



High volume video gamers have more difficulty staying attentive

Iowa State University news reports that a new Iowa State University study has found that high volume action video game players -- those who play around 40 hours per week -- have more difficulty keeping focused on tasks requiring longer, more proactive attention than those who play video games for less than a couple of hours a week.

The study, published in the professional journal *Psychophysiology*, also supports research published within the last year establishing a positive association between being addicted to playing video games and having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Rob West, one of the study's authors, an associate professor of psychology said, "Our thinking right now is the sort of real world effect that you might be seeing is that these are individuals who would really have difficulty trying to maintain their attention independently over time. So if they're engaged in some activity that doesn't really capture their attention -- like maybe a classroom lecture, or studying in a quiet space -- they're going to have difficulty maintaining attention on their own."

ISU psychology graduate student Kira Bailey led the study. The authors also included Distinguished Professor of Psychology Craig Anderson, director of Iowa State's Center for the Study of Violence.

In the study, data was collected from 51 Iowa State undergraduate men (ages 18 to 33) who were nearly evenly divided between those who reported playing less than a couple of hours of video games per week, and those who played video games an average of 43 hours per week.

"We were not actually measuring the most extreme ends," West said. "There were people who we were unable to recruit and have data for who have higher rates than 43 hours per week. So this is probably on the high end, but it's certainly not the highest. You get some undergrads self-reporting that they're playing 9 or 10 hours a day."

Electrical activity in each subject's brain was recorded through EEG's from their scalp while they were engaged in the computer Stroop Task -- a standard measure used to

determine attention. In the task, individuals identified the color of a word when the color and word matched, or did not match. It takes longer to indicate the color when the word does not match.

The study found that reactive attention control -- described as happening "just in time" -- was similar in the two groups of gamers. But brain wave and behavioral measures of proactive attention were significantly diminished in the frequent video game players.

"It's not clear what the effects would be if we tested people who were playing 10 or 20 hours a week," West said. "So we don't know if it's a graded effect or threshold effect -- like maybe 10's OK, but 20's not. We don't have those kinds of data yet."

"As you can imagine, this study could have implications for classroom and work performance for those people who play a lot of video games," he added.

Kira Bailey, Robert West, Craig A. Anderson. (2009) **A negative association between video game experience and proactive cognitive control.** *Psychophysiology*. Early View, October 2009

<http://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2009/oct/attention>

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Inquiry into impact of violence on young Australians

ACCM has lodged a submission with the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth Inquiry into the impact of violence. ACCM has argued that:

- the evidence from the reliable body of research on the impact of media violence on the young is compelling
- media violence is a contributor to the incidence of violence in real life
- short term exposure to media violence increases the predisposition to aggress for both children and adults regardless
- repeated exposure to media violence is likely to have further deleterious effects, including greater fear, a hostile bias whereby others are seen as threatening and dangerous, greater hostility, desensitisation to further depictions of violence, beliefs normalising aggression and detailed and generalised scripts for aggressive behaviour
- it is one factor about which we can take effective remedial steps.



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EDITORIAL

ACCM's views on the conduct of the Free TV code review

The Australian Council on Children and the Media has been a participant in the recent review of the Free TV Code of Practice. There are some aspects of this review which concern us. These include:

1) This review was not structured as an open ended review:

a) There was no open invitation for the public to freely comment on any aspect of concern to them.

b) No general issues paper released

c) The public were invited to comment on the changes that Free TV had already decided they wanted to make (viz via a "marked up" document, with explanatory memo. The Explanatory Note invited the public to make comment on "the proposed revised Code" .

The ACCM believes that the presentation of the Review documents would not have encouraged the general public to make comments outside of the proposed changes, and queries whether this method provides "an adequate opportunity for the public to comment" on the Code. (this aspect has to satisfy the Australian Communications and Media Authority).

2) The Explanatory Note and Explanatory Table contained statements about proposals for changes to the promotion of M and MA programs that were not consistent with the "marked up" version of the Code.

We drew attention in our submission to what appears to be a drafting contradiction between clauses 3.6 and 3.14 of Program promotion section. We have also asked ACMA to examine

A cautionary note on *A Christmas Carol*

Parents are warned that this is not a film for young children. It certainly deserves the PG rating with the guidelines "Mild themes and scary scenes" which it was given by the Australian Government Classification Board

ACCM's reviewer suggests that the film is not recommended for viewers under 8, with parental guidance recommended to 13, as children in the 8-13 age group may also be disturbed by scenes of supernatural events and frightening characters. The scenes involving the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come are particularly frightening for young children.

Our reviewer pointed out that the scary scenes are made more intense by the 3D version of the film which is showing in many cinemas.

To read the ACCM review of this film go to the ACCM website and click on the movie review button on the home page.

www.youngmedia.org.au

the proposed revisions to the Code at this point with care.



Barbara Biggins
OAM
Hon CEO

3) The proposed amendments to 3.14 (which have the effect of relaxing the present restrictions on the promotion of MA programs) cause ACCM some considerable concern.

As stated in our submission to Free TV, we know that parents object to being ambushed by promos of M programs in early evening hours now, and will resent this provision being extended to MA programs. Such promotions are required by the Free TV Code to be "sanitised" to be acceptable in some time slots.

In the view of ACCM such "sanitised" promotions are misleading in that they do not convey the actual nature of the program being promoted. Further the classification of such programs mostly appears for a very few seconds only.

ACCM has asked ACMA to consider the question of whether by approving such provisions (if it intends to do so) it is in effect giving its imprimatur to a misleading practice.

4) Summary of submissions supplied to ACMA.

We understand that Free TV summarises the public submissions received, and does not in fact provide ACMA with full copies of all submissions.

We have asked ACMA to consider whether this practice (if it is the case) hinders ACMA in its deliberations of whether the revised Code "provides adequate safeguards for the matters it covers".

DIARY DATE

***Sex, violence and rock'n'roll:
Reviewing the evidence for
media effects on children***

Sydney, Friday March 19

International researchers will address issues of media violence, and sexualisation of the young.

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Send an email with "SVR" in the subject line, and your name and contact details to admin@youngmedia.org.au "

Clips 'n' Cuts

small screen no. 258 October 2009



Dropping all the balls

Parents have said to me, "How can my kid be doing homework while he's also listening to MP3 files, he's texting on his phone, he's got three windows open on the computer - one of them Facebook - and he's petting the dog? How is this possible?" Well, it turns out they have different brains.

— Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*

MY SON INSISTS HE HAS DRESSED FOR dinner. Can't I see he's changed into his formal earbuds? His older sister, mesmerised by the 6cm vastness of her Facebook-simulated farm holding - and no, alas, that's not a typo - intermittently pecks away at her Media and Culture assignment, as her phone, set to "vibrate", growls menacingly for attention. "Have you Skyped Grammy to say thank you for your

birthday present yet?" I call to the baby. "Aw, Mum!" She surfaces briefly from the fathomless depths of her MSN contact list. "Can't you see I'm doing my homework?"

Believe me when I tell you: their brains are different ... though perhaps not exactly in the way Don Tapscott has in mind.

I used to wonder how my kids managed to

Multi-taskers were just lousy at everything

keep so many media balls in the air, when I have a hard time just chewing gum and Google-imaging. Their explanation, like Tapscott's - that the multi-tasking teen brain simply has powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal mono-taskers - seemed so logical. I mean, seriously: I couldn't do what they do.

Imagine my surprise, then, to discover they can't either.

Different brains they may have, but accord-

ing to new research, they are actually worse than standard models at processing multiple inputs. And not just a little worse, but hugely, gratifyingly, soul-satisfyingly worse. LOL!

The research, published in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, tested college students who self-identified as heavy media multi-taskers against students who said they were light multi-taskers on a range of problem-solving tasks. The main finding? In the words of researcher Clifford Nash: "Multi-taskers were just lousy at everything."

Compared to their peers, multi-taskers were terrible at filtering out distractions. They were also less efficient at task-switching, taking longer and making more errors. All of which surprised the researchers as much as it did their subjects. Multi-taskers "think they're great at what they do," the researchers observed, "and they've convinced everybody else they're good at it too."

Living well is nice too. But sometimes research is the best revenge.

Weekend Australian Magazine, 10-11 October 2009

Maligned Aussie-made monster movie in record US debut

Michaela Boland
National arts writer

THE Australian-made big-screen adaptation of children's classic *Where the Wild Things Are* overcame years of negative publicity to position itself as one of the year's biggest films when it set an opening-day record in its world premiere in the US on Friday.

Variety reports the PG-rated film earned \$US11.9 million (\$12.9m) on Friday, the highest ever one-day result for a live-action film released in the US in October, usually a slow movie-going month between the American summer and Thanksgiving family holidays in November.

The result is double what its studio, Warner Bros, was expecting and a surprise to industry watchers, given the Spike Jonze-directed drama was rumoured to be unre-

leaseable during the three years since cameras began rolling in Melbourne until its release last week.

"The major challenge was the visual effects and the character-production pipeline," said Caroline Pitcher, who was instrumental in bringing the film to Australia when she was general manager of the Melbourne Film Office.

The movie features newcomer Max Records as Max amid a host of furry monsters in suits and was shot at Central City Studios and at locations around Victoria.

Ms Pitcher said once the film was shot, the monsters' faces were found wanting. "They needed the puppets to be more expressive, so they needed a whole lot more visual effects," she said. These changes, along with Jonze's reputation for his singular vision - he directed *Being John Malkovich* and *Adapta-*

tion - and the fact the movie had been passed up by Universal Studios, fuelled speculation it had failed to meet Warner Bros' need for broad-appeal films. The delay also prevented the Australian companies boasting of their work on a well-reputed film in a bid to lure more production to Australia.

"A result like this can reinvigorate interest in Melbourne during a time that's really challenging with the dollar where it is," Ms Pitcher said. On Friday, Warner Bros announced it had pulled out of producing *Green Lantern*, its latest superhero blockbuster, in Australia because of the rising Aussie dollar.

While *Where The Wild Things Are*, which opens here in December, has started well, Ms Pitcher cautioned: "This is opening weekend, so you still have to see how the rest of the days and weeks play."

The Australian, 19 October 2009



A NEW VOICE FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH IN NSW

The Governor of NSW, Marie Bashir, has appointed Gaye Phillips as the NSW Commissioner of Children and Young People, effective from the 7th September 2009.

Gaye brings more than 15 years experience to the role of Commissioner of Children and Young People including work at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) both in Australia and Asia, and is widely respected for her advocacy work with the Indigenous community.

Ms Phillips in response to her appointment issued the following statement:

"It is a privilege to be appointed to lead the commission. It is an organisation with a noble mission to support a protective and enabling environment for children and young people. With a rich

10 year history, there is an opportunity for reflection and renewal. We will work strategically with multiple agencies and departments and civil society to identify the obstacles that prevent children and young people from reaching their potential. And similarly, we will work with others to examine the practices and policies that work, and how we can strengthen them."

The Commission for Children and Young People was set up in June 1999 to act as a bridge between children and government, business and local communities, and is the only independent organisation in NSW dedicated to ensuring that young people's views are taken seriously by government. Gay Phillips will be the 2nd NSW Commissioner of Children and Young people replacing Gillian Calvert who served a ten year term in the role.

Network News, September 2009

Telly addicts from the womb to the tomb

HERE was plenty of parental angst, denial and defensiveness on display this week after the revelation in this newspaper that the Rudd government planned to introduce guidelines recommending children under two be banned from watching television. Plenty of playground conversations started, "Well, my kid hardly watches any telly, just the occasional Wiggles video and maybe a few minutes of ABC Kids while I prepare their four food groups for dinner."

These were conversations between women. Plenty too that began with, "Well, I watched *The Jetsons*, *F Troop* and *The Flintstones* every chance I got and it didn't seem to do me any harm." These were conversations between men.

But there was one issue overlooked in the scramble for parental absolution. That is, if your child is a boy, your battle to corral the flickering beast in the corner of the room — in too many cases their own bedroom — will be considerably tougher.

The first few chapters of British author Sue Palmer's latest foray into the lives of our children, *21st Century Boys*, deals with this gender difference in the consumption of communications in forensic detail.

Reading it is, as the father of three young boys, an overwhelming, almost horrifying, experience. Much like a pregnant woman who reads ahead through *What to Expect When You're Expecting* to discover what the coming month holds in terms of bloated ankles, broken capillaries, plunging pelvic floors and the numerous risks to the survival of their unborn child. Or like reading *Jaws*.

Palmer examines the thesis that boys are from birth, or, extraordinarily, from even before birth, destined to be more influenced by television or computers than girls. They are neurologically hard-wired to prefer the screen over human interaction, with all the consequences that can entail in terms of future social awkwardness, anger and withdrawal, the theory goes. In so doing, she notes the work of Cambridge psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen, who believes that "many boys' lack of interest in people and how the mind works begins the minute the Y chromosome triggers the release of testosterone [in a foetus]."

Baron-Cohen tested the level of testosterone in amniotic fluid taken from pregnant women early in their term and revisited them a year after their child was born. "He found that the higher the level of testosterone these children had before birth, the less communicative they were in childhood, making less eye contact and speaking fewer words than children who'd had low fetal testosterone," Palmer writes.

"It's also been suggested that foetal testosterone speeds the growth of the right hemisphere of the brain [the side that specialises in spatial relationships] and slows



STEPHEN LUNN

down development of the left hemisphere [housing the main language areas]."

So there. Not even drawn his first breath and your boy's thumbs are already flexing in readiness for the hours he will devote to his Sony PlayStation and the television remote control in his darkened bedroom as he refuses all attempts to engage him in conversation. Is little Mr Hasn't-Even-Got-a-Name-Yet pre-programmed to give answers like "dunno" to Dorothy Dixers like "How was school today?" 10 years later?

Quite possibly, if you read the next piece of research in Palmer's book. I call it the second Amity Beach shark attack. She notes a study of children in the first weeks of their life shows that boys, when given the choice of looking at a picture of a friendly human face or an alien on a mobile hanging over their cot will consistently opt for the alien, while girls will choose the friendly face.

"Through the rituals of attachment — eye contact, physical closeness, body language, song — parent and child gradually become attuned to each other's emotions, and the baby gradually learns what it is to be human," she writes. "But a baby boy who'd rather stare at an alien mobile than a human face isn't naturally all that interested in learning these human skills. Given half a chance, he'll attune himself to screens rather than people."

Suddenly, a thought. With the toss of the genetic coin already over, does this let me off the responsible fatherhood hook? "Yeah sweetheart, they're with me watching toddlers walk into swings on *Australia's Funniest Home Videos* again. Yes, we're munching chips on the couch. Yes, we haven't moved in the past three hours and no, there's been no thought about preparing dinner. But what can I do about it? We're boys."

Palmer, of course, goes on to say that with the right type of nurturing home environment, lots of interaction with your sons from when they are very young, time and opportunity for outdoor play, and scope to sort out their own boundaries when it comes to interaction with siblings and friends, they can turn out just fine.

I've finished the book, but why do I keep having dreams I'm Roy Scheider frantically running along the beach yelling at parents frolicking in the surf with their young sons to "get out of the water, get out of the water!"

The Weekend Australian, 17-18 October 2009

Child's play for ABC

MEDIA are gearing up for a series of big launches of next year's TV offerings. Next week the national broadcaster unveils the highly anticipated new ad-free children's channel, ABC3 in Melbourne. The week after, Ten will stage a big event to show off its wares for 2010. *Diary* understands ABC3 may have its headquarters in Victoria, following a pitch from Victoria to the ABC and SBS review which argued the state had a prolific history of developing award-winning, successful children's programming. "There is an opportunity for Victoria to be the home of ABC3, utilising local expertise to deliver content for the dedicated channel," the submission said. The ABC will also reveal the new hosts for the channel, chosen from 5000 applications.

The Australian, 12 October 2009

NET

ADVENTURES

The Advertiser, 3 October 2009

SCHOOL holidays are upon us and we are surrounded by restless young, sometimes overtired, always in need of a new idea for further diversion.

Computer games are very fine but old-fashioned, real-life playing games are the makings of shared experiences for children. Here is a site with skipping games, clapping games, the rules for marbles and hopscotch — all those things which we'd love to remember. There are mental games and car games, scores of games for young and old.

<http://www.gameskidsplay.net/>

For playing on the computer, PrimaryGames is a very rich resource. I didn't know there were so many memory games. Then there are postcards and printout sections for making cards of place tags or paper dolls. Another vast and rich entertainment resource for the young.

<http://www.primarygames.com/>

Fresh for Kids is a very colourful and jolly site which encourages children to eat fruit. It was created by Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane markets and does not include Adelaide which has the best fresh fruit market in the business. However, it does have a nice Kids Corner section and some challenging fruity games.

<http://www.freshforkids.com.au/>

The travel site TravelMate provides that which we most need when headed off on a car trip with the kids — a mass of car games for all ages. Some of them you need to print out.

<http://www.travelmate.com.au/FunTrip/FunTrip.asp>

Rather more challenging is the CIA page of games for kids. It is wonderful that an organisation, such as the CIA, wants to entertain kids at all. And for adults, the rest of its site with its factbook and world leader data is utterly fascinating and encyclopaedic.

<https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/games/index.html>



Share your net adventures by emailing
Samela.Harris@adelaide.on.net

Aunty puts new face on kids' programs

Michael Bodey

AUSTRALIAN children will grow up with a new face of the ABC. His name is Jimmy Giggles, his puppet sidekick is Hoot the owl and from the moment kids get home from school until dinnertime, he will be the host of the public broadcaster's children's digital station.

James Rees, a 22-year-old media school drop-out with no television background plucked from more than 5000 candidates to anchor ABC3's afternoon to early evening slot, last night said he had yet to meet his feathered co-host.

As for Hoot, he faces the daunting task of joining the celebrated company of Australian TV puppet characters Ozzie Ostrich, Agro and Humphrey B. Bear.

"Interacting with him should be fantastic," Rees said. "Who knows what it will lead to, but at the moment it is just so exciting. I am just in awe. I am standing here in an ABC TV studio."

"I have absolutely no television experience. Back in July I

sent off a video and now, here I am."

The new digital multichannel ABC3 will broadcast children's programs from 6am to 9pm daily from December 4 and its preschool programming will play from 9am to 6pm each weekday and 6am to 6pm on weekends as ABC for Kids on 2 on ABC2.

The main ABC1 channel will feature ABC3 content for four hours each day.

ABC TV director Kim Dalton said the channel, which will be switched on by Kevin Rudd and broadcast from the network's Melbourne studios, was the culmination of many years' lobbying and demands.

"We were successful, we got the money and now it time for grey-haired people like me to move and let the kids take over."

ABC3 will also boost children's content online with its own portal and new digital material.

The channel will be aimed primarily at six- to 15-year-olds, with a core demographic of eight- to 12-year-olds. ABC2 will focus on pre-schoolers.

The Australian, 23 October 2009

Disney toys with 3-D, seeks fairytale ending

Sarah McBride

AS Disney re-releases *Toy Story* and *Toy Story 2* this weekend in 3-D, other studios will be watching to see if classic titles in their own vaults might benefit from a 3-D makeover.

While a reissue in 3-D might seem like an easy way to breathe new life into an existing property, the costs and hurdles have led most studios to hold off.

Just a handful of titles would justify the expense of a conversion — titles of the stature of *Star Wars*, *Titanic*, *Lord of the Rings* and the *Harry Potter* series. All those titles have been tested in 3-D. In 2005, director George Lucas said he hoped to begin re-releasing the *Star Wars* movies in 3-D in 2007; the delay underscores some of the complexities at play.

The *Toy Story* reissue will need to take in north of \$US25 million (\$28.8m) over its scheduled two-week run to justify the cost of conversion and marketing.

Converting a film to 3-D costs around \$US10m. Marketing costs add at least another \$US15m.

"The dollars just don't add up at the moment," says Dan Fellman, president of domestic distribution for Warner Bros, who has considered everything from *The Wizard of Oz* to *The Matrix* for reissue in 3-D. "Down the road, I'm sure there will be a way."

Legend Films, a San Diego-based 3-D production company, is among those working on less expensive methods — going as low as \$US2m — to convert existing films to 3-D.

Films that would do well outside the US, where an estimated 2000 3-D screens exist, are also good candidates. Jon Landau, a partner at Lightstorm Entertainment, says the company hopes to bring its 1997 film *Titanic* out in 3-D, but has yet to announce a release date. *Titanic*, which took in \$US1.2 billion overseas compared with \$US600m domestically, should perform strongly in 3-D, executives say.

Titanic producer James Cameron is working on his much anticipated *Avatar*, a 3-D fantasy that will be released for the holidays.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle to 3-D releases is finding enough screens. The films require

special projection systems that generally cost about \$US80,000 each to install. In the US, only about 3000 of the total 40,000 screens are 3-D.

In part that's why the *Toy Story* re-release is coming out in "shoulder season" — a time when it won't have to compete as hard for space on existing 3-D screens compared with the summer or winter holidays. "We're caught right now in this dilemma where getting off multiple pictures in 3-D at the same time is not optimum," says Chuck Viane, head of theatrical distribution at Disney. Disney's 3-D re-release could also lay the marketing groundwork for next year's *Toy Story 3*.

Converting existing films to 3-D for theatrical release has its advantages.

To begin with, 3-D films command a ticket price that is generally \$US3 higher, even for children. There is also a chance a re-release will boost sales of regular two-dimensional DVDs and that this rise in sales will eventually extend to 3-D versions for home viewing once 3-D TVs become widely available. Few 3-D TVs have been sold in the US.

When penetration of 3-D TVs and DVD players reaches 25 million households or so, studios are likely to start releasing films at a rapid clip, studio executives say, the way many dipped back into their catalogues for titles to release in the Blu-ray format.

Some films would make difficult transitions to 3-D for technical reasons. Newer films are generally easier to convert, especially animated ones, but tend to have lots of rapid cuts, which can tire the eye unless depths are similar from one shot to the next.

The goal of conversion is to create film where "your eyes aren't hunting and pecking, going in and out, trying to find that focal element," says Damian Wader, vice-president for business development at conversion company In-Three.

Older films, in contrast, linger longer on each shot, which "allows you to soak up the 3-D," says Mr Wader. But many of their effects translate badly.

Rob Moore, vice-chairman of Viacom's Paramount studio, says he thinks nostalgia can play a large part in building an audience for 3-D re-releases.

Weekend Australian, 3-4 October 2009

Backlash looms on smoking, drinking

Christian Kerr

AUSTRALIANS are overwhelmingly opposed to government plans to tell them to drink and smoke less and cut down on junk food in the wake of last month's National Preventative Health Taskforce report, confidential industry research reveals.

A leading social trends researcher has also warned that the federal government is taking the wrong approach. "Anything that can be seen as a criticism of people's own behaviour is immediately discounted and responded to quite angrily," Neer Korn, director of Heartbeat Trends, said yesterday.

The taskforce report floated higher taxes on fatty foods, cigarettes and alcohol; a ban on TV advertising of junk food to children; the phasing out of alcohol advertising during sporting events; and an end to remaining tobacco advertising.

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon has announced the establishment of a national preventive health watchdog.

But monitoring of calls to talkback radio, letters to the editor and comments on news websites shows ordinary Australians reacted overwhelmingly against the taskforce's recommendations, according to industry research obtained by *The Weekend Australian*. Seven-seventeen per cent of recorded comments were negative.

Further quantitative research found 60 per cent of Australians regarded the report's recommendations as attacks on their lifestyles, civil liberties and the way they operated businesses, while 57 per cent were concerned about its implications for social engineering.

Fifty-four per cent of respondents said there were problems with obesity, smoking and alcohol, but added "this report is not about targeting them".

Instead, more than half were concerned that the report was a political document "intent on overturning much of the way we choose to live".

Mr Korn said "the idea of the nanny state really hits home with people".

"People just don't want outsiders to interfere, particularly government or corporations, in their own private lives. They're very sensitive. You can't tell people anything negative."

Julie Novak, a research fellow at the Institute of Public Affairs, warned that "most Australians resent being bullied on health matters by distant bureaucrats".

"People already know what's good and not good for them and disliked the prospect of their health being micromanaged by government," she said.

Weekend Australian,
3-4 October 2009

Playtime is really serious business

MELANIE CHRISTIANSEN

CHILDREN need time set aside for some old-fashioned play or they face growing up without the skills to take risks or experiment, Playgroup Australia's national conference will be told next week.

Playtime is not just for fun, International Play Association regional vice-president Ric McConaghy will tell the Gold Coast conference.

"Spontaneous play aids children in developing resilience and decision-making capacity," Mr McConaghy said yesterday.

"The outcome is not clear, the rules are not clear and therefore they have to - with their peers - find solutions and rise to challenges.

"But if we start putting in too many rules, play loses its capacity to be unpredictable and experimental."

Playgroup Queensland chief executive Mark Brooke said too many busy parents were sacrificing their children's playtime for structured entertainment or far too much time in front of the television.

The Advertiser, 24 October 2009

A new online community helps teach with TV

School librarians and teachers, TAFEs, and universities now have access to an online community to help them get more out of broadcast material.

EnhanceTV's Community (<http://community.enhancetv.com.au>) has been set up to help educators share information, lesson plans, and teaching tips for using film and television in the classroom.

Filmmakers are also part of the community, giving teachers insider tips about their programs, and helping bring them to life in the classroom. For example, experienced television director Kay Pavlou talks about the work she has done on 'reality' docs and what goes on behind the scenes, along with useful class exercises.

EnhanceTV Manager, Jamie LeHuray said the community was established as a free resource to enable a dynamic exchange of information and ideas. The shared knowledge will help educators make better decisions in choosing programs for their libraries and classrooms, save them time with lesson planning, and expand their networks within the education community.

EnhanceTV (www.enhancetv.com.au) was developed by Screenrights, the non-profit organisation that licenses educational institutions to copy from TV. Nearly all schools, TAFEs, and universities in Australia have a Screenrights licence. For more information on the licence, visit www.screenrights.org.

Kerry Franta
Marketing Manager, Screenrights
kerry@screenrights.org

inCite, Vol 30, No 10, October 2009

Another attack on liberty?

HOT on the heels of the National Preventative Health Taskforce's recommendations on reducing smoking, drinking and the consumption of fatty foods, we now have Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital telling people how to live ("Ban" television for toddlers", 12/10).

The suggestion to limit toddlers' time in front of TV sets is a clear violation of individuals' inalienable right to liberty and another step towards a nanny state. More importantly, it jeopardises our economic future. These people should realise that TV is the cornerstone of our economy and ask themselves two questions: (1) how can parents fit in other, more productive activities, without plonking the toddler in front of a bit of day-time telly?; (2) how else can children be programmed with vital lifelong consumption habits if they are not exposed to at least two hours of TV advertising per day? Surely the last thing an aspirational country needs is citizens who can think for themselves.

Luke Slawomirski
Highgate, WA *The Australian*, 14 October 2009

SEX AND KIDS

We want the right to choose what TV tells us to
WITH our society being constantly bombarded by advertisements encouraging, if not outright indoctrinating, us into buying goods that are often not healthy or have no place in a sustainable future for the planet, then of course "people need encouragement to act in their own interests" ("Saying no to Nanny", 3-4/10).

Yes, Australians do like to make up their own minds, but let's not think for one moment that our minds have not been influenced by sophisticated advertising as well as cultural influence from television and movies that seem to promote unwholesome lifestyles as the way to go.

Suzanne Germain
Cooran, Qld

The Australian, 5 October 2009

Censor eyeing mobile content

Andrew Colley
E-stores

NOKIA and BlackBerry maker Research In Motion may have to join Apple in submitting thousands of software applications for classification before being allowed to sell them online in Australia.

Online technology news site ITnews reported last week that Australian Classification Board director Donald McDonald had raised concerns with Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor that games for mobile devices were being sold in Australia without being rated.

A spokeswoman for the classification board yesterday confirmed that the department's concerns extended to the Nokia and RIM online mobile software stores.

"As long as the applications fit the definition of a computer game, film or publication, it makes no difference," she said.

It is understood Apple has already established an ad hoc classification scheme that involves rejecting software it deems offensive.

Nokia was unable to respond to *The Australian's* request for comment in time for publication, but said it expected to comment in the near future.

RIM's local public relations representatives were also unable to provide comment in time for publication.

Nokia, RIM and Apple stores provide thousands of software developers around the world with a mass market for their applications. The applications vary in price from about \$1 for simple

calculators to \$120 for complex navigation tools. Most of the classification board's concerns relate to mobile games, many of which have adult themes. Some gently exploit sexual themes while others contain soft pornography and promote alcohol abuse.

For instance, the iPhone game R U Drunk, which uses the handset's inbuilt motion sensor to provide a mock sobriety test, has widely been promoted as a drinking games aid.

Another application for the iPhone called Passion claims to be able to use the motion sensor to rate its user's sexual performance if they keep the handset on their person while having sex.

Apple, Nokia and RIM offer the applications to Australian consumers from their online stores. Apple also offers movies and TV shows for a fee.

It is not clear at this stage whether the concerns will lead to tighter classification rules for all video content hosted and sold online in Australia.

The classification board said Mr McDonald's concerns lay "with all content that is pertinent to the Classification Act. This includes films, computer games and publications."

It referred to the Attorney-General's questions as to whether Apple would be required to apply classification across all its movie and TV content.

Late yesterday, an Attorney-General's Department spokeswoman said that was a matter for Mr O'Connor to decide.

Mr O'Connor's office was not able to respond to requests for comment in time for publication.

The Australian, 27 October 2009



I USED TO think the worst thing about bringing up two little girls was what would happen when they became teenagers. But what was just a worry turned into a nightmare the other day when I read *Getting Real*, a collection of essays on the sexualisation of girlhood. I was aware of the dangers of Barbie dolls and body image, but I was not aware of the recent research showing that all boys have seen pornography by the age of 15.

And girls are now "into" pornography at an alarmingly early age. According to Joan Sauers in her *Sex Lives of Australian Teenagers Survey*, 53.5 per cent of girls have seen pornography by the time they are 12 and 97 per cent by the age of 16. Maybe this is why almost a quarter of them also said they had engaged in oral sex by the time they were 14.

TODAY CHILDREN HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER CHILDREN AS WELL AS THE PAEDOPHILES

Sauers, the mother of a teenager, says parents may not want to know what their children get up to but they need to "have some understanding of the world their kids live in". We both were born in the mid-1950s at a time when most of us went to church. The nudity I saw before I was 12 was in the odd edition of *National Geographic*. Now and again a kid turned up with a copy of *Man* magazine but pornography wasn't part of our world and sex education virtually didn't exist.

The big problem back then was that kids were so naïve that paedophiles and perverts could take advantage. At one Catholic school I know of, there was a Brother who asked boys if their parents had told them anything about the facts of life and then proceeded to molest them on the grounds that he was "checking your sexual development".

But today it seems children have to worry about other children as well as the paedophiles. The pendulum's swung so far that children have become "pornified" and are "heavily into sex". Melinda Tankard Reist, who edited *Getting Real*, recently spoke in Adelaide and said because children are now raised in such a pornographic landscape

many girls are reduced to thinking their role is to act as "service stations for boys".

This is not being helped by mass marketing of padded decorative bras for little girls or by pole-dancing kits marketed by a British toy company. There are even pole fitness classes for children in Sydney. The pole dancing school here won't let children attend. But then again, Adelaide always was a bit behind Sydney! Tankard Reist wants a black list of retailers we can boycott this Christmas. Anglican Archbishop Jeffrey Driver has called for a review of the codes of practice and legislation relating to advertising, TV programming and children's magazines. He even used the term "corporate paedophilia" to refer to marketing that presented children "in sexually suggestive ways".

The churches are now telling us to be wary of the sinful world but we also know they

sheltered plenty of sinners against children. It gets even more confusing when you realise Father Frank Brennan, who heads the Federal Government Human Rights Consultation, gave the funeral oration for Bob Collins and said "only God can judge Bob". Remember he's talking about a former policeman and federal minister who killed himself just three days before he was to face court on 21 counts of child sex abuse.

I think part of the answer is to be forever vigilant and to have such a good relationship with your children you can talk to them about anything, including sex. And it is worth remembering SA wasn't settled by convicts, but it was founded by a former convict. Edward Gibbon Wakefield was 30 years old when he abducted a 15-year-old girl. He went to prison for three years. Plenty of others have not done time for their sex crimes, and they can be any age and be from any profession.

lan Henschke hosts *Stateline* on ABC TV.



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adelaidenow.com.au/sawekend

The Advertiser, SA Weekend, 31 October 2009

Body-image worries 'affecting 8-year-olds'

Siobhain Ryan

AUSTRALIAN children as young as eight are falling prey to concerns over body image, with girls most vulnerable to damaging self-assessments of their weight.

A Deakin University study of almost 200 schoolchildren in grades 3 and 4 has found that a quarter of girls compared their weight to their peers and a similar percentage of boys compared their muscles.

Associate Professor Lina Ricciardelli, who is presenting the study at the Australian Psychological Society annual confer-

ence this week, said while the prevalence of these "social comparisons" was similar across both sexes, the impact was not.

"It was quite gender-differentiated," Professor Ricciardelli said.

Girls were more likely to feel worse about themselves, regardless of their own weight or the body shapes of those they compared themselves against.

Boys, on the other hand, generally suffered no loss of self-esteem, despite the messages they absorbed about weight and muscle tone.

"It's mirroring the social and cultural pressures out there for

boys to attain leanness and muscularity. For girls it's primarily thinness," Professor Ricciardelli said.

The researcher said she had focused on the eight-to-10 year range because it was at that age that children began defining themselves and their body images in relation to their peers.

School and health authorities have long been alert to the risk of eating disorders among teenagers, but the Deakin University study confirms that weight worries can begin far earlier.

"Often acting on it can come later, in the next few years," Professor Ricciardelli said.

She said it was normal for children to compare themselves to their schoolmates, but some did so too frequently and with too little regard for individual difference. Parents could help limit the slide in self-esteem and the focus on dieting behaviour by highlighting their children's strengths in other areas.

Professor Ricciardelli said it was important to address body-image problems before they resulted in harm.

"It's a very risky time to be dieting, because it can impact on your growth development. It can lead to more body-image concerns and more weight gain at this stage," she said.

The Australian, 1 October 2009

NEW PUBLICATIONS

ADVERTISING

Montgomery, KC & Chester, J (2009)
Interactive food and beverage marketing: Targeting adolescents in the digital age.
Journal of Adolescent Health, No. 45, No. 3, PpS18-S29

Magnus, A; et al (2009)
The cost-effectiveness of removing television advertising of high-fat and/or high-sugar food and beverages to Australian children.
International Journal of Obesity, Vol. 33, No. 10, Pp1094-1102

Kelly, B; et al (2009)
Parental awareness and attitudes of food marketing to children: a community attitudes survey of parents in New South Wales, Australia.
Journal of Paediatric Child Health, Vol. 45, No. 9, Pp493-497

COMPUTERS & INTERNET

Notley, Tanya (2009)
Young people, online networks, and social inclusion.
Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Vol. 14, No. 4, Pp1208-1227

Mathers, M; et al (2009)
Electronic media use and adolescent health and well-being: Cross-sectional community study.
Academic Pediatrics, Vol. 9, No. 5, Pp307-314

Mishna, Faye; et al (2009)
Interventions for children, youth, and parents to prevent and reduce cyber abuse.
The Campbell Collaboration, www.campbellcollaboration.org

(2009)
Staying safe with Cybersmart Detectives.
ACMASphere, No. 46, October 2009, Pp8-9

MEDIA EDUCATION

Mendoza, Kelly (2009)
Surveying parental mediation: Connections, challenges and questions for media literacy.
Journal of Media Literacy Education, Vol. 1, No. 1, Pp28-41

Moeller, Susan D (2009)
Media literacy: Understanding the News.
<http://cima.ned.org>

MEDIA EFFECTS - HEALTH

Russ, SA; et al (2009)
Associations between media use and health in US children.
Academic Pediatrics, Vol. 9, No. 5, Pp300-306

Vader, AM; et al (2009)
Television viewing and snacking behaviors of fourth- and eighth-grade schoolchildren in Texas.
Preventing Chronic Disease, Vol. 6, No. 3, Pp1-10

Jones, RA; et al (2009)
Developing an online program to prevent obesity in preschool-aged children: What do parents recommend?
Nutrition & Dietetics, Vol. 66, No. 3, Pp151-157

MEDIA EFFECTS-PSYCHOLOGICAL

Cooper, NR; et al (2009)
Conditioning attentional skills: examining the effects of the pace of television editing on children's attention span.
ACTA Paediatrica, Vol. 98, No. 10, Pp1651-1655

MEDIA EFFECTS - SOCIAL

Mawson, Brent (2008)
Pretend I'm dead, eh: The place of death in socio-dramatic play.
New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education, Vol. 11, Pp51-63

Hastings, EC; et al (2009)
Young children's video/computer game use: relations with school performance and behavior.
Issues Mental Health Nursing, Vol. 30, No. 10, Pp638-649

REGULATION

(2009)
New standards for children's television released.
ACMASphere, No. 45, September 2009, Pp3-4

VIDEO GAMES

Bailey, K; West, R; Anderson, CA (2009)
A negative association between video game experience and proactive cognitive control.
Psychophysiology, DOI: 10.1111/j.1469-8986.2009.00925.x

Fischer, P; et al (2009)
Media violence and the self: The impact of personalized gaming characters in aggressive video games on aggressive behavior.
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, In Press, doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2009.06.010.x

Hong, JC; et al (2009)
Assessing the educational values of digital games.
Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, Vol. 25, No. 5, Pp423-437

Zea, NP; et al (2009)
Design of educational multiplayer videogames: A vision from collaborative learning.
Advances in Engineering Software, Vol. 40, No. 12, Pp1251-1260

VIOLENCE

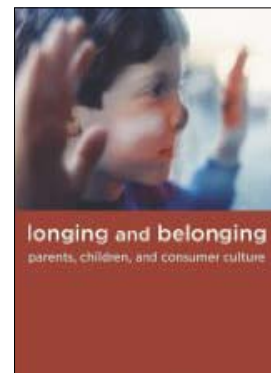
Green, David A (2008)
Suitable vehicles: Framing blame and justice when children kill a child.
Crime, Media, Culture, Vol. 4, No. 2, Pp197-220

Anderson, CA & Carnagey, NL (2009)
Causal effects of violent sports video games on aggression: Is it competitiveness or violent content?
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Vol. 45, No. 4, Pp731-739

SPECIAL ISSUE

Television 22/2009/E
A series of articles, research and program comment.
<http://www.izi.de>

NEW BOOK



Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture

Allison J. Pugh (2009)

University of California Press, LA

Allison Pugh explores the problems of rearing children in a consumer society and how children make meaning from consumption.

A review of the book by Lisa Jacobson, author of *Raising consumers: Children & the American mass market in the 20th century*, can be read at

<http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=15809>

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WORLD NEWS

US children watching more TV

New findings from the Nielsen Company show that American children aged 2-11 are watching more television than they have in years. Children aged 2-5 now spend more than 32 hours a week on average in front of a TV screen. The older segment of that group (ages 6-11) spend a little less time, about 28 hours per week watching TV, partly because they are more likely to be attending school for longer hours.

While 97% of kids' viewing is through live TV, younger kids spend more time than the older group viewing via DVR, DVD and, to a lesser extent, VCR. Four percent of kids aged 2-5 watch via those devices on average across a total day compared to 2.3% of those aged 6-11.

Younger children also watch more commercials than those aged 6-11. They also watch commercials in playback mode more than older kids and adults, as well as watch their favorite shows over and over and over on DVD, VOD and DVR.

http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/media_entertainment/tv-viewing-among-kids-at-an-eight-year-high/

Boycott goes international

The International Council of Women (ICW) General Assembly has voted unanimously in support of the New Zealand resolution on stopping the sexualisation of childhood through production, marketing and retailing of children's products.

National Council of Women New Zealand will now be dispatching resources to various National Councils of Women around the world, to assist in the ongoing

collaborative campaign to boycott the sexualisation of childhood both locally and internationally.

The successful "Cotton Off Our Kids" campaign was launched by NCWNZ a few months ago and attracted groups with a representative number of half a million in New Zealand. The campaign also worked collaboratively with the Australian organisation, *Kids Free 2B Kids*.

<http://www.voxy.co.nz/national/manufacturers-retailers-and-advertisers-take-note/5/27845>

Smart choices for your health?

Nutritionists in the US have been dismayed to find that a seal meant to flag healthier food has been granted to products such as sugary cereals and heavily salted packaged meals.

A new food-labeling campaign called Smart Choices, backed by most of America's largest food manufacturers, is "designed to help shoppers easily identify smarter food and beverage choices."

Foods with the Smart Choices checkmark include sugar-laden cereals like Froot Loops, full fat mayonnaise and Fudgsicle bars. Nutritionists say that the criteria used by the program were seriously flawed

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/05/business/05smart.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

Prix Jeunesse International 2010

The world's leading festival and competition for children's and youth television programs will take place in Munich 28 May to 2 June 2010.

The festival includes programme screenings, international discussion groups and reports of on research on children's media.

The deadline for programme entries is 15 December 2009. More details:

<http://www.prixjeunesse.de/>

KIDS' TV

A selection of children's programs screened on TV during the period

ABC

Behind the News; Science Clips; Escape from Scorpion Island; Blue Water High;

ABC2

Microscopic Milton; Pororo the Little Penguin; Inuk; Louie; Creature Features; Little Amadeus.

SEVEN

Raggs; It's Academic; Sea Princesses; Staines Down Drains.

NINE

Dora the Explorer; Kids' WB; Pixel Pinkie; Shaggy & Scooby Doo; Pyramid; The Saddle Club.

TEN

Totally Wild; Toasted TV; Puzzle Play; H2O: Just Add Water; Pearlie.

NICKELODEON

Drake & Josh; My Friend Mark; The Wonder Pets; Neds Declassified; Just Jordan; Lockie Leonard; El Tigre; Pop It!; The Fairly Odd Parents.

DISNEY CHANNEL

The Suite Life of Zack & Cody; Cory in the House; A Kind of Magic; Phineas & Ferb; Sonny with a Chance; Jonas; Yin Yang Yo!.