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Modern Warfare 2 brings high sales and controversy

About 4.7 million copies of the game have sold since its Tuesday release.

By Jeremiah Oetting November 12, 2009 (3 years ago)

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2, which was released on Tuesday, might be the most anticipated video game of all time, but its realistic violence has some people concerned. Estimated sales for the first day reached approximately 4.7 million copies, based on the game's publisher Activision's internal estimates.

The game sparked controversy even before its release, after a video was leaked online that highlighted one of its harsher scenes in which an elevator opens into an airport and the player witnesses a group of four characters opening fire on a large crowd of unarmed civilians.

Jerome Paul, an employee of Flip A Game on Washington Avenue, said the scene was necessary for the storyline.

"I would say that maybe it was a little bit vicious," he said. "But then you've got to think ... it's just a video game. It played a part in the story."

Cody Allen, an employee at the Block E GameStop store, has already played through the game twice. He agrees that certain parts are controversial.

"I think it's right that there is controversy, but I don't think it takes away from the game at all," he said.

While Allen maintains that all he can say about the game is "awesome," others aren't as excited about it.

"It just increases the risk of aggressive behavior in the real world," said Michael Potegal, assistant professor of pediatric neurology. "The more realistic the experience, the more of an impact it has."

Potegal said many people justify playing violent video games as a release for pent up aggression. He said research shows that having successful aggressive experiences leads to increased aggression.

"The results of years and years of research are extremely clear, and there's no controversy," he said. "Viewing and participating in violent and aggressive material and games increases tendencies for aggression and decreases tendencies for empathy."



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By Courtesy Activision

Nora Paul, the director of the Institute for New Media Studies at the University of Minnesota, says the idea of shooter games spurring violence in people is “conventional wisdom.”

“I’m not particularly a believer in that much of a one-to-one kind of correlation,” she said.

“There’s also certainly evidence that there’s no correlation at all.”

She said the issue arises from current “hyper-vigilance” of terrorism.

“The thing that’s distasteful is taking these kinds of incidents that happen in real life and putting them in the context of ‘isn’t this fun,’” she said.

Nora Paul said she is mostly concerned with violent games being played by younger audiences.

“Kids are already exposed to so many scenes of violence,” she said. “It’s disturbing to me as a person and as a mother.”

Allen said he believes that the game is meant for an older audience, and he supports GameStop’s sales policy.

“ID is required to get it,” he said. “I don’t care if they come in with somebody they found off the street. I ask if they’re their parent and if not, we don’t provide them the game.”

Jerome Paul also agreed with the age limit on the game.

“I don’t think anyone under 17 should play these kinds of games,” he said. “If you’re under 17 or just can’t handle it, don’t play.”

He said that video games provide a relaxing form of entertainment.

“It lets me step aside of the school work and the book work and just be able to have a fun experience,” he said.

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