Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Prologue: In the Fiery Depths	1
Introduction	3
Wait a Sec Is Expertise in Games Valuable?	3
Social and Cultural Capital	6
Description of Chapters	7
A World of Warcraft Primer	
Setting, Group, and Data Collection	14
Pugging the Chicken Quest	23
Chapter One: Individual vs. Group Expertise	29
Expertise Understood Through Ethnography	33
Stage One: Leveling Up	37
Stage Two: Raiding	41
Reflections on Studying Expert Practice	47
Chat Norms	51
Chapter Two: Communication, Coordination, and Camaraderie	55
(Computer) Game Theory	
A Typical Night in Molten Core	59
Gathering and Chatting	59
Pulling, Coordinated Fighting, and Division of Labor	61
Making Encounters Routine by Finding Balance	
Welcoming Failure in Golemagg and Other Boss Fights	
Socially Constructed Social Dilemmas AKA the Problem of Rare Loot	

An Atypical Night in Molten Core	
Role-Playing Takes So Much Time; We Could Be Killing Things Inste	ad83
Chapter Three: Assembling to Kill Ragnaros	
Mangles, Networks, and Assemblages	92
Roles, Responsibilities, and Aggro	97
Threat Management	98
KLH Threat Meter (KTM)	103
Using KTM as a Temporary Actor to Kill Ragnaros: April 28, 2006	108
KTM and Networks	120
Narrowing Play and Exposing Disruptions	123
Walt and Thoguht "Theorycrafting" Amidst a Server Shutdown	127
Chapter Four: Death of a Raid	133
Changing Schedules and Changing Roster	133
Death by Drama	134
Making Sense of the Meltdown	152
Tension Between the Roles I Play	159
Conclusion	167
The Major Assertions of This Book	168
Epilogue: Victory!	173
Appendix: Raid and Guild Members	177
Glossary	181
Bibliography	185
Index	191