

Multimedia violence leaves long term effects

By Peyton Combs and Savannah Schroering

When a crime occurs, many people are easy to blame the violent video games and television shows as the main factor to justify what happened. From disruptive behavior to school shootings, it seems like media is always at fault.

Every time a television is turned on or someone goes to search the internet, sex, violence, and vulgarity are some of the main things that pop up. What is socially acceptable in our society has made drastic changes, since the internet has less filters and sensors than before. Because of what children see on television, they become desensitized to all variations of factors that will impact them later in life.

“Shows with a lot of violence or other vivid images give people an outlet for their creativity and differences,” Said Radio/TV teacher Joseph Humphrey.

Movies and television shows often have violence and inappropriate content that seem to compete with each other. They are always trying to have the most shocking and intriguing plot lines. “It’s all about the shock factor,” Said AP psychology teacher Chad Clunie. “The more shocking the show is, the more it captivates the audience. If they do that, people talk about it, ratings go up, and they make more money.”

Media is a main reason behind violent and inappropriate behavior, but it is not the only factor. While media is an effective influence on people, there are many other ways that people can be driven to crime and violence.

“The media is more of a factor,” said Clunie. There are many different causes of why violence happens, such as bad upbringings, poverty, alcohol, and uncontrolled anger.

A psychologist named Albert Bandura conducted a controlled experiment on children in 1961 called The Bobo Doll Study. He had two groups of children. One was a control group who went into a separate room, where they viewed adults beating up a bobo doll in various ways in front of them. The other group never even saw the bobo doll. When they brought the children back into a room full of toys, the children in the control group only wanted to play with the bobo doll and beat it up.

Because of the experiment, they know of another factor now. Children will mimic what adults their peers do.

After Bandura’s experiment, rating scales for movies began to branch out, followed by video games. Movies and video games were now beginning to have scales on how appropriate and violent they were, depending on the ages of the consumer. Video games were important to have on the rating scale, since they are much more interactive and the players get immersed into the game.

For some young people, watching rated R movies is a right of passage.

“My mom would never let me watch scary movies or really inappropriate movies when I was a kid, so whenever I got the chance, I would watch them,” said senior Justin Sellers.

Almost as an act of defiance, Sellers watched rated R movies because it felt like a glimpse of freedom. These inappropriate movies seem to be the “cool” thing to watch solely because many teens and children are never allowed to watch them.

While some parents try to shield their children from inappropriate films, other parents will allow their children to watch whatever they want, unaware of any possible effects the movies may have on them. “I think parents know what children do, but I don’t think they know how much they do,” said Humphrey.

There are many different opinions on this topic. Some are more researched, while others are based on people’s morals.

“Most people would agree media covers cruder things and more violence, but the crime rate has actually gone down or stabilized. It peaked at the 1970s and early 90s. Now, It’s the same as the 1960s,” said Clunie. “Other factors relate to crime rate than just watching and hearing about them.”

“People are going to mimic what they see, no matter what,” said senior Sidney Reynolds. “If parents censored what their children are watching, our world wouldn’t be the way that it is today.”

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