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Confined to a Computer: Video Game Addicts

By Charles Shilling

In today's world, video games are a staple form of entertainment. We see advertisements every day for new and upcoming releases of every genre. These releases include popular titles such as the first-person shooters know as the Call of Duty series, an online military war game, and World of Warcraft, a world-renowned massively multiplayer online role playing game (known by the acronym MMORPG for short.) A certain trend that seems to take place among modern video games is a focus on ways to keep the players

interested. These games are often designed with common reward systems, such as a gaining experience to "level up" and unlock new functions of the game in question. The aspect of my focus is the time required to obtain the experience necessary to reach these goals in the game. But even more dreadful are certain games such as Minecraft, a popular online game fundamentally based on creativity, that has no real goals to reach. Having neither items

to obtain nor secrets to unlock, I fear such games are even worse for video game addicts. After these video games have taken all of someone's time and dedication, what remains for them in real life as they've not dedicated this time to aspects educational or financial?

The Call of Duty franchise is extremely well known. The corporation behind the video games runs advertisements for the latest addition to the series during some of the

most critical television hours, successfully promoting their product to the masses. This company typically releases a new addition to the series every year, promoting new features as well as

innovations on fan-favorites, such as Zombie Survival Mode (a game mode in which players fight an endless number of zombies to collect points and survive as long as possible.) Players of this game typically play at night, which tends to be the best time to mix with other millions of players worldwide. After a long night of Call of Duty, they are likely to sleep throughout daytime hours. Many people whom I know personally suffer from this routine, finding themselves wasting

daylight to awaken to "nothing better to do than play *Call of Duty*." Although I enjoy the game myself, I'm afraid I have found it impossible to make time for video games while

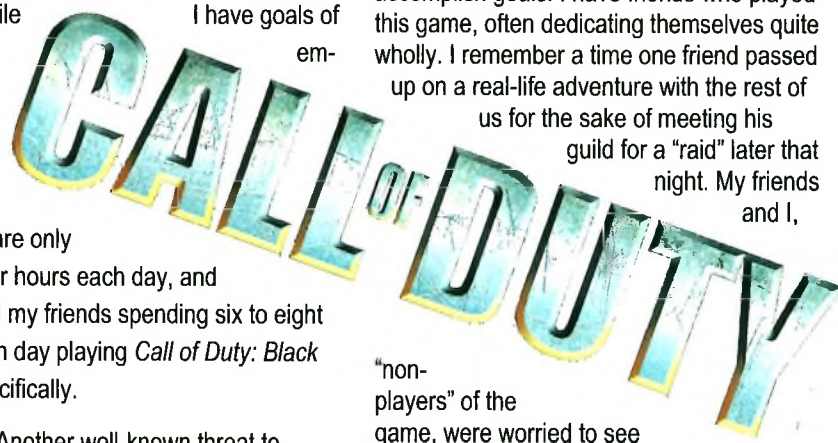
I have goals of employment and attending a university. There are only twenty-four hours each day, and I often find my friends spending six to eight hours each day playing *Call of Duty: Black Ops 2* specifically.

Another well-known threat to teens, young adults, and the middle-aged simultaneously is the epic phenomenon known as *World of Warcraft*. *World of Warcraft* is easily the best known example of an MMORPG, or massively multiplayer online role-playing game. Such games typically involve the customization of a player's avatar through the collection of experience points, obtained by means of traveling the game world, slaying monsters, and undertaking quests. The nature of such a game requires hundreds of hours of gameplay to accomplish goals in the game. It is debatable that there is no true end to such a game. The corporation behind *World of Warcraft* periodically releases "expansions" to the game, purchasable software which gives the player new features, quests, and places to explore. Such games also often call for teamwork to attempt quests, requiring a

dependence on other players to play the game. This dependence often lead to gamer communities, such as guilds, in which players work together in an organized fashion to accomplish goals. I have friends who played this game, often dedicating themselves quite wholly. I remember a time one friend passed up on a real-life adventure with the rest of us for the sake of meeting his guild for a "raid" later that night. My friends and I,

"non-players" of the game, were worried to see a friend forsake real-life fun for a video game. I suppose we wouldn't understand his point of view?

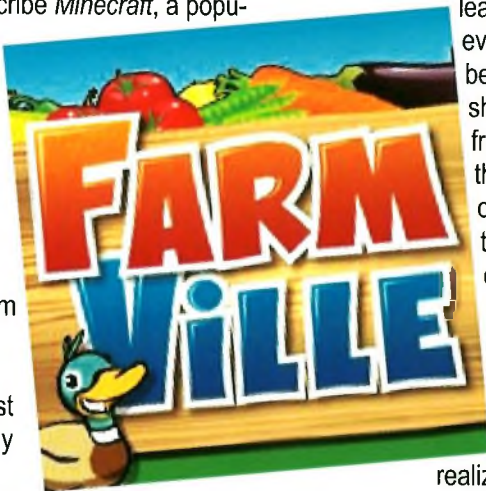
Facebook games: Facebook is estimated to have one billion users every month. Facebook is also known to run advertisements for, among many things, online video games. One I'm quite familiar with is known as *Farmville*, a game in which the player owns and operates a farm. This game operates on real-world time. For example, a player might plant seeds and find that crops have grown twenty-four hours later, representative of the time required in nature for plants to grow. A player would then harvest these crops to obtain points and items, often "coins" or "gems," then proceed to plant and harvest more. The nature of this game requires players to play every day, completing a routine of collecting points and "treasure"



within the world of the game. In my personal experience, I have seen many of my family members occupied for hours daily while tending to their crops and completing their daily routine. Throughout the duration of the routine, the player is often mesmerized by the game, rather unaware of anything going on around them. I fear this distraction from real life easily becomes a necessity to the player, the player feeling obligated to the game. I most certainly have a biased point of view and abhor games of this genre.

I feel it simply vital to this article to describe *Minecraft*, a popular multi-

platform video game that just recently found popularity.



ty. The premise of this game is an open world to explore, a world in which everything looks very block and low-resolution. All structures within the games are comprised of cubic components, often cubes of brick, wood, leaves, etc. Within this game, players use a pickaxe to collect cubes of material throughout the game's "daytime." Players use the obtained material to build a form of shelter, like a house with a door in it. At "night time," the player must use the shelter to find refuge from vicious skeletons armed

with arrows. To my understanding, there is no end to this game, and the only goals are to build structures comprised of the cubes collected by the player. I fear this gaming genre is sadly "the dregs of the dregs," being the most hazardous variety of video game to the layer's well-being.

Video games have changed a lot since the simplicity of *Pong* or *Pac-Man*. The video game industry has set a new standard by releasing video games which require unprecedented hours of dedication to playing the games. People all too often fall victim to a video game addiction that leaves them incapable of working or even functioning as a typical human being. We should be frightened, shocked by the transformation of our friends and families into creatures of the night, morbid creations of their own mistakes, be it lethargy or apathy. Don't misunderstand me, however. I believe morality should be considered in such a situation. By this I'm of course suggesting video-game addicts need help, just as addicts of other things within the material world. People have to

realize that there's a huge world with countless paths to explore, adventures into new lands, quests to help others --- Perhaps game addicts simply need to play the game of life for a few minutes and they'll be hooked. then proceed to plant and harvest more. The nature of this game requires players to play every day, completing a routine of collecting points and "treasure" within the world of the game. In my personal experience, I have seen many of my family members occupied for hours daily while tending to their crops and completing their daily routine. Throughout

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