

VIOLENCE, MEDIA AND CHILDREN

by Amriana Dean



VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES LINKED TO MASS SHOOTINGS ?

Olson (2004) emphasizes that the **American tradition** to blame media for corrupting youth **began as early as the 1930's**, from comic books to arcade games.

Florida school shooting should be blamed on video games, not GUNS ...

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/.../florida-school-shooting-blamed-video-games-guns-kentuck...>

Feb 16, 2018 - A KENTUCKY governor has blamed school shootings on violent **video games**, in the wake of this week's horrific events in Florida. The controversial comments came after 19-year-old **Nikolas Cruz** massacred 17 people at his former school with an AR-15 assault rifle on Valentine's Day. Kentucky Governor Matt ...

Video games, not guns, to blame for school shooting, says Kentucky ...

<https://arstechnica.com/gaming/.../video-games-not-guns-to-blame-for-school-shootin...>

Feb 15, 2018 - **Video games** and other cultural products were part of a long list of causes Bevin suggested for the increase in school shootings and the nation's loss of ... Some media reports focused on the 2007 Virginia Tech shooter's love of Counter-Strike, and a Norwegian **mass shooter** claimed at his trial that he had ...

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French terrorist played violent video game Call of Duty before embarking on brutal killing spree of seven, says wife

- Violent video game linked to second high-profile mass murder
- Follows Norwegian mass killer's claims that he trained on game

The Columbine shooters: video game addicts? - NY Daily News

www.nydailynews.com/.../role-video-game-addiction-played-columbine-shootings-art...

Apr 23, 2009 - What role might **video game** addiction have played in the **Columbine** shootings? ... This week marks ten years since Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris walked the halls of **Columbine High**. ... The **Columbine** shooters were immersed in their violence-filled Doom **video games**.

THE DEBATE

VIOLENT MEDIA LEADS TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

- Violent video games have a direct causal effect on aggression
- Have a more subtle effect on children: for example, they could make a child more inclined to bully or spread rumors about his peers
- Violent video games desensitize kids to real violence
- children who enjoy [violent] games can lose the emotional cues that trigger empathy

VIOLENT MEDIA DOES NOT LEAD TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

- There's no consistency in the aggression literature
- Not strong enough to draw any kind of causal, *or even really correlational* links between video game violence and aggression
- Many of the studies look at college students, not children
- the ambiguity of "aggression" as a psychological concept

“The data indicate that **video game playing is neither the menace** that many of its critics have portrayed it to be, **nor necessarily without possible negative consequences.**”

THE DEBATE : NOT AS CONCLUSIVE AS IT SEEMS

- Olson (2004) notes that the ideas in early studies “are taken out of context and repeated in the media echo chamber, creating a false sense of certainty” (p. 146).
- SCOTUS determined that there was no conclusive link between video games and aggression, writing that "most of the [violent game] studies suffer from significant, admitted flaws in methodology”

THE DEBATE : MAIN CRITIQUES OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH

- **Short term aggressive thoughts are equated with long term aggressive behavior** (Olson, 2004)
- The sample sizes and diversity of the samples are questionable (Olson, 2004)
- **Other contributing factors to aggression and violence are ignored** (Olson, 2004)
- **Political influence on scholars and publication bias** (Ferguson, 2017)
- **Crime Statistics do not support the theory that new media causes violence** (Levine, 2013)
- Much of the research provides insufficient data to prove a causal relationship (Levine, 2013)

CATALYST THEORY vs. HYPODERMIC NEEDLE THEORY

HYPODERMIC NEEDLE MODEL

- Audience passively accepts the message “injected” into them by mass media
- There is a direct correlation between violent behaviour in media and antisocial and even criminal behaviour

CATALYST MODEL

- Violence arises from a combination of genetic and social influences
- Media Violence is considered a weak causal influence

CATHARSIS THEORY

- In their daily life people are confronted with frustrating situations which can lead to acts of violence
- Violent media offers liberation from these frustrations through imaginary participation in acts of violence and aggression present on television
- Aggressive and violent urges are released through game play

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are some children more vulnerable to negative effects of violent video games than others?
2. Have you witnessed any children become more violent/aggressive after watching/playing violent media?
3. Why do you think video game play often comes up in the wake of school shootings?