

VIOLENCE, AGGRESSION & VIDEO GAMES

Video games are the fastest growing form of entertainment around the world: 97% of young Americans between 12 and 17 play video games, while 31% of adolescents play daily, averaging 13.2 hours per week between ages 8 to 18 ([Adachi & Willoughby, 2017](#)). In Australia, 67% of the population play video games, with 23% of those between ages 1 to 17 (IGEA, 2018).

Video games have been a controversial topic since the earliest arcade games of the 1970s, with violence and aggression cited as a primary concern. A 2010 literature review released by the Attorney-General's Department ([Australian Government](#)) determined that the research community was divided on the effects violent video games (VVGs) have on aggression.

Despite this controversy, more recent studies have shown that VVGs do not appear to predict violent behaviour except in those predisposed towards aggression or exposed to other risk factors, such as violence in the home ([Zendle, 2017](#); [Task Force on Violent Media, 2015](#); [DeCamp, 2015](#); [Ferguson, 2011](#)). In addition to VVGs, young people are also exposed to violence on TV and in advertising; there is little evidence that VVGs have a greater impact in this area than other violent media.

In 2017 the Media Psychology and Technology Division (MPTD) of the American Psychological Association released a statement asserting that the “weight of research evidence is unable to support links between violent video games or other violent media and societal violence”, and that media should avoid making such claims ([MPTD, 2017](#)).

More generally, the intensity of any game or competition can lead to temporary increases in arousal, which can trigger negative behaviour patterns if children are not taught how to identify and regulate that energy – a key learning from sportsmanship and sports psychology.

It is worth noting that video games themselves vary greatly in style, graphics, portrayal of stereotypes, gameplay – individual or team-based – and of course, content, including level and type of violence.

While much of the research has focused on assessing negative aspects of video gaming, there is a growing body of research into positive outcomes. Adachi and Willoughby assert that there is positive development associated with video games, such as the concentration and cognitive effort to learn new skills and apply them to



This document was created by Riot Games in consultation with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation.

future problems and challenges, as well as the application of cumulative effort over time in order to complete the game. These skills are transferable to other aspects of the child's life. ([Adachi & Willoughby, 2017](#); [Granic et al, 2014](#))

People who play games have cited a range of benefits including: improved thinking skills and dexterity, emotional wellbeing, reduced anxiety and social wellbeing (IGEA, 2018). For many, video games provide a powerful outlet for self-expression and a way to connect with others around shared interests. Furthermore, they can lead to viable careers within a multi-billion dollar industry.

Granic et al (2014) argue that gaming is typically social versus isolating through competition, cooperation, or in conversations surrounding a shared interest in a game. This requires the learning of social skills and prosocial behaviour. Granic has also suggested that gaming promotes the development of the ability to organise groups and lead people.

Lobel et al (2017) and Cunningham et al (2016) found that for certain high-risk groups, games can provide a positive outlet or distraction from more harmful behaviour. Still, exposure to any realistic violence in media can have a negative effect, especially at younger ages, so caregivers should be mindful of both the maturity and disposition of the child and the amount and type of exposure ([Larose, 2017](#)).

In summary, as with any form of media, parents and teachers should take care to review content and make decisions in the best interest of the individual child. Spending time to understand the particular perspective of your child can inform both the right games and the right amount of gaming, and ensure a healthy long-term relationship with gaming and its benefits.

REGULATION

League of Legends Overview

League of Legends is a fantasy game for 13 years or older (according to the Terms of Service) and any violence is strictly contextualised in the game. The game clearly establishes rules for play which include 'sportsmanlike' behaviour, which does not tolerate offensive content, mature content such as pornography, or real life depictions of gore and violence. The code of play supports the development of teamwork: recommending team support, constructive teamwork, facilitating civil discussions, building relationships, and leading by example.



This document was created by Riot Games in consultation with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation.

From the [Australian Classification Guide](#):

M rating, defined by the guide as “fantasy violence, online content variable”, meaning that there is some degree of unpredictability because the game is available to play online.

Description:

“The content is moderate in impact. Films and computer games classified M (Mature) contain content of a moderate impact and are recommended for teenagers aged 15 years and over. Children under 15 may legally access this material because it is an advisory category. However, M classified films and computer games may include classifiable elements such as violence and nudity of moderate impact that are not recommended for children under 15 years. Parents and guardians may need to find out more about the film or computer game’s specific content, before deciding whether the material is suitable for their child.”

Among the key categories, League of Legends is assessed as follows:

Themes: *Mild impact*

Violence: *Moderate impact*

Language: *None*

Drug Use: *None*

Nudity: *None*

Sex: *Very mild*

Additional note: In USA the sale of video games is self-regulated, with ratings classified by the Entertainment Software Review Board (currently League of Legends is ESRB Teen). This is a voluntary system and it is not against the law to sell violent games to a minor. In contrast, in Australia games that do not fit into the MA 15+ category or below are classified *Refused Classification* (RC) and cannot be legally sold.



This document was created by Riot Games in consultation with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation.