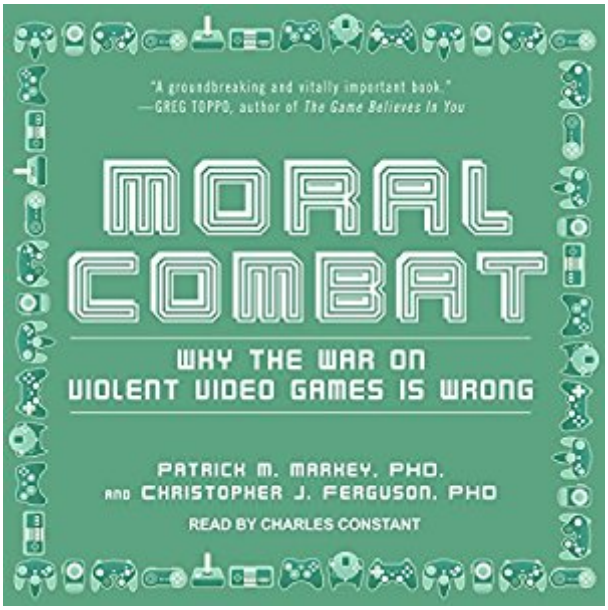
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Moral Combat: Why The War On Violent Video Games Is Wrong



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Synopsis

The media and politicians have been sounding the alarm for years, and with every fresh tragedy involving a young perpetrator comes another flurry of articles about the dangers of violent media. The problem is this: Their fear isn’t supported by the evidence. In fact, unlike the video game-trained murder machines depicted in the press, school shooters are actually less likely to be interested in violent games than their peers. In reality, most well-adjusted children and teenagers play violent video games, all without ever exhibiting violent behavior in real life. What’s more, spikes in sales of violent games actually correspond to decreased rates of violent crime. If that surprises you, you’re not alone - the national dialogue on games and violence has been hopelessly biased. But that’s beginning to change. Scholars are finding that not only are violent games not one of society’s great evils, they may even be a force for good. In Moral Combat, Markey and Ferguson explore how video games - even the bloodiest - can have a positive impact on everything from social skills to stress, and may even make us more morally sensitive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in this subject.

Moral Combat: Why the War on Violent Video Games is Wrong (2017) by Partrick Markey and Christopher Ferguson is book by two psychologists about the real effects of video games on people.The book looks at the history of the demonisation of games, pointing out that it is the latest in a long line of demonising new media that has included the bible, novels, music and comic books at

least. The history of demonising games that have violent themes is also looked at from Death race to Mortal Combat to Doom. There is also an interesting presentation of how the American Psychological Association put together a consensus policy on video games. Essentially august Psychologists reviewed their own work and declared the issue beyond further debate. By carefully selecting the people who wrote the policy they determined the outcome. The limits of their own work is not discussed.Markey and Ferguson nicely put forward the best argument that violent games almost certainly have a small effect on increasing violence and quite likely a sizable one on reducing violence, namely that as game sales have exploded violent crime has plummeted. Given that video games absorb a lot of time of the group, young males, that commits the most crime it's a reasonable supposition to suggest that games, even violent ones, have reduced violence.The authors also look at mass shootings that often elicit highly emotional responses. They point out that in recent large mass shootings when looking at the people who have carried them out they appear to play computer games, which are quite social today, less than the general population.For real problems that video games very probably do contribute to they point out that video game 'addiction' is very mild and the usual consequence is simply spending a lot of time in a hobby. For the contribution that games make to inactivity and obesity the authors point out to studies that increased activity but made a tiny contribution to weight loss and that the reason we get fat is dominated by eating too much unhealthy food.Nicely the authors also turn to the alleged benefits of computer games such as increased dexterity, cognitive ability and various things and they are just as skeptical as they were about the problems ascribed to games. Basically games are a reasonably mentally stimulating hobby that is as good for the brain as crosswords, playing chess and various other similar activities.Moral Combat is a well written, fun, easy to understand book that really does a very solid job of debunking the damage that games are alleged to cause. It's well worth a read for anyone who is worried about what their children or spouse or friends are doing to themselves by playing games.

I have been looking forward to the release of this book, I have read the studies by one of the authors (among the massive amount of studies I have read of the opposing view) and I am interested in a clearer understanding of the other side of the discussion. As a parent and grandparent, these ideas have effected my life for years.UPDATE: I have finished the book and have a few comments. The Kindle Version only: I enjoy reading footnotes. The Kindle version footnotes are infuriating. A few of them work fine, but most of them go to Wikipedia and tell me about some Roman Legion - fascinating reading, but NOT the link I was looking for. The few that

worked in respect to actually summoning the appropriate information failed to return to the spot in the text being referenced. Bad footnotes. Bad, bad footnotes. Also, charts that are, I’m sure, easy to understand in color are rendered a confusing mess in black and white - a video game sales vs. violent crime chart using world flags as data points is unreadable. (I never realized how many flags of the world were horizontal crosses on a single color field).For the book itself: To those who believe that violent video games cause violence, the data DOES NOT support your conclusions.The charting of a moral panic was excellent. Having read studies by both Drs. Anderson and Bushman, it was fascinating to read the common sense rebuttals of trends in violence in the real world vs. the virtual. The early studies with their perplexing views of what constituted violence in video games, predictions of violent behaviors never materialized. The conclusions that these early researchers - who may have elicited annoyance on the part of their test subjects - hardly validates their remarks about violence. Yet, from these early studies, headlines were born. Politicians were roused, and grants were funded to prove the hypothesis. A great quote from the book: "Social science during a moral panic begins to look and behave less like an actual science and more like a convenient way to benefit from societal agendas."I found the discussion of the Chris Harris murder trial appalling, horrifying in its abuse of scientific process for political gain. Horrifying.The chapter of the book entitled The Big Lie About School Shootings was fascinating. Joe Biden and President Obama are both quoted in the portion about the Newtown, CT, school shooting. "Congress should fund research into the effects violent video games have on young minds" said the President. And it became a springboard into the gun control demands of that administration. Newspaper articles, focused on Adam Lanza’s obsessive playing of violent video games, specifically mentioned Call of Duty. One Law Enforcement Official speculated that Lanza was attempting to score ’points’ in his mass shooting. The headlines were over by the time the full report was released on Lanza and his real video game obsession, Dance, Dance Revolution. This chapter of the book provides data that proves - convincingly, to me - that video game violence is not correlated in ANY way to school shootings. REALLY good information, good read. The data point about school shooters historically actually playing LESS video games than their peers suggests sticking a game controller in a teens hands is a better approach to alleviate aggressions.This book is a data junkies dream wrapped in very enjoyable, personable writing. The authors have found a good balance between presenting their findings, carefully presenting the bigger picture and including anecdotes about gaming and family stories. Not at all the same kind of studies I am used to reading, this is accessible, interesting, provocative and a lot of fun.Lost one star over the damn footnotes.

Don’t let the short and irreverent format of this book fool you: it is a rather accessible and well-written text from people who clearly have many years of first-hand experience with videogames as gamers, as parents and as scientists. It is filled with insights and useful advices for parents and teachers, with tales from the trenches of academia and parenthood, and with nerd references and humor. The authors, mind you, always back up their claims with tons of references, including scientific papers, news, and government and company reports. You will learn about moral panics, juvenoia, the ESRB ratings, poor "videogame addiction" definition and school shooters NOT playing violent games.

A very well written book on how video games DO NOT promote violence. I think anyone who has kids that play video games should read this. I always said it’s not the games. It’s how you raise your kids. Anyway very good book.

Such a great book! It really made me re-think everything I thought I new about media effects, academics, and research. As a Comms Scholar, this book is essential! I highly recommend, it was a fun and engaging read

Brilliantly researched book. Every gamer should keep a copy to hand to the killjoys and scolds in their lives. Two distinguished PhD researchers examine all the available evidence and debunk the bias and myths.

Definitely worth reading if you want to get a picture of the evolving violent video game debate. Mixes stats with humor and anecdotes. Doesn’t take itself too seriously.

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