Video Games: A Unique Educational Environment

Submitted by Sarah Fitz-Claridge on 2 September, 2003 - 07:31

This is a slightly-modified version of a TCS interview with David Deutsch, from *Taking Children Seriously*, the paper journal (TCS **4**, published in 1992.)

Sarah Fitz-Claridge (http://www.fitz-claridge.com/)

One in three households in America own video games. In Britain, the figure is eleven per cent. As the market here expands, more and more parents will have to face the issue. Are computer games really addictive? Is the violence and sexism damaging to children's psychological well-being? Are there risks associated with the X-ray emissions from television screens?

I went to interview David Deutsch, winner of the highly prestigious Dirac Prize for Theoretical Physics, and author of *The Fabric of Reality,* a best-selling book about the borderline between physics and philosophy. Many readers will have seen him on television – on anything from daytime chat shows to "Reality on the Rocks", a television programme in which he talked about his work on the many worlds interpretation of quantum theory. You may also have read his article on the physics of time travel in the "Scientific American" in March 1994, or his wonderful commentary on Michael Lockwood's "'Many Minds' Interpretations of Quantum Mechanics": "Comment on Lockwood" (p. 222-228) in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* Volume 47, Number 2, June 1996, OUP. David Deutsch is also planning a book on non-coercive education which will be of great interest to TCS readers. Far from believing computer games to be harmful, David believes them to be very *good* for children. I asked him what is so good about computer games.

David Deutsch: In a way, that is the wrong question, because it assumes that there is something obviously *bad* about video games, which might be offset by benefits I might mention. But there's nothing wrong with video games. So let's ask first, "Why do so many adults hate them? What *evidence* is there that there is anything bad about them?"

If you look at it closely, the evidence boils down to no more than the fact that children *like* video games. There seems to be a very common tendency among parents to regard children *liking* something as *prima facie* evidence that it is bad for them. If they are spending a lot of time doing something, parents wonder what harm it must be doing them. I think this is fundamentally the wrong attitude.

The right attitude is: if children are spending a lot of time doing something, let's try to find ways of letting them do *even more* of it. *Prima facie*, the fact that they like doing it is an indication that it is good for them.

I think that overwhelmingly the thing which draws people's attention to video games is the fact that children like them. People jump from that solitary piece of evidence to the conclusion that there must be something wrong with video games!

As it happens, I believe that playing video games is very good for you but, I think, even more important than understanding why it is good for you, is to understand and avoid the temptation of saying that if you like it, it must be

bad for you.

Now, why is playing video games good for you? They provide a unique learning environment. They provide something which for most of human history was not available, namely, an interactive complex entity that is accessible at low cost and zero risk.

Let's compare video games with other great educational things in the world. Books and television have great complexity and diversity – they give you access to almost every aspect of human culture and knowledge – but they are not interactive. On the other hand, something like playing the piano is also complex, and interactive, but it requires an enormous initial investment (months or years of practice or training) with the associated huge risk of misplacing that investment. One cannot make many such investments in one's life. I should say, of course, that *the* most educational thing in the world is conversation. That does have the property that it is complex, interactive, and ought to have a low cost, although often between children and adults it has a high cost and high risk for the children, but it should not and need not.

Apart from conversation, all the complex interactive things require a huge initial investment, except video games, and I think video games are a breakthrough in human culture for that reason. They are not some transient, fringe aspect of culture; they are destined to be an important means of human learning for the rest of history, because of this interactive element. Why is being interactive so important? Because interacting with a complex entity is what life and thinking and creativity and art and science are all about.

In *The Face* magazine (December 1992, page 46),

Dr Margaret Shotton, author of *Computer Addiction?*, is quoted as saying, "Apart from increasing your manual dexterity and hand to eye coordination, video games speed up your neural pathways." This, the writer says, allows knowledge to travel around quicker, thus speeding up judgements and decisions, possibly leading to a higher IQ. Margaret Shotton, like David Deutsch, believes that parents who disapprove of their children playing computer games are mistaken, but David Deutsch is sceptical about the neural pathways theory. Perhaps surprisingly, he doubts that computer games improve hand-eye coordination.

D: *Life* improves one's hand-eye coordination. One spends one's whole life picking things up and doing fine finger movements, which one does in video games as well, but video games, if they are well designed, tend to use skills which people already have. If they go too far beyond what people already have, they tend to be less attractive as video games. They are then more like playing the piano, which requires a new kind of physical skill. Video games do not really impart a new kind of physical skill; what they impart is *the* fundamental *mental* skill, of understanding a complex and autonomous world.

S: Many parents would agree that conversation is very valuable, and it is because their children spend so many hours playing computer games instead of conversing, that they worry.

D: I do not accept that children play video games *instead* of conversation. They love both, and there is plenty of time in a day for many hours of video games and many hours of conversation – especially since, in my experience, it is perfectly possible to play video games and talk at the same time. Most parents do not talk enough to their children. If they want to talk to their children, let them do so. If the conversation is interesting enough, the children will talk. They will either talk during the video game or, if it is *very* interesting, they may postpone the video game. Forcing them to give up the video game in order to talk will make the resulting conversation worthless.

S: Could the number of hours children spend playing computer games be harmful?

D: Let me answer that question in two ways. First, how do you know what the appropriate number of hours is? Nobody can know that. If your children were playing chess for several hours a day, you would boast about what geniuses they

are. There is no intrinsic difference between chess and a video game, or indeed, even between things like playing the piano and playing video games, except that playing the piano has this enormous initial cost. They are similar kinds of activity. One of them is culturally sanctioned and the other is still culturally stigmatised, but for no good reason. I spent a lot of time playing with Lego when I was a child. For some reason, it never occurred to my parents that because I spent hours and hours with Lego, this was bad for me. If it had occurred to them, they could have done a lot of harm. I know now, for myself, that the thing which makes me play video games today is identical to the thing which made me play with Lego then – which is, by the way, the very same thing that makes me do science – that is, the impulse to understand things.

Computer literacy

D: There is a myth going around that because of the increasing importance of computers, soon everybody will need to be "computer-literate," that is, able to program computers. It is like saying that the Channel Tunnel will soon be in extensive use, so we should all learn how to dig. Computer literacy is like dentistry, mathematics, or agricultural engineering: it is wonderful for those who like it – like me – but useless for those who don't. John Holt identified this myth. He hated the term "computer literacy" because the very term has behind it lots and lots of *lessons*, and it justifies a whole new type of coercion. Computer literacy, unlike reading, is not a general purpose skill. It is a specific skill which is right for some people and wrong for others. I see no reason to expect most children to like computer programming. Of course, forcing children to program is a good way of making sure they do not take it up, but I think even if you don't force them, there is no reason why most of them should become interested in it.

Could it be harmful? Suppose a child is for some reason unhappy with his situation – his home life or school or whatever – and he has very few creative outlets. Playing video games is such a good thing in this respect, that if he finds it, and finds other avenues blocked off, he may devote all his attention to it. Later, if his circumstances change, he may not be as open to taking up other opportunities as he might have been. If that is so, it is not the video game that is doing him harm, it is that he has been funnelled down a blind alley and not let out. The thing to do is to let him out, not to steal his last remaining source of joy and learning. If someone is in that state, just like with any compulsive behaviour, the cure is simply to offer him other things which he might prefer. There will be *some* things which he prefers; nobody actually spends twenty-four hours a day playing video games so, in the remaining time, try conversation, try anything. If that does not work, don't blame the video game. Be thankful that there is still something good in the child's life, to tide him over.

But such cases are exceptional. On the whole, if we are talking about how the overwhelming majority of children interact with video games, the reason they sit in front of them for hours is that they are very valuable things to sit in front of. The skills they are learning are needed in every creative aspect of life, and children will always be short of opportunities to learn them. The natural and healthy state of human beings is that we are constantly looking for opportunities to improve our thinking skills, to improve the complexity and the subtlety of the mental apparatus which we apply to the world. Traditionally, this has been expensive, but people still did it. Even learning to play chess is expensive, compared with learning to play a video game. The expense does not make it any more moral. It is a disadvantage of chess or playing the piano that they have this initial cost.

One of the ways you can tell that playing video games is not something which captures people and then holds them to their detriment is that each video game has only a finite lifetime. Video game playing almost always follows a definite pattern. People try a video game, and they tell with one or two playings of it whether this is for them or not. If they like it, they tend to continue to play it for as long as they are still improving. The instant they are no longer improving, they stop, and they go on to another game. That is neither random behaviour, nor any kind of mechanical, Pavlovian or compulsive behaviour. It is typical learning behaviour: you are improving at something, and, so long as you are improving, you carry on doing it; the moment you stop improving, you stop doing it.

You might say, okay, you are learning something, but what you are learning is not really very useful. But that is to misunderstand the whole point of the video game. The benefit of a video game is not that you learn the video game; it is

that you learn the mental skills *with which* you are learning the video game, and *those* skills are good for learning *anything*.

S: Could the element of violence present in many video games be harmful?

D: First of all, it is not the case that most video games nowadays have violent themes. This used to be true a few years ago, and the reason for that was not at all sinister. The technology for making images appear rapidly on the screen was in its infancy, and it took a great deal of ingenuity to make games out of the very few basic operations possible. I remember having a conversation with John Holt about this in about 1983. Although, of course, he would never have stopped a child playing video games, he was worried about the "violent" aspect of the "shoot-em-up" games that dominated the market then. I said, "*You* try to write one. It is very difficult *not* to write a shooting game." I predicted that within a few years, once the video technology got faster, most games would not be about shooting things at all.

The most popular types of games nowadays are platform games, whose basic themes are exploring, jumping around, finding and collecting things (though admittedly one usually has to fight the occasional monster on the way),

and completely abstract games such as *Tetris*. By the way, *I* play a lot of video games, and they haven't done *me* any harm, so there! :-) Some of my favourite games are "shoot-em-up" games – perhaps I'm just old-fashioned. But *whatever* the type of game, it is not *violence*. Violence is where you hurt people. Games just appear on a screen; they don't actually hurt anybody. The only actual hurting that goes on is by parents when they prevent or discourage children from playing.

All games need an object and, if there are people in the game, it is natural to have drama, which means there will be goodies and baddies. The same is true in all drama, in all novels, plays, films, or whatever. If *King Lear* were the first play a person had seen, he might come out severely shocked. But once you know what a play is, have seen a bit of Shakespeare and know what it is about, you know that *King Lear* is not actually dangerous, that people don't go around after seeing *King Lear*, plucking people's eyes out. People are not harmed by seeing *King Lear* if they have reached the stage of wanting to see it gradually, at their own pace, for their own reasons, under their own control. Video games are *par excellence* a learning environment that is under one's own control, and that prevents them from being harmful.

S: Somebody made the point to me that playing computer games arouses the fight or flight impulse, and gives children too much excess energy. This idea apparently came from *Four arguments for the elimination of television*. Parents do worry that seeing violence on screen is much more damaging than seeing violence in a play because video games appear to draw people in very deeply and make them addicted.

D: I think that is completely untrue. The only evidence that video games are addictive is that people play them. All this talk about "excess energy" or being "drawn in" and so on is not what scientists would call experimental data. The data are that the child is playing the video game. That is the only thing you know for a *fact*. You can't see this "drawn in" business. That is just an *interpretation* parents put on what has happened. Pure theory, based on their own preconceptions. I am not making a value judgement here. I am just stating a fact. My *judgement* is that these preconceptions are wrong and that children play video games because they instinctively recognise their educational value.

When you play video games, you are using the *emotional* part of your mind as well, because when you interact with complex external entities, you engage your emotions as well as your intellect. Anything worth doing engages the emotions. What would you say about somebody who learned to play the piano, but never got emotionally involved? I remember once, I came back to playing the Appassionata after a long time, and I ended up with blood all over the keys. (It was not as bad as it sounds.) I saw that I had a cut, but I did not want to stop, so I carried on playing. If that had been a video game and I had been younger, people would have used that as evidence of addiction.

Perhaps children feel violent when they are forced to stop playing, and quite right too! Of course somebody who does not like television is likely to be prejudiced against video games, because they are related. Television has advantages, namely,

that it is a more diverse opening to culture. On the other hand, it is not interactive. Video games are interactive, but they are less diverse. They both have their strengths and weaknesses.

X-ray emissions

D: LCD screens, such as those on hand-held game-playing machines, emit no radiation at all. The radiation from a television screen is negligible. Even the radiation televisions do give off comes mostly from the sides and the back, not from the screen. It is completely crazy to react to that tiny "danger" by preventing children from playing video games. If you can't help worrying irrationally about it, get a radiation shield for the screen, or an ultra low radiation monitor.

S: Should we be concerned about the sexism in some games?

D: The way to combat false ideas is not to censor them but to contradict them. Most of the great literature of the world is sexist, and more generally, riddled with all sorts of false and irrational ideas, as well as valuable ones. Nobody would want to cut himself off from all culture just because it is "something-ist." The sexism of some video games is a minor and easily corrected fault. Once you have pointed out to your child how silly it is, she will be able to recognise sexism in other contexts.

I think one thing that is sinister is how boys play video games much more than girls. This is part of the same phenomenon that makes girls reluctant to do science, reluctant to go into management and business, reluctant to do anything creative and effective in the world. It is an effect down a long chain of cause and effect which began with things like being dressed in pink costumes when they were babies. The whole pattern of behaviour towards a girl rewards her for suppressing her creativity. One of the unpleasant side effects of this is that it makes girls suppress the side of them that would like video games. The reason why this effect is more marked in video games is that video games are so well suited for developing creative skills.

People are so much more complicated than these simplistic theories of what "influences" them. Human beings are not laboratory rats, and do not react like laboratory rats. Look at Eastern Europe, where they used to control what everybody read, and gave them a constant diet of Marxist propaganda, which they had to learn by heart in school, and repeat with eagerness in their voices: in spite of all that, it did not rub off on the overwhelming majority of them, and even *those* people are rapidly regretting it. The children went to school; they learned the stuff the same way children do everywhere. The fact that it was Marxist propaganda did not make it any more or less easy to swallow than what children are taught in *our* schools, but it did not go in, any more than what children are taught in *our* schools goes in.

I think that all these fears are *a posteriori* – you first know the conclusion, which is that you must stop him playing the video game, and then you invent the reasons. The reason why video games are hated is that they are, in the true sense, educational. Of course people don't put it like that, but that is what it comes down to.

S: Most parents are really *very* keen to educate their children. Many have no objection to *educational* games.

D: But they have a preconception, a vision, of what education must look like, which results largely from psychological injuries inflicted on them in their own childhood in the name of education. They make the fundamental mistake of human relationships, which is to try to use *force* to make the other person act out your vision of him, instead of looking to see who the other person actually is, and what he wants, and trying to help him *get* what he wants. The market tends to do the latter – it tends to do the right thing – and so games which are made for money tend to be good for you. A video game which is designed to be "educational", like everything which is designed to be "educational", tends to be bad. It is making that fundamental error of trying to channel children into a predetermined vision.

Looking at this more broadly, learning to read is an educational video game. Learning to play a musical instrument is an educational video game. Some of these good things by accident have got social sanction. If children get "addicted" to

those things, parents overflow with pride. But there is no better criterion for finding out whether something is good for you than whether you enjoy it. There can't be.

Sir Karl Popper once said "the belief that truth is manifest is the basis of all tyranny". The fact is, the truth is not manifest. The truth can only be found by a critical process, by a creative process, by a process that is open, and our only criterion for whether one idea is better than another is whether we prefer it. We have to *look* at the ideas, and use criticism – everything must be open to criticism – to find which of them is ultimately preferable. We have to be willing to change and change again. If you have a power structure where a single idea of what is right is imposed by force, then that can never be criticised, and the chances of approaching the truth are nil.

Children playing video games – regardless of subject matter – are learning. Adults who prevent this are preventing them from learning.

S: But there is a whole world out there for children to find out about, to explore...

D: And I suppose that's why people lock them up in schools! Even home educating parents tend not to allow their children enough access to the world, just as schooling parents don't. Anyway, the video game world is a complex autonomous world. It is an artificial world, but then so is the street outside. The point is not *what* world you are learning about, but that you are learning *how* to understand the world.

to post comments

Comments

What are they learning?
Submitted by Pokemamma on 3 September, 2003 - 12:20

You say they're learning, but WHAT are they learning? How to sit on their ass all day doing nothing? What are they learning that's good? And what about the effect on their eyesight of close focusing all day? Get real, people!

to post comments

Get real, people!
Submitted by Alice Bachini on 4 September, 2003 - 00:05

Video games teach people how to solve problems, which basically means *how to think*.

And being able to think is kind of useful once you get to be an adult, even though parents try to stop their kids doing too much of it in case they don't squish as easily into those sad, out-of-date molds anymore.

to post comments

Re: What are they learning?
Submitted by Erin on 4 September, 2003 - 01:26

If you are concerned with children "sit[ting] on their ass all day doing nothing", and "close focusing all day", then it would be wise to make sure that they never enjoy reading.

Erin Riopel **eriopel@telus.net**

to post comments

A good way to describe going ...

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 6 September, 2003 - 17:05

A good way to describe going to school for a lot of children is 'sitting on their asses all day doing nothing worthwhile' and yet that is considered essessntial & mandatory.

The point that if a child likes to do something, and spends hours and hours engrossed in that activity it becomes suspect as an obsession & unhealthy fits - some parents struggle & fret that their kids don't read, because they spend all their time running around outside playing...others think their kids are obsessed with reading (I got that one growing up) and think its unhealthy to not spend more time playing outside.

to post comments

A child

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 17 September, 2003 - 02:42

I thank those who put together this page, because my father will not let me play video games during the week, I am supposedly preocupied with them (sorry for any spelling errors). (some quick backrount info about me, I was on my schools varsity tennis team freshman year, and got a 4.6 gpa) I asked my father what he would do If i was "preocupied" with tennis, if I played it as much as I would like to play video games. His reply was to tell me maybe, and that the discussion was closed. I am currently printing this page out to give to him to read. Thank you once again, I believe this will help greatly.

to post comments

This article is Great!

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 24 September, 2003 - 13:47

I like this article, it really shows the significance of playing video games and justifies the argument that I get all the time from my parents about playing them so much. My brothers sit around and talk to girls all day, and my father has no problem with that. or weight lifting all day, hours longer than I play video games. He doesn't say that's addictive, he just says it's "Natural" and that playing video games for a boy my age is not natural, and that I should've grown out of it by now. By the way i'm 15. Thank you! I will also show this to my parents.

to post comments

Pros and Cons

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 30 September, 2003 - 15:12

Yes, computer games can be fun, learning tools. Yes, people can get addicted to them and this would not benefit their social skills. No, I can't play a video game and talk at the same time. Only in between games! Violence can beget violence (in those who are susceptible to it, mostly caused by poor parenting/role modelling). "Everything in moderation" is to me the obvious common sense solution.

to post comments

Pros don't have those cons

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 30 September, 2003 - 21:07

if only you played more video games as a child I'm sure you would have learned to play and talk at the same time. but it's not too late now! you could still learn to do both, if you practice enough.

yesterday a character in a game, named after me, killed stuff with a fireball spell. today i didn't fireball anyone. coincidence? i think not. i got fireballing people out of my system in the game.

"everything in moderation" is fine, as long as you take that saying in moderation.....

-- Elliot Temple **http://curi.blogspot.com/ (http://curi.blogspot.com/)**

to post comments

Games

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 6 October, 2003 - 20:25

I'm a college student and just turned 20. I've been playing video games for years. Yes, I do play for long hours. The one thing that I must say is that video games are wonderful. I learn from them, use them to release stress and anger, and play just for the pure joy of it. I work, go to school, and play when I can. I'm married and live on my own too.

Videos games, violent games are good for releasing anger or stress but the person who takes that violence into the real word is a victim, I believe, of poor parenting and/or rolemodeling. I have played enough violent games that I "should" be in prison now, not a Honor student in college.

I really believe in this article, and must say that video games are much more educational then we realize. RPGS are very good since they encourage reading, I read dozens of novels now becuase of that very reason and text book reading comes much easier.

If parents still dislike video games, just work with your children. They could pick out a couple games they like, if one has alot of violence, just let your child play the other one, for a few hours. One thing that is most frustrating is having your parent stop you in the middle of a really hard puzzle that you're almost done with.

Remember, I'm a girl, so girls can like video games too!!

to post comments

Thanks.

I am currently composing a speech for a college class and I chose video games and how they affect children as my topic. I am also a avid supporter of video games and what they have to offer. In addition to the things listed above here are some additional benefits. History and culture- I learned quite a bit about Chinese history/folklore from the Romance of the 3 Kingdoms series, a very entertaining and informative strategy game with nearly no violence. I also learned about many of the battles of WWII from many games.

to post comments

Natalie

Video Games are like really cool. I like cheesecake.

to post comments

Awesome

The Best Game in the world-SOCOM II U.S. Navy Seals.

to post comments

Reading does the same thing

video games expand the mind of kids too, its not just reading and outdoor activites.

to post comments

reading sucks

if all u do is read u become blind cause u don't use your eyes to see immages and sitting is good for you because it relaxes you video games are good for the brain because it develops social skills

to post comments

RE: What are they learning?

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 24 November, 2003 - 16:20

They are learnig what shapes and colors look like, Books teach u what the letters look like. HOw does that help?

to post comments

Change of Mind

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 2 December, 2003 - 00:24

I started out today writing, for a college class, a paper about the negative affects of media and entertaiment on children. After reading this article, my topic did a 180*. We live in a society where we place the blame on everyone else except ourselves, video games shouldn't be in that list of 'blame.'

to post comments

video games also improve reflexes

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 6 January, 2004 - 18:17

My dad is a much better driver than my mom. Why? He played computer games! His reflexes are much better, and he notices a lot of things. My mom isn't as good scince she never playrd video games, and sometimes she panics when something happens. She also runs through stop signs some times. A couple of months ago in "Game Informer" magazine, there was a letter from someone that talked about how video games saved his life. He was about to run into an 18-Wheeler, but his video game reflexes made him just barely avoid it! Video games rule. (and so does cheesecake)

to post comments

Video Games are good

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 7 March, 2004 - 18:58

I am currently a senior in high school writing a persuasive essay on the benefits of video gaming. I have spent all day playing video games, I have also spent all day reading, listening to music, or watching tv as well as socializing. I am one of the most intellegent people in my school of over 3000, think where I would be without video games.(and cheesecake)

to post comments

NO, Socom II isn't the best video game ever

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 7 March, 2004 - 19:26

You're joking, right? I'll bet that you think Socom II is the best game ever just because you don't have an Xbox or Gamecube to play any other games. I used to do it too, when I just had Gamecube. I thought HALO and Xbox sucked more than school, but then I got both of them--well, let's just say that I don't hate either any more! But really, try HALO on Xbox or Metroid Prime on Gamecube (both Games of the Year, Metroid Prime is better though). You might find something you like!

to post comments

HAHA

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 7 March, 2004 - 19:34

Whoever wrote the cheesecake comment, thanks for making me laugh. You just made me a little bit happier!

to post comments

I knew there were others like me!

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 16 March, 2004 - 04:24

I love this article. I have been playing video games my whole life and they have taught me a lot about life. Some genres such as FPS (first person shooter) are great stress relievers. Others such as RPG's (role-playing games) are the reason that I love to read. I have noticed that I have much faster reflexes and have developed a lot of patience. Just as a side note I'm also of the female persuasion and think that video games are the reason I have a life.

to post comments

WOW

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 17 March, 2004 - 02:17

just let kids play games they learn alot from them :)!!!

to post comments

We are our own person

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 23 March, 2004 - 15:24

I am a Mom of two teenagers. I have an older girl who reads as often as she can. My son who is younger plays video games as often as he can. It is very interesting to hear what people say about your kids. My daughter is praised by other people because she reads so much. My son is viewed as, "Shouldn't my partner and I be concerned that all he does is play video games?" Well, no. In fact he is his own person, with his own likes and dislikes. I feel society in general puts too much emphasis on "the traditional" and fitting in as a whole. My kids are their own person just like each of us. Thank you for your article. It feels good to that someone out there believes the way I do.

to post comments

A teacher's/gamer's view....

I definetly see the cons with gaming;

- problemsolving, (some games such as Metroid Prime, Zelda and variants of RPG's, (Role Playing Games), very much so) - Computing data, reading data, using data, (processing information on how games works). - enhancing attention span, (not First Person Shooters, (FPS)) - if online, developing online social skills and ethichs. There's actually quite a lot of nannying going on in some game communities/guilds/clans.

Drawbacks are IMHO:

- FPS's as they are now, though it seems they're evolving into more social, team based structures. The most popular First Person Shooters these days, can IMHO be bad for attention spans, and very noticable when I'm at work, (the boys I know spends the night playing Counter Strike can be very hard to reach in the classroom). - Most games are highly addictive, and knowing from personal experience, can be very destructive for ones RL, (real life). - Some communities/clans/guilds can be ethical "bad", such as regarding cheating, spoiling games for others, use of non-legit software etc.

Overall though, I think that if parents bother to monitor and lightly restrict their kids gaming habits, (for instance measuring game time up with TV time, in my book playing most games are way better then being passive in front of a TV set).

You'll have to excuse my language though, as english is not my mother tongue.

to post comments

hmm...

I agree with what you are saying, but you are probably the reason that people might disagree with video games being educational. I say this because of your many mispelled words and lack of sentence structure. This does not just go for you, but for everyone sick of being looked down upon for liking video games. Don't just sit back and complain that you are being picked on, give them a reason to agree with you, show them that you are on the same intellectual level, if not higher, than you are expected to be.

OOOHHHH YYYAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 21 April, 2004 - 00:58

This article is very impressive. It renforces what I've been telling my parents all my life. I will be showing this article to them as soon as possible.

P.S. I have in my possesion Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix for my X-box and I gotta tell you it has noticably made my reflexiveness in every day life more acute. (Who doesn't love Cheesecake?)

giselle

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 26 April, 2004 - 22:20

OK, PERHAPS THIS HELPED ME WITH MY ESSAY.....

ANYWAY...................

THANK YOU!!

Social effects of video games

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 10 May, 2004 - 17:58

Just to add my own comments, I thought I would state that video games have had a strong positive effect on my life. My mom is always trying to limit my game time, but maybe this site can help change that. She thinks I spend all my free time playing games when I should be playing with friends. The reality of it is that video games have improved my social life. My friends and I spend a lot of time talking about video games and playing them together. I have made several new friends through a common interest in video games, and even met my girlfriend because we liked the same games.

Spike

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 11 May, 2004 - 00:13

Yea i do bad in school but i also play videogames 5 or 8 hours a day but that dosent mean its the videogames im not thinking about videogames when the damn teacher is passing out more worksheets im thinking about how the

hell am i gonna get out of here and im not going to be a writer when i mature because i suck at writing the only thing im good at is art and thats all i want to do when im older games helped me reach my creative side of my mind it opend me up to a whole side of art and now ive been a 3D graphic designer for the past 2 years And guess what game helped me get there, it was Grand Theft Auto III and Grand Theft Auto: Vice City. I don't play the game to kill people and watch them bleed form their heads but i like to play the game because i like to see what artistic ability the other designers have so for thos of you that think games is a large turn down, shut up. If my mother decided to take my games away i would still have bad grades but thats because its who i am

to post comments

If you played games you would know...

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 15 May, 2004 - 22:45

Many people who do not play games do not understand that there are different kinds of games. Example. You have your drama, Your epics, Your educational *now come on.. do you really want to watch a movie that tries to teach you how to do complex mathimatics? or play an action/rpg game that makes you do a math puzzle that consists of moving different blocks in certain orders and to certain spots depending on the position of the sun, and the amount of light reaching some magical weapon in order to enchant it.* , your action movies/games, the comical movies/games *example of a game is the monkey island series* I have to say all and all soon the most educational games will be mmorpg's if they FINNALY MAKE A GOOD ONE... *massive multiplayer role playing games* ussualy mmorpg's consist of increasing your characters skill level, finding or buying new equipment to help him/her make his way furthur into the world AND because it is online you are talking all the time to people learning conversation skills and such with NO risk.. NOW all that said i will admit that there are negative sides to video games and I believe this doctor did wrong on not touching on them, but many of them depend on the person playing and their ability to recognise what is real and what is just a companies way to make money. course if there is one thing games have not helped me much on.. its my spelling. *but they did increase my vocab*-rpgs of course*

to post comments

Like Duh!!

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 17 May, 2004 - 17:44

Ok. So what is the problem with video games? First they are new. There is so much new today; future shock is reality.

Some thoughts:

Video games popular because they are fun. But so are slingshots, firecrackers and bb guns. The real complaint I have, as the parent of 5 boys, is what they displace. They displace running around getting exercise naturally by climbing, running, jumping, etc. In my opinion video games are a big part of the reason there are so many fat kids today. They get their adventure exploring not the woods but a little screen whey they click, click, and point till their wrists and need for stimulation are exhausted. They are especially bad for boys because boys like to run and explore more. Like so many things today, including sex and violence in the movies, the problem is not that they are not in the best interest of kids, but that adults are the consumers who are defending them. The fact that more money is made now on video games than movies now is not incosequental. A world where type 2 diabetes is

becoming epidemic and we have to argue the case against something like typical video games. I say typical because most chidlrens' games consist of killing something or somebody. But when you point this out the proponents (and makers of the games) will point to the nonviolent games. The ones the kids are least inclined to play. We seem to have forgotten that the human animal is inherently nasty and destructive. Games were developed in large part to civilize the male children.

to post comments

Who couldn't like video games?

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 20 May, 2004 - 00:14

This article backs up my view on video games. It will be very useful for a debate I am going to be doing in my speech class. Yay for video games!!!!!! Cheesecake is good, but I'd rather have a pony!

to post comments

video violence

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 25 May, 2004 - 16:21

This article disturbs me. I have an eight year old stepson whose father has let him play violent video games since at least the age of five. Last year in school he punched a kid in the nose and this year he hit a girl in the school line for no reason. He has also had several detentions this year (second grade) for not being responsible and not following directions. He has emotional melt downs if things don't go his way in life. Have the video games taught him that because there are no consequences to violence it is alright to be violent? Have they taught him that he controls the actions of these games, so he can't handle being under someone elses authority, parents or teachers? When a child starts playing violent video games from the time they can play and play for hours at a time, what are the consequences of this? Maybe a little more study into living with a child who has been raised with video games should be done by the author.

to post comments

No, Socom II isn't the best game ever

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 31 May, 2004 - 17:36

Yeah, way to go! Metroid Prime is awsome. One of my favorite games, Halo to but I don't like Xbox that much. I have Socom II also but I don't like it much. Sure it lets you strategize with others but isn't all that fun. That guy should try Spliter Cell Pandora Tomorrow for better online.

to post comments

Have evidence or stats? I'll partly agree 'till then.

Of the hard core gamers (25-40 y/o males) that I've known - to me, none of them really seemed to understand:

-The laws of gravity: They have fallen off ladders and tree branches due to balacning problems or not knowing how much weight limbs could support

-Physics when driving: When ice may form on a road, when your car tires may slip on sand or grit or wet leaves, when wind or puddles can change the direction of your car, how to steer or adjust speed for bumps, etc.

-How to take social chances: They seemed to fear rejection (especially when looking for dates) and were always afraid to ask directions or contribute while in group brainstorming sessions.

There are other examples too. In the cases that I've known...these people have also replaced time outdoors getting physical/social experience in various activities with video game time or TV. How can video games provide such experience? Are there comparative stats that outline what I've mentioned above? I can see how reflexes can be improved with video games of popular choice but not much predictive thinking (outdoor physics) or abstract thinking (social creativeness). I mainly take issue with the blanket claims that these games improve hand-eye coordination. To what degree? Where are the numbers? --JC

to post comments

Well Written Article

This was a very well written article, you addressed both sides of the issue without being biased either way. I personally spend lots of time playing Computer Games, I prefer FPS games just because the pace is faster, one has to make descisions on the fly without slowing down, they force one to be descisive. I also spend lots of time doing other things though, I go out with friends almost everyday, and i play rugby, I think balance is the key, but not enforced balance, everyone has to find their own balance.

Thank You for taking the time to write this article

to post comments

to the writer of "video violence"

That's such bull, if that kid is doing all of those things he has a problem, not the video games, I'm 15, when I was about five my dad let me play Doom (probably the most violent games of the time) and I've only been in one fight in my entire life, and I didn't even hit anybody, I pushed them and they started throwing punches, and I pushed them only because I was going through an emotionally stressful period of time and they had been teasing me quite a bit that school year. If that kid is really doing all of those things you claimed he's doing, than it's because he was a psycho that was addicted to violence before playing games, yet again you're shifting the blame on inanimate objects, like every other person in this world, I have been teased and made fun of for as long as I can remember, and I played doom, why haven't I gone on a killing spree, throwing pipe bombs at people like in Columbine?

Because they were probably neglected by their parents and were never taught any morals and were probably feeling as though they had no one left to turn to but themselves... It was the parents, NOT the video games. What's my proof that I'm not some special case? Well, no one else at my school has gone on a killing spree, they all play violent video games, most of them have been doing so since at least the age of eight, they could probably have gone earlier than that, like I did. As for people who spend all of their time playing video games and are afraid of regection or being social with people, I play video games all of the time BECAUSE I dislike being social with people, everybody's got their trivial beliefs and always wanting to force everything on us and making fun of us, I'm disgusted that anybody would suggest that video games are bad and dealing with bastards of the world is good, people like you are the reasons people like us substitute video games for our social time, because you always have something negative to say about the way we live or are (you're black, you're jewish, you're gay, you do nothing but play video games) we're just trying to escape your crap. You want us to be more social, make the world a more socially welcoming place and maybe we'll do something social. Stop judging people based on some small tidbit of information (for example: he's jewish, he must hate all Christian's, he's Black: He must be retarded and eat from a trashcan, he's gay: he must want to rape little kids, he's religious: he must want to burn us all at a stake and tell us we're all going to hell, HE PLAYS VIDEO GAMES: HE MUST BE VIOLENT AND PSYCHOTIC, etc.) be a little bit nicer and stop being so narrow minded and perhaps we'll come out of our shells, but if you don't plan on changing, don't plan on us being any more social. (note: this last part of this post was not directed so much toward the writer of the video violence post as it was to all of the judgemental leap-to-a-conclusion-before-you-look-at-the-actual-people type of people).

to post comments

I no longer feel alone with my personal theory

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 9 September, 2004 - 03:04

Note: I do not know why my name had to be "a reader". I don't actually read books, but I write stories. It's fun!

Anyway, I certainly agree with this article. Sometimes I wondered if there would ever be some sort of company or doctor that thought this. My parents let me play video games for hours and it's usually fine so long as it's not sexual. I don't really want sexual content anyway, I'm more interested in the more aggressive graphic material such as violence and carnage.

Now anyway, to the "video violence" person as well, I believe that you are wrong in blaming video games. I'm 12 and I've been playing violent video games almost as long as I've had something to play video games on. I started playing video games as a 3-year-old and started with my first real bloody game, Wolfenstein 3D when I was 4 years old. 4 wretched years old. My parents have given me ethical lectures, about not to be a jerk and bash people up for no reason but to be assertive and stand up for yourself. Don't fight someone unless it's justified, and I think that's the message we want to send to our kids, and that's not to ever do something bad to someone unless they do the same to you. They like you, you like them. They bash you up, you bash them up. Those Columbine kids, it MIGHT have been video games, but I just don't think that they were being taught that punting down people isn't right.

I've been a video game addict for 8 years now (hey, I'm still pretty young, so at my age that's a bloody long time, I guess it's not the same for any of you old geezers here :p) and I know for sure that there are some powerful skills that I have that I wouldn't have had if I hadn't played video games so much. If I hadn't spent lots of my time playing video games then I would've done just as good if not WORSE. Even if video games are as bad as some say, there's lots of stuff out there that is just as bad. I personally believe that Deutsch's sayings were logical and I really agree with them. I seriously do not mean to brag but I ace school, I'm very imaginative and very intelligent. I sort of believe that what the other companies say is simply a form of quickly thought-up propaganda. If lots of

us were addicted to, say, wooden chairs then those guys probably would've said "Rah-rah! Ban wooden chairs! They're bad for us and they're bad for our children!"

Jeez, I don't understand about if someone spent their entire day reading books and playing chess then they would be considered an intellectual and highly intelligent, but if someone spent their entire day playing video games then most people would probably be worried and just assume that they wouldn't do good in school or even in life at all. But playing with a yo-yo is entirely productive, yes? HA HA HA! Those anti-video game thugs are hilarious!

Piff, parents complaining about how their sport-playing kids don't spend enough time reading books or something and the book-reading kids being nagged because they don't spend time outdoors?! I don't know about the rest of you, but I find it as simple as this: Some kids enjoy being active, some don't. Sure, 64.5% americans are now overweight but McDonalds is spreading like crazy, and I'm sure we would do much better if McDonalds just bit the dust. I'm a bit of both active and inactive but unfortunately there usually isn't much to do outside because it's a pain having to contact my friends from school and there isn't really anything interesting to do outside alone and there are no kids in the neighborhood (at least none that really come out or are willing to play).

I think that the reason that people think that video games poison children's minds is because some people don't play video games right. I became an expert on games like DOOM very quickly, and I don't think I would've managed were it not for my strategies and tactics and judgments I made along with the fighting I did. When many people play DOOM, they see the weapons as this: Don't ever use the fists, use the pistol only until you get the shotgun, use shotgun on occassion, use the chaingun often, use the rocket launcher very much, etc. Instead, I think that we should see it as this: Fist is good for punting weak enemies coming around the corner or for when you run out of ammo, pistol is best for sniping and accuracy as well as substituting the chaingun's capabilities, shotgun is good for up-close combat, etc, pointing out strengths and weaknesses between each of the weapons. Even if there isn't weapon equality (like in Wolfenstein 3D, where the weapons get better and better and the earlier weapons get more and more useless), it is often mindful to use the earlier weapons for the weak situations and preserve the better weapons for extreme situations, although I've only found that in Wolfenstein 3D, really. And with enemies most of us just say "these guys are wimps, these guys are a little better, these guys are very dangerous and pack a punch", and so on. And when most of us play FPS games, it is mostly just selecting the latest gun (and that latest weapon may not be useful for the situation that the player is encountering) and staying stationary firing at enemies and not really doing anything else. Maybe some of the people just stare at the screen blankly and pressing buttons all the time, not really doing anything else or really thinking, and I think that that's the only real problem. But then again, it's their own fault: If you don't think, you don't get anything from playing and you totally suck at the game.

My parents don't really care about my video games very much. Unfortunately, my mother thinks that I play mindless video games (like DOOM) but she doesn't really even know what these games of mine are all about. I don't know about my dad, but next time anyone says that video games are 'mindless' or 'not productive' or something, I think I'll sic this on them. Thanks for compiling this article! Maybe some people will come to their senses.

Anyway, that's all I have to say for now. I'm glad these folks made this article. Video games are very good for us, and in fact just as good or maybe even better than what many parents may want their kids to do instead. THANKS!

to post comments

Answer to like duh...
Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 9 September, 2004 - 22:36

HEY why is it bad for kids to be better at video games than sports. I have friends that play games about 3 hours a day and are still really good at sports. second i have seen that a lot of jocks and their parents(NOT ALL OF THEM)are usally aginst video games and want thier kids to play sports and only sports. you wanna know what i read when ever i can, i play soccer with my friends and im in honors and play video games a lot. so just because u dont like video games it doesnt mean thier bad. LASTLY video games help with reflexes i still like some sports but alot of kids dont like me just because i dont like football. THAT DOESNT MEAN IM STUPID JUST BECAUSE I DONT LIKE IT AND HALF THE TIME I SEE SOME OF THESE SPORTS DADS AND MOMS(NOT ALL OF THEM) RAM IT DOWN THEIR THROAT. P.S if i have offended some one im sorry. ...I like cheesecake too

to post comments

Great Article

I'm an 8th grader currently in class doing a feature article about how video games affect teens, and I'm very happy to have found this. Some of the knowlege in this will be very helpful to my article. thanks alot!

to post comments

To those who are against video games...

I find that very ignorant indeed.

I listened to a talk radio show on NPR from Michigan State University about the very subject described in some of the other wrong-headed articles about people turning into violent killing machines.

Those sorts of people (obviously from the bible-belt) arguing that games poison the minds of the nation's children fail to take into account that in their youth they did the exact same thing, training each other to kill without remorse, when they played 'army' or worse, 'cowboys and indians' which adds a healthy dose of racism and ethnic stereotyping into the mix.

to post comments

i just..

i just can't really understand why video games are popular.i have an on-going research paper regarding this matter.pardon me,i can't construct a concrete outline.what should i do?i was task to do this for the sake of my subject,but the fact that im not a video game lover.any suggestions please?

Reasons why video games are popular and entertaining? Why video games are preferred by teenagers over physical games?

thanks..

to post comments

x-box...halo-2

I have been wanting x-box ever since I got a glimpse at the games it played. I originally had gotten gamecube but the system has gotten old. My younger brother likes it more than I do. I now love halo due to a friends generosity in allowing me to play at his house and am quite skilled...

I am now petitioning for halo-2 on november 9. I put x-box as the only item on the list for my birthday. (maybe a car also)

This page will help persuade my parents by selecting certain quotes and printing them and attaching to news articles, my own thoughts, and magazine clippings. If I do not get the system this b-day, i will buy it myself...

Thanks for the help!

to post comments

I agree! -- Responce to -- answer to like duh...

I have straight A's, I am on honnor roll with distinction, I am an amazing basketball player, I have won the Calgary Science Fair, and I'm in all the clubs at school. But I also love video games! I spend all my free time either reading, playing on the computer, playing vidoe games, or watching TV (Ussualy playing on the computer or playing vidoe games) and there is nothing wrong with me!

to post comments

Re "We are our own person"

Honestly, this could have been me writing this comment. My daughter is an avid reader, my son is an avid gamer. Personally I'm not worried about either - but you can imagine who gets the praise and who gets the frowns from others. Sad but true.

to post comments

I Think

I think you people should actually play some of these games before you write this stuff. And you named this site "taking children seriously" maybe you ought to have a little more faith in your children and give some of these games a chance. Maybe not Grand Theft Auto, but Doom is not as bad as you think I read an article about some people thinking it was all Doom's fault that all those people died in the Columbine thing because those to boys played it but in Doom you kill aliens not people. And you go to other planets not a school building. and how many millions of other people have played Doom and not ran around and shot people. I have played Doom and I have never even sent someone to the hospital because of anything I saw in that game. Just so you know your kids go to school they are bound to have a friend who has parents who let them have games like Grand Theft Auto and your kids will have access to those types of games even if you say No. So one way or another they are going to play them with or without your permission. One last thing maybe you should talk to your kids about the difference between the real world and a video game and if they can't understand the difference then stick to E rated games but if they can handle it try T rated games first and see how it goes and then work your way to M rated games

Just so you know I am a 15 year old in 9th grade so I know what I'm talking about. But don't think I am saying you are a bad person if you don't think I am right,I just thought you could use the point of view of a person of that age.

to post comments

Another Child

I'm 12, a honors freshman in private highschool, and my parents don't seem to know that it takes brains to get that honor. For those of you who are shocked, that's how it is.

My dad hates videogames. I love video games. My dad used to be addicted to them. He loved them so much that he had to (in his late 20's-early 30's) get up in the middle of the night, turn on the computer, and play Doom and Castle Wolfstien. He taught me how to play Doom when I was five. A few months ago I was playing that same game. He came into the office, took out the cd, broke it in half, deleted it, and yelled at me for an hour. Lately he and I have been debating about video games. I knew most of these pointers before and metioned them, but he twists my words so it seems like I'm contridicting myself. It makes me frustrated and angry but I know I'm right. I hope seeing this in print helps him see that.

One more thing I would like to mention, my dad tells me I should do other things, I should be active, I shouldn't waste my eyesight and time on this, so I started doing other things (if you get tired, skip to the bottom for my point. This is mostly examples). I have always had a passion for reading so I started that. When all I read was novels, he told me to start reading things that teach me something. I tried and failed because reading my geometry book doesn't really appeal to me. So I went back to novels. I would stay in my room for hours, only coming out for meals, which I immediatly took to my room. That made him think, " He's always holed up in his room he should come out." So he gave me a lecture on that to. So to please him I took up shop. I lived on a farm so it wasn't too hard. I loved it. The only problem was my supply of wood. All I had were stakes. So then I started making swords and knives (blunt and not dangerous). So he said I was becoming violent. So I stoped that and went on to cross-country biking. He said I might get kiddnapped or hurt (I kept a pair of nunchucks and a can of pepperspry with me just in case. I never used either). So I stopped that too. I started expirimenting with things (chemical reactions,...). I knew that was dangerous, so I took percautions. All expiriments were carefully controled. But he got mad so I stopped. Now we moved to the city. I started paintballing. Guess what, they hate it and only let me play because I got into a privete high school. So I thought, " Now that I'm closer to my friends, maybe I

can got to their houses for fun." Ain't happening. My parents are traditional Punjabi parents; to them, " friends are for school, for home you have family." Well that doesn't work because everything I like, they hate. I am not like most Punjabi kids. They think that's bad. Everything I like, my entire family thinks it's for retards. My own cousin called me up once and asked me, "Do you like bowling?" I said yes. He replied, "Oh, okay," Then to his brother, "He likes it. Let's go watch a movie." Here I also started swimming. Now since it's winter I can't do that anymore because my mom thinks I'll catch a cold. I try to explain to her that colds have nothing to do with temperature but she won't hear it. So now I'm back to gaming.

The entire piont of this is{drumroll}... Parents think, "He likes it. It's bad."

Please reply to this, I need some idea to show my dad the light. The length of it is a testament to my boredom. My email is **mirza_jutt_04@yahoo.com**

Please forgive me for the typos. I'm dead tired. I just had another debating session with my dad.

Vote For George W. Bush.

to post comments

brain builder
Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 5 November, 2004 - 17:40

video games build brain power thus increasing your reflexes and even IQ

halo 2 will also be the best game ever

to post comments

In defendence of video games
Submitted by Cyber King (not verified) on 11 November, 2004 - 03:20

Sometimes I think that violent video games can make people turn violent. But only if they were not taught lessons and morals, taught about the difference between reality and a movie, a book, a video game, etc. What I despise most about the people who are on a campaign against video games is that they refuse to point out any positive aspects of video games, and they choose to paint them in a way that if you play a little game of Super Mario, you'll turn into an unsuccessful, unambitioned, unintelligent and raving socio path. That's not the right message, and it is definitely not true. I truly admire Deutsch's way of considering video games to be a unique educational environment and a very essential component to life rather than a destructive drug that must be stopped as most people put it.

I've been a gamer for years. My parents have taught me about morals and ethical topics, not to mention the fact that the things I read in novels, the things I see on TV, the things I play in video games are not real, and so I know the difference. I've played video games since I was 4, even violent games, and nothing bad has happened to me. In fact, without them, I would not have been as successful or as skilled or as intelligent or as unique as I am now.

Now I must say that some of you here don't sound the brightest to me. I do not mean to offend any of you, but many may think that video games may be a product of those problems. Of course, I'm still standing my ground with my belief, as I have learned from flat out EXPERIENCE that 3/4ths of the world's population are pretty much idiots.

Now let me point out the positive aspects of video games: ~Many games can be very good for blowing off steam ~Every game requires a substantial way of mental thinking. It's dependable on the game. Some contain a more quick thinking requirement (games like Doom or Sonic), which can be extremely useful for your quick thinking skills if their ability to improve your reflexes wasn't enough. Others require a more thinking ahead requirement (games like Warcraft and Alchemy). Some require a mixture of both. ~Many help to improve reflexes. ~Many include puzzles, which also excercise the mind. ~In multiplayer, it includes the same competitive theory and sometimes way of virtue involving teamwork and cooperation (assuming you are doing a team/cooperative way of network play). Even if it's not during network, there's still that competitive theory of seeing who can do the best (for example, who can do this in this difficulty level the best). Sometimes there can be a high score list that many may compete to top. ~Inspirational in many ways for people to create video games or adaptations to them, etc. ~Some games have an amazing plot that is a funner and more productive way of reading a book. ~There is a requirement of patience and perserverance when playing many games. Since in every real gamethere is always a goal to accomplish, many challenges can often get in the way and make it difficult. But that is what's great! Challenge! And it can excercise the gamer's ability to not give up, keep up their patience and perserverance. ~Online gaming can also be a way to improve your social skills when chatting. ~Much, much more!

Tell me when you can get that by reading a book or playing sports or puzzles. Actually, some of the things I mentioned are included in sports, books and puzzles. And I'm not trying to convince people that video games are superior over any of the other activities that many parents are trying to put on top of our instinct to be vidgamers, many of which are aside from sports, books and puzzles. Each activity has their own strengths and weaknesses. I'm just trying to get people to wake up: Video games are good for you, equal to sports, books, etc.

And don't think that this site is the only positive evaluation of video games. I've heard that there are other web sites out there that show studies of things such as adolescents doing better at schoolwork with video games. I even heard there's one that show studies of video games being able to make you more attractive to the opposite sex, and that is DEFINITELY a plus.

Don't worry. If we keep our rebellions strong against the people campaining against video games, they'll eventually fall back. Of course, by then there will be another form of entertainment for such degenerates to throw rocks at, but the process will have to go on and it has went on for quite a while.

My justification to calling the people who are campaigning against video games degenerates is not solely for the sake of disagreement but because those people are simply trying to shift the blame away from their POOR PARENTING SKILLS. Maybe that's something that we should focus on instead. Rather than blaming video games for many of the world's problems, perhaps we should look at ourselves. What have we done?And will parents ever accept their children for WHO THEY ARE? Gothics, intellectuals, wichens, sports and recreation fanatics, all sorts of unique people I know that have parents who feel that they have problems for being different, parents who cannot accept them for who they are. I think that could be part of the reason to many of our problems.

You are hearing this from a 12 year old 7th grader male, also an intellectual vidgamer.

to post comments

video games.. arent good..

you are all thinking too much about how good video games. sure there are a lot of good educational games out there but honestly who plays those? most people are into those violent, dirty, and vicous games. FYI the two boys who were responsible for columbine played Doom and reenacted this at columbine. why do u you need to spoil ur mind and imagination with such violent games?

to post comments

Video Games spoils the Imagination? I belive not..

I have to disagree with the person who posted above. I started to play video game at the tedner age of six or seven (all I remenber is getting the Sega Gensis and playing Sonic for hours on end) and so far it sparked my creatively. While I might not be a good drawer comapared to my freinds I still enjoy drawing my favorite character from vide games or just simply making up my own out of own little crazy imagination.

Also, I was diagnosed with a learning disability, Dyslexica when I was very young (way before I started gamming before you all jump on the idea that playing video games makes you learning disabled). When I started to read in the frist grade I wasn't such a good reader, however as time went on and the more RPG (Role Playing Games) I played my reading slowly gotten better. My Mom also helped me out by sounding the word out for me if I didn't know them. Today, I can read at the same level or a little bit higher than my peers.

People also tend to forget that not all video games are violent, only the main stream are more violent. If you dig alittle deeper you can find great non-voilent games like Haverst Moon or my personal favorite, Animal Crossing.

This posting it comming for a 18 year old girl gammer getting ready to graduate from high school. I would apologize for any typos you all might of picked up before me.

Oh, Cheesecake is good, but carrots can be more tastier sometimes! (Alittle joke for those who know what Usagi means)

to post comments

My opinion

Here is my opinion on video games:

I would first like to address the criticisms against video games: That they prompt violence and that they do damage to your IQ. The violence issue is something that I am agnostic about (although I am becoming less and less sure this is true because of informative resources such as other reports as well as the ridiculous things said in such criticizing reports). However, I must say that the rumor of video games causing detraction on IQ is downright ridiculous, and that it is logically and rationally easy to prove that opposite. Who knows what sorts of rioting and complaints would occur if society stopped blaming not just video games for the world's problems but also other products and corporations and instead demanded an improvement in supervising, parenting, teaching, relationships

and so on? People would not be happy. Though ludicrous, it is in the end, rather understandable: Who wants to think that they're the reason Eric and Dylan (the Columbiners) could have ever had such corrupted minds? I have a theory about psychology. I haven't yet managed to verify my theory's accuracy, but I'm confident that it is at least partially correct. It is this: Humans can have a tendency to try, sometimes at any cost, to do whatever they can to rip the label that says 'blame' off of them and stick it on whatever is closest to them that seems most accurate. For example, some people like to blame guns for murders, when really the reason there's a big mushroom in the sky and little Jimmy shot the sheriff is because of corrupted minds of human psychology, plenty of resources that feed it and little or no effort applied to stop it. Then, once the shit hits the fan, people seek fit to blame other things, and sadly that propaganda wins the consensus belief. But that is because people do not want to have to take the blame for things. Theresa and Jonathan raise a little child named Jake. Neither of them spends enough time with Jake; they neglect him; they are not firm with him; they do not give him the love he needs. Jake has a playstation too. Jake plays the playstation. Jake stabs his classmate with a pocketknife one time and has to get bailed out of jail, and he never pays attention to the teacher. But do the parents look at what may be wrong with the way they're raising him? No. They post articles everywhere about video games being a bad future for the world, take Jake's playstation away from him (which makes the problem worse), and does whatever they can to ban and sue as much video game resources as possible in their spare time. Things like this spread everywhere, using not just video games as an outlet for criticism over the world's problems, but others as well. That is why we live in a blame world (a.k.a. this gave me cancer or that made me fat or this made my son go to school and shoot people) where the reason Jake threw a pipebomb at his principal because he cheated on his math test is not because of human nature, corrupted psychology, bad parenting, bad environment, and so on: It's that playstation over there. Though people choose to deny it, their blaming of countless things are a product of human nature. Human nature is also the reason people fight: We've been fighting since we were apes, over matters from who gets the little itsy bitsy grape to what sort of administration will apply to what province. We deny our very nature, which we ironically are using to keep ourselves from taking the blame. What is also interesting is that the said criticisms over video games are actually descendants of previous criticisms over Elvis albums back in the 1950s, in which they were blamed for many problems and provoking violent and wild behavior among children. It is also the descendant of various arguments to ban books in the past because they were believed to have been bad influences provoking bad behavior. However, let me also argue something, a subject that I don't think has been discussed much (if at all): I believe that video games are productive. Why? Here are some reasons:

1. Action games are effective with relieving stress. 2. Almost single game requires you to think, and they are all equally intellectually productive to those who play them correctly. Games such as Marathon require quick thinking and lightning-fast reflexes sometimes to get the job done. Others require thinking ahead, like Age of Empires. Some require thinking involving lore of the area, puzzles, plot comprehension, and so on. In the end, it is simple: Video games are an intellectual activity to those who play them and take them in properly. Those who use their brains when playing will always be the most successful. That and many can involve use of imagination, and if not the game itself then other things catering to it (for example, level editors, which exercise a LOT of imagination for people). 3. All involve competition as in sports. Competition, of course, needs no explanation in the fact that it is a true benefit to people. The games can exercise competitive theory in going against and sometimes cooperating, whether it is with the computer, other humans, or both. 4. Video games require patience and perseverance. Aside with the concept of competition, both of these things are essential to effectively mastering and/or getting through the game. 5. Challenge. Need I say more? 6. Some games can offer education on some things the player may encounter in life. 7. Some games can help improve social skills. Not too accurate when playing with a computer on an RPG, but excellent online or with another player (a.k.a. side by side playing Mario). You could easily build great social skills there. Believe it or not, 65% of my social skills come from multiplayer experiences. And rumor even has it from a study So generally, video games are a highly constructive and uniquely educational activity, take it from someone who has been a gamer for years, AND--despite ignorant criticisms--aces school and isn't prone to violence. However, there is something I wonder about on this matter. You see,the benefits I listed above would apply more to those who played the video game the right way. Of course, you may think, "well how could you play it the right way without enjoying it?!" However, I have watched other people play video games, and some do not apply much (if at all) effort, enthusiasm, substantial thought, and so on to playing the game, and yet they would still enjoy it. For example, some people could simply start up Doom, put on god mode and all weapons, and

just sit there like a mindless corpse smashing buttons while the character is standing stationary. When playing like that, there is little or no productivity absorbed through playing that game. So the key to absorbing the positive aspects from the game--and, in the process, hopefully enjoying it--is to apply effort, substantial thought and so on to the game. The same should go for anything else you do. I would like to declare one final defensive statement in favor of the matter. I have noticed from time to time that a common scenario goes through this process: There are 3 people, Matt, Trisha and Bill. Matt enjoys reading, Trisha enjoys doing sports, and Bill enjoys playing video games. Matt and Trisha are praised, encouraged, complimented etc on their reading and sport-playing habits. However, Bill is frowned down upon and viewed as: "Shouldn't people be concerned that Bill spends so much time playing video games?", as the mother said. Well, no. Video games have their own attributes as to how productive and beneficial they are in comparison with other activities. And Bill, like the other person here said, is his own person, with his own likes and dislikes. Another issue in our society is that people can always have a tendency to form a majority and standardized way of society. And so, I believe it is important that people try harder to help with and spread influence on one little thing: Accepting others for who they are.

Go play!

to post comments

So confused, but anyway...

Submitted by What241 (not verified) on 13 January, 2005 - 04:21

Not understanding what Kyle is saying exactly, but i can also resort to the violence expericence. I don't play the games they claim for the violence like Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas and Doom and so-on, as i try to avoid playing them. To be honest, i try to avoid any game with guns, as they resolve my anger. The games I play as a substitute are the medieval games such as Dynasty Warriors and Monster Hunter. I find this Dynasty Warriors a great stress reliver, although the mass-slaughter doesn't ring a good tone in the adults ear, but button mashing is fun. I can't rememeber when i was introduced to games, but when i was young, my mom would turn on the SNES and let my brother and myself watch the background to Super Mario Brothers while waiting for dinner. But never has Mario caused me the inner feeling to jump on a random guys head waiting for a coin to pop out who knows where. Same with the Pacman games, never have i wanted to bite off someone's head (physically)becuase I was angry at them. Oh, sure you don't see those games on the playstation and such. but if your wanting not to expose your kid to the positive of video games, look at the Gamecube, as those game have the "kidde look" to them. If you rneed a game idea, try Animal Crossing, one of the very first games to come out for the Gamecube and yet found a warm spot in a 14-year old's soul. I'll never foeget that game as you are litteraly putting together a town with animals. There are so many games out there that aren't violent, but yet, from what i have heard from millions of sites, they blame everyone of the videogames when it is only those series of games really. Also, if you notice, the games that they point at are all sequels(Doom 3, Half Life 2, and GTA San Andreas) So, if it is a problem in little people, how come they coudn't have found this out earlier. Anyhow to sum up one long paragraph, TEENS AREN"T THE PROBLEM, ALL VIDEO GAMES DON"T CAUSE VIOLENCE, and STOP BLAMING THE PLAYSTATION AND PC FOR EVERYTHING.

Ever seen Halo?

to post comments

Re: video violence

Submitted by Terry (not verified) on 30 January, 2005 - 22:13

I've been playing video games, including violent video games since I was about 5. I have never punched someone in the face for no reason, or commited any violent acts for no reason. The thought that your step son is irresponsible because "he controls everything in the game, noone controls him" is outrageous! The thought that your blaming his violent acts solely because of video games is outrageous. I'm assuming he has been exposed to other violent sources as well. (e.g. Movies, Tv shows, Music, even cartoons.) One of many kids favorite tv shows, Pokemon, is also one of the most violent. Humans controlling little animals to fight eachother. I ask you to take a moment and sit down and just think about your step sons favorite activities. Whether it be sports, music, TV, movies, I guarantee you'll find some violence in there. Just because you and your husband cant parent well, dont take the easy way and blame video games.

to post comments

response to :video games...arent good.

Submitted by Terry (not verified) on 30 January, 2005 - 22:34

1.) Was there a statement that said "We are going to kill people because we want to reenact the video game Doom."?

A."Harris created some levels in Doom which later became known as the "Harris levels". Contrary to rumours, none of these were based on the layout of Columbine High School." -Wikipedia

2.) The two boys who shot up Columbine took part in "gothic" activities. They were teased by other students (admitted in interviews of other students) and were described by some teachers as "depressed and angry."

to post comments

I must say something...

Submitted by Soul Shinobi (not verified) on 1 February, 2005 - 18:07

Quite simply put this article is brilliant; but in all honesty, its greatness is truly beyond words. Thank you so much.

to post comments

My Opinion....

Submitted by a video gamer (not verified) on 13 February, 2005 - 11:17

I think the effects of a certain video game, either good or bad, depends on the person who plays it. I'm an avid fan of video games, but can still maintain my grades. As a matter of fact, I'm one of those "Cream of the Crop" in my batch (4th yr. Highschool). The secret is Self-control and Self- discipline. Anyways, I love Final Fantasy, especially 8 & 10. I think FF is the best RPG ever!!! What do you think?? =)

to post comments

Computer Game Renaissance

Submitted by student08 (not verified) on 13 February, 2005 - 23:15

I would hope that most people today are not so nieve as to to blame violence in todays youth soly on video games. In a world where people are influenced by so many different factors, making a simple cause-and-effect relationship relateting video games and violence would be a move to blind ourselfs to many other relavent discussions.

I don't feel that video games are completely inocent. As an influencial form of media, computer games are placed in a position be very threatening to our whole society. but, the cause of this threat doesn't come from computer games themselves, just like a gun doesnt cause one person to shoot anouther.

Obviously, computer games are not the same as guns; They are more powerful. Who was it that said "the pen is more powerful than the sword"?

It wasn't the written word that caused wars or injustice; if anything they helped end wars and make people live more peacably among each other. "The gettysburg address" was written for a cerimony praising the men who fought a violent battle; but the words of the speech were actually about the costs of war, pain caused by predutice, and the value of equality. This is why so many school children in the US memorise it and other writtings like it. Similary interactive games serve to inform. Poorly examined games may appear to in the end glorify terrible things like wars and violence. It would appear that these games would be propagating these evil actions among those that play them. But this doesn't happen because of the nature of the game and the nature of human beings. Appon introspection into why you enjoy playing these games so much, you'll find that none of your reasons match with the motivations that lead serial killers or religious fanatics to kill other human beings. Only poorly human generated mental flaws like hate can mislead people to kill one another for no reason. Of course there are all of the "natural insticts" that people, but i doubt that computer games even apply there.

I see two things a disturbing about the way society deals with computer games today.

1. that they sould be ignored and treated as a childish time consumer. 2. that they are seen only as bad influences or as evil

Computer games only have the potential to be bad because there are bad people out there and because the digital world is open access (especially via the internet). Bad people a pretty much enevitable, but since "good" is often relative i don't think that a little disturbance is always a bad thing. (I'm not really privy to the idea of perfection, like communism - not a fan). The internet is pretty much out of control, or rather it has a nice balance between chaos and order.)

It would be folly to ignore computer games as trivial. Only once we respect the importance and benifit of the video games in our world can we hope to influence their materation into something more healthy and safe for out children. The longer people hold out saying that video games are bad the longer it will take for the video games to get better. From so many educational and developemental perspectives, computer games have a lot to offer.

That video games are being mistaken for reality by children who are playing them is, as i feel, a common misconception.

The idea that playing computer games "consumes your life" is the reason for a lot of critism. These people often have this sci-fi picture of people being transported into digital worlds, or imagine people being controlled by computers becuase they give into their power. It is easy to understand why this arguement is so convincing when

you look around at all the negative imagery that surrounds computer games today. I am glad that these concepts are being questioned by articles like this one.

Even when i started playing games at around 8, i never felt like they were any more a part of my actual identity than a "saved file on a floppy" or a "digital account on a online server." I wasn't interacting with real people or objects (accounts owned by real people, maybe), i was just interacting with a keyboard and mouse (or controller). Your brain processes spacial information differently, it involves different motions. I had goals i wanted to complete in the game but they didn't define my life goals. I was just working with whatever material the game presented: character statistics, menu bars, 2d objects, and 3d landscapes.

While working with my digital world I still retained all of my normal urges and needs: to eat, to move around, to interact with other people. The pixiated screen and button covered panel were only important for as long as the information they mediated was involving for my brain.

Undoubted, stimulation helps the brain develope. Obviously you can't get all of them from computer games, but they certainly work on your higher level brain functions.

I do not feel that this article was at all a complete or finish arguement; it probably wasnt meant to be.

A kind of digital renaissance is underway. Human beings have created yet another piece of artificial art and it has changed our culture as a result. We might enventually destry ourselves but until then i say that computer games are an important part of moving us forward.

Sorry i wrote an whole essay. most of this really isnt very profound. I don't have any proof for what i said, it mostly comes from my own thoughts and experience. I am going to write a research paper relating to computer games and i really enjoyed reading this site and i think it will help.

Im a male freshman biomedical engineer student. I play games when i have extra down time (which isnt very often anymore). I for one do not like cheese cake, PEACE!

to post comments

huh, well now

Huh, well now. I'm doing a report on video games and how they affect children and this is the first to say video games are good. Being a gamer my self I'd have to agree, videogames do have good sides to them. i totally agree with I think... i think people should have a little tiny bit more faith in their kid and what they play, cept GTA, that's not so good. and to the people like I just, try playing a variety of more games if you want to know why they're fun. and if you can't see why they're fun for your self then i don't know what to tell you.

to post comments

Thanks

This is what I was looking for to write my thesis paper...thanks

By the way, the best video game is metal gear solid 3: snake eater :D

Cheese cake is good :p

to post comments

RE: video games.. arent good..

Submitted by josh (not verified) on 2 March, 2005 - 02:39

first, let me pose a question to the writer of that post: How far up your, or someone else's, ass did you have to reach your arm to pull out that much bullshit? this is not directed to only that individual but to all people who say that media (video games, music, movies, etc.) cause people to be violent. playing doom or listening to 'satanic' music does not cause a person to be violent, the person already has violent inclinations and that is why they enjoy violent video games or heavy metal. like what was prevísously mentioned by others, you are pushing the blame away from yourself and society onto inanimate objects incapable of self defense. the columbine kids did what they did because of society, they were picked on, pushed away and rejected by other students for their differences (actions taught by society) so they reacted by killing (a natural instinct) those who wronged them. they were already violent and probably not raised in a 'healthy, family environment'. they liked doom and violent video games because they like violence already... they didn't learn violence from video games, it is a part of history. since the beginning of time men have been fighting wars and killing off entire races at a time. are you suggesting we ban history as well because it teaches kids about violent and sexual things?

to post comments

What are they learning?

Submitted by Serious on 7 March, 2005 - 06:16

I really love to hear my child giggle and laugh whilst keeping a remarkable sense of humour in our world today. It is only when we parents make an effort to try playing these games that we 'see' just how wonderful they can be. Besides the interactive play and entertainment...may I suggest that parents 'play' pokemon just once! The complexity is astounding, the memory it takes, the map investigation etc, etc, etc. Truly, pokemon is not a mindless game! Try it! It's amazing! Peace!

to post comments

Re: Video violence

Submitted by J.L.M. (not verified) on 22 March, 2005 - 21:55

The fact that your stepson is, or rather was, in second grade means that he should not be playing extremely voilent video games. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that he shouldn't play violent games, or any games at all; it means that he shouldn't be playing games rate M for mature. I'm sure you'll find that the real reason you stepson is

acting up is beacuse of bad parenting and or role modles. I play video games, and I'm a girl. (sorry for any misspelled words, I can't spell for beans)

to post comments

I play viedo games

Submitted by J.L.M. (not verified) on 22 March, 2005 - 21:59

I play video games AND I'm a girl. And i happend to be very artistic, i love to read. So society I defy You!

to post comments

Video Games

Submitted by Chuck Paul (not verified) on 24 March, 2005 - 20:43

Video games are really educational and we should have more video game privelages in the schools.

to post comments

Conversations in Games

Submitted by a gamer (not verified) on 27 March, 2005 - 18:38

This was a great article. You stated before that parents feel that by playing video games, children dont have enough converstions. Well now, with online gameplay, children can talk with anyone online. I know that when i play online I can talk to my friends or even make new ones. And we dont just talk about games either. We talk about anything. Its like a virtual meeting place for people all over the world.

to post comments

Exactly

Submitted by Samentri (not verified) on 29 March, 2005 - 17:21

I've played video and PC games for a looooong time. Good way to kill time and relax, not to mention fun to do with good friends, and indeed those you don't even know, because commonly you make friends with them as well. I play, mainly violent games, whether they be FPS or RTS I've never had the urge, after playing halo to beat someone with the butt of a rifle and shoot them a few times, or run anyone down. I'll admit, the thought has come to me before, but can you truly say you've never paused and imagined getting at someone who really irks you? come now.. a good deal of people can contain the urge, like me, I often image running my boss down in a car, but never have. Then theres the columbine kids, who had bad lives going and had only one resolve in mind. But, the trick, some people are just more talented at holding it back. My parents never really spent time with me, heck, thats why I play games so much, parents never spent time with me. I knew, in my mind it was all false, and

contain those violent urges. People, not games cause these problems, humaninty is a twisted little thing you know. And yet regardless we blame everything else, maybe we need to stop being so biased eh?

to post comments

Is there such thing as video game addiction?

Submitted by The Princess Mom (not verified) on 5 April, 2005 - 17:41

As Kyle, Samentri and others have pointed out, this desire to blame video games for bad behavior is merely a way for people (in this case parents) to shift blame away from themselves. Nowadays, you can get "addicted" to anything and if you are an addict, then you can't be expected to control your behavior, therefore you are not to blame for the consequences.

This thinking is disingenuous at best and dangerous at worst. A parent's job is to keep their child safe--this requires knowing what the child is doing, how they're feeling, how they're coping with growing up, and whether they're ordering guns over the internet. A second grader doesn't "feel he has control everything" because he plays video games, but rather because the adults in his life won't exercise their control by setting loving limits for him. *Someone* has to be in charge.

Let's face it. When children become fascinated with an activity, they will do it to the exclusion of all other activities until the fascination wears off. That's the way we learn to do new things, as Deutsch pointed out. It has nothing to do with addiction.

I would ask parents who think their children are "obsessed with" or "addicted to" video games, "How much time do you spend sitting in front of a screen? Is your websurfing or channelsurfing or IMing or eBaying inherently more worthwhile because an adult is doing it? Or is it possible that your child is mimicking habits he learned from you?"

to post comments

I Am Starting a Study on how Computer games influence reflexes

Submitted by Dave (not verified) on 6 April, 2005 - 15:25

This is a very interesting article, For my final year computing project I will be addressing the issue of reflexes and how playing games can affect these, please let me know if anyone has any thoughts about this,

to post comments

video games are good

Submitted by pinky-chan (not verified) on 10 April, 2005 - 21:03

ooh the irony. I came upon this article becuase im also writing a paper on the benefits of video gaming. I think however one one my big pushes is going to be DDR and games that make you be active to play them. i know people that have lost weight and also learn to count better and keep beats better. Also one of my friends mom's

who is a gym teacher is now using ddr in some of her gym classes. Cant say that video gaming never helped you loose weight ^_~

to post comments

Thoughts of an avid video gamer

Submitted by Dale (not verified) on 14 April, 2005 - 00:44

I have been playing video games through the entire course of my 18 year life and would really like to say that I have not a single experience with any of the supposed cons of video games. Many people for whatever reason believe that video games inherently cause aggression, obesity, A.D.D, insociability, I.Q. decay, depression, etc.

1). Aggression- I play some very violent games, such as Devil May Cry, Dynasty Warriors, and Mortal Kombat among a long list of violent titles, I also am a devout metal-head,(Heavy Metal fan). Not once im my entire life have I swung a single ill-intended punch at another living entity. Nor have I ever verbally abused another. If video games seem to inspire violence it is most likely because the gamer is seeking an alternate reality to cope with their troubles. This is the kind of person who would be susceptible to becoming violent to solve issues as violent video games do. The video game, like many other things in life is not a direct cause of aggression, it vents aggression, but to this kind of person, who uses games to swap realities, they may "vent" this violence in real life. If you must find a scapegoat for this aggression, blame not the game.

2). Obesity- Whether obesity or just being out of shape, the parents of obese gamers like to say that it is due to the physically idle nature of video games. I myself am neither obese nor lazy. In fact I was a devout gymnast until I recieved a back injury that i do not wish to aggrivate with vigorous movement, but I have no problem engaging in standard exersize. I don't believe that the game makes one lazy any more than i believe it causes violence. I believe that the idle nature of video games that I mentioned a moment ago draws those who would still otherwise be physically inactive. Outdoors activities require physical involvment and not everybody is very active, thus they would choose to engage in other methods of recreation that require little energy such as video gaming.

3). A.D.D- Some people believe that video games cause A.D.D, others believe it prevents it. I find that video games greatly improve my focus on any activity I get involved with. I attribute this to the level of awareness required to play the games that I play. If I spend a long time away from video games, that is when I find my attentiveness diminishes, due to the lack of attention I must use consistently when playing games. In all this serves as a great learning tool, (relating to the notion of I.Q decay I mentioned at the start of this post) and is a great reason why my I.Q. is MENSA qualifying, (in the upper 180's may I say).

4). Insociability- Yet again, I find this absurd. I am at anytime willing to halt my games in order to spend time with my friends and am always looking to meet new people. Video games are wonderful but I would never shun real relationships pr the oppertunity to make new ones. Still, Many people belive that gamers have a tendancy to do this, but I attribute this to, once again, pre-existing behavior. Some people don't appreciate social settings because they feel they are shunned, or they just aren't willing to be social for a variety of reasons. Once again, such a person would be easily drawn to the ecsape of video games and I believe that this is why many unsociable people can be found among the ranks of video gamers, it is not caused by the video game itself.

5). Depression- Why would something that inspires fun in a person cause deprssion? If it in fact does depress you then the solution is simple here: Don't play the game. I don't feel the need to say much else on this topic, it seems like common sense to me.....

The bottom line from me is, video games do much more good than bad. Do remember though that a video game can't replace the rest of your life. There are things a video game can not do for you and it is important to realize this. I leave it to you to understand what these things are as a smart person should have little trouble doing so. A video game can harm only one who can't understand this and lets the fantasy of video games become the reality of their life.

to post comments

How can you say video games a

Submitted by An Intellectual... (not verified) on 19 April, 2005 - 22:39

How can you say video games are good? Most, if not all of kids in my grade who constantly play video games are: bad students with low self-esteem. There is NO stimulation when you are running around shooting people!What is this world coming to?

to post comments

my opinion...

Submitted by soma (not verified) on 22 April, 2005 - 15:15

I like ff 10 and 9 and have never played 8. I own 7,9,10 and 10-2

to post comments

Yay! Lets support capitalism

Submitted by Steph! (not verified) on 25 April, 2005 - 01:07

My god! What are you people saying? A person can spend hours upon hours wasting their lives on computer games. There has to be something more important in life! I've heard of certain individuals commiting suicide because they've realized just how much of their lives they've wasted playing video games.

Besides those people that play video games are not necessarily in control of them, these people are told what they're allowed to do. They're following the instructions of a machine . . . a box. Eventually, they'll become good working class citizens who follow instructions; however, it's not easy, and may be even impossible, to make it to the next level.

Remember: The medium is the message!

to post comments

Videogames

I am a fdrequent video game player. I play games like Halo 2 and Age of Empires but video games have been a part of my life sinced i was 5. I have a 4.5 gpa am an avid reader and play several sports along with around 20 hours of video games a week.

Video games have helped me so much with my school work. They allow me to exit the normal stressful world and enter one where anything is possible. They probably have kept me from getting into a few fights because if i get mad I can take out my anger in a safe way.

They have also helped me grasp concepts that were otherwise unlearnable. You can learn alot about chinese culture if you have to play as them on Age of Empires.

to post comments

Guess What, it saved my life! Beat that! Haha!

where i live, you might as well call it a waste land. video games give me something to do, because most of the buildings were ruined in a fire or no one takes care of their home because that's what the people are like. There are no attractions what-so-ever, except getting drugged up. So basically video games kept me off the streets, and i want to be a game designer because of it all. I see games as a form of art. And since i'm an artist, these so called addictions never stop amazing me with how much more the graphics look to real life.

to post comments

"video violence" and "to the writer of 'video violence'

Video games don't directly teach, but people may learn from them. A child might learn some violence from violent video games, but only if unable to distinguish between the real and unreal. This would be the case of some one who is quite young(see video violence) or someone who is already mentally unstable(columbine shootings). A parent should know their child well enough to decide when their mentally stable enough to play such violent video games. Also, "dealing with bastards" could give you a chance to help them stop being that way. Otherwise, you protrayed my sentiments exactly.

to post comments

Ignore conformist articles by the media and think for yourself.

I cannot say how evermore frustrated I grow with complacent conformists that simply feed off of misguided media reports and insecurities they pull out just to compensate for their lack of parenting skills.

You conformist pigs seriously need to have your ass fed to your face when you have the nerve to put down every single logically-based argument that lies in the hands of gamers and those who actually have the common sense to STUDY gaming history and these horrible shootings that were ignorantly 'connected' with it, and more importantly actually PLAY these games and develop an understanding with them, so that we can finally get a tight grip on what this unique and autonomous realm is all about.

It should seem clear to you people that flogging dead horse after dead horse for the same bigoted and moronic purpose isn't really doing anything. Sure, just keep putting out the slogan "if the media says it, it MUST be true", then let most everyone's eyes get blinded in shit.

Of course, there will always be people calling video games 'monsters that provoke the idea of violence and killing', 'breeders of killers', etc. But where were these people, might I ask? Where were these people when kids were picked on, or having trouble in school? Where were these people when kids were forced into conformity and homogenous image by aspects of peer pressure and the media? Where were these people when kids developed violent tendencies in vicious contact sports that have a majority fanbase that show no remorse or consideration for the game and instead focusing on crippling the shit out of everyone? Where were these people when kids come home from a school where nobody understands or cares for their unique personality, and instead throw them in the cold and label them as 'trouble-makers' or 'mentally corrupted children', with locker-room jackasses lusting for violence, all the while pushing the kids into the lockers? WHERE WERE THESE PEOPLE WHEN THEIR CHILDREN WERE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES?! Filing tax papers? Mopping the floor? Sitting on their ass in front of The Price Is Right, contemplating trivial matters and complaining endlessly over Janet Jackson's boob? Do these idiots even HAVE kids? I mean seriously, give me a break.

Looking at the history of the Columbine kids, it's really hard to imagine that reports accusing video games of making people go crazy and blast mofos left and right can be called an 'objective analysis'. I'd list the facts, but I want to stay on topic here, so go to wikipedia.org and search under "Columbine".

More parents today are beginning to adopt a 'less parenting, more blaming' reputation, a common excuse that has been put out to cover up the fact that parents are either working or sitting on their ass all day. Actually, come to think of it, it has been that way for years now.

How can you say that video games are just mindless killer-breeding machines with no stimulation value when the personal lives of their consumers haven't even been analyzed?

Dumbass said:

"How can you say video games are good? Most, if not all of kids in my grade who constantly play video games are: bad students with low self-esteem."

To begin with, it's really hard to find a kid in the USA today that doesn't associate with video games (or, for that matter, their industry), from time to time. And it is very common for kids in public schools to have a lot of trouble, both academically and socially.

Thus, it is foolhardy of you to mistake video games causing these sorts of problems with kids whose minds don't fit in with the standardized culture and teaching process that public schools and their shitty fanbase support. Clearly distinguishes your skewed perspective of what is a stimulation and what isn't, doesn't it? I doubt you've even observed video games and the real effects that have allowed people to develop more effectively.

Dumbass also said:

"There is NO stimulation when you are running around shooting people!What is this world coming to?"

The way video games are misunderstood in this manner is mainly because people haven't really tried them to experience the positive effects they have on people. There is in fact quite a lot of stimulation when playing any sort of video game, including the ones that depict people blowing enemies up. People need to--get this--THINK in order to accomplish anything. Video games use their own unique and autonomous environment to keep this method of development strong and wanting the player to come back for more.

In my experiences: Strategy games are self-explanatory, helping the player to improve in logical/rational decisions, strategize and think ahead. Role Playing Games teach the most perseverance in my humble opinion amongst other highly important principles that are especially found in online RPGs, helping people build upon their values and life principles in a very fun twist, and teaching to rationalize things, be observant, and deal with things one set at a time, or in other words 'divide and conquer'. Action games not only help the player build lightning-fast reflexes and visual skills very quickly, but give the player the oppurtunity to use a strategizing skill that is often not quite as large by comparison to strategy games, but nonetheless builds brain-working speed like no other game, increasing the ability for people to not only think quicker and be more observant, but also become better with judgement skills. Looking at all this, it is sad to know that the only real video games that are deemed "educational" by our society are games that feature perverted talking animals that throw math problems at people.

The fact is, the reason why video games are enjoyable by so many people is because every human loves learning. But the way they are fed information doesn't always work. The unique and fun method of video gaming is perhaps one of the most expendable methods towards boosting human intelligence, despite the ignorant sheep that label video games as pointless boxes that people 'waste their lives on' (coming your way, Steph Shit). Lack of parenting skills or lack of a socially open environment or misunderstanding for a constructive interactive environment should not be mistaken for a 'waste' of time. Yes, as people such as Steph pointed out, video games can seem like nothing when people fail to really bother understanding their environment (or, for that matter, even really playing them).

One of the most disturbing message that has been portrayed by the media is not that video games are 'evil and degrading', but that these so-called 'facts' have been used to demean video gamers and to place harsh stereotypes onto their identity. Readers? Bound to be successful, very smart and interesting people. Sports players? Very hearty people with a sense of athletic responsibility, thus bound to be successful. On and on the list goes. Oh wait, video gamers? Probably bound to rot away in the ghetto. They play video games. That makes them mentally challenged, unsophisticated and desensitized. Society's mind-rot mass has gotten away with a lot of rude generalizations, that's for sure.

If you ask me, it's time people consider any reports by the media as a low potential in terms of labeling an opinion as a 'fact'. No more of this 'the media says it, it's true' bullshit. No more throwing our weight of blind faith around. We need to crush people like the MAVAV, the PMRC, etc and start seeing for ourselves what autonomous worlds that are taken for granted really have to offer.

Oh, and Halo sucks.

~Sluggo

to post comments

Yey for videogames!

Submitted by violet_yoshi (not verified) on 5 June, 2005 - 14:26

YEY! *lots of applause* WHOO-HOO! I'm glad you're advocating the good in video games! I've been gaming since I was 10, and as a result have learned alot of problem solving skills. I think that because some game

designers, like to make trash like Grand Theft Auto, parents assumed that means ALL games are like that.

Basically, I tell people, if they want a family friendly gaming system, you're safe with Nintendo. They've always had a strict guideline, for making their games fun for all. Alot of people have considered that they're a "kiddy" system, and that real gamers don't play it. However, I don't see what's so "mature" about killing off zombies or soldiers. Yes Nintendo is starting to include a few M titles, but overall they've always been a company that has remained family-friendly.

Now after I've given Nintendo that free plug. (LoL, I always tend to do that.) I think that being able to have conversations is good, however, when you're requiring your child to be social, you're leaving them vunerable for all sorts of things. Mainly having to do with peer-pressure.

I ask people this. Would you rather have your child addicted to drugs, or video games? Of course the answer is video games. If you're going to pick between the best of two evils, well video games come out on top.

As far as sitting on one's butt all day gaming. The gaming industry has made strides to conquor this. They have a interactive USB camera game, called EyeToy for the Playstation 2. These games, involve full body movement to play the games. As in you aren't just sitting there twiddling your thumbs, over a controller.

Another concept is the Dance Dance Revolution games. You have a mat, that is set up like the controller. With the crosspad, and a start button in the center. You move your feet according to the arrows on screen.

I am not good at this, it really does take coordination skills. However, Nintendo has announced that it will release Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix for their new system, the Nintendo Revolution. Which will be released around Christmas/fall. I'm assuming, from what little is known about the game. That it might be less challanging, due to it being aimed at a younger audience.

So in conclusion, video games are good. Very very good. If it wasn't for looking foward to video games, I probaly would be much more depressed than I am now, because video games really are the only thing I'm good at. I never was good at physical things, and I think when it comes to kids who aren't sports stars. Video games can help them feel a sense of accomplishment. Or in general, video games help players feel accomplishment.

I can tell you this. I find many more things in video games, that I can apply usefully to life. Than I've ever learned from the "social world" at school, and outside. If you are concerned about social development, I'd reccomend you buy a Paper Mario game for your child. There's like 2 out now, both of them teach a kind of simplistic wrong from right social base. N' teaches how you can benifit from helping others. I know in the first Paper Mario, there's a really cute Toad (little mushroom people, not frogs) couple, and if you talk to them they exchange conversations of being in love with each other.

to post comments

Hey Thanks

Submitted by T-RAD (not verified) on 7 June, 2005 - 15:32

Thanks everyone on this site for their positive remarks on video games, you guys rock!!!!! those who put negative comments, why don't you try and PLAY a video game and see what its like instead of assuming, video games ROCK!!!!

Great article

Submitted by justin kutz (not verified) on 8 June, 2005 - 15:25

Great article!

i need help

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 22 August, 2005 - 12:59

my parents are probably one the few who won't let me play games over my age. i'm 12 so this sucks. i agree games do help. i am a straight A student and i love video games. in baseball i know exactly where the ball is going. my parents think i'm violent becuse of video games. i'm not. i've been in only one fight, i didn't cause it and only threw one punch. he through 50. i can't reply on the rpg and fps topics since i don't have any. if anybody has any ways that can help me go right ahead.

Help I'm in the middle of a Video Game struggle with Spouse

Submitted by Homeschool Vide... (not verified) on 30 August, 2005 - 08:42

What is a parent to do when there is a huge disagreement with a spouse in regard to the issue of whether or not children should play videogames? My husband totally disapproves of them but I think they are great, and that my son is doing well in his life. I don't want my husband making my son feel like he's strange or can't express himself. My husband has no respect for my son's hobby. He feels there is nothing wrong with his negative comments and I am making a bad choice as a mother for my kids. I feel like if he was really concerned he would try another approach or come up with something my son would like. HELP, am I wrong here? I'm a mother and I am standing up for Computer/Video Games.

To the person who needs help...

Submitted by Cyclone (not verified) on 1 September, 2005 - 20:29

Forget what your parents say and rebel already. Sheesh.

You call this taking children seriosly!?!

Submitted by a mad reader (not verified) on 29 September, 2005 - 15:43

I cannot believe you are planting this junk into kids minds! Who DO you think you are. What world do you live in, I mean I live in a real world so I have no idea where you come from. I am 14 years old and I do not believe in this.

to post comments

This is Marvelous

Submitted by __Matthew Burt (not verified) (http://www.fictionpress.com/~mlburt)__ on 29 October, 2005 - 00:21

I'd like to say that this is truly one of the best articles I've ever read. I'd like to leave a far more thorough comment, but I believe those before me have done enough.

But I will say this:

I'm fifteen, and video games have inspired me to write. I'm currently writing a novel.

There. A perfectly good example of one of the benefits of video gaming.

to post comments

Iggernant People

Submitted by Saint (not verified) on 29 November, 2005 - 07:06

I was in the process of researching for a paper on time travel (how it's impossible-you can't go back in time by going the speed of light if everything stops once you get there, but I digress...). I'm not entirely sure how I ended up here, but I'm glad I did. It pleases me to see this many gamers rising to defend the art in which they are proficient. Unfortunately, there are always people around to slander something that they don't fully agree with or understand; people who just talk for the sake of belittling something they don't like. Throughout the entire course of humanity, there has been one constant that impedes the progress of our race, and that is the resistance to change. Is there anyone here, perchance, that still thinks the world is flat? Fuck no. That's because eveyone that thought that died a long time ago. Now, when these gamers grow up, they'll be doing the same thing as you people attacking them for their video games-They'll be shunning new things as well; that's the nature of people. Resistance to change. No one really cares if that pisses you off, either. You think anyone's going to remember that you don't approve of this in a hundred years? I won't even remember that I wrote this tomorrow.

More to the point. A video game is an incredibly versitile instrument through which a child, teenager or adult can sit back and release some stress while having a good time. They can also help you learn. I personally think video games are great. I'm allowed to think that; it's my Constitutional right. You're allowed to dislike video games, but for God's sake (that is, if there is one) what the Hell are you doing posting negative comments on a board that opens with an interview that defends video games? If there is actually a brain residing somewhere inside that cavity that's usually supposed to hold one, why not use it? Do a little research. Play a couple games. Don't just play the ones that you hear about with all the controversy; that's stupid, and if you think about it, you'll realize that. Play it to the end, too. Don't puss out. Only then can you actually discuss this with an open mind.

reply

Submitted by james (not verified) on 9 December, 2005 - 14:55

no offence why dont you go and telll where your parents can go and stuff it? i would!!! i hope this helps you! please reply to me!

james

p.s: who were you fighting against?? is it ok now?

i cant get my mom to

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 19 December, 2005 - 06:15

i cant get my mom to understand that just cause i play a lot of games she thinks im dumb and waste my time on junk. since my freind let me borrow resident evil 4 she thinks since im using guns im learning its ok to kill people.

i have printed much much proof like this BUT she dosn't care and dissmes it. im a good kid and she thinks casue i get angry its the games fault. my sister is 11 and plays basketball, acts like a literal bitch sometimes and gets praised for wat she does.

i can't go a day without saying. "NO! stop playing it currupts your mid to kill people and dont do anything good for yourself"

well i read the lord of the rings book and currently reading 2 towers. i love reading and games. i just dont like sports.

I know right from wrong and such. bet if i did 12 hours of sports and read and watched only tv she'd be praising me and bragging how a great kid i am.

come on i have a mind and not your stupid old fashioned no questions asked boy. HELLO HOW DUMB DOES SHE THINK I AM!

Think about it.

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 4 January, 2006 - 23:24

I'm not saying you are a bad parent in any way but consider this. It probably is not only the video game that is the problem here.Maybe it has something to do with parenting,disipline,or not being taught morals.A lot of parents right away blame it on video games because they don't understand them fully.Talk to your child and don't be afraid to ask questions.

Please don't take any offence from this I am only trying to help.

to post comments

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