

# Extra lives: why video games matter by tom bissell



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Tom Bissell, in his essay, "Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter" has described video games and how they are unique and different from movies, books, or even interactive films. Bissell says "I came to accept that games were incompetent with almost every aspect of what I would call traditional narrative." This is showing the readers that even though there is a plot and story line, as characters can control and alter the story line or outcome by what you do or see throughout the game.

Bissell Explains he likes the freedom of being able to control what he sees and the fact that it's "intensely private." Bissell states that stories give you a place, character, words, and what they want you to see, vs. a movie gives you a person, place, and words but you can look at any detail, then with video games you have a story and plot and everything else you do is totally up to you how you see things or even how the plot is played out. Bissell states he doesn't care whether games are better or worse than novels or movies but he is interested what you can do in the games. The fact that it's him controlling things and deciding what is and isn't important is what interests him. Bissell says "...was greeted by the words Fuck You spray painted on a rock..." he states the little details allows you as the controller to choose what is and isn't important in the vividly detailed altered reality.

In reading this essay I have found that Bissell is very passionate about his video games and it concerns me because our youth today is very susceptible to things that everyone says is cool, with the video games being so vivid and blood and the child being able to manipulate the character it seems to promote violence and the child to be a "badass" when in reality they shouldn't. Video games are great for people to just get away and have fun

but the fact is if they aren't monitored or set to a limit, it can become an obsession and or a fantasy from the real world causing people to be unsocial.

My research shows that about four hundred billion eighty nine million four hundred thirty seven thousand eight hundred forty seven video games are created each year worldwide, with those kind of numbers any one person could play games for their whole life and not even put a dent in it, it is very overwhelming. With more and more children spending time on video games society changes a little more. Being able to play games without the internet makes it easier to play but for those that do have internet for their video games seem to spend twice the amount of time playing because they are playing with friends and talk and IM during the game.

Reading this essay has caused me to do more research on this specific topic and the things I have found are disturbing. Video games change your mind set, your way of thinking and can affect you for the rest of your life, so when it comes to the violent video games we are turning into a more violent society. It has been studied that playing video games can affect your dreams, and your dreams affect how you feel and treat people, it's a never ending circle. Through playing video games we are spending less and less time with one another and I think it's a crying shame. We as a society are naturally social people and the fact that with our recent technology we have become more and more independent.

Numerous of times I have found myself playing video games and thinking I really need to do something but never getting up to actually do it because I was so tied up in the game and thinking I'm so close to the next level, and

before I knew it I had been playing for 10 hours not moving from my spot on the couch to do anything but go to the bathroom, I had sat on my butt snacking and staring at a screen all day not accomplishing anything at all. I'm not sure whether video games are good or bad for all but with self-discipline and knowing when to stop video games can be a fun activity without ruling our lives. In the years that video games have really become available to anyone we have become lazy.