

Video games are beneficial

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Video Games are beneficial Video Games have come a long way since their first introduction into the main stream. With video games becoming more sophisticated and using advanced technology, it seems as if video games are closing in on the gap between games and reality. However, as video games become ever so life-like it brings up the question of if the violence associated with video games is having a negative consequence. There have been many accusations over the years over the harm video games are causing children and teenagers. Experiments have been conducted trying to associate a link between video games and aggressive behavior. Even the media has been known to point fingers at video games for the cause of children committing criminal activity. Despite these many accusations, I tend to argue that video games are not as harmful to the mind as portrayed by the media, and instead beneficial. There have been many tragic instances over the past two decades of teens and older children committing hideous acts of violence that have caused us to pay attention and seek who to blame. From the terrible event in the 90's of the Columbine shootings, or the more recent school shooting in Virginia Tech it seems as if the media has loved to point blame on video games. Many news reports have gone on revealing that this teen or that teen have all been at one point or another playing some sort of violent video game containing guns and killing. The media has made a clear stance on believing that the violence teenagers have watched and taken apart of in a video game is the main cause of them replicating violence onto the real world. There have also been issues on governments banning certain video games from being sold in their country due to its violent nature, causing an uproar from parents to get games banned in their countries as well. In the

90's there was even enough media attention to video game violence that the United States Congress had a hearing on issuing age appropriate labels, much like in movies, to video games to warn parents of the contents of a game. Each of these matters have only helped further tarnish the reputation of video games, and draw worse misconceptions about them. The advancement of media is one of the greatest accomplishments of our time, helping spread news globally at incredible speed; however, the media may not always prove such an unbiased or well-informed view on everything. Video games seem to be one topic the media tends to have a highly bias opinion against. The media tends to emphasis the connection of teenagers who commit crimes with playing violent video games yet, violent video games are highly played throughout the world. Ferguson, author of " The Good, The Bad and the Ugly " , says that " It is not hard to ' link' video game playing with violent acts if one wishes to do so, as one video game playing prevalence study indicated that 98. 7% of adolescents play video games to some degree". What Ferguson tries to explain is that for anyone trying to correlate teenagers committing violent crimes and the amount of time playing video games is hardly evidence of anything. Trying to prove that a behavior, such as video gamming, so highly common amongst teenagers is the cause of a rare behavioral incidence, as a school shooting, is highly illogical. Similar to early studies correlating television viewing to increased aggression, video games have been subjected to the same treatment. Recently researchers have done vast studies over the relationship between video games and aggressive behavior. The majority of studies done have linked video game to increasing a players' aggressive behavior. These

results indicate that after playing violent video games a person tends to have a higher level of arousal of aggression than before they played. However, these studies only prove a correlation to the fact aggression appears while playing video games and do not take account other variables or admit to their findings as conclusive. Despite studies showing correlations of aggressive behavior to video games, that does not mean a causation exists. Bartholow of the article, *Correlates and Consequences of Exposure to Video Game Violence: Hostile Personality, Empathy, and Aggressive Behavior*, says how "lab experiment(s) showed that individuals low in VVE behave more aggressively after playing a violent video game than after a nonviolent game but that those high in VVE display relatively high levels of aggression regardless of game content" (Bartholow, Sestir, Davis). What he means is that the people who showed an increase aggression are the ones prone to have the least aggressive behavior while, the ones who showed high aggressive behavior increase were highly aggressive regardless of game content because of their personality traits. A study done in the article, *VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES AND AGGRESSION*, showed that "once family violence and aggressive personality are controlled, violent-video-game exposure is not predictive of violent crimes"(Ferguson, Rueda, Cruz, Ferguson). They claim that most studies done showing a positive correlation to violent video games and violence are due to the fact of not controlling other important variables. By controlling the effects of personality traits and family violence history, each person showed very little correlation to aggression and exposure to violent video games. Results also showed that participants in the study regardless of playing a video game for the first time

or being a life long gamer had no significance on aggression increase. The article also mentions that, " playing violent video games does not constitute a significant risk for future violent criminal acts...violent crime can best be explained through a combination of innate personality factors, gender, and family violence exposure"(Ferguson, Rueda, Cruz, Ferguson). There are many misconceptions of video games harming a persons' mental and physical health. Many studies try to link extensive video game playing to a drop in academic grades, or anti-social attitudes. These misconceptions tend to be advertised by misinformed media. The truth is that video games neither harm nor damages a person's academic skills or health. Authors Kevin Durkina, and Bonnie Barber in the article, " Not so doomed: computer game play and positive adolescent development", do research between the health and social effects of non-gamers, light-gamers, and hardcore gamers. Durkina and Barber reported in that in their experiments, " those who reported low use of computer games had higher grades than both those who never played and those who played at high levels". This meant that video games did not necessarily harm students' grades but rather helped improve them. This also revealed that video games themselves did not cause a lower academic score but, instead a students' abuse in time spent on playing video games would be the cause in any drop in grades. It was also found out that, " participants who reported never playing computer games were less attached to school than those who reported playing computer games at either low or high levels"(Durkina, Barber). Relating to conceptions of video games causing anti-social behavior Durkina and Barber revealed that, " Adolescents who played computer games either at low or high rates reported

having closer family relationships than those who did not play". This revealed that teenagers who played video games seemed to have a better relationship with family members on average than those who do not play. This studied disregards any stigma that video games cause negative effects on children's mental health. Besides the entertainment value, video games provide many beneficial effects to people. What many people might not know is that video games are being used to help educate kids. In the article, *Enriched Learning with Video Simulation Games*, by author Frances Clem and Elizabeth Simpson, they describe the use of a video game in a classroom setting to help educate kids on triage procedures. They described how students in a triage elective course were given a game called 911 Paramedics to play as a method of learning procedures. After being able to play the game the majority of students' grades rose compared to previous exams without any video gaming. This showed that a video game used in class helped reinforce teaching learned from lecture. The only students who did not rise in grades were those who did not grasp the concept of the game as a additional tool for learning not a supplement. When those students were explained the idea of the use of the game they generally rose in grade as the rest of the class. There has also been a sting of video games aimed at pre-schoolers and small children, by such companies as Leap-Frog, that aim at teaching children to read and count. These video games have become wildly popular and have shown to help in the learning process. There are even video games used in hospitals aimed at younger children with diabetes that aim to help teach the child to take their insulin. Video games have also been known to increase spatial cognition. Since video games usually involve being

in a three dimensional world, players are exercising their cognition in understanding the placement of objects and the way to interact with them in a virtual world. Studies have shown that video game player have a higher growth in spatial cognition than those who do not play video games. This increase in spatial cognition is helpful in school, situation of complex thinking or figuring out puzzles. In conclusion, video games have had many negative conceptions about them with little evidence to support it. With all the bad press video games receive it is sometimes hard to believe that not all of it is true and even harder to believe that video games can actually contribute something positive to us. However, video games are not a negative influence on anyone. Any negative study done on video games has only been at best able to correlate game violence with aggression, and even than is highly disproved by many other studies. On the bright side, video games do offer the benefits of being used a learning tool. Video games also help with reaction time and eye-hand coordination. Even those who do spend many hours playing it is never a waste. Video games have evolved into a billion dollar industry with opportunity for gamers. Bibliography Anderson, Craig, Carnagey Nicholas, Flanagan Mindy, Benjamin Jr. Arlin, Eubanks Janie, Valentine, Jeffery. VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES: SPECIFIC EFFECTS OF VIOLENT CONTENT ON AGGRESSIVE THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOR. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 1115—1125 Bartholow, Bruce, Sestir Marc, and Davis Edward. Correlates and Consequences of Exposure to Video Game Violence: Hostile Personality, Empathy, and Aggressive Behavior. *Pers Soc Psychol Bull* 2005; 31; 1573 Clem, Frances and Simpson, Elizabeth. Enriched Learning with Video Stimulation Games. *Connect Magazine*; Mar/Apr2008,

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