

Video Games,  
The '*Bad Boys*' of the Entertainment Media:  
Why?, and, Who Influences their Content?

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Abstract

Video games now boast probably the world's fastest growing entertainment medium. From small beginning less than 20 years ago, the marketplace is now turning over beyond €20bn per annum, significantly more than video/DVD film hire, cinema attendance, video/DVD purchase and recorded music sales taken individually. They make up a major part of the turnover of the major Sony and Microsoft companies and tie-in with blockbuster movies, music and toys. And yet, video games may remain a geek's *cul-de-sac*; a white lad's marketplace where women and young girls have large breasts, where minorities exist to be stereotyped and persecuted, and where the graphic portrayal of violence and sex ever increases. This paper investigates the major phenomena that affect the standing of games in the eyes of the wider public. It proposes reasons why these areas and video games themselves cause so much concern and to whom. It looks at the industry itself to see who is producing such ethically challenging content. And it looks forward to try and see if and how video games will ever become a true mass-entertainment medium, or what forces might stifle the growth of the wider video gaming marketplace. Finally the paper tries to put a structure around the ethical issues that are challenging the development of video games, to allow others to tackle specific issues to further the understanding of and development of gaming.

Keywords: video games, ethics, entertainment