Matthew Gaines

Dr. Gingrich

AP Language

18 February 2019

Video Games: The Happiness Drug

The levels come quick and easy, you get a reward when you level up and in that first hour of playing the game you get so many rewards. But then they slow down, you need more and more experience to get to the next level, more coins, more weapons, more armor, *more time.* Video games are truly addicting by hijacking your brain and replacing the satisfaction you get with real life achievements with quick, meaningless happiness.

Video games work by using a variety of psychological tricks but two of the most effective ones are [the time sunk fallacy, cost sunk fallacy](http://time.com/5347133/sunk-cost-fallacy-decisions/) and the dopamine releases. The time sunk fallacy reasons that people will not quit video games because they spent their time and effort doing things in the game and quitting would be like wasting that time and effort. The cost sunk fallacy states that if you put 500$ into a game, then you won’t leave it. This is because if you leave the game then you leave your money and you’re not getting the best value out of it. The dopamine releases work by giving your brain things to be happy about, like beating a level, gaining experience or getting a new item. These are all designed to give you a sense of achievement, I worked for this I put in my time and effort so I should be happy I got something. These are all designed to addict you to the game and make it so you won’t leave for two reasons. The first is your data what you do on a video game is recorded and if it is free to play then if you’re not paying for the product that’s likely because you’re the [product](https://theconversation.com/if-its-free-online-you-are-the-product-95182). Advertisers/data miners then pay for your data from the company to help make them money. The second is paying the company directly, in cases like World of Warcraft you pay for the game month by month and if you want to leave then you are no longer giving them money. Video game companies are businesses and they want to make money off of you and getting you addicted is a part of the business plan.

People who argue that video games are good for you say that they increase cognitive skills, and hand eye coordination. But they fail to mention the [depression](https://inews.co.uk/news/technology/video-game-addiction-contributes-to-depression-and-anxiety/), withdrawal from society, lack of in person interaction or other negative health effects that can come from over using video games.

This issue hits close to home for me, just in the beginning of February I decided that I had enough and was done with video gaming. The two games I primarily played were [League of Legends](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwERJ6qJPuc) and Counter Strike Global Offensive. These games kept me using the same techniques I talked about earlier, I had already put time and money into these games so why should I stop? Along with the short quick release these video games rewarded me with when I played the game and achieved something. I was always chasing that next win and it was easy to replace long term work and goal planning in my real life with the quick releases that video games give. I’m about 3 weeks removed from when I deleted all of my accounts and it is a culture shock at first but my grades are improving, and my mood and emotions have changed for the better.

Video game addiction comes in all shapes and sizes what is extreme for some people may be casual for others but the mom who plays candy crush for 4 hours while her kids are at school has just as much of a problem as the kid who misses school because he’s playing for 16 hours a day. We cannot let society be [torn apart](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6e1riShmak) by brand new technologies that we do not understand what they can do to human interaction. Video games and the technologies associated replace the happiness you get from achieving something in life all to make money. Focus on the world you were born into, not the one you bought online.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/opinion/trump-saudi-arabia-nuclear-technology.html>

The New York Times Editorial Board writes about Donald Trump and his meddling in Saudi Arabian nuclear affairs. I mirrored their credibility building throughout the essay but in a different way while they used titles and achievements I used my personal experiences to build my own credibility. I used the same “building” method they did when talking about proof. Each paragraph they took an individual claim and dismantled it. But at the end they tied it all together and pulled the information together to quickly summarize the entire editorial while not making it too long and they left the reader asking, “What’s next?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/23/opinion/green-new-deal-climate-democrats.html>

The New York Times Editorial Board Writes about Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s proposed New Deal. I thought that this would be a great example to use for emotionally language but the article didn’t use a lot, instead it drew on statistics and boring facts instead of focusing on using things like “Our children won’t have a world to live in.” But the editorial was very effective in making a logical argument about why the Green New Deal is better than the climate nightmare we currently have.