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Video Games Teach Kids To Smoke Tobacco, Drink Alcohol, Study Says

Oct 27, 2016 03:28 PM By [Elana Glowatz](http://www.medicaldaily.com/reporters/elana-glowatz) [@ElanaGlow](http://www.twitter.com/ElanaGlow)

**Women In Gaming: Tracy Fullerton Talks About The Future Of Women In Video Games**

Popular video games might make young people more likely to smoke or drink, a new study has asserted.

Many of the bestselling games contain explicit use of alcohol or tobacco, implied use, or paraphernalia, and in a paper in *[Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking](http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/cyber.2016.0093%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank),*U.K. researchers suggest that young people “who play these video games are more likely to have experimented with tobacco and alcohol.” The authors compared this influence to that of films, noting that exposure to alcohol- and tobacco-related content in movies makes adolescents more inclined to try the drugs themselves. However, “tobacco and alcohol content is highly prevalent in a range of other popular media, and the interactive nature of video games provides multiple opportunities to promote products and behaviors.”

The team from the University of Nottingham looked at a few dozen of the bestselling video games in the U.K. in 2012 and 2013 that had avatars that look and behave like actual people, and took surveys of more than 1,000 kids between 11 and 17 years old that involved self-reported substance abuse. Almost half of the games had some sort of applicable drug content. According to the study, “young people exposed to this content are more than twice as likely to have used tobacco or alcohol.”

But the researchers did not lump all of those kids together: “Exposure to smoking and drinking could be moderated by individual experiences of gameplay and time spent playing, particularly in games ... where the players' choices impact on the story and plot, thus resulting in more or less exposure.”

Smoking and drinking alcohol have long been described as behaviors children and adolescents can pick up from their role models. One study found that when family members smoke, it counteracts anti-smoking education efforts taking place in schools. “The more smokers there are in the family, the more children have the opportunity to handle cigarettes and smoking accessories from an early age: they get, buy, or even light cigarettes,” according to a study in the [*Central European Journal of Public Health*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19256286). “Smoking of parents and other relatives led to a substantial increase in the number of children who were determined to smoke in the future or were considering it.”

The study is not the first time video games have been linked to youths’ behaviors — groups disagree on whether violence in video games influences how violently kids behave in real life. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry say violent media “can contribute to real-life violent behavior and harm children in other ways,” [Harvard Medical School](http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/violent-video-games-and-young-people) notes. But those who question that assertion say that “much of the research on violent video game use relies on measures to assess aggression that don't correlate with real-world violence. Some studies are observational and don't prove cause and effect.” While children learn by observing, the medical school adds, “Federal crime statistics suggest that serious violent crimes among youths have decreased since 1996, even as video game sales have soared.”

**Sources:** Cranwell J, Whittamore K, Britton J, Leonardi-Bee J. Alcohol and Tobacco Content in UK Video Games and Their Association with Alcohol and Tobacco Use Among Young People. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*. 2016.

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# Source: [www.parentherald.com](http://www.parentherald.com)

# Video Game Violence Vs. Culture: Creator of ‘DOOM’ 'John Romero Shares His Opinion

**By**[**Pets Torrefranca**](http://www.parentherald.com/reporters/pets-torrefranca)**, Parent Herald** October 25, 10:15 pm

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Ariana Cueto (L) and Luis Pineiro check out the items on display at the Logitech booth as they play a Doom 3 videogame during the TigerDirect Tech Bash at the Miami Marlins Park on November 7, 2014 in Miami, Florida. The event gave people the chance to have a hands on experience with some of the latest technology in portable computing devices, gaming rigs, consumer electronics, home theater, networking and other products.
(Photo : Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

John Romero creator of the video game "DOOM" which was banned in certain countries ([17 years in Germany](http://www.tomshardware.com/news/doom-sales-ban-doom-2-fps-ego-shooter%2C13353.html)) due to its gore and violence content, shares his opinion on the subject as published in a recent blog on the [PlaystationLifestyle](http://www.playstationlifestyle.net/2016/10/23/john-romero-on-video-game-violence-culture/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) page.

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John Romero said, "I believe games are cultural and the violence that we see in the world goes beyond games. Plenty of countries play games. Canada, Germany, Japan, England, Ireland... They're all hardcore consumers of games, yet we don't see similar outbreaks of violence in these countries. It's not the game, it's the gun. It's not the computer, it's the culture. It's not the player," the topic of video game and violence has been an ongoing debate within certain communities and forums, blaming video games violence for crimes committed within the society itself.

An article previously published by the [Telegraph UK](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2016/03/12/study-finds-no-evidence-violent-video-games-make-children-aggres/) cited a study conducted by Oxford University, which showed that the influence of video games were "statistically significant, yet minor, factor" in regards to the development of children's behavior." The study involves 200 children ranging from the age 10 and 11. In a statement by Dr. Andy Przyblski, head researcher of Oxford's Internet Institute, he explained that "the fact that the study had not found evidence of a link between violent games and real-life aggression did not mean it does not exist but academics are divided about the possible effects."

Meanwhile, [the](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/08/violent-video-games.aspx) [American Psychology Association](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/08/violent-video-games.aspx) confirmed the link between aggression and violent video games based on their report. Mark Appelbaum, PhD, who was the chairman of the Task explained that "Scientists have investigated the use of violent video games for more than two decades but to date, there is very limited research addressing whether violent video games cause people to commit acts of criminal violence, However, the link between violence in video games and increased aggression in players is one of the most studied and best established in the field."

Both studies from established institutions clearly explains that it all comes down to control and discipline, in a way John Romero is correct that playing violent video games is not the problem, lack of parental guidance and the culture we introduce our children are, as the famous author Mark Twain said, "too much of anything is bad."