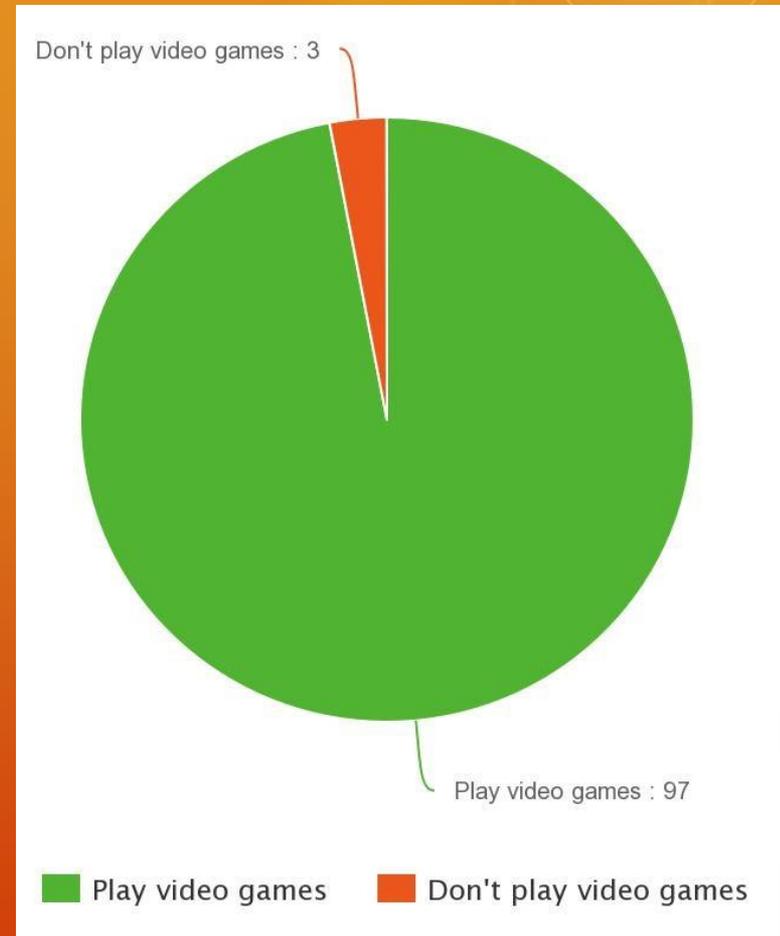




Video Game Addiction

Jared Beckham

- Roughly 97% of American children ages 12-17 play video games in their spare time¹
 - 22 million kids



1. http://www.teenink.com/opinion/movies_music_tv/article/82305/Video-Game-Addiction/

What is Addiction?

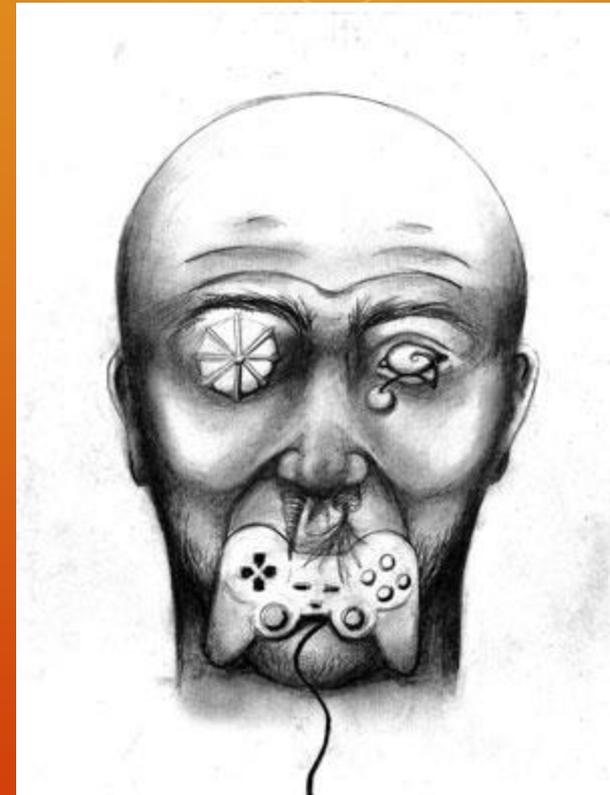
- The DSM-V defines addiction as “a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress”
 - Substance-related addictions
 - Dependency on a substance
 - E.g. alcohol, cocaine, heroin
 - Behavioral addictions
 - Dependency on a particular behavior
 - E.g. gambling, shopping, eating disorders

Are video games really an addiction?

- Not yet a reliable medical model for diagnosing it
 - DSM recently christened the phenomena “internet gaming disorder” in Section III of the DSM-V
 - “Persistent and recurrent use of the internet to engage in games, often with other players, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress”
- Observable withdrawal effects
 - Mood swings, depression, anxiety, physical illness
- Question of whether the addiction is specific to the medium of games or a subset of a more general media addiction
- Question of whether game addiction is the result of an underlying psychological disorder

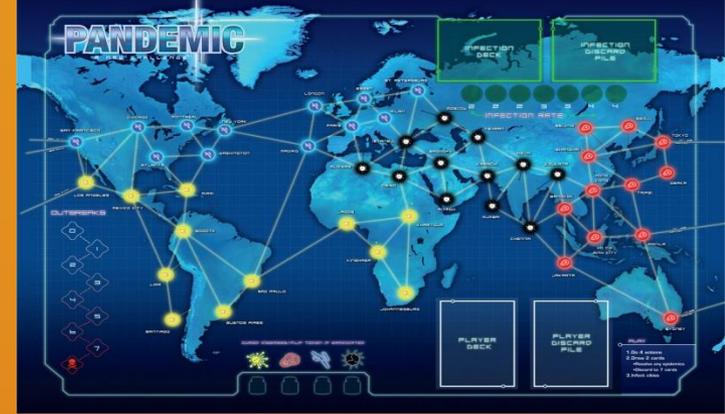
Incidents

- Lee Seung Seop
 - South Korean who died after playing StarCraft for 50 hours straight
- Kim Sa-Rang
 - Three-month-old Korean child who died of malnutrition while both her parents were raising a virtual child in Prilus Online
- Rebecca Christie
 - Woman who was sentenced to 25 years in prison after allowing her daughter to starve while preoccupied with World of Warcraft





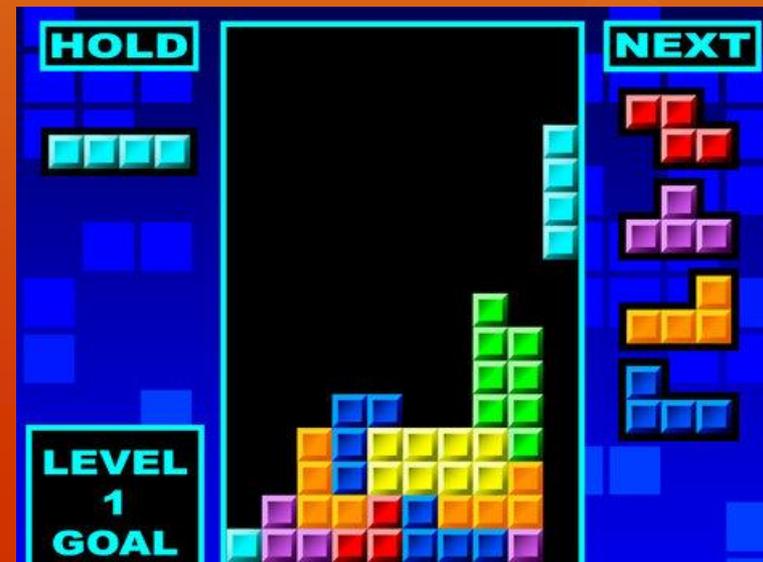
Epidemic



- Experts estimate that more than 3 million American children between the ages of 8-18 could be suffering from video game addiction.
- Study of school-aged children in Singapore found 9% showed signs of video game addiction.
 - 84% of those who were addicts when the study began were still addicted two years later at the end of the study
- The average male gamer plays about an hour on weekdays and 6-11 hours on weekends.
 - Roughly 750 hours, over 31 days out of the year
- Expanding problem
 - Many parents view the iPad as the new babysitter
 - Video game companies now hiring psychologists to ensure games are as addictive as possible

Hooks

- Timing
 - Short enough to be played in short sessions
 - E.g. bejeweled
- Social feedback and competition
 - Build relationships with others, become accepted in the online community which draws them back to the game
 - Competition with peers
 - E.g. World of Warcraft, Farmville
- Repetition
 - Repetitive activity
 - Tetris effect
 - E.g. Tetris, Angry Birds





○ Skill

- Player skill increases as they play more which makes the game more enjoyable to play
- E.g. Dance Dance Revolution, Street Fighter

○ Role-Playing

- Emotional attachment the character
- E.g. Dragon Age, The Elder Scrolls



- Shy or socially awkward kids
 - Escape into game world because they are uncomfortable dealing with people in the real world
- Unemployed
 - Increases risk of game addiction 3x
- Males under 30
 - While playing video games males exhibit greater activity in the nucleus accumbens, amygdala and orbitofrontal cortex
- The majority of people can play games safely in moderation without any adverse effects on their real life, however there is a subset who become addicted

Treatment options

- One-on-one or group therapy
- Online support groups
 - Computer Gaming Addicts Anonymous (CGAA.info)
 - Online Gamers Anonymous (olganon.org)
- Rehab centers, wilderness camp
- Efficacy?
 - Research is ongoing and few clinical trials have been conducted



Questions?

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