Violent video games make kids aggressive, study suggests

Posted by Ryan Jaslow Leave Comment

(CBS) Do violent video games breed violent kids? A new study suggests that young adults who play the games become desensitized to the guts and gore - and more prone to aggressive behavior.

For years, critics have claimed that video games can contribute to violence, but no study had ever shown a direct link between the games and aggression.

Until now.

"Video games are excellent teaching tools because they reward players for engaging in certain types of behavior," study author Dr. Bruce Bartholow, associate professor of psychology at the University of Missouri, said in a written statement. "Unfortunately, in many popular video games, the behavior is violence."

For the study - published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology - researchers at the university had 70 young adults play either a violent or nonviolent video game for 25 minutes. After the game, the subjects looked at neutral pictures - like a man on a bike - or violent pictures - like a man with a gun - as the researchers measured their brain wave activity. It turned out that when shown a violent image, those who had played a violent game showed a smaller brain response than those who had played a tamer game.

In other words, the violent games desensitized players to violent imagery - and subsequent testing showed that gamers who played violent games like "Killzone" and "Grand Theft Auto" behaved more aggressively against their gaming opponents.

But does gaming behavior turn kids violent?

"A single exposure to a violent video game won't turn someone into a mass murderer," Dr. Bartholow told CBS News. "But if someone has repeatedly exposed themselves, these kinds of effects in the short term can turn into long-term changes."
The American Psychological Association points to several studies linking video game violence to fighting at school and even to violent criminal behavior, such as assault or robbery. But not everyone is convinced that the links really exist.

Dr. Henry Jenkins, director of the comparative media studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told PBS that playing video games is just that - play - and that children are well aware that the rules of the game differ from those that apply in real life. "A child who responds to a video game the same way he or she responds to a real-world tragedy could be showing symptoms of being severely emotionally disturbed," he said.

Still, the new study may have parents wondering: Is it time to pry the controller from junior's hands?
Health nonprofits effectively using social media

By Nathan Hurst of the MU News Bureau
May 27, 2011

As the presence of social media continues to increase as a form of communication, health organizations are searching for the most effective ways to use the online tools to pass important information to the public.

Now, researchers at the University of Missouri have found that nonprofit organizations and community groups appear to be more actively engaged in posting health information and interacting with the public on Twitter than other types of health-related organizations, such as health business corporations, educational institutions and government agencies.

"Twitter may be more appealing to nonprofit organizations because it creates a barrier-free environment that allows these organizations to share important information through real-time exchanges without significant efforts," said Hyojung Park, a doctoral candidate at the Missouri School of Journalism.

"Unlike business organizations such as pharmaceutical companies, nonprofit health organizations and advocacy groups may suffer from lack of funding, staff and other resources in developing and implementing communication strategies for health intervention and promotion programs," he said. "Thus, it is likely that nonprofit organizations and support groups recognize the rapid growth of Twitter and its value as an inexpensive but highly effective communication tool."

In her study, Park explored how health-related organizations use Twitter, which is a popular social media outlet, to promote health literacy in society and raise awareness of their brands and manage their images. The study included a content analysis of 571 tweets from health-related organizations.

Park found that nonprofit health groups do an effective job of incorporating interactive elements into their communication planning.

"Recent studies have shown that most social media users want organizations to be actively involved in social media and to communicate and engage the users directly," Park said. "Nonprofit health groups do a great job of this, which helps them communicate their health messages and, ultimately, to increase health literacy in the community."

Park also found that about 30 percent of health tweets were actually republished, or retweeted, by readers who found the information useful or interesting. These retweets result in an even larger audience for the health messages. Park said this shows how dynamic and multidirectional communication on social networking sites such as Twitter hold great potential for health-related organizations to increase the awareness of health literacy, share resources and foster public discussion.

Park hopes future research will shed even more insight into how health organizations can effectively communicate their messages.

This study was published in the Journal of Health Communication and was supported by the Health Communication Research Center at the Missouri School of Journalism. The study was co-authored by Shelly Rodgers, associate professor in the Missouri School of Journalism, and Jon Stemmle, associate director of the Health Communication Research Center.
Engineer’s solar panel collects more energy

By Steven Adams of MU News Bureau
May 27, 2011

Efficiency is a problem with today’s solar panels; they only collect about 20 percent of available light.

Now a University of Missouri engineer has developed a flexible solar sheet that captures more than 90 percent of available light, and he plans to make prototypes available to consumers within the next five years.

Patrick Pinhero, associate professor in the Chemical Engineering Department, said energy generated using traditional photovoltaic methods of solar collection is inefficient and neglects much of the available solar electromagnetic (sunlight) spectrum.

The device his team has developed — essentially a thin, moldable sheet of small antennas called nantenna — can harvest the heat from industrial processes and convert it into usable electricity. Their ambition is to extend this concept to a direct solar-facing nantenna device capable of collecting solar irradiation in the near infrared and optical regions of the solar spectrum.

Pinhero said he and his team members have developed a way to extract electricity from the collected heat and sunlight using special high-speed electrical circuitry.

Also working on the project are an electrical engineering professor at the University of Colorado and a partner with MicroContinuum Inc. of Cambridge, Mass.

Their goal is to convert laboratory bench-scale technologies into devices that can be inexpensively mass-produced.

“Our overall goal is to collect and utilize as much solar energy as is theoretically possible and bring it to the commercial market in an inexpensive package that is accessible to everyone,” Pinhero said. “If successful, this product will put us orders of magnitudes ahead of the current solar energy technologies we have available to us today.”

As part of a rollout plan, the team is securing funding from the U.S. Department of Energy and private investors. The second phase features an energy-harvesting device for existing industrial infrastructure, including heat-process factories and solar farms.

Within five years, the research team believes it will have a product that complements conventional PV solar panels. Because it’s a flexible film, Pinhero believes it could be incorporated into roof shingle products or be custom-made to power vehicles.

Once the funding is secure, Pinhero envisions several commercial product spin-offs, including infrared detection. These include improved contraband-identifying products for airports and the military, optical computing and infrared line-of-sight telecommunications.

A study on the design and manufacturing process was published in the Journal of Solar Energy Engineering.
MU graduates’ salaries rise

By MU News Bureau
May 27, 2011

The starting salaries for MU graduates rose 6 percent in 2010 compared with the previous year, and more than two-thirds of the graduates stayed in Missouri to work or continue their education, according to the university’s destination study.

The average salary for undergraduates who responded to the survey was $40,100, and the average starting salary of graduate students was $48,600.

Those who graduated from the College of Engineering, School of Health Professions, Sinclair School of Nursing and the College of Business received the highest average salaries at $53,900, $44,300, $42,100 and $40,900 respectively.

Of those with bachelor’s degrees, 31 percent continued their education. Of those who were employed, 87 percent of undergraduates worked in a field related to their major. For those who earned graduate degrees, 11 percent furthered their education. Of those who were employed full time, 97 percent were working in a field related to their degree.

“The number of out-of-state students who are choosing to stay in Missouri after graduation shows that MU is importing and retaining people who contribute to the state’s economy,” said Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management.

The survey involved students who graduated between fall 2009 and spring 2010. Seventy percent of MU undergraduates and 66 percent of graduate students stayed in Missouri after graduation. Around 40 percent of non-resident undergraduate students remained in the state after graduation. The survey did not keep track of the number of graduates who stayed in Columbia.

MU officials added a new category, Overall Placement Rate, to the study this year. Overall Placement Rate is defined as graduates who met their post-graduation objective. Such objectives include obtaining full-time employment or attending graduate school. MU’s overall placement rate was 71 percent, 68 percent for undergraduates and 74 percent for those with graduate degrees.

Other highlights from the MU survey include:

• Social work undergraduates have an overall placement rate of 100 percent, with 54 percent attending graduate school and the remaining 46 percent finding employment in their field.

• Nearly 90 percent of nursing undergraduates who entered the job market were employed, with 97 percent of those in their chosen field.

• The number of those with graduate degrees employed in their chosen field rose slightly to 92 percent from 89 percent.
CBT Business News Digest

By CBT Staff
May 27, 2011

CBT News Review

The Mizzou Alumni Association announced that it has reached a record number of members. MAA has more than 42,100 members in the global alumni organization, and its membership is up nearly 5 percent from 2010 and nearly 20 percent from 2007. The goal of MAA is to make the University of Missouri stronger by supporting the university's best interests through programs that alumni value. In recent years, MAA has raised nearly $650,000 for student scholarships.
Columbia aids Joplin victims

By CBT Staff
May 27, 2011

Victims of the May 22 tornado that ravaged Joplin are receiving much needed food, supplies and money from Columbia organizations and businesses.

The Heart of Missouri United Way in Columbia raised more than $530,000 just three days after the storm that caused 125 deaths and leveled thousands of buildings. The United Way also partnered with companies of Museao and KOMU 8 for the United For Joplin: A Relief and Rebuild Effort fundraising event held May 26, with proceeds going to the United Way of Southwest Missouri.

The Heart of Missouri United Way has launched the Joplin Tornado Relief Fund. Those who would like to help in relief efforts can go to Heart of Missouri United Way PayPal Donation form or text JOPLIN to 864833 to make a $10 donation to the Joplin Tornado Relief Fund.

More than 5,000 pairs of shoes were sent to Joplin by members of the Columbia Board of Realtors and KFRU Radio 1400 AM in less than three days. "We did a tremendous thing, and I know the people of Joplin will be grateful," wrote CEO Michael Brown in an email that thanked Realtors and the Columbia community for their help.

The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri accumulated more than 70,000 pounds of food, hygiene products and cleaning supplies for Joplin residents, first responders, medical personnel and volunteers — enough to fill a tractor-trailer. D. Rowe's Restaurant in Columbia helped the food bank collect hygiene items and bottled water.

Operation Give: COMO Cares orchestrated a collection site May 28 at Columbia Mall for blankets, pillows, clothing, hygiene items and water and factory seal food items. Fry Wagner Moving Co. will help transport all collected items to the Salvation Army in Joplin.

The University of Missouri and the Heart of Missouri United Way have created "One State. One Spirit. One Mizzou." T-shirts for $14.95 to support the United Way's United for Joplin campaign. The shirts are available at the University Bookstore, the Tiger Team Store or online at mutigers.com.
Ellis Fischel Cancer Center will have a new home in early 2013. The center, which has been located on Business Loop 70 since it was established in 1940, will move into University of Missouri Health Care's new $203 million patient care tower that's under construction.

Preparation for the patient care tower began in August 2009, and ground was broken nearly a year and a half ago. Workers are completing internal concrete framing on the seven-level structure and will put up external panels next.

The tower is on the north side of University Hospital and will provide 300,000 total square feet for Ellis Fischel Cancer Center along with additional operating rooms, pre- and post-procedure rooms and 90 private patient rooms for University Hospital.

Ellis Fischel will occupy the first and second floors of the patient care tower, where personnel will provide outpatient services and clinical services such as chemotherapy treatment, radiation therapy and cancer screening. There will also be space for the Margaret Proctor Mulligan Breast Health and Research Center, Cancer Screening Services, Missouri's only lymphedema center and a variety of cancer survivor and quality-of-life services such as a resource center, family support services, a boutique and an outdoor "healing" garden.

Construction of the Ellis Fischel portion of the tower is funded through $30 million in revenue bonds that the MU Board of Curators approved in May 2010 and $22 million in operating revenue from MU Health Care.

The third and fourth floors of the patient care tower will house surgical services, including six operating rooms, with enough space for six more operating rooms in the future. The new tower will also include 25 new pre- and post-operating rooms — all private — with expansion space for 26 more rooms. The tower also will offer an expanded surgery waiting room.
The fifth, seventh and eighth floors will house inpatient units with 90 private patient rooms for patient-centered care, visitor lounges and facilities for physicians, nurses and other health care providers to treat patients. Because of the alignment of the new tower with University Hospital's critical care tower, there is no sixth floor.

MU Health Care is seeking Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification of the patient care tower with these green features:

- The landscaping plan will feature water-efficient plants to reduce the demand for irrigation.
- Thirty percent efficiency of sinks, toilets and shower fixtures will reduce water use.
- The building will be 16 percent more energy efficient than the ASHRAE 90.1 energy standard.
- Monitoring systems will confirm that the building is performing as designed.
- Fifty percent of construction waste is scheduled to be recycled.
- At least 20 percent of construction materials are scheduled to come from within a 500-radius of Columbia.
- The building materials will have at least 20 percent recycled content.
- Surgery spaces will "power down" when not in use.

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MU writing program gains new leadership

Amy Lannin, an assistant teaching professor of English education at the University of Missouri, has been appointed to a two-year term as director of MU’s Campus Writing Program.

The program provides support for the writing-intensive courses at MU, classes with a heavy emphasis on writing skills that are required of all students.

Lannin also accepted a tenure-track position as an assistant professor in the College of Education. She has served in a number of capacities at MU for a decade, earning her doctorate in 2007, and has been honored with a number of awards, including MU’s Excellence in Advising Award and the College of Education’s Graduate Instructor of the Year.

Lannin replaces Jeff Rice, who accepted an endowed chair position at the University of Kentucky.
Like many of you, I suspect, I turn to the sports pages and ESPN as an escape from the disturbing and depressing “real” world. That’s the world in which our national Congress is paralyzed, the economy is mired in a recovery that is leaving millions on the outside and three wars produce more casualties than progress.

Lately, though, the sports report hasn’t offered much relief. The headlines shout about a highly paid and highly respected coach caught lying about rule violations, our most revered bike racer and cancer crusader accused of cheating and suspicions of corruption at the highest levels of the game the rest of the world calls football.

So let’s focus today on a rare and welcome bright spot. I mean our university’s softball team and, more broadly, a measure of athletic success that deserves more celebration than it has received.

You’ve seen, I’m sure, that the MU women have once again played themselves onto the biggest stage in softball, the College World Series. (Admittedly, the stage isn’t really all that big. The series is being played in Oklahoma City, which isn’t likely to be confused with any of the sites of the BCS football championship games. And the record crowd that attended last week’s super regional here was a little over 2,500, a number that would probably just about fill Section Q, where my football season tickets are.)

Still, it’s a big deal, especially coming as it does on top of the Big 12 conference championship.

The championship that should be even more exciting, at least to anybody who believes that the “student” in “student athlete” should come first, is this: The softball team also led the conference in the APR ranking. APR is not to be confused with
RPI, ERA or any of the other initials that denote athletic achievement. Instead, it stands for Academic Progress Rate, the national measure that assesses how well an NCAA-member institution is doing at moving its athletes along toward the goal of graduation.

I don’t know exactly how an APR score is calculated, but I do know (because I read it on the Mizzou Athletics website) that it is based on a four-year average with points awarded on the basis of whether athletes remain eligible and either stay in school or graduate. A perfect score is 1,000.

Our high-flying softballers scored 997 in this year’s ranking, which leads the Big 12.

That’s what softball has in common with football. The football team didn’t do as well on the field, though it did claim the last co-championship of the Big 12 North. It did lead the conference in APR, with a score of 967.

I doubt the conference athletic directors spent a lot of time when they met this week in Kansas City comparing APR rankings. If they did, Mike Alden would have six championships to show, second only to the 10 of Texas.

(For the record, the other leaders are both men’s and women’s swimming and diving, women’s golf and gymnastics. The latter two earned perfect scores. Ten of MU’s 20 varsity sports finished in the top three in the conference. Men’s basketball was third; women’s basketball second. Only wrestling wound up below the national average.)

And just in case you might be looking for bragging rights, KU led in only three sports and Nebraska finished its Big 12 run with only one. Those with a vengeful nature may take some satisfaction in being reminded that Mike Anderson will lose one basketball scholarship at Arkansas because his predecessor did so poorly in academics.

The athletic department’s press release last week noted that our athletes have finished first or second in the conference every year since the APR was launched in 2004. That’s something to be proud of.

Now don’t you feel better? To make you feel better yet, I’m taking next week off.

George Kennedy is a former managing editor at the Missourian and professor emeritus at the Missouri School of Journalism.
MU stands behind Joplin after tornado

*T-shirt sales alone raised more than $100,000.*

By Abigail Geiger Published May 30, 2011

A week after the devastating tornado hit Joplin, Mo. citizens across Missouri and the nation are still joining together to aid and rebuild the community, little by little.

“We all have been shocked and saddened by the loss of life and devastation caused by the tornado that struck Joplin on Sunday,” Chancellor Brady Deaton said in an email May 24 to students, faculty and staff members.

Gov. Jay Nixon said $25 million in emergency funds was initially set aside for Joplin, and this increased with private donations.

In response to the tornado that struck Joplin on May 22, MU has partnered with several groups to help relief efforts for the Joplin community.

MU joined the Heart of Missouri United Way to produce a selection of tornado relief T-shirts entitled “One State. One Spirit. One Mizzou.” that are priced at $14.95 each.

The shirts can be purchased at mutigers.com and became available last Thursday afternoon at the Memorial Stadium Tiger Team Store and University Bookstore in the MU Student Center.

More than $100,000 has been raised in the past week from the T-shirt sale by itself.

The relief efforts, collectively called “United for Joplin,” include a text-to-support program whereby texting the word JOPLIN to 864833 donates $10 to the relief fund.

KOMU/Channel 8 and the Heart of Missouri United Way sponsored a fundraising telethon Thursday evening, which started with KOMU newscasts at 5 and 6 p.m.

A food drive, jointly hosted by the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri and MU Health Care, was also started last week. Locations of barrels for food donations are located at University Hospital, Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, among many others.

The American Red Cross sponsored blood drives Friday afternoon at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital and University Hospital’s lobby.
Also, MU Extension is helping coordinate relief efforts, the MU Center for Family Policy and Research is collecting donations for youth and the Shelter Club in the College of Veterinary Medicine are collecting donations.

President Barack Obama spoke in Joplin on Sunday afternoon at the memorial service held in honor of the approximate 100 deaths from the tornado.

Obama came to Joplin in order to express to the Joplin community of the national support to rebuild the community.

“We are troubled on every side, but not distressed,” Obama said, arousing great applause. “Cast down, but not destroyed. There’s no doubt in my mind that Joplin will rebuild. I can tell you, as President of the United States, that America will be with you every step of the way.”
MU braces for summer season of construction

Tate, Switzler and Gillett halls are due to open in the fall as summer renovations continue.

By Jaime Williams Published June 1, 2011

Though construction is nothing new to the MU campus, new projects will be going on this summer in addition to the completion of several ongoing ones.

“A lot of construction gets done in the summer and, yes, there are a lot of visitors but there are less people on campus in general,” Campus Facilities spokeswoman Karlan Seville said.

Seville said a storm sewer pipe under Francis Quadrangle has failed and needs to be removed.

“It’s actually crumbling and broken,” She said.

Seville said once the pipe is replaced, landscaping services would improve drainage on the south section of the Quad, creating a slight crown in the middle of the Quad so water drains better. Construction began May 16 and the whole project should be complete by Aug. 1.

Seville said when classes commence in the fall, no one will be able to tell the construction happened.

Because of the construction, Eighth Street circle drive will be closed beyond Parking Lot R-C1, and some of the sidewalk by the circle drive will be rerouted. Construction will take place along the entire length of the Quad on the east side, but the sidewalk will remain open.

“The pipe is 10 feet below the surface,” Seville said. “It’s going to be a huge trench.”

Ongoing projects include the renovation of Tate and Switzler halls, both of which will reopen in the fall.

“We’ve added classrooms and also added offices for faculty,” Seville said.

Seville said both buildings have been brought up to current code and the buildings are more efficient. Both buildings will now have central air.

“Essentially, the buildings have been gutted completely,” Seville said.
Gillett residence hall will also reopen in the fall.

"The building has been renovated top to bottom," Housing Operations Associate Director Harriet Green-Sappington said.

Green-Sappington said changes included reduced capacity, additional study spaces, wheelchair accessible rooms on all floors and central air conditioning.

"We're at the point of substantial completion," she said.

Green-Sappington said the renovation of Gillett is part of an 18-year master plan that began with the opening of the Virginia Avenue Housing Area.

Another ongoing project is the new Patient Care Tower being built on the northeast side of University Hospital. The project was started in August 2009 and is projected to be completed by early 2013.

MU Health Care spokesman Jeff Hoelscher said the completion of the Patient Care Tower will meet four needs. The building will be a new home for the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center and it will have expanded and updated surgical facilities. It will also house three new floors of private inpatient rooms and new educational facilities.

Hoelscher said the new cancer center will offer care in the latest facility with the most updated equipment.

"I think we're all very excited about it," Hoelscher said. "It's going to be a state-of-the-art facility."

Seville said because of the Patient Care Tower, utilities need to be upgraded, and one of the biggest projects this summer is relocating those utilities that run under the parking lot of the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital. She said the utilities are being relocated to underneath Monk Drive.

"We have to close Monk Drive, which affects anyone going to the hospital," Seville said.

Monk Drive will be closed June 15 through Sept. 2.

"Short-term, (the construction) will frustrate people," Seville said. "Long-term, it benefits the university and people will be happy with it."