

## Violence and Computer Games

**With the recent release of Red Dead Redemption, realistic and violent computer games and age restrictions are once again gaining plenty of media coverage. Headliners reporter, Malik Fields, investigates the contentious issue.**

Do violent computer games affect people? Do they change people's moods and behaviour? This has been a widely debated subject in many different countries. I decided to try and find an answer by myself by interviewing Laurie Hall, Director General of the [VSC](#) (Video Standards Council), and a couple of young people in East London, Andrew Antwi, 14, and David Villa, 12, who regularly play video games.

Let's try to answer the first question; whether violent computer games affect people? When I asked Laurie, he replied with: "This is a question for the experts. However the fact remains that there is no link between violent screen images whether it is in games, films or cinema and actual violence." In terms of general games, David spoke of a friend who reacts angrily to losing, and generally gets very emotional about games.

I told Laurie about my friends who play games out of their age range. David and Andrew both admitted that they enjoy playing violent computer games, with David saying he enjoys the 'action' and Andrew stating that he: "likes a bit of [Call of Duty](#)." Laurie explained how video games are rated. The first step is for the games publisher to answer a series of over 50 questions with Yes/No answers. They must be fully aware of what the game is, how you play it and the content. They give us the completed questionnaire, which gives us an indication to what age rating the game is likely to have. The games are either rated by [PEGI](#) (Pan European Game Information) or the VSC (Video Standards Council) and the video game rating system has 5 different age suitability levels: 3+, 7+, 12+, 16+ and 18+.

I have known some cases of parents purchasing 18 games for their underage children. I asked Laurie for his opinion on this. He said: "It's the parents and this is part of the problem. We've (VSC) got to do more to make parents aware that the age ratings mean something." However, in special cases, Laurie feels playing overage games is ok. He stated that: "If a parent buys an 18 rated game for a 15 or 16 year old, they know everything about that game, that it's generally suitable for someone 18 and above, but who knows the 15 or 16 year old better than the parent? If they take a reasoned decision and say I know it's 18 but my child is mature enough to play it and they allow him or her to do it, that's perfectly in order."

In this case, is Andrew on the safe side? When I asked him if his parents knew he played violent computer games, he replied; "this is irresponsible and it should be condemned."

So, Laurie thinks playing violent games is ok as long as your parents think you are mature enough to play it, and I agree. Also, playing violent computer games doesn't necessarily lead people down a path of violence. Yet maybe, just maybe, people do get a bit emotional about losing games. But after all, it is just a game, isn't it?

### About this story

This article was written by Malik Fields, 14.

### 1 comment

Laurie David

it's not like David has not operated his romantic life before inspiration. This was probably not a coincidence in the sixth season when his character's wife left him on the show [Laurie David](#) <http://usspost.com/laurie-david-11235/>

susan from OH, 15 June 2010 21:29

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