

THE MEDIA EFFECTS DEBATE

- Can the media affect behaviour?
- Can playing video games change the way you think and act?
- Do violent video games make people more violent in real life?
- Are video games more likely to affect a user than watching tv?

ALBERT BANDURA - THE BODO DOLL EXPERIMENT

1961 - controversial experiment known as 'The Bodo Doll' experiment

- studied children's behaviour after watching an adult act aggressively toward the bodo doll

RESULTS: more often than not children would repeat the actions / do something similar to the adults. They displayed aggressive behaviour towards the bodo doll

IDEAS from experiment:

1. media can implant ideas in the mind of the audience directly.
2. audiences acquire attitudes and emotional responses and new styles of conduct through modelling

Evaluation of Bodo Doll Experiment:

- provided evidence children would copy violent behaviour
- from other people, filmed images and fantasy scenarios

BUT...

- children may have been expected beforehand
- Noble (1975) reported one child arriving and said 'There's the doll we have to hit'

So... the question is...

Is it a reliable and valid source to argue people imitate violent behaviour seen and observed in media such as video games or not?

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES - DAVID HESMONDHALGH

- cultural industry companies try to minimize risk and maximise audiences through vertical and horizontal integration and by formatting
- largest companies or conglomerates now operate across a number of different cultural industries

FANDOM - Henry Jenkins

- fans of the franchise have been active in creating their own versions of the texts
- active fan communities of the game online where the world of the game and its elements are adapted and reinterpreted
- platforms such as youtube and twitch allow fans to live stream and play with an audience
- encourages participation and encourage them construct their own identities both inside and outside of the game

END OF AUDIENCE - CLAY SHIRKY

- fans have been active in discussing and interacting around the texts using social media and video platforms such as twitch
- allows users to 'talk back' to the game producers, designers and cast
- fan pages and discussing pages

Uses and gratifications theory

BULMER AND KATZ

media users play an active role in choosing and using the media.

the user seeks out the media source that best fulfils their needs

they suggest 5 reasons an audience will choose to watch something

1. information and education
2. entertainment
3. personal identity

Uses and gratifications theory (cont)

4. intergration and social interaction
5. escapism

Marketing + controversy

Developers Diaries: type of blog, video series or written log that documents the development process. typically created by developers and shared to the public, to engage the community and build anticipation. **Valhalla dev diaries:** on dlc game for wrath of druids, giving inside information on gameplay and story. released on twitter and filmed at home. Made by Ashrad Ismail then taken over by Darby Mcdevitt

Hidden Rune: typically an easter egg within the website before the game is released, recognised as a symbol or object bringing out secret/s for users to find. it generates excitement, involvement and popularity.

30fps issue: fans unhappy Valhalla was only said to run on 30 frames per second on Xbox series X, which can run on up to 120 fps, so game on only at one quarter of the consoles capacity. the game was harder to play with glitches. fans felt they weren't getting their money's worth.

Sisterhood Tattoo: players can customise their characters. led to a movement that supported the representation of women in the franchise. founded in 2020 as a response to abuse allegations within the video game industry and the lack of female characters in the game. the tattoo was to empower women in the gaming community. 'sisterhood' references assassins creed: brotherhood. the tattoo was widely received by audiences.



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Marketing + controversy (cont)

Ashraf Ismail steps down: creative director at UBISOFT stepped down from his role with AC:V, as a result of allegations of infidelity and sexual misconduct with younger fans. surfaced due to a twitter thread. he released a statement that he doesn't want other employees associated with the allegations, then deleted his accounts. after this, he disappeared from the public eye in 2020 when he was fired after the investigation determined his actions misconduct. now works at tencent.

Trailer Controversy: criticised for lack of gender representation in the trailer, focusing on male protagonists. some fans felt it poorly reflected contents of the game. however, fans were impressed by the visual elements, and the trailer accumulated 100 million views within the first week.

AUDIENCES

- fans can create videos and reviews and interact with the producer on social media
- their views matter and can inform future iterations of the franchise
- fans from socially and culturally diverse backgrounds so various views
- choice of avatar and its gender - gaming avatar no longer singular, set element
- players can adapt their avatar to their own identity

Targeting and constructing audiences

- part of a series: could be said a built in audience already exists (primary audience)
- trailers and launch videos were reacted too across social media and were predominately positive
- merchandise included comic books, downloadable soundtracks and clothing released prior to the game release

THEORY OF REGULATION

LIVINGSTONE AND LUNT

- the idea there is an underlying struggle in recent UK regulation policy between the need to further interests of citizens vs consumers
- the idea that the increasing power of global media corporations and rise of convergent media technologies in production, distribution and marketing of digital media have placed traditional media regulation at risk

REGULATION DEBATE

liberal viewpoint: people can be trusted to make their own decisions. all censorship is wrong and we should defend free speech and freedom of expression.

conservative viewpoint: people cannot be trusted to make the right decisions and need close observation and tight regulation and censorship

European regulation of video games

PEGI - pan European game information

- launched 2003
- age rating system
- used in more than 30 countries
- based on code of conduct
- every publisher using PEGI system is contractually committing to this code
- not run by government agency
- typically harsher than BBFC (used to rate Video games as well as PEGI)

UK regulation of video games

VSC - the video standards council

- in 2012 the PEGI system was incorporated into the UK law
- the VSC was appointed as the UK administrator of the PEGI system

UK regulation of video games (cont)

- in the UK PEGI ratings are legally enforceable

Factors that impact PEGI ratings

1. violence
2. bad language
3. fear
4. gambling
5. sex
6. drugs
7. discrimination
8. in game purchases

ALL ASSASINS CREED GAMES ARE RATED 18

REGULATING traditional vs converged media

Traditional media	converged media
- easier to regulate	- can be accessed, bought and downloaded without being face to face
- consumer was face to face with seller, can be challenged	- many games have live chats
	- internet is global and behaviour/language online is hard to regulate



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