

This is a pre-print version of Jennifer deWinter and Stephanie Vie's webtext "Sparklegate: Gamification, Academic Gravitas, and the Infantilization of Play" published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 201(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/20.1/topoi/dewinter-vie>.

Wendi Sierra talking:

So, the core group of people that originally developed *C's the Day* were all *World of Warcraft* players. And we were even all at some point affiliated with Jan Holmevik and Cynthia Haynes' venture Academic Gamers Guild. And around the time that we started thinking about developing the game, *WoW* released a mount that you could purchase called the Celestial Steed. And the Celestial Steed was this horse made of stars. And people started calling it Sparklepony. And in one of the panels at that C&W, somebody made a reference to it, so we started throwing around this joke about sparklepony as a prize, sparklepony. And it just gained momentum. But I think the cool thing about it is that it's this silly, playful, fun thing. It's not tied to any other referents; it doesn't have any other symbolism within the field. It's just this unique thing that really became sort of emblematic for us. And it stands out. You know, we're doing them now as the little ones that can go on your badge, so it's a piece of badge flair that you can identify other players.