

1) Think about your own gaming habits (or if you don't play games, the motivations you have/interests within the world of gaming) and determine an instance in your own game playing that could stand to the type of scrutiny we've explored over this short course. Questions of game play, audiences or business are acceptable starting points for your answer. The emphasis is on the quality thinking and explanation.

When considering what is right or wrong in video gaming, we can look at it from many different aspects.

Should we start from the point of view, of a person's choice to play a particular game, or from the point of view of the company to create such a game in the first place.

There are also personal options of a player when playing a game, to choose to do or not to do certain things.

From my own point of view, I don't have any main ethical issues with games I have played to date.

Take for example Half Life, which is a first person shooter game, you are in a scenario where you are being attacked by pretty much everybody, although you do have a few friends, and you have to shoot everybody to progress in the game.

This is pretty standard, for this type of game. These types of games are often accused of encouraging violence, gun crime, addictive behaviour and various other antisocial activities, none of which have ever been proved.

For my own part, I am of the opinion in relation to gun crime, that playing these sorts of games, while I enjoy the game play, would encourage me to stay as far away from real gun fights as possible.

As a player, of this game for example, and not being that good at it, there is one massively reoccurring theme, namely that I get shot (and killed) a lot.

If this is supposed to be an introduction to encouraging violent gun behaviour, in my case at least, the game is a massive failure in this regard.

On the other hand, if encountering a violent gun situation, I would be very aware of my key immediate objectives, which would mostly involve taking cover as quickly as possible, quite possibly in a crouching position. This I think is a good thing.

There are however, other ethical aspects of the game, that I have considered.

When stuck on a level, which typically means, I have missed a door or object/switch that is required to go to the next level, how long will I play the game before resorting to a 'walkthrough' sheet.

No doubt purist game players will consider this just plain cheating and completely wrong. And for the most part, I would have to agree with them, but, I really just want to play for fun, and walking around a virtual world for hours, going nowhere, is really quite dull. So cheating to find the answer, is something I have no real problem with, and as often as not, to compensate, I feel guilty for being too lazy, or too stupid, for not having the initiative to try an option that was staring me in the face.

Another game I played, was a MMORPG called Evony.

Now here is a game where I can see many of the antisocial issues that are often mentioned regarding addiction to games.

The game required constant checking and farms and mines that needed to be refreshed to

keep a constant flow of resources, to pay for the training of troops at barracks, which also need to be constantly checked, as did many other things. Before long you are having anxiety attacks at the thought of going to the pub, for fear your cities will be attacked and you won't be there to mobilise your troops to defend them.

Which is really quite miserable, as for all the work put into building up resources and troops, there is literally nothing more than a "W" (win) or "L" (lose) to show for all your work.

And it does not stop there. For those who have become utterly obsessed with the game, they go to great lengths, usually 'not in the spirit of the game' to create armies that under normal circumstances are unsustainable, often using computer programs (bots) to do basic work for them, even when there are not there.

As these obsessives are not alone in their activities, they do get to fight it out with each other, and no doubt enjoy themselves, but completely ruin normal game play and suck the fun out of the game for normal players.

Other aspects of the game include being able to spend real money to purchase items, that otherwise would be 'virtually' unattainable.

Now, while I have no real issue with this on face value, it is of concern in issues where addiction or compulsive behaviour has become an issue, for players.

I don't think it is a problem for the game developers, any more than issues of gambling or alcoholism are to bookies or brewers, but is something that can affect families in an adverse manner, and should be recognised as such.

Another issue that caused a stir at the time of the games release, was the second or third edition of Grand Theft Auto. The issue was that it was possible to beat prostitutes to death, and that the game was degrading and disrespectful to women.

Not having played the game a lot, but yet keen to see what all the fuss was about, my own 'experimental analysis', revealed that while this was possible, it was not part of the main game play, and there was no real advantage or gain from performing this heinous act.

No more or less at least, than was to be gained from attacking any other member of the street in this virtual world. Beating other men to death was not part of the controversy.

So once again, it seem to me to be the hysterical media, picking up half a story, misunderstanding and misrepresenting it, and crying wolf.

I suppose it was also the 3d nature of the game that seemed more graphic to them, as nobody every seem to care about the 'top down' version 1, of the same game, where there were a lot of extra points available if you squashed all the ten or so Hari Krishna's walking down the street.

I always felt bad for those Hari Krishna's, well that is to say, I always felt bad squashing those Hari Krishna's, and quite annoyed that I never got them all... there was always one at least that go away

Still that's gaming....