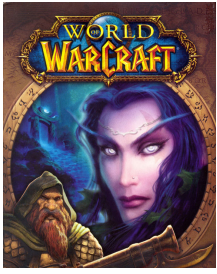


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By: Dan Talpalariu, Science Editor



World of Warcraft, an online game played by 8 million people
Blizzard

[Ninety-Seven Percent of America's Kids Play Video Games](#)

Gaming industry thrilled as games become youngsters' new culture

A recent survey involved questioning 1,102 children 12 to 17 years of age and their parents concerning their gaming-related habits. As it turns out, 94 percent of the young girls and 99 percent of the boys show different degrees of game addiction. Pew Internet & American Life Project demonstrated in a survey partially funded by the MacArthur Foundation that video games replace reading and the other "old" cultural shaping ways. The test lasted from November 2007 until February 2008 and it shows that kids don't necessarily play the same thing, their favorite games varying from violent shooters to role-playing-like world saving ones to agility and fitness testing examples. Eighty percent of the players have 5 or more favorite games, out of which, the most frequent choices are "Guitar Hero," "Halo 3," "Madden NFL" or the old "Solitaire." More than a quarter of players opt for Internet gaming. A senior researcher at Pew, Amanda Lenhart, states that "It shows that gamers are social people. They communicate just as much. They spend time face-to-face, just as much as other kids. They e-mail and text." Gamers play often, more than half of the respondents having played the day before they were tested. Games rated "M" (for "mature") and "AO" ("adult-only") count among youngsters' best choices, although their parents claim they always or at least sometimes check those respective ratings. Researchers don't want to label games in terms of good or bad, since even violent ones like "Halo" give players the chance to help each other. Joseph Kahne, dean of the education school at Mills College in California noticed that gamers weren't less likely to become involved in their community, as it was commonly feared. Games are merely a reason to get together, but after that other discussions are bound to take place. That's the reason experts advise parents not to take negative game-related stereotypes for granted. Jesse Schell, a professor of entertainment technology at Carnegie Mellon University has high hopes: "If more parents would take the time to play the same things their children are playing — or even better, play with them — it would benefit both parents and children." Only around 30% of the parents admittedly play video games with their kids. Most of them are about 40 years old and got to play games themselves while growing up.