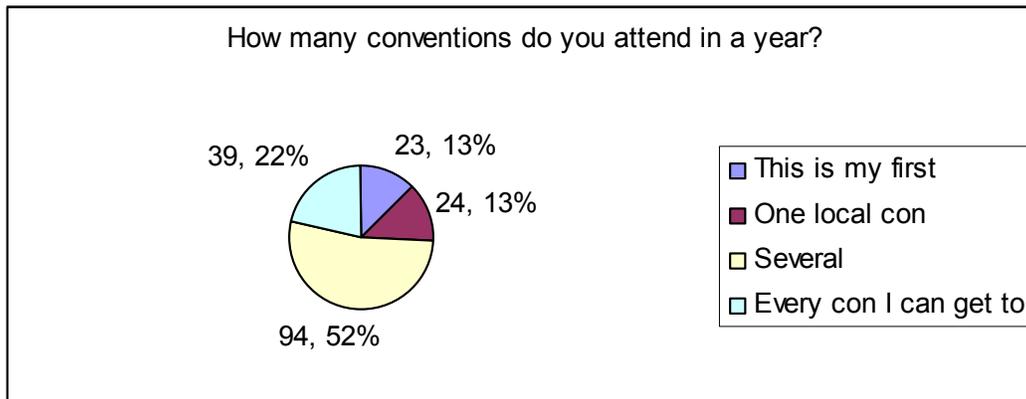
Equally, I was interested to see how many people there were for whom the convention at which we met them was their first.

How many times have you attended this convention?

The results of this question and the two following are convention specific and will require some further analysis to make any sense of them.

A supplementary report will be published shortly with the full details of the responses we received to these questions.

How long do you spend at conventions?

See above

Which do you participate in at a con?

See above

The Games People Play

The last three questions on the survey are there to see what people are playing, what they like and the range of games people have played. Quite a lot of people pointed out that we "missed out" a lot of popular games from the list. Well, "we" didn't make the list. The games included in these questions are the games played at Gaelcon 03 and 04, and hence the questions reveal something about the relevance of the selections of games made at what is reputed to be the country's most popular convention.

What is your favourite game?

Votes	Game
44	Dungeons & Dragons
27	Call Of Cthulhu
20	Vampire
14	Warhammer Fantasy RPG
14	GURPS
13	Werewolf
11	Starwars
9	SLA Industries
9	Other
8	CyberPunk
7	Legend of the Five Rings
6	D20
6	Sorcerer
5	Marvel
5	Savage Worlds
5	Home
4	In Nomine
3	Traveller
1	Riddle of Steel
1	A/State
0	X-Files
0	Godlike

Some people voted for more than one favourite whereas some others didn't vote for a favourite at all. Much as other surveys elsewhere have indicated D&D, CoC and Vampire top the poll as people's preferred games. Only 9 people voted for games off the list which would seem to indicate that the Gaelcon game selectors have been pretty close to the mark with their choice of games over the past couple of years.

Clearly there is also a role for conventions to play in introducing some of the more obscure games.

What games have you played in the past 6 months?

Votes	Game
74	Dungeons & Dragons
51	Vampire
44	Call of Cthulhu
43	GURPS
34	Warhammer Fantasy RPG
31	Starwars
27	WereWolf
25	Legend of the Five Rings
21	CyberPunk
19	D20
15	Marvel
14	SLA Industries
14	Home Brew
12	In Nomine
7	Traveller
7	Savage Worlds
6	Riddle of Steel
6	A/State
5	Sorcerer
5	Other
3	Godlike
0	X-Files

This question tries to determine which games people are actively playing. Once again, the "usual suspects" top the poll. I was quite surprised to see Star Wars scoring so well in this list. The "other" score is suspiciously low given the huge number of games listed by some, so I'd suspect that quite a lot of respondents simply didn't include games that weren't already on the list.

I was initially quite surprised at the number of different games some people are claiming to have played over the course of the past six months, but when you include the possible diversity of games an individual could play over the course of a weekend at a convention, I suppose the numbers are more understandable.

X-Files and Godlike score poorly here which seems to indicate that they were a bit of a "risk" to include in the conventions. I wonder how many people actually chose to play them at Gaelcon?

What games have you played ever?

Votes	Game
103	Vampire
102	Dungeons & Dragons
90	Call of Cthulhu
86	GURPS
76	Warhammer Fantasy RPG
73	Werewolf
72	Starwars
64	CyberPunk
58	In Nomine
56	Traveller
53	Legend of the Five Rings
50	SLA Industries
43	Marvel
42	D20
28	Home Brew
17	Sorcerer
15	Riddle of Steel
15	A/State
15	Savage Worlds
14	X-Files
10	Godlike
9	Other

This question seems to have been taken by some as a challenge to see how many game titles they could think of! The big surprise from the results was that more people had played Vampire than had played D&D despite D&D scoring higher in popularity and appearing to have been played most in the past 6 months.

Once again X-Files and Godlike score worst, and once again I take the very low score for "other" with a pinch of salt.

The table on the next page gives a list of games added to the list by a few people who felt compelled to give more complete lists of the games they'd played in the past. I was quite disappointed not to see Tunnels & Trolls or Bunnies & Burrows in this list…

There were, however, 83 additional games listed, giving a total of 103 games people claim to have played at one time of another. Some of these are quite obscure (my apologies for any spelling errors or ignorance in these game titles) but there are probably no real surprises in the top 25 or so.

Votes	Game	Votes	Game
16	Shadowrun	2	Babylon 5
10	Exalted	2	2300AD
8	Mage	2	Immortal
8	Runequest	2	Silver Age Sentinals
6	Paranoia	2	Big Eyes Small Mouth
6	Buffy the Vampire Slayer	2	Chill
6	Deadlands	2	Blue Planet
5	7th Sea	1	Munchkin
5	Changeling	1	Chez Geek
5	AD&D	1	Torg
5	Abhorant	1	Talislanta
5	BESM	1	Transhuman Space
5	Pendragon	1	Planescape
5	Middle Earth RPG	1	CBT Rpg
5	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	1	Ogre
4	Stargate	1	Ghostbusters
4	Judge Dredd	1	King Of The Woods
4	Fading Suns	1	Eidelon
6	Kult	1	Orc World
4	Rolemaster	1	Herosystem
4	Battletech	1	Dark Ages
4	Earthdawn	1	Mordheim
3	Magik	1	Dark Eye
3	Wraith	1	Universalis
3	Feng Shui	1	Over The Edge
3	Warhammer 40,000	1	Prince Valient
3	Mutants And Masterminds	1	Indianna Jones
3	Ars Magica	1	Axis & Allies
3	Dark Conspiracy	1	Union Pacific
3	Toon	1	Wheel Of Time
3	Witchcraft	1	Game Of Thrones
3	Space 1889	1	Lone Wolf
3	Nobilis	1	Ster Trek
2	Amber	1	23rd Letter
2	Robotech	1	Rifts
2	Car Wars	1	Twighlight 2000
2	Mech Warrior	1	Warzone
2	Macho Women With Guns	1	Chronopia
2	Delta Green	1	Spycraft
2	Trinity	1	DC Superheros
2	Mutant Chronicles	1	Bloodbowl
		1	Tales From The Floating Vagabond
		1	Bushido

Conclusions

BMIGS 04-05 was an interesting exercise in numerous respects and I believe that in addition to gathering facts about the Irish gaming scene that we can now use to support the preconceptions we've all been working on in the past, I think it has taught us one or two lessons as well.

The sample size is really quite small, and I suspect that there are many more people out there in the gaming hobby who do not attend games conventions and who do not frequent the online forums upon which this survey was mentioned. It would have been nice to get to more of these people, but without a door to door survey I don't think you're ever going to dig all of them up.

I've divided down the conclusions into a number of sections, each of which draws different information in a different context from what we found.

It should be noted that these are my own conclusions. I'm no statistician or market research guru, so if anyone else wants to draw their own conclusions I'd be happy to see them.

Conclusion 1 : The gaming community

It seems quite strong. There are a reasonable number of clubs and societies, some of which are fairly substantial but mostly they remain centred in the universities, and as a result the age profile remains young.

Given this close link with academia it would seem likely that the demographic of gamers closely matches the demographic of third level students.

The "traditional" genres of fantasy, sci-fi and horror remain the most popular and the same three games (D&D, CoC and Vampire) are the community's favourites, the games being played most and the games most people have played in the past.

Conclusion 2 : The games market

From the huge diversity of games people seem to be actively playing there is clearly still a market for new games. However, the value of that market remains relatively small in Ireland. Taking supplements and support material into account, gamers are willing to invest significant amounts in their hobby, but it is a long process.

Personal experience and recommendations still count for a lot, and by far the majority of gamers prefer to make purchases in a hands-on retail environment where they can see and touch the material.

Conclusion 3 : The survey

There were some errors and ambiguities in the survey that may have reduced the integrity of parts of the data. However, in order that their effect should remain the same throughout, we chose not to make any corrections and did not "lead" respondents by pointing out the errors even after they were reported.

There are certainly a number of questions that might have made valuable additions, but it simply wasn't possible to include any more than we did in the single sheet format we chose.

The vast majority of people were quite willing to share their opinions on the survey with only one or two actually refusing to fill it in when asked. We have to assume that there were RPG players at the conventions we attended who did not complete the questionnaire.

Conclusion 4 : Conventions

A fully detailed analyses of the results referring to conventions will be included in a supplementary report to be published soon.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, of course I have to thank the people who helped in getting BMIGS off the ground and in collecting data at the conventions we did make it along to.

In alphabetical order:

On drums - John "Hat-stand" Brennan
On bass - Anthony "Bunny-ears" McGovern
On saxophone - Catherine "D15" O'Sullivan
On lead guitar - Janet "Thaed" O'Sullivan
On marimbas and tambourine - Jonathon "Good in leather" O'Sullivan
On slide trombone - Rachel "The Pedanator" Pedan
On backing vocals - Lee "Go on, touch it" Raythorn
On grand piano - Colm "Doesn't need a nickname" Walsh

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- **Rachel** for drawing and painting a whole load of groovy stuff, only a fraction of which made it into the public domain.

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Finally, and really most importantly, thanks to every single person who took the time to actually fill in the questionnaire. Obviously this whole survey wouldn't be worth a kobold's handkerchief without you all.

In the immortal words of Anita Murray
"Splat Splat Frog!!"

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