

Gamers are accusing Elon Musk of cheating at popular video games by allegedly turning to loopholes and hiring better users to play for him

BY SASHA ROGELBERG



SpaceX and Tesla founder Elon Musk speaks during a town hall for President-elect Donald Trump at the The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center & Fairgrounds on October 18, 2024 in Oaks, Pennsylvania.

ALEX WONG—GETTY IMAGES

- Elon Musk boasts being one of the top-ranked Diablo IV players. Some prolific gamers believe the [Tesla](#) CEO is cheating by taking advantage of a game bug.

Amid Elon Musk's to-do list includes serving as chief executive of Tesla and SpaceX; overseeing X; and acting as a close advisor to President-elect Donald Trump and running the Department of Government Efficiency. In addition to those formidable tasks, he has managed to accomplish the improbable: Rank among the top players of the popular dungeon-crawling video games Diablo IV and Path of Exile 2.

However, Musk is lacking bona fides among some gamers who believe the ubiquitous tech titan couldn't have achieved this feat on his own. Some think he hired a more skilled player to level-up his character in Path of Exile 2, an action role-playing game released by Grinding Gear Games last month. Others allege he [turned to loopholes](#) to best parts of Diablo IV, a similar game released in June 2023 by [Activision Blizzard](#) subsidiary Blizzard Entertainment.

Musk and Activision Blizzard did not immediately respond to Fortune's requests for comment.

In a Tuesday evening Path of Exile 2 stream, Musk appeared to try to enter game portals he doesn't have access to and passed by valuable in-game items without collecting them, denoting rookie gameplay, [Vice reported](#). The faux-pas convinced [Twitch streamer Quin69 to allege](#) Musk didn't understand basic gaming conventions and was "boosting" his character by hiring a better player to "grind" through the game for him by completing tedious, time-consuming tasks.

"He literally has no idea what he's doing," Quin69, who has more than 892,000 Twitch followers, said in his stream. "This is straight-up account sharing."

Piling allegations

This isn't the first time a bona fide player has become suspicious of Musk's in-game accomplishments. Musk became one of Diablo IV's top players on Nov. 20 last year, posting a [video on X](#) of his record fast conquest of "the Pit," a culminating challenge at the end of the game, in under two minutes. The feat came weeks after Musk's [appearance](#) on the "Joe Rogan Experience," where he claimed to be among the top 20 Diablo IV players in the world. (According to Microsoft-owned leaderboard platform Helltides.com, Elon Musk now [sits at No. 53](#) on the all-time record board for the Pit.)

"So many life lessons to be learned from speedrunning video games on max difficulty," Musk said in the post. "Teaches you to see the matrix, rather than simply exist in the matrix."

Avid Diablo IV gamers weren't convinced. Luiz Felipe Terra da Silva, a 20-year-old student and video game TikToker in Brazil, said it was widely accepted in the gaming community that Musk took advantage of a bug in order to set a new Pit record. Indeed, some noted that Diablo IV was [experiencing a bug](#) that inflated a player's health at the same time Musk uploaded the video of his record-breaking run.

Siqi Chen, founder and CEO of finance platform Runway, suggested in jest Musk hired a team of professionals to play the game on his behalf. "I have it on good authority that the most airtight NDA on the planet is the one signed by the team of progamers ghostplaying diablo iv for elon," Chen [wrote on X](#) in November.

Regardless of how Musk earned his ranking, there's still one thing that saddens Silva about Musk's public Diablo IV gameplay.

“If he loves the game, really, he should just play without these things,” Silva told Fortune. “I don’t see the reason to do this because he’s already famous—very famous.”

Musk’s ranking on Helltides.com is accurate, Fayz, co-owner of the platform, [told The Verge](#) in November. But the ranking does come with an asterisk. Fayz said the platform is not affiliated with Activision Blizzard, the maker of the Diablo games, and rankings are based on user-submitted videos, of which there are fewer than 900. Diablo IV has more than [3.3 million monthly active users](#), according to games statistics platform ActivePlayer.io.

“There’s no way for us to know about Pit runs that aren’t recorded and shared,” Fayz said.

Musk’s work-game balance

Author and journalist Walter Isaacson, who published a biography about Elon Musk in 2023, has previously [called Musk a video-game addict](#). The tech mogul has even [pushed back meetings](#) in order to extend gaming sessions, according to Isaacson, and has [cited games like Polytopia](#) as helping create better CEOs because playing would help others “remove empathy.”

Musk has historically had no problems mixing work and play, with many of his Diablo IV streams [gaining attention](#) for their disclosures of Musk’s business plans. A SpaceX staff member appeared to brief Musk on Starlink Flight 5 while he was streaming last October, Reuters reporter Joey Roulette [observed](#).

“We were one second away from telling the rocket to abort...and try to crash into the ground next to the tower,” someone in the stream’s background said.

During a [three-hour stream](#) last January, Musk answered viewer questions on future plans for Starlink, which is operated by SpaceX, and his ambitions to build a video-streaming platform on X that could rival Amazon-owned Twitch. Those aspirations included a revenue-sharing program for users who stream on X.

In 2023, Musk broadcasted his gameplay on X for about an hour in order to [test his social network's capacity](#).

“Great game,” Musk wrote in an X post of the [broadcast](#), “one that is remarkably complex in interesting ways at max difficulty.”