Gay World of WarCraft guild forced to change name because of user complaints



Enlarge / What's to become of the *WoW Classic* guild "GAY BOYS"?
Aurich Lawson / Blizzard

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Public scrutiny of game developer Blizzard's relationship with free speech was already high this week. It intensified on Thursday, but the latest Blizzard story has nothing to do with punishing players for statements about Hong Kong. Instead, it's about the names of guilds in *World of WarCraft*.

We've heard lots of acronyms, but never "ZFXPK"

Ars Technica received word on Thursday that the "GAY BOYS" guild within the recent *World of WarCraft Classic* fork had its name changed late Wednesday to the machine-generated gibberish "Guild ZFXPK." An email, apparently sent by Blizzard Customer Service, indicated that the guild's name-change process began because "your fellow players reported your in-game name as inappropriate multiple times." From there, the email cites "a thorough investigation" that also led to the guild's creator receiving a temporary account suspension. The suspension was later overturned, but the guild's name remains "Guild ZFXPK."

A cursory scan of existing *WoW* guilds shows another one named "GAY BOYS," which had a temporary name change in 2016, followed by a Blizzard forum thread asking why it had been changed. After acknowledging that general user forums weren't the place to properly dispute customer service issues, a *WoW* forum moderator offered some advice for choosing a new name: "Picking a name that you can identify with without also using words that would illicit [sic] a reaction from other players would be far more beneficial."

A member of the guild affected this week says that he is not surprised about the new round of user complaints. In an emailed statement, "GAY BOYS" member Ahmil Jilani wrote:

> *If you reviewed my chat logs, you would see multiple messages from individuals through my recruitment process of getting us to where we are today, with individuals messaging "Fuck the gays, reported," amongst other extremely hateful and discriminating comments… These are the individuals that find our name inappropriate. Giving in to their demands only means that you are siding with them as a company, which, after a decade of playing your games, is a surprise to me.*

“To say there is anything inappropriate about the words GAY or BOYS is, in and of itself, inappropriate, childish, and discriminatory,” Jilani said. “Individuals that found the name inappropriate should be the ones taking a good look at themselves in the mirror, because this is 2019, and we have a right to exist as a community.”

Blizzard’s End User License Agreement includes the following wide-ranging clause about what content is or is not acceptable in the company’s online games:

> *You further represent and warrant that you will not use or contribute User Content that is unlawful, tortious, defamatory, obscene, invasive of the privacy of another person, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, racist or otherwise objectionable or inappropriate. Blizzard may remove any User Content and any related content or elements from the Platform at its sole discretion.*

The guild’s members are awaiting a response to their appeal of the automated name change; they plan to march as their virtual selves on their *WoW Classic* server Blaumeux as an “in-game protest.” Jilani forwarded Blizzard’s notice about the guild’s name change to Ars Technica, and it did not include any clarification about what rules the guild’s name may have violated.

Blizzard did not immediately respond to Ars Technica’s questions about the affected guild’s automatic name change or about how coordinated reports may have been gamed by abusive users to target a minority group within *WoW*. https://arstechnica.com/?p=1583251