

# Older men most likely to link video games with aggression

December 19 2013

---



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Video and computer games have seen a huge rise in popularity worldwide. The fact that such games provide an immersive virtual experience has led to public concerns, often articulated in the media, about a possible link between gaming and real world aggression.

However, a new study by the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University has found that although the general population has a diverse set of attitudes towards gaming, our belief in whether there is a link between video and computer games and [aggressive behaviour](#) is often influenced by whether we have actual experience of gaming.

The study found that men who never or almost never played electronic games were three and a half times more likely to believe that a link between gaming and [real world](#) aggression existed, as compared with men who said they played video/computer games most days. Younger men, aged 18-24, were almost six times more likely than the older men (65 and over) to have concrete gaming experience.

In March this year, a total of 2,504 people, who were representative of the US population, were surveyed on how regularly they played video/computer games. Some participants were also asked to rate how much they agreed with the statement: 'Violent video/computer games cause real-life aggression.'

Overall, women were found to be almost twice as likely as men of all ages to believe gaming contributed to real world aggression. There were no demographic differences for the group that neither agreed nor disagreed with a gaming-aggressive link.

The study says that as yet there is no scientific agreement on whether electronic games can cause harmful behaviour or not. Yet it says the public debate on this topic has attracted growing interest, with concerns heightened after events such as mass shootings. As the number of people who take up gaming is on the increase yearly, the researcher suggests that the effects of games are likely to become even more of a focus for future research as the medium becomes ever more ubiquitous.

Study author Dr Andrew Przybylski, from the Oxford Internet Institute,

said: 'Whether electronic games are a good thing or a bad thing remains an open question, but it is a topic that stirs up strong views. Older men without gaming experience were the most concerned about online games being linked to aggressive behaviour. The debate swings the other way when [younger men](#) with gaming experience are asked the same question. Overall, women were less likely to believe there was a gaming-aggressive link than [older men](#).

'At present, the spotlight is on electronic games in popular, legislative and scientific debates. This study is the first step towards understanding a wider aspect of that conversation. As the average age of online gamers continues to rise, this study suggests that the public debate around [electronic games](#) may become less polarised. History tells us that there have been other examples where novel forms of entertainment have met with social concern about their negative effect on society as a whole.'

In the study, Dr Przybylski cites previous studies that support his findings. In research by Ivory and Kalyanaraman, participants were instructed to think about a specific [violent video game](#) they were familiar with. The study found that by reflecting on the specific features of a particular [game](#), the study participants were less likely to believe the game promoted aggression. Another study by Harris Interactive showed that nearly three-quarters of older Americans endorsed a belief that there was a link between playing violent games and teenagers showing violent behaviour, whereas less than half of younger adults said they thought violent games led teenagers to behave aggressively.

**More information:** [online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/.../1089/cyber.2013.0245](http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/.../1089/cyber.2013.0245)

Provided by Oxford University

Citation: Older men most likely to link video games with aggression (2013, December 19)  
retrieved 21 September 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-12-older-men-link-video-games.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.