

Do video games cause violence?

Business



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Many people believe that playing video games directly contributes to violence. You probably heard this from the media through news stories and internet articles. But this has no or very little evidence to back it up. Violent juvenile crime in the United States has been declining as violent video game popularity has increased.

The arrest rate for juvenile murders has fallen 71.9% between 1995 and 2008. The arrest rate for all juvenile violent crimes has declined 49.3%. In this same period, video game sales have more than quadrupled (“Crime in the United States, 2008,” FBI website, Sep.

2009). If anything, video games reduce violence. Playing violent video games provides a safe outlet for aggressive and angry feelings. A 2007 study reported that 45% of boys played video games because “it helps me get my anger out” and 62% played because it “helps me relax.” (Cheryl Olson Journal of Adolescent Health, July 2007).

In 2005, 2,279 murders were committed by teenagers in the U. S. (27.9 per million residents) compared to 73 in Japan (3.1 per million). Per capita video game sales were \$5.

20 in the US compared to \$47 in Japan. This clearly illustrates that there is no correlation between violent behavior and playing video games (“White Paper on Crime 2006,” Japan’s Ministry of Justice website, 2006) (“Crime in the United States, 2005,” FBI website, Sep. 2006). Video games also have many positive health benefits. These include a faster reaction time, better decision making, better coordination, improved vision, and stress relief. Some games even improve social skills like teamwork.

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Overall, video games don't cause violence, but they help prevent it. Most gamers understand they are playing a game. Their ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality prevents them from emulating video game violence in real life. Violent video games provide healthy and safe opportunities for children to virtually explore rules and consequences of violent actions. Violent games also allow youth to experiment with issues such as war, violence and death without real world consequences.