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The Shattering:

Did the design choices for World of Warcraft: Cataclysm cause it to fail?

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Abstract

This study is an analysis of how MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) World of Warcraft: Cataclysm (Cataclysm or "Cata" for short) caused the monthly revenue of World of Warcraft, which was £123,000,000 (Rough estimation of the player base at peak times by the cost of a monthly subscription (12.3 Million x £9.99) at its peak, fell to £91,000,000 (9.1 Million x £9.99), a £32,000,000 loss. This excludes the sales of the expansions. If those lost players didn't buy the standard edition of Mist of Pandaria (£39.99), then it can be said a further £123,969,000 could be considered lost as well

This study is broken down into several sections to understand the nature of where these design or studio decisions affected the game in a negative way. It begins with a general overview of the topic, displaying and discussing the subscription numbers after World of Warcraft: Cataclysm. The study then breaks down the successes and changes that Cataclysm brought in comparison with its previous expansions, such as Wrath of The Lich King (WoTLK), which although had stagnant numbers, saw the game's peak at 12.3 million subscribed players. We look at the initial release of the Cataclysm, its middle point and the innovation and use of the new mechanics.

The study then makes a comparison to the previous expansion and why it wasn't as well received, going on to look at the difference in the quantity and quality of the content and why it was not enough. Why did Cataclysm lose 3.1 million subscribed players of a span of two years, a quarter of the initial player-base? Cataclysm lost eight hundred thousand between October of 2010 and March of 2011 (Purchase, 2011), this study asks and attempts to answer the question, why was there such a large subscriber loss?

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Chapter 1: The changes to difficulty

Looking for Dungeon (LFD)

When Cataclysm released on the 7th of December 2010. The players, both old and new, had been accustomed to the "Looking for Dungeon" (LFD) system introduced in Wrath of the Lich King (See Appendix (4)). The system was intended to get players who did not have access to a friendship/guild group (See Appendix (1)) and get them experiencing the small form of multiplayer content.

This changed in Cataclysm. The difficulty faced in Cataclysm was substantially harder, requiring organisation and planning, something that new players were not experienced with. Players who had not dealt with this required level of engagement subsequently caused strain on players and thus led to a higher rate of failures in the heroic difficulty. This led to the lead system designer, Greg Street releasing a post to the WoW Website titled "Wow, Dungeons are Hard!", where players were given advice about how to approach dungeons and that it is perhaps the fault of the player for not being able to progress. Mr Street stated in his post "If you just can't make progress and you are literally wiping on trash pulls over and over, it may be time to analyse your gear." [sic] (Street, 2020) This was met with a mixed response. Some players felt that his response was unhelpful, that in order to participate in the dungeons, they would need to participate in guilds and premade groups in order to have a chance of completing the dungeon.

However, this mentality displayed by Street changed in Patch 4.0.6, where changes were made to make fights easier (See Appendix (5)). John Bain, also known as "TotalBiscuit", Commentated on these changes on his show, Azeroth Daily (Specifically Azeroth Daily - 07/02/11). Mr Bain on a post made by a Community manager stated, "You're still making players worse, and that's the problem" [sic] Bain, J. (2011). The decrease in difficulty in Bain's eyes would lead to more players in the Looking for Dungeon system (LFD) who are not willing to engage with challenging content, thus making it difficult for players who wanted to have these engagements and use the LFD system and thus leave both parties unsatisfied.

During the six-month period prior to Cataclysm's release, the game, on the 5th of March, 2011, Cataclysm reportedly suffered a 600,000-subscriber loss for Cataclysm, bringing player numbers to 11.4 Million (Fahey, M. (2011)).

To change or redirect the subscription numbers, Blizzard Entertainment began further efforts to lower the difficulty of older content to make it easier for players to catch up. On the 25th of May 2011, EuroGamer reported reductions in damage and health up to 20% for bosses in the previous patches. While this allowed players, who had come from Wrath of The Lich king to enjoy the content which was initially difficult (Purchese, 2011) [1].

As the Cataclysm expansion ended, Scott Mercer was the lead encounter designer for Wrath of The Lich King, spoke in an article and stated "Initially, we started off the Heroic dungeons at too high {a level} of difficulty." [sic] (Sacco, 2012) and that "The difficulty level rather abruptly changed when compared to the Heroics players experienced at the end of Wrath of the Lich King." [sic], showing there was a dramatic change in order to appeal to players used to the easier style of play in Wrath of The Lich King.

"Attunements"

World of Warcraft Subscriptions
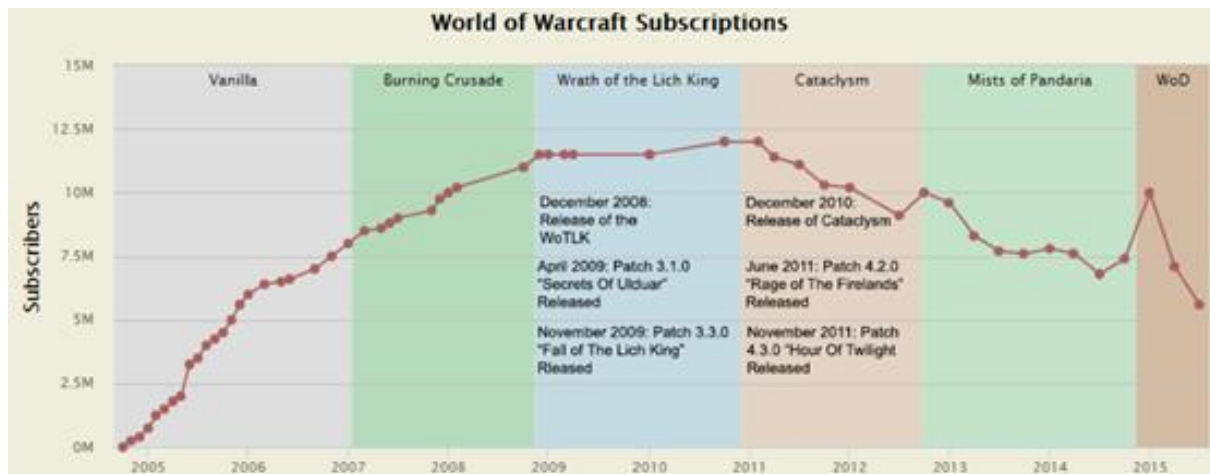
- A record of the number of subscriptions to World of Warcraft through Vanilla WoW (Base Game) Through WoD. Produced by MMO-Champion (MMo-Champion, 2015)

WoW saw incredible growth during the first eight years. With the first two iterations, Classic and The Burning Crusade (TBC/BC) the game required players to gain attunements in order to go enter the instance, as well gain the suitable gear required in order to go into the later dungeons and raids in the end game.

For example, players who would want to do the Onyxia's Lair raid required the Drakefire Amulet, which was obtained by a lengthy questline (see appendix 11 and 12). These attunements were essential to progress in the raids. However, this was expanded upon in the Burning Crusade, with the requirements for entering Mount Hyjal being one of the most complex and difficult for a player (See Appendix 13).

These attunements served a dual purpose as players would not only be prepared for the more challenging encounters later on, but also give them ample opportunity to improve and develop. It was a rite of passage; players would not be able to just turn up unprepared.

It can be understood that such a level of commitment to a game could be considered tedious. Attunements were only for one character a player made, it was not something given to all other characters the players owned. Players of the Horde faction will remember that Onyxia's Lair in Classic WoW was a lengthy ordeal, as certain aspects of the attunement were made even more of a challenge. For example, the quest "Etrigg's wisdom" led players to fighting in the Upper Blackrock Spire Dungeon. However, if you did not have the key that gave you access to this portion, you would have to complete an entirely different attunement which spanned a different questline (Andrews, 2012). This back and forth could be argued to be excessive, especially with the limitation of travel in Classic and The Burning Crusade. Flying was only introduced in TBC and was restricted to the Outland portion. Players would still only be limited to ground travel in the world of Azeroth (This changed in Cataclysm). It also made it difficult for guilds to get new players prepared for raids, especially in TBC, as players would have to do all the previous content that the guild members had done to catch up, taking up time in the recruitment process.

"The devs (developers) have already talked this to death. The problem was with lost players from guilds. If a progressed guild lost players, they had 2 options... they could rerun old content so new members could get caught up (which is ok the first or second time you have to do it, but many guilds basically had to do it almost every week). The other option that guild had was to poach players from other guilds... and this is what happened the most. The most progressed guilds on each server were constantly able to steal away members from less progressed guilds... which included the best geared members from those guilds... So, what ended up happening is the most progressed guilds stole members from other guilds, and the lesser progressed guilds were constantly losing their most geared members and also being forced to run old content to get new members caught up." - A quote from a player on WowHead post "Am I the only one who enjoyed the Burning Crusade attunements?", [sic] posted in 2013 (Wowhead, 2013).

While players did complain about this, many others felt that this was another part of the "meaningful Journey", a term used to describe that a player's progression was intended. This requirement of travel added to what the player was doing. These were not quests that only took part in one part of the world, it took part in the whole of World of Warcraft.

"I began WoW Classic with a friend, both of us tempted by the nostalgia. We're in the level 10-20 range after a few days' play and, while one of the reasons it's so enjoyable is the company, it has shown with surprising force what we've lost in the age of fast travel and user convenience." [sic] - Rich Santon, Journalist at Kotaku in WoW Classic Really is All About the Journey [sic] (Stanton, 2019).

Wrath of The Lich King did not utilise this system as much as (even seeing some attunements being removed (see Appendix 15)) TBC, to some player's disappointment, but Cataclysm saw the complete removal of attunements. The only restraint to players was their item level. This had players longing for a return to this system, debating how such a system could be included again in a more modernised system, perhaps being account wide rather than simply being locked to a specific character. Even players after Cataclysm were celebrating how fun the old Attunement System was.

- A pol on MMO-Champion, on "Would you like to see raid Attunements brought back as described by this post?", posted in 2012 (Jaylock, 2012).

"Attunements like they had at level 70 for BT were great.

Here's why.

1. You had to quest, to get rep to get heroic keys.
2. You had to do heroics, which were hard back then. You had to raid, which meant you had to have enough money for a flying mount.
3. Profit, by which I mean if you had people who could do the above you knew chances are they actually could raid... nobody is going to get attuned and not spend time reading up on the fights or reading up on how to play their class. You didn't have scrubs in there who didn't know how to farm or make money for pots / enchants.
4. Bonus: pride. You got tremendous pride when you completed the attunement.

Attunements made raiders better players. You earned the right to wear purples back then."

- Another player, on a Reddit post "I wish they'd bring back attunements, at least for some stuff…", Posted 2014 [sic] (Leeanth, 2014).

This, alongside continuous reduction of difficulty in patches, lost this element of challenge. Where you saw growth in subscriber numbers throughout the Burning Crusade, you saw a continuous decline in subscriber numbers throughout Cataclysm.

The Secret of WoTLK Success: Freedom of Choice

Wrath of The Lich King did meet similar critique of reducing difficulty for the sake of appealing to newer players. The early days of the expansion in December of 2008 saw players angry that Naxxramas was now reduced to a starter raid, with multiple damage and difficulty reductions (See Appendix 14). Naxxramas was once the infamous final raid of the classic WoW Period. Its legendary status was due to the surprising number of players that completed the raid before TBC released, which was (roughly) only 66 Guilds in the world. That is 2,640 players (40 Players per raid team) out of 7.5 Million in November of 2006 (0.0352% of Players) (realmhistory.net, 2007).

The new difficulty of Naxxramas was unsatisfying as players felt cheated, that this was not like completing the original raid (Rossi, 2010), this caused Blizzard Entertainment to consider an ambitious change for when Patch 3.1 Released, the Secrets of Ulduar.

The release of the Ulduar Raid saw a dramatic, experimental approach to how players could choose their difficulty, and with integrated difficulty selectors (IDS) which would change how the fight would progress. This also came with the changes to group sizes. Classic WoW required 40 players for each raid team, The Burning Crusade experimented with 10 player raids in Karazhan and 25 players for the larger raids (Black Temple, Sunwell, Etc). WoTLK allowed players to pick between 10 and 25 player modes. This, in combination with Ulduar's IDS, allowed for players to experience heroic modes of raids.

This system saw a change in opinion from WoTLK being too easy, to something which could be appreciated for its challenge. Scott Andrews, A journalist for EndGadget wrote about his feelings on Ulduar, reminiscing on what made Ulduar so enjoyable in terms of difficulty.

Andrews stated that "...Other trash mobs would put up a damage-negating shield over all their buddies or {instantly kill} your squishies (easily killed players)…" and went on to say "Trash wipes were common in the early days of the raid. Many players wryly commented that Ulduar's trash was harder than Naxx's bosses -- a testament to Blizzard's ability to make even the trash engaging in Ulduar." [sic] (Andrews, 2013)

Ulduar's unique approach to difficulty has not been seen since, aside from a few bosses using unique IDS systems for bosses after Cataclysm. WoTLK maintained the easier 10-man and 25-man modes with heroic modes of each.

Michael Bell, also known as "BelluarGaming" is a game developer at Coffee Box Games. Bell has documented the legacy of this choice in his video "Wrath of the Lich King's End & Messy Future It Caused: Pros, Cons & Legacy of WoW's Peak", discussing how these difficulties benefited players. "...at this stage, 10 and 25 were not just raid sizes, 10 was easier than 25 and dropped lower item level gear, and then both of them had hard modes. This essentially meant that you did have 4 effective difficulty modes. What really worked for the game's favour was "PUG-Ability" (Pickup Group) for the easier ones. The 1st wing of Icecrown Citadel (ICC) with the further rings becoming more 'puggable' over time… more than ever players were actually organising into ad-hog raid teams and that greatly expanded the gameplay for many World of Warcraft players." [sic] (Bell, 2019)

However, this system was lost in Cataclysm, as the difficulty was now Identical for the normal 10 and 25 man modes, all that changed was the number of players. Bell talks about this, in his video series "World of Warcraft Cataclysm... 8 Years Later", displaying in his video that Blizzard Entertainment was introducing a "Major foundational change to raiding. They were going to offer 25 and 10 player versions of the same difficulty and continued to support the heroic modes" [sic] (Bell, 2018). This would mean that the easier 10 player modes that allowed players to get into PUGs were now gone. This affected the structure of guilds and random groups; many were used to ICC's multiple difficulties which allowed players new to raiding to be accustomed to the tactics before entering the more challenging modes. Bell once again makes comments on this, stating "while I do not have the numbers, I think it's fair to expect that overall raid participation had decreased since." [sic]

This then led to Blizzard introducing reductions to difficulty in the raids during Cataclysm, much like Naxxramas in WoTLK. The achievements earned did not have the same prestige as their previous counterparts. The difference was however, that players were now experiencing this in the span of a single expansion, with content released only months ago.

John Bain, due to these changes, left after reporting on the upcoming raid updates in patch 4.2.0 in Cataclysm. Nethaera, a community manager for the World of Warcraft Forums, created a post named "Raid Updates for 4.2" (archive in the bibliography), where Nethaera discusses "10- and 25-person Normal mode raid encounters will be receiving a comprehensive set of tuning adjustments to decrease their difficulty".

"These changes will allow players, groups, and guilds who have yet to experience the content (The older Cataclysm raids) an opportunity to do so." Nethaera said, discussing that the previous raids would now be not only optional, but be easier for players (Nethaera, 2011).

She then goes onto add "With the addition of a new tier of armour and weapons, we want to make the previous tier more accessible in ways other than just a shift of currency type, so we are making item level 359 gear purchasable for Justice points in the upcoming content patch." (Nethaera, 2011). This would mean that players could, if they were dedicated, avoid doing the previous raids and instead focus on dungeons, where these justice points could be earned for an equivalent piece of gear.

Bain, in his final show of Azeroth Daily (24/05/2011), discussed what this meant for him as a player. He found that the changes were comprehensive and would mean that "every encounter had been nerfed (made easier) pretty damn hard". [sic] Bain, J. (2011) [2] This meant the encounters would be significantly easier and require less engagement from the players and would inflate percentage of players that had completed these fights.

The statistics Bain then discusses regarding player interaction with the heroic modes show a bleak picture as to why Blizzard was not correct in the need to reduce the difficulty. He reports on a large 'drop off' in player completion. When looking at WoWProgress.com, 55,350 guilds had defeated Cho'Gall in The Bastion of Twilight raid on normal mode, 73.3% of all guilds during the Cataclysm Period. This is in stark contrast to Heroic difficulty, as only 5,336 (7.07%) had defeated Cho'gall (Wowprogress, 2011). Players were all ready participating in the normal modes and the reduction of difficulty would not prepared for the next difficulty.

Bain argues that it is a poor decision as players were being given higher level gear to begin with, which meant that not only players were getting equal or better gear than what was available in the first set of raids, but the addition to further reductions to difficulty would mean that any challenge that was posed to the largest section of the player base would be lost.

There is a balance between avoiding discouragement of new players by reducing difficulty of sections already overcome by experienced players and disappointing those experienced players who find the new players, with apparently the same level of competence, as not suitable for membership of their guilds.

The 'good guys' want to stay the 'good guys'. Otherwise they, their subscriptions and their charisma leave the Game.

Chapter 2: Quality and Quantity

Cataclysm would suffer periodically from content droughts. These would describe long periods of time where there was no new content released for periods of time and the majority of the player base had completed the released content. In the first two expansions, or even in classic WoW, players had a wealth of content to do, most notably in The Burning Crusade (TBC).

The Burning Crusade was released with twenty-five separate instances (six raids, nineteen dungeons). This, in combination with the attunement systems as mentioned previously (Appendix 13), meant that players could not rush through to the end, players had plenty to do. Michael Bell discussed this in another part of his video series, "Warcraft: The Complete History". TBC released on the 16th of January 2007, and Karazhan was completed on 28th, Gruul's Lair was completed on the 3rd of February and Magtheridon's Lair was finished on the 24th of February 2007. Serpentine Cavern was completed a month later (29th of March) (Bell, 2020). These first raids were completed in slow succession, but the two most challenging raids, Tempest Keep and the Battle for Mount Hyjal were not completed before the release of Patch 2.1, The Black Temple, released on the 15th of May 2007. Tempest Keep was completed four days after Patch 2.1, meaning that a raid which was released at the start of the expansion was not completed in full for four months. The world's first completion of the Battle for Mount Hyjal was beaten on 9th of June, six months after its initial addition to the game. These achievements were earned by the most elite guilds, meaning that the average player would still be a month behind on their progress. While players were catching up, it gave the developers time to produce. However, Cataclysm was not as fortunate.

Cataclysm's Release

Cataclysm released on the 7th of December 2011 with twelve instances (4 Raids (One PvP locked), 8 Dungeons), thirteen fewer than TBC (although 1 more than WoTLK). These, despite the challenges of difficulty were seen as excellent additions to the game. Some players even stated that the dungeon experience prior to difficulty reductions were seen as a good section of the game. Bell again discusses this in his videos about Cataclysm, stating that "They were magnificent, the five player formats were naturally a bit more intimate with player interactions standing out… this led to really satisfying teamwork and appreciation for the people who are around you." [sic] If you were working in a guild group (Bell, 2018). However, players would no longer have to seek out attunements, meaning that they only had to concern themselves with matching the appropriate gear score (See Appendix 6, Point 2 onwards). This lack of requirement for entry revealed a flaw that was not expected by Blizzard, players were completing the content too quickly. Players with nothing to do left the Game.

The raiding guild, called "Method" documented the world's first kills for each of the final bosses of the Cataclysm's raids. On the heroic difficulties, Blackwing Descent was completed on 9th of January 2011, 27 days after Cataclym's release. The Bastion of twilight was completed in 28 days, Cho'gall being defeated by Paragon on the 20th of January. The Throne of The Four Winds lasted 42 Days (Method, 2019), meaning that each raid on its hardest difficulty had been short lived in comparison to the previous expansion raids.

The speed of which players completed these Raids would be intertwined with the fact that a large portion of the development time was dedicated to the revitalisation of the World of Azeroth. The original world had not been touched since 2006, with the only changes being small world events, and the opening of TBC. Players who would go through on new characters would have seen the changes made to the game and experience the changes to the continents. However, players progressing with their established characters would only progress through five new regions and had only 5 levels to progress through. This smaller amount of end level content would not be enough of an incentive to continue playing, as there would not be any more content until Patch 4.1, Rise of The Zandalari, roughly five months later.

Patch 4.1: Rise of The Zandalari

Rise of The Zandalari was Cataclysm's first major patch, released on the 26th of April 2011, which introduced new content to the game in the form of two remastered raids (which became dungeons), Zul'Aman and Zul'Gurub. Zul'Aman contained 6 bosses, with Zul'Gurub had 9 bosses, which was larger than the usual dungeons sizes. These dungeons had loot, which was significantly better than the previous dungeons, meaning that once players had gotten to level 85, they could repeatedly do the two dungeons to maximise their gear and enter the raiding scene more swiftly.

Scott Mercer, when interviewed by Blizzplanet, said "The classic dungeons ended up being a big hit with players, so we knew we wanted to keep the momentum going by remaking more dungeons. Zul'Gurub was an obvious choice as it was a long-time player favourite, and many people were sad to see it go when Cataclysm launched. We started revamping it as soon as we could" (Hernandez, 2011). This displayed a common theme of bringing the old content back into the modern game. However, Bell argued otherwise, "It meant where Players previously were doing many dungeons, they were now funnelled into just two." (Bell, 2018). Regardless of the quality of these dungeons, Players would yet again be left with too little content for too long of a time period (see Appendix 7). As the months progressed, Cataclysm saw further subscription losses, reporting on the 4th of August that WoW subscription numbers declined to 11.1 Million players (Purchese, 2011) [2].

Patch 4.2: Rage of the Firelands

Rage of The Firelands released on the 8th of June 2011, consisting of a single raid with 7 bosses inside. However, the patch originally had two planned for an additional, smaller raid to release alongside the Firelands, called the Abyssal Maw. Greg Street talked about this in a retrospective, saying "It was three bosses inside Nespirah, with no unique art. The reason it was originally appealing to us was because we had so many Vashj'ir assets that we could use. But by the time it was time to do the work, we felt like we (and many players) had Vashj'ir fatigue" (Street, 2012). While it is common for aspects for games to cut certain features or change what content will be released, such as the character progression system, Path of The Titans. This was an announced feature at the start of the expansion (See Appendix 6, point 5). However, this would mean that players would progress from the two dungeons of 4.1 straight to the Firelands, meaning there was little incentive to do the previous four raids.

Bain again talks about this final Azeroth Daily show, talking about how "...they're releasing Firelands which is a 7-boss raid encounter, as an entire tier of raiding. They can't add another dungeon in because at that point people would have already got that level of gear and are looking to go onto the next one {tier}..." [sic] (Bain (2011)[2]). The level of progression meant that players progressed faster than they intended, leading to promises of more content more frequently.

The raid itself was regarded as an excellent new tier, with new art, combat mechanics and a challenging heroic mode (See Appendix (9)). It also was one of many raids to be featured at Blizzcon 2011, in a live raid between two guilds. This patch also released with the Molten Front, a world quest which gave players a progressing story to engage with as they earned reputation in the region. This was similar to the Argent Tournament grounds in WoTLK, where they gained rewards and had an additional option of content, outside of Zul'Aman and Zul'Gurub. Despite the additions, the Patch still fell short, due to the limited content and the changes to difficulty.

Firelands can be compared to Ulduar in many ways. They both had new, excellent artwork that was supported by two dungeons and innovative boss encounters, even being regarded as some of the best raiding content to this very day. However, Ulduar had double the number of bosses, utilized the IDS system and had a memorable final encounter which was much more difficult. The Heroic Mode of Ragnaros, the final boss of the Firelands raid, was defeated on the 19th of July 2011, only fourteen days after the Firelands was released. Yogg-Saron, the final boss of Ulduar was defeated on the 7th of July 2008, two months after patch 3.1 was released (15th April 2009, during WoTLK) (Method, 2014).

Despite the positive reception, Cataclysm subscription numbers declined even further, slipping to 10.3 million after 3 months of release of patch 4.2 (Grayson, 2011).

Chapter 3: Endgame

The Dragon Soul

Patch 4.3, Hour of Twilight was released on the 29th of November 2011. It was the last major patch for Cataclysm before the release of Mists of Pandaria, the next expansion for WoW. Patch 4.3 was set to be the grand finale against the main antagonist of Cataclysm, Deathwing. However, there was controversy with the final raid released in Patch 4.3, the Dragon Soul (DS). This is because reuse of entire regions of the game's world during the raid. Unlike Ulduar or Icecrown Citadel, which at had unique architecture for each raid.

The Dragon Soul consisted of eight bosses, spread across three different zones. These zones were Dragonblight, a region made in WoTLK, Above the Frozen Sea on a gunship model used in WoTLK, and The Maelstrom, an area added at the start of the expansion. There were some changes made to Dragonblight, The Maw of Shu'ma and The Maw of Go'rath. However, these were based on a reutilized area called the Maw of Madness, added to the game in the Twilight Highlands region in Cataclysm.

The bosses in the raid, outside of the final two, are Models previously used in Cataclysm, or other expansions. These Bosses are:

- Morchok has the same model as Ozurk in The Stonecore dungeon (released in Cataclysm)
- Warlord Zon'ozz uses the General Vezax model from Ulduar (released in WoTLK)
- Yor'sahj is the Faceless spellcaster model, a generic mob used throughout the majority of Cataclysm
- Ultraxion is the Halion/Twilight dragon model, used in the Bastion of Twilight raid (released in WoTLK)
- Hagara the Stormbinder is an Orc player model which uses armour which was released in classic WoW
- Warmaster Blackhorn is a Tauren player model which used the new armour set which players could earn in the heroic version of the Dragon Soul Raid. The arena that you fight in is also a gunship model released in WoTLK, for the Icecrown Citadel Raid, which had its own gunship bossfight.

While there were some amendments, and the reusing of models and assets for non-boss enemies, the sheer amount of assets reused in what was the conclusion to an already troubled expansion, led to a poor reception amongst players.

Blizzard Entertainment had proved that that they could still produce excellent new environments and improve upon existing assets, the Firelands is a prime example of this, as it was filled with newly textured mobs, an entirely new region, new architecture and had a dramatic conclusion with its final boss. While Deathwing did receive new models for his two fights in DS, they were seen as a monotonous chore due to how the structure of how the fights work. They did not fight the main antagonist at his prime, or as Bell puts it, "At no point did we fight Deathwing in the form he was famous for. The spine of Deathwing was a trash fight (See Appendix 16) and the final encounter didn't feel like you were facing down a true villain at all. He was a pitiful disgrace of a creature at that point." (Bell [2/2], 2018 timestamp 10:30 seconds).

Looking for Raid (LFR)

Another point of contention in patch 4.3 was the new, easier difficulty setting for raids, Looking for Raid (LFR). This was in an effort to boost raid participation and let people experience the finale of Cataclysm. However, the system was troubled due to the issues experienced with Looking for Dungeon (LFD), only on a much grander scale. This meant that ten to twenty-five players that did not communicate with each other as if they were a guild, were now engaging in content that required a more tactical approach.

Greg Street was the man behind this implementation, wanting to get players involved in raiding quicker. However, this was not the case. In a question and answer session, Street discussed the dilemma of LFR. He discussed if players failed to beat a boss in less than two attempts, they would leave prematurely, and the group would have to wait until new players joined. (Street, 2017)

"You'd get these revolving doors where the raid itself was stuck on a boss but the individuals in the raid had cycled through maybe 100s of players after a few hours… For most players, Raid Finder was a weirdly silent and anonymous affair."
- Greg Street, former Lead Systems Designer for World of Warcraft, 2017. (Street, 2017)

While it is true that raid participation did increase, the engagement with the heroic version was still absent. 52,913 guilds (82.61%) had beaten the Madness of Deathwing on normal difficulty, whereas 14,126 (22.05%) had completed the fight on Heroic Difficulty. This was prior to August of 2012 (WoWProgress, 2012). While these numbers of engagement and participation seem promising, it is overshadowed by the dramatic fall in player numbers.

Exodus

Cataclysm had been haemorrhaging subscribers in a spectacular fashion, losing a million players in patch 4.3 (MMo-Champion, 2015). Even with the introduction of the Annual Pass, which would give players a copy of another Blizzard developed game, Diablo 3, and access to the Mists of Pandaria (MoP) beta testing phase (Blizzard Entertainment, 2011), players did not wish to stick around. The MoP expansion was incredibly divisive due to its approach and setting. There was no great villain like the previous expansions revealed, no antagonist on the box. There was only a pandaren, a new playable race in MoP.

Players saw this as an out of season April fool's joke, especially when contrasted with the release of the Dreamwork's film, Kung Fu Panda 2 in 2011, released about the same time. While there was a Pandaren (Chen Stormstout) in the original Real Time Strategy game (RTS), Warcraft 3, released in 2002, many would not have seen or heard of the character. This did not help calm the current players of Cataclysm. It would be nine months until MoP would be launched, in combination with a unsatisfying ending with the DS raid and the release of other MMO's, such as Star Wars: The Old Republic and Guild Wars 2, WoW subscription numbers dropped to 9.1 Million Players, a 1.1 Million drop since the release of Patch 4.3 (MMo-Champion, 2015).

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The Burning Crusade started with 8.5 Million subscribers in March of 2007, and at the expansion's conclusion ended with 11 million in September of 2008. Cataclysm started with 12.5 Million players in December of 2010, then fell to 9.1 million by July 2012, almost the complete opposite in player growth (MMo-Champion, 2015). In a realm of fantasy, it is important for games like WoW not to lose their magic.

Although World of Warcraft has never returned to the prior subscriber levels since, nor will Blizzard Entertainment release their current subscription numbers any longer, the MMORPG has indeed continued to be developed, releasing four new expansions as of writing this since Cataclysm. We must ask though, what could have been done differently at this expansion? Where did these 3 Million players go?

Perceptions and Progression

Firstly, we must say what happened. Expressed simply, the established achievements of players would be routinely downplayed, becoming less of a feat of strength and more like another point on a to-do list. When the changes to difficulty and the implementation of LFR occurred, the established player base lost status when the degree of difficulty for progression was diluted to enable new players to 'succeed'. The elite were surrounded by children in borrowed clothes. Ironic, seeing as Patch 4.3 brought with it the transmogrification system, meaning players could go back to the older content, either solo or with a smaller team, to obtain older gear sets, looking as if they had completed the old content legitimately (Whipple, 2011).

Legacy of The Exodus

Second, we must perceive where these players went. While it can be argued that some players had reached their time with the game and went on to do other things, a large number of players would depart to privately run servers, where fans ran the older versions of WoW, called legacy servers. The most famous of these servers was Nostalrius, with 150,000 active accounts who would experience the classic version of world of Warcraft (Frank, 2016). When Blizzard was first asked about the concept of adding official servers like Nostalrius at Blizzcon in 2013, World of Warcraft's executive producer, J. Allen Brack, swiftly refuted this concept, saying "You think you do, but you don't." (Malinowski, 2019). However, in recent years. Blizzard has brought back the original version of WoW on Official servers in the form of "World of Warcraft: Classic", which led to a massive surge in interest on the streaming service, Twitch, with 1 million viewers watching broadcasts of people playing the game. This was almost ten times the number of people watching people play Minecraft in the same time period (Becht, 2019).

Players in the content droughts of Cataclysm could have perhaps been tempted away to other MMORPG's that seemed to host a wealth of new experiences that WoW was not providing at that time. Star Wars: The Old Republic had been around at the time of Patch 4.3 had stopped the paid subscription service as a mandatory, in an effort to boost the player base beyond the estimated 500,000 players it had in August of 2012 (Sweet, 2012). Increasing the accessibility could have paid off. Guild Wars 2 also released around this time period, while it may be anecdotal, it is within the boundaries of possibility that players instead chose one of these contenders, rather than stay in Cataclysm.

Changes

Lastly, while 25% of the player base did leave during the Cataclysm period, the game would still boast to have one of the largest player bases in the MMORPG genre eight years later. The game did see fundamental changes to counteract the largest complaints. We see this in Mists of Pandaria. which managed to maintain roughly 7.5. Million players throughout the expansion after an early decline, most likely due to the annual pass ending (MMo-Champion, 2015).

In Mists of Pandaria, Normal mode dungeons began at a lower difficulty, but what was added was challenge modes. These would mean that players had to complete a dungeon within a set timer and additional difficulty enhancements. The set player numbers for raids changed as well, instead, players could form teams between ten and twenty-five players. This allowed for guilds to have either smaller or larger teams depending who was available. This also included a wealth of daily content players could do, in the form of daily quests similar to the Molten Front from Cataclysm, with unique rewards should players reach the conclusion of each questline.

Many of the changes made to the content and difficulty in Cataclysm could be linked to the pareto principle, where roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes, or in this case 80% to the changes to difficulty were due to the complaints of 20% of the player base (The elite and the inexperienced). In the end, the majority of players commonly do not disclose their displeasure, only choosing to continue their subscriptions or not. The majority of players wanted high quality content, with an engaging endgame and a reason to return to do it again.

Unfortunately for Blizzard Entertainment, what they provided proved to be a 'cataclysmic' error.

Appendix

Appendix (1) Guilds

- A guild is a group of players between twenty-five to one hundred under a common banner. Players receive access to a special guild "chat", a line of communication they can use to talk with other players during their time playing. This allows players to coordinate while doing their online duties. Some players come for a social aspect, others act as resource gatherers and creators of items used for the guild.

Appendix (2) Dungeons

- A dungeon is a small instance where there are 2-6 bosses which teams of players fight through. Dungeon teams take the form of five players, Healers, Tanks, and three DPS (Damage Per Second). Healers keep the team alive; Tanks draw the attention of enemies and DPS deal damage to enemies.

Appendix (3) Raids

- A raid group originally consisted between 10 and 25 players in a team, with a similar setup to a dungeon team but on a larger scale. For example, in a 25-player raid, there would be 2 Tanks, 4 healers and 19 DPS players.

Appendix (4) Dungeon Finder (LFD)

- The dungeon finder is a system used to bring in players into a group to do either a randomly selected or pre-chosen dungeon. The players must elect what role within the team they will take (Tank, Healer, DPS) before being allowed to join. Players can then interact with others through typing and are expected to go through the dungeon. Players reserve the right to remove players by a majority vote.

Appendix (5) An example of Cataclysm's Patch 4.0.6 Dungeons and Raids Updates (Brown, 2011).

- Blackrock Caverns (Dungeons)
    - Aura of Arcane Haste ability is now removed when leaving the dungeon

- Blackwing Descent (Raid)
    - Magmaw no longer casts the tantrum ability provided a player is within melee distance
    - Maloriak will no longer cast the Flash Freeze spell on tanking players
    - The debuff, named Pyreclaw's Flame Buffet has been reduced to a 8 second duration
    - The health of Drakeadon Mongrels and Drakonid Slayers has been reduced in 10- and 25-player versions.
    - Drakeadon Mongrels and Drakonoid slayers has been reduced for both 10- and 25-player modes.
    - Nefarian's spell, Blazing Inferno, has had its damaging radius reduced.

- Bastion of Twilight (Raid)
    - The Blackout Debuff will no longer hit players sent to the Twilight Zone in the Valiona/Theralion boss fight
    - Collapsing Twilight Portal should no longer close faster when a person uses it while on Heroic difficulty. It now has a set duration.
    - The Collapsing Twilight Portal should no longer close faster when a player uses it. It now has a set duration.
    - Devouring flame ability has been reduced in terms of damage and duration.
    - Theralion should maintain a consistent level of damage with Valiona.
    - Twilight Blast damage has been reduced on 10-player Heroic difficulty.
    - Twilight Protection now lasts 6 seconds, up from 3.
    - Players should now always receive the Twilight Protection buff when entering the Twilight Realm.

Appendix (6) Timeline of Cataclysm's is release (7th of December 2010):

1. Cataclysm's first change was that there were only 5 levels to progress through. There was only a 5-level difference (80-85) rather than 10 levels. Players would level up to 60, 70, then 80 prior to Cataclysm.
2. Cataclysm's end game content focused more on the gearing process, players would instead of working for attunements to raids to be allowed entry. Instead, players would only be required to earn a certain item level (iLvl) to be suitable for entry.
3. Maintained the old system of using special points to get better items. Justice was a form of currency used for dungeons, while Valour was used for raiding quality gear. Heroic dungeons also gave the player a small amount of valour to 'Gear up' for raids.
4. Cataclysm's large focus on the dungeon aspect. The difficulty of dungeons meant that you spent a long time even in normal difficulty dungeons. They required players to be attentive and to know what their spells and abilities did.
5. Path of the titans: New progression after levelling and Character upgrades, was cancelled after 2 weeks of announcement of the game (8th of June).
6. Mana management, the resource for spell casters used to cast spells, had been changed, meaning a healer with a poor-quality group of players would struggle to heal them. "None of the credit, all of the blame" Was a common phrase for healers.
7. This content was too difficult for those using the 'looking for dungeon' (LFD for short) system. However, those in guilds adored the challenge that the game now had.
8. Many 'casual' players played a damage class, meaning that Tanks and healers who were typically aware of their role now lived in fear of the LFD system.
9. The heroic dungeons defined the difficulty of Cataclysm's start. Lead systems designer 'Ghost Crawler' Responded with the famous "Wow, Dungeons are hard." Blog post.
10. Guilds were set up for the easier 10-man difficulty raids of the prior expansion, however, due to both 10 and 25-man raids being of equal difficulty, they were not prepared for this.
11. PvP (Player vs Player) players enjoyed the content, but Tol Barad was a disappointment in comparison to the old PvP area.
12. New World Changes were generally approved by the player bases. The modernised questing system was greatly appreciated. However, if you just focused on your end game character, rather than being a new player or having an alternative character, you wouldn't experience the redone zones.

Appendix (7) March 2011, Six Months After Cataclysm's Launch:

1. Without an infinitely repayable system, people felt a decline in the content. The redone zones did not appeal to players all that much. In March, Blizzard reported a loss of 600,000 players.
2. The broader player reception was no longer positive.
3. New zones were fragmented, the story was felt to be weak. This was the first time they did not have a main antagonist from Warcraft 3 or prior expansions.

Appendix (8) Timeline of Cataclysm's Patch 4.1: Rise of the Zandalar (Released April 26, 2011):

1. 2 New dungeons based on older raids from WoW Classic (Zul'Aman and Zul'Gurub).
2. The dungeons were well received. But The dungeons were not the issue.
3. The General Dungeon experience was still troubled in the changing of difficulty.
4. The consensus was that redoing updated content was not great.
5. While there were Multiple dungeons available, the patch made players funnel into only 2 dungeons to get the better rewards. It was no longer a choice of 7 towards the end of the content.
6. Valour points changed to have a weekly cap, which meant players could have more options when they played.
7. Call to arms dungeon system: Tank and healers were given incentives to use the LFG system for rewards.
8. Guild finder was added, players could now find and join communities more easily.
9. 4.2 Was soon in testing.
10. 04/08/2011: WoW subscription numbers decline once again. Down to 11.1 Million players
11. Players consumed the end game content too quickly, thus resulting in the promise of more content more quickly.

Appendix (9) Timeline of Cataclysm's Patch 4.2: Rage of the Firelands (Released June 28, 2011):

1. There were 2 Different raids planned for this expansion originally. One was the Firelands, one was the Abyssal Maw. However, they only release the Firelands expansion.
2. The story of the Vas'Jir zone was going to be concluded in the Abyssal Maw Raid, however, it was cut. The quality of Firelands was far more substantial than the Abyssal Maw.
3. The Firelands was received positively, but it was 1 raid with 7 bosses, it was not going to be a substantial amount of end game content for the time being.
4. The introduction of two 2 New daily questing zones. The molten front was something players were meant to progress through personally and earn reputation rewards.
5. Precursor to the issue with 'Green Jesus', Real name Thrall. Thrall was a character from Warcraft 3, and had slowly been developed into a 'main protagonist' of sorts. Side lining the players in this expansion.
6. A new legendary questline started. This was the first legendary item quest line since "Shadowmourne" was added to the game.
7. Added the Dungeon Journal, to show what rewards and tactics players would have to use to beat the bosses in the dungeons.
8. World of Warcraft loses another 800,000 subscribers by 09/11/2011. All the progress of the patch was overshadowed by the next expansion announcement. Mists of Pandaria.
9. It led to the uncertainty of the player base. It seemed to be 'Cartoony' for players.

Appendix (10) Timeline of Cataclysm's Patch 4.3: Hour of Twilight (released on 29th of November 2011) (Final Patch):

1. Considered to be a low-quality patch.
2. Was meant to have a 'War of the Ancients' Raid, A pivotal moment in warcraft history (In the Books). It was, however, reduced to be a dungeon.
3. The War of The Ancient's dungeon proved to be entertaining. The end game dungeons proved to be more able to sustain the player base.
4. The dragon soul raid, the end of the main antagonist of the expansion, was created using nearly entirely out of premade assets from the game/prior expansions. It was woefully poor quality in comparison to the new assets used for the Firelands.
5. The other 2 Dungeons added, End Time and Hour of Twilight, also used existing assets, not new ones.
6. Dragon Souls' difficulty was too lenient, with top guilds such as Method and Paragon clearing it in record times on normal difficulty. Heroic mode was still a challenge.
7. The locations were places you had seen before. The bosses were uninspiring and did not have the infamy/imposing nature. 5 bosses were character models you had fought before, just with new tactics.
8. Introduction to LFR (Looking for Raid). It allowed players to search for raiding party's much like dungeons. Ghost Crawler even admitted it did not have the intended outcome.
9. There was very little world content. No new questing zones, daily quests, or reputations However, there was the conclusion to the legendary artefact weapon, which gave players a new item.
10. Introduction to transmogrification. Players could now make their armour sets look like the older armour sets that they had collected before. It gave players an incentive to replay the old content to get the armour that they liked more.
11. By this Point, world of warcraft dropped to 9.1 Million Subscribed players. A near 3 Million Loss over the whole expansion.

Appendix (11) Questlines / Quest chains

- A questline is a series of quests (Tasks) for the player to do in order to gain a reward and tell a story. These could be for setting up a new storyline, preparing a player for a dungeon or raid, or to give a player experience while levelling.

Appendix (12) Drakefire Amulet (Onyxia's Lair) (Classic WoW)

- Players who wished to enter Onyxia's Lair, which was a one boss raid from the release version of WoW, would have to follow a long questline which would give them the Drakefire Amulet, a key to allow them passage into the one boss raid. This was a boss in the classic version of world of warcraft. The questline consisted of 11 quests for either faction and would take days to complete, as It required players to travel the world and do specific dungeons and tasks.

Appendix (13) The Attunement flowchart for Mount Hyjal, a Raid in the Burning Crusade

- A flowchart displaying what was content players had to complete in order to enter Mount Hyjal, created by "Heel" (Starts at level 70 (Bottom Middle Circle)

Mount Hyjal was released alongside 5 other raids (Gruul's lair, Tempest Keep, Serpentine Cavern, Magtheridon's Lair and Karazahn.) and the world boss, Doom Lord Kazzak at the start of the expansion (TBC). The players would have to complete the following steps in order to enter Mount Hyjal:

1. Player must reach Level 70, the maximum level at the time
2. Players must complete the two caverns of time dungeons, Durnholde (Old Hillsbrad) and Dark Portal (Black Morass)
3. Players must accept the "Vials of Eternity" Quest, tasking them with retrieving the two Items which were in two of the other Raids, Tempest Keep and Serpentine Cavern.
4. Players must complete the Cipher of Damnation quest chain in Shadowmoon Valley and the Stormspire quests in Netherstorm
5. Players accept the Arcatraz Key quest, obtaining the two keys from Tempest Keep: Botanica and Tempest Keep: Mechanar. Then complete the two quests "Stormspire" and "Cipher of Damnation" to then at last be given the quest for the tempest Key, used to enter the Tempest Keep raid.
6. Players need to gain reputation with the Sha'tar faction to obtain the Heroic Version of the Tempest Keep Key. They must also obtain revered with the 'Lower City' Faction to obtain the Auchenai Key to unlock the Auchindoun Dungeons in Heroic Mode, Revered with the Cenarion Expedition to unlock the heroic mode for Coilfang Reservoir Dungeons. You lastly had to earn the revered standing with Thrallmar/Honor hold in order to be able to do the Heroic Modes for Hellfire Citadel

7. Complete the Trials of The Naaru (Mercy, Strength and tenacity)
8. Players must defeat Murmur in Auchindoun: Shadow Labyrinth
9. Players must retrieve an unused Axe of the Executioner from the Hellfire Citadel: Shattered Halls dungeon and Kalithesh's Trident in Coilfang Reservoir: Steamvaults Dungeon
10. Rescue Millhouse Manastorm after defeating the last Boss in Tempest Keep: Arcatraz Dungeon
11. Once those four dungeons were complete, Players would need to speak to the NPC A'Dal, to receive the tempest key, allowing them to enter the Tempest Keep raid.
12. In the Coilfang Reservoir: Slave Pens dungeon, players must accept the Quest:The Cudgel of Kar'desh.
13. Players must receive the Retrieve the Earthen Signet from Gruul the Dragonkiller in Gruul's Lair Raid and the Blazing Signet from Nightbane in Karazhan. Once this is handed in to the quest giver, players will then be allowed to enter the serpentine Cavern raid
14. Players must get the two vials of eternity, one held by the final boss of tempest keep, the other by the final boss of Serpentine Cavern.
15. Players can now complete the "Vials of Eternity" quest and can now enter Mount Hyjal.

Not only did they need to do these steps. Players must also gain the correct gear for each raid, assembling groups between five to twenty-five other players in order to participate in these dungeons and raids. This does not factor in any food required, enchantments, or other preparations required. It is also to be noted that this was not the final raid of the expansion. There were two others that would be released later on.

Appendix (14) Examples of Changes to Naxxramas in Wrath of The Lich King (WoTLK) (Nitros14, 2017)

Kel'Thuzad (the final boss of Naxxramas) and many of the other bosses saw great changes to their abilities when the raid brought into Wrath of The Lich King, undergoing many compromises to damage, health and abilities to make it easier for the players involved. Here are a few examples.

1. Comparisons between the health of the bosses, such as Patchwerk or Kel'Thuzad (The final boss) to their original forms found that there was roughly a 66% health reduction
2. In Wrath of The Lich King, Kel'Thuzad's frostbolt volley did 5500 damage in its area of effect when players had a rough estimate of 20,000 health points, whereas in the classic version, it did 60,3250 damage to people with 4,000 health points, a near 500% reduction in damage
3. Anub'Rekan, Heigan, Loatheb, Gothrik the Harvester, the Four Horsemen and Kel'Thuzad were dramatically different encounters due to the smaller number of players (40 Players in classic, 25 players in Wrath of The Lich King).
4. There was less room for failure. Classic Characters had fewer abilities which could aid in the time sensitive parts of the encounter.

While the tactics required were not the most advanced, it is clear that as the game had changed, player classes changed, thus leading to the encounters in WoTLK to lose their infamy.

Appendix (15) A forum post discussing the removal of the Attunement requirement for Onyxia's Lair, 19th of September 2008 (Wowhead, 2008).

By **MrFredII** on 2008/09/19 at 8:22 PM (Patch 3.0.1)

From the beta forms - a Blizzard post:

> Onxyia's Lair no longer has a requirement for entry. This should be going live in the next build. The quests for attunement are going away.
> Lead World Designer

<sigh> Perhaps my favorite quest chain pre-BC. I guess compared to the total alteration of Naxx this is small potatoes, but I still think its sad.

http://forums.worldofwarcraft.com/thread.html?topicId=9679893069&sid=2000

Edited to clarify my point.
Sorry if I was unclear. I have no issue with the attunement being removed. I regret that the **QUEST CHAIN** will be lost to now players.
I still remember going to the throne room at level 18 and seeing the dragons appear and trying to help (lol) and getting one shotted then rezzed by a level 60 who was on the quest. I still think its some of Blizzards best stuff and I'll miss it.

Last edited by MrFredII on 2008/09/25 – edited 2 times

A bad night raiding is better than a good night doing **_almost_** anything else!

MrFredII
Joined on 2008/06/02
Posts: 556
Achievements: (10 6)
Reputation: 1,184

By **xaratherus** on 2008/09/19 at 8:28 PM (Patch 3.0.1)

Meh, I'm kinda of two minds of this. While I also think this is one of the best quest lines I've ever done - heck, even now when we troop up to Stormwind Keep to confront Lady Prestor, we wind up with an entourage of 2-3 strangers - it's also a very **long** quest line.

Our guild really enjoys doing all the old quest stuff, but it's also tough to get a group together when you have to do 15-20 quests plus at least 2 runs into BRD. So we'll probably still encourage our members to do the attunement chain, but we'll also be able to go down Ony for fun more often since it won't be required.

On a semi-related note: We discovered that AQ 20 is an excellent training ground for cooperation and raid "coreography". With this change, we'll probably work Ony into our "new raider basic training" as well.

Last edited by xaratherus on 2008/09/19

xaratherus
Joined on 2007/08/28
Posts: 5,003
Achievements: (3 20 41)
Reputation: 8,374

By **Cantras** on 2008/09/20 at 4:20 PM (Patch 3.0.1)

You know, the Ony attunement chain effing sucks. I hear horde-side has it even worse, but seriously, definitely one of the most tedious, obnoxious quest chains ever designed.

That said, I hope they're not taking it *out* entirely. Obviously they can't give us a title, because it's easier to get at 70, ans I'm not sure they could parse out who got it at 70 and who got it at 60. But what about the completionist folks who want to get the actual key? (70 mage lfg ubrs... need drakk's blood!)

Take the attunement out, sure, yes, please. But leave the quest chain in. The attunement chains for kara, etc are all still in.

That said, they should take out the key req for ubrs, too.

~Cantras

Cantras
Joined on 2007/09/02
Posts: 84
Achievements: (4 21 91)
Reputation: 10,818

Appendix (16) The Spine and Madness of Deathwing

The fight with Deathwing consists of two individual boss fights. One where players fight on his back, the other fights his shambling remains. This overview will look at the Normal modes of the fight specifically.

The spine of Deathwing consisted of three repeating phases. These phases consisting of players kill NPCs (Non-Playable Characters) called corrupted blood, these would then leave behind an un-targetable residue which are absorbed by another form of NPC called a Hideous amalgamation. Should the Hideous amalgamation absorb 9 of these, players would have to bring them to a nearby plate and destroy them. This would cause them to explode and reveal the actual boss NPC, called Burning Tendons. Once killed, these would release the plate. This would need to be completed a total of three times. While this occurred, Deathwing would consider how many players were either standing on the left of him, or the right, and would prepare to 'roll'. Should players not disperse themselves evenly, or move to each side quick enough, Deathwing would then roll and throw any player not standing in the small safety zones that deal damage to the player should they stay too long. (Wowhead, 2012)

The Madness of Deathwing would consist of two phases. There are four platforms that players must bounce between during the boss fight, the raid must destroy Deathwing's limbs. These consist of two arms and two wings. The only differences between these two types of NPCs are their name and their visual appearance. All limbs have the same amount of health.

The strategy is simple, focus on each limb and jump to the next one as soon as possible. These are friendly NPCs that support the raid, much like the Yogg-Saron fight in Ulduar, when you kill the limb on their platform, no longer assist the Raiding players.

Phase two would consist of a simple fight with Deathwing's head. Deathwing consistently uses a single ability called Corrupted Blood. This ability damages the raid team 2. When Deathwing's health declines below the 20% mark, the damage Corrupted blood does begin to increase in damage for every 5% he goes down by after that (20%,15%,10%,5%)

Phase two is simple in comparison to stage one, with minor NPCs spawning to impede the players. The raiders would start by damaging Deathwing. Deathwing also releases minor NPCs that seek to deal damage to the raid as Corrupted Blood continues. Once Deathwing's health reaches 0%, the fight ends there. (IcyVeins, 2017, 2017)

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