

science

Violence on video games big money-maker

by Steve Tonner

Look out Rambo, there's a new slaughter man on the block.

The world of entertainment has exploded to include a new and very lucrative player: violent video games.

Video games have enjoyed popularity for over a decade, with early versions like "Space Invaders" capturing the public interest by placing the player in a fantasy world. But the new growth spurt has recently been led by so-called 'fighting games', where one or two players face off on a video screen, their parts played by various animated characters with the ability to literally tear each other's heads off.

The growing number of video games featuring explicit violence has raised concerns that people are becoming jaded to this kind of extreme display of dismemberment. For instance, a game called "Time Killers" features a character equipped with a chain saw, which he uses to hack off his opponent's limbs. Another game, "Mortal Kombat", has characters with 'finishing moves' done with a secret combination of movements on the game controls, which will electrocute their victims, or burn them, rip out spines, hearts, or heads.

Part of the appeal of these games is due to the fact that the technology has advanced to the point that the characters represented on the screen now look very much like real people, rather than computer-drawn images.



Are games getting too violent?

PHOTO: LISA WAMBOLDT

In the case of "Mortal Kombat", images of real actors and actresses are used, creating the impression that the player is watching a movie rather than playing a game.

Wayne Cross runs the games room in the SUB, where there is a selection of the most popular video games currently on the market. He says there have been very few complaints about the violence in these games. In fact, "they make the most money" of all the currently popular video games, he says.

But not everyone is so neutral about these games.

Across many parts of Canada and the United States, people are de-

manding that video game companies start to restrict the violence in their games. In response, Nintendo and other companies have come out with a ratings system, similar to the one used for movies, where an NC-17 rating means that the game is unsuitable for players under 17.

One Dal student was upset at the very prospect of restricting or changing games for fear of excessive violence.

"It's ridiculous because any kid can go into an R-rated movie, and nobody will stop him, because it means lost money. And no one will stop kids from playing these games either."

POINTLESS PONDERABLES

Answer:

Well, if you decided to choose first, there would be three beers shaken, and three not. Hence you would have a fifty-fifty chance. If you choose second, there's a 50 per cent chance you won't have to choose at all since the first person may get a face full of frothy foam. Right away your chances are at least even, but you have the added advantage that you may choose a non-shaken beer making your chances greater of winning if you go second. Not sure? Try it a few times!

This week's question:

In celebration of the 125th birthday of the Gazette, we threw a big party. The favorite topic through the party was naturally birthdays. Someone asked how many people you would need at a party to have better than fifty-fifty odds of having two or more people with the same birthday (excluding year, just day and month). How many do you think? HINT: It's surprisingly low.

DAL STUDENT UNION
General Elections 1994

NOMINATIONS
 Close Tuesday, February 1, 1994 at 10.00 am. sharp.

President
 Executive Vice-President
 (must run as a team)

Vice-President External
 Vice-President Academic
 Vice-Pres. Community Affairs
 Communications Coordinator

2 Board of Governors Reps

9 Senate Reps. Faculties of Arts, Dentistry, Grad Studies, Health Sciences, Law, Management Studies, Medicine, Science, and School of Education.

CAMPAIGN
 Will run from Thursday, February 3, 1994 at 10.00 am. to Monday, February 14, 1994 at 8.00 pm.

VOTING
 February 15, 16, and 17, 1994

Contact Jennifer Hockey (ERO) at 491-6576 or 491-1106 or
 e-mail to DSUERO @ ac.dal.ca.