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Digital Humanities

25 April 2017

Video Games: Growing Trend and New Form of Human Expression

Digital Humanities focuses on many key forms of human expression using modern technology to entertain or educate people on the disciplines of the humanities. One particular element of Digital Humanities that really sparked my interest was how [video games](#) dramatically



affects modern society. I've played video games since I was five years old and my perspective on video games have definitely changed after taking a Digital Humanities course at the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown. I used to see it as somewhat of a bad habit

and never really wanted to be known as a gamer. But, I never saw all the positives video games have brought to our society, especially today when the trend is immensely growing larger. Video games have created a new aspect in Digital Humanities that have contributed to a number of benefits to society.

First off, what are video games? Video games are described as any game played by electronically manipulating images produced by a computer program on a TV screen or other display screen. Whether it is on an Xbox, a Playstation, a Wii, or a Nintendo Gamecube video

games have been apart of human culture for decades. Video games have been proven to improve hand-to-eye coordination, brain training, develop thinking and strategy skills, and have given a positive impact on mainstream application development. Despite the overall misconception that it promotes separation from reality and social isolation, video games have given more positive contributions than negative. One positive aspect that really jumped out at me was the development of thinking and strategy skills. It is clear as day to me now, there have been a growing trend in the video game industry in war games that incorporate a strategic element to the game. For example, the game I have played a lot recently, *Battlefield*, have taught me that there is more to war than just shooting people, you have to plan attacks carefully and secure territories. The game also taught me very interesting historical facts about World War I. Overall, the positive elements that video games have given society is astounding and should not be overlooked by common misconceptions.

Recently in Digital Humanities class we had an essay exhibit and many of the other students in the class's topics related to

video games. There were a couple that stuck out to me, the first was about video games and religion introduced by Hunter Graham. He cited a very popular video game, *The Legend of Zelda*, as his focus when depicting religion in video



games. The game touches on religious aspects by references a number of Gods and Goddesses, thus making religion the centerpiece of the game's overall plot. Another one that really struck my

attention was another student's piece on video games and the military. The military offers funding and technical expertise to game and computer developers. [Corey Mead](#), an English



professor at Baruch College CUNY, wrote a book called *War Play* and he stated “the armed forces took the lead in financing, sponsoring, and inventing the specific technology used in video games”. Military games have become one of the most popular trend in the video game industry. In fact, in

2014 *Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare* was the number one most played game of the year. This shows that video games can touch connect with two very unlike topics such as religion and the military.

So now for facts you probably did not know about video games. Did you know that the average video game player is 31 years old? I certainly did not know that until I researched it. The video game industry is valued at \$70 billion

worldwide. That value will only grow with continued innovation and popularity. About two-thirds of American households play video games 60% being male and 40% being female. I am shocked by the number of female video game players there are in the



world. This goes to show the accessibility video games bring to everyone no matter what gender one is. This reminds me that one of the purposes of Digital Humanities is to make every element

of human expression more accessible for everyone to view or participate in. These innovations would not be possible without the advancements of modern technology we are fortunate to have.

Next, teachers and parents have seen the positive contributions video games have given to the younger generation. For example, 74% of K-8 teachers use digital games in the classroom. At my elementary school my teacher used [Cool Math Games](#) to help make learning important



math skills more enjoyable for us. I still play Cool Math Games today even as a College student. In Digital Humanities class, we have spent multiple classes in The Zone on campus and played virtual reality games. The games we played were not only entertaining

but revealed an astounding sequence of the importance of learning about how these games affect not only the way we learn about the Humanities, but also show us what is coming for video games in the future. Games help keep students entertained and engaged in the classroom whether in Kindergarten or in College. In fact, more and more Colleges and Universities are incorporating Digital Humanities as a course for their institution, which means that the message revealing the importance of video games being a key element to human expression will spread in older scholars too, ultimately changing the perspective of many College students viewpoint on video games. What seems funny to me is that 56% of parents say video games positively affect their children. I found this shocking because I always believed that parents wanted their children

to play outside rather than inside. Apparently the parents see the benefits versus the common misconceptions that see gamers as being “lazy couch potatoes”. My Dad has been playing video games with me since I was in fourth grade and that never affected my social life and my athletics. I always saw that time playing video games with my Dad as a unique bonding experience and I deeply enjoy it. We still play video games to this day whenever we get the chance.

Finally, on our first day of Digital Humanities class in January, Dr. Justice revealed that video games were going to be a topic of discussion during the semester. Hearing that made me really excited to be taking this class because I always liked playing them, but I did not know how it related to the Humanities. With heavy research and discussion in class, I have seen the important contributions video games have made to allow people the freedom of expression through gameplay. Digital Humanities changed my viewpoint of video games completely due to the influence it has on major aspects of society such as: religion, military, sport, or any

educational field. Whether playing recreationally or for educational purposes, video games are apart of human culture that have completely changed the society we live in today. Video games have made it more accessible for everyone to see how human culture is evolving from paper to screen. Video games will continue to be a growing trend and will always be an integral part of understanding Digital Humanities.



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