Document 1

Video games have become one of the favorite activities of children in America ([Dewitt, 1993](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197103000927#BIB21)). Sales have grown consistently with the electronic entertainment category taking in between $7 billion and $7.5 billion in 1999, surpassing theatrical box office revenues for the first time ([Come in and play, 2000](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197103000927#BIB16)). Worldwide video game sales are now at $20 billion ([Cohen, 2000](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197103000927#BIB15)), fueled in part by the more than 100 million Gameboys and 75 million PlayStations that have been sold ([Kent, 2000](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197103000927#BIB36)). The average American child aged 2–17 years plays video games for 7 h a week ([Gentile & Walsh, 2002](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197103000927#BIB30)). This average masks wide differences between boys and girls and children of different ages. In the present study, for example, adolescent girls played video games for an average of 5 h a week whereas boys averaged 13 h a week.

Over the past 25 years, a number of studies have looked at the effects of video games on children and adolescents. A majority of this research has examined associations between video game use and aggressive behavior, but there has also been some interest in the effects of video games on school performance. There are at least two aspects of video game use that are of interest to researchers—amount and content. With respect to content, researchers have been most interested in violent games compared with non-violent games. Although not all studies have differentiated between violent and non-violent content, this is an important distinction, as it is likely that the effects of amount of play and the content of games may be independent of each other. For example, most evidence suggests that amount of play affects school performance, whereas violent content affects aggressive outcomes.

Document 2

“My anger is under complete control! COMPLETE! I'll control it as I rip limb from limb, I WILL control it as I pound head after head!”

-Minsc, Baldur’s Gate

As Minsc violently rips into his enemies, his assurances that he has complete control over his anger were frightening to his adventuring companions, but his anger was commanded by the player who can end that anger with a button. Unlike Minsc, who is a video game character, people cannot spontaneously control their own emotions and behaviors with buttons. In reality, people exercise self-control on their behaviors in line with personal or societal standards, and in particular exercising self-restraint from aggressive tendencies (Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007). However, self-control is a limited resource and when it runs out the consequences can lead to real harm, not unlike to Minsc’s rampage. Video game players exert considerable mental effort to survive in the violent and stressful virtual world they play in. They must simultaneously decide their course of action, engage them and keep their attention to many signs of danger to virtually survive within a fast-paced world. Whether it is to kill, find safety or to look out for enemies, it is reasonable that violent video game play is not a mindless activity. A large body of research on violent television has found a positive association between an individual’s 2 exposure to media violence and increases in aggression across various contexts, from experimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, and psychological processes, from attitudes, affect, cognition and behaviors (Huesmann et al., 2003; Paik & Comstock, 1994). Meta-analyses of violent video games have found associations with aggression similar to violent television (Anderson et al., 2010; Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Sherry, 2001). In line with prior violent television studies, playing violent video games has been associated with social conflicts, lower empathic concern and lower helping behaviors (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Bushman & Anderson, 2009). However, media violence is not the singular causal factor in aggression, but a risk factor that is as large or larger than most other risk factors, such as community violence (Anderson, Gentile, & Buckeley, 2007).