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OPINION

# Video games addiction won't lead to real violence

By **GABRIEL VILA**  
Staff writer

Hello. My name is Gabriel, and I'm addicted to video games.

I have played nearly every violent video game in existence. I have fought thousands upon thousands

of faceless minions. I have ended worlds, destroyed civilizations, and brought the Roman Empire to the far reaches of the world only to destroy the third Reich time and time again. I have a license to hunt and kill zombies, I am a qualified surgeon, and I occasionally engage

in international commerce. I am a one-man-army who has fought back invading alien fleets time and time again, and in my spare time I enter martial arts tournaments and fight against crazy fireball throwing Japanese karate experts.

According to Jack Thompson, a noted lawyer from Florida, I am a brainwashed killing machine, a ticking time bomb who is ready, willing, and able to kill. My brain has been damaged by all these years of exposure to these games and because I was a teenager when I started, I have dangerous copycatting behaviors, which will lead inevitably to the harm of others around me.

Funny, because, to my recollection, I've never killed anyone. In fact, I have something of an aversion to needless violence. I'm against the war in Iraq, I don't believe in capital punishment, and I abhor the genocide currently rampant in Africa.

Does that make me special? Well, no; all of my gaming friends (read: all of my friends) are fairly pacifistic, peaceable people. They're good people too, my friend Omer Ahmed, also on the staff of this paper, re-

cently donated a good deal to the Red Cross for Katrina relief.

Given my personal experience, I can only say that Jack is wrong. Sadly, there are many people who believe he's right.

Video games are like movies, television, music, paintings, sculptures, and what have you. Like said mediums, they are serious forms of art and expression that need to be taken seriously, and not written off as something that's just "for kids," as many older people see them.

These games haven't been just "for kids" for many years. It's been a long time since the halcyon days of Mario and Sonic, of Tetris and Pong. According to the Entertainment Software Association, the average age of players is 30, a far cry from yesteryear. New parents are at an age where video games are readily accessible to children; if you've walked past an elementary school when they're out for recess or lunch; try to count how many Gameboys you see. It won't be none, I'll tell you that.

The problems that we have seen with video games are caused by a simple misunderstanding; parents simply did not understand the im-

pact that games have. Would you take your ten-year-old to see an R-rated movie? Probably not. Why then, would you buy them an M-rated game?

When my family first got a game system, my father would take time out of his day to play with us. Maybe not every day, but certainly on weekends - maybe holidays, some afternoons. I look back on those days fondly, and although we've both gotten significantly busier, he still comes down for a bout of Tekken. Because he showed an avid interest in what I was doing, and moderated my game play from day one, I feel that I'm a better gamer, and a better person. I have an understanding of the real world versus the game world, if only because in one of them I can beat up on my dad and get away with it.

Hopefully, parents will now take the same approach; don't try to ban these violent games from your kids, but try to get in there and have a good time with them. Impress upon them that there is a difference between a zombie horde... and the lunch line at school.



Screenshot from Quake 4, from Tri-Star Pictures.

## CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

# Do you play violent video games? Why?



**CHRIS NGUYEN**  
Business Management

◆ "Yes. They are for stress relief; knowing it's fake."



**ALEXANDER TROUNG**  
Film

◆ "Yes. They have a high reaction time I like."



**KACI HANSON**  
Undeclared

◆ "Yes. I like to watch fires and blow people up."



**NICK GRECH**  
Business

◆ "Nice break from reality, plus online action is attractive."



**JOSH SNEDIGAR**  
Undeclared

◆ "Knowing it's not real makes it fun, online gaming lets me play with friends from all over the world."