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Researcher says study proves video game-violence link

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An Iowa State University professor said that though it has long been suspected, a new study provides conclusive evidence that playing violent video games causes an increase in violent behavior.

Craig Anderson, a Distinguished Professor of psychology, said his study took the results of previous studies and integrated them with a net analysis to determine that exposure to violent video games increases aggressive thoughts and behaviors, and decreases pro-social behavior.

"There were 130-some studies netted in this," Anderson said. "It's a much larger sample size than what's ever been done before. That allows us to ask broader questions."

Some of these questions included whether violent video games had similar effects on people, regardless of their culture, gender or age. Anderson's results showed that in all cases the answer was "yes."

He said his results also include several longitudinal studies that track the progress of a specific subject over a long period of time.

"If you want to think of addressing a research question sort of like building a three-legged stool, we've now got all three legs: experimental studies, correlational studies showing the same effects, and now we've got longitudinal studies," Anderson said.

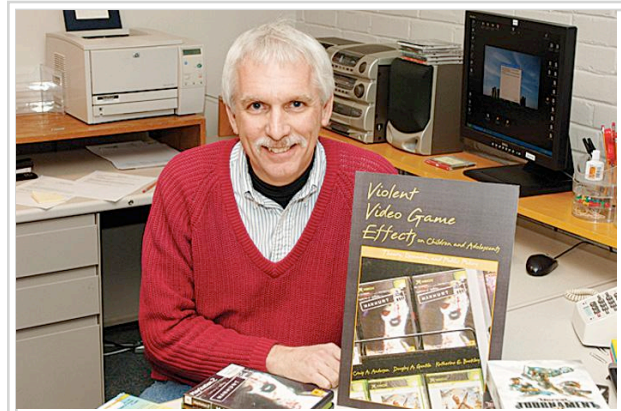
Though Anderson said the scientific community always has assumed that violent video games affected thoughts and behaviors, they lacked a broad study to provide the conclusive evidence. Anderson's study appeared in the March edition of the "Psychological Bulletin," a journal published by the American Psychological Association.

Anderson said he was not surprised by the general results of the study, but he did find it interesting that girls showed the same increases in aggression as boys. Similarly, gamers in Western cultures and Eastern cultures both showed the same effects.

Age also doesn't seem to play as great of a role as some might suspect, Anderson said. Though some might assume that elementary school students would be more susceptible to behavior change than college students, Anderson said this doesn't seem to be the case.

Anderson said this conclusive study on videogames should bring about new discussions on public policy.

"Within the U.S. it doesn't seem likely that there will be any laws enacted, but we could decide, as a culture, to do a much better job of educating parents of the harmful effects of certain kinds of videogames," Anderson said.



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By Iowa State University News Service
Iowa State University professor Craig Anderson has completed a new study on video games.

He said parents should treat their children's video game habits just as they would their diet. Just as a steady diet of potato chips and soda is unhealthy, Anderson said, so is a steady entertainment diet of violent video games.

However, he said the games aren't all bad if they are played in moderation.

"If a given child has no other risk factors for becoming aggressive, then playing a violent video game for a few hours a week is not going to turn them into a school shooter," Anderson said.

Some people have accused Anderson of being a "video game hater," but he said that assertion isn't true.

"I've been a gamer since 1978," Anderson said. "I'm not anti-game, and my kids grew up playing video games, but we did a pretty good job of screening those that didn't teach values."

He said some of his favorite games are Guitar Hero and Wii Fit.

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The image is a screenshot of the Ames Tribune website. At the top, the logo for 'THE TRIBUNE' is displayed in large, white, serif font against a dark background. Below the logo, the text 'Amestrib.com - Real News, Real People' is visible. To the right of the logo, there is a weather widget showing 'Ames 34°F' and a search bar with the text 'Search News: Enter Keywords'. Below the logo and weather, a navigation menu includes links for Home, News, Obituaries, Sports, Business, Opinion, Classifieds, and Photos. The main content area features a photograph of a man with white hair and a mustache, wearing a red sweater, sitting at a desk with a computer monitor and printer. He is holding a book titled 'Violent Video Game Effects'. Below the photo, the headline reads 'Researcher says study proves video game-violence link'. The sub-headline states: 'An Iowa State University professor said that though it has long been suspected, a new study provides conclusive evidence that playing violent video games causes an increase in violent behavior.' To the right of the photo, a 'Most Commented:' section lists several articles with their respective comment counts: 'Library board will pay for preference of study consultants (27)', 'Ask the Tribune: Send us your library questions (25)', 'Ames schools have problems (25)', and 'Ask The Tribune: Why does Ames need a new library? (25)'. The bottom of the page shows social media sharing icons.