The Epidemic of Electronic Games

Sheikh
Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

Zad Group

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Introduction

All praise is for Allaah the Exalted, the One who said (what means): {*And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allaah, so will you not reason?*} [QUR'AAN 6:32] May peace and blessings be on the one who was sent as a mercy for all creation and on his pure and righteous family, Companions, and wives, as well as on those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection.

To proceed:

One of the most emphasized obligations of the religion is to glorify Allaah the Exalted and declare Him transcendent above what the unjust say, as well as protecting the honor of monotheism from those things that conflict with it or denigrate it, exalting the rituals, rites, and sanctities of Islaam, while loving and defending it.

One of the biggest trusts placed on guardians – fathers, thinkers, and callers to Islaam – is to educate and raise generations on pure monotheism, and protect them from beliefs and actions of polytheism and disbelief, and being attached from it, its symbols, or its people. Likewise, to raise them to perform acts of obedience, loving them, glorifying them, and being keen on them. One must also make them shun reprehensible and immoral matters in action and mannerisms, and should protect children from them and from things that lead to them.

Deviant beliefs and ideologies have sneaked in during our present times by new means of technology, both audio and visual. One of the things that has the biggest effects is video games that have become widespread lately, and that have made the hearts of young, and sometimes even old people addicted to them. The pagan countries of the East and the disbelieving countries of the West have used these things to promote what they wish, regardless if it is a plot or a part of the war to corrupt the Muslim generations. They use it as a means to serve and promote their thoughts and beliefs to the widest possible range of people, or merely trying to earn monetary profit by way of seduction and excitement, even if that is at the expense of the beliefs and manners of others.

Whatever their cause is, the visible outcome is that there is a negative impact on young and upcoming Muslims in their beliefs, manners, and behavior that vary from severe to weak in terms of the level of deviancy and how quickly one is affected by it, how long they remain playing the game, depending on the contents of the game and how attractive it is, as well as on the age, comprehension, and the duration for which one plays the game.

Researchers and educators who are specialized in this field have been warning against the disastrous effects of these video games on our children, which have increased to epidemic proportion in recent times. It has reached the state that a buyer is in a state of complete confusion, regarding which game should they buy from the ever-increasing range of games that are available.

In the following pages, we add our voice to the voices of those warning against these games, clarifying to fathers, mothers, and guardians the dangers of these games and highlighting the ways in which they contradict the belief system and legislation of Islaam, and how they plant many deviant ideas in our youth. We will also clarify some of the other harms of these games or some of the harms of going overboard in playing them, in order to clarify the legal position of Islaam that everyone must know, after we understand the various types and genres of these games.

We ask Allaah for help and divine aid, and to give us inspiration of the guided and correct path.

Why speak about video games ?

The battle between the followers of the truth and the followers of falsehood is constant until the Day of Resurrection, and each group utilizes its utmost ability and energy in this battle. The methods of the people of falsehood in corruption have multiplied. Today, their soldiers are different, and the battle itself is different. It is no longer a classical battle, rather, it is a battle against a new type of corruption that is presented in an attractive and beautiful way.

The story begins with the advent of movies, soap-operas, and with the popularity of movie and television stars who have ensnared the hearts of our young boys and girls and have

become role-models for them. Our youth follow news reports about them, keep up with their updates and the latest celebrity gossip. With the development of the latest technology, new means of mass communications became widespread and with this, a new war has begun. It is a war that aims to estrange Muslim society, pushing it away from their religion, rendering it ignorant regarding its realities, and changing it to a society that is open to all cultures without preserving its unique personality, so that they lose their identity and have nothing to hold onto or defend.

This is a war that focuses on a group of people that is very important to us all. A group that represents our promising future and beautiful wishes and aspirations; it is a group that is most inclined to accept every new thing and adapt quickly. They are our progeny and children; the age group that innocently interacts with things around them. They absorb information, store it in their own mind and incorporate it into their behavior which determines their course and direction after reaching puberty.

As for the soldiers of the battle, they are computers and video game consoles. These machines have taken over the minds of our children and young men and women. They have introduced new customs and cultures to our children; rather, they have introduced beliefs that contradict Islaam.

It should be known that some of the producers of a number of these games did not produce them with the intention to corrupt the Muslims nor are they targeted at them; the intention was purely profit or to spread their own ideas. However, the final result is that these games played a big role

in ideological warfare, without the guardians of these youth being aware.

Following the widespread use of computers, video games also spread, especially PlayStation, which has become the most popular game these days. Our children and youth have been tested and tried by these consoles, to the extent that Muslim children and youth cannot imagine how their life would be without a PlayStation.

The advent and spread of these games not only spread Western culture which we are introduced to through video games, rather, it has been combined with Eastern culture. So, these games have combined the beliefs of the disbelieving West, with paganism of the atheistic East, in order to produce a new blend of sin and disbelief.

During the past years, the effects of these video games have become clear in the lives of our children and youth, as they have affected their understanding of their religion, compliance with its rulings, and love for it. Moreover, these games consume their health and time, and have had a debilitating effect on their nerves.

Many of the things with which we surround our children are, in our view, mere leisure activities and have nothing else to them. However, they have devastating effects on our children that we are unaware of. It is futile to talk about the terrible behavioral and health effects we see in our children or, to ask about the severe weakness in education that is so obviously widespread in the classrooms. What do we expect from a child who is "secluded in one of the corners of the room with his eyes are fixated at a small screen? It shines with various bright and

moving colors. Their hands are holding onto a small controller, and their hands shake every time the controller shakes. They move their hands with anger, frantically pressing the buttons of various colors and sizes. They have ears that intently listen to electronic sounds, screams, and beats that are quiet at times, but loud at other times, in order to captivate and control the one in front of it, causing them to not be unable to hear or understand anything around them, except for it."[1]

The importance of speaking about these games, and warning against the beliefs and ideas they espouse can be summarized in the following points:

1) They have quickly spread in our homes and are found everywhere. One of the distribution managers in a company that specializes in video games has noted that the markets in Saudi Arabia – as an example to judge all other Islaamic countries – have reached the number of approximately 1,800,000 PlayStation consoles in Saudi homes, showing that more than 40% of homes in Saudi have at least one console.[2]

2) There are few educators who are aware of and raise awareness regarding the content of these games, or the associated ailments and dangers and the subsequent effects of playing them.

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[1]Al-Al`aab Al-Alaktrooniyyah wa Waaqi`u Atfaalina by Ismaa`eel Husayn Abu Za`naznah – a cultural researcher and consultant, Ash-Shaqaa'iq, 61st edition, from Rajab 1423 Hijri (September 2002 C.E.). (Pg. 29).
[2]At-Tifl Al-Mutamayyizah: 23rd edition, from Thul-Qi`dah 1425 Hijri.

3) There is a general weakness that has overcome the present generation in their religious knowledge and in their awareness of the perils around them.

4) People are completely devoted to the games, to the point that it becomes very difficult to protect them from the harmful content.

5) Many of those who use these games become addicted, to the point that it hinders their learning as well as their religious and worldly duties.

6) There are certain benefits these games have, such as avoiding corruption of the streets or creating a calm and quiet atmosphere within the home, causing many parents to be heedless regarding its great corruptive effect on religion, manners, and behavior, in exchange for these small benefits.

7) These games are extremely deceptive, since the means of corruption mix with its more innocuous contents in a manner that makes it hard to bear these issues in mind.

After examining these games, we find that the reasons that youth are attracted to them are many, such as:

1) **Excellent graphics:** This is due to the huge budgets these gaming companies control, and because they can attract professionals and innovators in all fields. They rely on experts in marketing who study and analyze the contents of the game. These companies strive constantly to make greater advancements and innovations in producing these games.

2) **The excitement factor:** These games reach the pinnacle of art in their drawings, colors, imagination, adventure, and precision of graphics and animations.

3) **The element of competition:** This is the spirit and element of attraction in these games, such as racing cars and motorbikes. Some games feature a hero who is trying to save others from a group of evil people, a criminal trying to escape the police, or a lost person in the jungle fighting wild animals. Thus, the player is in a position of competing against the enemies and the elements, which is why they are completely engrossed in the scenario.

4) **Suggested realism:** This occurs through pictures of places that have the most precise details. At times, they are living in the jungle, at times the edge of mountains, and at times, in outer space. The game takes the player from their own reality to its virtual reality. It moves their heart and mind, so that they lose all awareness of who is with or around them.

5) **The hero character:** It presents the hero in a story fashion, so that the player identifies with them and represents them throughout the game, and even afterwards. By giving them the characteristic of heroism and strength, or giving it humor and fun, so that the player interacts with it and does not wish to leave it.

Effects of the contents of games on beliefs and morals

Allaah the Exalted has made the religion of Islaam a complete religion from all angles. He the Exalted made its rulings overpower all aspects of life. There is no situation in life or any statement or action that does not have a religious ruling associated with it.

Upon reflecting on these video games, we find that the effect of their contents must be weighed on the scale of religion, since the basic principle is that every person with a sound religion or creed should be keen on promoting and making their creed apparent to the utmost extent possible. Since these games began in atheistic or disbelieving environments, they comprise many false beliefs and dispraised manners that conflict with Islaam; in fact, they are actually at war against Islaam many times.

Allaah the Exalted has made faith beloved to His slaves, and has adorned it in their hearts. Also, He the Exalted has made disbelief, sin, and disobedience undesirable to them, and has made them of the rightly-guided. However, many of these games take our youth to the exact opposite of what Allaah the Exalted Loves.
There are a number of ways that the contents of these games corrupt and are contradictory to Islaam. There are also many

ways in which they propagate deviant ideas on a varying level and scale.

We can categorize them, however, into three subcategories and discussions: corruption of beliefs, disfiguring Islaam, and ruining manners.

The first discussion: Corrupting or disfiguring correct beliefs:

Many of these games contain – either intentionally or not – aspects that corrupt the monotheism of our children, as well as the purity of their beliefs. It causes them to have beliefs that contradict Tawheed (monotheism) totally. These games, even if they are not the majority, chip away at the most important thing a person possesses, which is, their creed.

Some of these games entail:

First: Belittling Allaah the Exalted:

A person who has great protective zeal for their religion said regarding something he saw in a video game: "I was amazed at the terrors of what I said, and I was fearful that the earth would split and swallow me when I saw on the advertisement screens of one of the stores that sell video games, a game that puts an image of a deity descending in the form of a bird, then, it is fought by the hero, then, the bird ascends, and the hero throws sparks of hellfire at him. Then, the hero rides a horse that has wings and rides it towards this supposed deity. Exalted is He and high above what they say!"

It has reached the extent in some games that they describe the descent of Allaah the Exalted to earth in order to do some immoral and shameless acts. They describe him as evil and someone who spills blood. Exalted is He and high above what they say!

Another way of belittling Allaah the Exalted are the games that feature the ancient polytheism of pagan Greece, and mention that the universe has many gods, and that there are disputes among them. They also say that the deities become sick and lose their powers, which then come back once again miraculously. They also mention female goddesses.

In one of these games, the female god says to the greatest god: "I am the giver of strength. Follow what I say, and I will show you how to kill the rest of the gods."

Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allaah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allaah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.} [QUR'AAN 21:22]

What kind of a deity needs someone to teach them tricks, give them second chances, and grant them strength?! What kind of a deity needs others, gets revenge through others, and seeks refuge in someone else?!

Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {Say, [O Muhammad], "If there had been with Him [other] gods, as they say, then they [each] would have sought to the Owner of the Throne a way." Exalted is He and high above what they say by great sublimity. The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is

in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allaah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving.} **[QUR'AAN 17:42-44]**

Second: Presenting and beautifying the principles of polytheism and disbelief:

This is done by presenting the strength of deities besides Allaah, and depicting their overwhelming strength that cannot be overcome, or, by showing a hero that cannot be killed or die, or that the safety of the world revolves around the hero of the game who does superhuman things that ordinary humans cannot possibly do.

Rather than raising our children on monotheism and sincerity, as in when Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {Say, "He is Allaah, [who is] One. Allaah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent."} **[QUR'AAN 112:1-4]** we bring them someone to tell them in affirmative language about these polytheistic beliefs and practices. After monotheism, should our children learn about this major polytheism regarding Allaah the Exalted, the Lord of all that exists, due to our own heedlessness?

Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {Say, "Shall we invoke instead of Allaah that which neither benefits us nor harms us and be turned back on our heels after Allaah has guided us? [We would then be] like one whom the devils enticed [to wander] upon the earth confused, [while] he has companions

inviting him to guidance, [calling], 'Come to us.' " Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allaah is the [only] guidance; and we have been commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds.} **[QUR'AAN 6:71]**

Third: Teaching and glorifying sorcery:

This is accomplished through a number of games, such as:

- The game based on the famous movie **Harry Potter**, about a boy who studies at **Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry** rides a broom, flies, and points at things with his stick, and moving them. He casts spells and changes the way they look.
- The game **Castle Shikigami** consists of magic, sorcery, utilizing spirits, and reading horoscopes.
- The game based on the famous show **Yu Gi Oh!** It contains cards of magic, beasts, Pharaohs, and the idea of reincarnation and replacement of souls, so that the soul of the Pharaoh is replaced within the soul of the hero, after he solves the riddle his grandfather gave him.

Fourth: Connection to constellations and stars:

One transgresses against the Unseen in some games, and develops false beliefs regarding constellations and stars.
In a game called **The Bouncer**, a girl named **Dominique Cross** plays the role of the lucky star for all. She brings about good luck and wealth for all those she meets and sits with.

Thus, our children – due to our own heedlessness – learn that luck and fortune has a star, and bad luck also has a star, just as the lying, deceiving fortunetellers claim.

They also come to believe that this woman brings good looks and great wealth. So, in a way, she provides sustenance and happiness. Exalted is Allaah and high above what the unjust say!

Fifth: Belittling our Prophet, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, and disfiguring his image:

A criminal Danish game company began marketing a new game by showing the Messenger of Mercy, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, in the form of a plastic action figure, stepping on another plastic action figure which was supposedly signifying the Mother of the Believers, `Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her.
The company issued an announcement of this game with an image of the scenario that is mentioned above.

In English, it was written: "Play as if you are the Prophet Muhammad who had 23 wives, one of whom was `Aa'ishah, a girl of six years."  This is a continuation of the filthy and disgusting campaign against Islaam and our Noble Prophet, Muhammad, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam.

Also, in the advertisement, the word "halal," appears, meaning that this game is Halaal (lawful).[1]   This was another way of mocking, making fun, and distorting the religion.

Sixth: Attachment to symbols of disbelief:

Many of these games feature glorification of priests, rabbis, and worshippers of Buddha. Many of the heroes of these games wear the cross. During soccer games, when the player enters the building or scores a goal, they make the sign of the cross on their body.
Some games necessitate that the player must earn or attain the cross in order to continue playing, to get an extra life, or to earn energy.

This makes the player attach special significance to the cross and their heart inclines to it throughout the game.
Therefore, through these games, the belief of the crucifixion of Jesus becomes established in our children. That is a belief that Allaah the Exalted ruled as a lie in His Book when He Said (what means):
{And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allaah." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them.} [QUR'AAN 4:157]

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[1]Naba' News, Friday, 20th of October, 2006 C.E.

Seventh: Belittling the symbols and rituals of Islaam, and removing their honor from the souls of the youth:

In some games, the player is told to destroy the most number of mosques to earn the most points. A father said: "While my children were playing video games, I heard the sound of the Athaan mixed with the sounds of bombs and gunshots. I was astonished to find that my son, who is not more than 12 years old, was playing a game that destroys mosques and their contents. It is hard for a 12-year-old to realize that he is earning points at the expense of destroyed mosques." He also said: "When I asked my son about why he was destroying the mosques, he said that he cannot reach the next level or win unless he did that!"

In one of the games, if you want to win, then you must shoot a number of copies of the Noble Qur'aan, in order to hear the sounds and shouts of victory. Likewise, the Athaan, or the person entering the mosque, both should not stop you from catching and killing them inside the mosque!

Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {That [is so]. And whoever honors the symbols of Allaah - indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.} [QUR'AAN 22:32]

Eighth: Love and imitation of the disbelievers:

This occurs through showing them as heroic figures, possessing strength and honor. This makes many of those who play these games become attached to the characters of the hero of these games, and love them. The result of this is that

they emulate their gestures, actions and even their clothes. We have seen people who wear necklaces, and those who wear very short clothes on the streets. All these things are the effects of these games.

A mother tells the story of her son, saying: "One day, I was surprised to find my son, who had not passed **6** years of age wearing a big necklace, wearing a cap like rap singers, and moving and acting in the way they act. I closed my eyes and reopened them to make sure what I was seeing was true, and found that the scenario did not change! I did not hit him or act violently towards him. I took in the severity of the situationand treated it delicately. I began searching for the reasons calmly, until I reached the root of the corruption, so I removed it from home without regretting it one bit. The source of corruption was the PlayStation."

The second discussion: Distorting the image of Islaam and Muslims:

This is by describing them as barbarians, destructive, terrorists, ignorant, stupid, and other attributes that repel people that show the hatred and enmity they possess towards Islaam and Muslims.

Video games of this type have become rampant in recent years, which is an extension of the war against Islaam and those who propagate it after linking the accusation of terrorism to it. This shows what Allaah the Exalted Said is true when He Said (what means): {Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have

certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason.} [QUR'AAN 3:118]

One of the reports by customs officials explained why they prevented a particular game from entering the country, and said: "It contains defamation of Islaam and shows it to be a religion of terrorism."

This becomes clear through many examples, such as:

First example: Terrorism and the Qur'aan:

A game known as 'First to Fight' is set in a Muslim area in Beirut in 2006, where some Muslim terrorists are taking shelter and refuge. The heroes of the game try to plunge into their areas and overcome them.

A Western university in the game is shown to be under siege. The heroes of the game infiltrate the Islaamic library and kill its guards and those in it. Then, the outcome of the victory becomes clear, as in, there are Islaamic books on the floor; all of them have the name: **"Lessons of the Noble Qur'aan."**

This is how the story of heroism begins, by protecting the Western university, the symbol of the triumphant forces.

It ends with being victorious over the Muslims, with their religious symbols thrown on the floor, as well as their books from which they learn **"terrorism"!**

This is something that does not need any further comment. It is enough to believe that this is right before our children.

Second example: Announcing to the people that Islaam has been destroyed:

At the end of one of the games, the hero who is on the verge of being victorious is shown shooting his last bullets at the mosque, killing the guards in it. At the time the hero is victorious, you can hear the sound of the Athaan, and it is as if it is an announcement to people that Islaam and Muslims have been defeated, and that they have submitted to their enemies so that they can do whatever they want to them.

Instead of teaching our children to honor the symbols and rites of Allaah, which is from the piety of the heart, and establish the sentiments through the Athaan, to glorify the rites of Allaah and to disavow themselves from the disbelieving religions, these games come and establish in their souls in a very despicable and cunning way, that victory belongs to those who destroy the symbols of Allaah the Exalted.

Third example: The Qur'aan and death:

When a frightening scene or climax occurs or there is the depiction of an incident that ends with brutal murder, some games play a background recitation of the Qur'aan, in the voice of a well-known reciter who has a beautiful voice.
This is what some video games feature today.

Through these games, in the moments when there is a lapse in our attention, the child learns that a terrible death is associated with the recitation of the Qur'aan. So, the psyche of the child becomes fearful of the Qur'aan.

Why? Because every time someone in that game dies, he hears the sound and voice of that reciter and those verses.
This is what the enemies of Allaah the Exalted want.

They want to convince our children and youth that the general Islaamic environment is tied to death. They incorporate ideas in these games that the Qur'aan talks about death, the Prophetic Hadeeth talks about death, and the lectures of the scholars and callers talk about death, as if there is nothing in this religion except death and talking about death.

Children of these ages until reaching their youth like to enjoy their lives, and they do not want their lives to be made difficult.

These games give them the equation that religion=death. Due to that, you find them disassociating with anything that associates with Islaam in the least bit.

Fourth example: Islaamic states and entities have the principle of destruction and terrorism, and their final result is that they will be destroyed:
There is a game that shows that Islaamic countries are countries of terrorism and destruction.

This game has a straightforward story.
It is not hidden or symbolic, and does not need much intelligence or analysis to understand this meaning. It is so clear that it does not need any of that.

It is the story of how the terroristic kingdom is destroyed by alliance troops. In the introduction to the game, a short clip shows the ruler as a bearded man with an evil look telling his people: "We have built, together, a great country on the ruins of the old country, and together, we will build Africa! However, before building becomes facilitated, we must first destroy."

This is how the Islaamic kingdom and its ruler are shown, in a repelling light. It is the image of destruction, and the image of a city built on destruction and ruins of other cities!

Destruction is not a onetime situation, as we see in the case of the Muslim ruler, rather, it is the general philosophy of this kingdom. It rules by the strategy of enmity to others. Rather than dealing with others based on the etiquette of war and peace, he destroys first and before anything else.

Then, the introduction continues. The alliance forces send a messenger to this president or leader. The messenger is shown as being extremely submissive, out of fear of this agitated beast. The leader says that the messenger of the alliance should be killed. At this, loud shouts of encouragement and approval from the Muslim nation rend the air!

After this deceptive introduction, the filthy game begins. The war is set in an Islaamic country. The elevations and topographic area is clear. The alliance moves forward while the leader of the Muslims is in a crisis.

His helper asks him to seek the help of the private forces, and tells him to think about other options.

The leader responds in a very repelling way: "It is either victory or martyrdom; which do you choose?" The discussion is translated throughout the scene. His helper says: **"Victory, my master."**

What do we expect to settle in the hearts of our children through this conversation? What will this image leave in their minds when they read when Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {Say, "Do you await for us except one of the two best things.} [QUR'AAN 9:52]

Shaykh 'Abd Ar-Rahmaan As-Si'di, may Allaah have mercy on him, said while explaining the verse: "Either, being victorious over the enemy and earning the Hereafter or worldly rewards, or martyrdom, as in, one of the highest levels of creation, and one of the highest levels to Allaah."[1]

The game ends with the alliance forces being victorious. They destroy the terrorist kingdom. The Muslim troops submit, and the alliance forces kill them. So, it is defeat, submission, and death!

One of the soldiers of this kingdom says: **"Allaah is Greater,"** but then, one of the alliance forces kills him. It is as if they are telling the Muslim child that your Great Deity will not help you when you are in our control!

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[1]Tayseer Al-Kareem Ar-Rahmaan (pg. 340).

Thus, there is no hiding or playing with words. It is clear and obvious enmity, and an outspoken way of saying that we, our religion, and our religious rites are foolish. Allaah the Exalted was truthful when He Said (what means):

{Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason.} [QUR'AAN 3:119]

Fifth example: Arabs are savages, ignorant, and cowards:
The game known as Metal Slug consists of giving two marines missions in Arab countries. These countries are clearly showed in this game. The main goal of these marines is to kill as many Arabs as possible.

Those marines go about fighting the Muslim Arabs who use dirty tactics in battle. They do not face their enemy in battle. At the same time, the American hero uses his advanced weapons to easily exterminate the Arabs.

Sixth example: Muslim=terrorist:
The negative images regarding the Muslim are not limited to a particular country that engages in terrorism and destruction, rather, the evil and negative image is cast on Muslim individuals, regardless of their fields of specialization. Some games create images and names of imaginary individuals, so that they can distort them and what they represent, such as:

- Muhammad ibn Faysal Aal Khaleefah: A Saudi Shaykh who is an Arab chemist. He aligns himself with an organization that is dubious in that it creates

prohibited biological materials. They wait for Muhammad ibn Faysal to arrive in his Arab dress to his hotel, then he is captured, his guards are killed, and then he himself is killed.

- Taariq `Abd Al-Lateef: A scholar that likes working in seclusion, away from people's sight. He has very dangerous ideas. He tried to change the genetic code and selling samples of it.

Just like that, when the image of the Arab Muslim is presented, regardless if they are from the Gulf, such as Aal Khaleefah, or otherwise, such as Taariq `Abd Al-Lateef, it is presented in a repelling and negative image. Even if the person is a scientist, their science is only a part of their terrorism, destruction, aggression and business in genetic manufacturing!

So, what would be the real image of such a society? If these are the cream of society, and its scholars, how would the common folk be?

Games that try to distort Islaam and Muslims:

Philip Taylor, professor of modern history at Leeds University, wrote in his important book, 'Munitions of the Mind,' wherein he speaks about propaganda during war, or during wartime media: "If war is essentially an organized communication of violence, propaganda and psychological warfare are essentially organized processes of persuasion. In wartime they attack a part of the body that other weapons cannot reach in an attempt to affect the way in which participants perform on the field of battle."

The West has always utilized its media to frighten its enemies, such as the Muslims. They worked to plant psychological defeat in the Muslims even before their armies reached them. The Muslims began to follow the disbelievers in everything, because they feel their defeat was imminent, and the defeated one is always infatuated with blindly following those that defeated them.

Then, they took the next step. The psychological war was not only geared towards the children who had reached puberty alone, rather, they transferred it to our children, planting the seeds that take a long time, but produce fruits in the distant future.

This time, they did not suffice with trying to convince with speeches from the media that are directed to the listener and consumer, rather, through video games, they made our children participate in ideas manufactured by the West, and made them agree and defend them.

The evils and harms of these games are not limited to Muslim children alone, but it is one of the biggest ways of keeping Western children away from Islaam, by distorting the teachings and image of Islaam in their minds. Consequently, a much greater effort is required to fix that image, so that we can call them to the correct religion.

The third discussion: Ruining manners and making reprehensible matters beloved:

This is the predominant effect of many games, which differ in the type of dispraised action they feature, how strong the call to that action is, and if the action is the point of the game

originally, or if it has occurred within the game as a result of something else or indirectly.

No one can deny the effects of these games on the youth, even if they are affected by it to different degrees. Many of these games are mixed with various dispraised actions, such as killing, stealing, gambling, dancing, and other reprehensible character traits. That leads a person to being lenient in some prohibited matters; actually, it leads to endearing these prohibited matters to the players.

We can divide these harmful character traits into three main categories:

The first category: Crime, cheating, stealing, and so forth:

The hero in one of the games speaks to our youngsters: "Follow my teachings, complete this experience and you will get your souls back."

The game begins with showing some film stars, gambling clubs, and women. Then, it shows a clear call to enter the battle square to the evil world, through the previous words we mentioned.

The scenes then begin. Gangs take control of police men. There is someone carrying a gun, and he is killing all those who stand before him with his gun. Even a woman that is in front of him, and it appears she wishes to enter her home, is killed. His killing is not any ordinary type of killing, he shoots one bullet that removes the head and neck from the body!

The hero then appears with women. Following this, there are scenes of killing with guns, cutting stomachs open, and necks

being cut. The hero steals a car, beats the owner of the car and drops him in the street, then uses it to go on his adventures that are rife with women and filthy relationships.

In another game, the player knows they are breaking the law, but they continue doing it, and they hide from the police and laugh at them! It is an explicit call to corruption, and clearly instructs a child to love crimes and disturbances!

Another game invites the player to become a criminal: "Be a criminal. Try to complete missions away from the eyes of police, otherwise, you will be an easy target!"

This is how our children are called to being victorious in the world of evil and crime, and to keep making inroads in it till their last breath. As long as one hopes that they will be granted another 'life', what is the problem with adventures and testing, even trying death itself?

Some of these games depict casinos where the player plays the most famous gambling games. The player goes to Las Vegas, and participates in various types of gambling.

There is a game called Grand Theft Auto, or GTA, which is the most popular and most circulated video game. Almost every home that has a console has it. It tell us the story of a thief that is being chased by the police. He kills people, steals their money and cars, burglarizes cars, engages in immorality, utters repugnant words, gambles, and drinks alcohol.

The second category: Sex, pornography, and moral indecencies:

Educational researchers have mentioned that it is possible that some children develop sexual feelings before reaching puberty,

and that signs of sexual maturity begin at the age of 9 for 10% of children.[1]   Many parents imagine that children do not care for or heed sexuality, which is not always the case. The truth is that sexual activity might be something that some children have a desire for at a very early age.

Some game producers play on this by creating games that introduce sex and pornography to our young children.

These are some examples of what is presented to our children regarding sex and pornography, by way of games:

1) In some games, there is blatant nudity throughout. Most of the time, that image has nothing to do with the game in the first place, showing that the point was just to show some nudity, regardless if it has anything to do with the game or not. Examples are racecar and wrestling games, for example, that show scantily clad women holding banners to mark the beginning or end of the race or match.

2) Some games begin with live images of naked dancing women, or during intervals during the game.

3) There is a game that has the prize of women removing their clothes. Every time the player wins at some point, women remove some of what they are wearing; to the point that the final prize is that women become naked.

4) Some games have some sexual allusions to homosexuality.

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[1] Mas'ooliyyat Al-Ab Al-Muslim fi Tarbiyat Al-Walad fi Marhalati At-Tufoolah, by `Adnaan Saalih Baa Haarith (Pg 468).

5) **There are games known for their sexual nature. The company that produces these games has begun using technology that has not been seen or used previously in classic video games, such as the passion index, or index of sensation, which transforms what happens on the screen to sensations that appear in audible form, or physical movements of the virtual three-dimensional figure.**

It is very disturbing that virtual sex simulations have found their way to our homes through the Internet, which has recently become a door to everything, including good and bad.
A mother of seven recalls her dismay at witnessing explicit sexual content such that she screamed out of fear for her children from the terror of the calamity she saw.

This mother said: "I have not tasted a full night's sleep since I saw a sexual movie on one of the PlayStation games that my children play. I wish I had not seen anything. I ask: 'How did these games enter our homes? How are they sold openly in stores to our children?'"

The unfortunate and embarrassing thing is that our boys and children are the ones who choose the naked, or semi-naked, woman themselves.

You find the game presenting to our children many different choices, and they may choose the hero they want. However, many of our children are attracted to these semi-naked women, and choose them to use in battle in the game.

The third category: Vulgarity and obscenity:

- Some games teach children the filthiest words used to curse, damn, and degrade others. Sometimes, the word would be in a place that it does not belong, such as when just asking for some help. It is as if the intent is simply filling the mind of the child with these filthy words.
- Some games have the words 'Arabic copy' written on them. However, the only Arabic words are that of cursing and damning.

Insults and cursing are not a part of the characteristics of the Muslim. The Prophet, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, said:

"A believer does not curse often, does not frequently taunt and defame others, is not vulgar, and is not obscene."[1]

- There are games that are specifically for teaching music and dancing to the youth.

The effects of playing video games

The previous section focuses on the content of the games which conflicts with or contradicts the religion of Islaam. This is the greater evil and the more dangerous aspect of these games, which have a bad impact on the behavior of children that affects them to a lesser or greater extent.

There are, however, other negative behavioral effects that one gets from playing too much video games, even if we were to

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[1] Reported by Ahmad (3948) and Al-Arnaa'oot ruled it as authentic.

turn a blind eye to the contents that conflict with the religion of Islaam.

These negative effects are of three types:

1) **Effects which** are specific to us Muslims, because they cause negligence of religious duties or falling into unlawful things.
2) **Effects which** are warned against by Muslims as well as Western intellectuals. These are the effects dealing specifically with social morality.
3) **Effects which** are general for everyone on earth, because they deal with psychological and physical health, as well as economic matters.

The first type: Negative effects on religious duties:

First: Missing prayers:

These games attract and lure the players into sitting in front of the screen for long hours. Every time they complete a level or part, they move on to the next level which is even more exciting and attractive.

Due to that, it becomes hard for the player to leave these games to get up, even for prayer. So, they delay the prayers past their time, and it might even lead them to abandon prayer altogether.

Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): *{But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil.}* **[QUR'AAN 19:59]**

Second: Disobedience to parents:

Some of our children could spend the entire day before the console. They dislike being with people and avoid them, preferring their games. This makes them disobey their parents, and not follow their orders, so that they do not have to abandon these games.

Disobedience might lead to something even greater than that. One of the callers to Islaam said: "A father called me, and mentioned that he has a 13-year-old son and his son getscramps in his hands. When that happens, his urge to become violent increases, and he would even hit his mother at times if she was next to him. After asking many questions, it was revealed that he was playing PlayStation approximately 5 hours a day."[1]

Allaah the Exalted Said (what means):

{And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "Uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small."} [QUR'AAN 17:23-24]

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[1]Khaalid Al-Hulaybi in an article called 'Video games, the danger, and the replacement.'
Link: http://saaid.net/tarbiah/157.htm

Third: Cutting ties of the womb:

If a child or young person stays in front of these consoles during their free time, when will they find time to maintain ties of kinship? When will they visit their grandfather, grandmother, uncles, and brothers? Actually, these games might even cause family discord between brothers and sisters, as mentioned previously.

This is the story of a father who threw his son out of the house due to these games.
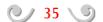
Al-Watan newspaper reported that a father used to watch his sons aged 20 and 8 years play a soccer game on PlayStation. The older brother was much better at the game than the younger one.

Their father wished to make his younger son happy, and told the older brother to let his brother win against him. When the young brother scored a goal against his older brother, the older brother became very angry and tied the game with a goal, then scored another goal to win, causing the game to end with him being victorious.

That made the younger brother begin to cry, and the father became angry with his older son, broke the console, hit his son, and threw him out of the house. He remained with his paternal uncle until his father allowed him to return, with the condition that he does not bring the PlayStation back into the home, otherwise, something regrettable would happen.[1]

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[1]Khaalid Al-Hulaybi in an article called 'Video games, the danger, and the replacement.'
  Link: http://saaid.net/tarbiah/157.htm

Someone narrated an incident regarding a group of young relatives playing on a game console: "A group of children from my family gathered at one of their homes to play on a console. In the beginning each of them said that they would all have a turn to play. They arranged themselves based on this.

The first player began playing one of the games, and played for fifteen minutes. When the turn of the second player came, he wanted to play the same game, but he made it into thirty minutes. The third player objected to that, but he forced his opinion through his physical strength. When he finished, the third player wanted to play another game longer than that of the second player in order to annoy the second player. They began to fight violently, which led to each of the mothers getting involved, and each mother was defending her son. The problem between the youngsters led to cutting ties of the womb with the elders, and it lasted a long time."

This is how these consoles bring a new cause to the list of reasons for familial and societal discord. One could compile an even longer section on the link between video games and problems between the spouses, father and son, brothers, and so forth.

Fourth: Negligence of the rights of the wife:

Those who neglect the rights of their wives are not our children, rather, they are our youth and men, sometimes. This calamity has reached even those who are past the age of childhood and teenage years. Many wives complain of how their husbands are busy with these games. There are actual stories of women who asked their husbands for divorce

because they cannot bear their husbands, who did not care about their existence anymore, and because the husbands' greatest concern was playing these games. O You (Allaah) who makes hearts and minds steadfast, make our minds and hearts steadfast.

Fifth: Creating disagreements and problems between friends:

Those who play these games with their friends in internet cafes note that some of these games incite anger, agitation, and short tempers, to the point of friends cutting ties with one another after completing a game. They point to how the game, in the beginning, is leisure and fun, then, it turns to competition, which turns to violence and discord.

This is something that makes those people turn far away from Islaamic brotherhood that the religion enjoins Muslims to maintain. `Abdullaah ibn `Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that Allaah's Messenger, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, said:

"The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim: they do not oppress one another, and do not hand one another in. Whoever comes to the aid of their brother, Allaah will come to their aid."[1]

Likewise, cursing and vulgarity that occurs between the competitors usually, as well as stubbornness when playing, all leads to ruining the ties between Muslims.

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[1] Reported by Al-Bukhaari (2310) and Muslim (2580).

Sixth: Desensitization and becoming accustomed to some prohibited things while playing:

1) Gambling:

One of the ways gambling has become widespread among our youth is due to playing video games. Two players play the same game, and the loser pays for the price of the game, or the price of dinner or a drink. A professional player said: "These games cause problems between the youth, especially in playing soccer, since in the cafes, the people would challenge one another and would bet on who win, and sometimes, it would lead to the loser paying for dinner and drinks."

A father says: "When going to work, I found a large group of children gathered before a store. My curiosity led me to ask what they were doing. I found them gathered around a PlayStation. I went to one of the children and asked: 'Who pays for these games?' I was taken aback when he said: 'It depends on how good the player is.' I asked how, and he said: 'The loser pays for the game!'"

It is well known that this method of payment is not allowed, and is a type of forbidden gambling in Islaam. Due to playing these games, some of our children try to deceive their fathers, making them get used to this despicable characteristic from a young age.

2) Listening to music:

Rarely do you find a game devoid of music on all levels. It is no secret that listening to music is forbidden in Islaam, since it entails driving people away from remembrance of Allaah and reciting His Book.

This is especially the case if the music presented has lyrics that talk of indecency, promiscuity, and features loud noises. There is no doubt that listening for long periods while playing makes music beloved to the youth, which usually leads to a long lasting relationship with music.

The second type: Negative effects on good manners:
These effects are rejected and fought by Muslims as well as Western intellectuals who care about the benefits of their generations and their stability and security.

Some of these negative effects are:

First: Teaching crime, theft, and the subsequent result of this, which is increase in the phenomenon of violence:
Some of the missions that the player must embark on in some games are assassinations of some members of a particular gang, burglaries, stealing weapons from an army base, robbing trains and trucks, and so forth.
These types of games have led to an increase in the phenomenon of violence.

Researchers have established that playing violent video games such as Mortal Combat increase aggressive impulses and urges. Researchers have warned that violent video games might be more harmful than watching movies or T.V. shows depicting aggression, because it is more interactive, and it requires the

player to take the role of the aggressor in the game, or pair with the character in the game.[1]

Researchers have said that most studies on the link between violence and video games conclude that violent video games can increase violent behavior in children, teenagers, and youth. An analysis of twenty years of study shows that the effects could be both immediate and long-term.

A study showed that children who played violent video games for less than ten minutes then took a personality test displayed attributes and actions that were violent, after only a short period of playing.[2]

Those who studied students between the ages of 13-15 found that children that spend more time playing violent video games are more violent than other children, and are more likely to argue with other students. The results that were presented at the yearly meeting of the APA (American Psychological Association) led to a resolution that recommended a decrease in the violent content in video games and interactive media that children and youth use. The meeting urged parents, teachers, and educators to help the youth in making decisions that show greater awareness with regard to the games that they play.[3]

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[1] This research is published in a magazine published by the American Psychological Association (APA). It was published by BBC Online 4/24/2000.

[2] Link:
http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=31&issue=9763&article=318760

[3] Majallat Al-Islaam Al-Yawm, 14th edition, Thul-Hijjah, 1426 Hijri (pg. 50).

Dr. 'Abbaas 'Abd As-Salaam said: "The child becomes aggressive, learns to love violence, adventure, and theft due to their addiction to such games." That is because the child tries to identify themselves with the characters in these games.
Most of these games are based on hitting, killing, and harshness; the player and those watching relive these instances, causing them to emulate such behaviors.

Many fathers have complained of their children's aggressive behavior, as well as their aggression against their siblings by hitting them, sometimes even doing so violently.

This is all the product of their recreating the characters of such games. Likewise, emulating the drivers in some car racing games sometimes leads to traffic accidents that might be disastrous.

As such, our children have truly become easy targets for criminal indoctrination that makes heroes of criminals. Children are affected by what they watch in movies on television and try to emulate it, even scenes of hanging and suicide, participating in illicit and unlawful sexual intercourse, smoking, and so forth. So, how about these games that raise children to be a part of the game, and a partner who has an effect on the outcome of the game, and their success in the game is based on being a criminal and thief?

The effects of these games have produced some horrifying incidents. In Germany, am **18-year-old** man opened fire in a high school on a group of students present in the school. **11** were injured or killed before he killed himself. The local media

focused on how the young man was addicted to **Counter Strike,** a video game that has the goal of killing aliens. A poll done after the incident showed that 72% of the participants believed that these types of incidents have a direct connection to video games.[1]

The effects of these behaviors have made their way to our societies. A dispute between two brothers broke out in Riyadh due to a soccer game on **PlayStation,** to the point that the older brother almost killed his younger brother, after he threatened him with a knife. The result of this behavior was that the mother fell into a severe depression.

She said: "I never would have thought that Saami, my older son who was 10 years old, would threaten his brother Fahad who was merely 8 years old, with a sharp knife, due to a game like this. I heard my young son screaming loudly, and when I went to his room, I found the knife in front of his neck, and his brother was threatening him. From that day, I could not sleep."[2]

To those who deny the effects of these games on our youth, we give them this story: a Saudi child, 10 years of age, met his death after he strangled himself after imitating a **PlayStation** game, as the father of the child said. The father mentioned

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[1] Link: http://syria-news.com/var/articlem.php?id=746

[2] Al-Watan newspaper, edition 2359, on Friday, 26th of Safar, 1428 Hijri, with the title: "PlayStation match ends with a brother threatening his brother with a knife." Riyadh. By Shuja` Al-Waazi`i. Link: http://www.alwatan.com.sa/daily/2007-03-16/socity/socity05.htm

that his son did not have any psychological disorder, and was very diligent and intelligent in his studies.[1]

Second: Planting the spirit of selfishness in the child:

These games make the child selfish and teach them not to think about anything except fulfilling their desires for these games.

It constantly causes problems within the family, between brothers and sisters, regarding who gets to play first or who gets to play.

This is contrary to collective games that are played locally that make children call their friends to play with them.

Third: Developing a spirit of isolation among players:

These games give the opportunity to the player to play alone. Children sit for long periods of time without needing any friends; actually, it develops a spirit of isolation, introverted behavior, lack of cooperation, and rejecting others.

The child spends hours with this game without connecting with others.

The result is a child who is antisocial and introverted. If they are brought out in society, they do not know how to act, because they did not interact with society in order to learn social behavior.

This is contrary and the opposite of local games that have the unique quality of enabling children connect with others. Children learn social skills and roles that they will take up later

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[1] Al-Watan newspaper, 6/3/2006 C.E.

on in life, such as being a father, mother, teacher, and so forth. Most local outdoor games are played by more than two children.

It gets the child used to having direct competition with their peers, contrary to video games which make children used to being alone and introverted.

A study showed that a child who gets used to the rapid pace of technology and computer games might find some difficulty in getting used to normal daily life, wherein the speed is significantly slower. That makes the child get used to the system of loneliness and a psychological void, regardless if they are in school or at home.

Fourth: Living in imagination:

This is one of the most prominent effects of living in the imaginary world created by the games, especially for those with weak personalities and lack of productive interaction in the real world.

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allaah have mercy on him, said: "The worst people in terms of their determination and the ones who have the lowest of souls and spirits are those who are pleased with false aspirations in favor of reality. Further, they draw those false aspirations to them and adorn themselves with it. By Allaah, this is the capital of the poor, and is the most harmful thing to a person. The honor, purity, and loftiness of a soul is if it removes every thought that has no substance, is not pleased with allowing it to cross their mind, and disdains that he would have such thoughts."[1]

The third type: General behavioral effects:

People across the board, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, warn against the harmful effects of games due to their effects on acquiring worldly benefits.
These vary from health, psychological, cultural, and economic effects.

First: Cultural and scientific effects:
Games weaken the ability to acquire scientific and cultural gains. When children become engrossed in video games and kill time with them, it lessens the timeframes they can use to study and revise, as well as the severe fatigue that occurs from these games, which expends the energy of the youth. That might lead to destroying their educational promise and futures; rather, some youth leave studies and rush to the game while

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[1]Ad-Da'iwa Ad-Dawa' (pg. 107-108)

their families do not know what they are engaged in and are in a state of heedlessness.

Many academic advisors have noted that the phenomenon of sleeping in class has increased, just as lateness in attending class in the morning has become something habitual. We have heard of many youth who earned their college degrees in double the time needed, due to the effects of video games, and so forth. It might lead to having a weak intellect in the long-run, due to the lack of engagement in some beneficial aspects of life.

Second: Health effects:

There is no doubt that sitting before gaming screens for long periods of time leads to very serious harms, such as:

1) Poor health, lethargy, and obesity:

Our children remain for long times without moving in front of these consoles. That leads to muscular weakness and lethargy.

A study showed that the rise in obesity in most countries around the world goes back to spending long periods of time in front of the television or computer.

Research on more than 2000 students between the ages of 9 and 18 showed that the weights of the children rose from 54 kilograms to 60 kilograms. Also, there is a sharp decline in fitness. Children 10 years of age in the year 1985 were able to run 1.6 kilometers in no more than 8.14 minutes. However, today, children run the same distance in 10 minutes or more.[1]

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[1]At-Tifl: Al-Mutamayyizah, 23rd edition, Thul-Qi`dah, 1425 Hijri.

If we were to look at our streets today, and were to compare them with the streets **5** years ago, we will notice a great difference.

Children used to always be in the streets and playgrounds, and used to play soccer, race, or would be happy to simply get together and have conversations with their friends.

As for today, you find the streets are empty.

It is hard to find two teams playing soccer over the course of a few streets. That game is only an hour long, then everyone goes home. Why? The answer is obvious and known: our children give precedence to PlayStation over exercise and meeting their friends.

As a result, children have begun developing obese and weak bodies.

2) Injuries to the muscular system:

Many children complain of pains in their neck, especially on the left side if the child is right handed, and sometimes on the right side if the child is left handed. This is due to the speed of using the hand, pulling the neck and shoulder muscles, and sitting in an unhealthy posture.

It also leads to curvature of the back, as a result of sitting in one position daily for hours on end.

3) Impaired vision as a result of exposure to harmful radiation:

The child develops weakness in their vision, as a result of exposure to short-frequency electromagnetic radiation emitted

from the screen that they sit in front of for long hours when playing.[1]

4) Harmful effects on the mind:

Dr. Vincent Mateus, a professor of X-ray scanning at Indiana University, warned of the harmful effects of these games on the mind. British academic Dr. Gavin Cleary has called for writing warnings against these products after he and a group of doctors and specialists came across many injuries and health problems due to these games.

One of the studies notes that children who are busy with these games under go body spasms, showing the deep penetration of violence and anxiety into their limbs and blood. It has reached the point that it might even lead to strokes and seizures.

5) Repeated epileptic episodes:

After a long period of addiction to video games, the child might become afflicted with repeated epileptic episodes. This has been mentioned in a scientific study done in Japan, which clarified that children in Japan has begun suffering from such effects, because they stimulate electric charges of the brain, resulting in a susceptibility to repeated epileptic episodes.

These games might even cause paralysis. `Aseer province in Saudi Arabia recorded its first rare case of a 12-year-old child becoming paralyzed in his hands, and being incapable of moving his hands due to playing PlayStation for long hours. This led to the weakness of the nerves of the hand. The doctor

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[1] A new study by Dr. Ilhaam Muhammad Husni, a professor of medicine at `Ayn Ash-Shams University.

said that the child cannot be cured, because all the nerves of his hand had become weak and unable to perform anything. He confirmed that this sickness was due to the child's excess in using the game for 12 straight hours, and occasionally, for 20 straight hours.

6)   Neuropathy and incidence of tremor in the fingers:

This is due to the continued excitement and the use of nerves constantly employed by the player. Likewise, this occurs since many games comprise of frightening images, such as graveyards, entering morgues, and seeing dead bodies.

Dr. Diana Mack, a British specialist in pediatrics, wrote an article wherein she called parents and guardians to be careful of the dangers of video games in terms of the effects on the psychological, bodily, and social health of their children. She said that she noticed when treating children that they spend long hours watching these games and suffer from constant nervous tension, and pain in the head and limbs.[1]

A real-life incident tells of a father who used to bring all the newest games for his son, but was surprised to see that his son fell into a strange phase due to the long time spent in front of those games.
He began to wake from sleep scared and screaming without a reason. Then, his movements and actions became very slow, as if he were a robot moving. He would get scared and shake because of any sound around him, and he was hindered in his

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[1] Scottish Medical Journal.

studies. Thus, the father had wanted to make his son happy through these games, but instead, he only harmed him.

7) Malnutrition and digestive problems:

Many children do not eat lunch and dinner with their families, because they are busy playing. They begin to get used to eating unhealthily and during times that are inappropriate for the body.

Third: Economical effects:

Economic harms of these games are due to wasting wealth through buying expensive consoles, purchasing software and games for the console, and maintaining and fixing the console. Many times, the console is broken due to misuse.

Through this, we are actually unwittingly helping our enemies with our money in the war against our creed, values, manners, and behavior.

It is known that preservation of wealth is one of the five universal principles that Islaam orders one to preserve, and that wealth should not be given to the foolish, as Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {And do not give the weak-minded your property, which Allaah has made a means of sustenance for you.} [QUR'AAN 4:5]

How much do we spend on these games?

Video games experts have given the estimate that a Saudi child spends approximately 400 dollars yearly, per child, on video

games. The Saudi market deals with about 3 million games per year, ten thousand of which are original, while the rest are pirated.

A circulation manager in a video game company said that the market in Saudi comprised of 1,800,000 PlayStation consoles, showing that 40% of all households in Saudi Arabia have at least one console.

It must be noted that PlayStation is not monopolized by children; rather, many youth and even adults indulge in playing PlayStation![1]

The manager of a store said: "There is great acceptance of and indulgence in purchasing PlayStation games, of which, the pirated versions cost between 5 and 15 Riyal, while authentic versions go beyond 100 Riyal. Some of them reach 250 Riyal, while the console can reach up to 900 Riyal, along with other special purchases for a number of disks and cases."

A salesman who used to sell video games, before its corruption became clear to him and he repented from it, reported that a father entered the store and purchased games worth 15,000 Riyals, in one instance.

The profiteers in this field are the American and Japanese companies that produce and circulate these games and programs, as well as traffickers and those who work in the black market. Sony, the Japanese company specialized in making electronics, has announced that it expects its collective profit to increase by 108%, to 280 billion dollars, in the

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[1]At-Tifl Al-Mutamayyizah, 23rd edition, Thul-Qi`dah, 1425 Hijri.

upcoming years. It said that the reason behind this raise was the success of PlayStation.[1]

The issue does not only pertain to ruining economies of countries. Actually, the economic harms incurred by these games affect individuals as well, either due to spending vast amounts of wealth in purchasing games and consoles necessary for the games, especially for middle-class or poor families, or due to the actions of gaming addicts who are employees, such as being late from work, and even calling in sick sometimes. That leads to a decrease in their salaries, and it might lead to them losing their job completely.

There might be an effect on the economic future of our children who are addicted to these games, especially since many of them fail at their studies, and have decreased physical and intellectual abilities that render them incapable of working in the future.

Addiction to video games

These games have gone past the level of mere leisure to many of those who use them, including the old and young, and has reached the level of addiction. This is a phenomenon that has many dangerous effects, as shown by scientific studies across the world. This has led doctors, educators, guardians, and even politicians to raise their voices in warning and raising awareness.

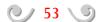[1]At-Tifl Al-Mutamayyizah, 23rd edition, Thul-Qi`dah, 1425 Hijri.

In China, the authorities stated their increasing worries regarding the high number of teenagers who spend many hours, maybe even complete days, playing in internet cafes. Eight government agencies created new rules that force online gaming companies to provide a service and program that fights against addiction to these games.[1]

The mother of a child addicted to video games said: "When my child wakes up at 10 in the morning, and even before he completely opens his eyes, he goes to the television to turn the game on. He refuses to have breakfast before his game, and this continues until he is forced to leave it for lunch. He eats lunch very quickly, and it does not exceed ten minutes, in order to go back to his game again, and he stays there until evening! When we try to stop him, we find that the outcome is that he creates problems for his siblings, he would get into things that did not concern him, and would act aggressively against and hit his siblings for no reason. We found that this game is a solution to keeping problems away that he creates when we take him away from the PlayStation."

A counselor in one of the universities said:

"I have dealt with a student who would sometimes spend more than 12 hours daily playing video games. He would usually play alone, until he was an expert in it. As I tried to fix the issue for more than three months, I noticed the following:

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[1]Bawwaabah Al-`Arabiyyah Technology News (4/10/2007).

1) **He spends his life alone. He does not participate in his family's outings at all, not even spending time with them inside the home. He eats alone by his console, and does not go out with them for anything, except rarely.**

2) **He cannot do things correctly, because he is used to imagination in a big way. He is even unable to look naturally and normally at things, even in his own specific and special situations and issues.**

3) **He cannot overcome his desire to play, even after he realized that it has begun destroying his future in his studies, since he failed in university due to his inability to free himself, although he tried to do so in despair.**

4) **He lacks social skills. He cannot converse with anyone or discuss anything. He thinks that he does not need to have logical dealings with people.**

5) **He is attracted by all imaginative and mythical matters.**

6) **He bases many of his dealings on competition and challenges, because he is attracted by that. He even would task me with making my way in curing his disorder by challenging me in a spirit of competition.**

7) **He does not see the value of having a realistic outlook on people's lives, and criticizes those who do.**

8) **He was unable to continue counseling sessions with the psychiatrist when he began to convince him of**

the necessity of judging by knowledge, reason, and prevalent values.

9) He spends all of his wealth on games. His father was very affluent and would spend generously on him. He would spend all he had on buying new and interesting games.

10) He tried adamantly to rid himself of the habit of playing for long hours through behavioral therapy that the psychiatrist set up for him, but he was unable and removed himself from the program.

11) He likes going to the beach, and stays there long hours, alone, or driving in the car all over the streets without any reason and in a very reckless way. Maybe that is a way of venting his feelings of failure in normal life."

One of them mentioned that he sat with his friend playing a soccer game from 10 P.M. until 8 A.M. the next day. Had that consisted of anything besides wasting the last third part of the night [which is the best time for supplication and getting closer to Allaah] it would be enough of a loss and waste!

The negative effects of addiction to these games can reach new and more dangerous levels. In China, the family of a 13-year-old boy filed a lawsuit against the Chinese producer of a game company after their child committed suicide after playing 36 straight hours on the console. They asked for a compensation of 12,500.[1]

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[1]Majallat Al-`Aalam (164).

Beneficial cures of addiction:

Addiction to video games is one of the most extreme ways a person wastes their life, which they will be questioned about on the Day of Resurrection. If the Muslim truly understands the importance and value of time, and that it is their field where they can plant seeds for the Hereafter, which can result in eternal bliss or eternal severe punishment, then they would not allow these games to ruin their life in this life or the next.

One of the verses that shows the importance of time and that this life is not for spending time in non-beneficial things is when Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {*Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?"*} [QUR'AAN 23:115]

From the Sunnah, we have the Hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas, may Allaah be pleased with him, who reported that Allaah's Messenger, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, said: *"There are two blessings that many people squander, and they are, good health and free time."*[1] Also, Ibn `Abbaas, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that Allaah's Messenger, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, said: *"Utilize five things before five: utilize your life before your death, your health before your lack thereof, your free time before your lack thereof, your youth before your old age, and your richness before your poverty."*[2]

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[1] Reported by Al-Bukhaari (6049).
[2] Reported by Al-Haakim (7846) and he and Ath-Thahabi, may Allaah have mercy on him, both ruled it as authentic.

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allaah have mercy on him, said: "Wasting time is worse than death, because wasting time cuts a person off from Allaah the Exalted and the Hereafter, while death only cuts you off from this life and those in it."[1]

There are two instances where the importance of the time of a person become clear, and that they regret wasting time, at a time when regret does not avail anyone, and they are:

First: When dying:

When a person passes away from this life, and faces the Hereafter, they wish they could be given respite for just a short time so that they could correct their wrongs and set right what they missed, as Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {*O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from remembrance of Allaah. And whoever does that - then those are the losers. And spend [in the way of Allaah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous."*} **[QUR'AAN 63:9-10] But, the answer to this wish will be:** {*But never will Allaah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allaah is Acquainted with what you do.*} **[QUR'AAN 63:11]**

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[1]Al-Fawaa'id (pg. 31).

Second: In the Hereafter:

Meaning, the **Day of Resurrection**, when standing before Allaah the **Exalted**, as Abu Barzah Al-Aslami, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported, that Allaah's Messenger, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, said: *"The feet of a slave will not move until they are asked about their life and how they spent it, their knowledge and how they used it, their wealth, how they earned and spent it, and their body and how they used it."*[1]

Likewise, when every soul is given the recompense for what it has done, when the people of Hellfire enter into Hellfire, and those of Paradise into Paradise, the people of Hellfire would wish to go back to the worldly life all over again, in order to do righteous actions, as Allaah the Exalted Said (what means): {*And they will cry out therein, "Our Lord, remove us; we will do righteousness – other than what we were doing!" But did We not grant you life enough for whoever would remember therein to remember, and the warner had come to you? So taste [the punishment], for there is not for the wrongdoers any helper.*} [QUR'AAN 35:37]

The concept of importance of time has been applied since the dawn of Islaam:

Al-Hasan Al-Basri, may Allaah have mercy on him, said: "I met people who were keener on [saving] their time than you are on your wealth." `Abdullaah ibn Mas`ood, may Allaah be pleased with him, said: "I never regretted anything as much as I did

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[1] Reported by At-Tirmithi (2417) and he said: "It is of an acceptably authentic grade."

over a day wherein the sun sets, my time in the world is closer to ending, while my actions did not increase."

> *'Abd Ar-Rahmaan, the son of Imaam Abu Haatim Ar-Raazi, may Allaah have mercy on him, said about his father: "He would eat while I would read to him, he would walk while I would read to him, he would go for a bath while I read to him, and would go inside the house to procure something, all while I was reading to him."[1]*

The fruit of this effort and keenness on saving time was the book known as Al-Jarhwa At-Ta`deel in nine volumes, as well as his book of exegesis in ten volumes, as well as other books.

Reflect, O Muslim, on what this wise person said: "Whoever spends a day of their life in something other than a right that they fulfil, an obligation that they perform, honor that they earn, praise that they incur, goodness that they set, or knowledge that they learn, then they have been undutiful to their day and unjust to their own souls."[2]

Abu Al-Wafa' ibn `Aqeel Al-Hanbali, may Allaah have mercy on him, said: "It is impermissible for me to waste an hour from my life. If my tongue is resting from revising or debating, and my eyes are from reading, my mind is working while I relax and am lying down. When I awaken, whatever I want to write comes to my mind. I find that my keenness on knowledge at

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[1]Tahtheeb Al-Kamaal (24/388).
[2]Adab Ad-Dunyawa Ad-Deen (1/57).

the age of eighty more intense than when I was twenty. I cut down, as much as possible, my eating times, until I choose to swallow bread with water over eating bread alone, because there is time difference in how much I need to chew."

He wrote a book of 600 volumes called Kitaab Al-Funoon, apart from his other books. However, he would still say: "It is impermissible for me to waste an hour from my life."[1]

Jamaal Ad-Deen Al-Qaasimi, may Allaah have mercy on him, used to pass by people sitting in cafés and would say: "I wish that time could be sold, so that I can purchase it." He is someone who wrote more than 50 books. His life was full of knowledge, calling to Allaah, and struggle. Despite that, he wished that he could buy more time to use.

This does not mean that one should not relax and enjoy leisure with some lawful means of recreation that help make a person energetic, because being serious all the time is something hard for the soul, and it results in weariness and distress. The soul is innately disposed on varying between things, moving from one action to another, and from one statement to another. This movement and transferring is, perhaps, what the Messenger, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, meant when he said to Hanthalah, may Allaah be pleased with him, when he said: *"Spend an hour in one thing, and another hour in another."*

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[1] Lisaan Al-Meezaan (4/243).

The Islaamic ruling on games

We have seen examples of these games, and have mentioned some of their negative effects. There is no doubt that we should clarify the legal ruling that apply to such games.

Some video games have been prohibited by the countries that created them. A Congressman in America suggested that they ban usage of bad and immoral games, after seeing their negative effects on the character of the viewer, now and in the future. In America, there is an excellent law that punishes those who are negligent regarding watching or using bad games. There are a number of games that have been prohibited in Western and Eastern countries.

If that is the case, then we, the Muslims, should be foremost in clarifying the prohibition on games that consist of features that are prohibited in the religion. The Muslim, as such, takes pride in their religion, and abandons unlawful leisure activities for the sake of pleasing their Lord.

Islaam does away with corruption and brings about goodness. When a game involves contradictions to the religion, it is ruled as unlawful. Games vary in their level of prohibition, based on their content or the reprehensible matters and ideas they feature. So, whatever has a deviation or contradiction in matters of creed is more prohibited than a game that merely has some small reprehensible matters.

Some of these contradictions that classify a game unlawful are:

- **Belittling Allaah or the angels:** Such as games that depict wars between the good people of earth and the bad inhabitants of the heavens, or that depict the presence of more than one deity in the heavens.

- **Glorification of the cross:** Such as games that depict that attaining the cross gives health and strength, revives the person, gives them extra lives, and so forth.

- **Honoring the holidays of the Christians:** Such as games wherein the player can create Christmas cards.

- **Honoring magicians and affirming magic.**

- **Hatred against Islaam and Muslims:** Such as the game where if the player destroys Makkah, they get 100 points, and if they destroy Baghdad, they get 50 points, and so forth.

- **Honoring disbelievers and breeding pride in them:** Such as games wherein if the player chooses the army of a disbelieving country, they attain strength, and if they choose the army of an Arab country, they are weak.

- **Fascination with people of disbelief in general:** Such as games that raise a child to be fascinated with sports clubs of the disbelievers, or the names of the disbelieving players.

Other dispraised matters featured in video games, making it unlawful are:

- **Love and lustful relationships:** Such as games that deal with saving someone the character lusts after, loves, or is friends with, from a villain or dragon.
- **Presence of dirty images or drawings:** Such as the case is with most games. This incites the impulses of the youth and leads them to various types of corruption.
- **Raising children to be violent and criminals, and desensitizing killing in their eyes.**
- **Most games available in the Muslim markets call to crime;** 90% **of games are crime games, and those games are most popular with our children, although it is prohibited to sell them to children below the age of** 15 **or** 18.
- **Gambling.**
- **Music:** Its prohibition is well-known in the Islaamic legislation.

Any game that features a corruption in creed or Islaamic etiquette is prohibited.

It is impermissible to buy and sell these games. Likewise, one may not play on these games, give them as gifts, import them, or produce them.

If the game is free from these prohibitions and the player is able to avoid them, then there is no problem with that, unless it is coupled with another thing that is prohibited, such as:

- **A bet between the two players.**

- **Missing prayers and obligations.**
- **Harming the body due to going beyond reasonable playing time, harming the eyes or nerves due to the visuals or the ears with the audible sounds. Recent studies have shown that these games may be addictive and damaging to the nervous system, causing tension and nervousness in children.**
- **Spending long periods of time playing: Some players might spend most of their lives in these games, and become famous among people as someone who is proficient in these games. It is feared that such a person may be included in the words of Allaah, when Allaah the Exalted Said (what means):** {*And the companions of the Fire will call to the companions of Paradise, "Pour upon us some water or from whatever Allaah has provided you." They will say, "Indeed, Allaah has forbidden them both to the disbelievers."*} **[QUR'AAN 7:50]**
- **Knowing what constitutes too much time is related to what is customary among people, and to comparing serious actions with play. If the percentage of time spent in play is a lot in comparison to the everyday activities of Muslims, or if it consists of half or a fourth of what they do, then the play is a waste of time.**

One must be aware that these games, if they are to be considered lawful, may not incorporate competing with a prize,

because they are not tools of Jihaad, and one cannot use them to get strengthened in Jihaad.[1]

A look at the content of popular games:

In an interview with university students who play these games, they were found to have **20** PlayStation games. After they were told about the elements of disbelief and corruption that make these games unlawful, they said that based on the legal principles, they cannot consider any game free of these corruptions, except two games from the twenty, meaning, **10%** of the games.
This is their view, and they were not even students of Islaamic knowledge. It is possible that if these games were shown to religious scholars, psychologists, or social workers, they would find things in them that render them unlawful, as well.

Thus, this is an extremely dangerous issue. We cannot be negligent regarding these games. We should be aware of them, and should pay close attention to our children at all times when they are playing them. If there are things that fulfill religious and worldly benefits that one can engage in the bare minimum that would suffice them. This would be more ideal and safer, religiously speaking.

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[1] Al-Musaabaqaat wa Ahkaamuha fi Ash-Sharee`ah Al-Islaamiyyah by Dr. Sa`d Ash-Shithri (www.islamqa.com).

A look at beneficial replacement:

Our youth have become affected by these games and the ideas, philosophies, behaviors, and character flaws they contain, that do not have any ties to our society and culture; this is something obvious and evident that no rational person can deny. That is why the voices of those who have protective zeal for the religion have been raised in trying to find a beneficial replacement for these games.

The question is: can there be a replacement for these games that do not contain corruption?

The evils of video games, as we mentioned, not only pertain to creed and Islaamic etiquettes, and their harms would not end if we were to remove the cross and music from the game. Or, if we were to make the Muslim army the stronger army, the problem would end. Rather, the issue is far bigger and more serious than that. The evils of these games pertain to health of the body and soul, as well.

Should we call Muslims to produce games that are filled with flashing colors and graphics that harm the eyes? Or a game that is so attractive that our children spend long hours in front of them, thereby wasting their lives in front of these consoles?

The companies that produce these games have huge capital and attract the best programmers and thinkers. They employ comprehensive and wide-ranging psychological studies in order to study what people want, what affects them, and what makes them infatuated with these games. So, can we create similar companies?

Reality calls us to face this challenge and to do something in this confusion and turmoil.

The replacement that is appropriate for our societies which will only have bad effects on those who are addicts or play too much is given precedence over Western games that have negative effects on health, belief, and character.

The first step to creating an appropriate replacement begins with studying the feasibility of doing such a thing, and the type of games that can be produced. The latter should be done by scholars, educators, and social workers who can channelize their thoughts in a constructive way.

Then, investors with financial capital should be called to invest in this venture, and they should be told that they will be filling a great void that the disbelieving West and East take advantage of, to slowly permeate the souls of our children.

Then, programmers should be advised that they should not spend their time and energy on producing games that have no goal besides spending time.

They should be guided to programming meaningful and beneficial games that are appropriate for the Muslim child and are in sync with an Islaamic environment. They should also be in accordance with the needs, aspirations, history, and culture of the Muslim child. In this way, we can spread Islaamic values and manners, fight corruption, deviation, and moral deterioration, develop self-confidence, and preserve spiritual and moral values.

The issue is not just to bring about electronic replacements, rather, to replace corruptive games with something that is upright and successful educationally.

They should also be regulated by Islaamic rulings and should be within the ambit of what is lawful.

They should be produced and prepared by specialists in education, as well those who have other capabilities.

Then, we must guide the guardians to promote such games, by giving precedence to them over other games, causing the game to reach the level of being an actual competitor, because usually, such games may not be attractive to children on their own, but may pique the child's curiosity due to the positive effect of the guardians advocating them and encouraging their children to play them.

In the present situation when there are none of these replacements, we might not be able to prevent children from playing the games that are available.

This needs a vast religious, social, and psychological study.

If a group of students of knowledge, psychologists, and sociologists gathered and conducted a study to deduce video games that have some benefit and that have the least of harms, which would, perhaps, be beneficial, and would close some doors of evil.

Video games are a two edged sword. Just as they have many dangerous negative aspects, they have their positive side.

Some games develop intelligence, talents, and sharpness in children. At the very least, they give them some sort of general competency culturally.

Some sociologists say that if video games were formulated under certain principles that were maintained through educational supervision, it would have some benefits. The child would be able to spend a part of their free time in playing those games, without fear or worry for them. They can play some interesting games, such as mathematical games, memory games, games that stimulate the mind, and games that stimulate innovative thinking.

If some video games give positive results that other games cannot give, or if the guardian of the household is unable to develop those talents in their children, due to their lack of time, lack of ability, or lack of someone to follow up in their absence, then there is no harm in giving these games to their children, to develop their talents, memory, and ability. However, it must be done under parental supervision.

One of the beneficial games the Westerners have developed is that "they developed video games for themselves, and did not give them to the Muslims. They are called narratives, especially in dealing with wars. They developed them to the point that they have become the most important means of training in war and other activities, regardless if they are students or soldiers. This is due to the important role such games play in managing, planning, training, and control systems. They rely on adopting the latest developments in something known as virtual reality.

The computer creates a three dimensional world, and the user interacts with it. It develops their scientific capabilities, and you find them acting with wisdom in difficult situations. It also gives them the opportunity to develop their intellectual abilities as well, so that they can take the appropriate decision at the appropriate time."[1]

Dealing with the phenomenon of video games

It is clear from what has been mentioned that many Western intellectuals have come to realize the negative effects of these games. It is important to mention some of the measures they have taken to limit these effects, so that it can be known that when those who have a protective zeal for Islaam warn against these games, it is not out of extremism or strictness, but rather, out of trying to preserve generations from things that ruin their religion and life.

What have the West and East done to limit these negative effects?

When intellectuals throughout the world called for placing a limit for these games, some countries and institutions placed strict laws for those games. Muslims must benefit from their experience in regulating video games and limiting their dangers. Some of the things that they have done are:

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[1] Al-Al`aab Al-Alaktrooniyyah wa Waaqi` Atfaalina by Ismaa`eel Husayn Abu Za`naznah

Age-based categorization of games:

Countries have categorized the games based on the age of players and have made it incumbent on companies that produce these games to place those categorizations on the cover of their games. If the buyer finds, for example, 18+, written on a game, they would know that this game is not suitable for those under than 18 years, and the game cannot be sold to them. Likewise, there are other numbers, such as 3+, 7+, 12+, and 16+, and each number tells that the game is not suitable for anyone except those who have passed the written number.

These countries not only forced companies to use this categorization system, rather, in the United States of America, some states have a set penalty in place for those who sell these games to the age group below what is mentioned on the game. It also warned older people from playing these games in front of youngsters, and from being lenient in giving them those games. They placed a list of games that are warned against, and this list is updated periodically.

Preventing games that feature killing, violence, and sex:

Some countries prohibit games that show blood, and they force the companies to make the criminal go to jail in the game, rather than being killed. In Illinois, in America, they placed a law that prohibits selling video games that have violent or

sexual content to minors. The law states that the store that sells these games to minors can be fined up to **1,000**.[1]

Many government ministers in the European Union asked that games with violence and killing be prohibited, and in giving a unified punishment to those who sell these games to teenagers.[2]

Since gambling is featured in some games, the Malaysian government has decided to close all video game stores down, because children were becoming addicted to them, and their effects were similar to opium addiction, as the Prime Minister said. He added that video games have turned into a type of gambling and will bring evil on society.[3]

Tightening controls on imported internet games:

The Chinese ministry of culture made a panel of people to keep tight control and supervise imported video games, in order to check if the contents of the games have anything that violate major values of the country, threaten national unity, leadership, and safety of land. Also, they check for things that might release secrets of the government, harm the glory of the nation, cause a disturbance of social order and violate the legitimate rights of others.

Those in charge said that all foreign games will be tested and checked by the ministry before they enter the Chinese market, otherwise, those who operate such games will be punished and

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[1] CNN in Arabic 6/28/2005.
[2] Majallat Al-`Aalam Ar-Raqami 193rd edition, 1/26/2007.
[3] BBC Online.

penalized based on the penalties stipulated by law.[1] Muslims should benefit from such experiences, and should apply them in their own lands.

Developing programs that combat video game addiction:

When the dangers of children being addicted to these games became clear to the Chinese government, and after it was discovered that a large number of teenagers spend long hours, and perhaps even complete days playing in internet cafés, they created new rules that force companies that host online gaming, as well as companies that offer the service, that they should download and utilize programs that combat addiction to these games.

This program is such that the players will get full points for the first three hours of play, as that is enough time, and conducive to health in their view. Afterwards, half the points will be deducted from the players who continue playing for five straight hours, and all points will be deducted from those who play past that point.[2]

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[1] http://arabic.peopledaily.com.cn/31664/2537798.html.
[2] Al-Bawwaabah Al-`Arabiyyah website
   (http://www.aitnews.com/index.php?option=newsDetails&nid=5852).