Violence in Video Games: 
What are its effects on the mind of youths today? 
An Annotated bibliography

Violence has been a mainstay in video games since the medium was created, and for about half of its life, it has been under fire for supposedly influencing young adults to commit unspeakable crimes. As an avid gamer myself, I find that anything involving the industry has pique my interest. Unfortunately, over the past ten plus years, violent crimes committed by young men have become an almost weekly event, with at least three major shootings happening this month alone. While no one claims that they did this because they played violent games, some are saying that having more and more kids exposed to violence that they control will influence them to be less sensitive to situations of actual extreme violence. The protest against games like Grand theft Auto, has led to people looking into the problem more and asking if it’s really video games that are the problem, or the fact that they portray real life to accurately to validate the games as the problem instead of the reality that the kids live in.

To begin looking into a topic this huge, I am going to start by looking at the library’s article guide and find articles related to the mental development of kids with the influence of violent video games. I will look for articles that have a psychological background and will provide a less biased argument as compared to an article created for a parent’s magazine or a gaming magazine. After that I will then look into the two sides of the argument, as a previously stated, articles meant for the parents and article written for gamers. In the library article guide, researching “Violent Video Games” garnishes more than enough articles to get a good start to my research.
One of the big problems that I will face looking this up is the built in bias many authors have against video games. As from what I found, most adults don’t take video games as a serious form of entertainment and this can be seen when they need to bring it up. I’ve seen many times where just mentioning video games around some has made them take what I was saying less serious because I was a “gamer.” To combat this, I plan to not only research using the un-biased psychology articles, but also look for articles written from someone involved in the gaming community, someone who will take the topic of video games more seriously.

Thesis:
A child who does not play violent games is just as likely to commit violent crimes as a child who does when they become young adults. It’s not the games they play, but the world they grown up in.


A Canadian study taken from 109 eighth graders shows the relationship they have between their video games playing patterns and their level of moral reasoning. The results showed that violent video games were extremely popular in adolescents and that they demonstrated the negative relationship between playing video games and their social skills. These results are based on the adolescent’s scores on the Sociomoral Reflection Measure. The source is from a scholarly journal, *Education Media International*, and is a report of results from an experiment. The author, Mirjana Bajovic, is a faculty member at Brock University in St. Catharines, ON, Canada.

Comparing the act of getting rid of violent video games on the basis of moral issues to the burning of books, which is seen many times throughout history, the author goes into why getting rid of the media will not get rid of the effects or ideas of it. He also goes into the tolerance society has for others to hold up their beliefs with no fear of persecution and why it is the same fight for those who support violent media/video games.

This article is off the popular gaming news website IGN. Its main purpose is to inform gamers about current events happening in the gaming community. This being said, this article is written with one audience in mind, gamers who come onto a website that talks about something they enjoy and won’t want to read an article on why gaming can be bad. This article is popular, but shows one extreme side of the argument.


Studying the use of video games to manage negative feelings, this test compared how two groups of children reacted to playing video games. One half of the group was frustrated before they started to play games, the other half going into the games calm. The experiment found that the group already frustrated played longer, and were more determined to complete their games. When they played violent games, they finished with more of a relief and were calmer after playing the game.

This article is the lab report of an experiment published to the November 2015 journal, Computers in Human Behavior. This is a scholarly journal based on the study of technology on the psyche of people. The authors, James Bonus, Alanna Peeble and Karyn Riddle, are affiliated with Communication arts and Journalism and mass communication colleges at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.


Claiming that violent video games are being omitted from studies that evaluate the effects of violent media on youths, a study was conducted on 3,372 Flemish adolescents. The results indicate that violent video games are a significant contribution to delinquent behavior, over other risks. The results were compared to ones that didn’t include violent games and found that they were better than those that did include violent video games.
This article was published in the scholarly journal, *Aggressive Behavior*, which is dedicated to the causes of aggressive behavior in people. The Authors, Liese Exelmans, Kathleen Custers and Jan Van den Bulck are all affiliated with the Leuven School for Mass Communication Research at University of Leuven in Leuven Belgium.


To test the role of violent video games in the minds of youths, aged 12-18, and three studies were tested during gameplay. The first study involved the youths playing an evenly matched action game, be it violent or non-violent, and the youths were given an opportunity to act aggressively in an ice water task. The second study was the same as the first, but a slower narrative based game was played instead of an action one. The third study exposed youths to violence in books. The results showed that there is no link between video game violence to aggressive behaviors.

This article was published in the scholarly journal, *Computers in Human Behavior*, which is a scholarly journal that reports the effects of computers and technology on the minds of people. Published in September 2015, this article is very recent and is using the most recent studies and real world events. The author, Christopher Ferguson and the other affiliates, are from the Departments of Psychology at Stetson University and Texas A&M International University.

Testing the effects of exposer to violent video games on children with pre-existing mental health problems can lead to more effects than it would with kids who don’t have pre-existing mental problems. 337 children with pre-existing mental problems were exposed to violent video games. The results showed that children with pre-existing mental health problems were not at any more risk of being effected by violent video games than a child without mental health problems.

Produced in the scholarly journal, *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, in January 2014, this article is recent. The Journal is dedicated to analyze the psychologies of young adults. The author, Christopher Ferguson, are from the Departments of Psychology at Stetson University.

The common misperception that violent video games leads to kids being less social, more angry and more prone to violence is being falsely claimed. Allowing parents to read into what actually is in the games that their kids play, this book goes into the misrepresentation of violent video games in the media.

Written by Lawrence Kutner and Cheryl Olson, who are co-founders of the Center for Mental Health and Media at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School. This book is a popular source made for parents of kids who play video games. Based on their stance, they are delivering an unpopular opinion in respects to the normal material for an audience of parents.


Research has shown the positive effects of prosocial gaming, but none of these tests have examined these effects on children. The test had young children (9-14) play prosocial, neutral and violent video games to see what behaviors were formed. The results showed that prosocial gaming increased helpful behavior and decreased hurtful behavior, but violent video games increased hurtful behaviors like aggress behavior.

This article is published in the journal, Aggressive Behavior, in July/August 2012. It studies the causes of aggressive behavior in people. The author, Muniba Saleem, is PhD in Social Psychology, Applied Psychology, and Media Psychology and is affiliated with the University of Michigan.


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