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## OPINION

# Online gaming offers underappreciated benefits

By ISAAC WEST  
Staff writer

Recently, I came across an interesting article in *TIME* magazine entitled, "Video Games: The Death of a Teenager." The article described the "tragic loss of a troubled teen" who spent endless hours playing games, which eventually led to malnourishment and his death. It is a sad and shocking story, and it seems that I hear a lot of negative buzz from all corners regarding video games.

However, someone needs to point out the other end of the spectrum of online gaming. There are a number of benefits to be gained from playing online games. The

United States armed forces have been using X-Box games to train their soldiers for combat. Corporate interns are now using their "World of Warcraft" stats on resumes to show their work ethic. Kids are learning reading and math skills from early childhood development computer games.

So why is it that while I am enjoying myself while playing online, someone happens to claim that I am isolating myself from the real world? Critics of online gaming contest that your character's interactions and responsibilities in the game world supersede the demands and responsibilities of the real world. In addition, there are those who think playing online

games can lead gamers to social isolation, and critics of the gaming industry suggest that excessive time spent gaming can lead to an increase in aggressive behavior.

Frankly, I'm tired of hearing these negative ideas on gaming. Video games are not the problem; bad parenting is the problem. Where was the mother that let her son play games until the point of death? Many people believe online games are becoming an unhealthy substitute for human contact. It is possible for people to play games for too long and become addicted to playing, but it can also be an enriching experience for the gamers who have interact with the players from around the world. We have fun play-

ing in teams and learning strategy skills as a group. Those who play "Counter Strike," "World of Warcraft" or "Call of Duty" experience scenarios in the games that build on a variety of acquired analytical and twitch reflex skills.

When playing games responsibly, there are definitely benefits to be had. Many games have connected people through their online communities, making online gaming a social activity that reaches far beyond single-player games. I believe that online gaming is a great opportunity for one to experience the game with a player or a friend from different states or countries. For instance, my experiences with the game "Call of Duty: World" at

War on X-Box Live, have me competing with players from Germany, Japan, Mexico and Australia. We learn about one another and develop strong teamwork skills while we become friends. I think that online games can be an enriching experience for anyone who plays them.

Video games can provide stress relief, can help develop hand-eye coordination and concentration to visual details, and help the gamer relate to others through healthy competition. Games also help hone pattern recognition skills. Just remember not to take your game too seriously. So kick back, and enjoy what should be a fun experience. Online games are an intuitive and healthy way to entertain yourself.

# The criminals have yet to leave the crime scene

By NOAH LEVIN  
Opinion editor

Politically, it doesn't really matter where you stand. Highway robbery is still highway robbery, politics and finger-pointing aside. The President has begun pushing his supporters to go out and knock on doors to rally the constituency behind his proposed budget, and bailout money continues to disappear into the corporate black hole.

Analysts on both side of political spectrum seem to be drawing a

similar consensus: these insurance companies, banks, and automakers that are being continually bailed out, should in fact, be allowed to fail.

Now this statement might seem to run against popular belief, but the fact of the matter is that if a bank were to be allowed to fail, then it would be bought by the government and restructured. Ideally, consumers would then have a new, more efficient company to give their business to.

Our government continues to call for the banks to be sending the bailout money back into the populace,

and to "start lending" again. This is actually counter-productive, being that excessive and shortsighted lending is what put our economy in such a bind. What the banks and insurance companies need to do is halt the exorbitant executive bonuses being handed out to people that do not even work for the companies any more.

I am puzzled, to say the least. Our new President is trying his hardest to be stern, but I cannot help but feel the same dirty dealings have been going on behind the scenes as before the election. This wide

stream of bailout money has been flowing unabated from our treasury and into the pockets of the same, already very rich individuals whom for the past eight years have robbed our country blind.

And yet, despite calls of outrage from all corners of the government, the money is still disappearing. Despite claims of transparency with each bailout bill, the American people have little to no idea of where their tax money is going. Currently, Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner is taking the brunt of negative attention within the

White House, namely because he purportedly knew of insurance firm AIG's illicit bonuses to executives before they were made public. But Geithner should not be the focus of the public's ire, but rather AIG, and more generally, the insurance and banking industries as whole entities.

There are a staggering amount of immoral business practices and traditions for the new President and his Cabinet to navigate, but consumers have a duty to decide where the market place is heading as well.

## CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

# What did you do to celebrate St. Patrick's Day?



**Katherine Kuo**  
ART

"I didn't do much; I'm not old enough to drink."



**Ryan Coggins**  
MULTIMEDIA

"I put on a green shirt and ran some errands."



**Tara Paulson**  
THEATER ARTS

"I studied and had corned beef and cabbage."



**Valentina Pereira**  
HOSPITALITY AND BUSINESS

"I had a traditional Irish dinner with my family."



**John Ropoulos**  
UNDECIDED

"I got really drunk."