

Security threats in online games

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



Security and Privacy Issues of Online Video Games

Introduction

Research shows that 25% of people in the world fall victims of online video games security threats each year. This means that one person in every 4 is affected by the issue of privacy and security as a threat in online video games (Herr and Allen, 2015). Security and privacy issues of online video games have resulted in internet users being preyed on by mischievous hackers and cyber bullies. High-speed technology in recent times has impacted to online gaming is one of the popular activities on the internet. This study analyzes the impact that online video games have on privacy and security of the users, more so on exposed individuals who are unaware of its tragic outcome. The paper will review the literature on online video games security threats as a current cyber security challenge from most findings. The paper questions why addiction to online video gaming permits cybercriminals to infiltrate an individual's private life hence a threat to security. The purpose of the paper is to increase information on cyber security challenges, online technology morals and evidence suggesting how online video gaming is an issue to be addressed in regards to privacy and security.

Review of literature

Online Video Games addiction

It is amazing how the internet has transformed our daily lives with the continuous use of it for different purposes such as shopping, entertainment, communication, gambling just to mention. As an entertainment platform,

online video gaming has on so many occasions raised issues concerning security and privacy. With the evolution of different online platforms such as social media, online video gaming is another activity that continues to thrive among youths and adults who end up being dependents and later addicts to on online video games. According to (Herr and Allen, 2015), average homes in the United States own at least one smartphone, console or a personal computer thus a high number of videos are downloaded daily. Some of the games have been said to be in conflict with society moral behaviors and wellbeing. Addiction to violent games such as Grand Theft influence youth to take part in gang-related escapades while others expose players to unknown cybercriminals (Grusser and Thaleman, 2006, 296). Online video games face an ethical challenge in society today as pertains to security and users privacy concerns.

Online game addiction is one of the main risk factors that allows youth and any other addicted person to fall victim of security threat and leakage of personal information as well. According to, (Choi and Kim, 2004; Kim, 2000, 30), social interaction matters a lot when it comes to video game addiction. From their research, interaction among players offers a network through which the players develop a strong emotional relationship. The study points out that game developers facilitate communication among the gamers by addition of virtual settings where gamers can talk; chatting box or bulletin board. Choi and Kim, (2004, 24) stress that increased social interaction among the players mostly ends up in a close relationship with a stranger who might capitalize on shared information to cause harm to an individual.

Cybercriminals take advantage of the social interaction to use the platform to manipulate their victims who end up being victims of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying

Bullying is an activity that many people have faced since the beginning of time. Currently, everything seems to evolve with changes in technology and bullying has not been left behind. Online video games just like social media has exposed young people and a portion of adults to harassment from peers. Kim, (2000) illustrates that cyberbullying comes in an array of forms that include impersonation, trickery, and cyber. He emphasizes in his study that gone are the days when bullying was associated with the biggest and meanest kids in the neighborhood or schoolyard. Nowadays, any person irrespective of size, gender, age or social status would create an anonymous profile to engage in cyber-crimes such as bullying, especially in online video games (Van Cleemput, 2009). Such an event leaves the victims feeling helpless and alone wondering what would happen to them any minute.

A research was done by Jackson and Cassidy (2014) on 1920 students in 4 Canadian universities concluded that approximately 25% of youth are cyberbullying victims for a period of a whole year. The findings of the study reveal that one person in every four individuals is a victim of cyberbullying. A figure which puts a high number of young people at risk of their privacy and security. The interesting part is that a similar study done among students that are younger gave conflicting results. When the study was done on students of 13 to 14 years old, fewer individuals were reported to be bullied. A similar finding to what Van Cleemput (2009) settled on after carrying out a research on 2050 students ranging from the age of 11 to 18. From the <https://assignbuster.com/security-threats-in-online-games/>

research, cyberbullying in online video games tends to be more predominant in young people as they grow older.

Social risks

Online video games developers have gone a step further in designing new sophisticated genres, for instance, the Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMOs). This genre of online video games allows the user to create a virtual identity as a character in order to take part in the online virtual adventure, (Van Cleemput, 2009). Hayes insists that these games proceed into the real world. An example is when a player is allowed to sell virtual items and get real money in different online shopping markets such as eBay. This development has bred a new line of criminal activity termed as “Virtual crime.” This study shares similar ideology done by Kim, (2000) on the basis that users fall prey to criminal activities that have faced before but in a new refurbished style (Pp. 25). The two studies expose how online video games pose a challenge where the computer security and privacy of players are compromised.

Despite computer games once being activities that operated as a solitary feature, it appears that it continues to develop into an online community which allows chatting, sending messages and talking during the game (Wan and Chiou, 2006). Intruders have now managed to take advantage of the social interaction by attempting to gain access to computers connected to the same internet especially in a case of an unprotected computer. The intruders may do a number of things such as stealing one's identity, copying personal information, stealing of card payment information or tricking one to reveal personal information.

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Violence as an Ethical Issue in Online Video Games

Violence is an ethical issue in regards to representation as a feature of online video games. Different studies criticize the games for failure to represent real demographics. Van Cleemput, (2004) points out that certain games such as Grand Theft Auto depict minorities as criminals hence misrepresenting the group. In addition, he states in his research that such games promote race violence. Critics of Moore research questions his study on the basis of whether violence in a mere video game could truly cause harm. Hollingdale and Greitemeyer (2014, 293) study seem to support Moore analysis by emphasizing that scientific research has allegedly proved that indeed the games might cause harm.

Hollingdale and Greitemeyer used 101 participants whereby they were assigned to one experimental condition of the four available' neutral video game (online), Neutral video game (Offline), Violent video game (Online) and Violent Video game (offline). After engaging in behavioral aggression test, the findings suggested that all those participants who took part in violent video games showed aggression trends than those who played a neutral video game (Hollingdale and Greitemeyer, 2014). The significance of the study shows that violent games are most probable to result in a violence deed which poses a threat to security to people around and public population as a whole.

Courses of Action on Online Video Games Ethical Issues

To combat issues related to privacy and security in online video games, different online video companies engage themselves in awareness campaigns to promote educational messages. Games such as Grand Theft

Auto, Warcraft, and Call of Duty have so far been scrutinized for having violent as well as explicit sexual contents. According to Wan, S. and Chiou, R. (2006), the government and game developers have taken action in order to create a social effect. A good example is seen in China where the government has come up with restrictions on the duration of time one can play a game. Another example is Thailand which banned a particular racing video game after a car in the country got carjacked in a similar way.

A number of countries have banned games showcasing violent content such as Fallout 3. So far, many companies have done much in improving social impacts of the online video games by creating programs to handle the security and privacy issues related to online video games. More games have been created that promote education by encouraging the development of the society as well as social awareness (Tuzun, 2007). A good example is Blizzard Entertainment, which has introduced “parental control” function to regulate what children play and exact hours that they play and also screen-warning messages that discourage criminal activities and violent scenes.

Method

Both quantitative and qualitative skills would work best if I would have to conduct the study on security and privacy issues related to online video games. A mixed- approach skills would be suitable to support the research in an event where one method of analysis appears biased or flawed. I would employ the use of focus groups and survey research for the purpose of studying the behavior and reason why online video games pose a security and privacy threat in the current technological world. Survey research would be helpful to collect data from a specific group in this case online video

game addicts to uncover whether victims of security and privacy attacks fall prey due to lack of proper measures in place or the ever-evolving technology. By utilizing focus groups and survey research, I believe the research will be diverse by looking at online video games from a broad perspective hence understanding the phenomenon better.

Sample Selection

I would consider using a suitable sample for my research. I would pick participants ranging from 12 to 22 years which is the age popular with online video games. My research would reach out to high schools and universities around my local by using the students who will be willing to take part in the research. Basing on the number of young people in my neighborhood town, I would select 1000 students as survey respondents and 500 volunteers to take part in focus groups. My participants will be allowed to take part in both sides in case they are willing to do so.

Conclusion

Despite ethical issues and challenges facing online video games business, there exist policies that must be observed in ensuring individual safety is observed. From the research, it is evident that online videos pose a great danger to users in the society from cyber bullies, hackers, violent criminals as well as impersonators. In my opinion, the online games industry should support the observation of social responsibility and high ethical standards.