

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

What Parents Need To Know About Guns In Video Games





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INTRODUCTION

For many families in America, gun ownership is a fact of life. With about 250 million privately owned guns nationwide, more than 40% of Americans live in a home with a gun. For most Americans, safe gun use, maintenance and storage are vital parts of the responsibility of gun ownership. Equally important to most parents who own guns is that their children learn the lessons of responsible gun use and gun safety.

Gun safety in the home is critically important. Most surveys have found that about 22 million children live homes with at least one gun, and almost half of them – about 10 million kids – live in homes with unlocked guns.¹ Many children also own their own guns – according to the Professional Gun Retailers Association, 200,000 guns are expected to be given as gifts this holiday season, and more than 100,000 of those will be youth-sized rifles and shotguns.² Children who own guns, or simply live in or visit homes with guns, must understand gun safety and the very real consequences of irresponsible or improper gun use.

But there is a chilling and potentially dangerous counterpart to the access that many children have to guns in the home: an array of easily available video games that provide appalling portrayals of guns being used in an irresponsible manner and without any consequence. Even diligent parents and responsible gun owners may be unaware of the damaging lessons that these video games are teaching their children about guns. Simply put, while most parents teach their kids the “do’s” of gun safety; these games teach them the “don’ts”.

In households across the country, children are playing games with startlingly realistic, computer-generated versions of the very guns that may be available in their own homes. Armed with these virtual weapons, children embark on remarkably life-like simulations of horrifying acts of gun violence in video games played on computers, the Internet or home gaming systems. While many of these games are intended to represent a fantasy world, game makers strive to replicate real-life settings, adding detail to the weapons and to the carnage they reap, thus blurring the line between fantasy and reality.

For example, in the game *Redneck Rampage*, the player simulates driving a truck through a rural town, drinking beer and using a shotgun to shoot, maim and kill the townspeople. In *Hitman*, the player uses realistically rendered handguns to shoot and kill victims for money. In these and the other games the Americans for Gun Safety Foundation studied, the suffering and deaths of the virtual victims are gruesomely realistic, but they come with little consequence to the shooter.

Moreover, the realism of these games extends beyond the blood and gore to the weapons they portray. In many video games the player uses shotguns, rifles or handguns of the type that may be found in their parents’ gun locker. These virtual guns look, sound, and act just like the real thing.

The games profiled below are not the extent of the problem – they represent just a sampling of the type of carnage that is currently and easily available on the video game market. This holiday season, some of the hottest items on store shelves are Microsoft’s XBOX, the Nintendo Game Cube and the Sony PlayStation 2, video gaming systems that provide platforms for ever more realistic graphics. As a result, the depiction of irresponsible gun use will be that much more enhanced in the games compatible with these systems.

¹ Schuster, M., et al., “Firearm Storage Patterns in US Homes with Children,” *American Journal of Public Health*, April 2000.

² “Under Some Christmas Trees, (Real) Guns for Kids,” *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 5, 2001 (B1).

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

This is not to suggest that every video game involving guns is potentially harmful. Many games involve guns in such fantastical settings (such as shooting at space aliens) that no child would be likely to confuse them with reality. Moreover, there are some video games that seek to impart a more responsible approach to guns and to gun safety. For example, as we detail below, some game manufacturers offer hunting or sport shooting games that portray realistic guns, accompanied by clear and sensible lessons on their use, maintenance and storage. In these games, the players learn valuable lessons about the safe handling of a firearm and, most importantly, the simulations involve appropriate gun use.

The Americans for Gun Safety Foundation (AGSF) urges that parents take a serious, considered look at the video games that their children may be playing and at the lessons the games may be teaching them about gun use and the consequences of gun violence. While most video games come with warning labels on their boxes, the warnings are simply advisory – children are not prevented access to even the most horrifying and irresponsible games. So although these games involve levels of violence that might make them “R” rated as movies, the warning labels on the games – unlike movie ratings – do nothing to prevent access by children under the prescribed age.

Moreover, the warnings, while useful, are not detailed enough for parents to judge whether the realism of the guns and the gore are appropriate for their children. It is critical that every parent can answer the question: do you know what is actually in the games your children are playing? The AGSF message to parents is clear: open the box, play the game, and make informed choices about what your children are playing.

BACKGROUND

Violent video games of all types are widely available to users of all ages, with almost no control over their content or their sales. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) was created in 1994 as an independent video game rating organization providing box labels and parental warnings about violence or other objectionable material in the games. While laudable in purpose, the ESRB ratings system does not provide adequate warning, for several reasons: First, the system is voluntary for both game manufacturers and retailers, meaning that some games are un-rated and some are sold without regard to the ratings. Second, the ESRB labels often provide inexact or inadequate descriptions of the nature of the violence portrayed in the games. Finally, the ratings on the game boxes may have a perverse result, by serving as an enticement to young players seeking a maximum level of gore.

Indeed, even the ESRB acknowledges the shortcomings of its system, noting on its official web page that, “the ESRB ratings are not meant to tell you what to buy or rent or to serve as the only basis for choosing a product. Rather, consumers should use the ESRB ratings in conjunction with their own tastes and standards when purchasing or renting a video game.” Furthermore a recent study of the ESRB concludes that “parents and caregivers relying on the ratings systems to guide their children’s use of media products should continue to monitor content independently.”³

³ David A. Walsh and Douglas A. Gentile, “A Validity Test of Movie, Television, and Video-Game Ratings,” National Institute on Media and Family (May 11, 2000).

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this report is to help parents monitor the content of their children's video games by exposing the irresponsible portrayal of gun use in certain games. AGSF has identified and described in detail ten video games that illustrate the wide scope of this problem. To provide contrast, AGSF has also profiled two other video games that display guns and gun use in a reasonable, safe, and responsible manner. This report provides an analysis only of the games themselves – we do not attempt to examine the impact that these games may have on the children who play them. It is worth noting, however, that there have been a number of academic and medical studies published in recent years that attempt to measure the impact on children of playing violent video games. For example, one recent study found that “violent video games provide a forum for learning and practicing aggressive solutions to conflict situations” and that “the active nature of the video game suggests that this medium is potentially more dangerous than the more heavily investigated TV and movie media.”⁴

In addition to the independent research of this type, the federal government has examined the issue of violence in video games (though not gun violence per se). Following the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, President Clinton asked the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) and the Department of Justice to conduct a study to determine the influence of violent entertainment material on children. As part of that study, the FTC reviewed the research on the impact of violence in entertainment media. From this review the Commission concluded “there is a high correlation between exposure to media violence and aggressive and at times violent behavior.”⁵

⁴ Craig A. Anderson and Karen E. Dill, “Video Games and Aggressive Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior in the Laboratory and in Life,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, April 2000.

⁵ “Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children: A Review of Self-Regulation and Industry Practices in the Motion Picture, Music Recording & Electronic Game Industries,” Report of the Federal Trade Commission, September 2000 (Appendix A, p.1)

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

METHODOLOGY

GAME TYPES

This study was conducted solely on the versions of games designed for use in the home. We therefore did not include arcade video games, many of which also involve active participation in violent gun-related simulations. Most of the games surveyed were played on computer CD-ROM, but almost all are also available for home gaming systems such as XBOX, the Game Cube, Nintendo 64, Sony PlayStation, and Sega. We also included one game that is played over the Internet to highlight the issue of young gamers participating in violent and realistic gun battles online.

GAME AVAILABILITY

The games profiled in this study were found on high-traffic websites like *amazon.com* and *bestbuy.com*. Thus, all the games detailed below are widely available through popular commercial outlets.

PENETRATION INTO THE YOUTH MARKET

While AGSF did no market research or other scientific evaluation of the extent to which these games are known and played by children, anecdotal evidence showed that they are widely known and heavily used. We asked students at several high schools around the country to relay to us the games with which they are familiar. All of the games in this study were familiar to the students that AGSF (informally) surveyed.

FOCUS ON GUN VIOLENCE

The focus of this study is on video game *gun* violence in particular and not “violence” in general. We chose games that involve realistic and readily available firearms, not just military hardware or fictional weapons. We also chose games that involve human characters shooting, wounding and killing other human characters.

This sort of game generally falls into one of two categories: in a “first person shooter” game, the player’s gun is the focus of the screen, and players move, aim and fire the gun directly. In a “third person shooter” game, the camera looks over the shoulder of the main character, which is fully visible on screen. In both types of games, the object is to move through the scenes shooting at other human characters.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATION FORMAT

Each review begins with a brief description of the game, followed by an assessment of the level of reality depicted by the game's action and graphics, and an assessment of the guns portrayed in the game.

For each of these categories, we have included a list of the following features:

<u>DEPICTION OF REALITY</u>	<u>GUN USE</u>
<p>FEATURES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Realistic Settings<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Game depicts human characters in real-world settings.2) Human Victims<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The game player can shoot at and kill human characters.3) No Consequences for Killing<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Killing human beings – even “innocent” characters -- does not carry any significant or realistic consequences.	<p>FEATURES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Realistic Depiction of Guns<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The guns in the game are graphically designed to look like real guns and function like real guns, by mimicking their real counterparts in aspects such as muzzle flash, barrel recoil, spent cartridges or requisite reloading.2) Commonly Available Guns<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The guns in the game are those commonly available for private ownership in the United States (i.e. shotguns, 9mm pistols, revolvers, etc.), rather than military or fictional weapons.3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The game provides some amount of information on the responsible handling, use or storage of the guns depicted in the game play.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

REDNECK RAMPAGE

Redneck Rampage is set in a rural town, and much of the game is spent driving around the dirt roads firing at any pedestrians that the player encounters. The only apparent storyline is absurd on its face – players are attempting to get back their pig, which has been kidnapped by aliens. In the process, they must kill all of the townspeople whom they encounter because they have been cloned. This is a first-person shooter game, in which the primary weapons available to the player are a double-barreled shotgun, a ranch rifle, and a handgun.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

While this game does not offer the high level of graphic sophistication reached by some of the other games covered in this study, the representations of gun violence are particularly appalling, and most notably, they are directed at innocent civilians. There are no consequences for killing innocent victims; indeed, the killing of civilians seems to be one of the primary points of the game. Greatly adding to the carnage is realistic inaccuracy of the shotgun, so victims must be shot repeatedly in order to kill them.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES |

GUN USE

Redneck Rampage contains some of the most egregious representations of irresponsible gun use found in this study. The guns used in this game are readily available throughout the United States.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Redneck Rampage carries an ESRB rating of Mature (17+: animated blood and gore, strong language, use of tobacco and alcohol).

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

HITMAN

Hitman is a third-person shooter game and, as the name describes, it is a game in which the job of the main character is to assassinate people. The character is given assignments on whom to kill and must track down his victims and assassinate them. The orders are given by the “Agency,” as it is referred to in the manual, though further identification is not provided.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

Reality is paramount in this game, as players move through real-world settings and face plausible obstacles as they track down their victims. The victims are found in common settings like showers, and shootings result in bloody and gruesome deaths. After assassinating a victim, the player must dispose of the body and cover up evidence to avoid capture.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -NO (in some cases) |

GUN USE

One of the key factors to the guns available in *Hitman* is the ability of the character to conceal them. The use of pistols and revolvers, like those frequently found in the home, is encouraged because they are lightweight and easily concealed and can kill at a greater distance than close-combat weapons. The player is advised in the manual to be aware of the noise level produced by each weapon, as it can be the difference between whether or not the police are alerted.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Hitman is rated Mature with animated violence, animated blood, and strong sexual content.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

MAX PAYNE

This is a third-person shooter game that follows the story of Max Payne, an ex-DEA agent whose wife and child were shot to death. Through a series of *cinema noir*-style plot twists, Max is pitted against both the mob and the police in his effort to exact revenge and to clear his name. In so doing, Max is required to shoot his way through a world reminiscent of New York City and filled with both innocent and “villainous” people, all of whom are potential targets for the player.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

Max Payne is a game of high-level graphics, displaying near picture-quality scenes in both live action and movie reel format. This video offers some particularly violent scenes, both in its action sequences as well as its movie clips. Players can shoot a rifle and follow a bullet’s eye-view directly into the bodies of Payne’s victims, with the requisite gore upon entry. Horrific scenes include a subway maintenance man who has been shot and dragged, leaving a trail of blood, and the wife of Max Payne dying of a gunshot wound to the stomach.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES |

GUN USE

Max Payne portrays remarkably realistic use of widely available firearms. The game includes slow motion action where gunfire can be seen in great detail, with spent cartridges falling with hollow sounds and vivid gun flashes from the weapons of both Max and his enemies. Shotgun blasts create substantially greater gore than the handguns available to players, and both require reloading and precise aiming throughout the game.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Max Payne carries an ESRB rating of Mature.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

HALF-LIFE: COUNTER STRIKE

Half-Life: Counter Strike is a first-person shooter game connected to an online gaming network that allows players to join either terrorist or counter-terrorist teams. The object of the game is to kill the opposing players in an attempt to achieve the given goal (e.g. saving a hostage, or defusing a bomb).

DEPICTION OF REALITY

Counter-Strike strives for realism. A player can withstand a few bullet wounds but will soon die, depending on the type of ammunition being fired and the presence of Kevlar. Bullet wounds result in extensive blood loss. Players are penalized for killing a team member and rewarded for killing opponents. All penalties and rewards are monetary, and money can be spent on weapons upgrades.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES (for some victims) |

GUN USE

The action of the weaponry is realistic in *Counter-Strike*. For example, if the player runs and fires at the same time, their accuracy suffers, though the extent varies from gun to gun. Due to the gun's recoil, holding the trigger down is not as effective as short, quick bursts. Weapons include realistically rendered shotguns, pistols, submachine guns and rifles, all models that are widely available for purchase in the United States.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Half-Life: Counter Strike carries an ESRB rating of Mature.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Soldier of Fortune is a first-person shooter game, and, as its name implies, this game puts the player in the position of a soldier with a mission to kill human “enemies.” The missions take place in a variety of realistic settings, and to successfully complete each level, the player must kill all “enemies” that stand in the way.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

Soldier of Fortune is a well-rendered game with highly realistic graphics depicting real-world settings. When victims are shot they fall to the ground with blood spewing from the bullet wound, and if a player continues to shoot, the victim’s body will twitch with each pull of the trigger. *Soldier of Fortune* fails to include repercussions for the killing of innocent victims; instead of a penalty, the game merely warns: “Check your fire, you’re here to save these people.” The game also includes levels where the player is invincible and thus immune to the hail of bullets that are fired at them.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES |

GUN USE

Soldier of Fortune goes to great lengths to replicate the real action of firing a gun. Players must take close aim in order to hit a target, reload when a weapon is empty, and even stretch the shooter’s finger when it is “tired.” The gunfire, smoke and sound of this game also closely resemble the action of real firearms. Furthermore, the arsenal available to a player is comprised of many weapons that are commonly available in gun stores and homes throughout the country.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Soldier of Fortune carries an ESRB rating of “mature” and includes a warning label on the front of the box that cites violent subject matter. (A low-violence installation option is provided).

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

This first-person shooter game follows the adventures of a female agent of a government organization. A player controls the action through many levels of play broken down into “missions.” The missions range from assassinations to rescue attempts, as the player moves through a 1960’s style world of “good guys,” “bad guys,” and many “civilians.”

DEPICTION OF REALITY

The graphics in *No One Lives Forever* are exceptional, and the attention to detail and story line are exhaustive. The game comes with detailed dossiers on all of the main characters, and the game itself is developed around a robust story with very “human” characters. As a result, the game draws players into a remarkably real world settings and equally familiar challenges. The gunplay and violence in the game are equal to the game makers’ efforts to portray reality. When an enemy is killed, they are jolted by the gunfire and then bloodied by the bullet at the point of entry. The player must sometimes fire multiple shots in order to fatally wound a victim. Different guns and even different ammunition are incorporated into the game to allow for a player to produce different levels of firepower and carnage. Though it is necessary to kill the “bad guys” in order to progress in the game, when a civilian is killed by mistake the game ends immediately. The only way to differentiate between civilians and enemies is that the target becomes red when the weapon is aimed at bystanders.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -NO |

GUN USE

The designers of *No One Lives Forever* have taken great pains to develop a game where the player’s weapons act like real guns and produce the effect of real guns. *No One Lives Forever* even allows the player to decide on types of ammunition (exploding rounds, phosphorous rounds, etc.). The location of a wound has also been taken in to consideration, so that head and chest wounds are more devastating than those to less vital parts of the victims. The selection of guns is extensive, and the weapons most often used in the game are commonly owned (i.e. 9mm pistol, carbine rifle, .38 caliber revolver, etc.)

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

No One Lives Forever has an ESRB rating of Mature for blood and violence.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

GANGSTERS 2

Gangsters 2 is a strategic game in which the player takes on the role of a mob boss directing his thugs. Never involved as an active participant in the action, the player instead makes all decisions that effect the progression of the game. It is similar to controlling chess pieces, as the mob boss directs people to move to different positions and shoot certain individuals. The scenario of this game is based upon a mobster's vow to avenge the death of his father. In order to do so, the player must orchestrate the execution of opposing mob families in order to dominate the world of organized crime.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

Unlike the first-person shooter games that make-up the bulk of this study, *Gangsters 2* does not allow for immediate control of a shooter character. Instead, objectives appear on the screen explaining who needs to be killed next and the location in which the potential victim can be found. Once the player directs the action, the game plays out a movie-like depiction of the events that the player has decided upon. These depictions present a very real scene of gun violence, such as drive-by and assassination-style shootings. Victims groan when they are shot, while blood gushes from their head and body.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -NO (in some cases) |

GUN USE

The scenes in *Gangsters 2* depict the devastating use of several weapons. Details such as the cocking of a shotgun and the flash of a muzzle are visible. The game boasts an arsenal of popular mob weapons, like sub-machine guns. There are also shotguns, which produce particularly gruesome results, and silenced pistols for assassination-style killings.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Gangsters 2 is rated T for teen and warns of animated blood and animated violence.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

DOOM II

Widely considered a “classic” in the genre of first-person shooter games, *Doom* introduced much of the computer gaming world to vivid depictions of gun violence. Indeed, this is the game that apparently had an enormous impact on the two boys who committed the mass murder at Columbine High School. *Doom II* is an upgraded version of the original game that provides better graphics and improved game play. In *Doom II*, the player moves around a maze and kills anything that gets in the way, including human victims.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

While *Doom II* does not reach the level of graphic sophistication that other games in this study achieve, it deserves significant mention, as it is one of the most popular first-person shooter games ever produced. Many of the victims are human characters and some are animals, but neither represents “good” or “bad” opponents--the player must kill them all in order to progress. There are no repercussions for killing the humans, and if a player wants to be an “invincible” shooter then at the start of the game the player chooses the skill level, “I’m too young to die.” Other levels include, “Hey, not too rough,” “Hurt me plenty,” “Ultra-Violence,” and “Nightmare.”

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES |

GUN USE

The guns that are used in *DOOM II* are well enough rendered to be recognizable, and all of the guns are similar to weapons found in the real world (i.e. shotguns, handguns, etc.). Firing the guns produces muzzle flashes, and other details (such as reloading and cocking the weapons) are also included. While the guns do not look as real as they do in other games in this study, there is a tremendous amount of gunfire and resultant carnage in *Doom II*.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Doom has an ESRB rating of Mature.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

007: AGENT UNDER FIRE

007: Agent Under Fire portrays the classic spy scenario depicted in numerous movies of the same name. The unique aspect of the video game version, however, is that it is both a first-person shooter and a multi-player game. The first-person shooter game involves a set mission that must be completed in order to proceed to the next level of play. The multi-player game involves two players competing against each other on a single course where the object is to locate the other character and kill him or her.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

This game provides a high level of graphic sophistication. The player must shoot the “enemies” in order to navigate through a mission and the more that are killed in the course of a mission, the greater the player’s score. Rather than having to view the dead corpses all over the screen, they conveniently disappear shortly after being shot, making the deaths that much more inconsequential.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES |

GUN USE

While some weapons are unlikely to be found in the average American home, most of the firearms portrayed in the game, such as 007’s standard 9mm pistol, are commonly found in many American homes. The player must become accustomed to the accuracy, distance, noise level, rate of discharge, and appearance of these weapons in order to succeed in completing each mission, thus making the depiction and use of the guns particularly realistic.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depictions of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

007:Agent Under Fire is rated T for Teens 13 and over.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

Delta Force is a first-person shooter war game in which the characters are American Special Forces soldiers. The soldiers are given assignments and are dropped by helicopter into enemy territory. When they land they must shoot enemies immediately, and success is achieved by eliminating all enemy targets.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

This game seeks to recreate the experience of a special operations combat mission, and the player must become familiar with the mission and with the required weapons. When the player is hit but not killed, the screen turns a pink color signifying a gunshot wound. Even when the player shoots someone on his own side of the conflict, no penalties are given.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -YES |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -YES |

GUN USE

In *Delta Force: Land Warrior* the weaponry is extensive and particularly realistic. There is a training area available to familiarize the player with the weapons, which provides detailed instructions on how to keep the gun steady and increase accuracy. Spent shell casings are visible when the weapon discharges bullets, and the gun must be reloaded once bullets are used. There are different sounds, distances, and accuracy for each weapon.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -NO |

ESRB RATING

Delta Force: Land Warrior carries and ESRB rating of T for Teen (ages 13+, includes animated violence and animated blood).

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

REMINGTON UPLAND GAME HUNTER

Remington Upland Game Hunter combines both first and third-person elements in a game hunting simulation. The player negotiates a variety of geographical settings (forest, desert, etc.) in an effort to flush out game birds and then shoot them. The objective is fairly simple, with points being awarded for the number of birds “bagged”.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

The graphics in *Remington Upland Game Hunter* are good in the first-person views (while shooting) and poor in the third-person views (while hunting). The game itself, however, plays like a real hunting trip, where a player begins by choosing a rifle, a hunting dog and a hunting location. However, unlike most of the other games in this study, *Remington Upland Game Hunter* makes no effort to portray the gore associated with the use of guns. When birds are shot, they just fall from the sky and are retrieved by the hunting dog. As the game is a simulation of hunting, there are no human victims, and it is quite easy to identify the appropriate targets for the hunt.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -NO |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -NO |

GUN USE

The guns that are used in *Remington Upland Game Hunter* are based on real versions of shotguns made by the game’s namesake, Remington Rifle Company. During the shooting sequences, the guns behave realistically, producing muzzle flashes and small recoils. Unique to the games examined in this study, *Remington Upland Game Hunter* includes a carefully organized section on gun safety and on responsible gun use. This section is accessed as a player chooses a gun before the hunt and includes such tips as: “Be sure of your target and what’s behind it,” “Firearms should be unloaded when not actually in use;” and “Shoot sober.”

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -YES |

ESRB RATING

Remington Upland Game Hunter does not carry an ESRB rating.

PLAYING WITH FIREARMS

GAME EVALUATIONS

BROWNING DUCK HUNTER

Browning Duck Hunter is a first-person shooter game in which the objective is to “bag” birds on a duck hunt. The action takes place from behind a shooting blind. Using a series of decoys and duck calls, the player flushes out different birds and shoots them. The object of the game is to collect a purse of money for the ducks that the players shoot in order to advance to more sophisticated duck hunting clubs.

DEPICTION OF REALITY

This game constrains players to duck hunting within the law. The player is required to purchase a hunting license or face a stiff fine. The player is also fined for killing more than the allotted number of birds or violating other rules specific to the different hunting grounds. When such rules are violated, a park ranger appears on the screen to reprimand the player; if they do not have sufficient funds in their “bank” to cover the fine, they are jailed and the game ends.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1) Realistic Settings | -YES |
| 2) Human Victims | -NO |
| 3) No Consequences for Killing | -NO |

GUN USE

The guns used in *Browning Duck Hunter* are commonly available hunting firearms and are used in a manner appropriate for sport hunting. The only targets that the gun will shoot at are various ducks that appear during the shooting sequences. Like real hunting, a player must take careful aim in order to hit the targets, and when a gun is fired it produces the requisite muzzle flashes and recoil. While gun safety is not detailed in *Browning Duck Hunter*, the game does take strides to penalize players for mishandling their weapons and thus promote responsible gun use.

FEATURES

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1) Realistic Depiction of Guns | -YES |
| 2) Commonly Available Guns | -YES |
| 3) Promotes Safe and Responsible Gun Use | -YES |

ESRB RATING

Browning Duck Hunter does not carry an ESRB rating.