Virtual Addiction Essay, Research Paper

There are certain things that cause addiction. Computer games are electronic games that are addictive. Played on a computer or on a console system such as the Sony Playstation, these games can occupy a person for countless hours. Through computer gaming, people escape their reality which includes school and work. Video games also present people with challenges they can overcome so they can feel a sense of accomplishment. In a virtual world, mistakes can be undone and time can renew itself with the push of a few buttons. Through gaming, a person can experience his or her fantasies that he or she cannot experience in real life. In a commercial world of advancing technology and electronic entertainment, people become obsessed over these games. Computer games are addictive because they allow people to escape reality, offer challenges, provide a world where mistakes can be undone and allow people to experience their dreams which they cannot experience in real life.

The fact that video games allow people to escape reality makes them addictive. Video games allow people to get away from certain things that cause them stress such as schoolwork. ?I?d rather play Half-Life or Goldeneye than do my physics. School is the same everyday. Video games are fun no matter when you play them? (Personal Interview). For many students, school can be seen as a source of stress because of the intense workload they are faced with daily. Video games direct their minds away from education and veer them towards the virtual world.

According to Doctor Cairn of the University of Texas, people, especially male children, are spending too much time on video games and not enough time on schoolwork or with their family (?Music, Television, Video Games and Their Effect on Children? 5). Computer game companies have proven that people under eighteen years of age play video games to a point of addiction because they want to evade pressures in their lives (?The Fantasy World ? 3). People often consider a job or their family life to be boring and tedious. A video game takes away that feeling by giving gamers a feeling of excitement. ?Many people who are video game addicts are those who feel they have boring, mundane lives. Through gaming, they can experience the excitement that they feel they are lacking in their real lives? (Geggis 1). However, the idea of escaping the reality of work or family soon turns into neglect as the gamer becomes more addicted (Scheeres 7). People forget about their jobs and their families and only focus about the game. ?I heard about a woman who left her child in the car because she was anxious to get to the next level in The Sims. The child was left there for two hours in a boiling car. I was disgusted when I read that? (Personal Interview). An addiction to computer games causes people to ignore things that can be very important. People escape from daily routines through playing computer games that are exciting and entertaining. Video games are addictive because they cause people to get away from reality.

In addition, computer games are addictive because they create challenges that can be overcome. People enjoy challenges that they know can be conquered. Successfully completing a computer game gives the user a sense of accomplishment regardless of the difficulty. ?Nothing beats smashing up a game. It?s the challenge that keeps you going. It feels good to win, especially against your friend? (Personal Interview). Many games offer adjustable degrees of difficulty for people to conquer. This keeps the person playing repeatedly even after he or she has completed the game the first time. Video games provide challenges from the comfort of the user?s home. People grapple with obstacles in computer games and can challenge their friends or even people around the world through the internet (?Documentary Examines Impact of Video Games? 4). Notorious video game companies such as Nintendo or Sony try to get people addicted to their games by making these challenges fun. ?I?d rather try to find a way out of the water temple in Zelda than try to figure out how to balance chemistry equations? (Personal Interview). Challenges in video games are more appealing than those that are usually found in everyday life. Many games involve the challenge of someone such as a secret agent travelling through scenarios with the sole purpose of shooting villains. ?Although she grants that these games can improve hand-eye coordination and encourage kids to focus, she points out that most of the students involved in the mass school shootings that occurred between 1997 and 1999 were heavily involved in video gaming? (Geggis 2). Many popular games such as Goldeneye: 007, Perfect Dark, Tom Clancy?s Rainbow Six, and Wolfenstein 3D have a violent purpose involving firearms and killing villains in realistic settings. Teenagers often become addicted to the challenge of killing a virtual enemy. Being addicted to these realistic shooting challenges can influence the gamer in serious, negative ways (?Music, Television, Video Games and Their Effect on Children? 5). Video games create a variety of challenges that cause people to become addicted.

Furthermore, video games are addictive in that they present a world where mistakes can be undone. Inside a video game world, nothing is real. Rules that govern reality such as death or time can be broken. If the user?s character is defeated during game play, the character can start over. ?No one?s perfect. I always die in Diablo. All I have to do is reset the game and hopefully this time, I won?t make the same mistake again? (Personal Interview). After a player is beaten by the game, the player can choose to redo the same journey until he or she gets it right. A person can explore a virtual world over and over which ultimately causes addiction. Inside a computer game, a character can experience injury or death without doing any actual harm to the user in real life. ?In reality, getting shot in the head will kill you. In a game, your character can die and reincarnate by pushing a few buttons? (Jameson 93). The idea of cheating death and injury in a computer game is appealing to people because the game does not harm them physically in real life. Because many games can be played with more than one person, a user can call upon someone for help if he or she does not know his or her mistakes in a game. ?Remember when both of us got up in the summer everyday at six o?clock to play Diablo? You kept trying to beat Andariel by yourself, but you couldn?t do it without me. We got so hooked on that. Diablo totally wasted half of August? (Personal Interview). A partner in a game can aid in finding and solving a person?s mistakes. A user becomes addicted to video games through worrying about how to improve his or her gaming skills. Since people do not have to adhere to rules in a virtual world, gamers have the option of continuing their adventures until the tasks are complete. Because mistakes can be undone in video games, a person can explore a virtual world many times and become addicted to the game.

In addition, computer games create fantasies that people cannot experience in real life which makes them addictive. People have dreams and fantasies that they cannot experience in the real world. Game companies generate these fantasies through their games. ?Some of the most common things people want to be are a knight in shining armour, a professional athlete or a secret agent saving the world. These are exciting, unique lifestyles that are definitely not common? (?The Fantasy World? 3). People can live their dreams through a virtual world. Computer games cause addiction by luring people into something they want to do. A gamer may feel that his or her life is boring or tedious and the idea of exploring a fantasy world with endless possibilities adventures is appealing and alluring. Although people do become addicted to games, there are many people who can resist playing them. According to the International Video Gaming Federation, many people play computer games for entertainment and do not become addicted whether they like the game or not. Many people allocate their time in sports or extra curricular activities (?Researchers: Video Games Can Hurt Development? 6). Computer games offer various types of virtual lifestyles that cause addiction in people. A person, usually a child or an adolescent, may wish to become a professional athlete when he or she is older. Through video games, that person can live his or her dreams in a virtual world by playing sports games. The thought of becoming an undercover spy to save the planet is also very appealing to people and keeps them playing the game (?The Fantasy World? 3). People immerse themselves in their fantasies through a virtual world and eventually become addicted. Video games are incorporated into the daily routines of sixty-five percent of all American households. Eighty-five percent of gamers are male because most computer games deal with action and adventure that males crave (?Documentary Examines Impact of Video Games? 4). Therefore, by generating people?s fantasies through a virtual world, people become addicted to playing video games.

Computer games cause people to be addicted because they permit gamers to escape reality, provide conquerable challenges, create a world where mistakes can be undone, and allow people to experience fantasies they cannot experience in real life. Video games are addictive in that they cause users to get away from reality and forget about things such as homework. People are addicted to electronic games because they also provide challenges that can be overcome and give users a sense of accomplishment. Mistakes can be undone and corrected in a virtual world. This allows people to explore a game world over and over and keeps them playing. By creating fantasies people cannot experience in real life, computer games cause people to become addicted to playing them. Many gamers crave the idea of living an exciting life and being something they are not. Hence, computer games generate an atmosphere that causes addiction in people who play them. There are particular things that create addiction.