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Mark Bodnar Nicklaus
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Videogame Use among Male Residents in University Housing

at Eastern Illinois University

(TITLE)

BY

Mark Bodnar Nicklaus

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

May 2009

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Abstract

The present quantitative study of 331 male students living in university residence halls or in university fraternity housing explored whether playing videogames promoted social networking and social opportunities for males living in college residence halls. Previous research on video gaming focused on the social networks created among players; however, little research focused directly on male students living in residence halls. Most participants (73%) played video games between 6 p.m. and midnight. Using the Spearman Rho for rank ordered data, a positive relationship was found between the number of hours spent playing video games and the time spent in conversation about video games. Suggestions for further research on the relationship between videogaming and male sociability are included.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the members of my committee for the support they provided and the interest they took in learning about the video gaming culture. I would especially like to thank Dr. Eberly, my committee chair who helped me through the final weeks of revising and editing my thesis to become what it is today. The many hours and long evenings and afternoons were something that I appreciated and I cannot thank him enough for his dedication. To my committee members, Jody Stone and Lou Hencken, thank you for your time, patience and gaining a new understanding of the topic of videogames. Finally I would like to thank my supervisor, Jacob Knight. You are a great mentor to follow in my career in student affairs and a great companion to explore new worlds and adventures with in many different virtual realms.

I would also like to thank my family. You have always helped me reach my dreams and enabled me to know that I can do anything I set my mind to achieve. My parents, Kathy and Nick, have allowed me to reach new heights and allowed me to explore the world at my pace. You have also inspired me, through your actions to always strive to do more and work to always "do better." To my sister- you are always around for a kind word and to give inspiration whenever I needed it. I can always count on you to provide the optimistic encouragement when I need it.

Finally I would like to thank my old resident assistant, Gabe Siehr. You allowed me to see the enjoyment and excitement that comes from being a resident assistant. Always coming into my room freshmen year asking if I wanted to play a game of Halo is the inspiration behind this thesis.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my college roommates, Tom Connell, Steve Marek and John Lettner, who provided me four great years of college and many long nights of exploring various videogame enjoyments.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Over the past decade, the growth of videogames has received significant attention

from the media and criticism from politicians about the negative impact of videogames

(Paprocki, 2005). Much of the negative attention focused on videogaming, however, is

centered on the excessive use of videogames by males from early adolescence into their

forties (Nielsen studies, 2005). Nie (2001) found that for males who spent significant

time engaged in virtual communities, their focus on videogaming "displaces face-to-face

social interactions" (p. 31). Several critics like St. George (2008) and Thompson[1],

(Retrieved May 5, 2009, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=me64O4uvOBY) have

blamed recent incidents of anti-social behavior and violence on the influence that

videogames created among the male perpetrators, such as the Columbine school

shootings being partly blamed on the killers' obsession with the game DOOM

(IDsoftware, 1994). However, many of these critics' conclusions were based on personal

opinion and not on peer-reviewed research, sensationalizing the use of videogames

among youth and their parents. In the same YouTube link, Thompson also asserted that

Seung Hui Cho, the anti-social perpetrator of the April 16, 2007 killings at Virginia

Polytechnic Institute and State University was "a fan of violent videogames, particularly

Counterstrike," (http://www.firingsquad.com/news/newsarticle.asp?searchid=15112,

retrieved May 15, 2009) an assertion later refuted by the Virginia Tech Review Panel

(2007).

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[1] Jack Thompson, a lawyer and vocal critic of videogaming, was disbarred by the Florida Supreme Court on October 25, 2008 (http://www.floridasupremecourt.org/decisions/2008/sc07-80.pdf).

Does frequent or even obsessive participation in videogaming really influence people, especially males, to become anti-social? Could participation in videogaming have just the opposite effect, allowing supportive social communities to develop among like-minded people, particularly among males living in college residence halls? What is the outcome of regular videogaming participation on undergraduate male sociability?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defined *sociability* as "the act of being sociable" (www.merriam-webster.com). The definition does not comprehensively answer the question of what sociability is, but rather seems to suggest circular reasoning. A definition of *sociable* is also needed to understand the meaning of *sociability*. Merriam-Webster defines *sociable* as "a: inclined to seek or enjoy companionship" or "b: marked by or conducive to friendliness or pleasant social relations" (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sociable) Using the definitions of "sociable" and "sociability," are the outcomes of male interaction with peers using videogames in college residence halls in a pleasant social environment positive or negative?

Reflexive Statement

For the past six years, I have lived on college male residence floors and there is one common element that pertains to all of them, the frequent use of videogames. At the very least, the majority of my friends are gamers. From staying up late at night playing hours of multiplayer games with fellow floor mates to having a topic to converse with floor mates at dinner, playing videogames has allowed me to create a vast network of friends since coming to college Videogaming dominated our social lives. I met two of my three undergraduate roommates through our mutual interest in videogame play and

LAN (Local Area Network) parties organized by my Resident Assistant (R.A.) as community development programs.

These games and interactions with new acquaintances created lasting friendships that I still have today, even though many of us are several hundred miles apart. These long distance friendships are still maintained not through sending letters, not through calling each other on the phone, and not through face to face interaction, but through online gaming. Videogaming allows players to journey through virtual worlds and conquer virtual lands, to work as a team and have fun. Whether the fun is competing against other teams, or simply putting on a microphone and joking around like we did as undergraduates in residence halls, we remain close and share many aspects of our personal and professional lives.

Videogames have changed my life for the better. I have promoted gaming since I was a R.A. and even now, as an Associate Residence Hall Director, I observe the positive interactions and social interactions videogames create, especially during those first few awkward weeks of adjusting to campus life experienced by new, first time students in college.

Videogame Sociability

Whether videogame participation fostered sociability among players received little attention among researchers prior to the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado. Within recent years, however, researchers have begun to examine the potential social benefits of videogaming. Williams and Jones have devoted their time and resources to investigating how videogames affect the sociability of males and the contributions videogames can make to human behavior. Both authors have published

several studies on how videogames and male sociability is connected (Williams 2003, 2006; Jones 2003).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

While critics of videogaming have blamed major tragedies such as the Virginia Tech shootings on the influence of videogames on perpetrators (Thompson, retrieved May 5, 2009, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=me64O4uvOBY), no refereed research has been published on the use of videogames among males in college. The purpose of the present study was to investigate/address the phenomenon of videogames as a tool that promotes social community among college males in residence halls.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the present inquiry. Does playing videogames in college residence halls promote a sense of community among residents on a floor? What elements of game playing promote positive behavioral outcomes? What is the place of videogaming as a social lubricant among college males in residence halls?

Significance of the Study

The videogaming phenomenon has became a major past time for people around the world. With videogame sales breaching 30 billion dollars a year the industry is set to surpass the music industry by the year 2011 (Retrieved May 11, 2009 from articles.moneycentral.msn.com/Investing/Extra/VideoGameSalesOvertakingMusic.aspx). The social impact of the money-making game industry, however, has not been fully analyzed, especially in the college setting. This study will be among the first to determine what social impact gaming may have among on-campus male college students.

Genres of Videogames

The social impact of videogaming may vary greatly depending on what kind of videogame genre is used. The term, videogames, covers a broad genre of ideas, of interactive media formats as well as traditional media (viz., movies). Whereas some people prefer action movies over chick flicks, others will not even consider watching a horror movie when there are plenty of comedy movies available. Everyone has different likes and dislikes, very much the same way that gamers prefer certain genres of games.

There are seven main types of gaming genres on which the present study will focus (Ringsurf.com, 2009). Each type can be categorized in multiple sub-genres. The seven main genres in this study included the following.

1) *Action Games/First Person Shooter.* The action genre is often defined by getting from point A to point B while fighting through computer generated enemies. Typical action games include *Super Mario Brothers* (Nintendo) and *Sonic the Hedge Hog* (Sega). These games are in the sub genre Side Scrollers, as the screen is 2-dimensional and players can only typically move in four directions, Up, Down, Left and Right.

First Person Shooters (FPS) requires the game player to look through the eyes of the character they control. The only thing the player usually sees of their character is the weapon the character holds in the bottom middle of the screen. These games often have online interactions, allowing multiple people play with or against each other with the use of internet connections and microphones to communicate. Popular games in this genre include Doom (IDsoftware), The Halo (Microsoft Game Studios) series, The Call of Duty (Activision) series and Half-Life (Electronic Arts).

2) *Role-playing Games* (RPGs) allow players to roam about a virtual world and "level up" their character. As a player "levels up", their character becomes stronger and more powerful through acquiring additional abilities and attributes such as health, speed, and strength, referred to as stats. Popular games include the Final Fantasy Series (Square Enix), Fable (Microsoft Game Studios), and Knights of the Old Republic (LucasArts).A large and upcoming sub-genre is known as Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games or "MMORPG." MMORPG's are RPGs that require multiple other human players. Games such as World of Warcraft (Blizzard), Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning (Electronic Arts) and Everquest (Sony Online Entertainment) allow, literally, thousands of players to play at once and work together to complete common goals and quests.

3) *Adventure and Puzzle games*. These games include the classic Minesweeper (Microsoft), Tomb Raider (Eidos Interactive), and Myst (Brøderbund) games. Most of the games in this genre only allow one individual to play against the computer. However these games allow the player to figure and solve riddles and puzzles throughout the game in order to win.

4) *Sports games*. This genre includes games such as The Madden football series (EA Sports), MLB: The Show (SCEA) and NBA Jam (Midway). This genre allows a player to play against computer controlled opponents or with/against a human player.

5) *The Simulation Genre*. Called Sims for short, this genre allows the player to simulate a new life or desire. Games such as The Sims (Electronic Arts) or Second Life (Linden Research Inc.) fall into this genre. The player is immersed in a virtual world of RPG's

except there is usually no violent conflict involved. The player creates a character and virtually lives a second virtual life.

A popular sub genre of this category is Flight Simulators. In general these games allow a player to ride in a virtual cockpit and fly anywhere in a created virtual world. Many flight simulators can also fall into the genre of Action or adventure.

6) *Strategy games.* This genre includes games such as chess, checkers and the Worms (Team 17) series. Players have to use their wits and think about the game several turns in advance. This genre can often be combined with the Puzzle genre.

A highly popular sub genre of Strategy is called Real-Time Strategy or RTS. RTS allows a player to compete against computer or human controlled opponents. Players can also team up or make an alliance and play with each other against computer controlled opponents or other human alliances. RTS games involve building a community, usually a military base, by harvesting resources, then using those resources to develop new building and units with which to attack enemies. Games in the RTS genre include: Warcraft III (Blizzard), Starcraft (Blizzard), Command and Conquer (Virgin Interactive), the Dawn of War (THQ) series and the Total War (Electronic Arts) series.

7) *Fighting* Genre is the last genre this study will focus on. This genre allows the player to play against a computer or another human controlled opponent. The player using his character must fight using button combinations that allow his character to do exhibit punches, kicks and mobility abilities. Games in this genre include: Super Smash Brothers (Nintendo), the Mortal Kombat (Midway) Series, Street Fighter (Capcom), Soul Calibur (Namco) and the Dead or Alive (Tecmo) series.

Summary

Videogames are an increasingly popular form of entertainment that will soon be surpassing music entertainment in sales. With this rising new form of entertainment fears have arisen from critics blaming playing videogames for social duress occurring in schools and universities. Recent studies, however, have focused on positive social connections among videogame participants. The present study will examine whether there is a relationship between playing videogames in college residence halls and self-reported evidence of male sociability.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Fear of a New Social Activity

Fear of a new form of social activity has worried many Americans. Wartella and Reeves (1983, 1985) proposed that a fear of a new activity follows a cycle. First there are fears that the new form of social activity will replace a current form of acceptable social activity. Second, fears about health and physical well being as a consequence of the new social activity will start to make headlines. Finally, issues dealing with social deviance and aggression will occur blamed on this new form of social activity. This progression of fears can be applied to videogames and the gamers that play them, since videogaming as a social activity is increasingly popular among young adult males.

Williams (2003) applied this progression of fears to the public view of videogames. His study tracked the roles of videogames in society over a 30 year period (1970-2000) using three popular magazines, *Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News & World Report,* as sources of information. Williams found similar results to Wartella and Reeves (1983, 1985) in viewing the notion of how a new social activity creates a fear of change. Williams (2003) postulated that people first go through a "River City hypothesis" (p. 528), the idea that the introduction of videogames gives rise to fears of participants replacing their presumed current constructive activities and become associated with deviant behavior in gaming.

Wood, Griffiths and Parke (2007) acknowledged the "River City hypothesis" in their study of time loss that occurs when people play videogames. The idea of time loss creates a fear among non-gamers because of "issues relating to either missing

other things (e.g., appointments, lectures, meals) or guilt feelings that the time could have been better spent" (p. 43). Social Scientists and the media also may view "playing videogames for long periods of time more stigmatic than other more established leisure activities such as reading books" (p.43).

Of the 280 people, Wood, Griffiths and Parke interviewed about videogames, 99% reported experiencing a loss of time while playing a videogame. While this loss might be viewed as a bad outcome by society as not being constructive use of time, only 29.3% of the respondents said that time loss could be considered negative. The remaining 62.5% said that time loss from their perspective was a good thing, since it allowed them to escape reality and to have fun for a while away from their responsibilities.

A similar hypothesis was created detailing the same concerns as the "River City hypothesis" (Williams, 2003, p. 528), but went one step further. Williams (2003) proposed a second wave of fears that would follow the "River City hypothesis" called "The Fear Order hypothesis" (p. 528). "The Fear Order hypothesis" begins as fear of a displacement of worthwhile activities, as discussed in the "River City hypothesis", then includes fears of negative health effects followed by the fear of negative values, attitudes and behaviors that gamers would begin to possess (Williams, 2003).

College Students and Gaming

The negative values and attitudes that college gamers would likely possess have been contested in a study at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In the largest study conducted about college gamers in the United States (1162 participants) Jones (2003) found that nearly 65% of college males played videogames on a regular basis. Survey results indicated that many of these college males (66%) reported that gaming had no

effect on their grades. However, in the results of another question about academic performance, 48% reported that gaming took away from their academic performance. Only 9% of gamers reported that they played videogames simply as an excuse to not study (Jones, 2003).

Out of the 65% who reported playing videogames, 23% reported that their *dorm room* was their favorite place to play, followed by their parents' home (31%) and friends' houses (27%). Jones interpreted this information to mean that college students viewed gaming as just another form of entertainment in their residence halls and that they used gaming as another form of social interaction in the privacy of their rooms and homes. Very likely, the social interaction Jones referred to occured through the virtual world by connecting to others through in-game text messaging or through using microphones hooked up to the game console or computer to enable online communication.

Online Gaming and its Social Interactions

Online gaming presents a new means of constructing social interactions. Jones (2003) reported that 46% of 1162 respondents played online games, while in a smaller study of 280 participants, Wood, et al., (2007) suggested that 61.1% of students regularly played online games. With the increasing availability of online videogames across time, the percentage of college students playing online games appears to be increasing.

The newest genre that creates social interactions for online games is called a Massively Multiplayer On-line Role Playing Game (MMORPG). This sub-genre of RPGs allows an individual to create a character and interact with other individuals in a virtual environment. Some popular games of this genre are World of Warcraft, Everquest or Guild Wars. These games allow hundreds of thousands of people to play at once. The

most successful game, *World of Warcraft*, had more than 1,000,000 subscribers in 2005 (Williams, 2006). This number rose to more than 8 million subscribers by 2007 (blizzard.com, 2007).

With MMORPG's attracting many social gamers, researchers have been examining the social interactions that MMORPG's create. Williams (2006) conducted a study using a MMORPG game called *Asherons Call*, or *AC2* for short, which allows people to communicate using text messages to build online friendships. Williams found that people who ventured alone in the game without making any online friends would play the game less well than someone who made "fellowships" (p.655). Players develop these fellowships in the game to be able to share resources and equipment they find as they make progress from level to level within the game. There are even out-of-game forums and web pages designed solely for those in the same fellowships to interact and communicate. However, *AC2* had one reason why it did not fare well, according to Williams. The game did not sell well due to poor sales promotion, thus limiting the number of potential players someone could interact with and making this game, designed to be socially based, not conducive to social interactions (Williams, 2006).

MMORPG's require strong social networks to be successful, since this genre of videogames requires players to work together as a team to complete quests. Many of these quests create friendships that last longer than the few online hours required to complete a quest. Cole and Griffiths (2007) asked 912 participants or self-proclaimed gamers to complete a questionnaire that was created from a prior pilot study. Cole and Griffiths found that MMORPG's were interactive social environments that allowed individuals to create strong emotional relationships. Quality social interactions were

found to be a motivating contributor for people playing this genre of games. For example, 76.2% of males and 74.7% of females reported that they made *good friends* within the game. The mean number of good friends created regardless of gender was seven. Among females and males, 55.4% and 37.6% respectively reported they actually met these online friends in real life. When it came to playing with real life friends and family, 26.3% said they played videogames together. Many families use videogames to connect with each other and to bond over a common gaming experience, similar to the roles that card games or board games play.

MMORPG's effect on relationships

While families are starting to use videogames as a source of bonding and connectedness, new relationships are also formed via the medium of videogames. Of Cole and Griffiths' (2007) 912 participants, 851 admitted to being attracted to another player, (31.3%). Females (43.2%), however, were more likely to answer 'yes' compared to males (26.2%) who answered to being attracted to another player. Many individuals imagine the feelings they share for another player are mutual. When asked if the attraction was mutual, 49.8% of those who answered *yes* thought that the attraction was shared with the person they *liked.* It was also reported that females (15.3%) were more likely to date other players than were males (7.7%), but this result is skewed as 70% (641) of the participants are male, increasing the likelihood that a female could find a male gamer to date. When it came to relationships with friends who played the same MMORPG together, 2.6% reported that the game negatively affected their relationships. Alternatively, the same result can be reframed to imply that 97.4% believed their videogaming had no effect or a positive effect on personal relationships. While 20.3%

reported that it negatively affected their relationship with their friends who did not play the same MMORPG, 67.4% of the participants reported that MMORPG playing positively affected their relationship with their friends who also played the same game.

When it came to offline friends verses online friends, 45.6% of the 912 participants in the Cole and Griffiths (2007) study believed that their online friends were equally close to them compared to their friends in real-life. A few gamers (4.8%) believed their online friends were more trustworthy than their real-life friends, however, the majority (53.3%) believed their real-life friends were more trustworthy than their online friends, while 36.7% reported online and offline friends to be equally trustworthy. Nearly half of the videogamers in the Cole and Griffiths study reported that they make trustworthy and close friends with individuals they have never met in real life, individuals they only know through virtual interactions.

Social effects of gaming and college students

Many of these virtual interactions occur in the evening when college males do not have classes and are able to socialize with others either online or face-to-face. Jones (2003) found that 41% of the 1,162 college males he studied played videogames after 9 p.m. Jones concluded that since many college students are known to be night owls, many have free time to socialize after 9 pm during which they play videogames. Jones also found that 66% of the males questioned believe that videogames helped to improve their relationships with friends, while another 20% believed that videogames allowed them to make new friendships and to strengthen old friendships.

According to the 1,162 responses Jones (2003) received, 46% of the students reported playing online or multiplayer games regularly as a way of being social. Other

students reported playing solitarily based games in public computer labs. These students would often direct each other to different solitaire games and tell stories of their achievements and failures. Jones cited these interactions as "War stories" (p.9). Despite all the positive effects and friendships gained, 57% of respondents said that the time spent gaming with friends was not "quality time" (p.10). Participants were "aware of possible negative consequences from gaming, although they seem[ed] to perceive these risks as minimum" (p. 10).

Summary

College students have a strong history of gaming. Many enjoy gaming for the social friendships they create as they participate in online activities. Despite research focued on social interactions created by gaming, no research was found that directly observed the interactions of college gamers who live in on-campus housing and the social interactions they create by playing videogames.

CHAPTER III

Method

The goal of the present study was to survey on-campus males at Eastern

Illinois University about the ways in which videogaming effects and enhances or

diminishes their social life. The locally developed survey, administered by the principal

investigator (PI), was used to determine if and what kind of effect videogaming had on

the social lives of young adult college males. Males were the focus of interest since prior

research suggested that on-line gaming especially influenced male social life (Jones,

2003). Resident Assistants use videogames to entice residents to come to programs and to

help get the residents more involved in their communities

(http://www.residentassistant.com/one/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2

74&Itemid=219. retrieved May 15, 2009). EIU faculty members serving as Faculty

Fellows in campus residence halls often find themselves participating in events featuring

videogaming (Charles Eberly, personal communication, October 8, 2008). What is the

value of videogaming as a tool to promote sociability among male residents and in what

ways is videogaming effective as a tool to promote community and sociability?

Site

The survey was administered to male students who currently live on-campus in

either the residence halls or on campus Greek Housing. The university, Eastern Illinois

University, is a mid-sized, public institution located in East-Central Illinois. Enrollment

at EIU in fall 2008 was 12,040 students, including both graduate and undergraduate

students (EIU Fact Sheet,

http://www.eiu.edu/~planning/institutional/factsheet/2008/on.php retrieved April 26, 2009).

Sampling

All 1,661 on-campus males living in university residence hall and fraternity houses were selected for participation in the study. Email addresses were obtained be permission from the Office of University Housing and Dining Services (Janet Werden, personal communication, December 3, 2008). The residence hall and Greek housing residents have an age range from 17-23, with a few students beyond age 23+, and reflect the typical age of college students.

Return Rate.--Among the undergraduate and graduate male students from Eastern Illinois University who were sent email invitations to participate to this study, a total of 331 (19.9%) responded. The demography of respondents compared to the male population in university housing is listed in Chapter IV.

Survey Development

The survey used for the present study was created by the PI (Appendix B). The items were derived from experiences and ideas that the PI has witnessed living in the residence halls. Survey items 1-6 asked the participants for personal information, age, year in college, race, sex, GPA and how many semesters they lived in the residence halls. Survey item 7 asked if the participant played videogames with other people, either through the internet, split screen etc. If a respondent answered no to the question, they were finished with the survey. If they answered yes, they were directed to survey item 8.

Survey items 8, 9, 13 and 15 asked how often they played videogames during the day or week, and what times did they play videogames during the day. Survey item 11 had the participants rank what games they preferred to play.

The next set of items surveyed who they played with and where they played videogames. Item 12 asked the participants how well they knew the people they played with in videogames. Survey item 14 intended to find location where the participants played videogames. Items 16 and 17 asked the participants how they met their friends in the hall and if they choose their current roommate due to a common interest in playing videogames. The last survey item, 18, asked if the participants ever participated in a videogame sponsored program in their residence halls.

Data Collection

All on-campus male students received an email from the researcher using a distribution list obtained from the Office of Housing and Dining Services (Janet Werden, personal communication, December 3, 2008). The survey was distributed via campus email with a link referring the user to Surveymonkey (Appendix B). Surveymonkey is an online research tool designed to allow the researcher to ask various questions including multiple choice, listing, short answer, rank order or multiple response questions (Surveymonkey.com). Questions can be required to be answered, and depending on the answer can direct the participant to a sub question at the designer's discretion.

Upon delivery of the email (December 4, 2008), the students had an initial week to fill out the survey. After the week was up, the PI sent out another email reminding students to fill out the survey, in which case the deadline was extended another week, increasing the total survey availability time to two weeks.

The time period during which the survey was available included the last week of classes and the final exam week of fall semester 2008. This time was chosen as it gave the students three months to have established relationships with other residents on their floors and in their halls.

Students who received the email were told that the survey was being distributed by a graduate student at Eastern Illinois University working on his thesis. The students had the option to click the link to begin the survey by first reading an informed consent disclaimer that they had read and agreed to the terms of the survey (Appendix A).

The email also announced that by completing the survey students would be eligible for a $60 gift certificate to Wal-Mart, where they could buy any videogame or videogame accessory of their choice for simply taking five minutes to fill out the survey. A feature of Surveymonkey enables a researcher to separate responses from email addresses by assigning random numbers to email addresses (URL instructions). Separating survey responses from email addresses accommodates anonymity for participants. Email addresses were recorded by Surveymonkey independently from survey responses so the researcher could enter individuals into the prize drawing.

Treatment of Data

The survey responses were kept in the Surveymonkey database and were only accessible to the PI by way of a username and password. Surveymonkey compiled responses into Microsoft Excel. Data were transferred from Microsoft Excel into SPSS 15.0 for analysis. After data were configured into SPSS, the PI computed a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient (Hays, 1963) analyzing the time spent playing videogames and the resulting relationships and sociability that it produces.

Spearman's Rho was selected as the statistic of choice because the planned comparisons among survey item responses mixed items with ordinal (ranked) and interval (continuous) data. A statistic had to be selected that accounted for the possibility that underlying continuous variables may or may not be linear, "but only that some more or less monotone relation holds" (Hays, 1963, p. 647). In order to visually check for nonmonotone relationships, graphs of specific data comparisons are presented in the results chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present results of a study examining the

sociability of videogaming among on-campus male residents. Results were based on a

sample return rate of 19.9 percent (331 of 1,661 residents). Data were analyzed using

Spearman's Rho (r_s) for ranked data (Hays, 1963).

Data Analysis

Survey responses were exported from the Surveymonkey database into Microsoft

excel. After exporting into excel the results were converted into a number based system

to make it easier to work with in SPSS 15.0. The results were analyzed in SPSS 15.0 and

a Spearman Rho (r_s) correlation was generated to determine any relationships occurring

among ranked responses on survey items.

The Spearman Rho was chosen as the statistic of choice for this study because of

the Spearman Rho correlations' ability to describe the relationship between an ordinal

and interval variable. The variables that were used for the present analysis using the

Spearman Rho were based on rank ordered questions (ordinal data) compared with data

implying a continuous underlying variable (interval data)

(http://www.uwsp.edu/PSYCH/stat/7/correlat.htm). One limitation to the use of

Spearman Rho on the current data is that the magnitude of a correlation is reduced when

the variability of the range of responses (total number of ranks) is limited. For the current

data, ranks could only range from one to seven (Hays, 1963).

Residence Hall Population

Respondents for the present study were selected from a population of 1661 male

students living in university housing, Fall 2008 (Janet Werden, personal communication,

December 3, 2008). Descriptive characteristics for the males sampled for study were

unavailable to the PI, however, selected characteristics of all residence hall students

(males and females combined) were available (Table. 1). Based on a comparison of the

entire residence hall population by class standing compared to the sample return group,

proportions of freshman, sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students were similar.

Table 1.

Eastern Illinois on Campus Population Break Down by Class Standing Fall 2008
(n=4314).

		Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate
On campus population by class standing	Sample%	51.7	20.3	14.0	11.8	2.2
	N	2234	874	604	507	95

Demographic Data

Data by several demographic categories (age, class standing, and semesters living

in a residence hall) are reported below (Table 2). Directly comparing class standing

among all male students attending EIU and class standing among male survey

participants was not possible. As a proxy, the on campus population by class standing

was obtained (Table 1). The percentage of students by class standing in both tables,

however, was similar.

Table 2.

*Respondents Demographics (*n=331).

Demographics	Sample %	N
Age		
17	0.6	2
18	30.3	100
19	26.7	88
20	20.0	66
21	10.6	35
22	6.7	22
23 or older	5.2	17
Year in School		
Freshmen	46.4	153
Sophomore	21.2	70
Junior	18.5	61
Senior	13.0	43
Graduate	0.9	3
Semesters in Residence Hall		
Less than one semester	45.3	148
One semester	10.7	35
Two semesters	3.4	11
Three semesters	19.9	65
Four semesters	3.1	10
Five semesters	17.7	58

Respondents

A majority of the 331 respondents, 30.3% (n=100) were 18 years old, 26.7% (n=88) were 19 years old, 20% (n=66) were 20 years old, 10.6% (n=35) were 21 years old, 6.7% (n=22) were 22 years old, and 0.6% (n=2) were 17 years old or younger. By class year in school, 46.4% (n=153) were freshmen, 21.2% (n=70) were sophomores, 18.5% (n=61) were juniors, 13% (n=43) were seniors and 0.9% (n=3) were graduate level students (Table 2). The largest percentage of survey respondents, 45.3% (n=178) lived in the residence halls for less than one semester, 19.9% (n=65) for 3 semesters, 17.7% (n=58) for 5 semesters, 10.7% (n=35) for 1 semesters, 3.4% (n=11) for 2 semesters, and 3.1% (n=10) for 4 semesters.

Self-Reported GPA.-- Among the participants who claimed a GPA, 22.8% said they had between a 2.5 and a 3.0. Out of the participants that reported to have a GPA 51.0% reported to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and 89.7% reported to have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. For all undergraduate males in fall semester 2008 at Eastern Illinois University, the mean GPA was 2.62 (Robyn Paige, personal communication, 2009). While a direct comparison was not possible, academic performance of respondents appeared to be a plausible match to undergraduate males within the institution, thus providing further justification that survey respondents were representative of on-campus males.

Sociability of Videogames

Participants reported whether they played videogames with other people through the internet, linking systems directly together, or playing with someone else on the same video system (Item 7). Among the 331 respondents, 91.8% played videogames with other people when they chose to play videogames.

Respondents marked how many hours they spent each day playing videogames, 38.6% (n=115) played videogames less than one hour per day, 32.9% (n=98) played videogames one to two hours a day, 20.8% (n=62) played two to four hours per day, and 4.7% (n=14) played videogames four to six hours per day (Table 3).

Table 3.

How Many Hours Playing Videogames Each Day (n=298).

		Less than one hour	1-2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	More than 6 hours a day
How many hours playing	%	38.6	32.9	20.8	4.7	0.7
videogames each day	N	115	98	62	14	2

Respondents also indicated how many days a week participants played videogames with others in their residence hall, 38.8% (n=113) played one day a week, 18.2% (n=53) played five or more days a week, 15.8% (n=46) played two days a week, 14.8% (n=43) played three days a week, and 12.4% (n=36) played four days a week (Table 4).

Table 4.

How Many Days a Week Spent Playing Videogames with Others (n=291).

		One day a week	2 days a week	3 days a week	4 days a week	5 or more days a week
How many days a week	%	38.8	15.8	14.8	12.4	18.2
playing videogames?	N	113	46	43	36	53

Almost six in ten respondents reported that videogames were the topic of conversation "some of the time" 59.4% (n=117), while nearly three in ten, 28.2% (n=84) said "rarely," and 7.7% (n=23) said "most of the time" (Table 5).

Table 5.

Videogames as a Topic of Conversation (n=298).

		Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time
Videogames as a topic	%	4.7	59.4	28.2	7.7
of conversation.	N	14	117	84	23

Respondents reported the most likely times to play videogames were from 9 p.m. to 12 a.m., 45.6% (n=124), while 28.1% (n=74) were most likely to play from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Respondents were least likely to play videogames from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1.6% (n=4) (Table 6).

Table 6.

Time Preference to Play Videogames (n=285).

		6 a.m.- 12 p.m.	12 p.m.- 3 p.m.	3 p.m.- 6 p.m.	6 p.m.- 9 p.m.	9 p.m.- 12 a.m.	12 a.m.- 6 a.m
Time preference to	%	1.6	7.3	11.1	28.1	45.6	7.1
play videogames.	N	4	19	28	74	124	19

Respondents indicated how many hours a week they played videogames with others in their residence hall. Respondants were most likely to play videogames (33.2%, n=95) for less than 1 hour a week, 25.9% (n=74) play videogames for 1-3 hours a week,

17.8% (n=51) play videogames 3-5 hours per week, and 10.5% play videogames 5-7

(n=30) hours per week (Table 7).

Table 7.

How Many Hours a Week are Spent Playing Videogames with Others (n=286).

		Less than 1 hour	1-3 hours	3-5 hours	5-7 hours	7-10 hours	10-15 hours	More than 15 hours
How many hours do you play videogames a week?	%	33.2	25.9	17.8	10.5	4.5	5.2	2.8
	N	95	74	51	30	13	15	8

Respondents ranked what game genres they prefered to play with other people.

First person shooters ranked the highest at 42.1% (n=112), Sports games at 24.6%

(n=68), MMORPG's at 20.3% (n= 51), Wii sports games had11.0% (n=31), and RTS

(real time strategy) at 7.8% (n=21) (Table 8).

Table 8.

Videogame Genre Preference to Play with Others (n=293).

		MMORPG	Sports	FPS	Wii Sports	RTS
Game genre preference	%	20.3	24.6	42.1	11.0	7.8
	N	51	68	112	31	21

The final question relating to sociability in this study was "the people you play

with, do you know them outside of the game or only by playing with the people over the

internet?" Respondents replied that 79.6% (n=230) knew fellow gamers personally and interacted with them face to face. Among the respondants 15.6% (n=45) knew who they played videogames with only through an internet alias, and 4.8% (n=14) knew them personally but never met them face to face (Table 9).

Table 9.

How Well do You Know Who You Play Videogames with (n=289).

		Know them face to face	Only through internet alias	Know personally but never met face to face
How well do you know who	%	79.6	15.6	4.8
you play videogames with?	N	230	45	14

Relationship between Playing Videogames with others and Creating Relationships

An analysis using Spearman Rho correlations was carried out to examine possible relationships among respondents between how much time they spent playing videogames with others, and whether videogame socializing resulted in personal relationships. For the purposes of this study, socializing resulting in personal relationships was assessed by asking respondents to indicate how many *days per week* they played videogames "with others in your hall" (Item 9), how many *hours in a day* they played videogames "with others in your hall" (Item 15), time spent talking about videogames (Item 10), and the number of semesters living in residence halls (Item 6) (Table 10).

Table 10.

Correlation Between Hours per Day Playing Videogames with Others and the Resulting Relationships and Sociability that it Produces (N= 331).

				Correlations
Survey Question	How many days per week playing videogames with other people in hall	Time spent talking about videogames	Number of semesters living in residence halls	GPA
Hours per day playing videogames with others?	.543(**)	.386(**)	.011	-.02

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman *rho* (r$_s$) correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship

between numbers of hours spent playing videogames per day with others and how many

days per week respondents reported playing videogames with others (r$_s$ = .543). Since the

Spearman r$_s$ correlation coefficient itself indicates magnitude and direction of

relationship only, but does not show if the relationship is linear (Hays, 1963, p. 647), a

graph of the correlation showing the linearity (slope) of the relationship is provided

(Illustration 1).
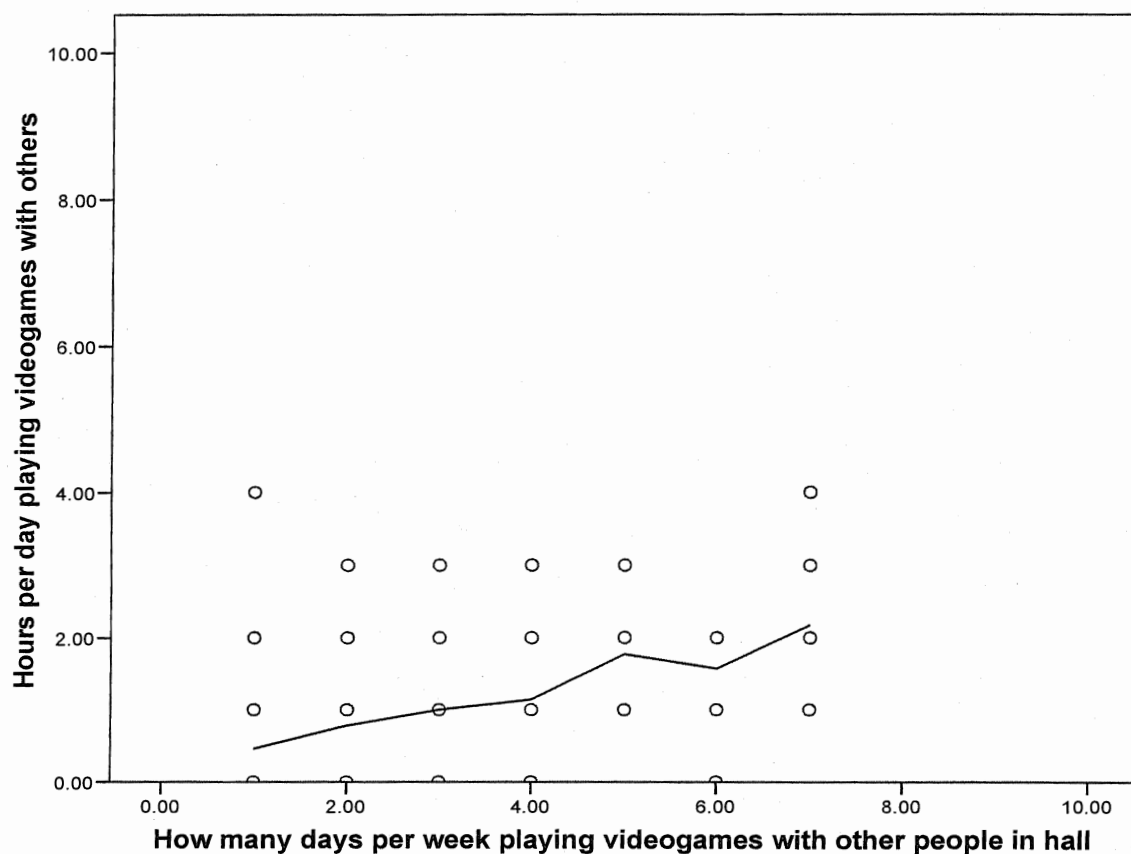
Illustration 1. Hours Spent Playing Videogames per Day with Others and How Many

Days per Week Respondents Reported Playing Videogames with Others.

A Spearman r_s correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between numbers of hours spent playing videogames per day with others and how much time is spent talking about videogames(r_s = .386). A moderate positive correlation was found (r_s= .386) indicating a moderate relationship existed between the two variables (Illustration 2).
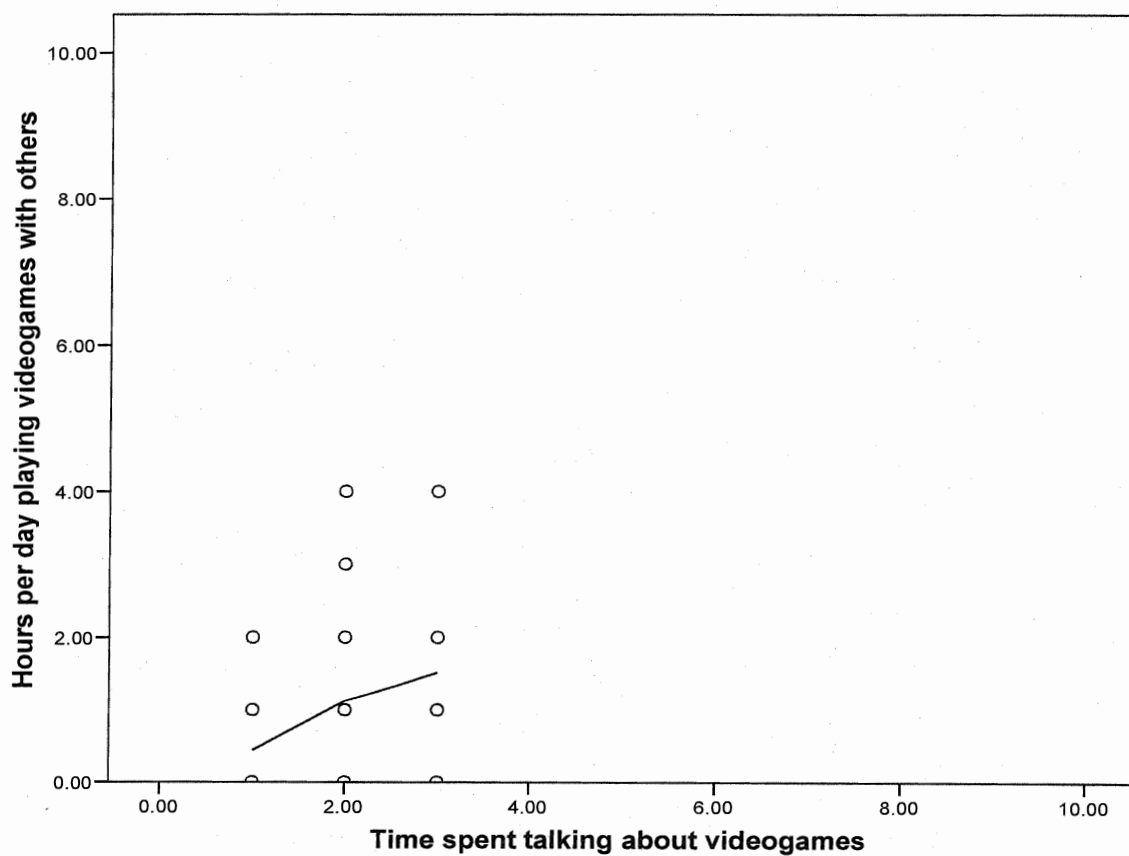
Illustration 2. Hours Spent Playing Videogames per Day with Others and How Much Time is Spent Talking about Videogames.

The Spearman r_s correlation coefficient calculated for the relationship between numbers of hours spent playing videogames per day with others and the number of semesters the participant has lived in the residence halls was $r_s = .011$. The weak positive correlation ($r_s = .011$) indicated no clear relationship existed between the two variables (Illustration 3).
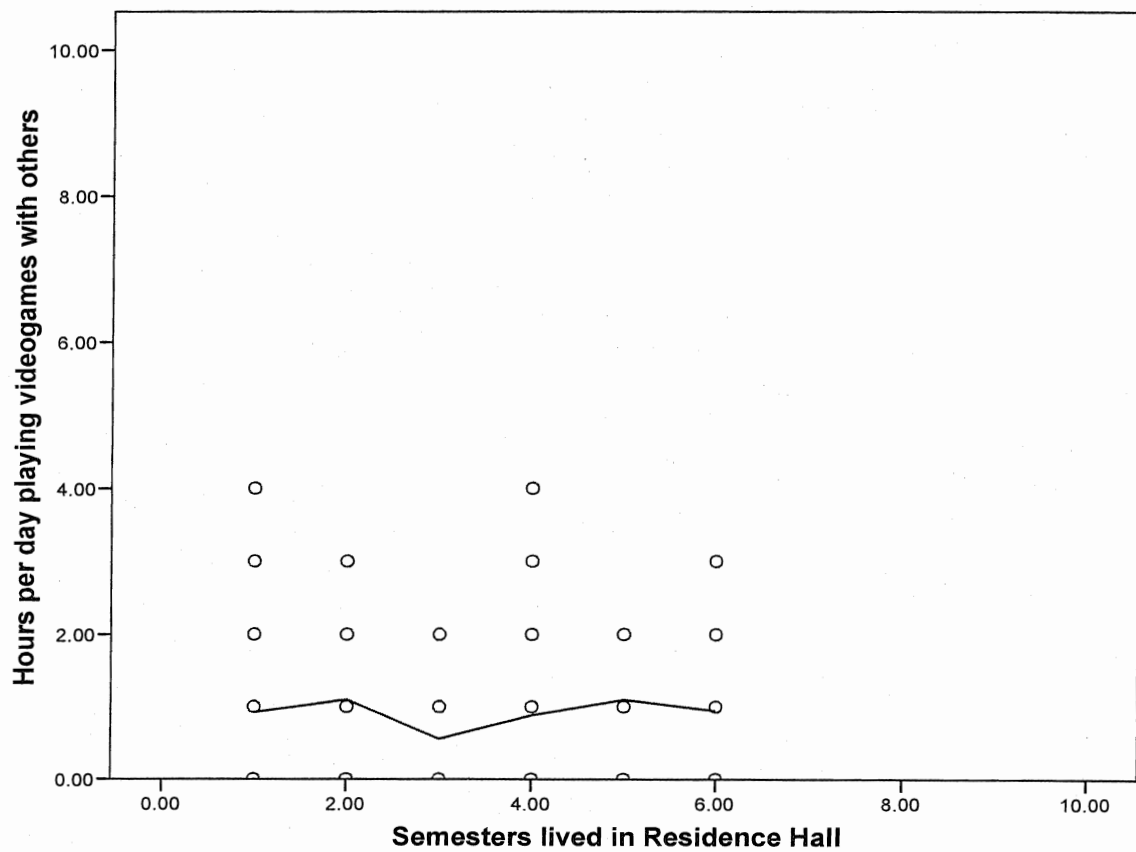
Illustration 3. Numbers of Hours Spent Playing Videogames per Day with Others and the Number of Semesters the Participant has Lived in the Residence Halls.

A Spearman r_s correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between numbers of hours spent playing videogames per day with others and the participants self reported GPA ($r_s = -.021$). A graph of the correlation showing the linearity (slope) of the relationship is provided (Illustration 4).
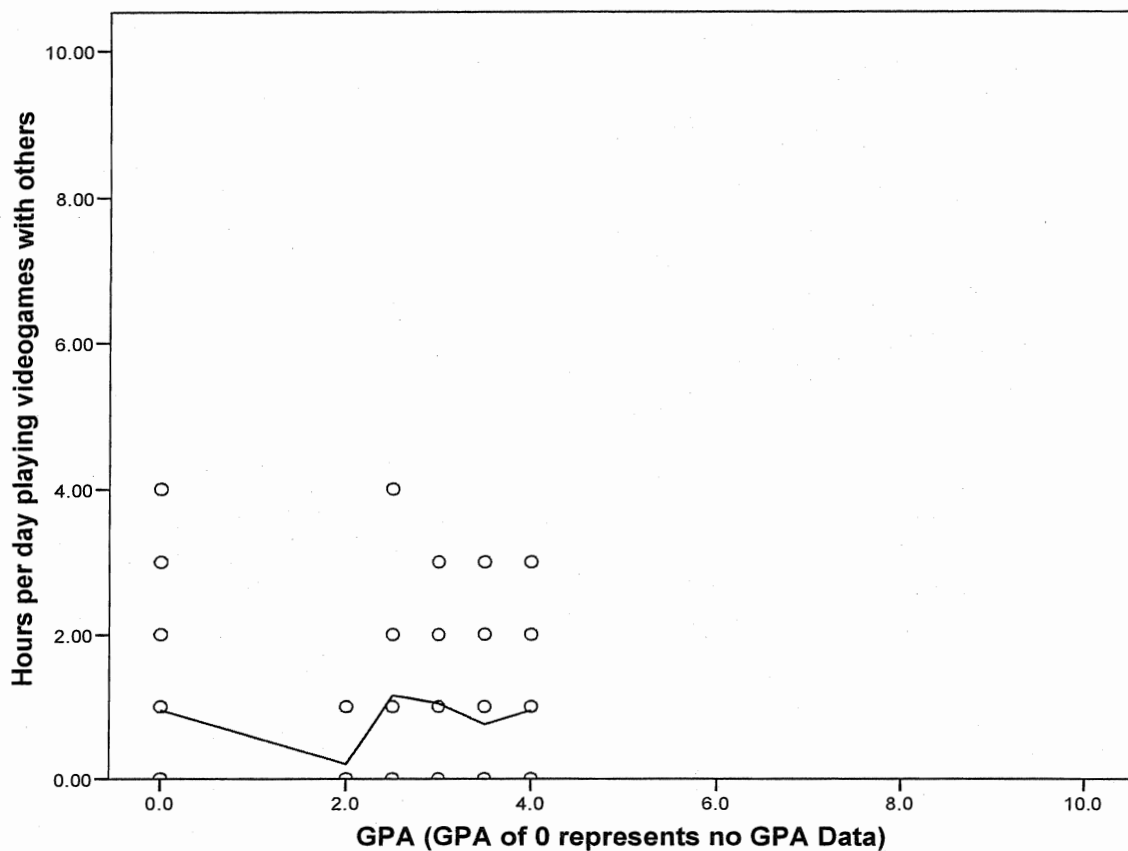
Illustration 4. Numbers of Hours Spent Playing Videogames per Day with Others and the Participants Self Reported GPA.

Another analysis using Spearman Rho correlations was carried out to examine possible relationships among respondents spending time talking about videogames (item 10) and how many *days per week* they spent playing videogames with others in the hall (item 9), how many *hours a week* (item 15) they played videogames with others in residence hall, and the number of semesters respondents had lived in residence halls (Table 11).

Table 11.

Correlation between Time Spent Talking about Videogames and How Much Time is Spent Playing Videogames. (N=331)

Correlations

Survey Question	How many days per week playing videogames with other people in hall	How many hours a week playing videogames with others in residence hall	Number of semesters living in residence halls
Time spent talking about videogames	.19(**)	.23	.13

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman r_s correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between how many *days per week* playing videogames with others and how much time is spent talking about videogames ($r_s = .195$). A graph of the correlation showed the relationship between the two variables was non-linear (Illustration 5).
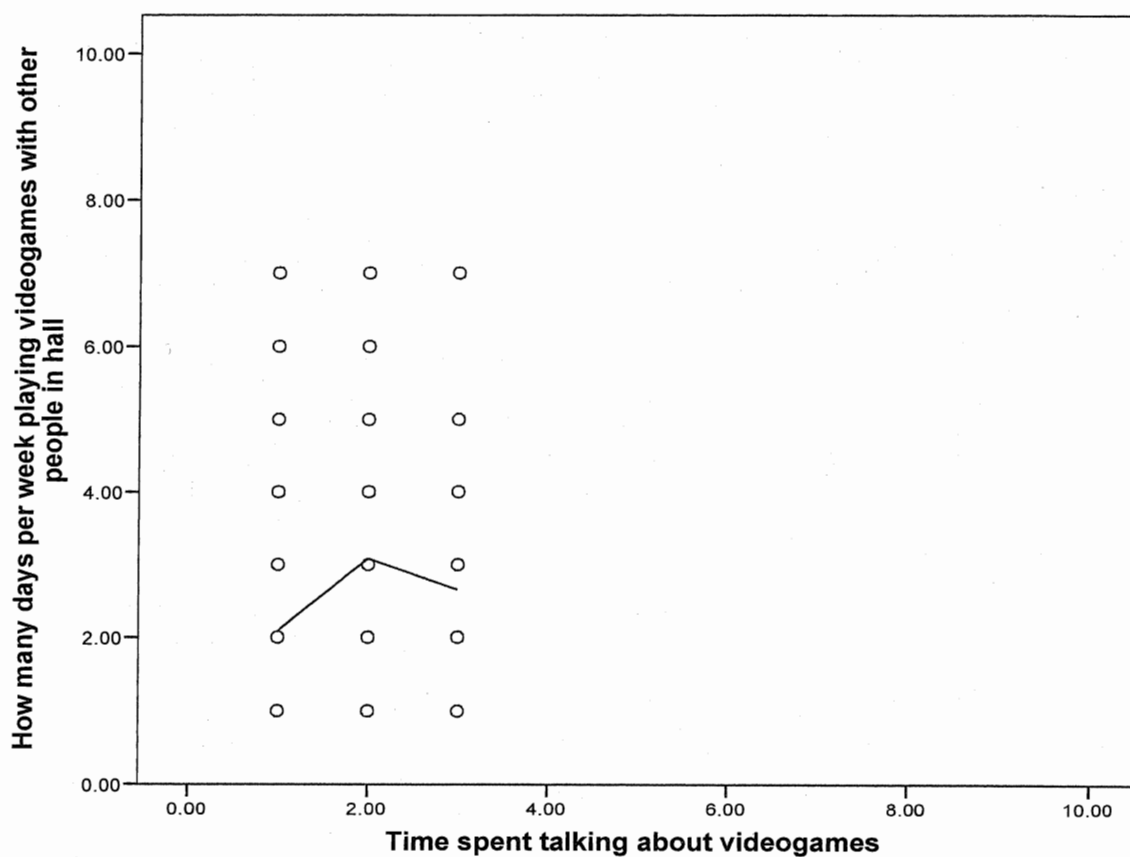
Illustration 5. How Many D*ays per Week* Playing Videogames with Others and How Much Time is Spent Talking about Videogames.

A Spearman r_s correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between how many *hours per week* respondents spent playing videogames with others in the residence halls and how much time was spent talking about videogames(r_s = .230). A moderate positive correlation (r_s = .230) was found, indicating a moderate relationship may exist between the two variables (Illustration 6).
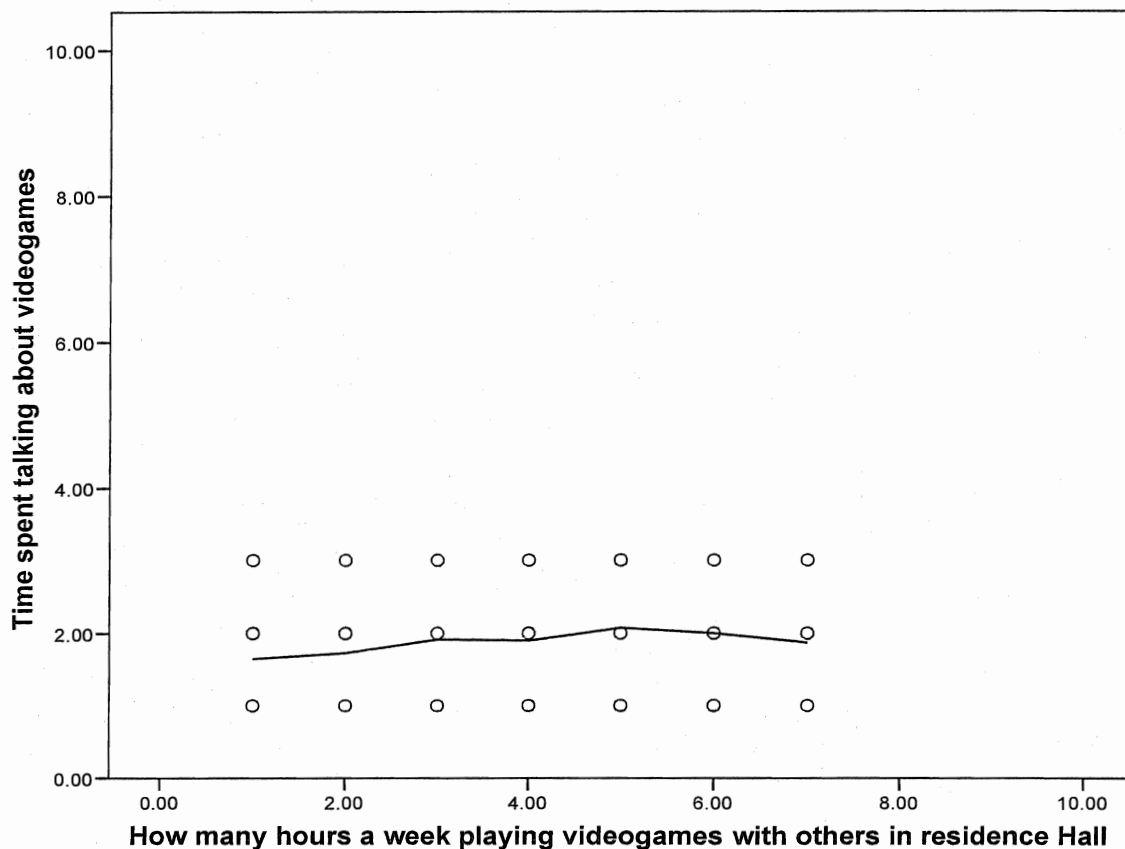
Illustration 6. How Many H*ours per Week* Respondents Spent Playing Videogames with Others in the Residence Halls and How Much Time was Spent Talking about Videogames.

A Spearman r_s correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between how much time is spent talking about videogames and the number of semesters participants lived in the residence halls(r_s = .133). A graph of the correlation showing the linearity (slope) of the relationship is provided (Illustration 7).
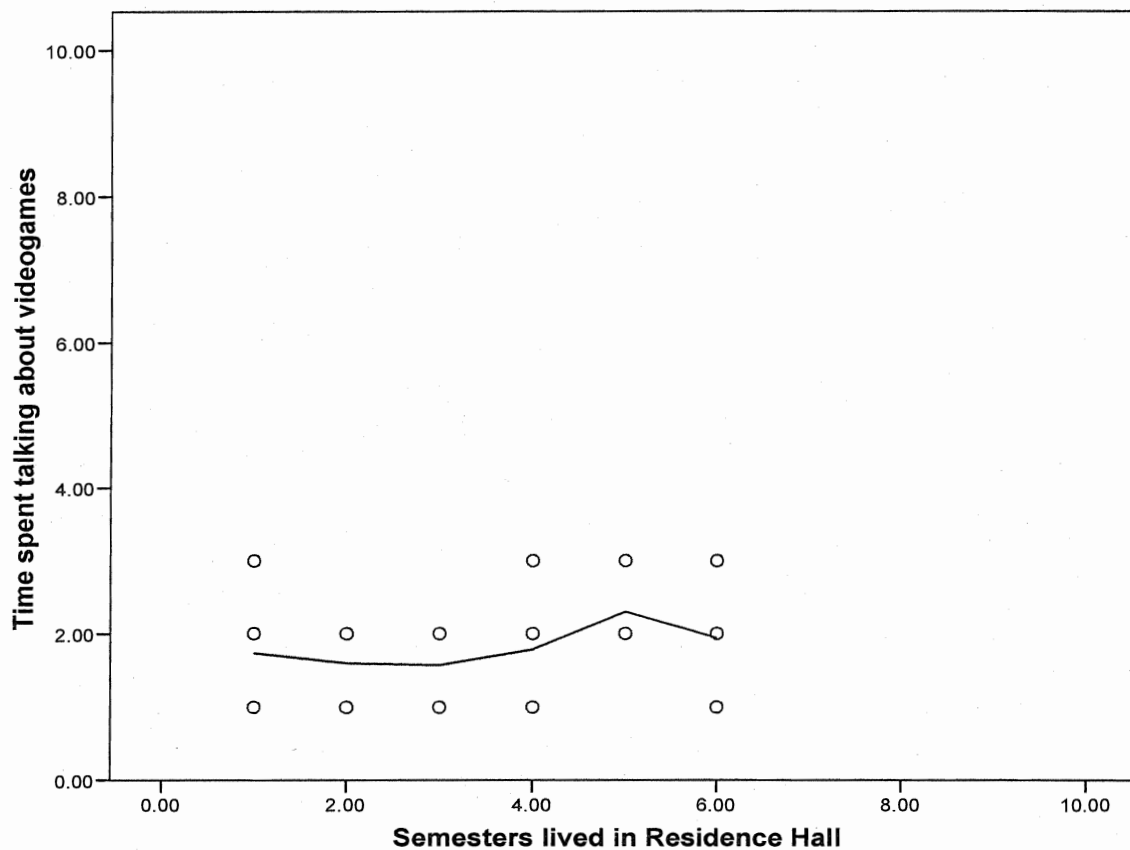
Illustration 7. How Much Time is Spent Talking about Videogames and the Number of Semesters Participants Lived in the Residence Halls.

The last Spearman Rho correlation compared the number of days per week respondents played videogames with other people in the hall compared to their self reported GPA (r_s = -.17) (Table 12). There was a low negative relationship. A graph of the correlation showed the non-linearity (slope) of the relationship (Illustration 8).

Table 12.

Correlation between How Many Days per Week Playing Videogames with Others in the Hall and their Self Reported GPA (N=331).   **Correlations**

Survey Question	GPA
How many days per week playing videogames with other people in hall	-.17(**)

A Spearman r_s correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between how many days per week playing videogames with other people in hall and the participants self reported GPA(r_s = -.17). Since the Spearman r_s correlation coefficient itself indicates magnitude and direction of relationship only, but does not show if the relationship is linear (Hays, 1963, p. 647), a graph of the correlation showing the linearity (slope) of the relationship is provided (Illustration

8).
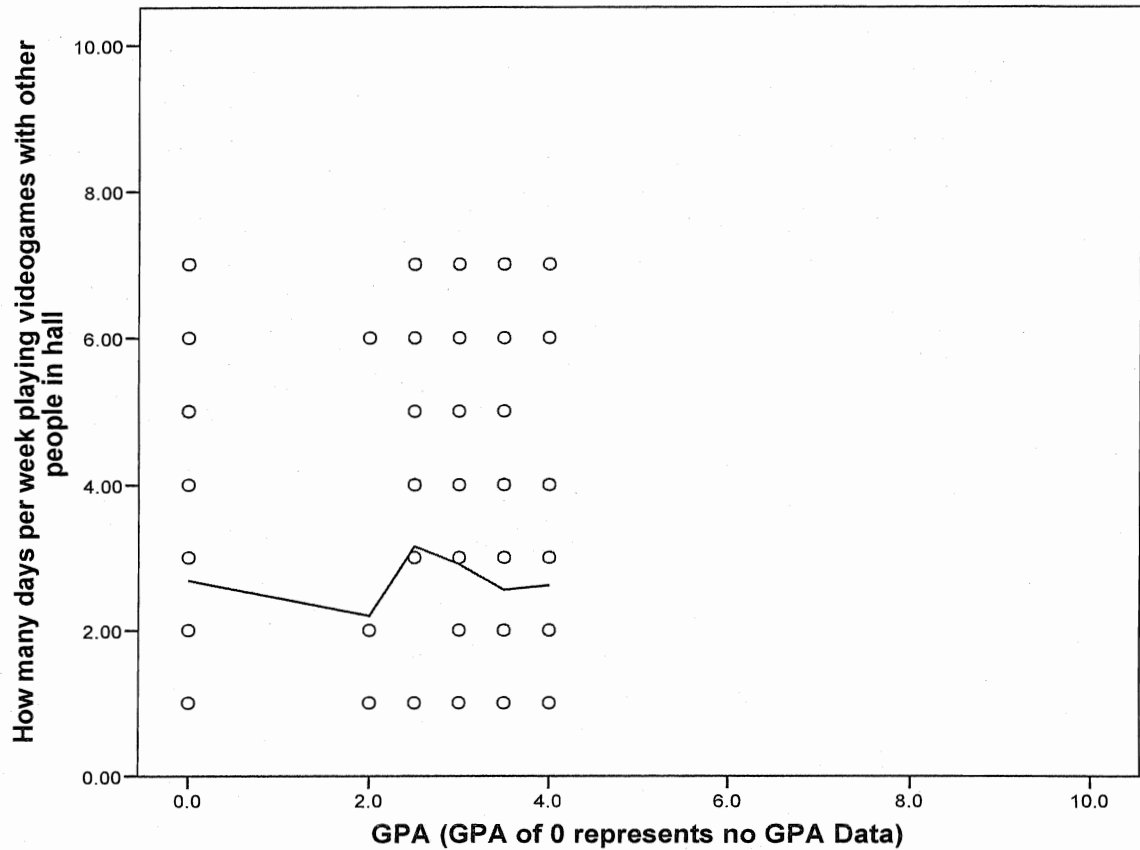
Illustration 8. How Many Days per Week Playing Videogames with Other People in Hall and the Participants Self Reported GPA.

Summary of Results

There were positive correlations among variables (Table 10) suggesting that the more residents played videogames the more they were inclined to spend their time in conversation talking about videogames. Most of the correlations, however, did not suggest any clear relationships among the variables.

CHAPTER V

Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

The present study was designed to examine what effects playing videogames had on college students in relation to their social lives in residence halls. The researcher designed survey on which the study was based was developed from personal interactions and observations made from living in a residence hall for six years. Return rate for the on-line survey was 331 (19.9%) of 1,661 male students living in residence halls in fall semester 2008. A discussion of results followed by implications for practice in student affairs and suggestions for future research will be contained in this chapter.

Discussion

As such a large proportion of respondents were freshmen level students (Table 2) it was no surprise that 41% claimed they had not yet received a GPA. Among the participants that did claim a GPA, 22.8% said they had between a 2.5 and a 3.0. Out of the participants that reported to have a GPA 51.0% reported to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and 89.7% reported to have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. For all undergraduate males in fall semester 2008 at Eastern Illinois University, the mean GPA was 2.62 (Robyn Paige, personal communication, 2009). While a direct comparison was not possible, academic performance of respondents appeared to be a reasonable match to undergraduate males within the institution. There is reason to suggest on the basis of this comparison that students who play videogames in their leisure time perform at about the same level as do other male students.

The largest proportion of respondents, 45.3%, also claimed to have lived in a residence hall for less than one semester, and since many respondents were freshmen,

46.4%, this result was no surprise. One-fifth, 19.9%, said they lived in the hall for three semesters, and slightly under one-fifth, 17.7%, reported they lived in the halls for five or more semesters.

The amount of hours participants spent playing videogames with others per day had a strong relationship with how many days per week they played videogames with others in the residence hall ($r_s = .543$, table 10). These results suggested that students spend a good deal of time playing videogames with other residents in their hall and on their specific floor. Resident Assistants have been using videogames as a way to build community among residents on floors. The videogames allow the residents to come out of their rooms and meet others in a controlled environment, while building comradeship and team building as they must overcome levels and virtual obstacles. This bonding also seems to carry over the following day or weeks as residents then use this videogame experience as a topic of conversation.

The amount of hours a resident played videogames with others had a moderate correlation ($r_s = .23$, table 11) with how much they talked about videogames when they were not playing videogames. The more a resident plays videogames with others, the more likely they will use videogames as a topic of conversation when they socialize with other residents. Videogaming appears to add an additional dimension to conversation among males living in residence halls.

Out of the 298 of 331 participants who said they played videogames, 33.2% said they played for less than one hour a week. One third of the respondents said they rarely played videogames. While videogaming may enhance sociability for some males as

mentioned above, many other options for social interaction in residence halls also need to be encouraged.

The location where students preferred to play videogames reported in the present study was different from prior studies. According to Jones (2003), out of the 65% of respondents in his research at the University of Illinois-Chicago who reported playing videogames, 23% reported that their *dorm room* was their favorite place to play, followed by their parents' home (31%) and friends' houses (27%). In the present study, 71.9% preferred playing in their *dorm room*, 21.5% preferred their friends room, while only 1.7% said "other" for where they preferred to play. "Other" in the present survey could have included a parent's house, but was not a specific option in the current survey. "Other," however, could also have included other sites, such as the library, computer lab, or even an aunt or uncle's residence. Jones completed his study at the University of Illinois at Chicago, a commuter campus, that had more students who lived at home and do not live in residence halls, while the present study solely focused on on-campus males.

Another variation could also be in the time the two studies took place. Jones' 2003 study took place six years prior to this study, and the time differential could account for a change in videogaming. Videogaming became more popular with the release of the game, World of Warcraft, by Blizzard Entertainment, which had more than 1,000,000 subscribers in 2005 (Williams, 2006). There were more than 10 million subscribers by 2009 to this single videogame (blizzard.com, 2007).

A large number of participants indicated they preferred to play first person Shooters, 42.1%, and Sports games, 24.6%. Many of these popular games enjoy a large online community because one can play these games with partners from around the

world. However, it is surprising that many respondents felt that playing these games did not seem to recognize playing with others incorporated playing against persons using unknown, internet aliases. I know from personal experience that I play with a vast majority of people I have never met, nor will meet again, when I play FPS and Sports action games online. The result that less than one in six participants (15.6%) reported they knew the people they played with only through their internet alias contradicted personal experience.

Limitations

1. Very important to the focus of this study on the social benefits of videogaming was item 12 on who players interacted with when they were videogaming. The wording of item 12 about knowing who respondents played games with on the Internet, asked,

    "The people you play with, do you know them outside of the game (example: playing with your friends from EIU or high school online), or only by playing with the people over the internet (Example: playing Call of Duty 4 on Xbox Live, or questing with others in World of Warcraft, or playing Starcraft with random people)."

    This wording of the item could have been misperceived by respondents. There was no indication that "knowing" did not only mean having a personal relationship, but also that "knowing" simply meant know of, or heard of. Clarifying the meaning of the item could have resulted in a much different set of responses, and thus have changed the results.

2. A second limitation was whether respondents held the same understanding of what online gaming and social interaction entailed as did the researcher. Directions to the survey never specified that online gaming and interactions could include everything from playing the

hottest game on the Playstation 3 or Xbox360, to playing the online chess or checkers that comes with purchase of Microsoft Windows.

3. Time loss (losing track of time) playing videogames occurred to over 99% of respondents Wood, Griffiths and Parke (2007) surveyed in their research on college students videogame playing. Some of the inconclusive results found in the present study may be related to participants under-reporting the amount of time they actually played videogames in the residence halls.

4. The restricted range of response options in survey items (ranging no more than from 1 to 7) could have artificially reduced the magnitude of Spearman Rho correlation coefficients among the variables analyzed. The range of response options, the total number of respondents, and the underlying linear relationship (slope) all effect the magnitude of a correlation coefficient (Hays, 1963).

5. Finally, the focus of the present study dealing with male sociability in college residence halls was entirely on the use of videogames as the medium of social interaction. Asking respondents about their social relationships with other males across a range of possible social activities (e.g., sports, alcohol, women, current events) (Clayton & Humberstone, 2006) might help to place videogaming in the larger context of social life among men living in residence halls.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed specifically to practitioners in student affairs and future researchers in videogames and/or sociability. I have provided some ideas that might be applied to males in the residence halls as well as a few programming ideas that I have either developed or assisted conducting. Future

researchers I have provided some topic ideas that should be researched further as well as some mistakes I have learned along the way of this present study.

Field of Student Affairs

1. A large percent, 37.7%, of study respondents said they attended a floor or hall sponsored videogame program. This is a large percentage of male students, if the results of this study can be generalized to videogaming behavior in residence halls. Their interests should be addressed. In the past two years at Eastern Illinois University in my role as an Associate Hall Director, I have found that programming for males will always be successful if food or videogames or a combination of the two is involved. Below are several programs I have either advised or developed, and all were successful in both attendance and perceived enjoyment gained from residents.

    a. *Tournaments.* One successful program involves a tournament setting. This tournament would include a game in which each resident in attendance would be able to play against other residents. Sort of like a program for athletic intramurals, this program would have a tournament bracket with either single or double elimination. Many of the games that participants in the study ranked highly would fit well into this program, such as First Person Shooters (42.1% prefer) and Sports games (24.6% prefer).

        i. For First person Shooters, like Halo, Call of Duty, or Gears of War, these games can be used to create some friendly competition and to allow residents to interact with other residents who they might not know but who enjoy similar activities and games. These

games allow residents to show off their skills or simply to have fun and enjoy interacting with other residents in a calm quiet area, as compared to running around a field playing a physical sport.

ii. For sports games, residents can challenge each other to a game of video football or basketball. Similar to First Person Shooters, sports games allow residents to have friendly competition with each other, and to meet other residents on the floor or in the hall. Using sports games as an activity also can appeal to those athletic residents in the hall, who might not want to go outside and play a game because of the rain or bad weather. Instead they can challenge each others' skills and strategies in the confines of the hall lobby.

b. *Team Tournaments.* Team tournament programs are a variation of the tournament, but instead of playing alone, residents have a pre-established team. As many of the participants in the study, 79.6%, said they know who they play with personally and interact with them face to face, team tournaments is an extremely viable option. Residents form their own teams with their friends and floor mates to challenge other similar resident teams. Team tournaments help build cohesiveness among the individual team members as the team mates will have to work towards a common goal. However, the one downside to look out for is that the teams will rarely interact with members from other teams, and this program is thus

not as successful as the previous suggestion if the goal is to build community with the whole floor.

    c. *March Madness*. March Madness is a lot of fun but takes little work and preparation to carry out successfully. All this program requires is for the presenter to locate a TV (preferably a large one) and a game on an appropriate game console. Like basketball's March Madness, the residents will each make a tournament bracket for the so called game. I personally have seen this done with Madden '08 and with Super Smash Bro. Brawl. Some games the presenter has to manually select which team faces which, and must begin the bracket, while in other videogames the presenter just simply needs to select the option for CPU (Central Processing Unit) vs. CPU play. As many of these games will take a long time to play out the full bracket, this can be an event that takes place over several evenings.

    d. *Old School Videogame Night*. Old consoles such as the Nintendo 64, Super Nintendo, and Sega Genesis are still popular gaming machines. However they are rarer and residents to not have as much access to them. One thing I did notice while doing my survey was that some people emailed me asking why I did not include older systems or videogames in the survey

2. Although this study did not focus on academic performance, 22.8% self-reported they had a GPA between 2.5 and 3.0, while 30.1% reported a GPA of 3.0 to 4.0. Only 6.1% reported having a GPA lower than 2.5. These numbers supported Jones (2003) at University of Illinois at Chicago, who reported that 66% of his

participants said that videogames had no effect on academics. Videogames should not be seen as a deterrent to grades and studying, and hall advising staff need not be so disparaging of them.

3. Many students reported that playing videogames from 9 p.m. till midnight as their preference (45.6%) and that playing videogames from 6 p.m. till 9 p.m. (35.7%) was their second most preferred time. These times periods are generally when students use their time to relax, spend time playing videogames and socializing with others. Students should be encouraged to play their games at these times with doors open to help build community on floors. Residents will have an easy time seeing what others are playing and will help promote community and sociability through commonality of videogames among the residents.

Future Researchers

1. Future researchers might want to explore videogames and female sociability and determine if there are different games that appeal to their interests. Based on my observations females seem to inquire about older gaming systems as well as older games whenever the topic of videogames is brought up.

2. Future researchers might also want to explore specific game genres and how they relate to sociability such as MMORPG's. How do games like World of Warcraft, Everquest or Warhammeronline attribute to people making friends and building social networks?

3. It is also important that the survey be as straightforward as possible and not assume respondents have the same understanding of terminology as the researcher. Surveys should be pre-tested on a small group of people like the

people for whom the research is intended prior to formal administration (McMillan et al., 2005).

4. A larger study between other universities on-campus population and videogaming could also generate more patterns and insight to the phenomenon of videogame sociability.

Summary of the Findings

The goal of this study was to investigate the relationship of videogames and sociability among male college students living in University housing. The studies that exist on videogames and their value in building relationships and community are slim (Jones, 2003, Cole and Griffiths 2007, Norris 2002 and Williams, 2003 and 2006). There was no direct relationship found between videogaming and sociability among males in the present study, but improvements in design of future studies may shed more light on the phenomenon.

There was no relationship between how many hours videogames were played per day, how well respondents knew who they played with, or number of semesters they lived in the residence hall. There was also no relationship between how many days per week playing videogames with others in the hall and the time spent talking about videogames, how well they know who they played videogames with or number of semesters lived in the residence hall. The only relationship that was established was that the more hours the student played videogames the more time they spent talking about videogames.

A large proportion of students (79.6%) knew who they videogamed with personally and played in a personal face-to-face setting (table 9). This result supported

the thesis that videogames are used as a tool for socializing with close friends and people who are known in a personal and face to face manner (table 9). There is some evidence to conclude that socialization at some level does occur via the medium of videogaming.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

Hi there! My name is Mark Nicklaus and I am a graduate student at EIU working on my Thesis.

This email is an opportunity for you to participate in a research study about videogaming and their social implications on male college students. It will only take about 5 minutes to complete the entire survey. Simply completing this survey will make you eligible for a drawing to win a $60 gift card to Wal-Mart! This is enough to buy a new game of your choosing!

Your participation in this survey is important, so please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Rest assured, all of your answers will be kept confidential. While I have access to your email address, Survey Monkey will separate your response from your email address.

By clicking the following link you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to participate in the research.
  http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=_2bImcQKkAfOEhSCxGDOrBNQ_3d_3d

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact:
Dr. James Wallace
217-581-2400
Buzzard Hall Room 2117

Thanks in advance!
Mark Nicklaus

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Sociability of Videogames: How Videogames Promote Community among Males

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study has been designed to elicit the perceptions of male students attending EIU regarding their involvement in videogaming and its impact on their sense of community development in residence hall settings. Participant perceptions will be gathered through a survey instrument designed by the primary researcher. The following research questions have been developed for the purpose of guiding the present study.
    #1   How do videogames, as a tool, promote the social community among college

males?

#2 What affects does videogames, as a tool; have on the social interactions of college males?

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

First, you will click the link in this email letter introducing the research project along with instructions for accessing the survey instrument.

Second, students will be instructed to complete the survey within one week. Students who have not responded to the request for participation will again be contacted via Survey Monkey with a request for their participation. This second request will be sent out during the second week after the initial survey participation deadline. A third request for participation will not be made.

Third, after completing the survey, you will automatically be entered into the drawing for the $60 gift card to Wal-Mart.

Fourth, the winner will receive an email or phone from the investigator, Mark Nicklaus, announcing their prize by the end of the first week of second semester.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Risks associated with participation in the current research project will be minimal. Participants will not risk any physical, psychological or legal rights by their participation.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participants will not receive any direct benefits for simply participating in the present study. The potential benefits that society (specifically university residential life communities) will receive from the current research project might include (1) increased understanding of the use of videogaming in social program for residential populations, (2) the use of technology in the creation of a sense of community and belonging among members of undergraduate male populations, (3) the incorporation of videogaming in staff training and team building, and (4) the impact of videogaming on study habits and academic performance.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may

withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact:
Dr. James Wallace
217-581-2400
Buzzard Hall Room 2117

Thanks in advance!

Mark Nicklaus

Associate Resident Director
Thomas Hall
Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, IL 61920
Phone: 217.581.7702

APPENDIX B

SurveyMonkey.com
because knowledge is everything

HomeCreate SurveyMy SurveysAddress BookMy Account   Need Help?

You have a **basic account.** | To remove the limits of a basic account and get unlimited questions, **upgrade now!**

---

design survey

survey title:
Videogame Sociobility **Edit Title**   **collect responses**

---

analyze results

- **View Summary**
- **Browse Responses**
- **Filter Responses**
- **Crosstab Responses**
- **Download Responses**
- **Share Responses**

current report: | Default Report | Add Report

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 331

Total Completed Survey: 313 (94.6 %)

Select a page to view below or view all pages:

<< | #1. Default Section ▼ | >>

Page: Default Section

1. Age:

answered question		330
skipped question		1

	Response Percent	Response Count
17 or under	0.6%	2
18	30.3%	100
19	26.7%	88
20	20.0%	66
21	10.6%	35
22	6.7%	22
23+	5.2%	17

2. Year in College:

answered question		330
skipped question		1

	Response Percent	Response Count
Freshman	**46.4%**	153
Sophomore	21.2%	70
Junior	18.5%	61
Senior	13.0%	43
Graduate	0.9%	3

3. Race:

answered question		328
skipped question		3

	Response Percent	Response Count
Caucasian	84.8%	278
African American	10.1%	33
Latin American	1.5%	5
Asian	0.9%	3
Native American	0.0%	0
Other	2.7%	9

4. Sex:

answered question		329
skipped question		2

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	100.0%	329
Female	0.0%	0

5. Your cumulative GPA:

	answered question	329
	skipped question	2

	Response Percent	Response Count
I have not completed a semester to have received a GPA	41.0%	135
Less than 1.0	0.0%	0
1.0 – 2.0	1.5%	5
2.0 - 2.5	4.6%	15
2.5 - 3.0	22.8%	75
3.0 - 3.5	16.4%	54
3.5 – 4.0	13.7%	45

6. How many semesters have you lived in the Residence Halls?

answered question		327
skipped question		4

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than a semester	45.3%	148
One Semester	10.7%	35
Two Semesters	3.4%	11
Three Semesters	19.9%	65
Four Semesters	3.1%	10
Five or more semesters	17.7%	58

7. Do you play video games with other people? This can include split screen, system link, internet, etc.

	answered question	328
	skipped question	3

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91.8%	301
No	8.2%	27

8. How often do you play multiplayer video games with another person, this can include: system link, playing together on same console, playing over the internet?

	answered question	298
	skipped question	33

	never	less than an hour a day	1-2 hours a day	2-4 hours a day	4-6 hours a day	More than 6 hours a day.	Rating Average	Response Count
Hours played with others per day	2.3% (7)	38.6% (115)	32.9% (98)	20.8% (62)	4.7% (14)	0.7% (2)	2.89	298

9. How often do you play games with others in your residence hall?

	1 day a week	2 days a week	3 days a week	4 days a week	5 days a week	6 days a week	7 days a week	Rating Average	Response Count
Days playing videogames with others	**38.8%** **(113)**	15.8% (46)	14.8% (43)	12.4% (36)	7.6% (22)	4.8% (14)	5.8% (17)	2.72	291

10. Do you and your friends spend time talking about video games when not playing them?

answered question **298**

skipped question **33**

	Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time	Rating Average	Response Count
Time talking about videogames	4.7% (14)	28.2% (84)	**59.4% (177)**	7.7% (23)	0.0% (0)	2.70	298

11. What games do you prefer to play with others? Please rank in order of preference. 1 being your favorite, 5 being your least favorite.

						answered question	293
						skipped question	38
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Rating Average**	**Response Count**
MMORPG (Massivly Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games) (example: World of Warcraft)	20.3% (51)	12.7% (32)	17.1% (43)	12.7% (32)	**37.1% (93)**	3.33	251
FPS (First Person Shooters) (example: Call of duty 4, Halo)	**42.1% (112)**	18.0% (48)	13.2% (35)	13.2% (35)	13.5% (36)	2.38	266
RTS (Real Time Strategy) (example: Starcraft or Dawn of War)	7.8% (21)	22.2% (60)	25.9% (70)	**29.6% (80)**	14.4% (39)	3.21	270
Sports games (like Madden '08 or NCAA Basketball '08)	**24.6% (68)**	20.3% (56)	16.3% (45)	15.9% (44)	22.8% (63)	2.92	276
Wii sports	11.0% (31)	24.9% (70)	**25.3% (71)**	24.2% (68)	14.6% (41)	3.06	281

12. The people you play with, do you know them outside of the game (example: playing with your friends from EIU or high school online), or only by playing with the people over the internet? (Example: playing Call of Duty 4 on Xbox Live, or questing with others in World of Warcraft, or playing Starcraft with random people).

		answered question	289
		skipped question	42

	Response Percent	Response Count
1= Know them personally and interact with them face to face	79.6%	230
2= Know them only through their internet alias	15.6%	45
3= Know them personally but only through the internet, xbox live, online clan, but never met them face to face	4.8%	14

13. When do you typically play video games?(rank in order of preference)

	Most Likely				Least Likely	Rating Average	Response Count
6:00am until Noon	1.6% (4)	1.6% (4)	2.3% (6)	4.3% (11)	19.9% (51)	**70.3% (180)**	5.50	256
Noon until 3:00pm	7.3% (19)	9.3% (24)	14.7% (38)	28.6% (74)	**38.2% (99)**	1.9% (5)	3.87	259
3:00pm until 6:00pm	11.1% (28)	15.0% (38)	32.4% (82)	**36.4% (92)**	4.0% (10)	1.2% (3)	3.11	253
6:00pm until 9:00pm	28.1% (74)	**35.7% (94)**	26.2% (69)	4.6% (12)	4.9% (13)	0.4% (1)	2.24	263
9pm until midnight	**45.6% (124)**	25.4% (69)	11.4% (31)	11.4% (31)	4.4% (12)	1.8% (5)	2.09	272
Midnight until 6am	7.1% (19)	13.9% (37)	13.2% (35)	12.8% (34)	**27.1% (72)**	25.9% (69)	4.17	266

14. Where do you play video games the most?

	answered question	288
	skipped question	43

	Response Percent	Response Count
Residence Hall lobbies/ public area	2.8%	8
Arcades	0.0%	0
Your room	**71.9%**	**207**
Friend's room	21.5%	62
Friends apartment	2.1%	6
Internet café	0.0%	0
Other	1.7%	5

15. How often do you play video games with others in your residence hall? (choose the best answer)

	answered question	286
	skipped question	45

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 hour a week	33.2%	95
1-3 hours a week	25.9%	74
3-5 hours a week	17.8%	51
5-7 hours a week	10.5%	30
7-10 hours a week	4.5%	13
10-15 hours a week	5.2%	15
15+ hours a week	2.8%	8

16. If this is your second year living in a residence hall, did you request your current roommate because of common interest in video games?

| | answered question | 231 |
| | skipped question | 100 |

	Response Percent	Response Count
yes	1.3%	3
partly	7.8%	18
no	90.9%	210

17. How did you meet your friends in the residence hall? (check all that apply)

	answered question	280
	skipped question	51

	Response Percent	Response Count
Video games	31.1%	87
Movies	17.1%	48
Hobbies	38.2%	107
Sports	34.3%	96
Foor/hall program	37.5%	105
Other	63.9%	179

18. Have you ever attended a floor/ hall/university sponsored videogame program?

answered question		314
skipped question		17

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37.3%	117
No	62.7%	197