

9 REASONS VIDEO GAMES DON'T CAUSE VIOLENCE

By Rob Ager, June 2019

Oh my God folks, you'll never guess what. Those video games are making people become violent and murderous! ... Makes for a nice easy alarmist headline doesn't it. There have been quite a few half-baked theories to that effect quoted from psychologists and other behavioural "experts" who very rarely express actual knowledge of what it's like to play a video game. The impression I get from such alarmists is that to them video games are a mysterious thing that other people do. So because they have little in the way of personal experience in the matter, they make lazy assumptions on the subject and rely on their vaguely related academic credentials to lend credibility to those assumptions. Not that they all do this. There have been lots of "experts" who have claimed that video games don't cause players to become violent or murderous. And I agree with the latter group, not just for the reasons they say, but also for a handful of other reasons that will be included in this article. So here goes ...

ONE

LACK OF CASE EVIDENCE

Presently there are hundreds of millions of people who play video games. Many individual game titles have sold tens of millions of copies. The biggest selling game of all time, GTA V (*Grand Theft Auto V*), was recently reported as having sold over 110 million copies. Being that it's also a game that has been subject to controversy over its violence, let's do some very basic math to find out how many violent crimes this game ought to have incited if video games can actually cause violence. If we conservatively assume that 1 out of 10000 players of GTA V will be inspired to commit a violent act then 110 million divided by 10000 = 11000. Yes, if 1 in 10000 players of GTA V were inspired to an actual act of violence then there would be 11000 such cases to report. For argument's sake let's assume that just 1% of those 11000 GTA V inspired violent acts would be recognized and publicly reported for their video game influence. 1% of 11000 would be 110. To summarize, if 1 in 10000 players of GTA V was inspired to commit violence and only 1% of those violent acts were reported as being influenced by GTA V then there should be 110 documented cases of violence attributed to that game alone. But I can't even find 10 proven instances of video game induced violence spanning the entire video games industry since its birth in the 1970's. So the number of case studies out there really doesn't support the theory.

But for the sake of being thorough let's look at the cases that are on record. A quick search engine query for sample cases of video games causing violence brings up a handful of compilation articles. But on closer inspection the articles are sensationalist because many of the "cases" involve violent crimes where video game influence has only been theorized as being the central fact, not proven. The supposed cases often involve other mitigating factors such as poverty, drugs, parental abuse, mental ill health, bullying and so on – factors which, in combination have historically caused countless violent crimes without video games being a factor at all.

There also tends to be a lack of specific publicly available detail about the cases. Often the news media narrative is based on little more than a police investigator stating that video games might be a factor. But hey, when a reporter is trying to bait an audience with shock value the finer details hinting at a more standard narrative get ignored.

Let's take an infamous example, the gang of six teenagers who went on a crime spree in New Hyde Park has been reported widely as being the teens attempting to emulate the video game GTA IV. I've looked at lots of the media reports on this case and there's very little information about the personal backgrounds of the six teens, whether they had a previous history of delinquency, violence, car theft, whether they were from broken homes or subject to poverty. Without this info I find it hard to buy into the narrative. Sure, it's reported that the police said the kids claimed they were imitating the video game, but did the kids just say that to try and get leniency? Had they already decided that they were going to commit a series of crimes anyway and then came up with the idea of enacting the GTA IV game? Did they all view their crime spree as a GTA IV simulation or did just one of them bring that up. And were all six of them actually familiar with the game? There's a lot of questions and not enough answers, but one statement I did find which goes against the *"it was GTA IV"* narrative is that in this report

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20080630075011/http://www.newsday.com/news/local/crime/ny-lirob275743162jun27%2C0%2C4494415.story>) it's stated there were initially just four youths engaged in the crime spree, but they bumped into a couple of other teens they knew and those teens joined them on the spree. So this sounds more like peer influence than video game induction. This information was easy for me to find and yet most of the news reports on the case don't mention that factor.

Here's another case. An 8 yr old boy reportedly shot his grandmother right after playing GTA IV. Only an idiot would conclude cause and effect without further detailed information. How did the boy get hold of a loaded handgun? It must have been left out in the open and within easy reach, which should be much more of an issue than what video game he'd played. And did the kid know it was a real gun and that it was loaded? If he thought it was a toy gun or not loaded then it wouldn't be an act of violence. It would be an accident. That must have been the case because, unless the kid was mentally impaired, he would have known at 8 years of age that shooting his grandmother with a real gun would kill her and get him into a lot of trouble.

Another case is the Bethel Regional High School shooter Evan Ramsay. Some have tried to cite him as being influenced by video games to kill. Look at the title of this forum post (<https://www.cheapassgamer.com/topic/127847-evan-ramsey-blames-video-games-specifically-doom-for-school-shootings/>), which mismatches the actual interview text quoted in support of that title. Ramsay very clearly says that his act was a response to excessive bullying. With regards video games he simply says that he assumed people he shot would get up and run away and thus need to be shot several times before they would die, like in the video game Doom, but he is not saying that the video game caused him to go and kill in the first place.

These kinds of contradictions I've found over and over again in virtually every alleged instance of video game induced violence that I've explored. When a fair amount of detail is released about the perpetrator of the crime, there's virtually always some collection of other, non-video game, causes

that led to the violence. And being that near enough all boys and teenagers play violent video games today it is going to become harder and harder to find a violent criminal who hasn't played a violent video game at some point, but that doesn't mean it's the cause.

One other factor is that the parents of school shooting perpetrator Michael Carneal and the family of one of the Columbine school massacre victims began multimillion lawsuits against various entertainment media companies for supposedly inciting the school shootings through their products, but both cases were dismissed by courts for ... lack of evidence. If we were going to be really cynical we could say that the families saw the entertainment media controversy as being a way to earn a fast buck, but I think more likely the issue is denial – denial from Carneal's parents at their failure as parents and denial from the Columbine victim family that there was a complex history to the killers that can't just be blamed on someone other than the killers themselves.

TWO LACK OF EQUIVALENT BEHAVIOURAL EFFECTS

This is an argument I've not heard talked about, but I think it has really strong merit. If playing violent video games can induce violent behaviour from the player in the real world then there should be a wide range of similar, non-violent influences on player behaviour. For example, the Tomb Raider video game series should cause some players to start climbing at dangerous heights and leaping across things at great height. If this was the case then we should be hearing about multiple Tomb Raider players falling to their deaths over the 20+ years the games have been on the market.

Again, basic maths comes to our aid. Total number of *Tombraider* game sales is reported to be tens of millions. Number of deaths and injuries attributed to *Tombraider* inspired real world climbing and jumping ... zero. How about the digging exploration game *Minecraft*? Number of game copies sold ... over 100 million. Number of deaths and injuries due to *Minecraft* inspired digging ... zero. Going back in time a bit, how about the game *Thief 2*? How many of the 200,000+ players who bought copies of it went to commit actual theft? ... none.

I could go on and on about the lack of RPG (role-playing game) players who are inspired to leave home and go on a globe-trotting adventure or become deluded that they can actually use magic, the lack of beat 'em up game inspired street fights, the lack of *Sonic the Hedgehog* inspired running injuries, the lack of *Kingdom Come Deliverance* inspired sword attacks.

The assumption tends to be that shoot 'em up video games cause real world mass shootings – for some reason most of the allegations centre around that. But if it were true then we should be also seeing a multitude of other behavioural influences on the player like the ones I've described. This is especially true where those influences would not bring negative real world consequences to the player or anyone else.

We don't try to imitate dangerous things in video games because even kids know that real life has consequences. In the case of a murder spree it requires a person be willing to risk a prison sentence

or commit themselves to suicide after the fact or be risked being killed by police in the act. A video game cannot create those real world motivations, nor overcome those real world inhibitions.

THREE

SOCIETY WAS MORE VIOLENT BEFORE VIDEO GAMES EXISTED

This one I'll keep short and simple and you can easily go check up on the many available statistical studies yourself. Despite the video games industry beginning in the 1970's and thriving to a colossal level that today rivals the movie industry, crime rates in the United States and UK have massively fallen, and that includes violent crime.

The simple fact is that psychopaths and violent crime existed before entertainment media did. Humans have raped, beaten, tortured and killed each other as far back in history as our historical records take us. It was going on long before the existence of game consoles, televisions, radios, comics and even before humans invented written language.

FOUR

VIDEO GAMES DON'T FOOL OUR SENSES

Of all the creatures on Earth humans have a unique ability to engage in artificial experiences via books, movies or even just listening to someone else describe an experience, but for the most part we consciously and intellectually know that those experiences are artificial. When we watch movies we know that we are seeing actors and special effects. We know that what is on screen isn't real, even though we allow ourselves to momentarily engage emotionally, and we know the emotions would be many times stronger if the events were happening in our real world experience. However, fictional or simulated experiences can influence our beliefs and expectations when there's a gap in our real world experience. Most people have never been in a battlefield and so war movies can mislead them into assuming that real world warfare is different than it actually is. But with video games this kind of influence on belief systems is massively reduced to the point of being almost non-existent. At the base sensory level we absolutely know when playing a video game that the simulated experience is entirely separate from our actual physical reality.

Video game graphics have gotten better and better to the point that sometimes a moving landscape in a game such as Kingdom Come Deliverance can momentarily pass for real video footage. Or at least it would to a person who had just walked into a room and seen the footage but wasn't actually playing the game. But if that person observed the footage for a minute or so their brain would quickly recognize the thousands of little sensory giveaways – reminders that the footage is artificially generated. The occasionally obvious polygon edges, the blurred detail upon close up, the clipped shadows and so on. The simulation is amazing, but it's still not good enough to fool our senses for more than a few seconds. Add to this that the player actions of switching on the game system, picking up a controller, and loading up the game provides an absolute separation between the video game reality and the actual world. People don't forget that they're playing a video game. If they did

they would be terrified of the enemies they fight in the simulation. The experience would become very unpleasant. Even if these obstacles could be overcome the actual interface we have with video games still creates a total separation. Dreams feel real because we don't remember falling asleep, but when playing a game we don't forget switching the game on and we don't forget the controller interface.

The physical simulation is virtually non-existent. In real life we don't press buttons to walk down a street or pick up an object. We use our body in all manner of complex ways. And when it comes to violence, the real thing is a totally different universe to what we call "*video game violence*". In fact I would say that video game violence doesn't actually exist. We call it "*video game violence*", but it's just button pressing. No one gets actually hurt or put in danger no matter what the visual content of the game is. The so called "*characters*" in the game, which are just a bunch of mathematical polygons and bitmaps, are not alive. They don't feel anything so pressing buttons to affect how they are animated is not a violent act. Just like painting a picture of a violent act is not a violent act.

When it comes to the big controversial issue of shoot 'em up games supposedly influencing the pathology of players to go on killing sprees, the actual act of firing a gun is a totally different experience to pressing buttons on a controller. Real guns are a different shape to video game controllers. They're much heavier, they give a recoil jolt when fired, they have muzzle flash, they create smoke which we can see and smell, and they create ear piercing bangs. Controllers do none of this even when the controller is gun shaped. A little vibration from time to time to imitate recoil is as good as it gets.

Take Adam Lanza, the Sandy Hook school shooter. Have you seen the schizophrenic looking eyes on that fella? His photo screams either mental illness or drug-induced disconnection. It's been theorized he was influenced by video games, but a brief glance over the case history reveals that he was trained to use real guns on real shooting ranges. In that situation the physical simulation with killing a person is infinitely closer to the reality than what it is in a shooter video game. Not that the shooting range is the core issue either. Lanza talked about being bullied endlessly as being the central cause of his killing spree. And any normal person could be trained at a gun range, but it would not make them start killing real people.

The same simulation problem goes for kicking or punching people or hitting them with clubs or stabbing them or raping them. These violent acts in the real world involve a very complex set of physical actions involving multiple muscle groups – the video game controller interface doesn't even remotely imitate the reality of committing those violent actions. The brain is not fooled.

FIVE **MURDER RATES BY COUNTRY**

This one I'm going to keep very simple as it's something you can easily verify with a few minutes of internet searching. If you take the ranking of nations by their annual rate of murder among their population most of the research available shows South American, Central American and African countries dominating the top 20 odd positions, ie the places with the most murders. However the

countries that spend the most on video games are a total mismatch. China, the United States, Germany, UK, Canada, Japan – these countries are really into their gaming and yet they fall way lower down on the list of countries by homicide rate. Japan in particular consumes an incredible amount of violent entertainment media and yet their crime rates are very low compared with the rest of the world. If video games caused violence then we should expect the nations that most play them to be boosted higher up the *homicide by nation* rankings.

SIX GOOD VS EVIL NARRATIVES

There have been some very poorly thought out statements made by those who contend that video games cause violence. One of the dumbest I've heard was this one by police officer Andrew Scipione. Let's call him skipper. Talking about video games Skipper told the Australian Daily Telegraph ***"You get rewarded for killing people, raping women, stealing money from prostitutes, driving cars crashing and killing people."*** (<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/violent-video-games-incite-kids-to-crime-says-scipione/news-story/57d23b514b6e2ba147abc5f0ff5a3731?sv=5082ef0e3eed8469c484f32f04c13f36>)

Well obviously Skipper has had little to no experience of actually playing video games. He's probably just glanced at a few bits of footage and made a heap of assumptions. The reason I say that is because Skipper gives no specific game examples, and because I've played hundreds of video games in my life time (possibly more than a thousand and I've played many of the most violent ones) and I can't think of any game titles that fit the description he's given.

In video games we don't get rewarded for simply killing people. In virtually every violent video game there is an enemy or group of enemies who are themselves violent. These enemies are virtually always trying to kill the player or some person or population that the player is protecting or they are mercenaries protecting some great destructive leader. It's hardly ever just a case of ... *here are some streets full of random people minding their own business and it's up to you to kill them and you'll get rewarded*. Sure there might be some very obscure indie game titles that do that, I haven't found any, but even the most controversial games don't fall into that category. Oh actually, there is one example, GTA V, that does it for just a few brief moments. The character Trevor has a few *"rampage"* moments in the game where he flips out and kills lots of people in the street and the player's aim is to maximize the body count in about a minute or two, but this doesn't even account for 1% of the game's storyline. Throughout most of the game you can kill random people in the streets and steal what little money they have on them, but most of the time the game then attacks the player with squads of police cars who give chase and try to kill the player. Sometimes the bystanders fight back either with their fists or with weapons. There are virtually no children bystanders in the game or babies, so you can't even kill them by accident. Start attacking people in the streets during one of the story missions and most of the time it will result in you failing the mission because it blows your cover ... and often your mission is to rescue someone. So I seriously doubt that someone playing through GTA V would be turned to violence by Trevor's occasional *"rampage"* moment, which would account for probably less than 15 minutes of the player's total experience of a full play through.

As for Skipper's claim that video games reward players for raping women, what the hell is he talking about? I can't even recall having ever played a game where I was able to rape a woman at all, never mind be rewarded for it. Apparently there's an obscure Japanese game called *Rapelay* in which the aim is to stalk and rape women, but according to the Wiki page on the subject it was only sold in Japan, and after objections to the game they stopped distributing it. So where are these rape games that Skipper is referring to? Sounds like he heard a rumour and just blurted it out to a journalist as if it was fact. Fine detective work there Skipper.

However, in skipper's defense the press don't help in how they report these kinds of dumb theoretical statements. For example, Skipper didn't just blame video games. The article about his comments continues on to include him citing alcohol and parental disinterest as being a major contributory factor in a spate of youth stabbings. But, "*journalist*" Andrew Clennell, writing for the Daily Telegraph (or perhaps it his editor), decided in the article title to discard the alcohol and parenting issue in favour of the dumbed down sensationalist headline "***Violent video games incite kids to crime, says Scipione***". Mr. Clennell, you're supposed to report, not distort.

The truth is that most video games, even the controversial ones, involve some sort of narrative in which the player is good and the enemy is evil. Many games don't even have innocent bystanders and if they do then the vast majority of the time the player either can't kill them, is rewarded for saving them or penalized for attacking them. Have you played kingdom Come Deliverance? Try killing a bystander in a crowded street in that game ... the guards will ferociously attack you in response, your reputation in the town will be lowered and you can be thrown in jail. Kill a shopkeeper and they won't be there to sell you goods later or help repair your equipment. Steal something and you'll be attacked if you're seen in the process ... and even if you succeed in stealing by stealth, most vendors in the game won't buy your stolen goods. As video games become more advanced in their simulation effort, the kinds of social, legal and economic barriers to violence that we face in the real world are also becoming incorporated into the game worlds we play in.

SEVEN

VIDEO GAMES ARE BEHAVIOUR INHIBITORS

Rather than causing behaviour, violent or non-violent, a much stronger case is that video games prevent behaviour. If a person spends 20 hours a week playing video games then that is 20 hours of suppressed real world behaviour that they would have engage in otherwise. Take youth crime. Teenagers with nothing to do often get together and roam the streets out of boredom, and can get themselves into a lot of trouble and cause a lot of harm to other people. But 20 hours a week playing video games could mean for them 20 hours of not wandering the streets looking for trouble.

I'm not saying this is entirely a good thing either because spending large amounts of time playing video games can cause a person to neglect good and worthwhile activities they would be better off doing. In some cases the result can be terrible such as the South Korean couple whose baby died from physical neglect while they obsessively played their favourite video game. Or Eugene Wygant, who wrapped his crying son so heavily in blankets to shut him up while he played video games that

his son suffocated and died. Of course there's another factor in those cases. Looking after a baby full time can be exhausting and frustrating, that's what post-natal depression is often about, and so the neglect or abuse of babies by frustrated parents can't just be pinned on whatever behaviour they would rather be doing. It could be video games, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, having sex with their partner, watching TV – those things aren't the cause of the abuse or neglect. The cause is the lack of parenting skills and often combined with the lack of external support to give the exhausted parent an occasional break.

In other types of cases, which are also mistakenly labelled as examples of *video games causing violence*, it has actually been the absence of video games that led to violence. Nathan Brooks shot his parents after they took away his video game privileges. Daniel Petric killed his parents after they took the game Halo 3 away from him. In these cases if the killers hadn't had their video games taken away they might not have killed anyone, and much more important, if their parents had raised them to be respectful people who had control of their emotions then that would be much more likely to prevent those crimes. Otherwise they could have killed their parents over anything. In another example, Luke Marshall attacked and injured his brother as they argued over whose turn it was to use their games machine. *Look video games made them do it!* No, if they had a console each then there would be no reason to fight. Of course I'm not saying these kids were in anyway right to turn violent to restore access to a video game. I'm merely illustrating how the mislabelling sometimes works. If Luke Marshall had attacked his brother because they were arguing over who got to watch TV then we would not conclude that watching TV causes people to kill. How about if they had fought each other over a girl they had both dated? Would we conclude that girls dating boys causes boys to be violent? No, we wouldn't.

Video games are actually very cathartic and arguably relaxing for most gamers. Even the Sandy Hook killer, who has been theorized by the blindfolded to have been influenced by video games to kill, even he stated that he played video games to calm himself, to distract from all the pain he felt about real world anxieties. And the games he played were mostly non-violent such as Super Mario bros and Dance Dance Revolution. Not the most controversial of titles are they?

There's actually another reporting problem regarding all this. Our news media and academic assessments tend to report on crimes that happen, not the one that don't happen. For all we know there might be thousands of violent crimes prevented every day across the world because the would-be perpetrators are too busy playing video games. For many potential violent offenders playing video games might provide a cathartic means of alternate, harmless self-expression – an artificial world where the player can achieve a momentary simulated feeling of power and influence that they lack in daily life.

I think a big part of the problem in terms of research is that video games are a relatively new facet of society so their actual influence is still mysterious in the minds of most people, especially in the minds of those who don't play video games and have only superficially watched others play them. A lot of the research gets done by older people, usually academics, who let's face it generally aren't the video game playing types. Their personal lack of experience of what it's actually like to play through a full video game I consider a severe obstacle to their understanding. The same might well be true of reporters who reach silly assumptions on the subject. Combine those factors with the fact

that people who commit crimes can sometimes try to dodge responsibility by claiming that “*a video game made me do it*” ... and you have a recipe for misleading reports on the subject.

EIGHT

VIDEO GAME CHARACTERS ARE NOT CONVINCING

This is an extension of point 3 in this article (the fact that video games do not fool our senses). The failure of video game simulation compared to reality reaches consistently comical levels when it comes to the depiction of human beings. Incredible artistry and effort goes into creating the facial structures and expressive movements of video game characters, but they still do not look real, just as ventriloquist’s dummy’s don’t look real.

The human brain’s hardwired recognition and familiarity with real faces is far too intricate to be fooled by computer simulation using today’s technology. Even pre-rendered examples involving much more complex models still don’t cut it. Maybe we can be fooled momentarily from a distance, but once up close, with more than a couple of seconds to examine, the uncanny valley kicks in. We don’t always understand why simulated faces don’t look real, but we feel it due to subconscious recognition of simulation clues. And when it comes to the movements, the best motion capture technology in the world still doesn’t come close to convincingly reproducing the intricate expressive movements of a real face.

Real faces change colour tone depending on blood flow. Real skin has tiny pores when viewed up close. Eyes change their moisture level. Pupils change size. Skin becomes drier or greasier in different conditions. Growing stubble can change a man’s appearance in the space of half a day. Lips and tongues have an intricacy of detail and movement that video game characters lack and which can’t be motion captured so easily. Eyelids are far too intricate for convincing motion capture. Hair is far more detailed in life than in games. A real human head has around a hundred thousand hairs and the whole human body has millions of hairs. Video game characters don’t have individual strands of hair, they have a simplified polygon equivalent. And then there’s the fact that human hair grows over time. Humans breathe as well, which is something video game characters are often not animated to do and their rate and depth of their breathing doesn’t match their dialogue or how active the character has been in moments before they speak. They move their bodies and facial features in repetitive pre-programmed ways, where as a person repeating the same action over and over will always result in tiny differences of speed and movement each and every time. The clues that video game characters aren’t real go on and on.

There has never been a computer generated person who reliably fools audiences again and again in close up lasting footage where we can see the details. And yet the proponents of the idea that video games cause violence assume that gamers somehow forget that video game characters are entirely separate from living, flesh and blood human beings or that somehow the player’s brain will begin to view real everyday people before their very eyes as being equivalent to polygon video game entities.

The unrealism still applies in multiplayer games where each character is controlled by a human. The characters still run and jump in unconvincing ways with their heads facing forward all the time and so on. It's consistently comical. And even non-computerized shoot 'em up games such as quasar and paintballing don't cause players to go on a shooting rampage outside of those game environments, despite the fact that the physical simulation is far more real in sensory terms than a video game is.

When it comes to the artificial intelligence of video game characters the disconnection from the players physical organic reality is just as severe. We have very stupid conversations with NPCs (non-player characters), those conversations consisting of extremely limited multiple choice options that most of the time don't even properly match the context in which they're spoken. You can run around an NPC jumping up and down and they will continue talking as if you're just stood there.

Video game characters, whether NPCs or player controlled, simply don't look, feel, sound or act realistic enough to make themselves psychologically interchangeable with flesh and blood organic people in the real world, not even in the minds of children.

NINE

PATHOLOGY DETERMINES GAME CHOICE

Rather than video games shaping the minds of players, the existing belief structures of the player, which are shaped by their real world experience, determine what games they are predisposed to play. It's the same with movies, music and other forms of entertainment consumption. The serial killer cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer had, among his many obsessions, a desire to imitate the evil *Emperor* character in *Return of the Jedi*. But would you be dumb enough to assume that *Return of the Jedi* made Jeffrey Dahmer become a psychopathic serial killer? No, his already existing pathology made him react to the *Emperor* character in a unique way that differed from the millions of others who'd seen the film. If he hadn't have seen that film then his existing desire for domination and power would have made him seek out evil fiction characters elsewhere as role models to imitate.

Anders Brevik, the Norwegian gun firing mass murderer, apparently used a video game as a deliberate training simulation, just as military do same, but his clear motive was political – his fear of Islamization. Without the political motive or his mental health problems the video games would not have influenced him toward murder. And without the video games he could have trained at a shooting range, but it wouldn't mean the shooting range caused him to kill. The video games didn't provide him with the actual guns he used, nor did those games teach him how to physically handle them. Without the video games he still would have carried out his attack as he'd already been planning in for a long time. And video games didn't cause his fear of Norway being Islamified either.

How about Charles Manson and his obsession with the *White Album* by the *Beatles*. Manson claimed the *Beatles* were sending him hidden messages via the *White Album* with relation to his activities as a cult leader. Does this mean that *Beatles* music causes violence or cult leadership behaviour? No! Manson was a messed up guy, having spent half his life in the prison system. He was already crazy and he superimposed his pathology onto an album. He may have even consciously knew the *Beatles*

were not sending him messages and instead may have simply concocted the theory to impress his cult members.

My overall point here is that in situations where entertainment media appear to cause a person to commit violence, it's not the entertainment media that is the problem. The problem is the already existing pathology of the violently predisposed consumer. I'm not saying we can't do things as a society to make the world a less violent place. We can do a lot, but the answers lie in other areas. Good quality child care and parenting, both of the nurturing and non-abusive disciplinary type, quality mental health care, the teaching of good social values generally rather than the shallow self-indulgence and virtue-faking that are currently popular. Helping people to build quality lifestyles that keep them away from the temptation toward drugs and alcohol would help a lot – those things are proven to be related to a lot of violence in our society. Prevention of child abuse, neglect and early life bullying would certainly help. But these are complex issues that require a lot of study, investment and time to address. Whereas blaming video games represents the temptation toward a quick and easy ban something solution that will make proponents of that idea think they are addressing the problem, but actually will have a negligible, perhaps even non-existence, affect. And if video violent video games do serve a mass function of cathartic release of frustration, then maybe banning them would actually cause more violence.

So, to recap, here's my 9 reasons why video games don't cause violence.

- 1) Lack of case evidence
- 2) Lack of equivalent behavioural effects
- 3) Society was more violent before video games existed
- 4) Video games don't fool our senses
- 5) Murder rates by country
- 6) Good vs evil narratives
- 7) Video games are behaviour inhibitors
- 8) Video game characters are not convincing
- 9) Pathology determines game choice

And to end on a positive note, I think there's a good argument to be made that video games help players to develop hand-eye co-ordination and enhance their information gathering and problem solving abilities, being that many video games involve intellectual challenges as well as a challenge of momentary reflexes. Therein lies an opportunity to expand and increase the social value of video games.

Thanks for reading. If you would like to read more of my articles on video games, movies, psychology and social issues then visit my website at <http://www.collativelearning.com>