Video Game Violence Essay, Research Paper

In recent years, video games have been a popular icon of youth culture. However,as games have become popular, so has the amount of violence contained in them. Because of the immense popularity of video games with children, violence within them should be handled more properly.

First of all, let’s take a look at some background information to get a few ideas of who plays the games frequently and what amount of video games contain violence. A lot of people tend to think that the majority of video game users are children, but a congressional testimony by Interactive Digital Software Association denies this, and points out that 77 percent of the most frequent consumers are “adults”. (57 percent-over18, 20 percent-over 36). And yet, even though those “adults”account for most of the users, the remaining 23 percent of the consumers are still under 18, and shouldn’t be overlooked, especially when researches have found that many games contain at least some form of violence. One research has sampled 33 popular Nintendo

and Sega games, and came to the conclusion that close to 80 percent of them have at least some aggression or violence. Another research shows that 85 percent of the games that are inspected embrace a lot of acts involving killings.

One example of a destructive game that I have seen is Mortal Kombat IV. It’s a fighting game between two characters in which one of them literally destroys the other by pulling off the arms or pulling off the head to make them explode, and so on. The commentator just laughs about it very loudly or says “Excellent!” to praise you every time you kill the other character. Its graphics are full of blood that I remember very vividly. My friends who used to play it say that it’s kind of old so they are tired of it already, but I still see them playing it once in a while. One of them says that even though it’s not a very good game, people still play it because they think it’s funny to kill people in such a manner.

Because of recent events in America involving school shootings, the importance of the role of parents has been discussed more frequently here and there, especially regarding how much parents can control what their children see or do. But can parents know what their child’s whereabouts and actions are every minute? It would be difficult to say that they could, such as when their children are at video arcades or playing games at a friend’s house. Actually, arcade games are as popular as home versions, and many children commonly spend their time at arcades. Moreover mothers nowadays must also work to improve their family

incomes, and have very little time to stay at home and watch their children. However,they can at least check and control what kinds of games their children buy and play at home. Usually new games cost between 18,000 to 25,000 drs which is not a reasonable price for young children, so parents are usually the ones who buy games for them. In fact, I see many children go into game stores with their parents to buy games. So if parents say that they are really concerned about protecting their children from violent games, it’s natural for them to ask the sales people and also look for the rating systems on the games. It is

the least they can do, and is also a necessary responsibility as a parent. This also means that they can’t just blame game companies for their products if the parents don’t do what they should be doing. However, as mentioned before, parents aren’t always around to see what their children are getting into.

Another aspect of parent responsibility is to make sure whether their children are easily mis-led about things that are happening in their environment. They are much more impressionable than elder teenagers and adults. Therefore, they are more likely to emulate and imitate people and things that would capture their attention. However,parents can take advantage of this approach because it means if children have a good role model, they would mimic and act in a positive way. Adequate communication such as family discussion and family activities are also some of the ways to teach them morals. If children learn enough knowledge of difference between fantasy and reality, then they would be better able to distinguish between right and wrong without being told by their parents and other good role models. This is becoming more and more difficult, however, especially when game companies are trying to make video games seem more real. Because of new technology, many games look like films or tv, and children see the violence almost as though it is in front of them.

This constant exposure to realistic violence is the final matter to be discussed. It means that children will become less and less shocked at witnessing or experiencing violence, and are thus more likely to cause it. It has been found out that “younger children” tend to have more aggressive behavioral patterns after they play “violent games” than the elder teenagers. On the other hand, a University of Massachusetts psychologist, Dan Anderson, suggests that it’s not every child, but only a “small minority” which are easily influenced by exposure to video game violence. Yet,those people which are affected “can cause serious havoc.” He also states:

If you’re predisposed to violence and aggression, you can find like-minded people who will validate your experience. You can become part of an

isolated group that family and friends don’t know about, and that group can

exchange information on getting or making weapons. (44)

A well known example of this case is the tragic event that happened at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Two students shot and killed 13 people and wounded 23 other students before they committed suicide. A lot of the media has reported repeatedly that those two students did like to play games a lot,especially the kind of games that include lots of violence. And even though it cannot be proven that video games caused them to kill their fellow students, it is still a fact that they were constantly playing games which exposed them to violence. Therefore, it is not

strange to think that video games were most likely a part of what affected their violent behavior.

In conclusion, it has become obvious to the public that video games are a big part of children’s lives. It has also been shown in studies that exposure to violence in video games can create aggressive behavior, and can possibly even lead to violence at home or in school. The solution to this problem is not easy, but one short-term solution is for government regulation of game sales. If the government forces retailers to keep track of which games are being sold to minors, then children wouldn’t be able to purchase violent games. Because video games already have a rating system, it would only be necessary for retailers to ensure that under-age children were unable to purchase games with a rating higher than their age limit.