

Articles on the Rating System

→ Smart for Technology
and
NDC program
24m till April 1/2020

R. Williams
news

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 46471412 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: AOL to Require Ratings For Video Games Online
Authors: Anonymous
Journal: The Wall Street Journal [WSJ] ISSN: 0099-9660 Jnl Group: News
Date: Nov 19, 1999 Sec: B p: 3
Type: News
Companies: America Online Inc
Subjects: Internet; Computer & video games; Content ratings
Abstract: The company said games not rated or those that bear 'Adults Only' ratings won't be available on AOL or its Web sites. Game manufacturers will submit products to the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, a New York group that relies on parents, educators and others to determine ratings for the games. The ratings range from 'Early Childhood' to 'Mature' to 'Adults Only.'

Access No: 04522999 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Rating kids' movies
Authors: Parris, Jennifer
Journal: Parenting [IPNT] ISSN: 0890-247X Jnl Group: Lifestyles
Vol: 13 Iss: 9 Date: Nov 1999 p: 30-33
Type: News Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Subjects: Motion pictures; Content ratings; Children & youth
Abstract: The Motion Picture Association of America is being urged to create a new movie rating, G-6, which means a movie is unsuitable for children under six. Some 'G' movies that may be too scary for little ones include 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'The Lion King.'

Access No: 04493368 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Cyberguides to cinema
Authors: Anonymous
Journal: Working Mother [PWOM] ISSN: 0278-193X Jnl Group: Lifestyles
Vol: 22 Iss: 10 Date: Nov 1999 p: 20
Type: Commentary Length: Medium Illus: Photograph
Companies: Kidflix.com; Moviemom.com
Subjects: Web sites; Motion pictures; Parents & parenting; Children & youth; Content ratings
Abstract: Several Web sites a parents can visit before taking their children to the movies are listed. Sites such as moviemom.com and kidflix.com

let a parent screen films in various ways.

Access No: 46052065 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Man bites dog: A PG or an R???

Authors: Strupp, Joe
Journal: ✓ Editor & Publisher [GEDP] ISSN: 0013-094X Jrnl Group:
Business
Vol: 132 Iss: 44 Date: Oct 30, 1999 p: 16
Type: Feature

Companies: Hamilton Spectator-Ontario
Geo Places: Canada
Subjects: Newspapers; Product design; Content ratings

Abstract: The Hamilton (Ontario) Spectator, a 104,000-circulation daily south of Toronto, began October 13 adding adult-content warnings to its front-page index, which label some sections as having mature content.

Access No: 05736717 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Video Game Industry Makes Push at Self-Policing

Authors: King, Sharon R
Journal: The New York Times [NYT] ISSN: 0362-4331 Jrnl Group:
News
Date: Oct 12, 1999 Sec: C p: 1 col: 2
Type: News Length: Long Illus: Table

Subjects: Video stores; Computer & video games; Self regulation; Video recordings; Content ratings; Corporate responsibility; Violence

Abstract: In an attempt to stave off threatened state and Federal regulation of movies and video games, the nation's video rental stores and video game makers, with the cooperation of the motion picture industry, have joined forces in a push toward self-policing.

This week, members of the association - independent video rental stores as well as chains like Blockbuster and Hollywood Video - are beginning to display brightly colored posters highlighting their updated Pledge to Parents campaign. Some posters explain the voluntary movie ratings system that has been administered by the Motion Picture Association of America for the last 30 years. Others highlight video game ratings, created in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

In about a month, video game makers will begin their own push, which will include ads in national parent and family-oriented magazines as well as posters and pamphlets for retailers, said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, a trade group. The group also is asking retailers to restrict to people over 17 sales of video games rated "mature," or "adults only" by the Entertainment Software Rating Board, Mr. Lowenstein said.

Access No: 04530243 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Movie ratings help
Authors: Blake, Kevin
Journal: ✓ Consumers' Research Magazine [GCRM] ISSN: 0095-2222
Jrnl Group: Socio/Environmental
Vol: 82 Iss: 10 Date: Oct 1999 p: 2
Type: Feature Length: Short
Subjects: Motion pictures; Content ratings; Web sites; Parents & parenting
Abstract: If parents think movie ratings aren't really much help in determining appropriate shows for children, there are other resources that offer more information. Kids-in-Mind (www.kids-in-mind.com), Screen It! (www.screenit.com), and US Catholic Conference (www.nccbuscc.org) all provide more indepth information on aspects like violence, profanity and sexual content.

12 ✓
Access No: 04490496 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Kevin Smith stirs it up
Authors: Atkinson, Michael
Journal: Interview [GINT] ISSN: 0149-8932 Jrnl Group: Commentary; Lifestyles
Vol: 29 Iss: 10 Date: Oct 1999 p: 180-186
Type: Interview Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Names: Smith, Kevin
Subjects: Motion picture directors & producers; Motion pictures; Content ratings; Motion picture criticism; Religion
Abstract: Atkinson interviews motion picture director Kevin Smith about his raucous new movie 'Dogma,' which has been disowned by Disney because of its supposedly incendiary content. The movie is discussed.

Access No: 05707077 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Plan Calls for Self-Policing of the Internet
Authors: Mendels, Pamela
Journal: The New York Times [NYT] ISSN: 0362-4331 Jrnl Group: News
Date: Sep 20, 1999 Sec: C p: 5 col: 1
Type: News Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Companies: Bertelsmann Foundation
Names: Balkin, Jack M
Subjects: Internet; Self regulation; Freedom of speech; Content ratings; Filtering software
Abstract: Parents who want to shield their children from pornographic,

violent or other harmful material in the mass media are used to relying on industry ratings for guidance about movies and video games. But when it comes to the Internet, they are on their own - or left to rely on commercial blocking programs that function as censors rather than guides.

Now, an ambitious proposal drawn up by a German policy research group and based largely on the ideas of an American First Amendment scholar urges the creation of an international rating and filtering system for the Internet.

The proposal, nine months in the making, was written by the Bertelsmann Foundation, a nonprofit group associated with the German media conglomerate, Bertelsmann A.G. It was introduced on Sept. 10 at a meeting in Munich sponsored by the foundation and attended by about 300 government officials, scholars, Internet industry representatives and civil libertarians from around the world.

Access No: 04528519 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: G, why R ratings so confusing?
Authors: Morris, Holly J; Silver, Marc
Journal: ✓ US News & World Report [GUNW] ISSN: 0041-5537 Jrnl
Group: News
Vol: 127 Iss: 11 Date: Sep 20, 1999 p: 68-70
Type: Feature Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Subjects: Motion pictures; Content ratings; Parents & parenting;
Alternatives
Abstract: The 31-year-old ratings system used to rate motion pictures is frustrating for moviegoers, especially parents. Morris and Silver discuss some recent movies and their questionable ratings, along with alternative resources for parents to find out about the content of movies.

Access No: 04528520 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Should lil' Timmy see Tarzan?
Authors: Morris, Holly J
Journal: ✓ US News & World Report [GUNW] ISSN: 0041-5537 Jrnl
Group: News
Vol: 127 Iss: 11 Date: Sep 20, 1999 p: 70
Type: Feature Length: Short
Subjects: Motion pictures; Content ratings; Web sites; Books
Abstract: Several resources for film content are presented. The Web sites and books provide more detailed analyses of movies than does the traditional ratings assigned to motion pictures.

122
Access No: 04461024 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: 'Romance' won't court MPAA board
Authors: Lyons, Charles
Journal: Variety [GVAR] ISSN: 0042-2738 Jnl Group: Arts; Business
Vol: 376 Iss: 4 Date: Sep 13-19, 1999 p: 18, 91
Type: News Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Companies: Motion Picture Association of America; MPAA
Names: Breillat, Catherine
Subjects: Content ratings; Motion pictures; Sexual behavior
Abstract: In the wake of the heated debate over the Motion Picture Association's ratings and the sexual content of Stanley Kubrick's 'Eyes Wide Shut,' Trimark Pictures has elected to distribute Catherine Breillat's erotic film 'Romance' without a rating.

Access No: 04434635 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Video rating alert
Authors: Lavin, Christiane
Journal: ✓ Good Housekeeping [GGOH] ISSN: 0017-209X Jnl Group: Lifestyles
Vol: 229 Iss: 3 Date: Sep 1999 p: 87
Type: Feature Length: Short
Subjects: Computer & video games; CD-ROM; Violence; Content ratings
Abstract: After the tragedy in Littleton CO, news reports were full of debate about the impact of violent video games. But what got lost in the clamor was that most video and CD-ROM games already come with a voluntary rating.

122
Access No: 04457318 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Bring back NC-17!
Authors: Meigs, James B
Journal: Premiere [IPRE] ISSN: 0894-9263 Jnl Group: Arts
Vol: 13 Iss: 1 Date: Sep 1999 p: 18
Type: Editorial Length: Medium Illus: Photograph
Subjects: Editorials; Motion pictures; Content ratings
Abstract: An editorial claims that destroying the viability of NC-17 has had the perverse effect of raising the level of sex and violence in R- and even PG-13-rated movies. The relentless pressure to fit every adult-oriented film under the R umbrella has made the ratings system ludicrous.

Access No: 04399884 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Do censors need censoring?
Authors: Bart, Peter
Journal: Variety [GVAR] ISSN: 0042-2738 Jrnl Group: Arts; Business
Vol: 375 Iss: 8 Date: Jul 12-18, 1999 p: 4, 6
Type: Commentary Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Names: Rudin, Scott
Subjects: Motion pictures; Content ratings; Censorship
Abstract: Scott Rudin's movie, 'South Park,' ricocheted back and forth six times between the ratings gurus and the studio before being blessed with an R rating instead of a dreaded NC-17. In awarding an R on the movie, the gurus of the code get caught between a ratings rock and a cinematic hard place.

Access No: 05605000 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Movies: It's Rated R - and Underage Kids Are Lining Up
Authors: Orwall, Bruce
Journal: The Wall Street Journal [WSJ] ISSN: 0099-9660 Jrnl Group: News
Date: Jul 6, 1999 Sec: A p: 17 col: 3
Type: News Length: Long Illus: Photograph
Companies: Universal Pictures Corp
Subjects: Motion pictures; Teenagers; Content ratings; Marketing
Abstract: That's the question facing movie companies like Seagram Co.'s Universal Pictures, which is hoping for a hit in its bawdy summer comedy 'American Pie.' The film - about high school seniors who vow to lose their virginity on prom night - received an R rating from the Motion Picture Association of America. Kids under 17 theoretically can't see it without being accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.
But that hasn't stopped a flood of publicity and marketing from reaching an under-17 crowd. For example, the inaugural issue of Hearst Corp.'s CosmoGIRL magazine, targeted at girls 12 to 17, touts 'American Pie' as one of the summer's 'date-worthy' movies. 'Pie' star Jason Biggs is featured in Teen People magazine.
Many studios today prefer to try for a PG-13 rating, because it allows so many more kids access to a film. But the R rating sometimes raises interest among teenagers because it seems more daring. Universal says 'American Pie' was always planned as an R-rated movie because it would seem lame without the explicit scenes.

Access No: 04376759 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Should ratings come with a swoosh?
Authors: Albiniak, Paige; McConnell, Bill

Journal: Broadcasting & Cable [BRO] ISSN: 1068-6827 Jrnl Group: Business
Vol: 129 Iss: 27 Date: Jun 28, 1999 p: 15
Type: Feature Length: Medium
Subjects: Newspapers; Content ratings; Television programs; V Chip; Regulated industries
Abstract: V-chip law author Representative Edward Markey complained recently that too many newspapers are refusing to publish ratings of television shows in their program guides. Markey praised USA Today and the Boston Herald for publishing both program ratings and explanations of the categories.

Access No: 05596723 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Game Blocker To Be Installed On Windows
Authors: King, Sharon R
Journal: The New York Times [NYT] ISSN: 0362-4331 Jrnl Group: News
Date: Jun 25, 1999 Sec: C p: 1 col: 5
Type: News Length: Long
Companies: Microsoft Corp
Subjects: Computer & video games; Windows operating system; Content ratings; Product introduction; Violence
Abstract: The Microsoft Corporation plans to introduce a feature in its Windows operating system allowing users to determine what kinds of games can be played on the computer. Such a feature could enable parents to keep a game with gruesome violence, offensive language or nudity from being played, based on the game's content rating.
The option, to be included in the next release of Windows, will be similar to a feature on Microsoft's Web browser that can be used to block access to some sites, said Kevin Bachus, a multimedia group product manager at Microsoft.
With the computer and video game industry under siege because of concerns about marketing violent content to children, Microsoft's offering could represent the most widespread program available for parents to use to limit their children's exposure to games they consider unsuitable.

Access No: 04348982 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Minor threat
Authors: Braunstein, Peter
Journal: Village Voice [GVIV] ISSN: 0042-6180 Jrnl Group: Commentary
Vol: 44 Iss: 24 Date: Jun 22, 1999 p: 154
Type: Feature Length: Medium
Companies: National Association of Theater Owners; Video Dealers Software Association

Subjects: Motion picture industry; Trends; Content ratings

Abstract: The National Association of Theater Owners and the Video Software Dealers Association have both strongly recommended that people under the age of 17 not be allowed to view R-rated motion pictures.

Access No: 05584328 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
 Title: Movie-Rating Group Is Frisking Ads for Guns

Authors: Orwall, Bruce; Lippman, John
 Journal: The Wall Street Journal [WSJ] ISSN: 0099-9660 Jnl Group: News
 Date: Jun 14, 1999 Sec: B p: 1 col: 3
 Type: News Length: Long

Companies: Motion Picture Association of America; MPAA
 Subjects: Firearms; Advertising; Motion pictures; Content ratings; Motion picture industry; Policy making

Abstract: Amid a growing debate over a possible link between movies and youth violence, the movie-industry trade group is telling Hollywood to lay down its arms. As the industry tries to fend off government regulation of how it markets entertainment to kids, the Motion Picture Association of America has quietly told studios in recent weeks that it plans to get tougher on the use of gun and other violent imagery in movie advertising, including TV spots and previews in theaters.
 'If you're brandishing a gun in a poster or a trailer or anything, it's going to be looked at more intensely than it was,' says MPAA Chairman Jack Valenti. 'And some of those are going to be toned down.'
 But some movie marketing executives in Hollywood say they have been told by the MPAA that the group will specifically disallow many images that show weapons being fired, especially straight at the camera. Some studio executives say that guns held in a pointing position may also be off limits.

Access No: 05573309 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
 Title: Film Violence: No Hollywood Defense

Authors: Weinraub, Bernard
 Journal: The New York Times [NYT] ISSN: 0362-4331 Jnl Group: News
 Date: Jun 6, 1999 Sec: 1 p: 36 col: 1
 Type: News Length: Long Illus: Photograph

Subjects: Violence; Motion pictures; Social responsibility; Motion picture industry; Entertainment industry; Content ratings

Abstract: But the one issue over which the Hollywood hierarchy has direct control and responsibility - violence in films - has left industry executives uncharacteristically silent. In fact, the moguls and studio chiefs whose violent

films are even more popular abroad than in the United States, seem like a herd of deer caught in the headlights of Washington's focus.

President Clinton, who has raised tens of millions of dollars for the Democratic Party among the Hollywood elite, unexpectedly announced on Tuesday that he had asked the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission to study whether the entertainment industry was implicitly luring children to watch violent films, listen to sexually explicit music lyrics and play video games that depict mayhem and murder.

But this hardly explains the resolute, and surprising, silence of most top executives in town. Mr. Clinton's most vocal supporters in Hollywood, David Geffen, Jeffrey Katzenberg and Steven Spielberg, who run Dreamworks, declined to talk about violence. A spokeswoman at Warner Brothers, which has produced films like Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers," with its brutal and horrific murders, and the jokey but violent "Lethal Weapon" series, said Mr. (Jack) Valenti would handle all questions about violence.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 04415912 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: When speech is heard around the world: Internet content regulation in the United States and Germany

Authors: McGuire, John F
Journal: New York University Law Review [INYL] ISSN: 0028-7881 Jrnl Group: Academic
Vol: 74 Iss: 3 Date: Jun 1999 p: 750-792
Type: Feature Length: Long Illus: References

Geo Places: United States; US; Germany
Subjects: Internet; Content ratings; Regulation; Software; Freedom of speech; Censorship

Abstract: McGuire argues that a market-driven regulatory system combining an Internet ratings regime with screening software could be the best method to internalize domestic legal constraints in an Internet regulatory regime and preempt more drastic legislative regulation that may be politically expedient in the US or Germany.

Access No: 04163022 ProQuest Periodical Abstracts
Title: Rating electronic games: Violence is in the eye of the beholder

Authors: Funk, Jeanne B; Flores, Geysa; Buchman, Debra D; Germann, Julie N
Journal: Youth & Society [PYNS] ISSN: 0044-118X Jrnl Group: Academic
Vol: 30 Iss: 3 Date: Mar 1999 p: 283-312
Type: Feature Length: Long Illus: References; Table

Subjects: Computer & video games; Violence; Content ratings; Perceptions

Abstract: Commercial ratings assist parents in monitoring their children's media experiences. Exposure to media violence may affect attitudes and behavior, and rating systems should accurately reflect the presence of violent content.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 48504879 ProQuest - The Washington Post Ondisc
Title: UNLETTERED IN RATINGS?; INDUSTRY BLASTS
CLINTON'S RATINGS PROPOSAL
Authors: Jacqueline Trescott
Source: THE WASHINGTON POST, FINAL EDITION
Date: Saturday Jan 29, 2000 Sec: C. p: 3
Length: Medium (821 words) Type: News
Subjects: Entertainment industry; Content ratings
Names: Clinton, Bill

Abstract: Why fix the ratings on movies, television, music and computer games? They're not broken, insisted entertainment industry leaders yesterday in response to President Clinton's call for a single, voluntary system to replace the current codes.

Hollywood's silver-haired spokesman, Jack Valenti, was first to fire at the White House for being ill-informed and advocating something "impossible" to carry out.

"I promise you--it can't work. It won't work," said Valenti, who heads the Motion Picture Association of America, which created the movie rating system. "The reason is quite simple: We rated 700 movies last year. There are 2,000 hours a day of television--the equivalent of 1,000 motion pictures every day. There's 1,000 video games every year, 7,000 albums and other materials. To have one panel that's going to apply subjective judgments to this is simply an impossible achievement."

Copyright 2000 The Washington Post.

Article Text:

Why fix the ratings on movies, television, music and computer games? They're not broken, insisted entertainment industry leaders yesterday in response to President Clinton's call for a single, voluntary system to replace the current codes. Hollywood's silver-haired spokesman, Jack Valenti, was first to fire at the White House for being ill-informed and advocating something "impossible" to carry out.

"I promise you--it can't work. It won't work," said Valenti, who heads the Motion Picture Association of America, which created the movie rating system. "The reason is quite simple: We rated 700 movies last year. There are 2,000 hours a day of television--the equivalent of 1,000 motion pictures every day. There's 1,000 video games every year, 7,000 albums and other materials. To have one panel that's going to apply subjective judgments to this is simply an impossible achievement."

In his State of the Union speech on Thursday night, Clinton said the current systems are "too numerous, diverse and confusing to be really useful to parents," and

championed a suggestion by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to come up with a single system to replace it.

But other entertainment industry representatives agreed with Valenti. "A move to one rating system for mediums whose content is distinctly different will only create confusion, not clarity," said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

"The Clinton administration should spend its resources ensuring that every American, especially parents, know more about the entertainment ratings systems already in place," he continued. "Empowering parents with the knowledge to make choices that are in the best interest of their families is the most constructive way to address this issue."

Edward O. Fritts, president of the National Association of Broadcasters, said it was the wrong time to change the ratings system, now that televisions are finally entering the marketplace with the V-chip, a parental monitoring device.

"It would be unfortunate for parents and families to be asked to adapt to a new system of program guidelines. We worked for two years with the White House, Congress and children's advocacy groups to develop our pro-family rating system," he said. As of this year, every television set sold in the United States with a screen larger than 13 inches has a V-chip.

An official at the Washington office of the Recording Industry of America Association, the music industry lobby, said the group had no comment.

Valenti accused the White House of criticizing the current system without researching whether it works, and without having an alternative in mind. He said the first he'd heard of Clinton's proposal was in a courtesy phone call from the White House at 5 p.m. on the evening of the president's speech.

"No one has been in touch with us," he said. "Where does he get his information that it's confusing? We have a Web site, a fax, an address. A PSA (public service announcement) that says, 'Tell us what you want.' " He added, "If you're going to say something isn't working, you ought to present some evidence other than your own personal opinion as to why it isn't working."

But Valenti himself has come under fire for refusing to explore changes in the 30-year-old movie rating system that critics charge is vague, secretive and often amounts to censorship. And the young television ratings system, adopted in January 1997, is often skewered as irrelevant. The Washington Post, among many other newspapers, does not publish them in its daily television chart.

A spokeswoman for Hillary Clinton said neither the president nor the first lady is an expert in the ratings issue, and said they want to leave it in the hands of the respective industries.

"They are aware there are people who feel it would be difficult to do that," said Lissa Muscatine in Hillary Clinton's office. "Mrs. Clinton's point is that parents are having a hard time with the ratings system as it currently exists. We should find a way to make it easier. In her view the people in the industry should figure this out without interference from the federal government."

She said Valenti had met with Clinton's domestic policy adviser Bruce Reed in the past six months to explore this idea, though Valenti said otherwise.

The Interactive Digital Software Association, which represents Disney Interactive, Nintendo of America, Sega of America, Dreamcast Inc. and the other creators of video and computer games, has its own ratings board. The manufacturers stamp each of its

computer games with a simple lettered guide that shows whether the content is suitable for a young user or adults only.

The television ratings--in which producers rate their own programs- -has been used by 54 percent of parents who responded to a Kaiser Family Foundation study. "Every poll shows that the parental guidelines are being used. We're willing to discuss proposals that help empower parents and viewers, but why turn back the clock on a system that is working?" said the NAB's Fritts.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 47398943 ProQuest - The Washington Post Ondisc
Title: FIRST LADY URGES INCLUSIVE MEDIA RATINGS
Authors: Liz Leyden
Source: THE WASHINGTON POST, FINAL EDITION
Date: Wednesday Dec 22, 1999 Sec: A. p: 6
Length: Medium (357 words) Type: News
Subjects: Media; Content ratings; Political campaigns; Congressional elections -- New York
Names: Clinton, Hillary
Abstract: Mixing holiday cheer with the upcoming business of her Senate campaign, Hillary Rodham Clinton served as keynote speaker for the New York State Democratic Committee's fifth annual holiday gala.
The party at the Pierre Hotel on Fifth Avenue attracted a powerhouse of state politicians, including Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D).
Earlier in the day, speaking to a Boys' and Girls' Club in Oyster Bay, N.Y., she proposed the creation of an all-inclusive ratings system that would cover movies, video games and television. She said the current rating system--which differs from one medium to the next- -is too confusing.

Copyright 1999 The Washington Post.

Article Text:

NEW YORK, Dec. 21 -- Mixing holiday cheer with the upcoming business of her Senate campaign, Hillary Rodham Clinton served as keynote speaker for the New York State Democratic Committee's fifth annual holiday gala. The party at the Pierre Hotel on Fifth Avenue attracted a powerhouse of state politicians, including Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D).

Earlier in the day, speaking to a Boys' and Girls' Club in Oyster Bay, N.Y., she proposed the creation of an all-inclusive ratings system that would cover movies, video games and television. She said the current rating system--which differs from one medium to the next- -is too confusing.

She said she would fight for an all-inclusive ratings system if she is elected to the Senate next fall over her likely opponent, New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani (R).

During her 10-minute speech tonight, she touched on familiar issues such as the need to expand health care coverage, to improve education and to curb youth violence.

Clinton and other prominent speakers, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, gathered onstage about 6:40.

At the evening reception (there was an earlier one for about 100 people), about 450 guests clustered around tables and stood on chairs throughout the speeches. Each had paid \$125 to attend the dinner, which was to be followed by a less pricey (\$50) dessert reception for young Democrats.

Though the party honored the two members of the Kennedy clan-- Cuomo for her human rights activism, Kennedy for his environmentalism-- both used their time at the lectern to praise Clinton.

Kennedy recalled his late father in discussing Clinton's senatorial bid.

"Then there are the Saturday morning gas bags--they say there isn't room in New York state for Hillary Rodham Clinton," Kennedy said, his voice rising. "These are the same guys who were saying there wasn't room for Robert F. Kennedy in 1964. It's always the same guys. And they're always Republicans."

The program lasted about one hour, during which some in the crowd were boisterous. As Kennedy, who spoke before Clinton, began to wrap up, one guest stormed from the front tables toward the noisemakers and shouted for silence.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 99956554 ProQuest - The Washington Post Ondisc
Title: THEATERS TO REQUIRE PICTURE IDS FOR R FILMS;
EFFECT OF POST- LITTLETON MOVE IS QUESTIONED
Authors: Charles Babington, Washington Post Staff Writer
Source: Washington Post, Final Edition
Date: Wednesday Jun 9, 1999 Sec: A SECTION p: 1
Length: Long (1010 words) Type: News National Illus:
Photograph
Subjects: Motion picture industry; Teenagers; Theaters & cinemas;
Identification documents; Violence; Content ratings

Abstract: With political pressure building all around, the movie industry came to the White House yesterday with a plan of its own for limiting adolescents' exposure to violence: Teenagers interested in seeing an R-rated movie will now have to produce a photo ID first.

Representatives of companies that own two-thirds of the nation's movie screens said they would begin strict enforcement of the policy immediately, vowing that it will become much tougher for young teenagers to sneak into theaters where they don't belong. It's the latest reaction to President Clinton's request to combat youth violence in the wake of April's school shootings in Littleton, Colo.

The movie industry has had a rating system in place since 1968, requiring that viewers of R-rated movies be at least 17 years old or accompanied by a parent or an adult. But in a White House ceremony yesterday, cinema owners acknowledged that children under 17 sometimes get tickets to R movies, which feature explicit sex and violence.

Copyright The Washington Post

Article Text:

With political pressure building all around, the movie industry came to the White House yesterday with a plan of its own for limiting adolescents' exposure to violence: Teenagers interested in seeing an R-rated movie will now have to produce a photo ID first.

Representatives of companies that own two-thirds of the nation's movie screens said they would begin strict enforcement of the policy immediately, vowing that it will become much tougher for young teenagers to sneak into theaters where they don't belong. It's the latest reaction to President Clinton's request to combat youth violence in the wake of April's school shootings in Littleton, Colo. Industry analysts privately

questioned whether the new policy will do much to keep teenagers from watching lusty or blood-drenched movies, let alone prevent some future shooting spree. Nevertheless, executives clearly have decided it was important to redouble efforts to police the rating system in an environment growing increasingly hostile to their industry.

The movie industry has had a rating system in place since 1968, requiring that viewers of R-rated movies be at least 17 years old or accompanied by a parent or an adult. But in a White House ceremony yesterday, cinema owners acknowledged that children under 17 sometimes get tickets to R movies, which feature explicit sex and violence.

'Too often children do get past the ticket counter unescorted and under-age,' Clinton told a gathering of PTA parents and their children in the Roosevelt Room. He said the theater owners' decision is part of a 'national grass-roots campaign to prevent youth violence, to give our children the childhoods they deserve.'

The announcement left several questions about the new campaign's likely effectiveness. It's voluntary, with no penalties for employees who let underage patrons into R movies. Moreover, one-third of the nation's movie screens are not covered by the agreement, nor are video rental outlets.

Mike Thompson, 19, a Rockville resident and college student, said he doubts the new policy will do much good. 'Kids can always find a way to get in and see the movie they want,' he said yesterday as he stood outside Tower Records in Rockville. 'It's not going to work. And, if they can't get in to see the movie, they can still see it when it comes out on video.'

Also, movie theater representatives are not sure how they will prevent youths from legally buying tickets for a PG or PG-13 movie, then slipping into an R-rated show in multi-screen theaters that typically have only one ticket-taker.

'We're going to do the very best we can,' said William F. Kartoizian, president of the National Association of Theatre Owners. His group represents more than 20,000 movie screens nationwide, or 65 percent of the nation's total.

'All of us, I believe, have had our sensibilities heightened since the recent tragedies at Columbine and in Georgia, and we as theater owners feel our responsibilities as keenly as does anybody,' Kartoizian said at the White House, where he shared the podium with Clinton. He was alluding to the Colorado high school where two teenage boys killed themselves and 13 others on April 20, and to a Georgia school shooting in May that wounded several students.

Liz Greene, spokesman for Blockbuster Inc., the nation's largest video rental retailer, said it is difficult for underage children to rent R-rated movies. Patrons must be at least 18 to get a membership card, she said, and children can't rent R-rated movies or M-rated video games with a parent's card unless that parent gives permission when joining the club. Other major rental outlets have similar policies, said a spokesman for Video Software Dealers, an industry trade group.

Since the Littleton shootings, Clinton has called on Congress to toughen gun restrictions, and he has asked the entertainment industry to stop marketing violent products -- including movies, records and video games -- to youths.

In yesterday's ceremony, Clinton said: 'For rating systems to work, they must also be enforced, not simply by watchful parents, but by retailers at the point of sales, and theater owners at the multiplex. . . . When you drop them off, you shouldn't have to worry about your G-rated kids getting into violent or suggestive R-rated movies.'

Yet some theater managers say it is the parents who are the biggest problem. 'A lot of times the parents will buy the tickets and send them in' to an R-rated movie, said Kgosana Mangoaela, manager of the Loews multi-screen cinema at Wheaton Plaza. 'But we don't let them in. A lot of times the parents get upset.'

William Galston, who has written about youth violence as director of the University of Maryland's Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, called yesterday's announcement 'a modest but significant step.' Galston, a top domestic aide to Clinton from 1993 to 1995, said, 'A pretty strong link has been established between violence in films and on television on the one hand, and the propensity for youthful violence on the other.'

As in last week's announcement to launch a study into Hollywood's marketing practices of violent movies, entertainment industry executives privately grumbled that yesterday's announcement seemed largely a public relations gesture that would have little practical meaning.

'We have always had this policy [of checking IDs for R-rated movies], and we will continue to enforce it and to look for better ways to enforce it,' said Marc Pascucci, a spokesman for Loews Cineplex Entertainment, a nationwide chain of about 1,800 screens. The chain issued a statement saying it has a 'longstanding policy' to 'strictly adhere' to the industry guidelines.

Speaking on background, another theater executive said the White House move was a 'smoke screen. . . . It's not like there's this overall malaise of kids sneaking in left and right. We're doing our part. This will blow over when the next issue is serial killers.'

Staff writers Manuel Rivas-Perez and Sharon Waxman contributed to this report.

Caption:

The president jokes with Douglas McWilliams of Nashville at White House event where movie industry announced tighter rules on admission to films.

ec

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 991119000040 ProQuest - The Wall Street Journal (R)
Ondisc
Title: TECHNOLOGY: AOL TO REQUIRE RATINGS FOR VIDEO
GAMES ONLINE
Source: The Wall Street Journal
Date: Friday Nov 19, 1999 Sec: B p: 3
Length: Short (193 words) Type: News
Subjects: Internet; Computer & video games; Content ratings
Companies: America Online Inc

Abstract: The company said games not rated or those that bear 'Adults Only' ratings won't be available on AOL or its Web sites. Game manufacturers will submit products to the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, a New York group that relies on parents, educators and others to determine ratings for the games. The ratings range from 'Early Childhood' to 'Mature' to 'Adults Only.'

Copyright 1999 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

Article Text:

DULLES, Va. -- America Online Inc. said it will require all video games available on the online service to display ratings as part of an industry push to provide warnings about sexual and violent content.

The company said games not rated or those that bear 'Adults Only' ratings won't be available on AOL or its Web sites. Game manufacturers will submit products to the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, a New York group that relies on parents, educators and others to determine ratings for the games. The ratings range from 'Early Childhood' to 'Mature' to 'Adults Only.'

The new policy applies to games played directly over the online service and to shrink-wrapped games promoted on AOL by its software-merchant partners, though those companies will still be permitted to sell adult games on their own sites. AOL said all of its merchant partners agreed to comply, including eToys Inc., Beyond.com Corp. and others. AOL members would still be able to access such games on Web sites not controlled by the online service.

The move comes as the video-game industry is feeling increasing pressure from parents and law-enforcement agencies to police the content of their games.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 990614000148 ProQuest - The Wall Street Journal (R)
Ondisc
Title: MOVIE-RATING GROUP IS FRISKING ADS FOR GUNS
Authors: Bruce Orwall and John Lippman Staff Reporters of The Wall
Street Journal
Source: The Wall Street Journal
Date: Monday Jun 14, 1999 Sec: B p: 1
Length: Long (1004 words) Type: News
Subjects: Firearms; Advertising; Motion pictures; Content ratings; Motion
picture industry; Policy making
Companies: Motion Picture Association of America; MPAA
Abstract: Amid a growing debate over a possible link between movies
and youth violence, the movie-industry trade group is telling
Hollywood to lay down its arms. As the industry tries to fend off
government regulation of how it markets entertainment to kids,
the Motion Picture Association of America has quietly told
studios in recent weeks that it plans to get tougher on the use
of gun and other violent imagery in movie advertising, including
TV spots and previews in theaters.
'If you're brandishing a gun in a poster or a trailer or anything,
it's going to be looked at more intensely than it was,' says
MPAA Chairman Jack Valenti. 'And some of those are going to
be toned down.'
But some movie marketing executives in Hollywood say they
have been told by the MPAA that the group will specifically
disallow many images that show weapons being fired,
especially straight at the camera. Some studio executives say
that guns held in a pointing position may also be off limits.

Copyright 1999 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

Article Text:

Memo to movie advertisers: Hold your fire.

Amid a growing debate over a possible link between movies and youth violence, the movie-industry trade group is telling Hollywood to lay down its arms. As the industry tries to fend off government regulation of how it markets entertainment to kids, the Motion Picture Association of America has quietly told studios in recent weeks that it plans to get tougher on the use of gun and other violent imagery in movie advertising, including TV spots and previews in theaters.

'If you're brandishing a gun in a poster or a trailer or anything, it's going to be looked at more intensely than it was,' says MPAA Chairman Jack Valenti. 'And some of those

are going to be toned down.'

The policy shift isn't a legal matter, but part of what it calls the movie industry's program of 'voluntary self-regulation,' which includes the assignment of ratings to films. While it hasn't issued a directive, the group is informing studios about the new policy as they submit advertising materials for review.

The MPAA, which lobbies on behalf of seven major studios that fund it, approves all advertising materials for films that are submitted to be rated.

In an interview, Mr. Valenti characterized the new policy as one of 'heightened scrutiny.' It doesn't add new specific prohibitions to MPAA policy, which already bans ads from showing scenes with weapons held to a person's head.

But some movie marketing executives in Hollywood say they have been told by the MPAA that the group will specifically disallow many images that show weapons being fired, especially straight at the camera. Some studio executives say that guns held in a pointing position may also be off limits.

The MPAA recently told Seagram Co.'s Universal Pictures to delete an image of a firing machine gun from a trailer for 'Mystery Men,' a comedy about ragtag superheroes. Universal declined to comment.

Independent studio Trimark Pictures, a unit of Trimark Holdings Inc, two weeks ago submitted advertising materials for a home-video release of 'Mr. Murder.' The original ad, featuring a pointed gun, was rejected. When Trimark resubmitted it substituting a knife for the gun, it was approved.

Artisan Entertainment Inc. President Amir Malin says it isn't just gun violence getting fresh attention. In a trailer touting Artisan's coming Steven Soderbergh film 'The Limey,' the MPAA recently vetoed an image of someone being thrown off a balcony. 'That hasn't happened before,' he says, adding that much worse violence appears on TV cop shows.

Mr. Malin adds that the studio had been warned that intensified scrutiny was coming. 'After Columbine, we did get a call from the MPAA saying they would be tougher on the issue of violence,' he says.

The MPAA's edict is Hollywood's strongest response yet to the political pressure in the wake of the recent Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, Colo. In recent weeks, President Clinton has ordered a government investigation on the marketing of violent entertainment to children, which may result in studio marketing records being subpoenaed.

Also, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde has introduced legislation that would outlaw the sale of obscenely violent movies, video games and books to children. Movie-theater owners have agreed to begin checking IDs of teenagers trying to buy tickets to R-rated movies.

Mr. Valenti says the industry isn't flinching under pressure. Rather, he says, the group is trying to be a responsive participant in the national debate on youth violence. 'Trying to lessen the reliance on guns in advertising if we possibly can is a small way of trying to be part of this movement,' he says.

Mr. Valenti adds: 'Suppose I told you that yesterday the speed limit on I-95 was 75 and tomorrow it says 55. We changed the speed limit, that's all.'

Guns and gunfire have been staples of movie advertising for years. Perhaps the most vivid recent examples were the ammo-heavy previews for 'The Matrix,' the science-fiction thriller starring Keanu Reeves that was released in April by Time Warner Inc.'s Warner Bros. unit. One 'Matrix' preview climaxed with Mr. Reeves, a gun

in each fist, firing rounds straight into the camera. Another showed slow-motion shoot-outs and included the line 'Guns. We need lots of guns.'

Both previews were preceded by a stamp of approval that reads: 'The following preview has been approved for all audiences by the Motion Picture Association of America.'

'The Matrix' isn't alone in featuring gunplay. The poster for 'Payback,' released last winter by Viacom Inc.'s Paramount Pictures, featured star Mel Gibson pointing a gun into the camera. The movie's preview also shows Mr. Gibson firing straight at the viewer. Even advertisements for more serious fare, such as Steven Spielberg's 'Saving Private Ryan,' showed men pointing guns.

The MPAA's rating system is voluntary, and nonmember studios can take their films to the marketplace without being rated. But studios feel bound to submit their films for rating because theater operators usually won't accept unrated movies.

Once a film is submitted to the MPAA for rating, the organization insists on approving all the film's ad materials. If a studio were to air a rejected TV spot over the MPAA's objection, Mr. Valenti says the group would revoke the movie's rating.

He concedes the new policy will require some adjustments. 'If I were a marketing guy I'd be screaming my head off,' he says. But the rating system is designed for parents, not directors, film marketers or studio executives, he says. And with current concerns about movie violence, he says, Hollywood can't be unresponsive.

But the new crackdown is causing some confusion for movie marketers. Some studios have been told to edit TV spots that contain imagery in preview trailers that the MPAA cleared before the Columbine tragedy. DreamWorks SKG, for instance, was ordered to cut a sequence, which been approved for the trailer of 'The Haunting,' from a TV commercial for the thriller. The studio declined to comment, but the scene at issue showed spikes dropping from a ceiling onto actress Lili Taylor.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 990525000092 ProQuest - The Wall Street Journal (R)
Ondisc
Title: GAMES: GAME MAKERS, TAKING HITS, TRY TO SHIELD
KIDS
Authors: Dean Takahashi Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal
Source: The Wall Street Journal
Date: Tuesday May 25, 1999 Sec: B p: 1
Length: Long (1115 words) Type: News
Subjects: Computer & video games; Content ratings; Children & youth
Companies: Interactive Digital Software Association

Abstract: The recent spate of teen violence has prompted legislators to target video-game makers nationwide. The U.S. Senate has authorized a study on the effects of violent games and music on young people, and legislators in four states have already proposed making it illegal to sell games rated 'mature' to minors.

Responding, the game publishers' lobbying group, the Interactive Digital Software Association, has begun working with retailers to develop a voluntary system that would essentially 'card' potential game buyers. When any adult-rated title is scanned into a cash register, the system would alert the retailer to ask for identification. If the buyer is a minor without parental permission, the clerk could deny the sale. Retailers hope to begin using the system first in Washington state, and eventually plan to deploy it nationally.

How effective that would be is questionable, since critics say retailers are lax when it comes to enforcement. In a study last year, a Minneapolis advocacy group called the National Institute on Media and the Family found that 41% of retail clerks didn't understand the ratings, and only 40% of parents reported routinely checking ratings. When the institute surveyed fourth through eighth graders, half named violent games as their favorites. It also found that while video stores accounted for \$800 million in game revenue last year, only 9% of them refused to rent mature titles to minors.

Copyright 1999 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

Article Text:

Hoping to avert a regulatory crackdown, the video-game industry says it is trying to strengthen voluntary measures to shield children from inappropriate games.

The recent spate of teen violence has prompted legislators to target video-game makers nationwide. The U.S. Senate has authorized a study on the effects of violent games and music on young people, and legislators in four states have already proposed making it illegal to sell games rated 'mature' to minors.

Responding, the game publishers' lobbying group, the Interactive Digital Software Association, has begun working with retailers to develop a voluntary system that would essentially 'card' potential game buyers. When any adult-rated title is scanned into a cash register, the system would alert the retailer to ask for identification. If the buyer is a minor without parental permission, the clerk could deny the sale. Retailers hope to begin using the system first in Washington state, and eventually plan to deploy it nationally.

How effective that would be is questionable, since critics say retailers are lax when it comes to enforcement. In a study last year, a Minneapolis advocacy group called the National Institute on Media and the Family found that 41% of retail clerks didn't understand the ratings, and only 40% of parents reported routinely checking ratings. When the institute surveyed fourth through eighth graders, half named violent games as their favorites. It also found that while video stores accounted for \$800 million in game revenue last year, only 9% of them refused to rent mature titles to minors.

Meanwhile, there are virtually no curbs to prevent minors from anonymously downloading violent titles from Internet game sites.

Rapid growth of video games has increased the industry's visibility. Last year, electronic-game sales in North America grew 25%, to \$5.5 billion -- not far behind the \$6.9 billion in movie box-office receipts. In its first six weeks last Christmas, one game, Nintendo Co.'s 'Legend of Zelda,' generated \$150 million in sales, outpacing the film 'A Bug's Life,' which pulled in \$114 million during the same time at the box office.

'As our industry has become so large, we are a fair target for criticism,' says Peter Main, executive vice president at Nintendo of America. 'The level of concern is greater than ever before, especially on Capitol Hill,' says Doug Lowenstein, IDSA president. 'More needs to be done with the rating system and ad codes.'

As with the movie and music industries, video-game makers have a voluntary ratings system, but it is relatively new and largely ignored. A postage-stamp-size logo appears on game covers categorizing titles as Adults Only, Mature, Teen, Everyone or Early Childhood. Industry experts say so-called 'violent shooter' titles -- like 'Doom,' 'Quake,' 'Sin,' and 'Half-Life' -- make up only 6% of the sales of the entire gaming market. All are rated Mature.

Store operators say they aren't the problem. 'Retailers should pay attention to the ratings,' says Pamela Rucker, a spokeswoman for the National Retail Federation in Washington, but 'parents need to know what their children are playing.'

The industry's Mr. Lowenstein says research connecting violence and game-playing is thin. Roughly 57% of video games are played by adults, and the industry's fastest-growing sector is children's puzzle and board games, like Monopoly. Of 5,000 games rated by the industry's Entertainment Software Ratings Board in the past five years, 70% were considered appropriate for all ages to play.

Still, it's the violent titles that have gaming companies under attack. After the December 1997 school shooting in Paducah, Ky., families of three victims sued makers of violent games, as well as movie studios, for allegedly influencing the killer.

Washington state is a hotbed of activity. In Olympia, the Washington Retailers Association has agreed to encourage electronic game retailers to voluntarily prohibit

sales of violent games to minors throughout the state.

That plan follows a campaign by a Seattle group called Mothers Against Violence, which started its advocacy work last year when one member's eight-year-old son saw an ad in Electronic Gaming Monthly. The ad, for Activision Inc.'s 'Vigilante 8,' pictured a school bus armed with missiles and featured 'Molo,' an expelled student aiming to get an 'A' in violent acts. Activision declined to comment.

The video-game trade group says it also plans to tone down such violence references in ads. Last year, Interplay Entertainment Inc. advertised a car-combat game, 'Carmageddon,' with the caption 'Easier than killing babies with axes.' The ad outraged children's advocacy groups. In the aftermath, Interplay says it will be 'more careful' about its ads and enlarge the warning labels on its adult-oriented games.

While denying any connection between violence and game-playing, some publishers and retailers themselves are taking steps to limit access to violent titles. Some retailers, for instance, recently balked at carrying Interactive Magic Inc.'s 'Mortyr,' a game whose cover depicted a black Nazi helmet in a pool of blood.

And recently, Electronic Arts Inc. nixed 'Thrill Kill,' a violent game it inherited when it acquired another company. Glenn Fong, head of the company's Canada studios, said, 'We even killed the project altogether so someone else couldn't publish it.'

But some people worry that overreacting to recent tragic events could limit the industry's artistic freedom. 'It's scary that the violence issue has become political,' says Mike Wilson, chief executive officer of Gathering of Developers LLC, a Dallas company that has a number of violent games in the works. 'A big retailer could very well get a lot of PR out of saying they won't sell violent games.'

Fans of violent shooting games say their appeal is more about using one's wits than about gore. 'We make the games that we like to play,' says John Carmack, co-founder of Id Software Inc. and developer of the upcoming Quake III. 'It's not for kids.'

An online survey, just released by market researcher PC Data Inc. in Reston, Va., found that nearly 19% of respondents said the government should impose minimum age restrictions to buy violent games.

Parents struggle with that same issue. Istok Stajner, a 37-year-old Web site master in San Jose, Calif., says it's hard to steer his 13-year-old stepson away from violent games when his friends play them and see them widely advertised in TV cartoons and in magazines. Enforcing game ratings on sales to minors would help, Mr. Stajner says, but he adds, 'Somehow, the kids would still get their hands on the games.'

He adds: 'I can't make the games into forbidden fruit. All I can do is talk now and then, and stress how violence in real life is not a fun thing.'

Journal Link: Join an online discussion about the issue of violence in video games in The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition at <http://wsj.com>

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 990512000115 ProQuest - The Wall Street Journal (R)
Ondisc
Title: TECHNOLOGY: GLOBAL GROUP TO ESTABLISH WEB-SITE
CONTENT RATINGS
Source: The Wall Street Journal
Date: Wednesday May 12, 1999 Sec: B p: 10
Length: Short (162 words) Type: News
Subjects: Content ratings; Web sites
Companies: America Online Inc; IBM Corp; Microsoft Corp

Abstract: A group of large technology companies, including America
Online Inc., International Business Machines Corp. and
Microsoft Corp., are launching an international organization to
rate Web sites for sexual content and violence.

Copyright 1999 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

Article Text:

LONDON -- A group of large technology companies, including America Online Inc., International Business Machines Corp. and Microsoft Corp., are launching an international organization to rate Web sites for sexual content and violence.

The Internet Content Rating Association, to be based in London, plans to develop a rating system in various languages and will account for cultural differences between countries.

The international system will be based on ratings already established by the Recreational Software Advisory Council in the U.S., launched in 1994 by many of the companies involved in the new organization. With the RSAC system, Web sites receive scores in four categories: nudity, sex, language and violence. Participation is voluntary and sites evaluate themselves. Since RSAC's inception, more than 100,000 sites have been rated. RSAC's ratings are imbedded in Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator browsers.

As part of the new effort, the U.S.'s Recreational Software Advisory Council will disband. RSAC's staff and assets will be folded into the new association.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 91585819991012 ProQuest - The New York Times (R) Ondisc
Title: Video Game Industry Makes Push at Self-Policing
Authors: Sharon R. King
Source: New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)
Date: Oct 12, 1999 Sec: C Business/Financial Desk p: 1
Length: Long (1293 words) Type: News
Subjects: Video stores; Computer & video games; Self regulation; Video recordings; Content ratings; Corporate responsibility; Violence

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company.

Article Text:

In an attempt to stave off threatened state and Federal regulation of movies and video games, the nation's video rental stores and video game makers, with the cooperation of the motion picture industry, have joined forces in a push toward self-policing.

Their effort, which comes in the wake of high-profile teen-age shootings in Colorado and Georgia last spring, includes a move to beef up restrictions on the sale and rental of some products to minors.

'We want to make it clear this level of parental control is the right vehicle, and home video stores are well equipped to handle this,' said Bo Andersen, president of the Video Software Dealers Association, which represents more than 19,000 video rental stores, about two-thirds of the nation's total.

This week, members of the association -- independent video rental stores as well as chains like Blockbuster and Hollywood Video -- are beginning to display brightly colored posters highlighting their updated Pledge to Parents campaign. Some posters explain the voluntary movie ratings system that has been administered by the Motion Picture Association of America for the last 30 years. Others highlight video game ratings, created in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

Signs point out that without parental consent, the store will not rent or sell to children under 17 videotapes or video games designated as restricted. In addition, when adults apply for membership at a video store, or at any point thereafter, they can elect to prohibit the sale or rental of certain types of video games and movies to their children. For some stores, including the Blockbuster chain, such moves supplement optional restrictions already in place.

In about a month, video game makers will begin their own push, which will include ads in national parent and family-oriented magazines as well as posters and pamphlets for retailers, said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, a trade group. The group also is asking retailers to restrict to people over 17 sales of video games rated 'mature,' or 'adults only' by the Entertainment Software Rating Board, Mr. Lowenstein said.

'We believe we have a great rating system,' Mr. Lowenstein said. 'This is about making it as well known as it possibly can be.'

Bowing to concerns raised by the Clinton Administration about how violent games are marketed to children, the video game makers and their ratings board have established guidelines to limit gratuitous violence, sexual content and profanity in advertising video games. The guidelines are to take effect at the end of January.

The moves by these groups follow an announcement in June by the National Association of Theater Owners that theaters would check identification and prohibit minors from viewing adult-rated movies.

Video dealers and game makers are planning to have most of the revised educational material for their campaign in place before the Christmas holiday selling season.

While the video game rating system has been in existence since 1994, and most games now sold include a rating logo, most parents know little about the system and few stores enforce any limits on sales or rentals.

According to the National Institute on Media and the Family's 1998 Video and Computer Game Report Card, only 40 percent of parents surveyed said they routinely checked the ratings of the games their children buy or rent. Only 5 percent of parents could identify a popular mature-rated game, 'Duke Nukem,' while 80 percent of junior high school students were familiar with the title.

In addition, only 21 percent of the retailers it surveyed enforced ratings policies on the sale of games. Less than half the retail and rental employees understood the rating system and few stores educated employees about it, the report said.

'Although there is a rating system, there's not a lot of knowledge about it,' said David Walsh, president and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family, a nonprofit group based in Minneapolis.

Moreover, he said, 'Most adults over the age of 30 have no idea what's in these games because they can't play them.'

Anxiety about game violence and about how inappropriate games are marketed to children comes as the video game industry is enjoying its greatest popularity ever.

From their start as two-dimensional blips on a screen in the early 1970's to today's near-movie-quality narratives, video games have grown into a more than \$6 billion industry. They have spawned movies, toys, clothing lines and even a postage stamp. The Navy has even incorporated a flight simulator game developed by Microsoft into its pilot training program.

Through Oct. 3, video stores rented about 213 million video games this year, compared with about 2.3 billion videotapes, according to the Video Software Dealers Association. Last year, stores took in \$804 million on game rentals, a 50 percent increase over 1997, and \$8.1 billion on videotape rentals, a 9.6 percent rise.

In the wake of the school shootings this year, several states, including New York and Pennsylvania, have proposed legislation to ban the sale, rental or public viewing of violent games to minors, or to establish state-governed rating systems. And an amendment pending in Congress would mandate a universal ratings system and prohibit the rental or sale of any unrated product. But the issue has been around a while, and other states, including Arkansas, Florida and Minnesota, had already proposed similar legislation. None of the bills have become law, according to the Video Software Dealers Association and others watching the issue.

'Education and voluntary compliance with retailers is probably going to get us further,' Mr. Walsh said. 'As soon as we start passing laws, there are going to be challenges.'

Earlier industry efforts to head off government regulation included the original Pledge to Parents campaign, introduced in 1991 and intended largely to limit children's access to sexual content.

Since it was established in 1994, the Entertainment Software Rating Board has rated more than 5,000 computer and video games. More than 70 percent of the products have been rated 'E,' or suitable for anyone over 6; 7 percent have been rated 'M' or mature, and less than 1 percent have been rated 'AO' for adults only, Mr. Lowenstein said.

The industry may have a tough time persuading retailers to take bold moves to restrict access to some of the products they sell.

Earlier this year, for example, F.A.O. Schwarz, the toy emporium, reversed a plan to remove all toy guns from its shelves, saying the toys' bright colors kept them from being mistaken for real weapons, a company spokesman said. But a handful of F.A.O. Schwarz stores, including the flagship Fifth Avenue location in Manhattan, did remove about a dozen video games from shelves because of their violent content.

A Kmart spokesman said the chain had no official restrictions, though it has refused to sell some games it has deemed inappropriate.

And an official for K-B Toys, the retailer based in Pittsfield, Mass., said the company did not have any plans to restrict the sale of adult-rated video games. Employees explain the ratings system to parents and other customers, but there are no pamphlets or educational posters in stores now, he said. 'We make parents aware of the ratings,' he said, 'but we don't make a judgment.'

Caption:

'Rating Games'

Retailers plan to begin using ratings developed by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board to restrict who may rent or buy video games. Here is the ratings system.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Content suitable for persons ages 3 and older.

EVERYONE

Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older.

TEEN

Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older.

MATURE

Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older.

ADULTS ONLY

Content suitable only for adults.

RATING PENDING

Product has been submitted for the Ratings Board and is awaiting final rating. (pg.

C23)

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 57456219990920 ProQuest - The New York Times (R) Ondisc
Title: Plan Calls for Self-Policing of the Internet
Authors: Pamela Mendels
Source: New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)
Date: Sep 20, 1999 Sec: C Business/Financial Desk p: 5
Length: Long (1016 words) Type: News
Subjects: Internet; Self regulation; Freedom of speech; Content ratings;
Filtering software; Computers & the Internet; Freedom of
Speech & Expression; Children & Youth; Sex; Violence;
Ratings & Rating Systems; Censorship; Regulation &
Deregulation of Industry
Names: Balkin, Jack M; Balkin, Jack M (Prof)
Companies: Bertelsmann Foundation
Abstract: Bertelsmann Foundation urges creation of an international
rating and filtering system for the Internet as part of series of
steps that businesses can take to protect children from harmful
material on line; Jack M Balkin, First Amendment scholar at
Yale Law School, is architect of rating and filtering system; civil
libertarians are cool to idea, fearing it could backfire and chill
free speech on line; photos (M)

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company.

Article Text:

Parents who want to shield their children from pornographic, violent or other harmful material in the mass media are used to relying on industry ratings for guidance about movies and video games. But when it comes to the Internet, they are on their own -- or left to rely on commercial blocking programs that function as censors rather than guides.

Now, an ambitious proposal drawn up by a German policy research group and based largely on the ideas of an American First Amendment scholar urges the creation of an international rating and filtering system for the Internet.

The idea is included in a set of recommendations for how the Internet industry can police itself to stave off regulation by governments.

'The best thing the industry can do is adopt a system that allows parents, who choose to, to decide to filter things for their children,' said Jack M. Balkin, an architect of the plan and a professor of constitutional law and the First Amendment at Yale Law School.

But so far, the proposal has received a cool reception from civil libertarians and some major World Wide Web publishers, who argue that the plan could backfire and

chill free speech on line.

'This is being put forward as an effort to prevent regulation of content, but there is a very good possibility it could end up inviting official censorship,' said David L. Sobel, general counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a Washington-based civil liberties group.

The proposal, nine months in the making, was written by the Bertelsmann Foundation, a nonprofit group associated with the German media conglomerate, Bertelsmann A.G. It was introduced on Sept. 10 at a meeting in Munich sponsored by the foundation and attended by about 300 government officials, scholars, Internet industry representatives and civil libertarians from around the world.

It is part of a lengthy Memorandum on Self-Regulation of the Internet that suggests a number of steps businesses can take to protect children from harmful material on line, including the development of industry codes of conduct to be enforced by self-regulatory agencies.

But the part of the proposal that has drawn the most fire from free-speech advocates is the suggestion that the industry develop a global voluntary rating system that parents can use with filtering software to block content.

The Bertelsmann memorandum likens its proposal to a three-layered cake. On the first layer, Web publishers around the world would voluntarily describe their sites using a standard set of terms drawn up by an independent, nonprofit organization. At the second layer, organizations representing a range of backgrounds and viewpoints would devise rating systems to evaluate the terms according to their values, spawning a variety of filters reflecting different ideologies.

The third layer refines the scheme by allowing, among other things, the creation of 'white lists' of approved sites that may have been unreasonably filtered out -- for example, news sites that might otherwise be blocked because news can be of a violent nature. Parents can choose block children's access to unrated sites.

Jens Waltermann, deputy head of the media division of the Bertelsmann Foundation, argues that the proposed system, with its heavy emphasis on parental choice, could discourage governments from intervening in content regulation.

But others see dangers in the plan.

Mr. Sobel, like the American Civil Liberties Union and other free-speech advocates, fears that the system could invite government regulation. For one thing, governments might require sites to rate themselves, perhaps even imposing sanctions on those that misrate their content, he said. And, he added, less democratic governments might use the system to filter what citizens see.

Others express the fear that self-rating would invite self-censorship. 'If you know you are rating for a particular level of violence or other content, you may try to jigger a story so a wider audience could watch it,' said Arthur B. Sackler, vice president for law and public policy at Time Warner.

Christopher Barr, editor at large at the on-line publisher Cnet and co-chairman of the Internet Content Coalition, a group of Web publishers that includes The New York Times, said that while the white lists are supposed to act as a brake on unreasonably filtered sites, he was nervous about the idea of someone defining news.

'What's a bona fide news site?' Mr. Barr asked. 'The New York Times? Nudist news? Matt Drudge? Who's to say?'

Supporters of the plan say such fears are either unfounded or addressable.

Professor Balkin says the self-censorship argument is overstated, in part because it

is reasonable to expect producers of children's sites to create age-appropriate material, and the proposed system would not bind adults. As for defining what constitutes news, he says, a variety of news white lists could describe a range of sorts of news.

Mr. Balkin also argues that even totalitarian governments may be unable to use the system to censor content, because ratings would not describe political viewpoints and technology could be developed to route around censorship.

Perhaps most important, says Mr. Waltermann of the Bertelsmann organization, is the threat of government regulation. 'If governments feel that there are no ways for parents to make choices in their own homes,' he said, 'they could do all kinds of horrible things to make sure people don't have access.'

George Vradenburg, senior vice president for global and strategic policy at America Online, says the Bertelsmann proposal lends an 'an intelligent and thoughtful voice' to the discussion of ratings and controls. He added, however, that he had misgivings about a global rating system, fearing, like the civil liberties groups, that it could invite government mandates.

The most appropriate place for Internet ratings, he says, may be in those categories of content where parents are accustomed to seeing them in the off-line world -- in movies, games and television shows that migrate to the Web.

Caption:

Christopher Barr, left, Cnet's editor at large, says he is nervous about people being able to block Web sites. He is with Hari Sreenivasan, a senior correspondent. (Peter DaSilva for The New York Times); Jens Waltermann of the Bertelsmann Foundation favors a proposed rating system.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 32952519990625 ProQuest - The New York Times (R) Ondisc
Title: Game Blocker To Be Installed On Windows
Authors: Sharon R. King
Source: New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)
Date: Jun 25, 1999 Sec: C Business/Financial Desk p: 1
Length: Long (1003 words) Type: News
Subjects: Computer & video games; Windows operating system; Content ratings; Product introduction; Violence; Computer & Video Games; Computer Software; Computers & the Internet; Children & Youth; Ratings & Rating Systems

Names: Bachus, Kevin
Companies: Microsoft Corp

Abstract: Microsoft Corp plans to introduce feature in its Windows operating system allowing users to determine what kinds of games can be played on computer; such a feature could enable parents to keep a game with violence, offensive language or nudity from being played, based on game's content rating; Microsoft multimedia group product manager Kevin Bachus says option, to be included in next release of Windows, will be similar to feature on Microsoft's Web browser that can be used to block access to some sites; Microsoft's offering could represent most widespread program available for parents to use to limit their children's exposure to games they consider unsuitable; new release of Windows will be available sometime next year; it is to be installed on all new personal computers that run Windows operating system and will be available for purchase as upgrade for most of nation's more than 60 million home computers (M)

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company.

Article Text:

The Microsoft Corporation plans to introduce a feature in its Windows operating system allowing users to determine what kinds of games can be played on the computer. Such a feature could enable parents to keep a game with gruesome violence, offensive language or nudity from being played, based on the game's content rating.

The option, to be included in the next release of Windows, will be similar to a feature on Microsoft's Web browser that can be used to block access to some sites, said Kevin Bachus, a multimedia group product manager at Microsoft.

With the computer and video game industry under siege because of concerns about marketing violent content to children, Microsoft's offering could represent the most widespread program available for parents to use to limit their children's exposure to games they consider unsuitable.

Microsoft said that the new release of Windows would be available sometime next year. It is to be installed on all new personal computers that run the Windows operating system and will be available for purchase as an upgrade for most of the nation's more than 60 million home computers.

Microsoft is in discussions with the Entertainment Software Rating Board and the Recreational Software Advisory Council, the primary groups that rate games, to incorporate their ratings into a data base on which the feature would rely, Mr. Bachus said.

Ratings from other organizations, such as religious or educational groups, could be added as well, and parents would be able to assign their own ratings.

Microsoft is also trying to encourage game makers to embed code information on ratings in new games. Ratings now appear on game packaging and covers of software; they are not coded into the games themselves.

The participation of the rating groups and game makers could be the key to the success of the feature. So far, no game makers have agreed to embed ratings in their new games, but executives at several companies, including GT Interactive Software, Mindscape Entertainment, Acclaim Entertainment and Interplay Entertainment, said their companies would consider doing so.

In 1998, computer games represented approximately 40 percent of the game software market, according to PC Data, a Reston, Va., research firm. Games using the Windows operating system accounted for about 90 percent of the computer-game total.

But console-based games, such as those played on Sony, Sega and Nintendo systems, make up the bulk of the game software market, which is estimated at \$4 billion.

Mr. Bachus said Microsoft had been working on the feature, expected to be called Windows Game Manager, for more than a year. To activate it, users would follow a series of prompts that let them designate which content is appropriate.

Access to games based on ratings or titles could be limited based on user names, or a password, for example.

The application could also be used to prohibit the running of unrated games, thus providing some control over the use of games that users have not entered into the system, Mr. Bachus said.

One former game developer expressed skepticism about whether Microsoft would be able to maintain the security of the application.

'The day after it's available, there's going to be a ton of hackers trying to get around it,' said Howard Schwartz, chief executive of Heynetwork.com, a family entertainment Internet site based in Stamford, Conn.

'I don't think it's a matter of possible,' he said. 'If people can put macro-viruses into Microsoft Word, I think there will be a crack in this. No matter what Microsoft tries to do, it's going to be easy to crack.'

About three years ago, the National Institute on Media and the Family developed its own video and computer game rating system. The ratings are only available on the organization's World Wide Web site, but the group would welcome a chance for

broadier distribution, David Walsh, the institute's founder, said.

'The feedback we get is very positive,' Mr. Walsh said. 'We would be very interested in partnering with anyone to make the ratings more widely available.'

The group's rating system, called Kidscore, is based on how much violence is contained in a game and how it is portrayed, the amount of sex and nudity, as well as identifying any content that might scare children. Thus far, the organization has rated more than 150 games.

Microsoft's efforts do not represent the first attempts to limit access to violent games.

In 1995, Bethesda Softworks created a parental control system called Childgard for its games, like Dagger Fall, a medieval role-playing game. The feature lets parents control the level of violence on a scale ranging from realistic to nonrealistic, containing blood or bloodless.

And in 1997 Acclaim included a control feature in its first version of Turok, a first-person shooting game in which a Native American hunts dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures. For both the console and computer versions, players can elect to eliminate the use of blood.

The company, which primarily makes console games, may consider encoding games with ratings, a spokeswoman said.

In response to recent concerns about violent games, Interplay, an Irvine, Calif., game manufacturer, postponed the release of a new game, Kingpin, Life of Crime. Packaging for the game, which combines elements of gang and Mafia warfare, now includes warning information in larger detail about the game's mature rating, its violence and language content, said Kirk Green, an Interplay spokesman.

In addition, players can set controls to play a less or more violent version of the game. At the low-violence level, there is no blood, no dismemberment and foul language is not heard.

'We tried to go out of our way to make sure people are informed and aware of what the game is about,' Mr. Green said. The feature may be included in future games designated for players older than 17, he said.

Though unfamiliar with Microsoft plans, Mr. Green said, Interplay would also consider embedding ratings information in its games. 'We'd have to look at exactly what it would entail, but the idea is a good one,' he said.

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 24830419990620 ProQuest - The New York Times (R) Ondisc
Title: Video Battlers Stick by Their Games
Source: New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)
Date: Jun 20, 1999 Sec: 1 National Desk p: 26
Length: Medium (958 words) Type: News
Subjects: Computer & video games; Violence; Entertainment industry;
Content ratings; Federal regulation

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company.

Article Text:

INGLEWOOD, Calif., June 19 -- Soon after turning on his computer, Alfredo Lambour, 15, shot and killed the same zombie six times, saw countless gallons of blood splatter and ran among the decapitated heads and other body parts that littered a fortress floor in the video game Quake II.

Alfredo spends nearly two hours a day in his living room, here in this Los Angeles suburb, looking down the barrel of a gun as he roams dimly lit corridors in search of monsters. On a recent day, he played the role of a marine, outfitted with body armor, fatigues and a weapon called a blaster that he fired at anything that moved, using his computer keyboard.

'It can just split people in half,' he said of the blaster.

Video games have come under increased scrutiny after the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., that left 15 people dead. The students who carried out the attack, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, have been described as players of Doom, a violent video game released in 1993 that is not considered to be realistic compared with newer games but still includes ample amounts of blood and numerous explosions.

No one knows whether the gory scenes in the game influenced the minds of the Columbine shooters. But the issue of the violent influence of video games has been seized upon by many politicians and others who believe that such entertainment is inappropriate for minors and needs to be toned down.

President Clinton singled out video game advertising as particularly excessive when he announced the beginning of two Federal investigations on June 1 into whether the entertainment industry is marketing violence to children. A proposal by Representative Henry J. Hyde, Republican of Illinois, to prohibit the sale to children under 17 of all violent entertainment, including video games, failed in a House vote on Wednesday.

While video game enthusiasts often concede that some of the games sold in stores have violent content, they are adamant that the games do not encourage players to imitate what they see on screen. To them, fighting animated enemies is merely thrilling competition and no more harmful than football, professional wrestling or a cartoon in which Wile E. Coyote battles the Road Runner with anvils and dynamite.

'There wouldn't be a lot of people foaming at the mouth over video games if Littleton didn't happen,' said Jon Dempster, a video game enthusiast from Grand Rapids, Mich.,

who sometimes plays games like Quake II with his twin 11-year-old boys. 'As long as children can separate fantasy from reality, they leave any aggressive thoughts behind once they turn off the computer. It has no effect.'

For the past five years, video game boxes have been printed with ratings as part of a voluntary program of software publishers. However, even games that are rated as 'mature,' like Postal, which says on the box that it is so realistic that 'your victims actually beg for mercy and scream for their lives,' can be legally sold to children of any age.

Yet most video games are actually bought by adults, according to the Interactive Digital Software Association, the video game industry's trade group. If parents are not already aware of the contents, most soon learn, and judging from the widespread use by children, do nothing to intervene.

'These ratings are completely neglected,' said Dave Sparks, owner of Interact, a computer video game store in Pasadena, Calif. 'Maybe one out of a hundred moms pay any attention to them.'

Many video game enthusiasts blame the media and what they see as political opportunism for the blows to their hobby's reputation. The recent rash of school shootings, they said, was more a consequence of action movies, news reports about crime, bad parenting and mental disturbance than of video games.

Randy Matulewicz, 15, from San Jose, Calif., said that reducing the violence in the games he played would not diminish his interest in them because he did not stop to admire the dead bodies. He added that changing the content was not necessary because thousands of people play video games every day without hurting others -- proof, he said, that some other factor must be responsible for violence like that at Columbine.

The Federal Government's attention to the video game industry is met with skepticism by many video game players. Steve Merz, a longtime video game enthusiast from Forest City, N.C., who has two small children, said the content of video games and the age of the people who play them was none of the Government's business.

Mr. Merz said parents should be the ones to decide what children played. Dismissing the violence in video games as inconsequential, he allows his 7-year-old son, Danny, to play games like Quake, but not those with foul language, satanic imagery and nudity because they, he believes, can be harmful.

But some parents support strengthening video game ratings, which are being reviewed by the industry trade group. They also want more manufacturers to install switches in video games that would allow parents to block parts of the action.

David Lepore, a 30-year-old computer analyst in Tacoma, Wash., is among the parents who encourage the industry to adopt some voluntary changes. For now, his two boys, ages 5 and 10, are not even allowed to watch the screen when, for example, he assumes the role of a horrific creature that has invaded a space colony in the game Aliens Versus Predators.

'In some cases these games may lead to violence,' he said. 'I'm not taking any chances.'

Credit: By The New York Times

Caption:

Alfredo Lambour, 15, killed a fellow 'clan member' in the violence-oriented computer video game Quake II at his home in Inglewood, Calif., on Friday. (Gerard Burkhardt for The New York Times)

Copyright (c) 1999 by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

Access No: 42570219981215 ProQuest - The New York Times (R) Ondisc
Title: Children and Violent Video Games: A Warning
Authors: Carey Goldberg
Source: New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)
Date: Dec 15, 1998 Sec: A National Desk p: 16
Length: Long (1301 words) Type: News
Subjects: Computer & video games; Content ratings; Violence; Children
& youth; Computer & Video Games; Internet & World Wide
Web; Children & Youth

Names: Lieberman, Joseph I; Kohl, Herbert; Lieberman, Joseph I (Sen);
Kohl, Herb (Sen)

Companies: National Institute on Media & the Family; National on Media &
the Family

Abstract: US Sens Joseph I Lieberman and Herb Kohl and media-watch
group, National Institute on Media and the Family, issue annual
report card on video games, which calls parents' attention to
need to monitor children's Internet play, and warns of what
seems to be growing tendency by some makers of violent
games to market to youngsters; photos (M)

Copyright 1998 The New York Times Company.

Article Text:

BOSTON, Dec. 13 -- It's almost Christmas. Do you know what your children are playing? Might they perhaps be ripping out the spines of their enemies, perpetrating massacres of marching bands and splatting their screens with sprays and spurts of pixelated blood?

Such hair-raising queries have become as seasonal a ritual as gift-giving. Each year since 1995, as parents have bought more and more computer and video games for their children, a posse of two United States Senators and a media-watch group has issued a report card meant in part to warn of certain games' violent content.

This year, the report card issuers focused on a small group of ultra-violent games they said would be better termed 'kill-for-fun murder simulations' than games. They cited evidence that such thrill-killing was being marketed to children, who can gain access to the games in poorly policed stores or on the Internet, and warned of their 'antisocial' and 'perverse' bent.

They did not list the ultra-violent games, but one of the Senators, Joseph I. Lieberman, a Connecticut Democrat, particularly complained about advertisements for the games Point Blank, Die by the Sword and Cardinal Syn.

For the last four years, 'whack-and-hack' players have responded pretty much like

Sylvainson Gelin, an 11-year-old aficionado of Mortal Kombat and Resident Evil, when caught between plays at an arcade in Somerville, Mass., this week. Politicians who condemn violent games, he said, 'should try it out themselves.'

'If they try it out, they'll see why we like it so much,' Sylvainson said. 'It's fun.'

Game makers, for their part, have often reacted to the report card much like Jamey Harvey, the chief executive officer of Digital Addiction, a game company: 'We tend to ignore all that hype,' he said.

Mr. Harvey compared the political hubbub around video games to the outcry from some Senators in the 1950's 'screaming about how rock-and-roll was going to destroy the country.'

But one difference is that the technology of video games is exploding, and every year brings new questions and issues, even as the game market expands wildly. It is expected to amount to about \$6 billion in retail sales this year, almost rivaling movie box-office receipts, and has been growing at a rate of more than 30 percent annually, according to the Interactive Digital Software Association, the industry's trade group.

Games obtained on line often do not get parental scrutiny, so this year, the watchdogs set their sights on the Internet.

The report card issuers -- who, in addition to Mr. Lieberman, include Senator Herb Kohl, a Wisconsin Democrat, and the National Institute on Media and the Family, based in Minneapolis -- acknowledge that the rating system established for video games in 1994, run by the Entertainment Software Rating Board, is working very well.

Virtually all games sold in stores carry ratings that range from EC for early childhood to M for mature (over 17) and AO for adults only; and parents in doubt about a game can call the ratings board's toll-free number -- (800) 771-3772 -- or go to its Web site, at www.esrb.org.

But increasingly, young players can download demos and sometimes entire games on line, often without a credit card, and the vast majority of those cyberversions are not rated.

The rise in on-line games, said David Walsh, a psychologist and president of the National Institute on Media and the Family, prompted the report card writers to call parents' attention to the need to monitor their children's Internet play.

'The knowledge gap between parents and kids in this whole realm of media is an enormous knowledge gap,' Dr. Walsh said.

The report card cited its own survey of more than 500 parents, which found that fewer than 5 percent of them had ever heard of Duke Nukem, a violent game rated M, while 80 percent of junior high students said they were familiar with it.

Video game supporters say that parents should indeed pay better attention. But the Interactive Digital Software Association says that surveys show that 9 of 10 buyers of games are adults, and that adults are the main players of M-rated games as well. Over all, 7 of 10 players of computer games and 6 of 10 players of video games on special consoles are over 18, the association says.

Ultimately, said Douglas Lowenstein, the association's president, rather than 'spanking the industry' each year, the issuers of the report card would do better to 'use their bully pulpit to deliver a message to parents, saying, do not buy games without looking into these ratings.'

The report card also warned of what seemed to be a growing tendency by some makers of violent games to market to youngsters, from Duke Nukem action figures in toy stores to the rebellious advertisements in video game magazines popular among

young boys.

Indeed, some of the advertisements do get graphic: 'As easy as killing babies with axes,' was one slogan quoted by the report card, along with 'More fun than shooting your neighbor's cat' and 'Happiness is a warm cranium,' accompanied by a picture of a severed head.

If adults out buying games recently at the Best Buy store in Cambridge, Mass., were any indication, some do worry about the games' content, and stick to sports or scholastic games for their children.

'Most of the games that you see, like this right here, this is outrageous,' said Harvey Lemay of Malden, Mass., gesturing toward a shelf of violent games. 'This is teaching kids to go out and fight in school, and get a bad attitude.'

But others are not worried.

John Sedleski, 44, a computer technician, said he let his 13-year-old son, James, start playing video games as soon as he could handle a control pad, and introduced him to Mortal Kombat when he was 7.

'I ignored what it said on it -- PC 13 or whatever it said on it,' he said. 'I laid the rules down to him a long time before that: that this is pretend -- it's not real life. He buys that.'

'My son doesn't get himself into trouble at school,' Mr. Sedleski said. 'He doesn't get in any trouble with the law; and he's a real nice, polite kid, no matter who talks to him. It all depends on how you bring your children up. It has nothing to do with how violent the game is.'

That point is the subject of jousting as lively as in any fantasy fight, because, as both sides acknowledge, no research has shown conclusively that playing violent on-screen games produces violent real-life kids.

The National Institute on Media and the Family and others argue that extrapolating from studies of violent television, and positing that interactive play provides an even more intense experience, points to a real danger. The Interactive Digital Software Association and others counter that children distinguish clearly between reality and fantasy, and that studies have shown that it is real-life clashes and problems at home that induce youth violence.

A sampling of preteens interviewed at the arcade in Somerville showed that most fell into the latter camp. Jean Syllien, 11, of Cambridge, said: 'It's just watching TV and playing. It's not real life.'

And 8-year-old Richard McCoy of Malden, Mass., accompanied by his encouraging mother as he shot miscreants with a blue plastic handgun, allowed as how he thought the games might actually be good for him.

'I want to be a cop,' he said. 'I like to play gun games -- especially when I shoot all the bad guys. I think it's good practice.'

Caption:

Gary Fang, 16, of Somerville, Mass., played a combat video game yesterday at Good Times Video Arcade in his hometown. Below, a video game at the arcade made clear its rating: T, suitable for 13 and older. (Photographs by Kirsten Elstner for The New York Times)

A Kaiser
Family
Foundation
Report

November 1999

kids & media

the new millennium

THE HENRY J.
KAISER
FAMILY
FOUNDATION

A Comprehensive
National Analysis
of Children's
Media Use

THE HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Kaiser Family Foundation, based in Menlo Park, California, is an independent national health care philanthropy and not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries. This study was conducted as part of the Foundation's Program on the Entertainment Media and Public Health, which was established to examine the impact of entertainment media in society, and to work with entertainment industry leaders to help them convey important health messages to the public.

The study was designed by Kaiser Family Foundation staff in consultation with Stanford University Professor Donald F. Roberts and Harris Interactive, Inc. (formerly Louis Harris & Associates), including Humphrey Taylor, Katherine Binns, Dana Markow and Michele Salomon. Harris Interactive collected all data. The results were analyzed and this report was prepared by Foundation staff and Professor Roberts. Special thanks to Cathryn Borum, Kaiser Family Foundation, who provided vital assistance in the preparation of this report.

A Kaiser
Family
Foundation
Report

November 1999

kids & media @ the new millennium

Victoria J. Rideout,
Henry J. Kaiser
Family Foundation

Ulla G. Foehr,
Henry J. Kaiser
Family Foundation

Donald F. Roberts, Ph.D.,
Stanford University

Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D.,
Henry J. Kaiser
Family Foundation



A Comprehensive
National Analysis
of Children's
Media Use

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4

INTRODUCTION

6

KEY FINDINGS

6

American children spend the equivalent of a full-time work week using media.

10

Kids today grow up literally surrounded by media.

14

Even the very youngest children are widely exposed to media.

17

Many parents do not appear to exercise much oversight of their children's media use.

20

Young people's media use hits its zenith just as children are making the transition to their teenage years.

22

Despite widespread access, children spend a relatively small amount of time each day using computers.

26

Traditional media — especially TV — continue to dominate children's media use time.

29

Most kids still read for fun.

31

Kids use new media to supplement rather than replace other forms of media.

33

In a possible indication of things to come, most kids say they prefer computers to TV, if they're forced to choose.

36

Children who spend the most time with media are the least contented.

38

Children who live in or go to school in lower income communities spend more time with most types of media than kids in wealthier neighborhoods, but are significantly less likely to use computers.

41

Black and Hispanic children spend significantly more time using media — especially television — than White children.

43

Black and Hispanic children have significantly less access to computers than White children, but find a way to spend about as much time on computers as White kids anyway.

47

Boys and girls spend roughly the same amount of time each day using media, but girls listen to more music and boys watch more TV and play more video games.

50

Boys spend a little more time than girls do with computers, mostly playing games.

52

Whether kids live in rural or urban areas makes very little difference in how much or what kinds of media they use.

54

Kids in single-parent homes watch more TV than those in two-parent homes.

55

FOOTNOTES

56

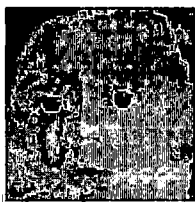
METHODOLOGY

Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Introduction

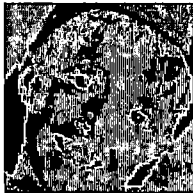
CONCERN OVER THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CHILDREN'S LIVES has never been higher: hardly a week goes by without a public debate about violent video games, educational TV, depressed computer-users, gender stereotypes in rap music, the technology gap between rich and poor, or the online dangers lurking just behind the computer screen. And never has there been such a push to use media proactively to reach young people with information or positive messages.



THEN & NOW:

Percent of homes with more than one TV set in 1970: 35%¹

Percent of homes with more than one TV set in 1999: 88%



At the same time, the “media environment” for kids of all ages has changed radically in recent years. While one generation of Americans experienced a childhood in which they shared a single black and white, three-channel TV with their parents, the next is growing up with a Walkman glued to their ears, 100 channels in the bedroom, and a World Wide Web of information at their fingertips. One generation may have flinched at gunshots in a western; the next generation plays video games with violence so vivid it leaves them ducking to avoid being splattered.

Despite the widespread debate over kids and media, and despite the dramatic changes in children's media environments, no publicly available study has yet exam-

ined the full pattern of media use among American youth. The majority of studies tend to focus on just a few media (e.g., television, or music, or computers) or to use small, non-representative samples of respondents (e.g., adolescent girls, or preschoolers, or 12th graders in the Northeast). This study examines media use patterns among a large, nationally representative sample of children ages 2–18, and it explores how children choose and interact with the whole array of media available to them, including television, movies, computers, music, video games, radio, magazines, books and newspapers. The goal of the study is to provide a more solid base from which to examine media's effects on children and develop strategies for proactively using media to communicate with America's youth.

Kids AND Media

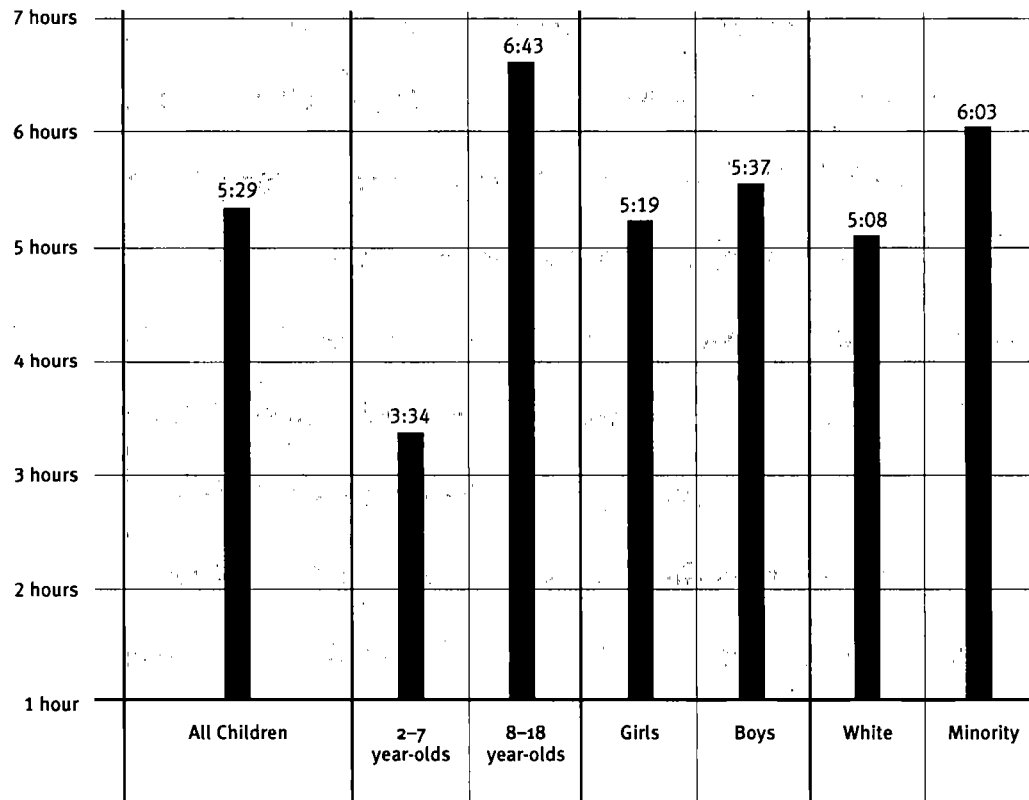
AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

AMERICAN CHILDREN SPEND THE EQUIVALENT OF A FULL-TIME WORK WEEK USING MEDIA.

THE AVERAGE CHILD SPENDS ABOUT FIVE AND A HALF HOURS a day using media (5:29) — more than 38 hours a week. This figure includes electronic media (TV, videos, movies, music, computers and video games), as well as books, magazines and newspapers. It does not include any media used in school or for homework.

Media Use

On a typical day, the total amount of time spent using media by...



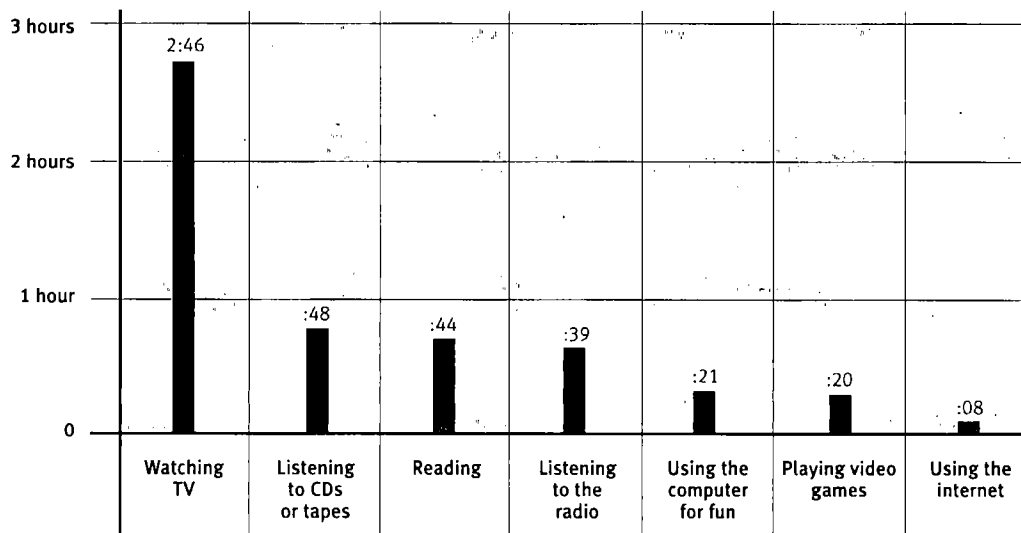
Times are presented in hours : minutes

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

OLDER KIDS — THOSE 8 YEARS OLD OR OLDER — SPEND AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT SIX AND THREE-QUARTER HOURS A DAY (6:43) USING MEDIA. ONLY 5% OF KIDS SPEND AN HOUR A DAY OR LESS WITH MEDIA.

Media Use

In a typical day, the average amount of time children spend...



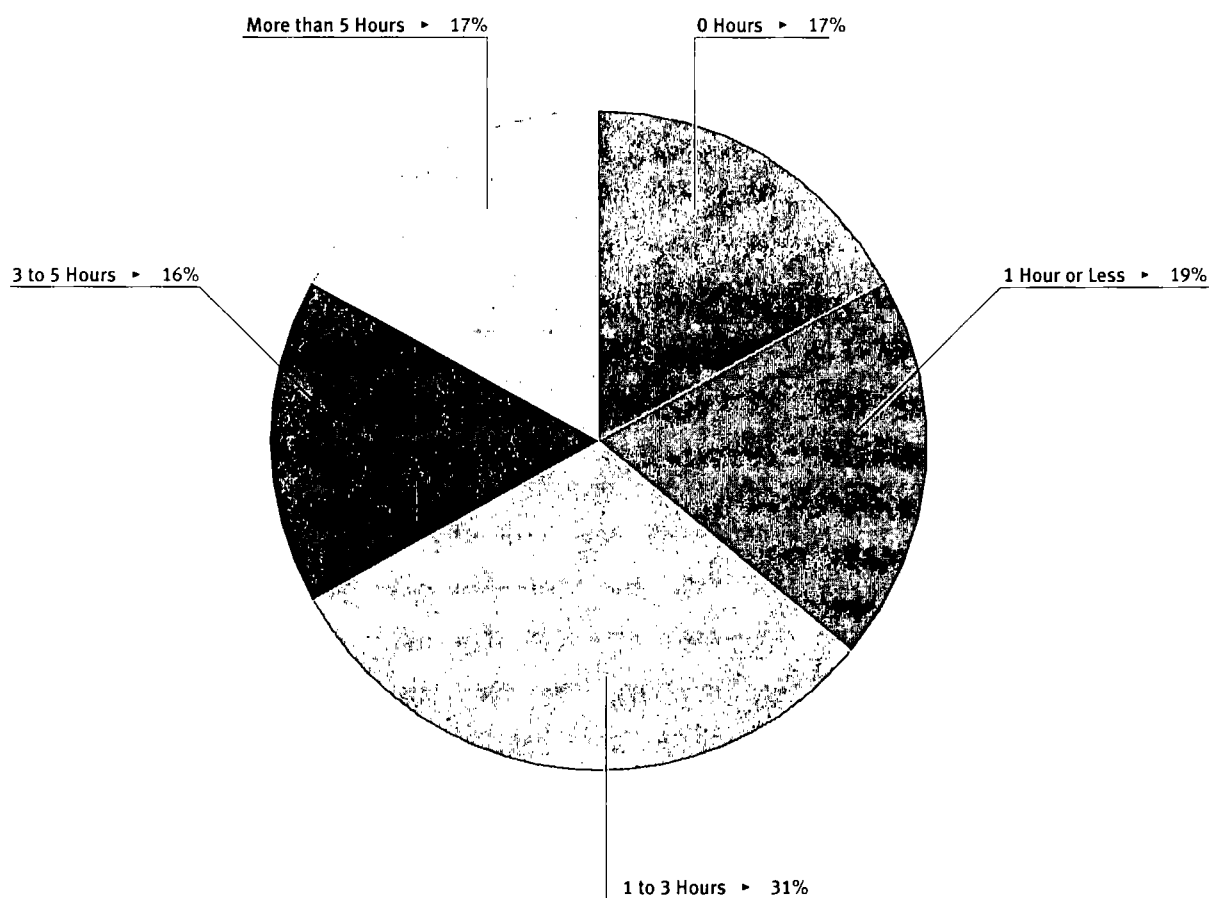
Times are presented in hours : minutes. Numbers cannot be summed to calculate children's total media use time because they may have used more than one medium at a time.

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

MOST CHILDREN SPEND AT LEAST PART OF THEIR DAY USING MORE THAN ONE MEDIA AT A TIME, FOR EXAMPLE, READING A MAGAZINE WHILE WATCHING TV OR LISTENING TO THE RADIO. The chart above shows the average amount of time spent with each medium, but can't be summed due to this multiple media use.

Daily TV Viewing

On a typical day, the percent of children who watch TV for...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

**MORE THAN ONE OUT OF EVERY SIX KIDS IN THIS COUNTRY (17%)
WATCHES MORE THAN FIVE HOURS OF TV A DAY.**

Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

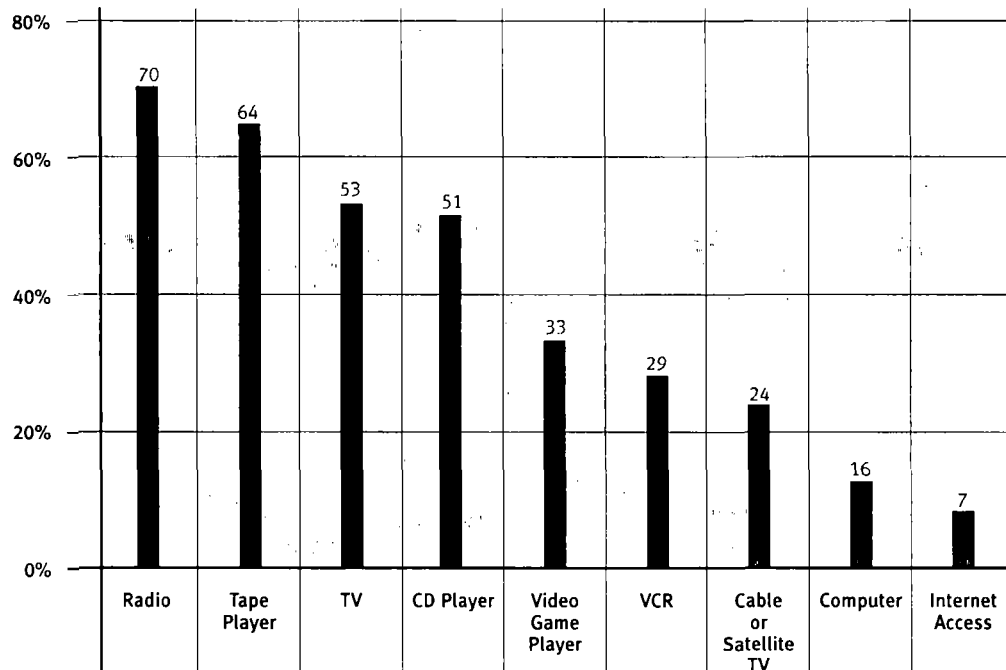
KIDS TODAY GROW UP LITERALLY SURROUNDED BY MEDIA.

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN CHILD GROWS UP IN A HOME WITH:
three TVs, three tape players, three radios, two VCRs, two CD players,
one video game player, and one computer.

Many young people live in homes in which the TV is a constant companion, left on for much of the day, with no guidelines limiting its use. The TV is on "most of the time" in 42% of children's homes, and is usually on during meals in 58% of children's homes. Among kids 8 and older, two-thirds (65%) say the TV is usually on during meals in their home.

Media in the Bedroom

Percent of children who have the following media in their bedroom...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

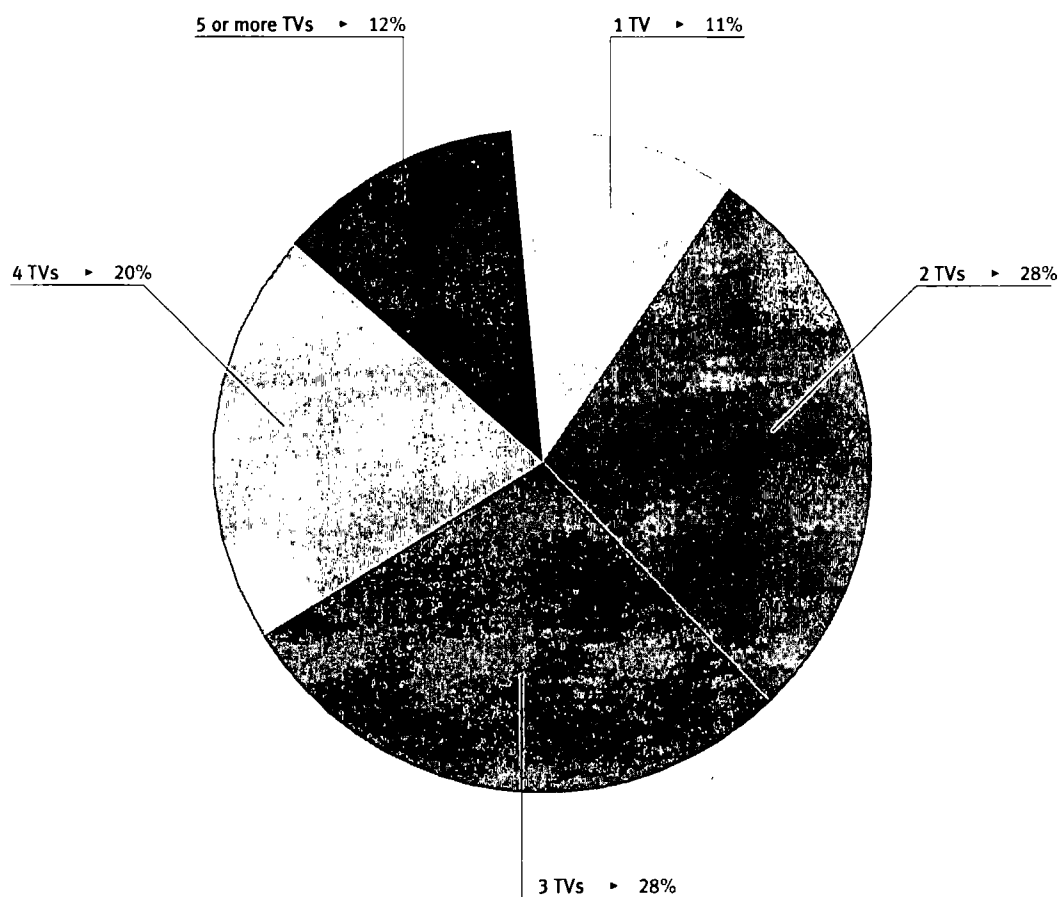
CHILDREN'S BEDROOMS ARE RAPIDLY BECOMING 'MEDIA CENTRAL,' OFFERING MOST KIDS THE CHANCE TO CONSUME MANY KINDS OF MEDIA IN THE PRIVACY OF THEIR OWN ROOMS. More than half of all children have a radio (70%), tape player (64%), TV (53%), or CD player (51%) in their bedroom; a third (33%) have a video game player in their bedroom, and almost a third (29%) have a VCR there. More than one in seven (16%) has a computer in their bedroom.

Among older kids, the proportion with TVs or computers in their rooms is even higher. Two-thirds of children 8 and older (65%) have a TV in their bedroom and about one out of five (21%) has a computer there.



TVs in the Home

Percent of children who live in homes with...



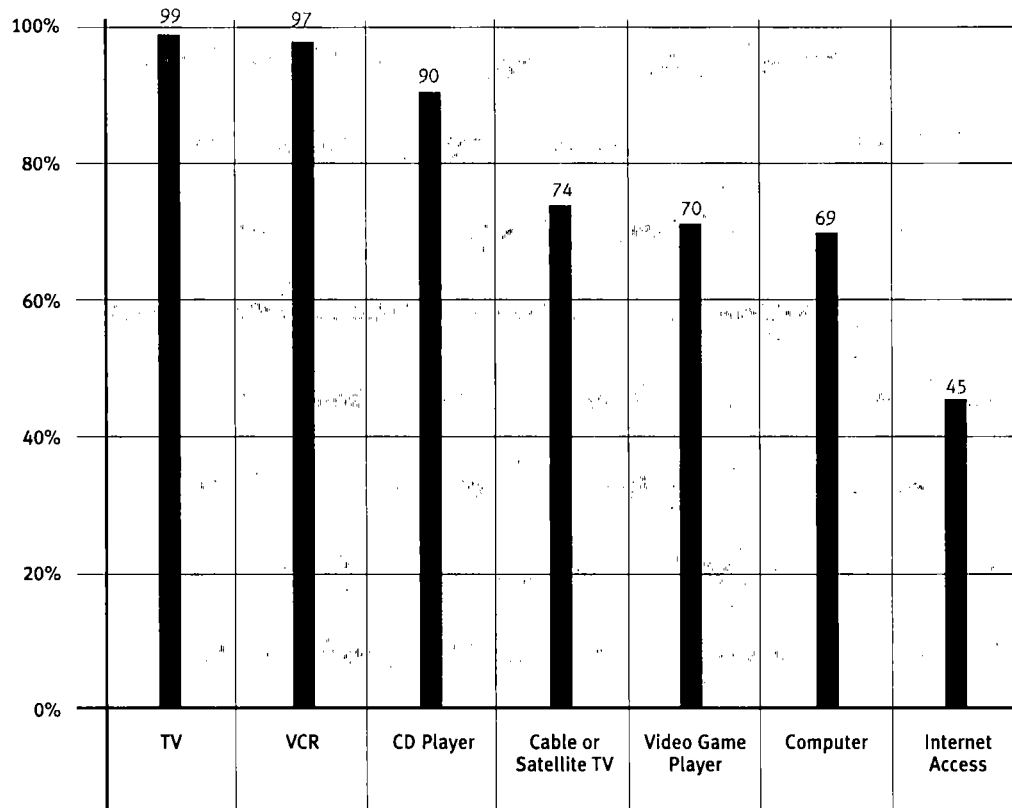
"No answer" responses not shown.

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

NEARLY A THIRD (32%) OF KIDS LIVE IN HOMES WITH FOUR OR MORE TVS. About as many children live in homes with five or more TVs (12%) as live in homes with only one TV (11%).

Media in the Home

Percent of children who live in homes with...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

THE COMPUTER HAS RAPIDLY BECOME A STANDARD FEATURE IN MOST CHILDREN'S HOMES. Nearly seven out of every ten (69%) children have a computer in the home, and nearly half (45%) have Internet access.





Kids AND Media

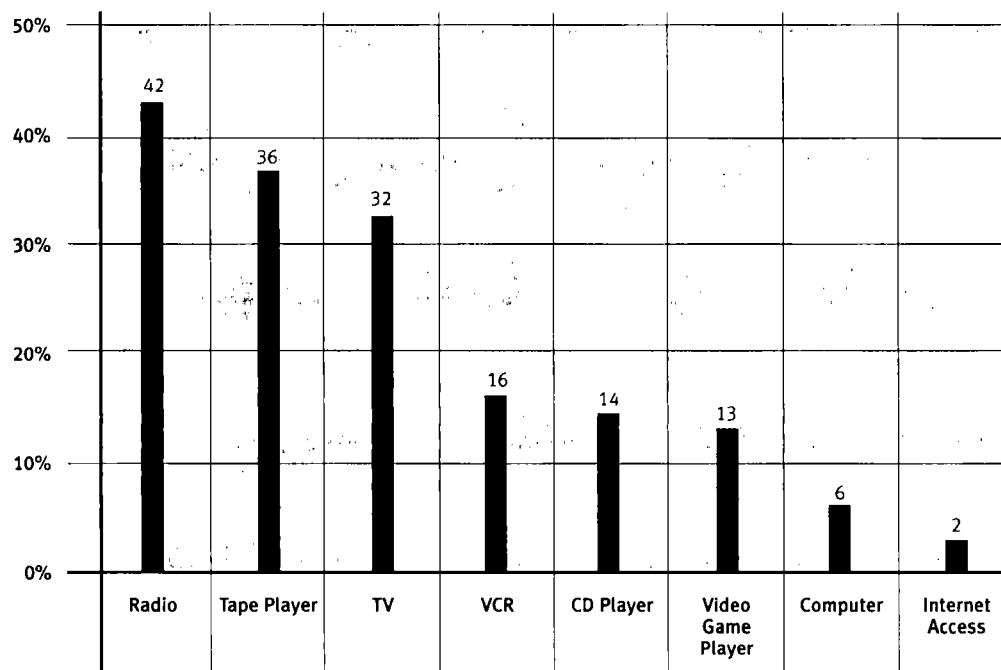
AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

**EVEN THE VERY YOUNGEST CHILDREN
ARE WIDELY EXPOSED TO MEDIA.**

ACCORDING TO PARENTS, 2-7 YEAR-OLDS SPEND AN AVERAGE
of three and a half hours (3:34) a day using media. Only 8% spend an
hour or less a day with media.

Media in the Bedroom

Percent of 2–7 year-olds who have the following media in their bedroom...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

MANY PRESCHOOLERS HAVE THEIR OWN TV OR VCR IN THEIR BEDROOM.

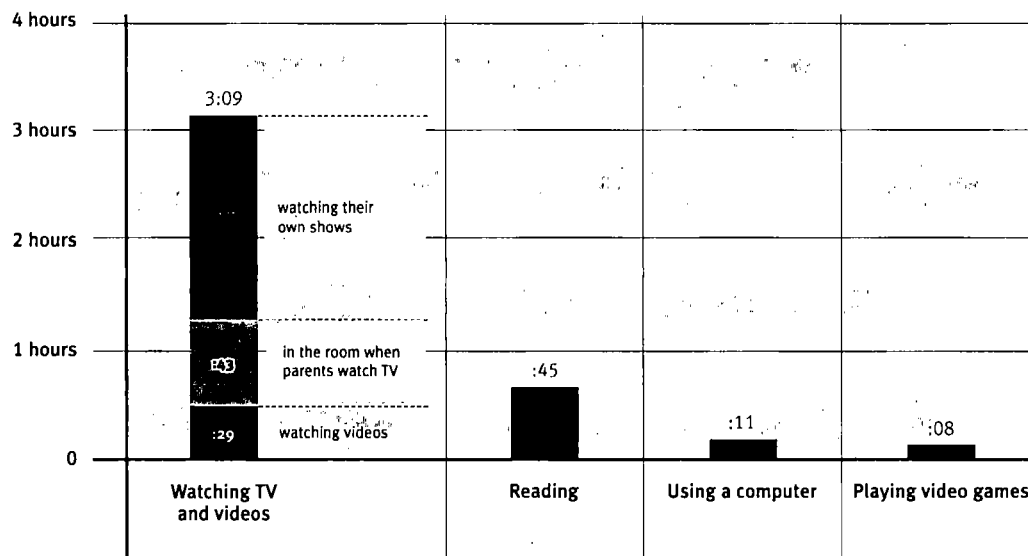
A third (32%) of 2–7 year-olds have a TV in their bedroom.⁷ A fair number of this 7-and-under crowd have additional media in their rooms: more than one in ten has a VCR (16%) or a video game player (13%) in their bedroom.

The majority of 2–7 year-olds have a computer in their home. More than six out of ten (62%) kids under 8 have a computer at home, and 40% have Internet access.

On an average day, 16% of 2–7 year-olds play video games and 26% use computers. Kids in this age group who play video games spend a fair amount of time at the controls—an average of 50 minutes a day. Those who use computers spend about 40 minutes a day at the keyboard.

Media Use

On a typical day, the amount of time **2-7 year-olds** spend...



Times are presented in hours : minutes. Numbers cannot be summed to calculate children's total media use time because they may have used more than one medium at a time. Reading includes amount of time children are read to.

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

PARENTS REPORT THAT THEIR KIDS IN THIS AGE GROUP SPEND AN AVERAGE OF MORE THAN THREE HOURS (3:09) IN FRONT OF THE TV EACH DAY, including about two hours (1:59) watching their own shows, three-quarters of an hour (:43) in the same room with a parent while he or she is watching TV, and half an hour (:29) watching videos, either of movies or of previously taped TV shows.³

More than a third of parents (35%) of 2-7 year-olds report that the TV is on "most of the time" in their home; and almost half (47%) say the TV is usually on during meals.





Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

BY THE PEARSON GROUP

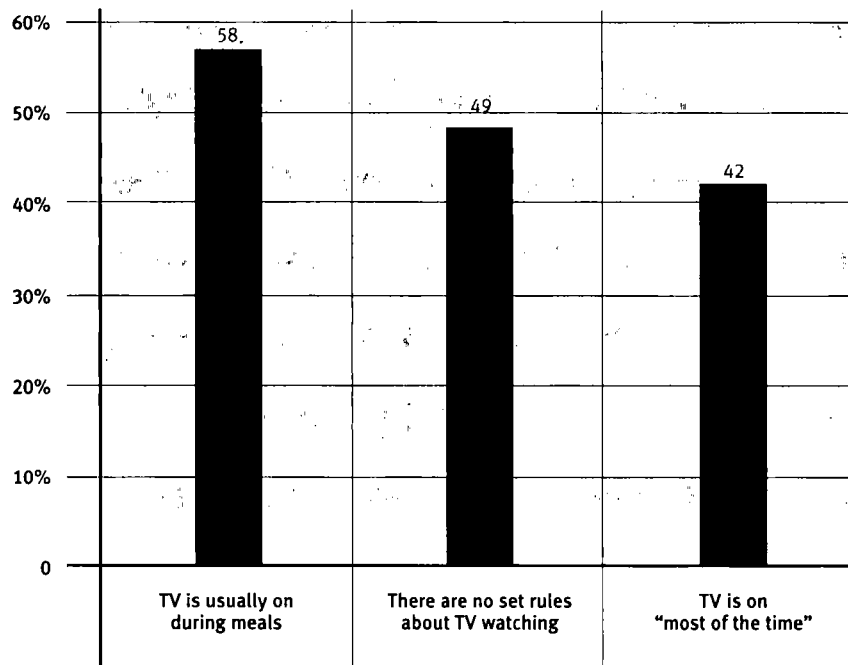
MANY PARENTS DO NOT APPEAR TO EXERCISE MUCH OVERSIGHT OF THEIR CHILDREN'S MEDIA USE.

MANY CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP IN HOMES WHERE THE TV is always on, there are no rules about how much or what kinds of shows can be watched, and kids are left on their own with media for large portions of the day.

About half (49%) of all kids don't have any rules about how much or what kind of TV they can watch. Among kids 8 and older, 61% say there aren't any rules about TV watching in their homes.

Media Use in the Home

Percent of children who live in homes where...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

PARENTS DO NOT WATCH MUCH TV WITH THEIR KIDS. According to the diaries kids kept of their media use, those over 7 **almost never watch TV with their parents** (95% of the time they are not with their parents); according to parents who filled out diaries about their younger kids (2–7 year-olds), 81% of the time these youngsters are watching TV, their parents are doing something else.

PREDICTORS OF HIGH MEDIA USE THAT PARENTS CAN CONTROL:

(BASED ON 8-18 YEAR-OLDS)

Our analysis found that certain demographic variables such as race, age and family composition are significantly related to high media use. However, other media-related environmental conditions that can be altered also act as consistent predictors of media use, even after accounting for these demographic factors.

Media use is higher among children who have access to a lot of media in their bedroom (computer, video game players, and cable are especially strong predictors), live in homes where the TV is frequently on “even when no one is watching,” or spend more than half of their TV time watching alone.

Parents who want to help limit their children's media use should:

- Limit the number of media a child has access to in the bedroom. Specifically, the presence of a computer, a video game player or cable TV in the bedroom are among the strongest predictors of higher media use that a parent can control.
- Limit the amount of time that the television is on in the home, even if it's just on as background noise.





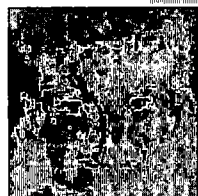
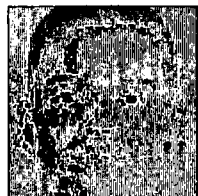
Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEDIA USE HITS ITS
ZENITH JUST AS CHILDREN ARE MAKING THE
TRANSITION TO THEIR TEENAGE YEARS.

CHILDREN AGES 8-13 SPEND MORE TIME WITH MEDIA THAN KIDS
in any other age group — six and three-quarter hours (6:47) a day.

These “tweens” spend as much or more time with virtually every
kind of media except listening to music.



THEN & NOW:

Percent of sixth graders who had
a TV in their bedroom in 1970: 6% +

Percent of sixth graders who have
a TV in their bedroom in 1999: 77%

Tweens spend the most time of any age group watching TV, watching videos of TV shows, and playing video and computer games, and they are most likely to have gone to a movie the previous day. They spend about the same amount of time each day as older kids watching movies on video, using computers for fun, and going online. By contrast, they spend much less time than older kids listening to the radio, CDs or tapes.

TV is still the medium of choice for this age group. More than one in four (27%) tweens spends more than five hours a day watching TV. By contrast, a much smaller proportion spends more than a single hour playing video games (13%), going online (5%) or playing computer games (3%).



Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

DESPITE WIDESPREAD ACCESS, CHILDREN
SPEND A RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME
EACH DAY USING COMPUTERS.

ON A TYPICAL DAY, 42% OF ALL CHILDREN AGES 2-18 WILL USE a computer. Parents report that about a quarter (26%) of 2-7 year-olds spend at least some time using a computer on a typical day, while about half (51%) of all children 8 or older report using a computer. On a typical school day, 29% of students will use a computer in the classroom.

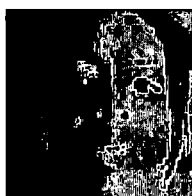
Almost seven in ten (69%) children 2-18 have a computer in their home, and 45% have Internet access. More than one out of every five kids (21%) over 7 has a computer in his or her bedroom, and one in ten (10%) has Internet access from their own room.



THEN & NOW:

Percent of homes with 3 or more TV sets in 1970: 6%

Percent of homes with 3 or more TV sets in 1999: 66%



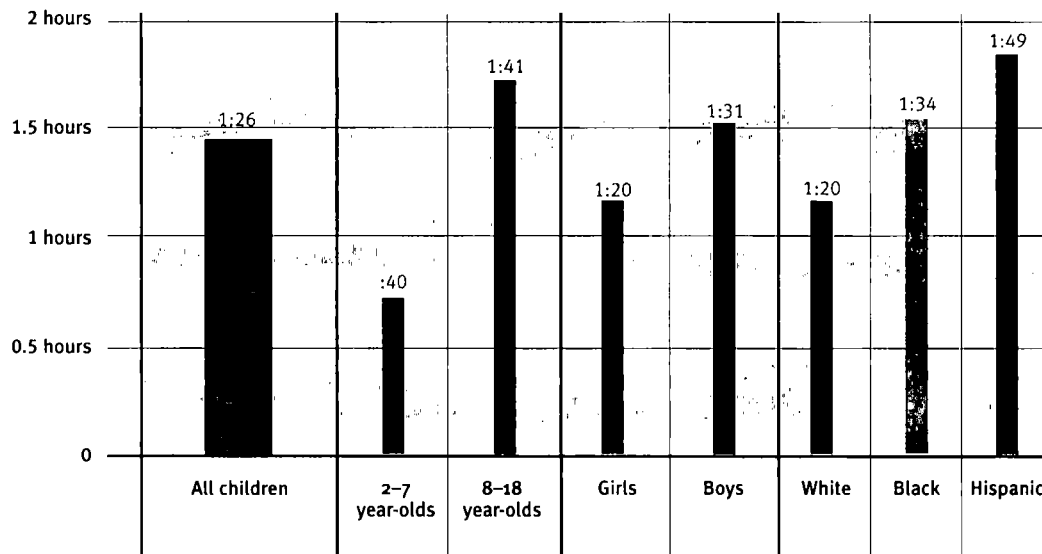
But while the vast majority of kids have access to computers, on the whole most kids spend very little time using them.

Among all children ages 2–18, kids spend an average of about a half an hour a day using computers (:34), including time spent on computers in school. They spend an average of 21 minutes a day using computers for fun. By contrast, kids average two and three-quarter hours a day watching TV.

Fewer than one in ten kids (9%) spends more than an hour a day using computers for fun, and only 3% spend more than an hour a day online.

Computer Use

Among children who use a computer, the average amount of time spent at the keyboard per day by...



Times are presented in hours : minutes

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

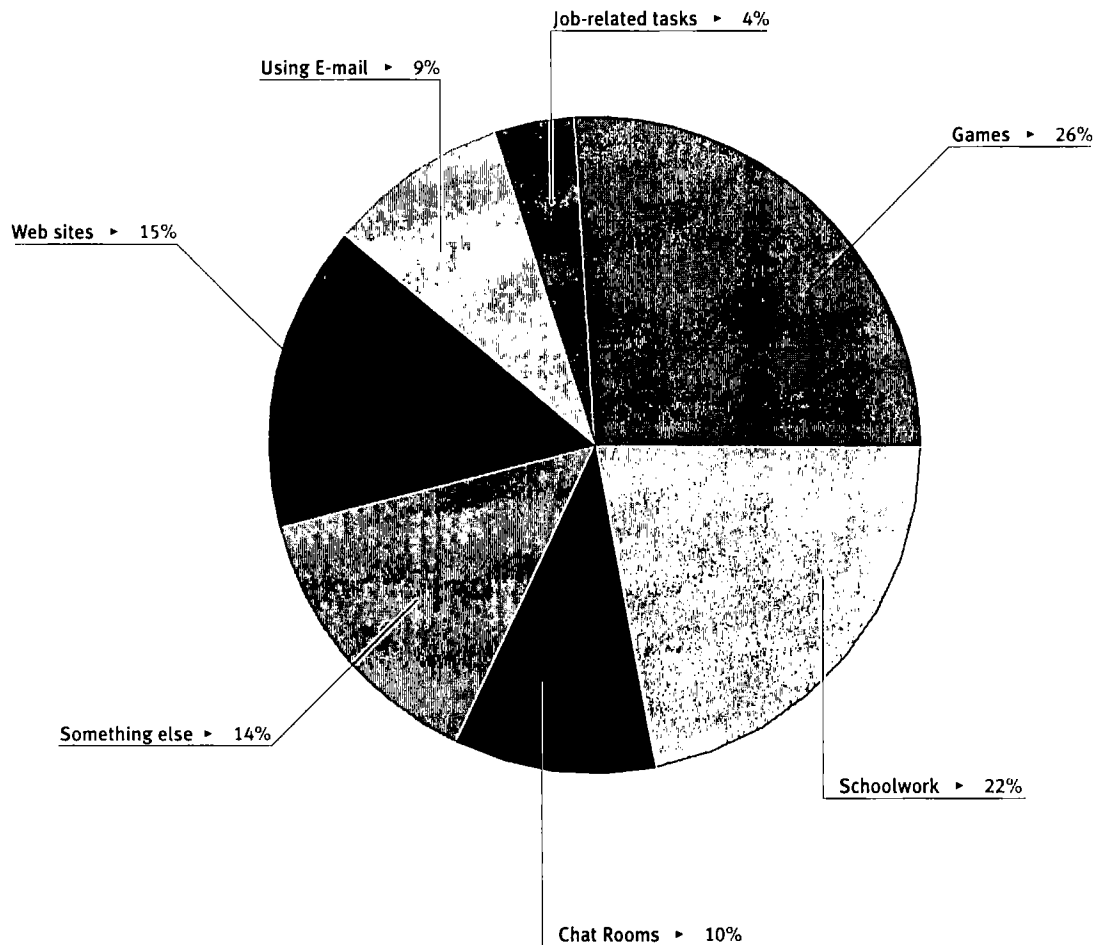
EVEN THOSE CHILDREN WHO USE COMPUTERS SPEND SUBSTANTIALLY LESS TIME AT THE KEYBOARD THAN THEY DO WATCHING TV.

The limited time kids spend with computers, on average, is clearly due in part to the fact that more than half of all kids don't use a computer at all on a typical day (58% of all 2-18 year-olds).

Looking just at those children who use computers on a given day, 2-7 year-olds spend an average of 40 minutes a day at the keyboard, while kids 8 and older who use computers spend an average of more than an hour and a half (1:41) each day.

Computer Use

Of children who use a computer on a typical day,
the proportion of time spent on...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

THOSE KIDS 8 AND OLDER WHO USE COMPUTERS SPEND ABOUT A QUARTER OF THEIR TIME (26%) PLAYING GAMES, almost a quarter (22%) doing school work, and about a third of their time on the Internet, either chatting (10%), surfing the Web (15%), or sending e-mail (9%).

Kids AND Media

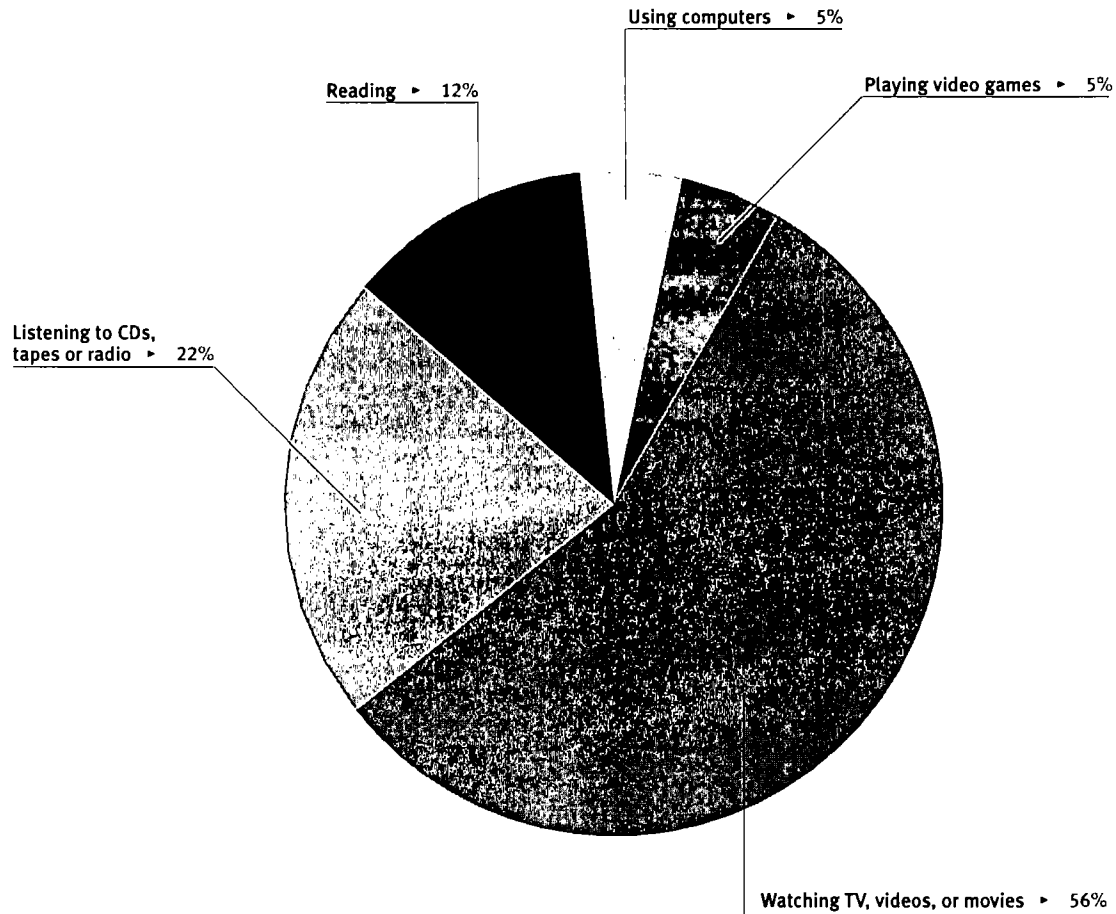
AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

TRADITIONAL MEDIA — ESPECIALLY TV —
CONTINUE TO DOMINATE CHILDREN'S
MEDIA USE TIME.

DESPITE ALL THE NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE TO KIDS,
young people today continue to spend the large majority of their
media time with the same types of media that kids spent time with
a generation ago: watching TV, listening to music, and reading books
and magazines.

Media Use

Of all time with media, the proportion children spend...

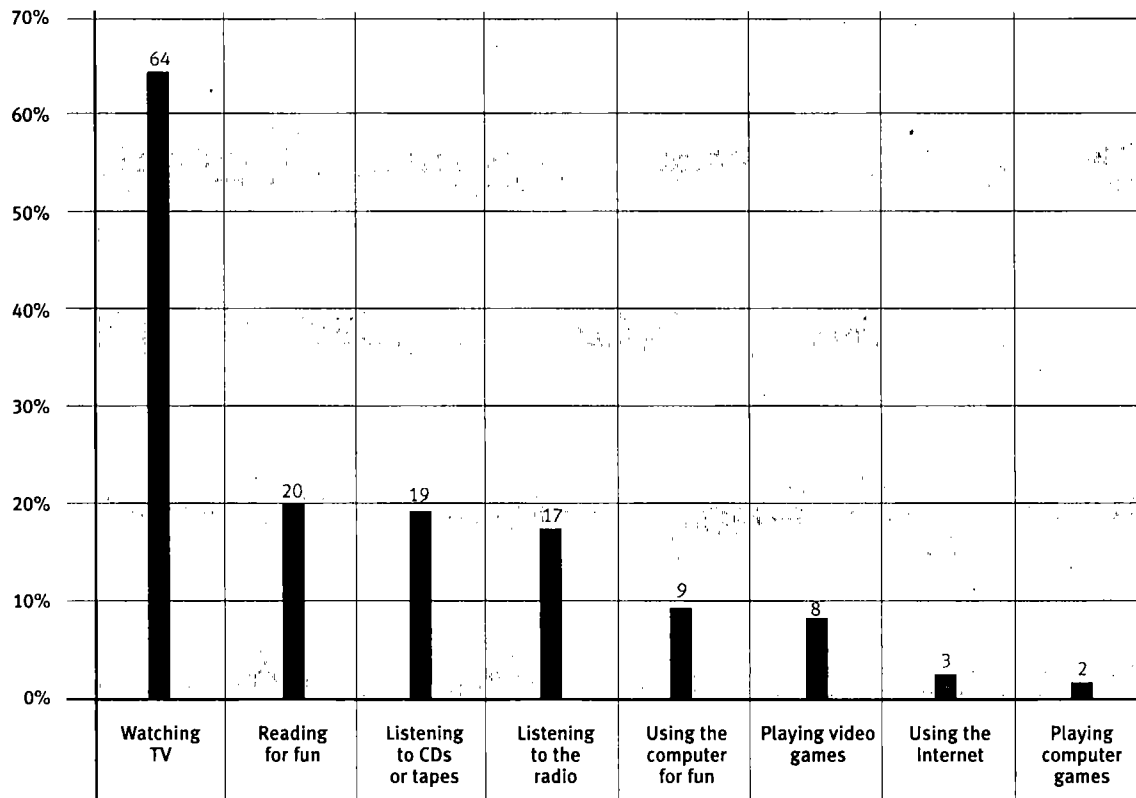


Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

OF ALL THE TIME THE AVERAGE KID SPENDS WITH MEDIA, more than half (56%) is spent watching TV, videos or movies, nearly a quarter (22%) is spent listening to music on CDs or the radio, 12% is spent reading, and 5% each is spent with computers and video games.

Media Use

Percent of children who spend more than one hour per day...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

WHEN VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO SPEND MORE THAN AN HOUR A DAY USING A PARTICULAR KIND OF MEDIA, TRADITIONAL MEDIA ALSO DOMINATE.

About two-thirds (64%) of all kids spend more than an hour a day watching TV, and about one out of six (17%) spends **more than five hours a day watching TV.**

By contrast, **fewer than one out of ten (9%) kids spends more than an hour a day using a computer for fun**, including 3% who spend more than an hour online and 2% who spend more than an hour playing computer games. Eight percent spend more than an hour a day playing video games.



Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

MOST KIDS STILL READ FOR FUN.

AS TELEVISION HAS CEMENTED ITS PRESENCE IN YOUNG people's lives and kids have added video games, Walkman headsets, computers and Game Boys to their media repertoires, concern has grown that reading may be going by the wayside. While this study confirms that electronic media certainly dominate children's time, it also indicates that reading for pleasure is still a staple in young people's lives.

IN A TYPICAL WEEK :

Kids spend an average of more than **nineteen hours** watching TV (19:19), more than **ten hours** listening to music (10:04), more than **five hours** reading for pleasure (5:15), about **two and a half hours** using computers for fun (2:29), and more than **two hours** playing video games (2:17).



In a typical day, about eight out of ten children (82%) will read or be read to, excluding time spent reading in school or doing homework. Kids spend an average of nearly three-quarters of an hour a day (:44) reading for pleasure.⁷ Most experts recommend that kids read or be read to for a minimum of 20–30 minutes a day, a standard that kids are meeting, on average.

In comparison to most electronic media, however, reading certainly lags far behind: kids spend more than five times as much time in front of a TV or computer screen as they do reading (an average of more than four hours a day (4:06) watching TV or videos, playing video games, or using a computer for fun).

Of all the print media, kids spend the most time each day with books — an average of 25 minutes a day, followed by 16 minutes a day reading magazines and an average of five minutes a day reading a newspaper. In a typical day, 57% of kids will read a book for fun, 51% will read a magazine, and 31% will read a newspaper.

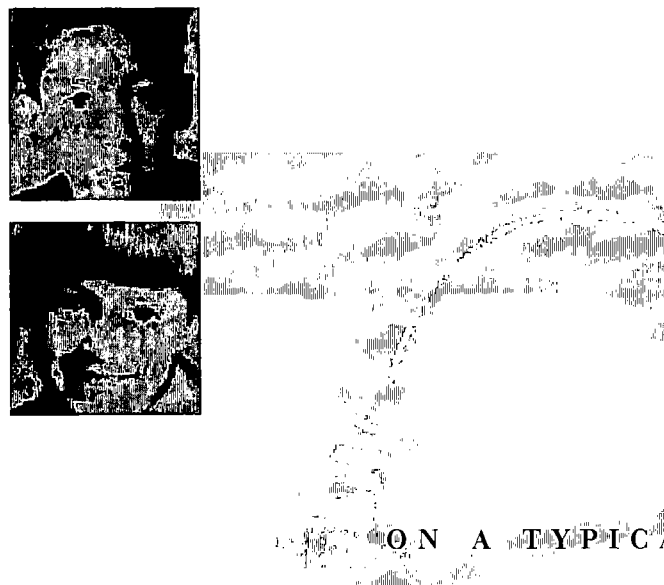
The amount of time young people spend reading for fun drops off precipitously once they hit the teenage years — especially the amount of time spent reading books. “Tweens” in the 8–13 year old age group spend an average of 50 minutes a day reading for fun, including 28 minutes reading books; by contrast, teens in the 14–18 year age range spend an average of 37 minutes a day reading, including just 14 minutes with books. In a typical day, 59% of tweens spend some time reading a book for pleasure; only 30% of teens do the same.

Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

KIDS USE NEW MEDIA TO
SUPPLEMENT RATHER THAN REPLACE
OTHER FORMS OF MEDIA.

KIDS WHO SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH ONE KIND OF MEDIA — whether it is TV, computers or books — tend to spend a lot of time with all kinds of media. Those kids who watch a lot of TV also spend more time reading than most other kids; and those kids who spend a lot of time using computers also watch more TV and read more than most other kids.



ON A TYPICAL DAY:

Two percent of all kids will use the Internet to visit research or information sites.

Eight percent of all kids will visit a Web site about a TV show, movie or musical group.

Children who watch a lot of TV tend to read slightly more than other kids. On average, “high” TV users read for about eight minutes more a day than “low” TV users.⁸

Children who spend more time using computers than other kids also tend to spend more time watching TV and reading. Children who use a computer for enjoyment for more than an hour a day watch about one hour and 40 minutes more TV a day and read about 22 minutes more a day than children who don’t use computers at all. These “high” computer users are also twice as likely as kids who don’t use computers at all to watch TV for more than five hours a day (35% v. 15%), and to read for more than an hour a day (34% v. 17%).

Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

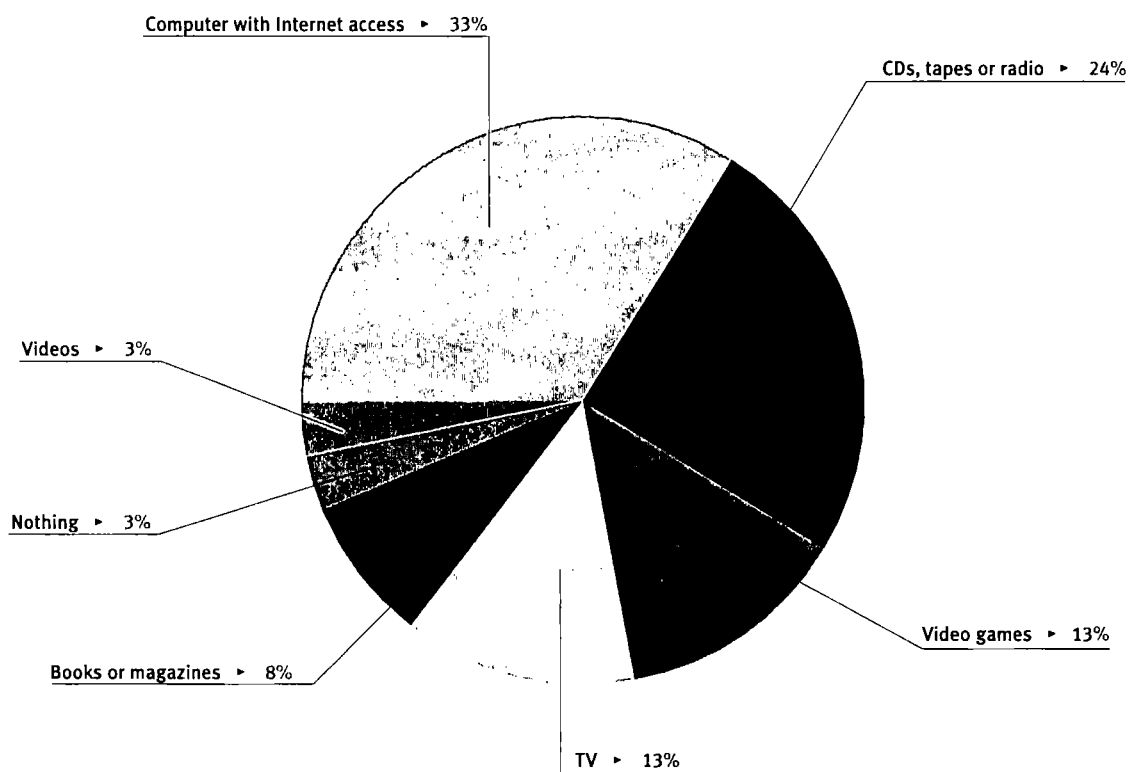
BY JENNIFER L. HARRIS

IN A POSSIBLE INDICATION OF THINGS TO
COME, MOST KIDS SAY THEY PREFER COMPUTERS
TO TV, IF THEY'RE FORCED TO CHOOSE.

WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, CHILDREN 8 AND OLDER SAY THEY
prefer computers to TV; even among preschoolers, computers are
a close second.

Favorite Media

When asked to choose which medium to bring to a desert island, the percent of children aged 8–18 who picked...



"No answer" responses not shown.

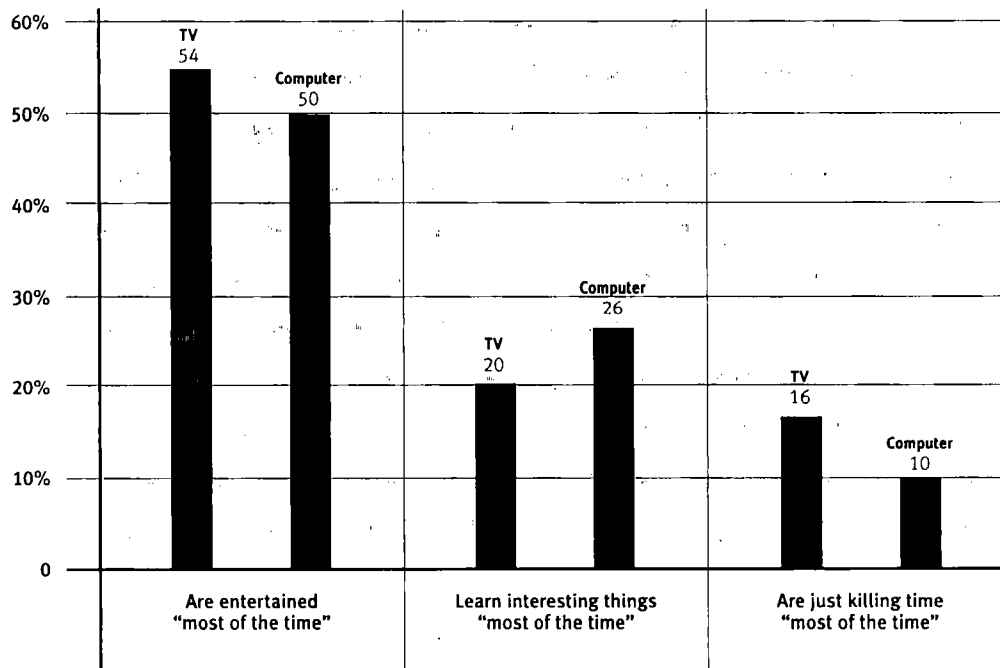
Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

KIDS 8 AND OLDER ARE NEARLY THREE TIMES AS LIKELY TO CHOOSE COMPUTERS OVER TV if forced to pick one form of media to have with them on a desert island (33% pick computers, 13% pick TV). Of course, a computer with Internet access could theoretically offer someone on a desert island a range of news, entertainment content and interpersonal communication that no other media can compete with; but the fact that so many young people selected computers and so few chose television is nonetheless illuminating.

Among 2–7 year-olds, 29% say TV is their favorite, while 23% pick computers and 23% pick video games as their favorite medium.⁹

Attitudes Toward Media

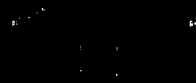
When asked how they feel when they use computers or watch TV, the percent of children aged 8–18 who say they...



Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

MOST CHILDREN DON'T MAKE A BIG DISTINCTION BETWEEN TVs AND COMPUTERS IN TERMS OF THEIR ENTERTAINMENT OR EDUCATIONAL VALUE.

Similar proportions of children say they are likely to **learn interesting things** from TV (20%) as from computers (26%), are entertained "most of the time" by TV (54%) and computers (50%), and are just killing time "most of the time" with TV (16%) and computers (10%).



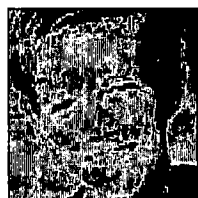
Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

BY JENNIFER L. HARRIS

CHILDREN WHO SPEND THE MOST TIME WITH MEDIA ARE THE LEAST CONTENTED.

OVERALL, MOST KIDS REPORT THAT THEY HAVE LOTS OF FRIENDS, are happy at school, get along well with their parents, don't get into trouble a lot, and are not often bored, sad or unhappy. On a "contentedness index" summarizing self-reports on these issues, the average child scores 18.4 on a scale that ranges from 6–24, a fairly good indication of overall contentedness. It should be noted, therefore, that differences on this index are relative differences among kids who appear quite happy and well-adjusted.



THEN & NOW:

Percent of sixth graders who said they learned a lot “most of the time” they watched TV, in 1970: 38% ¹⁰

Percent of sixth graders who said they learned interesting things “most of the time” they watched TV, in 1999: 29%

Nevertheless, the study results do indicate that those children who use the most media tend to be the least contented. “High” media users (those who spend more than ten and a half hours a day using media; about 16% of all kids 8 and older) score significantly lower on the contentedness index than do other kids, averaging 17.5 compared to 18.6 for other kids. Statistically, this is a highly significant difference. Indeed, further analysis found that even when controlling for factors such as income of the community in which the child attends school, race, age, and family composition, indicators of discontent such as not getting along with parents, unhappiness at school and getting into trouble a lot are strongly associated with high media use.

In addition, kids with lower grades spend significantly more time with TV, movies, videos, CDs and tapes (1:07 more a day), and significantly less time reading (12 minutes less); conversely, those children who report mostly A's and B's spend more time reading and less time with most other media.

It should be stressed that no causality can be inferred from these data. We cannot say, for example, whether TV causes kids to get into trouble, whether getting into trouble leads to watching more TV, or whether something else entirely leads to watching more TV and getting into trouble.

Kids AND Media

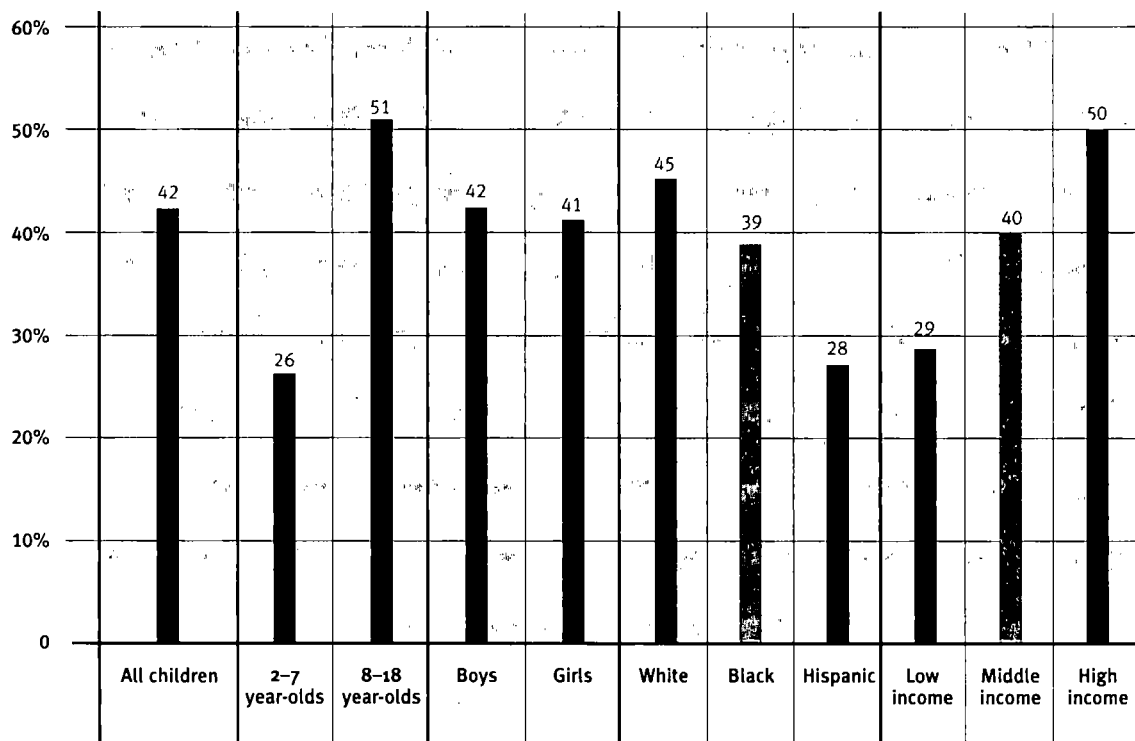
AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN OR GO TO SCHOOL IN LOWER INCOME COMMUNITIES SPEND MORE TIME WITH MOST TYPES OF MEDIA THAN KIDS IN WEALTHIER NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS LIKELY TO USE COMPUTERS.

CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN OR GO TO SCHOOL IN POORER NEIGHBORHOODS spend an average of almost an hour more with media every day than kids from wealthier communities (6:08 v. 5:13), including about half an hour more watching TV each day (3:06 v. 2:29).¹ Kids from lower income areas are more likely to have a TV in their bedroom (61% v. 44%), less likely to have family rules about TV watching (45% v. 54%), and more likely to live in homes where the TV is on “most of the time” (51% v. 36%), or is usually on during meals (70% v. 48%).

Computer Use

In a typical day, the percent of children who use a computer...



Income categories are based on the median income of the zip code in which a child lives (among 2-7 year-olds) or attends school (among 8-18 year-olds), and represent the following ranges: "Low Income," less than \$25,000; "Middle Income," \$25,000 to \$39,999; "High Income," \$40,000 or more.⁸

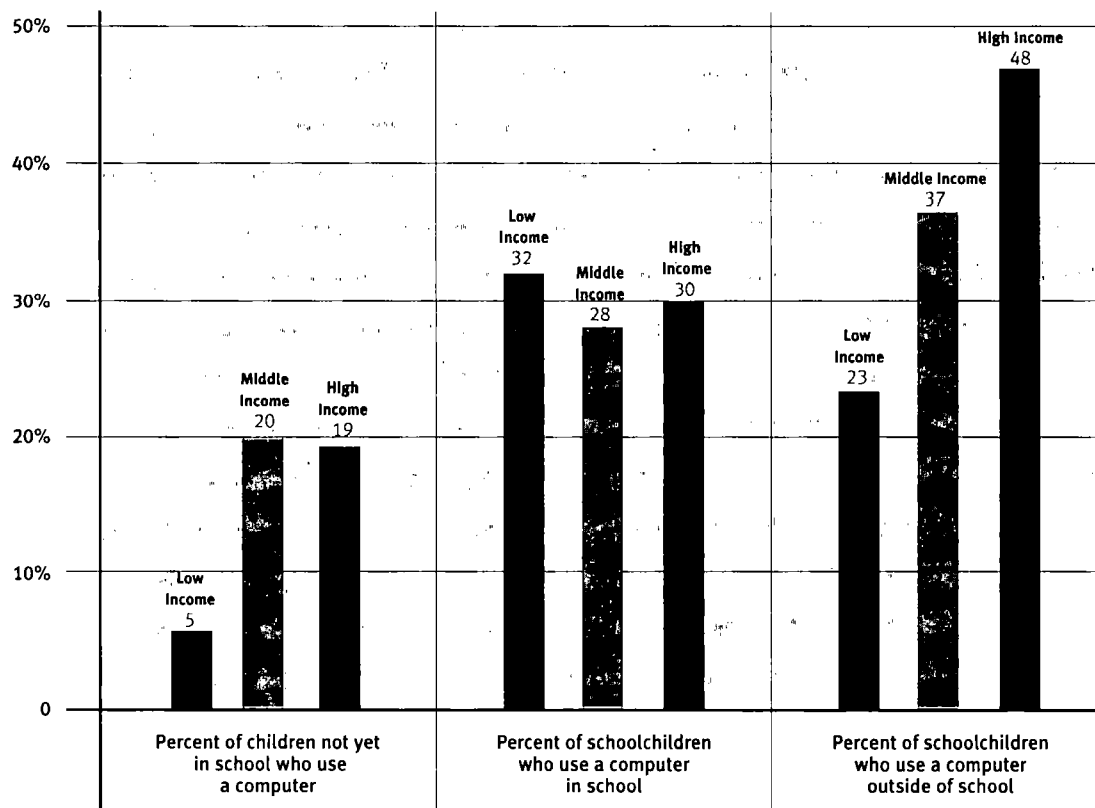
Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

HOWEVER, CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN OR GO TO SCHOOL IN HIGHER INCOME COMMUNITIES ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO USE COMPUTERS THAN CHILDREN IN LOWER INCOME AREAS: less than a third (29%) of kids from lower income communities use a computer on a typical day, compared to half (50%) of kids from higher income neighborhoods.

Kids who live in or go to school in lower income neighborhoods are much less likely to have a computer anywhere in the home. About half (49%) of kids in lower income communities have a computer in the home, and about a quarter (23%) have Internet access. By contrast, 81% of kids in higher income neighborhoods have a computer at home, and more than half (58%) have Internet access.

Computer Use

The impact of school on income differentials in computer use. In a typical day...



Income categories are based on the median income of the zip code in which a child lives (among 2-7 year-olds) or attends school (among 8-18 year-olds), and represent the following ranges: "Low Income," less than \$25,000; "Middle Income," \$25,000 to \$39,999; "High Income," \$40,000 or more.

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

SCHOOLS ARE HELPING TO EQUALIZE ACCESS TO COMPUTERS. Children from lower income neighborhoods are just as likely as those from higher income communities to have used a computer in school the day before (32% v. 30%). By contrast, children in upper income communities are more than twice as likely as children in poorer areas to have used a computer outside of school (48% v. 23%).

This income gap is even more pronounced among younger kids: among kids who aren't in school yet, just 5% of those from lower income neighborhoods use a computer on a typical day, compared to 19% of those from wealthier communities.



Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

**BLACK AND HISPANIC CHILDREN SPEND SIGNIFICANTLY
MORE TIME USING MEDIA — ESPECIALLY TELEVISION —
THAN WHITE CHILDREN.**

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN FROM MINORITY GROUPS SPEND ALMOST
an hour more each day using media than White children do. Among all
kids 2–18, those from minority groups spend an average of six hours
a day using media (6:03), while White kids spend an average of
just over five hours a day (5:08).

Much of the discrepancy in media use between kids of different races is a result of time spent watching TV. Black (3:56) and Hispanic (3:13) kids spend more time watching TV than White kids (2:22). Black (30%) and Hispanic (22%) children are both more likely than White (12%) children to spend more than five hours a day watching TV. Black (69%) and Hispanic (60%) children are more likely than White (48%) children to have a TV in their bedroom.

Black children are also more likely than White children to live in homes where the TV is often on. Fifty-six percent of Black children, 42% of Hispanic children and 39% of White children live in a home where the TV is on "most of the time." They are also more likely to live in homes where the TV is usually on during meals (76% of Black children v. 63% of Hispanic and 51% of White children).

Black (:25) and Hispanic (:24) kids also spend more time on average with video games than White kids (:17). Sixteen percent of Black and Hispanic kids play video games for more than an hour a day (11% of White kids do).

Overall, based on the measures available to us in this study, socio-economic status does not appear to account for the discrepancies in the total amount of time spent with media between White and minority kids.

At every income level (based on the average income for the community in which the child lives or goes to school), White children spend substantially less time with TV and with media overall than do either Black or Hispanic children.



Kids AND Media

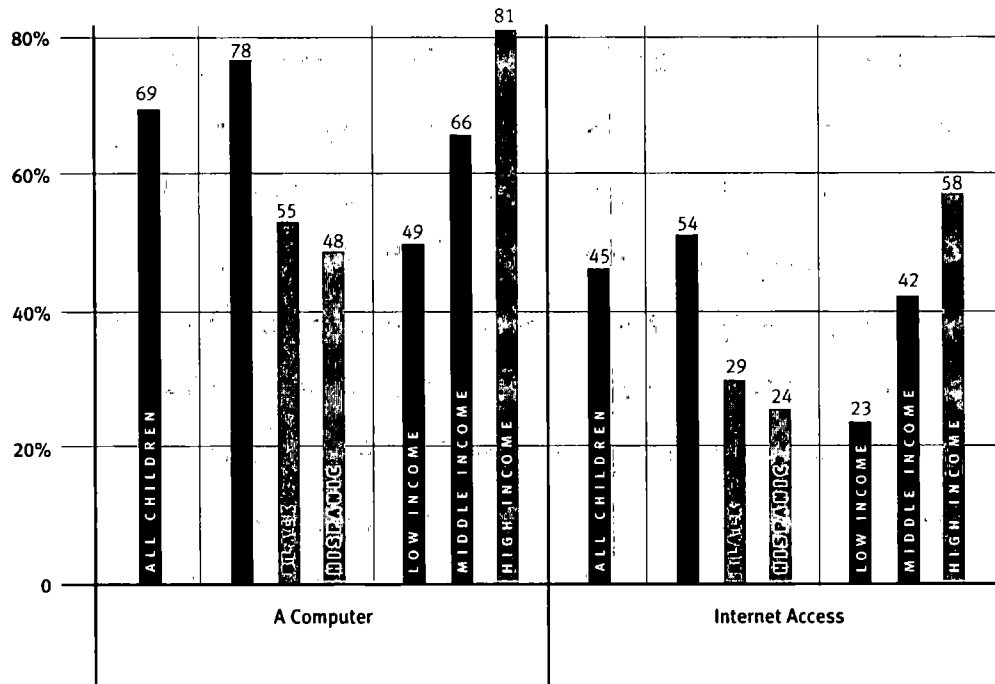
AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

**BLACK AND HISPANIC CHILDREN HAVE
SIGNIFICANTLY LESS ACCESS TO COMPUTERS
THAN WHITE CHILDREN, BUT FIND A WAY TO SPEND
ABOUT AS MUCH TIME ON COMPUTERS AS
WHITE KIDS ANYWAY.**

LARGELY DUE TO INCOME DIFFERENCES, CHILDREN FROM minority groups have substantially less access to computers outside of school; but because schools appear to have done a fairly good job equalizing access to computers, and because once they get on a computer Black and Hispanic kids tend to spend more time there than White kids, children of different races average roughly the same amount of time in daily computer use.

Computers in the Home

Percent of children who live in homes with...



Income categories are based on the median income of the zip code in which a child lives (among 2-7 year-olds) or attends school (among 8-18 year-olds), and represent the following ranges: "Low Income," less than \$25,000; "Middle Income," \$25,000 to \$39,999; "High Income," \$40,000 or more.

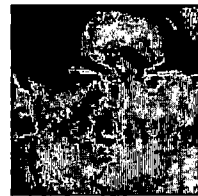
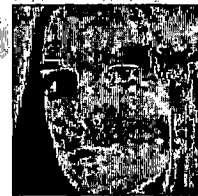
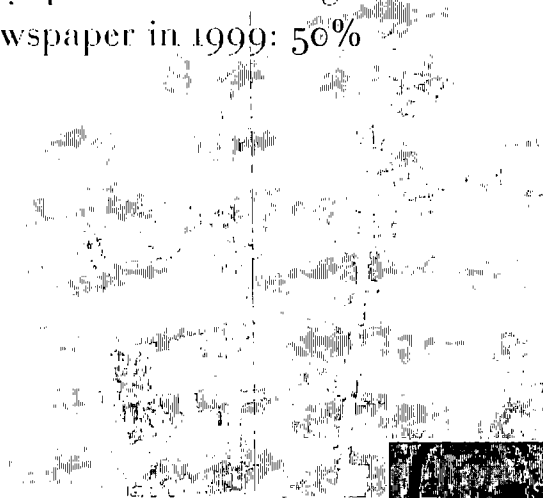
Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

WHITE CHILDREN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A COMPUTER IN THE HOME (78%) THAN BLACK (55%) OR HISPANIC (48%) CHILDREN. White children are also far more likely to have Internet access in the home (54%) than Black (29%) or Hispanic (24%) children. These differences are significantly affected by income: for example, 67% of Black children who live in or go to school in upper-income communities have a computer at home, and 37% have Internet access, compared to 46% of Black children from lower-income areas who have computers at home and 17% who have Internet access.

THEN & NOW:

Percent of tenth graders who read
a newspaper every day in 1970: 47% ¹²

In a typical day, percent of tenth graders
who read a newspaper in 1999: 50%



Yet despite this difference in access, Black and Hispanic children average approximately the same amount of time on computers as White kids do (:35 for White and Black kids, :29 for Hispanics). Among those children who use a computer, Hispanic children spend an average of one hour and 49 minutes a day at the keyboard; Black kids spend an average of one hour and 34 minutes a day, and White kids spend an average of one hour and 20 minutes a day.

In an average day, 45% of White kids, 39% of Black kids and 28% of Hispanic kids will use a computer.

Racial disparities in computer use among 2–7 year-olds who are not yet in school are pronounced, with White youngsters about twice as likely as Black or Hispanic kids to use a computer. One out of every five (20%) White preschoolers uses a computer on a typical day, compared to one in ten (9%) Black or Hispanic (11%) kids.

However, this disparity disappears when it comes to how likely kids are to use a computer in school. In a typical school day, 37% of Black schoolchildren, 29% of Hispanic, and 28% of White kids use a computer in school.



Kids AND Media

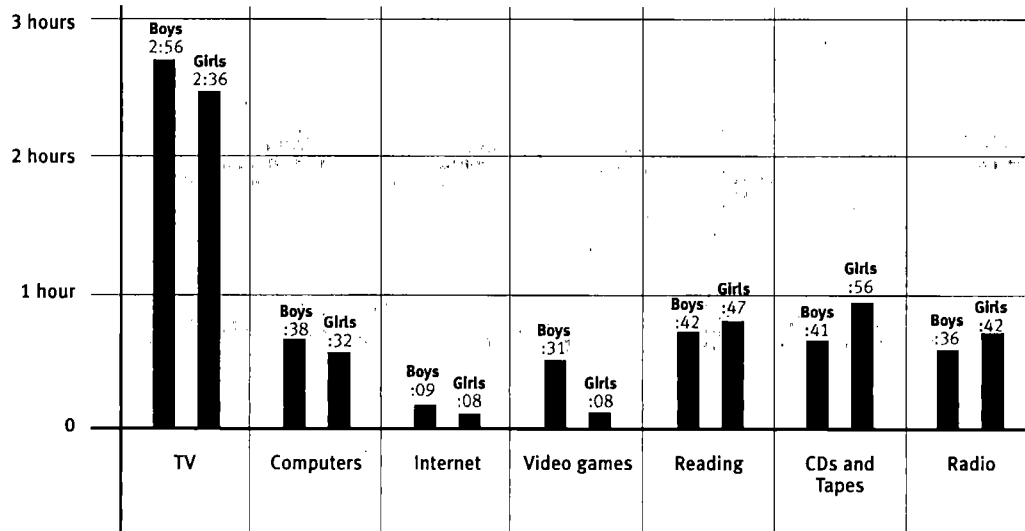
AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

**BOYS AND GIRLS SPEND ROUGHLY THE SAME
AMOUNT OF TIME EACH DAY USING MEDIA, BUT GIRLS
LISTEN TO MORE MUSIC AND BOYS WATCH MORE
TV AND PLAY MORE VIDEO GAMES.**

BOYS SPEND AN AVERAGE OF 18 MINUTES MORE EACH DAY using media than girls do (5:37 v. 5:19). The media gender gap grows slightly as kids get older — among 2–7 year-olds, boys spend 19 minutes more each day using media than girls; by the time they are 8 or older, that gap has grown to 24 minutes (6:53 v. 6:29).

Media Use

Average amount of time boys and girls spend with the following media...



Times are presented in hours : minutes

Source: Kids and Media at the New Millennium, Kaiser Family Foundation, November 1999

BOYS SPEND MUCH MORE TIME PLAYING VIDEO GAMES THAN DO GIRLS.

On average, boys spend a little more than half an hour a day playing video games (:31), while girls average just eight minutes a day.

The video game gender gap starts young: 25% of little boys (2–7) play video games, compared to just 7% of girls.

Among 8–18 year-olds, 55% of boys and 23% of girls play video games on a typical day. **Nearly one out of every five boys (17%) in this age group spends more than an hour a day playing video games, compared to just 4% of girls.**



ON A TYPICAL DAY:

A third of all kids (34%) will watch a TV sitcom.

Six percent of all kids will watch a TV news show.

Boys watch TV for about 20 minutes more each day than do girls (2:56 v. 2:36). Boys are slightly more likely (56%) to have a TV in their bedroom than are girls (50%). **Boys and girls average the same amount of time reading for pleasure every day.**

Girls spend more time listening to music. Girls average about 20 minutes more a day than guys listening to CDs, tapes and the radio (1:38 v. 1:17).

There are significant differences between boys and girls in terms of the genres of media they like to use; these differences generally fit with existing gender stereotypes.

Of those kids who watch TV, boys watch more **sports** (19% v. 5%).

Of those who play video games, boys are more likely than girls to play **action or combat games** (46% v. 30%) or sports and competition games (44% v. 33%).

Of those 7th–12th graders who read magazines, girls are much more likely than boys to read **“teen” magazines** (73% v. 4%) while boys are much more likely than girls to read sports magazines (46% v. 7%).



Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

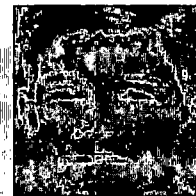
BOYS SPEND A LITTLE MORE TIME THAN GIRLS DO
WITH COMPUTERS, MOSTLY PLAYING GAMES.

IN A TYPICAL DAY, BOYS AND GIRLS ARE EQUALLY LIKELY TO USE a computer, and they average about the same amount of time at the keyboard – about a half an hour a day, including time spent with school work (:38 for boys and :32 for girls). Boys and girls also spend roughly the same amount of time online each day (:09 for boys and :08 for girls).

ON A TYPICAL DAY:

One out of every four boys (24%) will play an action or combat game like *Doom* or *Duke Nukem*

Seven percent of all kids will play an educational computer game



However, among kids who are 8 and older, boys average about 10 minutes more a day using computers than girls do. **Looking only at those kids who use a computer in a typical day, boys average almost 20 minutes more each day at the keyboard than girls.** Almost all of this gender gap in computer use is due to the fact that boys spend more time playing computer games than girls do; when it comes to the amount of time spent using computers for school or job-related tasks, the gender gap disappears.

Among children 8 and older, on a typical day 36% of boys play computer games, compared to 28% of girls, and boys who play do so for an average of 16 minutes more a day than girls (:46 v. :30). Across all ages, boys are more likely than girls to spend an hour or more using computer games (8% of boys v. 4% of girls).

Boys who play computer games are more than three times as likely to play action or combat games than are girls who play computer games (27% v. 8%). They are also more likely than girls to play sports or competition games (23% v. 9%) and to play simulation or strategic planning games (14% v. 5%). Girls are more likely to play classic games like *Solitaire* or *Word Grid* (29% of girls who play computer games v. 19% of boys).

Of those who visited Web sites, girls are more likely to visit **entertainment sites** (64% v. 44%), while boys are more likely to visit sports (33% v. 12%) or gaming sites (32% v. 13%).



Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

WHETHER KIDS LIVE IN RURAL OR URBAN AREAS
MAKES VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN HOW MUCH
OR WHAT KINDS OF MEDIA THEY USE.

WHETHER A CHILD LIVES IN THE CITY OR IN A RURAL COMMUNITY makes very little difference in the amount or kind of media to which they are exposed.

On average, rural kids (2–18) spend five and three-quarters hours (5:43) a day using media, compared to five hours and thirty-five minutes for urban kids.

When it comes to what types of media rural kids versus city kids choose, there are very few differences. Kids over 12 watch the same genres of TV, are equally likely to play a computer or video game such as *Doom*, and, for the most part, listen to the same types of music. Rural kids listen to Rap or Hip Hop almost as much as urban kids (on any given day, 42% of 12–18 year-olds in rural areas listen to Rap or Hip Hop, compared to 48% of city kids). One musical difference is that more rural kids listen to country music on the radio than kids in the city (17% v. 9%).

Even when it comes to **new media**, there are very few differences based on whether a kids grows up in the city or in a rural area. Rural and urban kids are about equally likely to have a computer in their home (63% rural, 66% urban) and to have Internet access (39% rural v. 41% urban). As a result, urban and rural kids are just as likely to use computers or go on the Internet, and they spend roughly the same amount of time doing so. (On a typical day, 39% of urban and rural kids will use a computer; 15% of urban and 18% of rural kids will go online.)

On the other hand, **kids who live in the suburbs** tend to use less media overall (5:19) but are more computer-oriented than either city kids or kids who live in rural areas. Nearly three out of four kids in the suburbs (74%) have a computer at home (63% rural, 66% urban), and more than half (51%) have Internet access at home (39% rural, 41% urban).

Kids AND Media

AT THE NEW MILLENNIUM

KIDS IN SINGLE-PARENT HOMES WATCH MORE TV THAN THOSE IN TWO-PARENT HOMES.

KIDS IN SINGLE-PARENT HOMES ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A TV in their bedroom (60% v. 50% for two-parent homes), but less likely to own a computer (55% v. 73%). They spend almost 45 minutes more each day watching TV (3:16 v. 2:34). Single-parent homes are more likely to have the TV on during meals (69% say it's usually on during meals v. 54% of those in two-parent homes) and less likely to have rules about TV watching (42% v. 53%).

FOOTNOTES

1. Nielsen Media Research. (1998). 1998 report on television. New York: Author, p. 15.
2. One in four (26%) 2-4 year-olds has a TV in their bedroom, as do more than a third (39%) of 5-7 year-olds.
3. Time spent in the same room while a parent watches TV is not included in the 3:34 estimate of total media use for 2-7 year-olds.
4. Lyle, J., & Hoffman, H. (1972). Children's use of television and other media. In E.A. Rubinstein, G.A. Comstock, & J.P. Murray (Eds.), *Television and social behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 129-256). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, p. 140.
5. Nielsen Media Research, p. 15.
6. Week-long averages are based on mean times with each medium, separating out weekday and weekend reports. Weekday averages were multiplied by five, and weekend averages by two, to compile an accurate estimate of a typical week.
7. The "reading for pleasure" total includes time spent reading or being read to by an adult, and it excludes time spent reading in school or for homework.
8. "High" TV users are defined as those who watch more than five hours a day; "low" users are those who watch for an hour or less a day.
9. During the in-home survey with parents of children 2-7, children were asked about their "favorite" media, using picture cards.
10. Lyle & Hoffman, p. 176.
11. Because it is extremely difficult to obtain accurate estimates of household income from school-aged youth, this study relies instead on federal estimates of median household income in the zip code of each participating school (for the school-based sample) or of each participating household (for the in-home sample). This is an imprecise measure of income: some students from higher income households undoubtedly attend schools located in low-income zip codes (and vice versa); similarly, some high-income households may be located in low-income zip codes (and vice versa). Therefore, this measure should be seen as providing only a rough estimate of possible variations in media use based on income. This measure did correlate strongly with parent education, which we have available for each child.
12. Lyle & Hoffman, p. 159.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a nationally representative sample of 3,155 children ages 2–18, including oversamples of African-American and Hispanic children. The media included in the study are television, computers, movies, videos, video games, books, magazines, newspapers, radio, and CDs and tapes. The study was designed by Kaiser Family Foundation staff in consultation with Stanford University Professor Donald F. Roberts and Harris Interactive, Inc., and the data were collected by Harris Interactive. The results were analyzed and this report was prepared by Foundation staff and Professor Roberts.

The sample includes 2,065 students in grades 3–12 (who completed self-administered written questionnaires in the classroom about their media use the previous day) and 1,090 children ages 2–7 (whose parents or caregivers participated in an hour-long in-home survey about the child's media use the previous day). In addition, week-long media use diaries were collected for 621 of these children (487 completed by 3rd–12th graders, and 134 completed by parents of 2–7 year-olds).

The margin of error for the combined sample of children 2–18 is $\pm 3\%$; for the in-school sample of 3rd–12th graders it is $\pm 3\%$; and for the in-home sample of 2–7 year-olds it is $\pm 5\%$.

The findings reported on in this summary are based on the nationally representative sample, except where noted; the diaries were used primarily for verification, to examine media use patterns among individual children over the course of a week, and to collect additional information about media genres.

A more detailed description of methodology can be found in the full report on which this summary is based, and in Appendix A.



The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

650-854-9400 Facsimile 650-854-4800

Washington Office:

1450 G Street NW, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20005

202-347-5270 Facsimile 202-347-5274

www.kff.org

Additional free copies of this publication (#1535), the Full Report (#1536), and the Appendices (#1537) on which it is based, are available on our website www.kff.org or by calling the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's publication request line at 800-656-4533.