

# Violent video games and their influence on kids

[Entertainment](#), [Video Games](#)



Researchers, parents and educators are all discussing the controversy around violent video games and their influence on kids. The audience seems to be divided into two large groups: one is in favor of restricting or even banning violent video games as they make children (and, arguably, adults as well) more prone to aggressive behavior, like that seen on the screen.

Opponents of this view claim that video games do not cause violent behavior in real life and are, in fact, a safe outlet to natural aggression and frustration.

Representatives of the first group such as John Leo, in his article "When Life Imitates Video" argue that watching countless deaths and identifying with killers would undoubtedly lead to people feeling more comfortable about violence and suffering in their everyday life. He even goes so far as to say that playing games that involve shooting people is akin to undergoing training to kill (in other words, it is like a "dress rehearsal" of potential murders). (Leo 1999).

On the other hand, there are claims that violent media are beneficial (Cones), because in the present world kids are at a higher risk of growing up passive and weak than violent and riotous, and when they see examples of rebellion, domination and well, violence, they are able to channel their suppressed feelings and deal with issues that otherwise remain unresolved. In my opinion, violent video games cannot be directly responsible for real-life violence but on the contrary they can help release stress and anger in non-violent methods.

John Leo agrees that most murders are not directly connected to violent games. However, he says that some murders are. In particular, Dylan Klebold

and Eric Harris, the students who murdered 13 and wounded 21 more people in Columbine high school massacre, enjoyed playing video games such as Doom, and they acted out in real life what they have seen on the screen.

Well, even in this particular case, it is not that simple. Obviously, a lot more than playing murderous games contributed to the actual killings in Colorado.

The teenager murderers were frequently the victims of bullying (involving being covered in ketchup in school cafeteria and having fecal matter thrown at them). Once they were arrested based on wrongful accusations, and that was very traumatic for both of them. The mother of Dylan Klebold admitted that she prayed that her son would commit suicide- this illustrates lack of support for the boy in the family. The other youth, Eric Harris, was taking an antidepressant, which he abruptly discontinued, and that is another possible reason for emotional instability and elevated aggression levels.

All of the above does not indicate that Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris were completely innocent. They were not. Yet, their crimes were not caused directly by video games, as most likely their playing violent games were not a cause but an outcome of frustration which they had because of different factors. If there are lessons to be learned from this massacre, it is necessary to realize that to prevent another incident like that from happening, it would be insufficient to just ban violent video games.

A lot of issues involving peer and teacher support, mental health, prevention of bullying, education, closer attention to what is going on in kids' lives need to be resolved to promote safety and make sure this type of episode is never repeated. Also, video games have been around for several decades, while

Going back to the Colorado massacre, Dylan and Eric thought very highly of Adolf Hitler. Their obsession with anti-human philosophies has no connection to violent video games, but obviously it displays that the kids were not properly socialized.

The games were not the only outlet of feelings of aggression, rejection and frustration that the boys carried around. And, speaking of Adolf Hitler; he obviously never played violent video games, simply because they were not around back then. That did not make him a nice person, ready to resolve conflicts peacefully. And he is not alone, human history abounds in ruthless, cruel, ready to inflict pain and degrade other people. And, historically, these dictators have not played violent computer games either.

Gerard Jones is more persuasive because he is talking about his personal experience and that of his son, and some other real kids. Unlike John Leo, who did not seem to do the background check on the Colorado massacre (or else, ignored the findings and picked out only the facts that support his theory), Gerard Jones' evidence looks more persuasive, as he indicates that violent video games (and comics, and other media products, for that matter) not only channel aggression, they help to manage such emotions as fear, greed, rage and power hunger.

In modern society, those emotions are considered inappropriate. Children, however, have to deal with them - and imaginary selves, capable of handling and using those motivations, are very helpful in this aspect. Statistics show that crime does not go up in the countries where people play a lot of video games. The crime rate depends on other things: prosperity, economics,

psychological wellbeing, and so on, violent media content does not seem to be one of them. However, maybe virtual violence make people less sensitive and more engrossed with themselves, less emphatic to others?

These matters are really hard to measure; however, in my opinion, our society is placing emphasis on equal opportunities, fair play, human rights and charity. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that people now are callous, insensitive and heartless. That is simply not true. The studies that show that there is a link between violence on screen and violence in reality, say that there is a connection but not necessarily cause-and-effect dependency. In other words, people who tend to be violent would choose violent games, while the reverse statement does not hold true.

It is true that the video games, movies, comics and stories all bear influence upon the society at large and each individual member of it. Indeed, watching indiscriminate violent content all the time does not contribute to a child growing up into a reasonable, intelligent or, for that matter, healthy adult. However, there is no sufficient reason to state that there is a direct connection between violent video games and real-life violence; they rather demonstrate a reverse effect of calming down negative feelings. Works Cited Jones, Gerard. Violent Media is Good for Kids. June 27, 2000. Web. 24 Feb. 2013