

Addictions Rock

There was a time when **addiction** was defined as a **physical and psychological** dependence on a psychoactive substance such as alcohol, heroin or other drugs. Addiction was bad. It was wrong.

Today, professionals debate whether addiction can also be viewed as **any continued involvement with a substance or activity despite the negative consequences associated with it**. Under this view addiction can include the internet, gambling, pornography, TV, work, computers, sex, food, exercise or shopping – thus any dependency that has issues of self control and

that can be identified as something ruining a person's life.

Postmodern marketers see addiction positively. Addiction is celebrated. The best video game is the "the most addictive game ever." Addiction is good. It can hold your attention and keep you motivated. Plus it boosts **their** economy!

Addiction is brain-porn. (Oh, porn is also a good word in postmodernism.) It keeps your brain occupied. It drives away boredom.

Postmodernism is a stimulation culture, not a moral culture. Rather than avoiding the near occasion of sin, we avoid the near occasion of boredom. Nothing is



worse than having nothing to do. Do what you must to eat and survive, but after that, give in to your favorite distractions. Let yourself go. Enjoy your addictions. Live for the rush!

Adrenaline sells. Sports have been restructured to ensure more exciting and drawn out finishes. Horror movies use our fears to cause the adrenaline kick.

Pornography is not about the desire to procreate nor is televised gambling about the desire for wealth. In the world, adrenaline is the way to life. Boredom is the way to death. Who wouldn't choose life? What is the problem?

The adrenaline life is totally self-centered. It is about self-stimulation – aided by others who make money from the process.

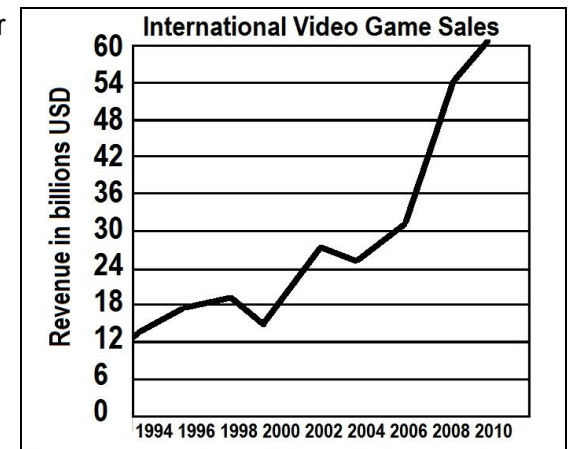
This is not the structuring of one's life around love of God and love of others. It is living for the distractions and resulting addictions.

You might become so self-absorbed that you never notice that the adrenaline "way of life" is death.

Video Games

- The [average age](#) of a video gamer is 37 – or someone born in 1974. In 2004, seven years ago, the average age of a video-gamer was 30 – or someone born in 1974.
- 42% of video gamers are women.
- Those who play video games [eat more](#) and [sleep less](#) than those who don't.
- [97%](#) of teens play video games

- So far in 2011, [15% of U.K. divorce](#) cases have cited "paying more attention to a video game than to their spouse" as one of the causes of the divorce. In 2010 only 10% did.
- In [2008](#) the international video game industry was worth \$40 billion. The music industry was worth \$35 billion. The movie industry worth \$27 billion and the DVD industry - \$23 billion.
- What Americans search for "addictive games" online? Those with lower incomes. 95% of searches are done by them.
- [From 2005 to 2009](#), the entertainment software industry's annual growth rate exceeded 10 percent while the U.S. economy grew at a rate of less than two percent.



Vocabulary

Video Games: any electronic game on any platform.

Platform: the hardware on which you play a video game – computer, online (internet access), console (normally connected to a TV), handheld, arcade, mobile phone.

Classifications:

- Core games are demanding, intense, complicated, long-lasting
- Casual games are simple to comprehend, quick to play
- Educational games are meant to teach you something.



Call of Duty: Black Ops is a console game that not only broke video game records (selling 5.6 million copies in 24 hours and grossing \$650 million in its first five days) it was the biggest entertainment opening of all time. In comparison, the film [Avatar](#) grossed \$77 million in its first weekend.



Angry Birds is the number one video game application for cell phones. It has been downloaded 250 million times across its available platforms and, currently, it is being downloaded 1 million times per day.

"Dangerously addictive but deceptively simple, *Angry Birds* lets you employ cartoon birds as weaponized projectiles in an escalating war against a posse of egg-stealing green pigs... The real challenge? Putting your phone down once you've started." [Time Magazine](#)

Not interested? Try *Fruit Ninja* – slice those killer fruit before they hit the ground. Or try *Doodle Jump* – tilt your phone to guide Doodler through the maze. No? How about *Plants vs. Zombies*—kill the zombies with your tomatoes and carrots. Along with *Tetris* these are the top five mobile phone games today.

As the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) posted on its web page, "Here are some of the most entertaining games for your phone. They pose only one problem: They are highly addictive. Enjoy!"



"Zynga, the makers of the alternately addictive or infuriating *Farmville*, is worth an estimated \$14.5 billion," according to [CNN Money](#).

Farmville is an online game. It was the most popular application on Facebook as of July 2010. (Ten percent of their users play.) According to Zynga, *Farmville* made three times the net profit of its host, Facebook, in 2009. More people play *Farmville* every day than are employed in the United Kingdom. *Farmville* turned 2 years old on 7 June 2011.

To The Point

Not all video games are bad for you. Nor are all TV shows or sports. The point is that they can be addictive (in many cases, that is the goal) and helping youth recognize when game playing is becoming addictive is part of what parents and youth workers must do today. Are they losing track of time spent? Are they unable to quit the first time they realize they should? Are they ignoring other people for their own pleasure? Teach them the signs of addiction and how to deal with it.

Write to us at: kairos.editor@gmail.com

Previous issues (searchable) are available at www.kairos-na.org/Special_Archives