The Adventure of Simulated Living

Imagine being a captain on an interstellar voyage across the galaxy on a mission to rid the universe of all evil. Or, visualize a hero whose sole purpose is to free the lady fair from the clutches of a ruthless tyrant. Video games make it possible to live beyond the self and to have an adventure within the safety of home. Video games have been evolving ever since the first game of Pong was played. It would be quite a challenge in this day and age to find someone who has not played at least one video game in their life. From consoles and PCs to handhelds and smartphones, video games seem to encompass much of American culture and have also become an integral part of society. As video games are ever evolving, so too are people’s view of them. At first, games were looked down upon as time wasters, and people who did not play them tended to look upon them negatively. But, as games were developed and grew in popularity, the majority of individuals have come to the conclusion that, taken in moderation, gaming can be one of the best hobbies to have.

First of all, gaming is always evolving. Everyone always wants the newest system or the latest games. Looking at the roots of video games reveal a treasure trove of fun and frustration. Newer games and consoles may have better graphics and complex stories with vast worlds to explore, but can new developments really compare to the simplicity of stomping turtles or the sheer nostalgia of playing on an eight-bit system? Every console has its flaws, but sometimes those flaws are what make the system great. For example, one of the biggest regrets many
gamers have is selling their first console to help finance the purchase of a new system, such as a PS2. Many fond memories were made holding that strange controller, saving princesses and shooting down enemy TIE fighters. Gamers may remember blowing into old cartridges, trying to make the game work. Although many would say that blowing onto the cartridges doesn’t work, it totally doe. Who can forget that elated feeling upon completing *Majora’s Mask* for the first time. While some people may prefer the oldies, others have different tastes or simply are not old enough to appreciate the classics. In an interview with former DSC student Alex Koekenberg, he had this to say on the matter, “I enjoy NES as much as the next guy, but c’mon Ben, the PS3 is so much better, not just because of the better graphics, but all the older systems are just that-old. Some things are better left in the past” (Koekenberg). Everyone has his or her preferences, and those preferences should be respected. No console is better than another, and each represents the possibility for enjoyment.

Secondly, with the age of the average gamer being thirty-one, one would think that society would have a better image of gamers in general. Sadly, this is not the case. The general stereotype of a gamer is someone who does not have a social life and lives in his or her parents’ basement playing games non-stop. Several individuals who hold these stereotypes are actually gamers themselves. If someone plays a game on a smartphone or Facebook, they are a gamer. “Negative connotations about gaming lead people to not identify as gamers, and even to not play video games” (Shaw). People are worried about what others think of them and will not call themselves gamers because of pressure by society. The reality is that fifty-nine percent of people in the United States play games (Shaw). So, that means that the negative stereotype of being a gamer has to be false. In contrast to popular belief, gamers contribute just as much to society as everyone else.
Finally, the view on games in general has changed. While it may be true that, “Exposure to a violent video game increased aggressive thoughts and behavior,” (Anderson), it is also true that video games can help people develop new skills and be more sociable. The key to this is one simple task: play in moderation. People of the past seemed to believe that videogames would rot their child’s brain or cause them to commit heinous acts. “San Diego recently revealed that children 8 to 12 who played a video game they developed that teaches how to code were successfully able to write code by hand in Java” (Woodham). Compared to the views of the past, the judgment seems to be only half right. While it is unhealthy to spend a majority of time playing video games, playing with self-control can improve one’s discipline significantly. “Children who play video games for less than an hour a day are better adjusted than children who either played no video games or played for three or more hours a day” (Woodham). Finding the happy medium between too much and none at all can help in making people more dynamic, well-rounded individuals.

In closing, video games have changed the world. From the very first to the most current, games have had a massive impact. As the gaming movement advances, the possibilities seem limitless, especially when most people in the United States are gamers. It is exciting to think about what generations to come will create and how these creations will impact the gamer “image.” Also, knowing when to stop is an important factor to being a gamer. It is extremely easy to lose the self in realms of fantasy and adventure while ignoring the moving world. Gamers are all around. From the lowly college students to the remarkable professors that teach them, from pauper to prince, boys and girls alike, all may be connected and not even know. Embracing gaming is like throwing the self into an immeasurable melting pot where anyone can depart from his or her current station in the real world and become something special.
Work Cited


Koekenberg, Alex. Face to Face Interview. 6 November 2014.
