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Negotiations on Player Identities: *The Sims 2* Skinning as a Gendered Practice.

The practice of making skins for game characters situates on an interesting no-man's-land in between subcultures, namely hackerism, fandom and tactical art. What is common to the three is their emphasis on the resistant and critical nature of the practice. Discourses around hackerism and fandom also maintain strong gendered stereotypes of the participants.

This paper, discussing the key findings of a Ph.D. study on how female players' identities become constructed through the participation in creating skins for *The Sims 2* game, suggests that a more nuanced approach is needed. With a thick description on what has been learned from fifteen individual players, the paper explores a balance between resistance and exploitation in the practice of skinning *The Sims 2*. The player identities studied are characterized by continuous negotiation and emphasized disavowal in regard to one's engagement in skinning as well as one's appreciation towards a game that encourages the 'rebellious' practice.