

Researchers questioning the link between violent computer games and aggressiveness

April 2 2012

There is a long-lasting and at times intense debate about the possible link between violent computer games and aggressiveness. A group of researchers from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, are now questioning the entire basis of the discussion. In a recently published article, they present a new study showing that, more than anything, a good ability to cooperate is a prerequisite for success in the violent gaming environment.

One camp in the debate believes that [gamers](#) not only learn to cooperate but also to understand complex contexts, how skills can be improved, and cause and effect relationships. The opposing camp, on the other hand, is convinced that the games may foster violent and [aggressive behaviour](#) outside the gaming environment.

Complex gaming situations

The study, authored by Ulrika Bennerstedt, Jonas Ivarsson and Jonas Linderoth and titled How gamers manage [aggression](#): Situating skills in collaborative computer games, is presented in *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*.

The Gothenburg-based research group spent hundreds of hours playing online games and observing other gamers, including on video recordings. They focused on complex games with portrayals of violence and aggressive action where the participants have to fight with and against

each other. 'The situations gamers encounter in these games call for sophisticated and well-coordinated collaboration. We analysed what characteristics and knowledge the gamers need to have in order to be successful,' says Jonas Ivarsson, Docent (Reader) at the Department of Education, Communication and Learning.

Strategy and timing

It turns out that a successful gamer is strategic and technically knowledgeable, and has good timing. Inconsiderate gamers, as well as those who act aggressively or emotionally, generally do not do well.

'The suggested link between games and aggression is based on the notion of transfer, which means that knowledge gained in a certain situation can be used in an entirely different context. The whole idea of transfer has been central in education research for a very long time. The question of how a learning situation should be designed in order for learners to be able to use the learned material in real life is very difficult, and has no clear answers,' says Ivarsson.

'In a nutshell, we're questioning the whole gaming and violence debate, since it's not based on a real problem but rather on some hypothetical reasoning,' he says.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

Citation: Researchers questioning the link between violent computer games and aggressiveness (2012, April 2) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-04-link-violent-games-aggressiveness.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.