

Video game playing tied to creativity

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Both boys and girls who play video games tend to be more creative, regardless of whether the games are violent or nonviolent, according to new research by Michigan State University scholars.

A study of nearly 500 12-year-olds found that the more kids played video games, the more creative they were in tasks such as drawing pictures and writing stories. In contrast, use of cell phones, the Internet and computers (other than for video games) was unrelated to [creativity](#), the study found.

Linda Jackson, professor of psychology and lead researcher on the project, said the study appears to be the first evidence-based demonstration of a relationship between technology use and creativity. About 72 percent of U.S. households play video or computer games, according to the Entertainment Software Association.

The MSU findings should motivate [game designers](#) to identify the aspects of video game activity that are responsible for the creative effects, Jackson said.

"Once they do that, video games can be designed to optimize the development of creativity while retaining their entertainment values such that a new generation of video games will blur the distinction between education and entertainment," Jackson said.

The researchers surveyed 491 middle-school students as part of MSU's Children and Technology Project, which is funded by the National

Science Foundation. The survey assessed how often the students used different forms of technology and gauged their creativity with the widely used Torrance Test of Creativity-Figural.

The Torrance test involved tasks such as drawing an "interesting and exciting" picture from a curved shape, giving the picture a title and then writing a story about it.

Overall, the study found that boys played video games more than girls, and that boys favored games of violence and sports while girls favored games involving interaction with others (human or nonhuman).

Yet, regardless of gender, race or type of game played, greater [video game](#) playing was the only technology to be associated with greater creativity.

The study appears online in the research journal *Computers in Human Behavior*.

Provided by Michigan State University

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