

Text 5. Online cravings

Facts and figures

Gaming

MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) are multiplayer real-time virtual worlds, usually text-based, where players can interact with each other and the world by typing commands that resemble a natural language. The first one, *Colossal Cave Adventure*, was created by Will Crowther in 1975. Then a group of students at MIT wrote a game called *Zork*, posted under the filename *Dungeon*, hence the name.

Today, **MMORPGs** (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games) allow a very large number of players to interact with one another. They assume the role of a character (often in a fantasy world) and take control over many of that character's actions. MMORPGs such as *RuneScape*, *World of Warcraft*, *Guild Wars*, *Warhammer Online*, *Lord of the Rings Online* and *Final Fantasy XI* offer a persistent world, which continues to exist and evolve while the player is offline and away from the game.

Revenues for MMORPGs:

- ◆ Worldwide: half a billion dollars in 2005,
- ◆ In the West: \$ 1.4 billion in 2008.
- ◆ *World of Warcraft* had more than 10 million subscribers in February 2012.
- ◆ *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, released in 2011, became the world's Fastest-Growing MMO ever, after gaining 1 million subscribers within the first three days of its launch.

Many critics of video games argue that they humiliate people, promote violence and glorify sex. Others claim that video games have become brainier and that they make young people smarter because they give the brain a good "cognitive workout", like an algebra class. They impel players to learn because playing them means not just following rules but also discovering what the rules are. And these rules can be staggeringly complicated. They force kids to think like grownups, analyzing complex social networks, managing resources, tracking subtle narrative intertwinings, recognizing long-term patterns.

Words you might need

an addict : un drogué
an addiction : une addiction
to assault : agresser
an assault : une agression
to damage : abîmer
damage : des dommages
danger : le danger
dangerous : dangereux
deadly/lethal/mortal : mortel
exposure : l'exposition au danger
to fall, fell, fallen : tomber
a fall : une chute
fatalities : des décès
a habit : une habitude
to handle : manipuler
hazardous : à risque
life-threatening : mettant la vie en danger
a potential risk : un risque éventuel
an occupational hazard : un risque professionnel

Safety : la sécurité

to award : récompenser
an award : une récompense, un prix
an audit : une vérification
a booklet : une brochure
to care about : se soucier de
careful : prudent
carefulness : la prudence
careless : imprudent
carelessness : l'imprudence
to carry out : mener à bien
to consider : prendre en compte
to cover : couvrir
to foster/to encourage : encourager
a fire extinguisher : un extincteur
a fireguard : un pare-feu
a safeguard : un garde-fou
to fit : installer, convenir
fitting : qui convient
to identify : identifier

to manipulate : manipuler
involved : concerné
involvement : l'implication
to judge : juger
a judgement : un jugement
maintenance : l'entretien
mindful of : attentif à
to outlaw : mettre hors la loi
humane/understanding : humain/
compréhensif
to prohibit : interdire
a prohibition : une interdiction
regular : régulier
irregular : irrégulier
the regulations : le règlement
a rule : une règle
self-control : le contrôle de soi
a smoke alarm : une alarme anti-feu
to sensitise : sensibiliser
sensitive : sensible
to warn : prévenir
a warning : un avertissement

Health-consciousness : l'attention à la santé

acute pain : la douleur aiguë
to burst into tears : éclater en larmes
AIDS : le SIDA
HIV-positive : séropositif
to complain : se plaindre
a complaint : une plainte
to crack up (fam.) : craquer
to cry/to weep : pleurer
to diagnose : diagnostiquer
a diagnosis : un diagnostic
catching diseases : des maladies contagieuses
an epidemic : une épidémie
a drug/a medicine : un médicament
to exercise/to work out : faire de l'exercice
a stroke : une attaque, un AVC
the disabled : les handicapés

to distress : déprimer
an emergency : une urgence
to enable to : permettre, rendre capable de
fit/in good shape/trim : en forme
fitness : la forme
a GP (General Practitioner) : un généraliste
a hospital : un hôpital
an illness/a sickness : une maladie
first aid : les premiers secours
the paramedics : les agents du SAMU
a healthy lifestyle : un mode de vie sain
a heart attack : une crise cardiaque
an injury : une blessure
a wound : une plaie
to irritate : irriter
irritation : l'irritation
a nervous breakdown : une crise de nerfs
the noise level : le niveau de bruit

a nurse : une infirmière
a male nurse : un infirmier
a patient : un patient
the sick : les malades
a shock : un choc
to shock : choquer
specific : spécial
stress : la pression, le stress
stressed : stressé
a sufferer/a victim : une victime
a casualty : une victime = un mort
to sustain : soutenir
unhealthy : malsain, en mauvaise santé
a vaccine : un vaccin
a shot : une piqûre
callisthenics : la culture physique
weak : faible
weakness : la faiblesse

Exercises

1. Find equivalents in the text for the following words or phrases

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. to fall down suddenly | b. an organic breakdown |
| c. to die for lack of food | d. a poll |
| e. the demands for school achievement | f. to perform brilliantly |
| g. to find evasion | h. nearly |
| i. financed | j. given birth to |
| k. an abundant source of income | l. as can easily be understood |

2. Exploring the text

1. Say on what occasion this column was written.
2. Say what the three cases mentioned in the first paragraph have in common.
3. What do the two surveys indicate?
4. List the reason mentioned to explain such a phenomenon.
5. Why can the South-Korean online-gaming industry be said to be a cash cow?
6. Say what the aim of the Gaming Shutdown Law is.
7. What other solution is used?

3. Essay (200 words \pm 10%)

Do you agree that online-gaming is a real form of addiction or do you see positive effects to it ?

4. Translate into French

When I was six or seven, we tended to stay at home and play a board game, or sometimes even with my toy soldiers. I can still remember a routine we developed around that time. My mother would emerge from the house, still singing, step on to the grass and sit on the swing. I would be waiting up on my mound at the back of the garden, and come running up to her pretending to be furious. "Get off, Mother! You'll break it!" I would jump up and down before the swing, waving my arms about. "You're much too big! You'll break it!" And my mother, pretending she could neither see nor hear me, would swing herself higher and higher, all the time continuing to sing at the top of her voice some song like: "Daisy, Daisy, Give Me Your Answer Do". When all my pleading had failed, I would – the logic of this now eludes me – attempt a succession of headstands on the grass in front of her. Her singing would then become punctuated by gales of laughter, until eventually she would come down from the swing, and we would go off to play with whatever I had prepared for us.

Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans*, 2000.

Online Cravings

In late July, a 21-year-old online-gaming addict was found dead in his home in Incheon, South Korea. He'd played intensely since graduating from high school, rarely sleeping or leaving his room, according to family members. In 2005, a 28-year-old man collapsed and died from organ failure after playing for 50 hours straight. In 2009, a married couple from Suwon immersed themselves in a game where they took care of a virtual infant while their real baby starved to death.

South Korean authorities think that these fatalities are part of a much larger national problem: gaming addiction. Two big surveys found that more than one in 10 Korean adolescents are at high risk for Internet addiction and that one in 20 are already seriously addicted.

South Korean schoolchildren face extreme academic pressure, and they have few after-school activities to participate in. So online gaming is one of the few places where the average student can excel or escape. And superstars have been born from the gaming world. Players like Jung Myung-hoon and Yo Hwan-lim earn close to \$ 400,000 a year battling it out in professional StarCraft leagues – one of 10 major gaming leagues in the country. They are watched by millions of fans in competitions broadcast by two of Korea's major TV channels. The gaming leagues are sponsored by big corporations such as SK Telecom and Samsung. The popularity of the competitions has spawned the World Cyber Games, the Olympics of the gaming world. South Korea has won the grand-champion title for the past three years.

In a nation where more than half of the nearly 50 million people play online games, the industry has become a cash cow. In 2008 the online-gaming industry earned \$ 1.1 billion in exports, more than half of the country's entire overseas revenue. Games like *StarCraft*, first published in 1998, have sold 11 million copies worldwide (4.5 million in South Korea alone).

Understandably, it's going to be difficult to regulate such a massive industry. But the government is intent upon trying. Next month, a Gaming Shutdown Law, dubbed the Cinderella Law, is set to go into effect. The law will prevent underage gamers from playing online, whether via PCs, handheld device, or in gaming arcades from midnight until 6 am. Just how the government will enforce the law is a subject of debate. One possibility would see minors registering their national identification cards online, but many suspect hard-core Korean gamers will simply use stolen ID numbers. While the shutdown law isn't perfect, many parents appreciate the government's intervention efforts. Adults work late and are often unable to take the necessary steps to control their children's online-gaming behavior.

Today, hundreds of hospitals and clinics have installed government-subsidized programs to treat gaming addiction. Online multiplayer role-playing games and first-person shooter games are considered the most addictive. The clinic treats patients with a mix of medication, therapy, and magnetic stimulation of the frontal cortex, which is hyperfunctional in gaming addicts.

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