

# Your shout

## WEB

There were tram delays at the weekend after a car was stranded on Lenton Lane bridge. It is the second time it has happened in the past two months. Saturday, December 12

NET need to start coming down harder on these drivers who choose to ignore the 'tram only' signs. I've seen several cars attempt to jump the lights on Lenton Lane/Gregory St and the tram has had to blast its horn. Always seems to happen on the same stretch of track between QMC and NG2.

Emma Louise Fowler

We've gone back to the old days with trams. Had this been a car or bus they could have gone round it.

Sally Salmon

They need to clamp down harder on the idiots who can't read signs correctly! NET gets slated for it and people want fares reimbursing.

so why not make the driver pay for it! Might make people read signs in the first place.



Lisa Redfern

Ah classic, some idiot gets their car stuck on a tram line and the same old moaners appear yet again to blame NET. Obviously it was all their fault! How dare they not control every single driver on the road! Some people need to get a grip

Nikki Croxall

The trams are a great advert for using the bus. Kev-Kitten Winterbourne

This is what comes of putting tram lines in a city with established roads and having to run trams in the same place.

Jill Playford

Daft driver or inadequate signs?

Carole Wall

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## Accentuating the video positives



If you're thinking of buying a videogames system this Xmas but are worried about the impact, Nottingham Trent University psychologist **Dr Mark Griffiths** has some advice

**P**LAYING videogames is arguably the most popular leisure activity among teenagers in the UK. This Christmas, sales of videogame hardware and software are likely to be astronomical.

But with all the media hype surrounding the more negative aspects such as addiction and violence (areas that I personally carry out research into), should parents be worried about buying videogames for their children?

I have probably published more scientific papers on videogame addiction than any other academic in the world. However, I think the positives of playing videogames significantly outweigh the negatives.

I have three "screenagers" myself (two teenage boys and a teenage girl), and they all

play videogames. As a parent I always have in the back of my mind that videogame playing is just one of many activities that my children can do alongside their sporting activities, school clubs, reading, watching television, and socialising with their friends. These all contribute to what I describes as a balanced "recreational diet".

There is now a wealth of research showing that video games can have innovative educational and therapeutic uses, as well as many studies showing that playing video games can increase reaction times and improve hand-eye co-ordination. For example, research has shown that spatial visualisation ability skills (i.e., mentally, rotating and manipulating two- and three-dimensional objects) improve with video game



Playing videogames can have a positive impact, says Dr Mark Griffiths.

playing. In an educational context, video games:  
■ Are fun, engaging, motivating, interactive, rewarding, and stimulating. Therefore, they can maintain a child's undivided attention for long periods of time, with elements of interactivity that can facilitate learning;  
■ Allow individuals to experience novelty, curiosity and challenge that can stimulate learning;  
■ May help in the development of transferable skills;  
■ Can be used when developing characteristics such as self-esteem, self-concept, and goal-setting;  
■ Can act as safe simulations

that allow individuals to engage in extraordinary activities without real consequences.

Because video games can be so engaging, they can also be used therapeutically. For instance, they can be used as a form of physiotherapy as well as in more innovative contexts (for instance, a number of studies have shown that children who play video games following chemotherapy they need less painkillers than children engaged in other activities).

So when it comes to buying videogames this Christmas, what should parents do?  
To begin with parents

should actually find out what videogames their children are actually playing! All games now feature the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) rating system, which contains a specific age rating and specific game content. Some games contain material that parents would prefer their children not to be having exposure to.

What is clear from the scientific literature is that the negative consequences of playing almost always involve people that are excessive players. There is little very evidence of serious adverse effects on health and education from playing videogames a few hours a day.

## We need to limit our playing time



**James Shepherd**, 17, from West Bridgford, says we do need to limit the amount of time spent on videogames

**F**RIDAY afternoons; Grand Theft Auto, Call Of Duty, a multi-pack of energy drinks, and the next thing you know it's dark outside and you've wasted an entire afternoon and evening playing videogames.

You could have met up with friends in the real world or done something more productive than blast away artificial soldiers.

Social life is being threatened by the prominence of videogames; people would much rather spend evenings sitting inside staring at a computer or TV screen than engage in social interaction in the real world.

Not only does this threaten social aspects of life but also academic attainment. The

public are constantly bombarded with reports on how children are staying up too late, which makes them unable to focus the next day in school. And while I don't think there should be a ban on videogames, it is important to try and show players the dangers of succumbing, and allowing them to see the importance of social interaction.

A life of videogames can turn someone into a social recluse.

I cannot sit here and say videogames are not enjoyable, as I am partial to GTA and Black Ops, but people need to know their limits. I have been in a place where I promise myself I will only spend two hours playing, but end being in my



Do we become more aggressive after playing videogames like Grand Theft Auto, pictured?

living room for more like four or five. I have not experienced any addiction to these games first hand, but it is easy to see how people can have their lives destroyed.

Playing games also has an effect on behaviour. After several hours of playing a game, whether it's Fifa or Call Of Duty, I find I can become very irritable and will become more aggressive. I am not

saying these games make people kill people or re-enact anything pictured in them, but they definitely have some psychological effect, which can have a negative effect on the people that surround them.

I found that I was much more prone to snap over confrontation after a session of playing videogames than I would be normally. While

this never resulted in any violence it would often result in an argument over the most petty and ridiculous things.

Where would we be if everyone just spent their time playing games and didn't speak to anyone? Keep playing if you enjoy them, but ensure you set some time barriers on it to make sure you spend some time speaking to real people.

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