

The Influence of Video Games on Youth: Implications for Learning in the New Millennium

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Are video games bad for you?

- ◆ Black and white thinking about video games; the truth is more nuanced
- ◆ A game is a medium; it sends messages and teaches lessons
 - ◆ Like comparing Sesame Street to Adult Videos; content varies widely
 - ◆ Research shows most popular commercial games are violent

Why we're easy to manipulate

- ◆ Third Person Effect - others may be affected, but not me (e.g., Scharrer & Leone, 2006)
- ◆ Cognitive Dissonance
 - ◆ Brenick et al. (2007): Higher frequency players and males more likely to condone negative (sexual and aggressive) gender stereotypes in games
- ◆ Misunderstanding of media effects-11 Myths of Media Violence
 - ◆ "Playing is okay because it's not like he's going to go out and shoot someone tomorrow." (p. 412)

Why we're easy to manipulate

- ◆ We disbelieve serious effects have trivial causes
- ◆ We believe manipulation is done by overt techniques of government (communist Russia), not by business/advertising
 - ◆ To paraphrase: advertising doesn't affect me; I don't notice ads
- ◆ "The most effective kind of propaganda is that which is not recognized as propaganda."

-Jean Kilbourne, *Can't Buy My Love*

VGs and Aggression

- ◆ A growing body of evidence has shown a causal link between violent video game play and aggressive thoughts, behaviors and emotions
- ◆ Ex. 2007 study demonstrated that adolescent boys playing vvg's significantly more likely to deliver noise blasts they believed would cause permanent hearing damage



See work of Craig Anderson and Brad Bushman

Posing with Weapons = Glamorized

- ◆ 32% Males
- ◆ 31% Females
- ◆ Compared to:
- ◆ Fighting:
33% Males
16% Females
- ◆ Military:
4% Males
1% Females

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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Female Game Characters

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

- ◆ 60% Sexualized
 - ◆ 1% of males
- ◆ 63% Vision of Beauty
- ◆ 39% Scantily clad
- ◆ 62% Aggressive
- ◆ 39% Sexualized & Aggressive

Dill & Thill, in press

Male Game Characters

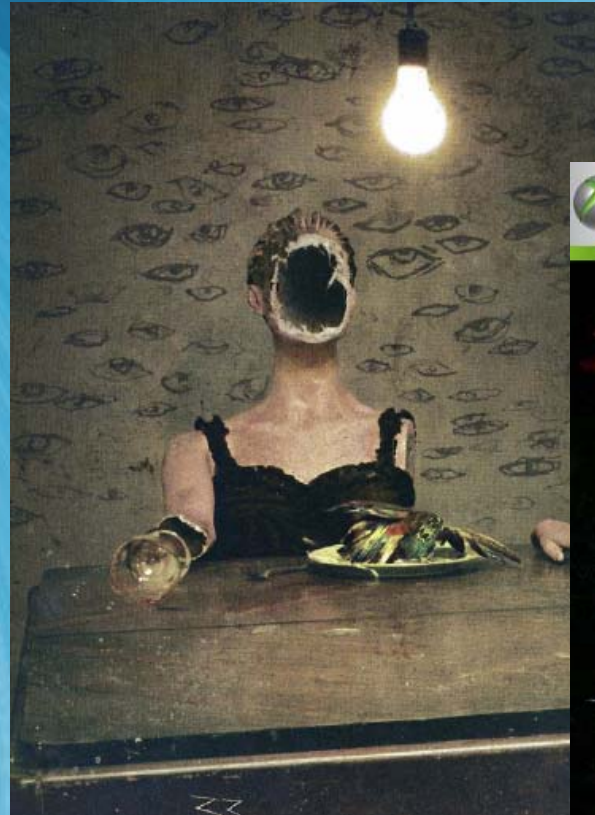
- ◆ 83% Aggressive
- ◆ 33% Hyper-masculine
- ◆ Aggressive Portrayal:
 - ◆ 4% military
 - ◆ 33% fighting
 - ◆ 42% wearing armor



Dill & Thill, in press

“Just harmless entertainment”?

- ◆ May be created for sexual titillation, but important issues are:
 - ◆ Demeaning portrayals
 - ◆ Objectification
 - ◆ Disempowerment
 - ◆ Eroticized aggression



Sexism as Aggression



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The advertisement features a large image of a female character in a black bikini with colorful patterns. To her right is a smaller image of a GamePro magazine cover with the headline "HIP-HOP GAMES" and "200".

- ◆ Aggression as dominance and coercion
 - ◆ Sociological theory of aggression as a means of power, dominance, coercion
- ◆ Ambivalent Sexism Theory
 - ◆ "bad but bold" vs. "wonderful but weak"
- ◆ Hegemonic Masculinity Theory
 - ◆ Maleness is normal and dominant; keep females "in their place"



Rap Music Example

- ◆ In Rap music, women are referred to by the “b” and “h” words
- ◆ References to raping, throwing women down on the floor (see David Banner lyrics)
- ◆ Social hierarchy - power move over women, especially black women
- ◆ Male dominance/Female objectification juxtaposition

Racial Stereotyping in VGs



- ♦ African-American males: athletes, “gangsta’s” and thugs
 - ♦ Exposure to AA male vg images caused > recognition of aggressive stimuli
- ♦ Asian males: 75% martial artists; females: non-aggressive beauties

Burgess, Dill, et al. (2007)

Teens: Typical VG Characters?

- ◆ Males:

- ◆ Powerful
- ◆ Aggressive
- ◆ Hostile Attitude
- ◆ Athlete
- ◆ Thug

- ◆ Females:

- ◆ Provocative Dress
- ◆ Large Breasts
- ◆ Skinny
- ◆ Sexual
- ◆ Aggressive

Correlations

- ◆ Dill, 2007: Violent video game play correlated with Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA; Burt, 1980) and negative ATW
 - ◆ E.g., "The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men," (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973)
- ◆ Dill, Brown, & Collins (2007): VVG play correlated with specific rape myths (Meuhlenhard & Felts, 1998) and less progressive sexual harassment judgments

Effects of Exposure to Common VG Sex Role Stereotypes

Control-Professional Images



Experimental-
Stereotypical Images

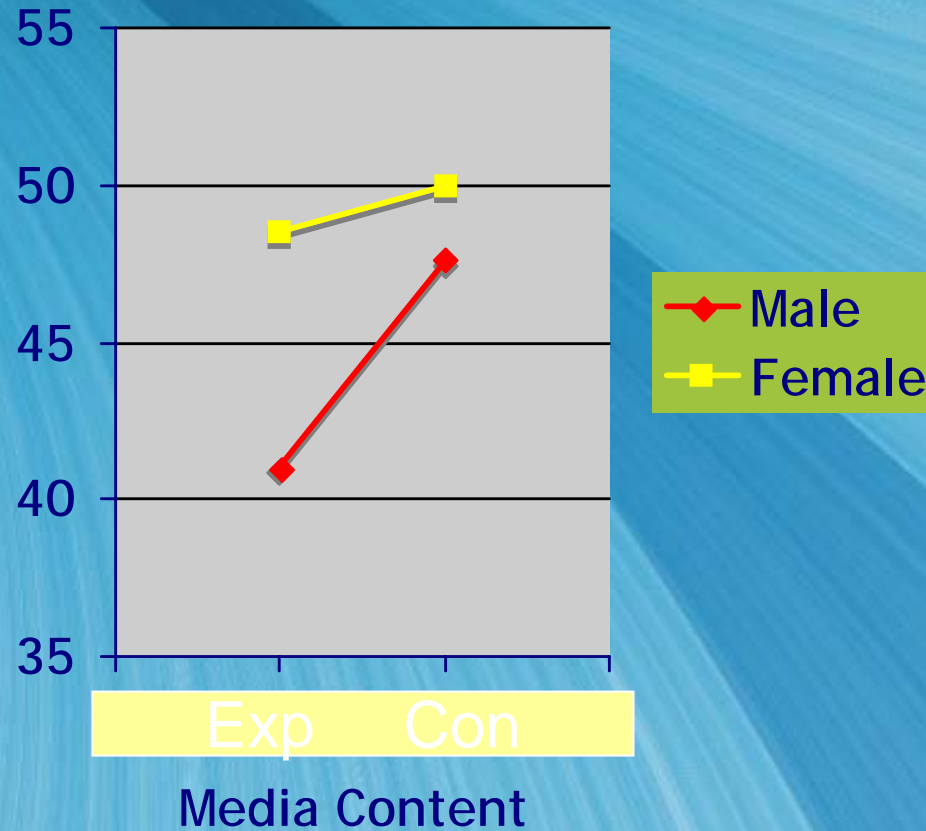


Dill, Brown & Collins, 2007

Dependant Measures

- ◆ Sexual Harassment
 - ◆ *The Silent Treatment* by Naomi Wolf
 - ◆ Ratings: 0 to 9 - Is it SH? Victim empathy, victim blame (rev), punishment, serious? damaging?
- ◆ Rape Myth Acceptance
 - ◆ Sexual Beliefs Scale (Meuhlenhard & Felts, 1998)-5 subscales: Leading on Justifies Force, Men Should Dominate, Women Like Force, Token Refusals, No Means Stop
 - ◆ Results: Main Effect of Experimental Manipulation

Results: Sexual Harassment



Lower = Less
Progressive

VGs, Motivation & Addiction

- ◆ Skinnerian Conditioning
 - ◆ “If-then”
 - ◆ Positive Reinforcement
 - ◆ Fixed-Ratio Schedule that may appear as a Variable Ratio Schedule
 - ◆ Reinforces habit strength
 - ◆ Very motivating/addictive-like slot machines

Energization Theory of Motivation

- ◆ We're most likely to mobilize energy for difficult but possible tasks

VGs as Exemplary Teachers

- ◆ 1) clear objectives w/ adaptable difficulty levels
- ◆ 2) active learning with practice and feedback
- ◆ 3) over-learning to gain mastery

Exemplary Teachers

- ◆ 4) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
- ◆ 5) increased difficulty across levels where past learning can be applied
- ◆ 6) close to optimal level of massed vs. distributed practice
- ◆ 7) learning that can be applied to different problems and contexts

Summary and Conclusions

- ◆ Gender Stereotypes in video games are pervasive
 - ◆ Impoverished images perpetuate myth
 - ◆ Male power/Female objectification
- ◆ Exposure to violent video games linked to RMA and negative attitudes towards women, including judgments about sexual harassment
- ◆ New experimental data suggests exposure matters
 - ◆ E.g., exposed males have more lax views about sexual harassment