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## Reviewing the Critics: Examining Popular Video Game Reviews Through a Comparative Content Analysis

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REVIEWING THE CRITICS:  
EXAMINING POPULAR VIDEO GAME REVIEWS THROUGH A COMPARATIVE  
CONTENT ANALYSIS

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MASTER OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION THEORY AND METHODOLOGY  
at the  
CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY  
May, 2013

**THESIS APPROVAL**  
**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION**

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In memory of Dr. Paul Skalski,

You made friends wherever you went, and you are missed by all of them.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current critical climate in popular online video game reviews (i.e., video game criticism written for a general audience). So far, most of the research published in this area focuses on how the reviews reflect the games themselves, rather than strictly examining the content of the reviews in this growing body of literature. This study uses computer-aided text analysis (CATA) supplemented with human coding to identify typological differences between film and video game reviews, as well as differences in theory usage and critical thought and style. Video game reviews are more concerned with the price of the work being reviewed, supporting the notion for a utility theory of video games. Game reviewers also tend to find redeeming qualities even in very flawed games, suggesting they are either overly passionate and/or concerned about keeping advertisers happy. Although not at the exceedingly high levels as previous studies, the author finds support for using usability heuristics (e.g., responsiveness of controls, use of in-game tutorials) to review games. Neither body of popular criticism examined delves deeply into theoretical frameworks for auteur or feminist theories, but discussion is provided as to how the reviewers could address these issues should they choose to do so.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is no question video games have become increasingly popular in recent decades. In 2011, the average video gamer was 30-years old and had been playing for 12 years. (“Industry facts,” 2011). Admittedly, video game retail sales have been in decline the past few years. However, much of this can be attributed to the popularization of digital sales and free-to-play games (Zacks Equity Research, 2013). Video games have still become a mainstream phenomenon and are a massive industry in and of themselves.

With this widespread popularity, a field of video game studies has emerged called “ludology.” Ludologists have begun developing several theories specific to video games, including critical approaches to the scholarly study of games (e.g., Bogost, 2006; Juul, 2005b). Though these theories are still in early form, scholarly debates and studies are already taking place. For example, Eludamos ([eludamos.org](http://eludamos.org)), which describes itself as

the “Journal for Computer Game Culture,” celebrated its five-year anniversary in early 2012. Game Studies (gamestudies.org), another academic video game journal, has existed for 11 years as of December 2012. While ludologists are busy establishing and validating working theories of video games, a field of popular video game criticism has already taken hold. Many gamers are likely to have fond memories of their favorite video game publications like *Nintendo Power*, *Electronic Games Monthly*, and *GamePro*. Although print media for video games — as with print media in general — has seen a huge decline in popularity during recent years, *Game Informer* still remains a prominent figure in the field. Meanwhile, websites like IGN (ign.com) and GameSpot (gamespot.com) have led the charge for video game reviews online. Though there are currently very few studies relating these reviews to video game sales, several other studies have shown that popular movie reviews can have a significant impact on box office success (e.g., Gemser, Van Oostrum, & Leenders, 2006; Reinstein & Snyder, 2005). Video games are similar to movies in that they are both “experience goods,” that is they are both products for which “consumers cannot ascertain quality prior to actual consumption” (Boatwright, Basuroy, & Kamakura, 2007, p. 402). Because of this, popular video game reviews should be similar to popular film criticism in terms of their potential influence. With the rising popularity of online criticism, large audiences have easy access to a growing body of popular game reviews. However, popular video game criticism has been left largely unquestioned. At this stage in the game, popular video game criticism is a relatively young field with an even younger field of related academic studies. Who are these reviewers, though? Are they critics who want to push and challenge video games in exciting new directions? Are they marketing specialists who write reviews to promote

video games and sell advertising? Perhaps they are something in between. Regardless, these are questions that have, as of yet, never been asked or answered empirically.

This study uses computer-aided text analysis (CATA) supplemented by human coding to evaluate the current realm of popular video game reviews, testing levels of critical thought and any use of theory. Since there are no established acceptable levels for these somewhat abstract concepts, the study will be comparative in nature. Film criticism predates video game criticism by nearly 80 years and has an established body of theory and practice that can be used to help guide this study. Video games and film have both undergone similar development cycles (Skalski et al., 2008), and it seems that when it comes to entertainment media, video games may be most similar (or least dissimilar) to film. Therefore, film criticism studies can be used as a point of reference for comparison. Theater criticism was also considered for this comparison, but theater itself contains a great deal of variability. Even the same cast performing the same play in the same venue can vary in quality from night to night. Movies, like video games, provide a relatively universal experience regardless of where and when they are experienced. Furthermore, online theater criticism has not reached the same kind of mass appeal that online movie and video game criticism have reached. However, film and video games still differ in many ways. Video games, for example, require near-constant input from the player, and they tend to assume a certain degree of skill and/or dexterity in a player. This thesis highlights and discusses some of these difference in the research prior to and in the findings after the content analysis.

To conduct this study, the author gathered an extensive sample of online reviews of movies and video games. With a prescriptive critical approach itself, one that identifies

problem areas and offers potential remedies, this study attempts to criticize the critics, potentially finding worth in certain aspects of popular video game criticism, while identifying other areas that may lack critical thought and require new approaches. Furthermore, reviews have been shown to be valid reflections of the content of games themselves (Ivory, 2006). Therefore, this study will also provide an early test for emerging video game theories and pre-existing critical theories as they apply to video games and further define the differences between film and video games.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Definition of Video Games

According to Juul (2005b), video games are a form of electronic entertainment that share the same foundations as traditional games. A game can be a set of rules for a player to overcome, and/or describe a certain fiction to the player. According to Juul:

A game is a rule-based system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes are assigned different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels emotionally attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are negotiable, (2005b, Chapter 2, Section 4, para. 2).

There are certainly borderline cases of games, which may fit a majority of the definition but lack a specific goal or not provide player attachment. Simulation games like *The Sims* and *SimCity* are perhaps two of the most common examples of these borderline cases.

While they allow players to experiment and feel attached to the outcome, they do not have any sort of quantifiable outcome; players cannot “win” or “beat” them. Juul also excludes



skill-based gambling and games of chance as a true games since the outcomes are already determined or may require no effort from the player beyond pressing a button (e.g., slot machines). See Appendix A for a full breakdown of game features, borderline game features, and non-game features.

Since these borderline games can appear in the same context and channels as other video games (e.g., available in retail environments, downloadable, reviewed in popular media), they are still included in this study. Video games have many other defining factors to consider such as, single-player and multiplayer modes (including massively multiplayer online games called “MMOs”), online and offline play, distribution method (e.g., retail or downloadable), and whether or not the game is playable on a mobile platform or a desktop computer or home console. Popular video game genres include action, adventure, platform, puzzle, role-playing, shooter, and sports, with single-player and multiplayer variants of each.

## 2.2 Background

The popularity of video games these days can be staggering. In 2006, the software market made \$30.3 billion in revenue across the globe. That figure rose to \$46.5 billion in 2009: a 50 percent increase over the course of four years (Wu, 2010). In 2010, 72 percent of American households played video games (“Industry facts,” 2011). Recently, *Angry Birds* has proved a popular hit, even among the casual gaming crowd. It has spawned a line of memorabilia including dolls and Halloween costumes and is available on web browsers in addition to mobile devices. As of May 2011, *Angry Birds* was the top-selling app in the Apple App store, with more than 6.5 million downloads (Olivarez-Giles, 2011). The Android Market estimated an additional 50 to 100 million installs as of

December 2011 (“Angry Birds,” 2011). The game also has three popular sequels, one of which was created in a partnership with 20th Century Fox for the movie *Rio*.

While certainly on their way to becoming a mainstream, successful entertainment medium — and arguably there already — video games have existed for more than 50 years. Steve Russell created the first digital game, *SpaceWar!*, in 1962 (Juergen, 2010; Postigo, 2003). Ten years later, *Pong* was created and became another gaming milestone. Though criticism for the medium had yet to emerge, the very first gaming-related publication was printed in 1974. The magazine, *Play Meter*, is a trade publication dedicated to coin-operated entertainment and is still in circulation today (“#1 Trade Magazine,” n.d.). The first gaming magazines to target consumers both arrived in 1981: *Computer and Video Games* and *Electronic Games Magazine* (“CVG Magazine returns!,” 2008; Thomasson & Kunkel, 2003). The content in the first issue of *Electronic Games Magazine* was far from critical; it began as more of a consumer-focused guide.

One of the feature stories saw the editors comparing the five main “consoles” of the day: Atari VCS, Odyssey<sup>2</sup> (this is not a footnote, rather the console was the successor to the original Magnavox Odyssey and carried a superscript “2”), Intellivision, Channel F, and ActiVision. It should be noted that ActiVision was not a console, rather it was a set of games by one software company for play on the Atari VCS. The editors examined each console through nine categories, with eight focusing on the types of games each platform offered and a final category for overall graphics (see Fig. 1).

**Figure 1. A chart comparing consoles in 1981, taken from the first issue of *Electronic Games Magazine* (Laney et al., p. 48). Note that ActiVision was not a console, but a series of games for the Atari by the software company ActiVision (now stylized “Activision”).**

**Videogame System Scoreboard Chart**

	Atari VCS	Odyssey <sup>2</sup>	Intellivision	ActiVision	Channel F
Head-to-Head Games	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Fair-Good
Solitaire Games	Excellent	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Variety of Software	Excellent	Excellent	Fair-Good	Good	Good
Arcade Games	Excellent	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair-Good
S.F. & Fantasy Games	Excellent	Excellent	Fair-Good	Fair-Good	Fair
Sports Games	Fair-Good	Good-Excellent	Excellent	Good	Fair
Strategy Games	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Fair-Good	Fair-Good
Electronic Board Games	Fair-Good	Excellent	Good-Excellent	Fair-Good	Good
Graphics	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Fair-Good

Note: These ratings are based on an evaluation by the staff of **Electronic Games**. They consider both the quantity and quality of the offerings within each category. Thus a “Fair” rating may indicate that there isn’t much choice, but what is available is good to excellent. The best evaluation is the one each arcader makes for him or her self.

One of the more interesting aspects of the chart is that no console scored worse than “fair” in any category. Either the editors of *Electronic Games Magazine* were very easily contented, or they feared repercussions from advertisers. The second scenario seems more likely as some evidence suggests (see Klosterman, 2006; Scalzi, 2006), especially when taking into account that the magazine was in its infancy and filled with ads.

It is difficult to pinpoint when actual video game reviews first started appearing in publications, but it seems likely some of the first may have come in *Computer Gaming World*, which also launched in 1981. It was eventually plagued by a number of problems and was rebranded as *Games For Windows* in 2006, before closing for good in 2008 (Green, 2008). *Famitsu*, which launched in 1986, is likely another milestone in video

game reviews. The Japanese magazine still exists and reviews current games today. Though the magazine's prestige has waned in recent years, receiving a perfect score in *Famitsu* is still considered a high honor among game developers. As stated earlier, however, very few studies have been published that examine the content of these popular criticisms devoted to video games.

Another facet that warrants discussion is the difference among publication types. Excluding academic journals and scholarly texts, video game publications, especially those sampled for this study, belong to the popular realm: they are for a general audience, usually with the only restriction to readership being an interest in video games. Publications containing movie reviews frequently belong to the popular realm as well, however this study also sampled several publications that can be classified as industry insiders (e.g., *Box Office Magazine*, *Variety*). These publications are not directed toward a general audience. Instead, they are written for those involved in the film industry. It follows that they should differ in their writing styles and the content they discuss. However, one of the more curious observations is that there are very few video game publications that could be considered equivalent to these industry insider film publications. One notable gaming publication that does fit this industry insider category is *Gamasutra* (gamasutra.com). There are others as well (e.g., *Game Developer Magazine*), but these gaming publications, unlike some industry insider film publications, rarely feature popular reviews and, as a result, remain outside of the sampling frame for this study.

### 2.3 Defining Criticism

Before studying today's popular reviews, it seems prudent to discuss criticism and what it entails when grounded in theory. Popular reviews are similar to persuasive op-ed pieces in that both types of articles are very personal and offer an author's unique point of view. Wyatt and Badger (1990) stress the evaluative nature of mass media reviews; they "are the result of [the author's] own tastes and, as such, are personal and often idiosyncratic," (p. 360). However, popular reviews have two key features that differentiate them from editorial pieces. They include "basic factual information about a current or forthcoming event or object, usually before it has been experienced by audience members" and also "a simultaneous personal evaluation of the quality of the execution of that event or object," (p. 360).

In terms of content, criticism can touch on the economic or social impact of an artistic work, mentioning perhaps that it is a zeitgeist, (i.e., a spirit (product) of the times). Criticism can take into account the history of a medium, and mention how a reviewed product compares to predecessors, possibly discussing how it may further the medium and introduce new techniques. Genre offers yet another dimension to criticism. Critics may choose to discuss how the production fits into an existing genre and whether it contributes anything to that genre. Genre is often a way to categorize a work and to determine what sort of elements to expect in the narrative (Bogost, 2008). There are many ways to criticize something, all of which are potentially valid so long as they are backed by critical thought and solid arguments with evidence from the work and/or related works. Costikyan (2008) made an attempt to spell out several of the larger questions that good criticism should answer:

Where does this work fall, in terms of the historical evolution of its medium. How does this work fit into the creator's previous *oeuvres*, and what does it say about his or her continuing evolution as an artist. What novel techniques does this work introduce, or how does it use previously known techniques to create a novel and impactful effect. How does it compare to other works with similar ambitions or themes. What was the creator attempting to do, and how well or poorly did he achieve his ambitions. What emotions or thoughts does it induce in those exposed to the work, and is the net effect enlightening or incoherent. What is the political subtext of the work, and what does it say about gender relationships/current political issues/the nature-nurture debate, or about any other particular intellectual question (whether that question is a particular hobby-horse of the reviewer, or inherently raised by the work in question) (para. 8).

Regardless of the medium under scrutiny, media criticism can be divided into three typological categories (see Abelman & Kushner, 2013). Promotional criticism is barely criticism. Its goal is simply to promote the media being reviewed. Descriptive or informative criticism attempts to tell the audience what the reviewed media is and likely carries some sort of judgment. Prescriptive criticism is designed to challenge and change a medium. Good prescriptive criticism, like good medicine, analyzes the play, book, movie, show, or game; identifies any problems; and offers potential remedies. It can, of course, also praise a body of work for aspects that it performs particularly well, but the ultimate goal is to improve the medium being examined. Even promotional criticism can impact readership. Wyatt and Badger (1990) found the mere presentation of information about a work, even without evaluative language, can significantly increase the interest of the reader in experiencing the work reviewed.

Of course, these techniques and methods did not just spring up all at once. Media criticism has existed in some form or another for at least some 2,500 years. The earliest form seems to have been theater criticism in ancient Greece, evolving out of a need for judgment during dramatic contests. Over time, criticism has developed alongside each

new medium as it emerged. Each body of criticism has tended to borrow from pre-existing media criticism, while developing new ideas and theories unique to the new medium. For example, though both theater and film tell a story, film has the added elements of camerawork and editing that require their own considerations outside of theater criticism. Video games are the newest entertainment medium, and, while similar in many ways to earlier media, are equipped with unique characteristics that present new challenges when thinking and writing critically. Notably, video games are unique in the sense that they require input from a player. Yes, a reader must scan lines on a page before turning to the next one, but a player must enter a series of (often complex) commands for a video game to proceed. Most video games also incorporate some sort of penalty system; playing poorly or not playing at all often results in the death of the player character, the failure of a mission, or some other form of loss.

Further differentiating video games from other media, nearly all works in other entertainment media have concrete narratives that cannot be influenced by the consumer. Video games, especially modern ones like the *Mass Effect* and *Fallout* series, can allow for choice and flexibility in a narrative, with two different players experiencing vastly different scenarios. Even games without explicit choices offer variability through difficulty levels, optional “sidequests,” different modes of play (e.g., single-player campaigns, cooperative campaigns, challenge/time-attack instances, and competitive play), and different methods of play (e.g., solving a problem by either fighting or negotiating, choosing alternate methods of transportation, selecting different weapons). These different scenarios could still be criticized as they relate to the narrative the player

is experiencing. Hamilton (1990), on studying the critical essays of literary theorist Northrop Frye, remarks on the nature of criticism as it applies to literature:

Traditionally, reading is transformed into criticism at the moment of catharsis: For some recognition or discovery the story is seen as a plot with the beginning, a middle, and an end. No longer participating in the work, the reader becomes a detached but concerned spectator of it as a unity, "simultaneous pattern radiating out from the center" and no longer a narrative moving in time (p. 29).

However, video games, unlike other entertainment media, can exist and even succeed without narratives. *Words With Friends* is an incredibly popular video game, but the *Scrabble* clone has no plot other than two friends (or strangers) competing for a high score. While books can exist without narratives (e.g., cookbooks, self-help books) and could even be entertaining without them (e.g., joke books, trivia books), it seems safe to assume that literature as an entertainment medium treats narrative with more importance than video games do. Narrative is especially prominent in film and theater as well. In video games, narratives are generally required to be structured around gameplay elements in video games and are often not the primary concern of the design team, or they need to be flexible enough to undergo revisions to adapt to gameplay changes during development (Avellone et al., 2012). Several scholars have begun to address differences such as these between video games and other entertainment media, building theories unique to video games, though many still pay respect to existing critical theories (e.g., Aarseth, 1997; Bogost, 2006, 2008; Juul, 2005b; Pearce, 2004).

It should be noted that, although criticism can appear in a number of different forums, this study concerns itself specifically with popular criticism. This excludes criticism appearing in academic journals, which may be rife with theoretical leanings and



critical examinations. Instead, the study is concerned with reviews that are readily available to and primarily targeted toward a general readership. Some of the reviews gathered — while available to the average reader — are from publications aimed at those who belong to the industry rather than a general audience (e.g., *Variety*).

#### 2.4 History of Film Criticism

The earliest film reviews date back to 1907, a decade after the birth of cinema. Film was becoming a viable medium to tell stories, and trade publications started assigning writers to comment on it. Frank E. Woods, who later became known for his screenplays, was one of the first reviewers to dabble in film criticism. His reviews focused on the acting, suggesting that it should be more subdued and natural than theater acting (Peary, 2009). Film began to reach prominence in the 1920s. During this decade, the Hollywood studio system took hold, there was an average of 800 American movies produced each year, and (toward the end) the Academy Awards were established to recognize excellence in film (Dirks, 2011a).

#### 2.5 Auteur Theory

This theory was proposed by a group of writers for French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*. “Auteur” literally translates to “author,” and this is the essence of the theory. It postulates that the director is the author of a film. Sarris (1962) states that not all directors are auteurs, but those who place a certain personal stamp on their films. These auteur films in some way reflect the personalities of their directors. Some scholars note that film professionals other than directors (e.g., producers, cinematographers, screenwriters) may fulfill the role of auteur. According to Wollen (1972), scholars of auteur thought try to reveal a core meaning and a set of thematic motifs that run through

films. They also examine the style of a particular work, paying attention to the *mise en scène*, which refers to the staging of scene, and the composition of everything in front of the camera (Dirks, 2011b). Naremore (1990) describes the early auteur theorists, specifically Jean-Luc Godard, as embracing a sort of adolescent romanticism in their criticisms of film. Although some of Godard's writings may seem akin to those of a schoolboy pining after a crush, his love for film was instrumental in revitalizing the realm of scholarly film studies.

Utilizing auteur theory in video game reviews makes a certain amount of sense. There have been some attempts by gaming journalists to identify video game auteurs (e.g., Hawkins, 2011; Rice, 2008), but auteur theory tends to focus on a powerful individual: the director. It may be difficult or impossible to see the influence of a singular, powerful auteur in a video game. Aside from small, independent or "indie" games, video games are produced by large companies; in many cases, no clear directorial role is assigned to any one person. Rice (2008) states there are two subsets of auteurs when it comes to video games. One is the traditional view of the strong individual, someone like Hideo Kojima, the driving force behind the very distinctive *Metal Gear Solid* series, or David Jaffe, the creative director of the *God of War* series. Jaffe has been called an auteur because he championed his artistic visions during production, much to the chagrin of many of the games' engineers (Schreier, 2011). Meanwhile, Ken Levine, creative director of *Bioshock*, has been referred to as the industry's number-one auteur (Hawkins, 2011). This is a title that Levine himself questions, (Thomsen, 2010), namely because of Rice's (2008) other view of the video game auteur: The studios themselves are the auteurs. Ted Price, CEO and founder of Insomniac Games — the studio behind the

*Ratchet and Clank* and *Resistance* games — has testified to this effect. According to Price, one opinionated person leading a large game development team can become a “bottleneck” and “universally hated” (Ashcraft, 2010). Rice (2008) mentions that development at Valve, creators of *Half-Life* and *Team Fortress*, is a “cabal” one, where no individual takes on a definitive role. Instead, Valve employees take on a number of tasks and roles where they are needed.

While this studio-as-auteur view might be appropriately applied to the films produced during the Hollywood Studio Era (c. 1920’s through 1950’s; Mordden, 1988; Schatz, 1996), contemporary film production does not follow such a model. Films are created by crews of people that break apart once production is finished. Even if crew members work together again, there’s no corporate connection between them (Ashcraft, 2010), and it follows that directors work with many different film crews, yet their auteur stamp persists throughout different films. With game development studios that band together for multiple projects and less defined directorial roles, it’s difficult to say whether the video game auteur exists. If it does, is the individual the auteur? Is the studio the auteur? Can it be both?

## 2.6 Feminist Theory

This section will be brief; in the author’s experience, many popular film and game reviews refrain from a feminist standpoint. Still, feminist theory remains an important critical viewpoint, and one that is certainly valid for popular online reviews. In general, feminist theories examine “the origins and continuing nature of women’s nearly universal devaluation in society,” (Steeves, 1987, p. 96). These assumptions can be based in gender analytic and psychoanalytic theories (see Mulvey, 2004) and often concern body images

and media portrayal (e.g., Consalvo, 2004). In film studies, Feminist Theory regularly examines gender roles and portrayals on screen. For example, Modleski (2004) argues – against a popular consensus – that Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* presents a powerful female figure in Lisa, whereas the male protagonist, Jeff, remains fairly infantile throughout.

With their ever-increasing popularity, there should be a growing concern of how women are portrayed in video games. Indeed, feminist studies specific to the medium are beginning to emerge. One of the more prominent voices is the webseries Feminist Frequency ([feministfrequency.com](http://feministfrequency.com)). Though it examines film and other media in addition to video games, in 2012 series’ founder Anita Sarkeesian launched a project on the crowd-funding site Kickstarter ([kickstarter.com](http://kickstarter.com)) to specifically examine females in video games. She called the study “Tropes vs. Women” and was met with harsh and immediate opposition from many members of the gaming community. When her pitch video for the campaign appeared on YouTube, it was met with an overflow of derogatory comments and hate speech (Carter, 2012). Her Wikipedia page was vandalized and subsequently locked from editing by the Wikipedia site administrators. Furthermore, Kickstarter received numerous (erroneous) complaints to try to have her project removed from the site (Plunkett, 2012). The attacks backfired when media outlets began running the story and Sarkeesian’s project exceeded its original funding goal by more than 26 times the amount she had originally sought to produce the videos.

Though there are studies that examine gender portrayals in games (e.g., Ivory, 2006), published studies examining feminist viewpoints in popular gaming criticism are somewhat uncommon. Soukup (2007) is one of the few published studies that ties feminist theory in with popular game reviews. Though his methodology is unclear,

Soukup examines game reviews through an entelechial perspective based on Burke's (1966) writings. Entelechy is defined as "the desire of someone or something to move toward its perceived (symbolic) state of perfection," (Soukup, 2007, pp. 159-160).

Although this is a concept developed in the 1960s, video games and video game reviews fit this notion particularly well. Players describe scenarios where they try to play as best as they can. Some of the earliest video games found in arcades contain little motivation for players beyond achieving a high score. These arcade games profited from players depositing more and more quarters as they attempted to beat the high scores of other players.

Even though 21st century gamers usually play video games from their homes on console machines and PCs, these "quarter plugging" conventions remain. Today, in most games featuring avatars, gamers seek to develop the "best" or "strongest" characters possible — this is the central purpose of the game, (Soukup, 2007, p. 167).

Soukup (2007) finds that these inherently patriarchal traits of mastery and perfection are present throughout popular gaming criticism, often through a lens of violent conquest.

Video games about so-called "empowered women" and their reviews do little to challenge these patriarchal traits. Instead, powerful women in video games are encouraged to be as violent and skilled at killing as their male counterparts.

## 2.7 Usability Principles for Video Game Design.

Traditionally, usability heuristics are methods to evaluate issues that interfere with the use of productivity software. They generally consist of a set of categories of problems within the software and have accompanying ratings for each category to rate the severity of each problem type (Livingston, Mandryk, & Stanley, 2010).

A few studies had previously attempted to create video game heuristics and examine usability (e.g., Clanton, 1998; Desurvire, Caplan, & Toth, 2004; Federoff, 2002). In Federoff's thesis, she equates many of the components of usability to fun. She writes, "Measuring satisfaction should be central to the evaluation of the usability of games since the goal of a game is entertainment not productivity" (p. 8). This is a point Bogost (2008) strongly refutes. He writes that the trend in most popular critical game reviews is to place a strong emphasis on fun, and he equates this to focusing on, "subjectivity's lowest common denominator" (p. 131). However, Federoff's (2002) research is still valuable; by shadowing the development process of a video game and interviewing the development team, she discovered an extensive list of heuristics the team tried to abide by. Desurvire, Caplan, and Toth (2004) also studied video game heuristics, though they had several broad categories and it is somewhat unclear in their methods as to how they developed these heuristics.

Pinelle, Wong, and Stach (2008) worked to further refine and simplify video game heuristics with a focus specifically on usability. They reviewed the previously mentioned studies and also based principles on Nielsen's (1994) usability heuristics, but with significant alterations. Unlike other media, video games require near-constant input and interaction from players. These usability principles focus on the user experience and how game design can facilitate or hinder it.

In developing their heuristics, Pinelle, Wong, and Stach collected 108 game reviews from *GameSpot*. They selected 18 reviews from 6 different genres: "role playing, sports/racing, shooter/tactical-shooter, action, strategy (both real-time and turn-based), and adventure" (pp. 1455-1456). Across all 108 game reviews, researchers identified a

total of 285 usability problems, an average of 2.64 problems per game, and at least one problem mentioned in every review. They were able to classify these problems into 10 different usability heuristics. Examples of some of their heuristics include providing consistent responses to user actions and allowing users to customize settings like audio, video, and difficulty (see Appendix B for the full set of usability heuristics).

Like the video game heuristics that came before, Pinelle, Wong, and Stach's can be used as a guide during the development process. Perhaps because they were taken from actual video game reviews, their heuristics are clear and concise enough to accurately and effectively critique games in popular reviews as well. Though their paper lacks reliability checks for coding the reviews, they had reviewers validate their heuristics by using them to review a game. They recruited five individuals with gaming experience to play and evaluate the PC game *Necromania: Traps of Darkness* by implementing the usability heuristics. Each of the evaluators found between 7 and 10 ( $m = 9$ ) usability problems in the game. The reviewers identified problems in every heuristic category except for one (the ability to skip non-playable content). Based on the abysmal reviews for *Necromania: Traps of Darkness*, it seems entirely likely the game may not have had any content — in the way of dialog or cutscenes — to skip (Colayco, 2005).

Overall, the reviewers reported several benefits to this review method. They felt the terminology was well suited to the task at hand and found using the heuristics appropriately narrowed their scopes to issues of usability (Pinelle, Stach, & Wong, 2008, p. 1460) rather than criticizing other areas like narrative design or glitches.

There were a number of other shortcomings in the research of Pinelle, Wong, and Stach. Instead of collecting reviews from multiple outlets, their study was concerned only

with reviews from a single online source, *GameSpot*. The researchers themselves acknowledged their limited number of game genres studied and their choice to study only PC game reviews instead of adding console or mobile game reviews. This current study partially replicates their design and further tests their heuristics while addressing these limitations.

One of the concerns Pinelle, Wong, and Stach mention themselves is their heuristics are designed with a single-player experience in mind. They felt multiplayer games had become increasingly complex and warranted their own set of usability heuristics to critique the multiplayer experience (p. 1461). Pinelle et al. (2009) addressed these concerns and performed a similar study to develop heuristics specific to networked multiplayer games. These multiplayer heuristics would likely apply only to a small portion of the game reviews collected for this study, so they will not be used.

## 2.8 Utility Theory of Video Games

This particular theory differs greatly from the preceding ones in that it is not based around the content or form of video games, and it is not a critical theory in the classical sense. Since popular reviews are likely directed toward consumers, this is more of an economic theory concerned with the value games can offer. While casually browsing some of the reviews collected for this project, the author noticed several that had an emphasis on pricing and how long the game took to complete. In discussing this with a peer, the notion of economic utility arose. Expected Utility Theory is an economic concept related to decision-making and risk aversion (e.g., Mongin, 1997; Rabin, 2000). A common problem for economists is to model the maximization of utility. In other words, what is the best way for an individual to spend his or her money to ensure the



most entertainment value for his or her dollar? Bogost (2008) is keen to pick up on this. He writes, “As the value proposition of entertainment gaming, fun and emergence both imply a kind of accounting, a return on investment for the player. In such an economy, a high degree of nonrepeating interactivity might indeed suggest more total ‘potential fun,’” (pp. 121-122).

The purpose of including these ideas is not to attempt an economic model along of the lines of “ $X$  hours of gameplay divided by  $Y$  dollars equals  $Z$  satisfaction.” Though an equation like this may be possible, there are doubtless numerous variables to somehow factor in such as overall quality of the game, ingenuity, learning curves, and so forth. Furthermore, the implications of having one would seem more useful to a developer or publisher looking to maximize returns on money spent developing the game. The author has merely noticed this trend while observing popular game reviews and wishes to determine how common this practice it is and the fundamental aspects it involves. Is utilitarian criticism commonplace for cell phone games? Are the big-budget, \$60 titles placed under heavy scrutiny? Do reviewers place stricter guidelines for them to match up to a sort of idealized gameplay-received-for-money-spent ratio? These are some of the questions this thesis asks of reviews when it comes to this theoretical domain.

This type of approach has been largely unutilized when it comes to experiential goods like video games. This author believes a utilitarian lens can apply to video games because of how greatly they vary in the types and amounts of “value” (i.e., enjoyment) received, especially when compared to the fairly static pricing and lower variance of enjoyment in other entertainment media. Keep in mind the following information is

completely anecdotal. It also does not take into account sales and promotions, or second-hand distribution.

Certainly, no two movies offer the exact same “amount” of entertainment, but in terms of running time, movies are fairly homogeneous. A majority of feature films at the box office run anywhere in length from 90 minutes to 150 minutes. At the box office, movies are priced universally: usually about \$10 these days with an upcharge for 3D but with discounts for matinees. Entertainment literature may have a larger range in length, but it seems safe to assume most books read for entertainment range from 200 pages to 800 pages. Again, books are priced fairly consistently when they are sold at retail value.

Video games experience the greatest range in both pricing and the amount of content they offer out of any experiential good. Casual cell phone games can usually be had for a few dollars or even for free, and they can potentially offer hours of entertainment. Most current console games sell for \$60 in retail stores and could range in length anywhere from a few hours to 30 hours or more. When additional playthroughs are encouraged or online play is involved, players can easily stick with a particular game for more than 100 hours. Somewhere in between these two general categories lies a third, emerging category of indie games: games developed by a small team or an individual and often self-published. These indie games mentioned previously tend to be priced between \$5 and \$20 and can offer a significant range in play time. At the time of this writing, indie games *And Yet It Moves* and *The Binding of Isaac* were priced at \$9.99 and \$4.99 respectively on the Steam store. Players reported an average time of about 3 hours to complete *And Yet it Moves* and about 24 hours to complete *The Binding of Isaac*, (“And Yet It Moves,” 2012; “The Binding of Isaac,” 2012).

An example of this type of criticism is Levi Buchannan's (2009) review, "...Call of Duty: World at War: Zombies makes a serious blunder that keeps it from being an easy game to recommend to shooter fans: it offers far too little for way too much money... The idea of a \$10 game with a single level — whether it offers multiplayer or not — is just crazy..." (para. 2). In his 2010 review of *Blacklight: Tango Down*, Brent Roberts writes, "I guess the big question for gamers is: 'Is this worth 1200 MS points [\$15]?' The answer to that question is yes.... This could easily be a \$49.99 retail title" (para. 11).

Yet another example of this utilitarian criticism can be found in the *Gamespot* review for *Rogue Warrior*. Though it received many harsh criticisms for a variety of reasons, one of the leading complaints about *Rogue Warrior*, a \$60 retail game released in 2009, was how short it was. Under his bullet point list of "bad" points about the game, senior editor Kevin VanOrd lists his first complaint as, "[It offers] just over two hours of solo gameplay at full price." He even refers to the game as an "absolute rip-off" in the title of his review (VanOrd, 2009).

While a game like *Rogue Warrior* has a concrete pricing structure and an amount of gameplay time that is fairly easy to measure and with little variance, the emerging trend of free-to-play games further complicates this issue. Becoming prevalent especially in massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) and casual social games like *Farmville*, the free-to-play model generally offers players a game that is technically free to play. These games also tend to be open-ended, so there really is no "beating" the game. Valve's *Team Fortress 2* became free-to-play when the developers realized players were willing to spend money on digital hats, weapons, and other items for their characters (McWhertor, 2011). In many free-to-play games, players may choose to pay money to

circumvent the less fun and/or repetitive activities they perform in a game to achieve a more powerful character. These acts are commonly referred to as “farming,” “grinding,” or “leveling.” Spending real money may even be somewhat necessary in a free-to-play game if a player wishes to remain competitive when playing against other players (Hayes, 2012). The most curious thing about the free-to-play model is — depending on the nature and design of the game — the relationship between money spent and time spent playing the game can be positive or negative. Some players will pay money to play more often, such as in *Farmville* where using credits allows players more turns without having to wait. Similarly, spending money in *Treasures of Montezuma: Blitz* on the PlayStation Vita is similar to putting more money in an arcade machine, allowing players more chances to play. Other players who spend money in free-to-play games are — in essence — paying money to play the game less. Rather than play the game repeatedly to unlock more powerful characters and abilities, players can spend money in a free game like *League of Legends* to unlock content more quickly. They may still play the game a great deal and consider spending money to “skip to the good part,” or they may actually spend less time playing the game because they’ve chosen to forego a lengthy process of gaining access to new features. Whatever the motives, this is indeed a complex area that merits additional research.

## 2.9 Previous Research

Little content analysis has been applied to video games so far. A number of scholars have stressed the difficulty in properly examining the content. Because of the extensive range in the length of video game plays, Schmierbach (2009) noted that simply sampling the first hour of a game may not present an accurate depiction of the content

that appears throughout. Smith (2006) discusses variables like character selection. For example, a character like Scorpion in the popular fighting series *Mortal Kombat* wields a spear of sorts. Selecting him may lead to more graphic violence than if the player were to pick a character who specializes in hand-to-hand combat. Lachlan and Maloney (2008) attribute much of the variability in game play to individual playing styles, personality traits, and skill levels. They conducted a study where they recorded players' individual gameplay sessions and then content analyzed each video for violent behavior, finding some support for this idea.

While video games themselves have been the target of many studies outside of content analysis, often with a bias toward studying violence (Ferguson, 2007), little research has been published specifically dedicated to video game reviews. Ivory (2006) analyzed the content of a number of reviews on the popular website GameSpot, but his study was to ascertain if reviews reflect the content of the games they were written about, namely if reviews could be used to measure gender representations in video games. He found confirming support in his study, but he was not especially interested in discovering more about the reviews themselves. Similarly, Soukup (2007) analyzed game reviews, but like Ivory he was more interested in determining what the reviews said about the mentality of the gaming community than critiquing the reviews.

## 2.10 Rationale

There is a substantial amount of theory behind film, and an emerging body of theory behind video games. Even before these media became dominant forms of entertainment, theories guided literary and dramatic criticism. This study will attempt to determine if there is any semblance of critical theory in popular reviews today,

specifically those found online; video game reviews in particular have found a much stronger foothold in the online environment than in print. In doing so, it will also seek to support or refute the emerging video game theories proposed by various ludologists.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that ratings and reviews are widespread on the Internet these days. While a large portion of these are consumer reviews on commerce sites, there are entire websites that exist based solely around criticism. Metacritic ([metacritic.com](http://metacritic.com)) may be the best example, with its comprehensive collection of reviews and review scores for movies, video games, TV shows and music. Game Rankings ([gamerankings.com](http://gamerankings.com)) is another review-collection site, or “aggregator,” that focuses specifically on video games. Rotten Tomatoes ([rottentomatoes.com](http://rottentomatoes.com)) has movie news, but a large portion of the site is dedicated to movie reviews written by critics from more than 250 publications that contribute to the “Tomatometer”: an aggregate measure of how “fresh” or “rotten” a movie is as an indicator of its overall quality.

To speak proverbially, the popular video game reviewers may have put the cart before the horse. They regularly write about video games, but little has been published analyzing the content of these popular reviews and the sites they write for receive voluminous amounts of traffic. IGN is the most popular video game review website in the U.S. and the 241st most popular website in the U.S. overall, with 4.3 million visitors each month. This may seem small or large depending on perspective, but, according to the web audience monitoring site Quantcast, IGN is ranked above the websites of popular computer and electronics retailer Newegg, the IRS, CVS Pharmacy, social news aggregator Digg, the television network CBS, and only slightly behind Verizon.com and the movie review website Rotten Tomatoes (“Top sites,” 2011). Also, keep in mind that

the 4.3 million figure applies to unique visitors. IGN has not made public how many page views it receives from those visitors. Google Trends estimated IGN received 700,000 unique visitors across the globe every day in December 2011. Note that this is actually a decrease over the past two years; IGN had an average of approximately 1 million daily viewers worldwide in the beginning of 2009 (“Google Trends,” 2011). While IGN also has sections of its site dedicated to other interests like movies, TV, and comic books, its front page has a strong focus on video games (“IGN,” 2012), and some 45.59 percent of all its visitors use the main, video-game-focused portion of the site. Specialized video game subdomains for PlayStation 3, PC and Xbox 360 make up the top-three most popular sections on the site, with a general “games” section constituting the fourth most popular subdomain in IGN (“IGN.com Site Info,” 2011). All of this means that an extremely popular site in the U.S. and in the world sees a majority of its traffic driven by video game news and reviews.

## 2.11 Comparing Video Games and Film

Video games and movies are two popular forms of entertainment media that, while different in many ways, share a host of similarities. Skalski et al. (2008) examines the similar, “parallel” development processes of the two media. For example, both movies and video games began in public environments; movies started in Kinetoscope parlors and nickelodeons, and the first video games appeared in bars and arcades. Furthermore, both media have attempted to make their respective audiences feel some sort of presence, which can be defined as actually feeling as though one is present in the diegetic environment created by the media being consumed (Lombard & Ditton, 1997). Though both film and video games may have started as simple tests of technology, they

eventually “shifted towards a more complex narrative and character-based construction rooted in increasingly realistic representations” (Skalski et al., 2008, p. 14). They have also evolved along similar paths technologically. Over the years, movies added sound, became colorized, moved to widescreen formats, added surround sound, and sometimes play in 3D. Video games have adopted a number of similar concepts, and have also added motion controls to many games (Skalski et al., 2008). The Nintendo Wii was one of the earliest examples, but Sony and Microsoft followed suit with their devices: the PlayStation Move and Kinect (respectively). Even handheld gaming is following the same trend. The Nintendo 3DS and Sony PlayStation Vita both have accelerometers and gyroscopes for motion-based controls. Many smart phones also have accelerometers, allowing players to tilt their devices back and forth to manipulate the action on the screen. It is on these technological grounds — along with advances in narrative and character construction in both games and films — that the author has decided to examine video game reviews with respect to existing film theories.

Furthermore, the reviews of video games have often been treated similarly to those of movies. Observation of the review climate suggests that video game reviews are seen as having a similar sort of power and influence that movie reviews are seen as having. Shortly after the release of the blockbuster hit *Titanic*, director James Cameron became outraged by Kenneth Turan’s review. He referred to Turan’s review as a personal attack on him and suggested he be removed from his position at the *L.A. Times* (Cameron, 1998; Peary, 2009). In the realm of video game reviews, GameSpot editor Jeff Gerstmann was terminated from his position after he posted a somewhat negative review of *Kane and Lynch: Dead Men* (McWhertor, 2007). He assigned the game a score of 6



out of 10, which corresponds to “fair,” on the GameSpot website (gamespot.com). Although GameSpot officially stated that Gerstmann was dismissed for internal reasons and cited a number of explanations why the content in his review was subsequently altered, it bears mentioning that the site was plastered with ads for *Kane and Lynch* at the time (“Spot on,” 2007). More recently, Epic Games’ Cliff Bleszinski expressed his disdain for Eurogamer’s review for his company’s hit game *Gears of War 3* (Sterling, 2011). Eurogamer assigned the game a respectable 8 out of 10. In spite of many perfect reviews, Bleszinski referred to Eurogamer as “haters” and said in an interview:

You know, I didn’t quite gather it. I don’t want to come across as defensive. How do I phrase this properly? When people rated *Gears 2* higher than *Gears 3*, it kind of upset me because I know *Gears 3* is a better game on every level (Garrat, 2011, para. 10).

Boatwright, Basuroy, and Kamakura (2007) define movies and video games, among other goods and media, as experience goods; they are products for which “consumers cannot ascertain quality prior to actual consumption” (p. 402). Their study, along with others like Reinstein and Snyder (2005) found support for the notion that popular movie reviews impact the movie box office. Basuroy, Chatterjee, and Ravid (2003) specifically found support for a negativity bias: that negative reviews have a stronger effect on the box office than positive reviews. Gemser, Van Oostrum, and Leenders (2006) focused their efforts on print reviews and found similar support for the effects of popular criticism on the box office success of movies. The above studies support the power of expert opinion in influencing the sales of movies, but Boatwright, Basuroy, and Kamakura (2007) suggest their model rings true for any experience good, specifically mentioning video games.

Supporting this notion, some interesting video game sales figures were highlighted at the 2012 Game Developers Conference. According to Geoffrey Zatkin of Electronic Entertainment Design and Research, review score has a significant impact on game sales. When standardized to a 100-point scale, only 216 games were rated at 90 or better in 2011. Each of these “excellent” games averaged 700,000 units sold in the first three months of release. When the rating dropped to the 80 to 89 range, the three-month average plummeted to 236,000 units sold. This decreasing trend continued. Games in the 70 to 79 range sold an average of 62,000 copies in their first three months. Those in the 60 to 69 range sold 57,000 copies on average during the first three months, and the 1,024 games rated 50 or lower sold a mere 30,000 copies during their first three months (North, 2012). In other words, a video game that received ratings of 50 or lower sold 630,000 fewer copies on average than an excellent, “90 or better game” in their first three months. This translates to the higher-rated game selling approximately 23 times as many copies, and — assuming a \$60 retail value — grossing \$37.8 million dollars more in revenue.

This information coincides with three separate, international polls conducted on the popular video game strategy site GameFAQs ([gamefaqs.com](http://gamefaqs.com)). Each poll was open for 24 hours in 2009, 2010, and 2012. The polls averaged 71,411 respondents. An average of 35.69 percent of the respondents said they paid at least “some” attention to review scores when deciding which games to buy. Also, 15.64 percent said they paid a “good amount” of attention to the scores, and that this information influenced their decisions. Some 3.61 percent paid “a lot” of attention to the scores and said they wouldn’t buy a game with a bad score. That means more than half the GameFAQs readership pays at least some attention to review scores when purchasing a game. Only 21.62 percent of the

respondents said the scores had no influence on their purchasing behaviors (“Poll of the day,” 2009, 2010, 2012).

Publishers have taken note of the impact of review scores, and some have begun offering “Metacritic bonuses” if a game obtains a high enough score on the review aggregation site. Developer Obsidian missed an extra bonus on “Fallout: New Vegas” because the game averaged an 84 on Metacritic. Had it received an 85, then the studio would have been entitled to a cash bonus from the publisher (Sterling, 2012).

In spite of their many similarities, video games are still very different from movies. A movie progresses without feedback from the audience, whereas most video games require constant input from a player. There is a certain skill required to play video games. This varies from game to game and many have adjustable difficulty settings, but this necessary ability or talent can still be seen as a barrier preventing some from playing. Many ludologists have suggested that video games need their own theories to reflect these and other differences they have from other media (e.g., Frasca, 2003; Pearce 2004).

This study serves as an early test of these fledgling ludological theories, many of which have never been tested empirically. If popular reviewers have reviewed games using these video game theories (albeit unknowingly in many cases), there may be some merit to them after all. Furthermore, if popular reviews of video games — along with film and other media — contain little or no theory, then it seems they may have no more credibility than the average blogger. As DePoy and Gitlin (1998) suggest:

Theory provides conceptual clarity and the capacity to connect new knowledge that is obtained through data collection actions to the vast body of knowledge to which it is relevant. Without theory, we cannot have conceptual direction. Data that are derived without being conceptually embedded in theoretical contexts do not advance our understanding of human experience (para. 1).

Bogost (2008) suggests that video games “require critical interpretation” for players to truly understand the effects of the work (p. 99), and it follows that an equivalent level of critical interpretation is necessary to obtain the same understanding of film. Therefore, this study will scrutinize popular video game reviews for theory, critical thought, and general purpose, using popular film reviews as an established field for baseline comparison.

## 2.12 Research Questions

This study posits a number of research questions designed to identify differences between the two bodies of popular reviews. Pennebaker’s (2007) content analysis program Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) contains a multitude of dictionaries that can be used to analyze text and discern certain attributes from it. One of the key dictionaries for this study is Pennebaker’s cognitive mechanisms dictionary. Containing words to measure insight, causal linkage, discrepancies, tentative thoughts, certainty, inhibition, and inclusive and exclusive language (“Comparing LIWC2007,” n.d.), the cognitive mechanisms dictionary is designed to examine the “depth of thinking” present in a text (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 35). This would seem to be an important aspect of any critical work, and it should be necessary to make the kinds of connections that Costikyan (2008) writes about. The author posits the following research question:

RQ1: How do video game reviews and film reviews differ in their use of cognitive mechanism words (based on a Pennebaker dictionary)?

In order to gauge familiarity with and usage of terms relating to the reviewers' respective media, the author created technical film term and technical game term dictionaries. These dictionaries can be viewed as an attempt to quantify expertise through the use of technical jargon. The author posits the following research question:

RQ2: How do video game reviews and film reviews differ in their respective technical term dictionaries?

As discussed previously, criticism can attempt to classify works by genre. These dictionaries measure yet another method of descriptive criticism, and the author posits the following research question:

RQ3: How do video game reviews and film reviews differ in respect to their genre theory dictionaries?

Utilizing several more Pennebaker (2007) dictionaries, the author wishes to gauge the use of emotional language to better discern how popular reviewers feel toward their review media. Does either group of reviewers today possess an excited optimism similar to how Naremore (1990) describes Godard's criticism of film? The author posits the following research question:

RQ4: How do the two different review types compare in Pennebaker's emotional content dictionaries?

Harkening back to the typologies of criticism mentioned earlier (i.e., descriptive, promotional, and prescriptive; Abelman & Kushner, 2013), the author posits the following research question:

RQ5: What is the general purpose of these popular reviews?

Although it may seem reasonable to expect theory to appear more in the realm of scholarly criticism, there may be room for it in the realm of popular reviews. The author has laid out rudimentary frameworks for examining presence of auteur theory, feminist theory, usability principles, and utility theory in the reviews samples. The author posits the following research question:

RQ6: Which theories, if any, exist in popular film and video game reviews?

Finally, the author posits one additional research question to account for any other discoveries that might arise while performing this study, keeping the emergent field of ludology in mind (Bogost, 2006; Juul, 2005b):

RQ7: What attributes define popular gaming criticism?

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### 3.1 Conceptualization and Operationalization of Variables

Many of the variables for this content analysis are from Pennebaker's LIWC dictionaries. The sources for the dictionaries and dictionary terms are reputable, so they should be valid descriptive measures for the traits they apply to. Twelve dictionaries were utilized, eight of which were taken directly from or modified slightly from Pennebaker's (2001) LIWC dictionaries. These dictionaries are "cognitive mechanisms," "negative emotions," "optimism," "referencing audience," "referencing self," and "vulgarity." The four custom dictionaries are "film genres," "game genres," "technical film terms," and "technical game terms." The film genre and technical film term dictionaries were created using the American Movie Classics (AMC) website (Dirks, 2011b). The game genre and technical game term dictionaries were created using the author's existing knowledge

combined with online sources (Hughes, 2007; Juul, 2005a). Totaled, the technical film dictionary has 305 terms, the technical video game dictionary has 204 terms, the film genre dictionary has 39 terms, and the video game genre dictionary has 41 terms. As discussed earlier, Skalski et al. (2008) note many similarities between video games and film. There is some overlap between the dictionaries. The two technical term dictionaries have 105 entries in common, and the genre dictionaries have three entries in common. All of the dictionaries used created variables measured at the ratio level.

During CATA analysis, the author noticed game reviews regularly mention “fans” of certain game series and genres. An additional custom dictionary called “fandom” was created to measure usage of this terminology. CATA Analysis was performed using WordStat. A complete list of dictionary terms is in Appendix C.

Several variables were constructed to supplement the CATA coding with a human coding element. Costikyan’s (2008) assertion on the qualifications of good criticism were simplified, reworked and expanded into a scale of 13 dichotomous variables that can be used to gauge the presence of critical thought in a review:

1. Does the review describe how the work compares to other similar works?
2. Does the review mention any previous efforts by the work’s creator(s)?
3. Does the review mention at least one individual person responsible for the work (either writer, producer, director or equivalent) by name?
4. Does the review mention at least one development team/group or production/publishing company responsible for the work by name?
5. Does the review mention what the work’s creator was attempting to do and how well it was done?
6. Does the review describe how the work uses previous techniques to create a new or novel effect?
7. Does the review describe any new or novel techniques used in the work?
8. Does the review make any mention of genre?
9. Does the review discuss the emotions that the work induces in those exposed to it?
10. Does the review discuss the performance(s) of any actors and/or voice actors?



11. Does the review make any mention of gender relationships and/or gender portrayals?
12. Does the review mention any political subtext and/or agenda present in the work?
13. Does the review make any attempt(s) to tie the work in with the current social and/or political environment?

It seems very unlikely that a review should answer all of these questions, but a meaningful review should address at least some them. By giving a score of “1” for a “yes” and “0” for a “no,” each review can be assigned a score from 0 to 13 representing, very loosely, increasing levels of critical thought and examination present in a review.

Based on the very basic typological forms of media criticism discussed earlier (i.e., descriptive, promotional, and prescriptive), additional variables were added to assess the purpose and type of criticism employed in each review. An additional set of variables arose from the utility research. Like those questions above for critical thought and style, these were answered “1” for “yes” and “0” for “no.” The exceptions to this were 6a and 6b. These variables were only coded for if variable 6 was “yes,” otherwise those variables were coded as “missing.” After each item in brackets is the typological or theoretical aspect it can be linked to.

1. Does the review summarize the plot? [Descriptive criticism]
2. Does the review recommend or partially recommend readers should watch/play the movie or game? [Promotional criticism]
3. Does the review discourage or partially discourage readers from watching/playing the movie or game? [Promotional criticism]
4. Does the review offer suggestions on how the work could be improved? [Prescriptive criticism]
5. Does the review mention specifically how much the movie/game costs to watch or play (in dollars or another currency)? [Utility theory]
6. Does the review make any evaluative statement in regard to the value or price of the movie/game? [Utility theory]
  - a. Does the review suggest the value of the movie/game is higher than its asking price (i.e., it is a bargain or good value)?
  - b. Does the review suggest the movie/game is priced too high?

Finally, human coding was used for the Pinelle, Wong, and Stach (2008) usability heuristics. Again, they were coded “1” for “yes” and “0” for “no.” It should be noted these variables only apply to video game reviews.

1. The review discusses the consistency of the game’s responses to user input. This may include hit detection, physics, consistent character movement, and/or enemy behavior.
2. The review discusses customizable game settings (e.g., video, audio, difficulty, game speed) beyond simply changing the controls.
3. The review discusses the functionality of any computer-controlled units/characters (AI)
4. The review discusses how the player actually views the game. This may include fixed or manually controlled camera angles, and/or customizable views (e.g., cockpit, overhead, etc.).
5. The review discusses how a player may skip or is forced to watch non-playable and frequently repeated content.
6. The review discusses the input mapping/controls of the game (i.e., which buttons or keys do what actions). The review may suggest they are intuitive or unintuitive, and may also mention if they are customizable in any way.
7. The review discusses the sensitivity and responsiveness of the game’s controls.
8. The review discusses how the game presents status information to the player. This may include player score, health, ammunition and/or locations of objectives, teammates, or enemies.
9. The review discusses the visual representation of the game’s interface. This may include menu systems that are too numerous or too complex, or maps that are too cluttered to read. Conversely, it may include very clean interfaces that are easy to interpret.
10. The review discusses any sort of in-game instructions, training, tutorials and/or help available to players (or lack thereof).

The popular site Metacritic ([metacritic.com](http://metacritic.com)) provides several additional variables. Metacritic gathers reviews from other websites and combines their scores into a weighted average it terms “Metascore.” A work must have at least four reviews on Metacritic-approved sites before it calculates a Metascore (see Appendix D for a detailed explanation of Metascore). These additional variables from Metacritic include the medium the review is for (i.e., film or video games), the platform a game was released on, whether the game is for a home or portable console, the console generation the game

is part of, the year the review was written, the Metascore, the user score on Metacritic, the publication score (a standardized publication review score from Metacritic), the publication's name, the author of the review, and the author's gender. The author categorized each publication based on its audience (i.e., general readership, industry insider, independent) for an additional variable. Some variables were dropped from analysis (e.g., author's gender). For full definitions of the variables, see the coding manual in Appendix E.

### 3.2 Human Coding

Human coding was conducted for all non-CATA variables. Training was conducted during a one-week period of email correspondence with one coder in addition to the author. The author provided a sample review for the coder to code, and the author coded it separately. Afterwards, the author compared the two sets of results and discussed any discrepancies with the coder.

After obtaining reviews (see Appendix F) and familiarizing himself with the variables, the coder was to read the review entirely. Upon completion, the coder entered values for each of the variables into a spreadsheet, consulting the review as necessary to make sure the values were accurate.

For the full codebook and a more detailed, step-by-step guide to obtaining and coding reviews, see Appendices E and F respectively.

### 3.3 Sampling

The popular review aggregate site Metacritic ([metacritic.com](http://metacritic.com)) was chosen to develop a sampling frame because it allows for a broad frame that is easy to sample systematically from when compared to other review aggregation sites. Reviews on Game

Rankings and Rotten Tomatoes were also considered as potential sample frames, but Game Rankings provides no easily measurable way to determine how many reviews it contains, and Rotten Tomatoes has no master list of movie reviews.

PC, PlayStation 3, and Xbox 360 each have their own share of unique games, but they also have a substantial amount of overlap. To decrease the chance of sampling the same review twice, only one of the three platforms was chosen. To do this, the author used random.org, which claims it generates “true random numbers” using “atmospheric noise” (“What’s this fuss,” n.d.). Each platform was assigned a number one through three. By entering these numbers into the random-number generator, the Xbox 360 was chosen.

The Nintendo Wii has many unique titles not found on the other platforms, so reviews for its games were included in the sampling frame. Then current portable systems Nintendo DS and PlayStation Portable (PSP) were similarly assigned numbers and PSP reviews were chosen using random.org. Reviews for games on iOS (i.e., iPhone, iPad) were added to the sampling frame since many of these games are exclusive to the platform. The Nintendo 3DS and PlayStation Vita had relatively small game libraries at the time of this study, and the Nintendo Wii U had not yet been released, so reviews for games on these systems were excluded.

Rather than focus strictly on current generation titles, the author also chose titles from a few legacy platforms. Reviews for games on all legacy platforms on Metacritic were added to the sampling frame except for PlayStation 2 and Xbox. The Nintendo Gamecube, PlayStation 2, and Xbox have considerable overlap in their catalog of games, and the Nintendo Gamecube was randomly chosen out the three to be included.

Thus, the sampling frame for video game reviews was every review on Metacritic for games on the selected platforms (i.e., Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, iOS, PlayStation Portable Sega Dreamcast, Nintendo Game Boy Advance, Nintendo 64, Nintendo Game Cube, and Sony PlayStation), as long as they were written in English and the game had at least four reviews on Metacritic. The sampling frame for movie reviews was simpler since there is no console division. The movie review sample frame was all movie reviews appearing on Metacritic for movies with at least four reviews (there were no non-English movie reviews encountered on Metacritic).

To choose a variety of reviews, the author used systematic random sampling. Metacritic allows the user to sort items with a descending average score, which ensured a wide variety of sampling “good,” “bad,” and “average” movies and games. After clicking on a movie or game title, Metacritic presents a sort of summary page. A link at the bottom of the left column reads “See all ‘X’ critic reviews.” Clicking this brings up Metacritic’s list of critic reviews for that game or movie. Out of this list, one review was randomly chosen. Clicking on “read full review” on Metacritic usually takes the user to the full text, which was then copied and pasted into a text document. On occasion, the link on Metacritic to the full review was broken. In these situations, the excerpt from the review on Metacritic was used to search the review site itself (e.g., Rolling Stone or IGN) and/or Google and Bing if necessary.

In several situations, predominantly with legacy game reviews, the site hosting the Metacritic review had shut down. In these occasions, the review’s URL was searched in the Internet Archive Wayback Machine (<http://archive.org/web/web.php>). This site

contains archives of numerous websites dating back to the '90s. Through this method, several legacy reviews were obtained, giving a more historical context to the sample data.

Other times, the video game review that was randomly chosen was written in a non-English language. In these situations and other situations where the review's full text could not be found, that particular review was discarded and another review for the same work was randomly chosen.

All movie reviews sampled were written in English, however some movie reviews were hosted on websites where paid subscriptions were necessary to view old archives. Like the video game review sampling, these reviews were discarded and a new review for the work was randomly chosen. This process of review gathering was continued until platform and set of movie reviews was exhausted.

In total, 630 reviews were sampled with 245 coming from movies. The rest of the reviews were for games appearing on the Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, PSP, iOS, Dreamcast, Game Boy Advance, Nintendo 64, Game Cube, and PlayStation. Game reviews ranged in date from 1996 to 2012 (median = 2008), and were written by 265 different authors from 106 different media outlets. Andrew Nesvadba was the most-sampled game critic (n=8), and *IGN* was the most-sampled source (n=42). Movie reviews ranged in date from 1974 to 2012 (median = 2005) from 132 different authors and 43 different media outlets. Roger Ebert was the most-sampled movie critic (n=11), and *The New York Times* was the most-sampled publication (n=32). For a full list of the reviews used in this study, see Appendix G.

### 3.4 Reliability Check

To perform a reliability check, 50 additional reviews were sampled using the same techniques described previously. To ensure no duplicate reviews were selected, film reviews were limited to more recent releases that existed outside the original sampling frame, and game reviews were selected from PlayStation 3 and PC game reviews. Using one additional coder, a reliability check was performed using the free online utility ReCal (<http://dfreelon.org/utis/recalfront/>). The numbers in the left column correspond to the items as they appear in the coding manual. Bolded entries correspond to values deemed acceptable or better. A partial discussion is below the table. See Appendix H for a list of the reviews used in the reliability check.

**Table 1. Inter-coder Reliability Check**

	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha	N Agreements	N Disagreements	Percent case occurrence <sup>1</sup>
101	<b>72</b>	0.432	0.433	0.438	36	14	44
102	<b>80</b>	0.540	0.541	0.545	40	10	32
103	<b>94</b>	<b>0.880</b>	<b>0.880</b>	<b>0.881</b>	47	3	47
104	<b>90</b>	<b>0.766</b>	<b>0.767</b>	<b>0.769</b>	45	5	31
105	<b>88</b>	-0.064	-0.056	-0.053	44	6	94
106	<b>80</b>	0.053	0.084	0.063	40	10	12
107	<b>94</b>	<b>0.634</b>	<b>0.638</b>	<b>0.637</b>	47	3	9
108	<b>70</b>	0.341	0.363	0.347	35	15	65
109	<b>76</b>	0.187	0.196	0.195	38	12	18
110	<b>88</b>	<b>0.745</b>	<b>0.746</b>	<b>0.748</b>	44	6	38
111	<b>86</b>	-0.075	-0.061	-0.065	43	7	7
112	<b>90</b>	-0.053	-0.050	-0.042	45	5	5
113	<b>88</b>	0.333	0.336	0.340	44	6	9
201	<b>84</b>	<b>0.660</b>	<b>0.666</b>	<b>0.664</b>	42	8	62
202	<b>92</b>	<b>0.781</b>	<b>0.781</b>	<b>0.783</b>	46	4	32
203	<b>96</b>	-0.020	0.000	-0.010	48	2	2
204	<b>92</b>	0.457	0.459	0.462	46	4	8
205	<b>100</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	50	0	18
206	<b>82</b>	0.081	0.125	0.090	41	9	11

<sup>1</sup> Mean percent of cases in each variable coded as “yes” by both coders.

	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha	N Agreements	N Disagreements	Percent case occurrence <sup>1</sup>
206a	<b>88</b>	0.520	0.525	0.524	44	6	5
206b	<b>88</b>	0.520	0.528	0.524	44	6	5
301	56	-0.048	0.092	-0.027	14	11	30
302	<b>84</b>	0.405	0.412	0.417	21	4	16
303	<b>80</b>	0.417	0.429	0.429	20	5	22
304	<b>76</b>	0.107	0.148	0.125	19	6	16
305	<b>100</b>	*	*	*	25	0	0
306	68	0.206	0.231	0.222	17	8	28
307	<b>72</b>	-0.163	-0.129	-0.140	18	7	14
308	<b>100</b>	*	*	*	25	0	0
309	<b>96</b>	-0.020	0.000	0.000	24	1	2
310	<b>92</b>	-0.042	0.000	-0.021	23	2	4

Percent agreement was greater than 70 percent for all variables except for 301 (consistency to user input) and 306 (input mapping/controls). Scott's Pi, Cohen's Kappa, and Krippendorff's Alpha had acceptable values for only seven of the 31 variables in spite of the high percentages of agreement. This is because many of the variables had very little variance, so any disagreements will weigh strongly against these reliability checks. Furthermore, items 301 to 310 appear in only 25 of the 50 cases because they are limited to video game reviews.

These reliability statistics are designed to assume relatively normal population distributions. Scenarios like those encountered here (i.e., high percent agreement, low Alpha/Kappa/Pi) often present when examining a population where traits occur very frequently or very rarely. Additionally, statistics used to measure observer variability often attempt to correct for chance agreement, even when such an assumption may be unfounded. As Feinstein and Cicchetti (1990) observe:

[This] reasoning makes the assumption that each observer has a relatively fixed prior probability of making positive or negative responses... If unbiased, the observers will usually respond to whatever is presented in



each particular instance of challenge. The observers may develop a fixed prior probability if they know in advance that the challenge population is predominantly normal or abnormal, positive or negative — but there is no reason to assume that such probabilities will be established in advance if the observers are “blind” to the characteristics of the challenge population (p. 548).

In other words, these concordance statistics for reliability assume there is a certain amount of coin flipping inside of a coder’s mind. With an unbalanced population distribution, as several of these variables seemed to reflect, coders can agree highly, but because there is little variance among the results, the reliability statistics appear low — sometimes abysmally so.

Even when focusing on simple agreement for those variables with unbalanced distributions (that therefore have unacceptable chance-agreement-corrected reliability coefficients) there are still several variables that must be viewed with caution. In particular, 108 (mentions genre), 301 (consistency of responses to user input), 304 (how the player views the game), 306 (input mapping/controls), and 307 (responsiveness of controls) had low percent agreements and low kappas. It should be noted that while human coding for genre was somewhat unreliable, there are two CATA dictionaries that also measure genre (i.e., “film genres” and “game genres”). Unfortunately though, many of the human coding variables do not have corresponding CATA dictionaries.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Information About Results

In the sections that follow, the author compares the means of the variables between film and game reviews. Though it is not a standard practice, correlations were also run to give a better picture of how strongly a dictionary is associated with each review type. A negative value for Pearson's  $r$  represents a stronger association with film reviews and a positive  $r$  represents a stronger association with game reviews.

#### 4.2 Analysis for RQ1

RQ1 asks how video game reviews and film reviews differ in their usage of cognitive mechanism words (based on a Pennebaker dictionary). This analysis finds a higher frequency of cognitive mechanism words in movie reviews than in game reviews;

movie reviews have a marginally higher correlation with the Pennebaker cognitive mechanism dictionary, however, this correlation is non-significant (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Mean Comparison of Dictionary Scores Between and Correlations to Review Types (Controlling For Word Count). See Appendix I for corresponding charts.**

	Mean (percent of total words in a review that match the dictionary)	Std. Dev.	<i>r</i>	Sig.	N
Cognitive mechanisms			-0.058	.145	630
Film	5.98	0.066			245
Games	5.31	0.048			385
Film genres			<b>-0.326</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	432
Film	0.87	0.010			190
Games	0.38	0.004			242
Game genres			0.058	.247	406
Film	0.61	0.006			66
Games	0.77	0.011			340
Negative emotions			<b>-0.198</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	623
Film	2.59	0.026			239
Games	1.79	0.018			384
Nonsense words			<b>-0.574</b>	<b>.025</b>	15
Film	0.27	0.003			5
Games	0.15	0.001			10
Optimism			0.038	.362	584
Film	1.09	0.011			203
Games	1.18	0.012			381
References to audience			<b>0.364</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	502
Film	0.87	0.011			132
Games	2.83	0.025			370
References to self			-0.012	.801	478
Film	1.20	0.015			150
Games	1.16	0.021			328
Sensory language			<b>-0.157</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	615
Film	2.12	0.027			235
Games	1.49	0.013			380
Technical film language			<b>-0.294</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	630
Film	4.04	0.049			240
Games	1.91	0.019			385

	Mean (percent of total words in a review that match the dictionary)	Std. Dev.	<i>r</i>	Sig.	N
Technical game language			<b>0.337</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	625
Film	2.44	0.030			240
Games	5.51	0.048			385
Vulgarity			<b>-0.335</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	150
Film	0.51	0.006			43
Games	0.22	0.002			107
Fandom			<b>0.213</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	186
Film	0.03	0.001			15
Games	0.12	0.002			171

**Note: Significant entries in bold. A negative correlation means the dictionary is associated with movie reviews and a positive correlation means it is associated with to game reviews.**

#### 4.3 Analysis for RQ2

RQ2 asks how video game reviews and film reviews differ in their respective technical term dictionaries. On average, video game reviews do use more technical game language ( $m=5.51$ ) than do film reviews ( $m=4.04$ ), and these values are significantly different ( $p<0.001$ ). Admittedly, this finding does little to explain the differences between the two media. Both types of reviews do explain their media in technical terms. All reviews across both segments contained at least one instance of technical film language, although five film reviews contained no technical game language, which is why  $n=625$  for that dictionary.

Perhaps more importantly, these nubile dictionaries relate to their respective media. There is a 2.13 percent difference in the mean usage of technical film terms between the two review types. Video game reviews use an average of 3.07 percent more technical game language than film reviews do.

#### 4.4 Analysis for RQ3

RQ3 asks how video game and film reviews differ in their respective genre theory dictionaries. Film reviews have a significant, higher mean usage of film genre terms ( $m=0.87$ ) than video game reviews do ( $m=0.38$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). While game reviews do use slightly more game genre terms than film reviews do, the game genre dictionary is significantly related to neither segment. Although it suffered from poor intercoder reliability, human coding revealed no significant relationship between mentioning genre in a review and the medium reviewed (see Table 3). As with RQ2, the film genre dictionary might be a valid measure of film genre, but the game genre dictionary does not adequately describe the differences in genre usage between review segments.

**Table 3. Percent Occurrence and Correlations of Critical Thought and Style to Review Types (Controlling for Word Count). See Appendix J for corresponding charts.**

	Percent Occurrence	<i>r</i>	Sig.	N
Compares work to similar works		<b>0.083</b>	<b>0.036</b>	630
Film	46.1			113
Games	64.9			250
Mentions previous works by creator(s)		-0.024	0.544	630
Film	35.5			87
Games	42.6			164
Mentions individual responsible		<b>-0.839</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	88.6			217
Games	3.6			14
Mentions team/group responsible		<b>0.398</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	9.8			24
Games	62.3			240
Says what was attempted and how well		<b>-0.171</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	93.9			230
Games	90.4			348
Mentions any previous techniques used in new ways		<0.000	>0.999	630
Film	9.0			22
Games	18.4			71

	Percent Occurrence	<i>r</i>	Sig.	N
Mentions any new or novel techniques		<b>0.180</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	6.1			15
Games	29.1			112
Mentions genre		0.050	0.215	630
Film	62.4			153
Games	76.1			293
Emotions felt by audience		<b>-0.094</b>	<b>0.019</b>	630
Film	14.7			36
Games	10.9			42
Actor or voice actor performances		<b>-0.466</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	58.4			143
Games	20.5			79
Gender relationships, portrayals		<b>-0.157</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	10.2			25
Games	2.6			10
Political subtext, agenda		<b>-0.229</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	10.2			25
Games	0.8			3
How it ties in with current political or social environment		<b>-0.194</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	630
Film	9.4			23
Games	0.1			5
<b>Total thought and style</b>				
	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Film	0	9	4.54	1.615
Games	0	10	4.24	1.686
Any thought or style?			Percent occurrence	<b>-0.088</b>
Film			99.2	<b>0.027</b>
Games			98.7	630

**Note: Significant entries in bold. A negative correlation means the dictionary correlates to movie reviews and a positive correlation means it correlates more to game reviews.**

#### 4.5 Analysis for RQ4

RQ4 asks, “How do the two different review types compare in Pennebaker’s emotional content dictionaries?” As shown in Table 2, several of the other dictionaries

used in this study have significantly different mean values between review types.

Negative emotions, nonsense words, sensory language, and vulgarity are all significantly higher in film reviews. Game reviews have significantly greater amounts of audience references and fandom language. All of these dictionaries are significant at  $p < 0.001$  except for nonsense words ( $p = 0.025$ ), but only 15 reviews in all contained nonsense words. See Table 2 for the mean values.

#### 4.6 Analysis for RQ5

RQ5 asks, “What is the general purpose of these popular reviews?” It is safe to say that nearly all of the reviews sampled for this study went beyond simple promotional criticism (i.e., trying to promote the product without critical thought). For movie reviews, 93.9 percent mention what was attempted and how well it was done, and 99.2 percent have at least one occurrence in the critical thought and style scale (see Table 3). Similarly, 90.3 percent of all video game reviews mention what was attempted and how well it was done, and 98.7 percent have at least one occurrence of critical thought and style.

Significantly more movie reviews provide plot summaries compared to video game reviews (see Table 4). Most movie reviews (93.5 percent) contain some sort of plot summary. Comparatively, only 36.9 percent of video game reviews have plot summaries. Since Ivory (2006) found reviews to reflect the content of the games themselves, it seems likely that video games in general do not have plots, or at least ones worth mentioning. While Juul (2005b) ultimately disagrees with this platform, specifically his fifth point below, he still offers an argument for the “denial of fiction” in video games:

1. Rules are what makes a game a game.
2. Fiction is incidental to whether something is a game.
3. A game can be interesting without fiction.
4. A game with an interesting fictional world can be a terrible game.
5. Therefore, fiction in games is unimportant (Chapter 1, Section 3, para. 20).

Video game reviews are more likely to be prescriptive in nature. That is, they are more likely than movie reviewers to suggest ways to improve the piece ( $r=0.100$ ;  $p=0.012$ ). This could stem in part from the malleable state video games have entered. They can be tweaked through patches and expanded upon or altered through downloadable content (see Totilo, 2012). Perhaps in some cases, game reviewers wish to send feedback to developers to fix problems in an existing game, which is a luxury generally not afforded to movie reviewers. In some situations, movies may see alternate versions with different edits or endings, but with a frequency much less likely than game patches and DLC.

Game reviewers are also more likely to recommend ( $r=0.337$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) or discourage ( $r=0.204$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) readers from playing or purchasing the game. As stated earlier, game reviews are more correlated with fandom than movie reviews. Even in low scoring games, it is fairly common for a reviewer to make some kind of partial recommendation. For example, in the review for *The Warriors: Street Brawl* on Xbox 360, which has the lowest Metascore out of all game reviews sampled (40 out of 100), Conrad Zimmerman (2009) writes

All told, if you really enjoy either The Warriors or 2D brawlers, this would not be the worst possible way to spend your money, but it's still difficult to recommend due to the problems it has. There are some great elements but they can't make up for its problems. Outside of a love for one or both of those things, there's very little reason to pick this game up. It can be fun, but



the pacing is annoying and the difficulty will frustrate all but the devoted (para. 16).

Zimmerman himself acknowledges the game's faults in his own scoring (4 out of 10), but still manages to look for some positive aspects to the game. Even if he is being discouraging, he still recommends it at least partially to fans of *The Warriors* and two-dimensional brawlers.

#### 4.7 Analysis for RQ6

RQ6 asks "Which theories, if any, exist in popular film and video game reviews?"

***Auteur theory.*** As mentioned earlier in the paper, auteur theory seems like it may be a good fit for the realm of popular criticism in both media. There are significant correlations between the medium the review is for and whether it mentions a single creative mind or a creative team (see Table 3). Auteur theory should also examine past works, so the author combined the variables "Mentions previous works by creators(s)," "Mentions individual responsible" and "Mentions team/group responsible," then re-coded it to be a binary variable. A value of "1" means the review mentions the creative individual and/or team and it also mentions past works. All other combinations result in a value of "0." This new variable, "auteurism," has a significant correlation to movie reviews ( $r=-0.288$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), but approximately one third of both video game and (slightly more) film reviews test positive for "auteurism" (see Table 5).

**Table 4. Percent Occurrence and Correlations of Review Purpose to Review Types (Controlling for Word Count). See Appendix K for corresponding charts.**

		Percent Occurrence	<i>r</i>	Sig.	N	
Descriptive	Review summarizes plot		<b>0.542</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	630	
	Film	93.5			229	
	Games	36.9			142	
Promotional	Review recommends the work		<b>0.337</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	630	
	Film	2.9			7	
	Games	35.3			136	
	Review discourages readers from watching or playing		<b>0.204</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	630	
	Film	0.8			2	
	Games	18.7			78	
Prescriptive	Review discusses ways to improve the work		<b>0.100</b>	<b>0.012</b>	630	
	Film	8.2			20	
	Games	26.2			101	
Utility	Review mentions how much work costs		<b>0.282</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	630	
	Film	0			0	
	Games	16.9			65	
	Review makes an evaluative statement about cost		<b>0.231</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	630	
	Film	0.4			1	
	Games	16.4			63	
	The work is a bargain/good value <sup>†</sup>	Percent cost rev. <sup>††</sup>		0.107	0.406	64
	Film	0	0			0
Games	39.7	6.5			63	
The work is priced too high <sup>†</sup>	Percent cost rev. <sup>††</sup>		0.091	0.483	64	
Film	0	0			0	
Games	35.0	5.7			63	

**Note:** Significant entries in bold. A negative correlation means the dictionary correlates to movie reviews and a positive correlation means it correlates more to game reviews.

<sup>†</sup> These variables were only measured if the review made an evaluative statement about cost, otherwise they were coded as “missing.”

<sup>††</sup> The “Percent cost rev.” cells show the percentage of the reviews that make an evaluative statement about cost and then state whether it costs too much or is a good value.

**Table 5. Percent Occurrence and Correlations of “Auteurism” to Review Types**

	Percent Occurrence	<i>r</i>	Sig.	N
Auteurism		<b>-0.288</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	630
Film	34.7			85
Games	33.5			129

However, from reading the reviews, movie reviews seem to touch much more on the “essence” of auteur questions. That said, very few popular reviews delve into deeper questions of trends and recurring themes appearing throughout the author’s works. This excerpt from Peter Ranier’s (n.d.) review of the movie *Talk to Her* is an example of what attempts at tackling auteur theory in the popular realm look like.

[Pedro] Almodóvar is more playful when he's making movies about women (or transvestites or transsexuals). The men here tend to bring out in him a dull gravitas. The essence of the film's story line is a lot creepier than Almodóvar allows for; there's something almost fetishistic about the way he savors the immutability of the women. It's as if they had become comatose so that the two men could be soul mates (para. 2).

Ranier touches on the most basic trends of director Pedro Almodóvar, but does not dig any deeper than that. Which is not to say this diminishes the quality of Ranier’s review, or that video games cannot be examined through an auteur lens. Certainly the groundwork is there, and video game reviewers at least identify publishers and development teams with some regularity. If video game reviews are to branch into auteur criticism, then it will definitely look at the group or team as auteur as opposed to the individual as the auteur. Only 3.6 percent of video game reviews mentioned a creative individual responsible for the work, whereas 62.3 percent of game reviews mention a responsible team or group. Still these deeper, scholarly questions are perhaps better left to

academic journals than the realm of popular criticism, where there are often strict limitations on word count — particularly in print.

*Feminist theory.* Admittedly, this study does little to examine feminist theory in regard to popular criticism. Only one question in the codebook was (loosely) dedicated to any sort of feminist issue: “Does the review make any mention of gender relationships or gender portrayals?” Even with such a sweeping generalization, movie reviews had the stronger correlation to these questions of gender ( $r=-0.157$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Movie reviewers mentioned gender portrayal or relationships in 10.2 percent of the reviews sampled, whereas game reviewers only mentioned it in 2.6 percent of the reviews. Granted, issues of gender are not present in all games. For example, gender can be easily excluded from a video game adaptation of Checkers or the all-popular puzzler *Tetris*. However, this figure still seems abysmally low. Even in reviews where gender is mentioned, it is rarely explored with any depth. Take this excerpt from Justin Speer’s (2001) review of *Mega Man 64* for example. “Engaging and colorful characters such as the maniacal Tiesel [sic] Bonne and the cute-as-a-button Roll do their best to make the game enjoyable,” (para. 7). Speer mentions that Roll, a female character, is cute, but makes no effort to go beyond this claim.

Rather than a meaningful examination of gender roles, the author actually noticed misogyny in many game reviews. Zimmerman (2009) writes, “In addition to the story mode, there is an ‘Arcade’ mode featuring more difficult enemies, no continues and no checkpoints to load from. It is strictly for hardcore fans of brawlers, as it is very challenging to play and you’ll probably get raped,” (para. 12). This kind of un-professionalism was not observed in film reviews.

*Usability principles for video game design.* No review identified more than seven usability issues (m=1.65 out of a possible 10), but at least one usability heuristic was identified in 77.4 percent of video game reviews. This is a good step lower from Pinelle, Stach, and Wong's (2008) findings where every review in their 108 review sample contained a usability problem. However, this evidence suggests that popular video game criticism is aware of usability issues and regularly mentions them. See Table 6 for a breakdown of heuristics.

**Table 6. Frequency of Usability Principles for Video Game Design in Popular Gaming Criticism and Correlation to Publication Score**

	Quantity of Game reviews identifying heuristic	Correlation to publication score			Sig.
<b>Consistency of responses to input<sup>††</sup></b>	23.12%	<b>-0.112</b>			<b>0.028</b>
Customizable game settings	22.56%	0.081			0.113
AI functionality	21.04%	-0.011			0.825
How the player views the game <sup>††</sup>	24.94%	-0.031			0.547
<b>Skip non-playable content?</b>	4.68%	<b>-0.125</b>			<b>0.014</b>
Input mapping/controls <sup>††</sup>	28.05%	0.037			0.465
Responsiveness of controls <sup>††</sup>	19.22%	-0.022			0.674
Status information	5.71%	0.008			0.872
Game interface, menus	6.75%	0.028			0.588
Tutorials, in-game help	10.13%	-0.034			0.506
		Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev
Total usability heuristics (N=385)	--	1.65	0	7	1.369
Any usability heuristics? (N=298)	77.4%	2.13 <sup>†</sup>	1	7	1.179

**Note: Significant entries in bold**

<sup>†</sup> This represents the mean value of heuristics mentioned in the 77.4 percent of reviews that already mention at least one heuristic.

<sup>††</sup> These variables had poor intercoder reliability and must be viewed with caution.

One problem with identifying significant correlations in this regard is that most of these heuristics, if not all of them, can be mentioned in positive, negative, or neutral regards. In other words, one reviewer could mention a game's fantastic enemy AI, and another could write about abysmal enemy AI. In the current coding scheme, both comments would be coded the same way, and if this trait impacted the publication's score, it would most likely decrease the correlation.

In spite of this, "Consistency of responses to input" and "Skip non-playable content?" both have slightly negative, significant correlations to publication score, meaning reviews that mention these issues have a slight tendency to have lower scores, or perhaps signifying that reviewers are more likely to mention these issues when they negatively affect the gameplay experience.

There is no significant relationship between merely mentioning a heuristic and release year, but there is a small, negative significant correlation between total heuristics mentioned and the game's release year ( $r=-0.154$ ;  $p=0.002$ ), meaning that reviewers are mentioning fewer heuristics overall in more recent reviews. "Responsiveness of controls" has slight, significant correlations with release year ( $r=0.108$ ;  $p=0.034$ ), meaning it occurs more often in more recent reviews. Responsiveness of controls also has a slight, negative correlation to home consoles ( $r=-0.166$ ;  $p=0.001$ ), meaning it is positively correlated to mobile consoles. This might suggest that in more recent reviews, control responsiveness has become more important to reviewers because of the proliferation of games that use touch screen controls on mobile devices.

***Utility theory of video games.*** There is some evidence that suggests game reviewers score a game higher when they perceive it is a bargain or good value.

Publication score, that is the final numerical score the reviewer assigned the game, is positively correlated to a reviewer stating the game is a good value or priced lower than it should, and this approaches significant levels ( $r=0.332$ ,  $p=0.051$ ). It should be noted that stating a game was priced too high or low was observed in a limited number of cases ( $n=63$ ). This trend of evaluating price also seems to be increasing over time, which supports the notion that game pricing is becoming a critical factor in evaluating a game. Discussing price in a review is positively correlated with both a game's release year ( $r=0.209$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and its console generation ( $r=0.207$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The games collected from this review break down into roughly three console generations: the fifth generation (e.g., Nintendo 64, PlayStation), sixth generation (e.g., Sega Dreamcast, Nintendo Gamecube), and seventh generation (e.g., iOS, Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360). Console generation was also positively correlated with a reviewer stating a game cost too much ( $r=0.268$ ,  $p=0.035$ ). However, iOS games tend to be priced much lower than home console games and are considered part of the newest platform generation. The author recoded all reviews into two categories, either iOS or non-iOS. Two significant relationships were discovered. Merely, stating the price of the game is correlated with a game being on iOS ( $r=0.153$ ;  $p=0.003$ ), and iOS games are negatively correlated with stating a game is too expensive ( $r=-0.299$ ;  $p=0.018$ ). In other words, reviewers tend to discuss price for an iOS game more than the other platforms, but are less likely to say an iOS game is too expensive. This implies that iOS reviewers might perceive their audience is concerned with the pricing of iOS games, but that the reviewers are generally satisfied with the pricing structure of most iOS games.

Cost discussion in video game reviews is still somewhat low. Only 22.6 percent of game reviews state the cost and/or evaluate it, but that is compared to 0.4 percent of movie reviews doing the same. In other words, only one movie review out of 245 mentioned or evaluated the cost of the movie. Berardinelli (2007) simply writes, “While I admit that *Evan Almighty* isn't as ineptly constructed and poorly realized as its predecessor, this still isn't a wise investment of anyone's entertainment dollar” (para. 7). Although movie ticket price might vary from theater to theater, movie reviewers seem very unlikely to mention this. They do not frequently write “The movie is worth the matinee price, but not the full price” or “Forego the 3D glasses surcharge and buy the normal tickets.”

#### 4.8 Analysis for RQ7

**Table 7. Mean Comparison of Review Scores and Length Between Review Types.**

		Movie reviews	Game reviews
Metascore	Mean	56.54	69.69
	N	245	385
	Standard Deviation	17.48	16.53
User score	Mean	70.16	76.36
	N	181	222
	Standard Deviation	15.37	14.61
Publication score	Mean	60.40	68.60
	N	245	385
	Standard Deviation	21.38	17.36
Word count	Mean	482.18	940.83
	N	245	385
	Standard Deviation	266.59	480.73

All values are significant at  $p < .001$ .

RQ7 asks, “What attributes define popular gaming criticism?” Game reviewers score games much higher on average than movie reviewers (see Table 7). As discussed



earlier, film reviews contain more negative emotion language, and they also have lower average review scores ( $m=56.54$ ) than video games ( $m=69.69$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Furthermore, there has been a slight increase in game review scores over time (see Appendix L). Game reviews contain more “fandom” language so it is possible that game reviewers want to give games higher scores because they themselves are fans. These traits, along with the author’s own observations, suggest game reviewers are more biased, or at least more defensive than film reviewers. Here, “defensive” means looking for positive and redeeming qualities in lackluster titles. This style, however, is not unlike that of Goddard’s romantic and energetic writings about film discussed earlier in this study.

On average, game reviews ( $m=940.83$  words) are quite a bit longer than movie reviews ( $m=482.18$  words). Since games tend to be much longer in terms of content and reviews are shown to be a reflection of content, this should not be much of a surprise. There is simply more there to discuss.

Gaming criticism, compared to film and likely other forms of popular criticism, is more concerned with the cost of the item being reviewed. Movie reviews are more likely than game reviews to tie the work in with the “real world.” These references to real life are somewhat uncommon in film reviews; only 10.2 percent mention any sort of political subtext or agenda and 9.4 percent mention how the work ties in with the current social environment. However, these observations were made even less frequently in video game reviews. Mention of political subtext or agenda appeared in only 0.8 percent of game reviews and tying it into the current environment was only in 1.3 percent of game reviews. This suggests that game reviewers confine their sights more than others to reviewing the game at hand, rather than placing it in any sort of real-world context,

and/or that video games themselves rarely reflect the real world. Indeed, this is in line with what Bogost (2008) suggests, that “video games inherit a mass-market entertainment culture whose primary purpose is the production of low-reflection, high-gloss entertainment” (p. 117).

Curiously, many game reviewers across several publications reference “departments” to compartmentalize their game reviews. Jay Acevedo (2009) writes, “Overall, the game excels and [sic] many departments” (para. 7), and “As for the sound department...” (para. 9). Robert Workman (2012) writes, “...With each new game, Namco Bandai actually seems to be improving in the visual department” (para. 3). In his review of *The Warriors: Street Brawl*, Zimmerman (2009) writes, “Character designs ring true with the gangs featured in the film and while environments are occasionally a bit sparse in the details department, they still manage to be decent representations of familiar locations” (para. 4). He continues this style later by writing, “...You can include up to three AI-controlled teammates who are astonishingly competent fighters, if a little slow in the ‘walking towards the objective’ department” (para. 13).

With very few exceptions, this language and style was not observed in movie reviews. Although film reviewers might discuss acting or cinematography, they rarely refer to these as “departments.” Perhaps this refers in some way to the differences between how game and movie development is perceived. While there certainly are “departments” of sorts for film production, there may be actual departments dedicated to various aspects of design within the developer’s studio. Use of the word “department” conjures images of cubicle groups dedicated to graphics or sound design and perhaps more input from a larger collective group.

Game reviewers, perhaps because the reviews are longer, or perhaps because they are more used to writing online than in print, use much more indirect leads than movie reviews. It is often hard to discern the reviewer's opinion in the first paragraph or two, and the reviewer will often tease the reader. An example of this is in Zimmerman's (2009) review. "Can The Warriors: Street Brawl make it all the way home? Read on" (para. 3). Anecdotally, this writing style is fairly common for game reviews. It implies that video game reviewers, more than film reviewers, feel it is necessary to drive web traffic to the end of the review. Most game reviews were solely available online, a realm where advertisements generate revenue differently than in print, often relying on users to click ads, or seeking the opportunity to make more pop-ups appear. The majority of film reviews also appeared in print; the advertisements are already paid for, so it does not matter if the reader continues to the end of the article in terms of revenue for the publication.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Overview

Video game and film reviews are different in several notable ways. Game reviews tend to be longer and more positive than film reviews, with reviewers finding redeeming qualities in many of the worst video games. Certainly there are film critics who like bad movies, but game reviewers are more likely to make conditional recommendations to readers. Whether this can be attributed to concerns over sales and advertising or simple excitement over the medium is unclear, but this suggests at least a notable element of promotional criticism present in video game reviews. Gamestop's firing of Jeff Gerstmann for his middling review of *Kane and Lynch: Dead Men* would suggest that promotional aspects of game reviews are indeed valued by gaming publications.

The issue of cost and utility remains unique to video game criticism, at least when compared to film criticism. As discussed earlier, video games have one of the most complex pricing structures of any entertainment medium, and the amount of enjoyment they can provide has a great deal of variance. It stands to reason that a game with a high “cost-to-enjoyment” ratio could receive positive criticism, with the opposite holding true as well.

Although they rarely tackle auteur theory with any sort of depth, both types of popular reviews seem to have the foundations in place. They generally identify the work’s “author” and mention previous works by the same person or group. However, these reviews typically fail to touch on recurring themes or trends within an author’s oeuvre. If a reviewer is to explore auteurism, he or she needs to recognize how a work reflects the identity of the author or authors.

Both fields of popular criticism could stand to benefit from exploring gender relationships and portrayals and how the work relates to the current environment, as these observations were fairly infrequent, especially in video game reviews. The portrayal of women in video games is especially problematic. Violence is often a key gameplay mechanic and plot device, and women are commonly the subject of these violent acts. In some video games, women actually beg for the male protagonists to kill them and/or thank their executioners with their last breath (Sarkeesian, 2013). In her critical examination, Sarkeesian (2013) makes no claims that video games endorse violence against women. Rather, she states these depictions are convenient motivators for developers to frame stories and violent gameplay around, and developers are attempting to make the medium appear grittier, darker, and more mature. The point remains that

gender portrayal in video games is rarely discussed or challenged in the realm of popular reviews. As long as gender discussions remain scarce, the medium will have difficulty maturing in this area; the average player is unlikely to give gender portrayal much thought, and developers may not realize the gravity of their decisions.

In this study, significant differences were found when examining the promotional, descriptive, and prescriptive typologies of criticism. Movie reviews were more likely to be descriptive in nature; nearly all movie reviews contained some form of plot summary. Undoubtedly, it is difficult for movies to exist without a plot. Video game reviews had much less focus on plot summarization. This suggests that as a storytelling medium, video games are somewhat inferior to film. It indicates that plots in video games are secondary to gameplay, or a plot might be entirely excluded entirely from a video game (e.g., Checkers, the *Madden NFL* series). Simply put, not all games have a “story.”

In Juan Castro’s (2005) review for *The Sims 2*, he writes, “... Even though it’s called ‘Story’ mode, there’s no real narrative in terms of plot twists and the like, but there’s a definite feeling of progression as more and more locations are discovered and items become available for purchase” (p. 2, para. 4). In Greg Miller’s (2009) review of *G-Force* he writes, “Yeah, I could Wikipedia this, rewatch [sic] the trailer, or go talk to some kid on the street, but I’ve avoided those avenues just so you’d see how little story this title provides” (para. 4). Many reviews describe how the game “works” or the general premise. The author chose to interpret the codebook’s usage of “plot” as describing some sort of narrative structure, so this offers some explanation as to why so few game reviews were coded as summarizing the plot. However, developers would do well to note these differences. Game reviewers infrequently summarize game plots, let alone evaluate them.

Only 36.9 percent of video game reviews attempted a plot summary, compared to 93.5 percent of film reviews. Perhaps the gaming audience, including reviewers, are starved for video games with exemplary storytelling. As Avellone et al. (2012) discuss, storylines often have to be flexible enough to bend to the features and limitations of gameplay during the development process.

Either way, plot discussion is less important to video game reviewers. Instead, video game reviews tended to be more prescriptive than film reviews. In other words, game reviewers are more likely to describe how to improve a game. The gaming audience might feel more involved in the creation and maintenance of games, as video games are often patched upon release. One of the more notable recent examples is the public outcry at the ending of *Mass Effect 3*. In this instance, developer BioWare and publisher Electronic Arts released additional material to alter the ending of *Mass Effect 3* in attempt to appease fans who felt let down by the original ending (Totilo, 2012). Video game reviews also have more of a promotional focus than film reviews and more commonly recommend or discourage media consumption. This makes sense because of the greater financial burden and time commitments video games often require compared to film. That is, seeing a bad movie may not “cost” as much as purchasing, playing, and/or completing a bad video game.

Usability heuristics are frequently found throughout video game reviews; 77.4 percent of the game reviews sampled contained usability issues, and there was a mean of 2.13 heuristic issues in each of these reviews. However, this is a notably lower frequency than that reported by Pinelle, Stach, and Wong (2008), who discovered an average of 2.64 usability problems mentioned per review, and at least one issue in all 108 reviews

they examined. Their study differed from the current one in that it was limited to PC game reviews on the GameSpot website. With this study's more robust sample, these usability issues are still prevalent, but not at the ubiquitous levels discovered by Pinelle, Stach, and Wong. GameSpot was not significantly more likely to include more usability issues in its reviews, however, there were significant differences in two of the specific usability issues. Compared with all other video game publications, GameSpot mentions more about the consistency of responses to user input and A.I. functionality. Only 21.5 percent of all other game reviews examine input consistency, compared to 39 percent of GameSpot reviews ( $p = 0.018$ ). Similarly, 19.5 percent of all other game reviews discuss A.I. functionality, compared to 36 percent of GameSpot reviews ( $p = 0.020$ ). Because PC games were not sampled for this study, it is impossible to determine if PC game reviews have significant difference in usability issues mentioned, and it is possible that this could account, at least partially, for the increased occurrence of usability heuristics in the Pinelle, Stach, and Wong study.

In the reviews sampled for this study, some of the usability principles proved very uncommon. Each of the following heuristics were discussed in less than 10 percent of the reviews: the ability (or inability) to skip unplayable content, how the game presents status information to players, and how the menus and interface are designed. These issues are likely present in a majority of video games, but they are rarely mentioned in reviews. It may be part of a negativity bias; reviewers might mention them much more frequently when they interfere with gameplay, rather than when there are functional menus that enhance gameplay or cutscenes that are allowed to be skipped.



Usability heuristics remain a somewhat unique and entirely valid method of criticizing video games. Reviewers could benefit from keeping these issues in mind while playing through a game. They are somewhat tangible, defined traits that can aid a reviewer in isolating areas of gameplay that particularly hinder or facilitate the experience. Developers could benefit from using a usability “checklist” of sorts to reference while creating a game. After all, a game has to be playable for gamers to work through it.

In some older reviews, game saves were a point of criticism. Older games may not have had saves, implemented password saves, or could consume excess space on a memory card or hard drive. The ability to save a game was, at one time, a novel feature and even a unique selling point for video games to advertise. A few Game Boy Advance titles examined in this study (e.g., *The Simpsons: Road Rage*, *Shaun Palmer’s Pro Snowboarder*) were criticized for using passwords instead of battery saves. This is an example of a usability issue that has become somewhat extinct over time. If a modern game prevents the player from saving his or her status, surely it would be negatively criticized. Game saves are universal and therefore no longer discussed in game reviews in terms of whether they are allowed or not. However, the issue of when checkpoints appear or how often a player is allowed to save could still present points of criticism for modern video games. Over time, other usability issues may become standardized and less prominent in popular criticism. For example, the ability to skip non-playable content or reconfigure controls both seem to have become more commonplace in video games. These issues and the issue of saving one’s progress may have been addressed, but issues of usability should be reexamined over time to determine which of them are still salient

and commonly discussed in game reviews. If done correctly, game developers could provide a more cohesive user experience with a lower barrier to entry.

Sometimes non-playable content comes in the forms of advertisements, not simply content the developers programmed as part of the game. This has become more common with the free model pushed forward by mobile gaming on tablets and smartphones. In her review for *Hero Academy* Colette Bennett (2012) writes, “...The free version is relentless when it comes to in-game ads. Between each match, you’ll see an ad that you have to stare at for five seconds before it disappears and you can play again” (para. 8). This is another significant difference between film and video games. In the same vein as the complex pricing structure of video games, increasingly games are becoming ad-supported, primarily on mobile devices. Although product placement exists in movies, it is a far cry from the ad-supported video game model, where ads are sometimes omnipresent during the gameplay experience. Sometimes the gamer may pay a fee to permanently or temporarily remove the ad, but there are also many games that are strictly ad-supported. The only place movies come close to replicating this experience is on TV when the network places advertisements at the bottom of the screen or watermarks the image with its network logo. As these features are added to the work after it is released (i.e., they are not part of the film itself), they are not points of criticism for film, remaining a unique aspect for game reviewers to examine.

One difference between the two bodies of criticism are the sources of the reviews sampled in this study. As mentioned earlier, some of the film reviews sampled came from industry insider publications, whereas all game reviews were sampled from publications with a general readership. The scarcity of industry insider gaming publications is

somewhat baffling, but noteworthy and perhaps indicative of a difference in maturity of the two media. Regardless, the reviews from industry insider publications though few in number, contained several significant differences when compared to the general publications. Of note, the industry insider and independent reviews had higher levels of cognitive mechanism language and higher average scores on the critical thought and style scale. See Appendix M for tables describing the differences between these publication types. As video games continue to evolve, perhaps these industry insider magazines will become more prevalent for video games. This would be a welcome addition to the popular realms, as they do appear to have a more critical approach than the publications aimed at a general audience.

## 5.2 Limitations

For the inter-coder reliability check, coder training should have been more developed. Had the author had a more pro-active discussion with the second coder during the training process, several of the variables with low reliability might have seen improvement and been more reliable in analyzing the results. In particular, this seems to be true for the genre variable coding.

A few issues arose during the sampling process. One of the games that was randomly selected, “uDraw Studio: Instant Artist” for Xbox 360, had five reviews listed, but four had appeared only in print and were unavailable and the fifth was not in English, so another game and review had to be selected. Another interesting and slightly troubling aspect of this study is that, although rarely encountered, there are an unknown number of links on Metacritic that point to the wrong reviews. For example, The Village Voice review was randomly selected for the movie *New Guy*. When clicking the link, it led to a

review for a different movie titled *Overnight*. This seems like fluke, but instances like this could have some impact on the Metascore of a game or movie. If Metacritic somehow put the wrong review in, then it could inflate or deflate the average score. However, the effect — if any — would likely be negligible.

There were some instances where sampled reviews were combined together. This happened most frequently with capsule-size reviews of approximately 200 words, and they tended to be easily separable. In a rare example, the NPR review of *Cowboys & Aliens* was interwoven with a review of *Attack the Block*. Author Ian Buckwalter continually compared the two, and there was no clear division. In this case, another review was randomly chosen and used in place of NPR's review.

Nintendo 64 and PlayStation represent the oldest console generation available on Metacritic. To the author's knowledge, there is no online collection of older game reviews that possesses the same kind of merit and supposed professionalism as Metacritic does. It seems that until the PlayStation era, which began in 1996, game reviews appeared in print. Publications like *Nintendo Power* and *GamePro* have not made archival reviews for systems like Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo Entertainment System publically available online.

Reviews could have been listed for games on the wrong systems. This generally has an insignificant impact on the game, but can make a serious difference during the changeover from one console generation to the next (e.g., from PlayStation to PlayStation 2) because of the change in processing power. One such review was noticed during the coding. The review that had been selected for *High Heat Major League Baseball 2002* on

PlayStation was actually for the PlayStation 2 version. A new review for the correct console was randomly chosen.

### 5.3 Directions for Future Research

While this study provides some support for a utility theory of video games, more can be done to examine how it relates to play time. Discovering how much content a game has to offer in terms of game length and replay value and comparing this to review score and game price may yield some interesting results.

More research should also be applied to gender studies in video games and video game reviews. From the author's personal experience, there is a certain degree of rape culture in the gaming industry. In video game culture, the term "rape" has come to mean winning by a great margin, or ruthlessly slaughtering the opposition. Since these are desirable outcomes in most games, the word "rape" may have some positive connotations among gamers. Certainly, the example from Zimmerman's (2009) review for *The Warriors* presented earlier shows how a so-called industry professional casually uses the term to review a game. "[The hardcore mode] is strictly for hardcore fans of brawlers, as it is very challenging to play and you'll probably get raped," (para. 12). Feminist studies in film have already been established, but in ludology, it seems they are just beginning. As stated earlier, Sarkeesian's study is hopefully a step in the right direction to help the medium become more aware of its shortcomings in dealing with gender representations, and her project is one that, by design, could impact the popular realm.

Entering this study, there were no normal levels for how high a review should have scored in the dictionaries. However, after determining the average score across reviews of each medium, it may be possible to establish normal levels. For example, in

Table 2, the mean score for video game reviews using cognitive mechanism is 5.31. If a game review was later analyzed and found to contain only 2 percent cognitive mechanism words, it could prove to be suspect. To truly flesh out a system like this, more research would be necessary.

Little research has been applied to the impact of popular criticism on video game sales. This is a much more measurable phenomenon for movies with easy-to-find box office figures. The website Box Office Mojo ([boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)) has a detailed history for the box office sales of movies. For video games, however, sales figures are generally not made public. There is no video game website comparable to Box Office Mojo mostly because there is no video game equivalent to the box office. VGChartz ([vgchartz.com](http://vgchartz.com)) has minimal data relating to this, and it is limited to the bestselling titles each week; it does not track individual game sales over time.

Movies have a limited run in theaters, so their box office sales figures are relatively easy to measure and report. Video games have no box office premieres, and sit on store shelves instead. The number of consoles and platforms may make sales reports somewhat difficult as well, but it does seem likely that each video game publisher must track sales of its products. These figures are mostly private, with publishers announcing them only when they wish to brag (e.g., Activision proclaiming *Call of Duty* sales records each year). Further, complicating matters for tracking video game sales is the sale of used video games. To truly capture video game sales figures, the used video game retailers like Game Stop would have to report their sales figures as well. Also, websites like Amazon, eBay, and Glyde have allowed consumers to sell their own video games to others with ease, complicating matters even more. This is one area fairly unique to video games.

While used sales of other media are still popular, anecdotal evidence suggests that used video game sales are much more prevalent than used sales for media like music and movies. Used video game sales are so prevalent that many video game publishers have started including single-use codes in new copies of games for online play or additional content. The ploy is that gamers either have to buy a new copy of a game or pay extra when buying a used copy to get the full experience.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

It must be noted that video games are a much younger medium than film. Excluding a few earlier attempts, video games are roughly 35 years old compared to film's 100 years of history. Other storytelling and entertainment media (e.g., literature, oratory, theater), are even older. So while many video game reviewers write in a more casual style, many of them write passionately about the works they are reviewing. In examining Godard, Naremore (1990) writes:

We can dismiss him as "adolescent," but before we rush to proclaim ourselves adults and scholars, we should remember that adolescence is an important period of human development—a period of cultural resistance, when discoveries are made. If Godard is adolescent, he at least shows us that popular culture can be talked about in a less repressed fashion than high art, and that critical enthusiasms can be channeled into a rebellious, witty energy. (p. 21)

If video game reviewers are in their adolescence, then it is only a matter of time before this energy spreads to new generations of more learned game critics.

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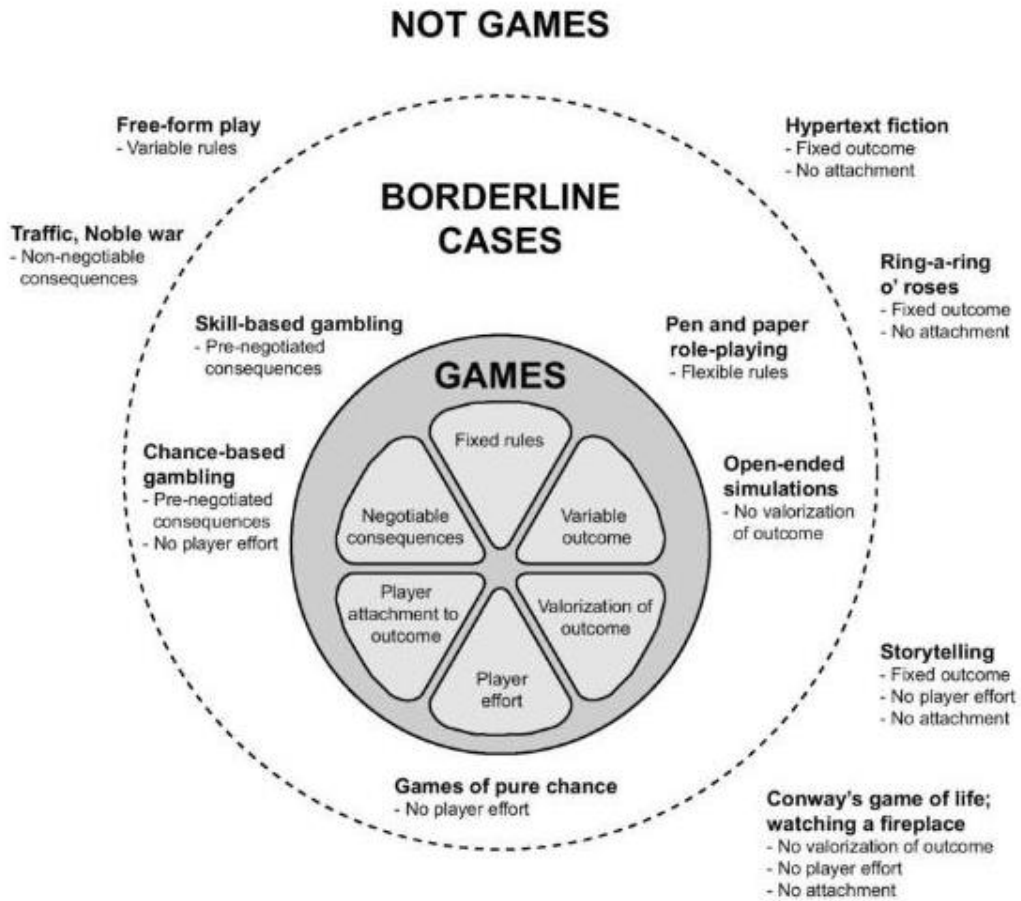
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## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## ON THE BORDERS OF THE CLASSIC GAME MODEL

From Juul (2005b, Chapter 2, Section 6, para. 1).



## APPENDIX B

### USABILITY PRINCIPLES FOR VIDEO GAME DESIGN

From Pinelle, Wong, and Stach (2008, p. 1458).

1. Provide consistent responses to the user's actions.

Games should respond to users' actions in a predictable manner. Basic mechanics, such as hit detection, game physics, character movement, and enemy behavior, should all be appropriate for the situation that the user is facing. Games should also provide consistent input mappings so that users' actions always lead to the expected outcome.

2. Allow users to customize video and audio settings, difficulty and game speed.

The video and audio settings, and the difficulty and game speed levels seen in games are not appropriate for all users. The system should allow people to customize a range of settings so that the game accommodates their individual needs.

3. Provide predictable and reasonable behavior for computer controlled units.

In many games, the computer helps the user control the movement of their character, of a small group of teammates, or of a large number of units. Computer controlled units should behave in a predictable fashion, and users should not be forced to issue extra commands to correct faulty artificial intelligence. The game should control units so that pathfinding and other behaviors are reasonable for in-game situations.

4. Provide unobstructed views that are appropriate for the user's current actions

Most games provide users with a visual representation (i.e. a "view") of the virtual location that the user is currently occupying. The game should provide views that allow the user to have a clear, unobstructed view of the area, and of all visual information that is tied to the location. Views should also be designed so that they are appropriate for

the activity that the user is carrying out in the game. For example, in a 3D game different camera angles may be needed for jumping sequences, for fighting sequences, and for small and large rooms.

5. Allow users to skip non-playable and frequently repeated content.

Many games include lengthy audio and video sequences, or other types of non-interactive content. Games should allow users to skip non-playable content so that it does not interfere with gameplay.

6. Provide intuitive and customizable input mappings. Most games require rapid responses from the user, so input mapping must be designed so that users can issue commands quickly and accurately. Mappings should be easy to learn and should be intuitive to use, leveraging spatial relationships (the up button is above the down button, etc.) and other natural pairings. They should also adopt input conventions that are common in other similar games (e.g. many first-person shooters and real-time strategy games use similar input schemes). Games should allow users to remap the input settings, should support standard input devices (e.g. mouse, keyboard, gamepad), and should provide shortcuts for expert players.

7. Provide controls that are easy to manage, and that have an appropriate level of sensitivity and responsiveness. Many games allow users to control avatars such as characters or vehicles. Controls for avatars should be designed so that they are easy for the user to manage, i.e. they are not too sensitive or unresponsive. When controls are based on real world interactions, such as steering a car or using a control stick in an airplane, the game should respond to input in a way that mirrors the real world. Further,



games should respond to controls in a timeframe that is suitable for gameplay requirements.

8. Provide users with information on game status.

Users make decisions based on their knowledge of the current status of the game. Examples of common types of information that users need to track include the current status of their character (such as their health, armor status, and location in the game world), objectives, teammates, and enemies. Users should be provided with enough information to allow them to make proper decisions while playing the game.

9. Provide instructions, training, and help.

Many games are complex and have steep learning curves, making it challenging for users to gain mastery of game fundamentals. Users should have access to complete documentation on the game, including how to interpret visual representations and how to interact with game elements. When appropriate, users should be provided with interactive training to coach them through the basics. Further, default or recommended choices should be provided when users have to make decisions in complex games, and additional help should be accessible within the application.

10. Provide visual representations that are easy to interpret and that minimize the need for micromanagement. Visual representations, such as radar views, maps, icons, and avatars, are frequently used to convey information about the current status of the game. Visual representations should be designed so that they are easy to interpret, so that they minimize clutter and occlusion, and so that users can differentiate important elements from irrelevant elements. Further, representations should be designed to minimize the

need for micromanagement, where users are forced to interactively search through the representation to find needed elements.

APPENDIX C  
DICTIONARIES

Note: an asterisk (\*) represents a wild card. CATA programs ignore what comes after.

For example, an entry of cat\* would count occurrences of “cat” and “cats.”

**Pennebaker**

*Cognitive mechanisms*

abandon*	believed	cos	duty
accept	believes	could	effect*
accepted	believing	could'*	end
accepting	block*	couldn't	ended
accepts	brake*	coz	ending*
achiev*	but	create*	ends
acknowledg*	careful*	creating	enlighten*
adjust*	caus*	cuz	evaluat*
admit	clarif*	decid*	examine*
admits	clear	defens*	examining
admitted	clog*	delay*	expect*
admitting	closure	deni*	explain
affect	cohere*	deny*	explained
affected	complete	depend	explaining
affects	compreh*	depended	explains
agree*	concentrat*	depending	explanat*
anal	concern*	depends	explor*
analys*	conclud*	describe	fact*
analyz*	conclus*	described	feeling*
answer*	confess*	describes	feels
approv*	confide	describing	felt
arrange*	confided	determina*	figur*
assum*	confides	determine	find*
avoid*	confiding	determined	finish
aware*	confirm*	determines	fit
barrier*	conflict*	determining	fits
bases	confus*	digest*	forbid*
basis	consequen*	discern*	forgiv*
became	constrain*	discl*	found
because	constrict*	discover*	foundation*
become	construct*	disregard*	gather*
becomes	contain*	done	generate*
becoming	contradic*	doubt*	goal*
believe	control*	duties	grasp*

guard*	meaningf*	refrain	stops
held	means	refus*	structure*
hence	meant	relate*	stubborn*
hesitant	mind*	relation*	suspect*
hesitat*	motivate*	reluctan*	therefor*
hold	motive*	remember*	think
holding	must	repress*	thinking
holds	need	require	thinks
hope	needed	required	thought
hoped	needing	requirement*	thoughts
hopef*	needs	requires	thus
hopes	neglect*	resolu*	tried
hoping	obstac*	resolve	try
how	organize*	resolved	trying
how's	organizing	responsib*	understand
if	origin	restrain*	understandable
ignore*	ought	restrict*	understanding
ignori*	outcome*	result*	understands
implic*	perceiv*	retard*	understood
incorporat*	perception*	rethink*	undo
induc*	ponder*	reveal*	unresolve*
infer	pretty	rigid*	wait
inferred	prevent*	root*	waited
inferring	produce*	saw	waiting
infers	product	secret	waits
influenc*	productive*	secrets	want
inform	prohib*	see	wanted
informs	purpose*	seeing	wanting
inhib*	question	seem	wants
initiat*	questioning	seemed	welcom*
insight*	questionned	seems	what
integrat*	questions	settl*	what's
intell*	quit*	should	why
interfer*	rational*	should'*	why's
justif*	react*	shouldn't	wish
kind	read	since	wished
kinda	reading	smart*	wishes
knew	reads	solution*	wishing
know	realiz*	solve*	withheld
knowing	reason*	sort	withhold
knowl*	reckon*	sorta	wonder
known	recognis*	source*	wondered
knows	recogniz*	stimul*	wondering
learn*	reconsider*	stop	would
limit*	reconstruct*	stopped	would'*
meaning	reflect*	stopping	wouldn'*

yield\*

*Negative emotions*

abandon*	cheat*	dislike	forbid*
abuse*	complain*	disliked	fought
abusive	confus*	dislikes	frantic*
ache*	contradic*	dismay*	freak*
aching	crap*	distraught	fright*
advers*	craz*	distress*	frustrat*
afraid	cried	distrust*	fuck*
aggravat*	cries	disturb*	furious*
aggress*	critical	dominate*	gloom*
agitat*	critici*	doom*	goddam*
agony	cruel*	doubt*	gossip*
alarm*	crushed	dread*	grave*
alone	cry	dull*	greed*
anger*	crying	dumb*	grief
angr*	cut	dump*	griev*
anguish*	cynical	dwel*	grim*
annoy*	damn*	egotis*	grind
antagoni*	danger*	embarass*	gross*
anxi*	daze*	emotional	guilt*
appall*	decay*	empt*	harass*
apprehens*	defeat*	enem*	hate
argu*	defect*	enrag*	hated
arrogan*	defens*	envious	hateful
asham*	degrad*	envy	hates
assault*	depress*	evil	hating
aversi*	depriv*	excruciat*	hatred
avoid*	despair*	exhaust*	hazy
awful	desperate*	fail*	hell
bad	despis*	fatal	helpless*
bastard	destroy*	fatigu*	hesitant
beaten	destruct*	fear	homesick*
bewilder*	devastat*	feared	hopeless*
bitch*	devil*	fearing	horribl*
bitter*	difficult*	fears	horrif*
blam*	disagree*	feud*	horror
bore*	disappoint*	fight	hostil*
boring	disaster*	fighting	humiliat*
bother*	discomfort*	fights	hurt*
burden*	discourag*	flop*	ignorant*
careless*	disgust*	flunk*	impatien*

impersonal	nag*	ridicul*	teas*
inadequate	nast*	rigid*	temper
indifferen*	neglect*	rude*	tense*
ineffect*	nervous*	ruin*	tension*
inferior	nostalgi*	sad	terribl*
inhib*	numb	sarcas*	terrified*
insecur*	obnoxious*	scare*	terrifying
insult*	obsess*	scream*	terror*
interrup*	offend*	screw*	threaten*
intimidat*	outrag*	selfish*	tick
irrational	overwhelm*	serious*	ticked
irrita*	pain	severe*	torture*
isolat*	painf*	shak*	tragedy
jealous*	painl*	shame*	tragic
jerk	pains	shit*	trembl*
jerked	panic*	shock*	trick*
jerks	paranoi*	shy*	troubl*
kill*	pathetic*	sicken*	turmoil
lame	peculiar*	silly	ugh
liar*	pervert*	sin	ugly
lie	pessimis*	sinister	unattractive
lied	petrif*	sins	uncertain
lies	pett*	skeptical	uncomfortable
loneli*	piss*	smother*	uneas*
lonely	pitiful*	snob*	unfortunate*
lonesome	pity	sorrow*	unhapp*
longing	poison*	sorry	unimportant
lose	prejudic*	spite*	unpleasant
loser*	pressur*	startl*	unprotected
losing	protest	strain*	unsuccessful
loss*	protested	strange	unsure*
lost	protesting	stress*	upset*
lous*	puk*	stubborn*	useless
low*	punish*	stunned	vain
ludicrous*	rage*	stuns	vanity
mad	rape*	stupid	vicious*
mess	rebel*	suck	victim*
messy	regret*	sucked	violent*
miser*	reject*	sucking	vulnerab*
miss	reluctan*	sucks	weak*
missed	remorse*	suffer	weep*
misses	repress*	suffered	weird*
missing	resent*	suffering	whine*
molest*	resign*	suffers	wicked*
moody	restless*	suspicious*	worr*
mourn*	revenge*	tear*	worse*

worthless

wrong\*

*Nonsense*

er  
hm\*

uh  
um

umm\*  
zz\*

*Optimism*

accept  
accepta\*  
accepted  
accepting  
accepts  
advantage\*  
adventur\*  
assur\*  
award\*  
best  
bold  
brave\*  
bright\*  
certain\*

challeng\*  
commitment\*  
confidence\*  
confidently  
confront\*  
control\*  
convinc\*  
courag\*  
daring  
definite\*  
determina\*  
determined  
ease\*  
easy\*

efficien\*  
encourag\*  
enthus\*  
excel\*  
faith\*  
flawless  
free\*  
glorious  
glory  
hero\*  
hope  
hoped  
hopef\*  
hopes

hoping  
impress\*  
improve\*  
inspir\*  
optimi\*  
original  
pride  
profit\*  
promising  
proud\*  
ready  
secure  
securi\*  
strong\*

sun\*  
super  
superior\*  
suprem\*  
terrific\*  
top  
triumph\*  
trust\*  
vigor\*  
vigour\*  
win  
winn\*  
wins  
won

*Sensory*

appear  
appeared  
appearing  
appears  
ask  
asked  
asking  
asks  
ate  
bitter\*  
call  
called  
calling  
calls  
chat\*

contact\*  
discuss\*  
drank  
drink  
drinking  
drinks  
ear  
ears  
eat  
eaten  
eating  
eats  
eye\*  
feel  
feeling\*

feels  
felt  
grab\*  
handl\*  
hear  
heard  
hearing  
hears  
held  
hold  
holding  
holds  
hug\*  
itch\*  
listen

listened  
listening  
listens  
look  
looked  
looking  
looks  
noise\*  
observ\*  
pain  
painf\*  
painl\*  
pains  
perceiv\*  
perception\*

read  
reading  
reads  
rub  
rubbed  
rubs  
said  
say\*  
see  
seeing  
seen  
sees  
sensation  
sensations  
sense

sensed	shows	speaking	talk	telling
senses	sight*	speaks	talked	tells
sensing	skin	spoke*	talking	told
show	smell*	squeez*	talks	touch*
showed	sound*	stare*	tast*	view
showing	speak	sweet	tell	viewed
viewing	vision*	watch*		
views	visual	witness*		

***Vulgarity (adapted from Pennebaker)***

***Referencing audience (adapted from Pennebaker)***

thee	thoust	ya	you'd	you've
thine	thy	ye	you'll	your*
thou	y'all	you	you're	

***Referencing self (adapted from Pennebaker)***

i	i've	mine	ours	we'd
i'd	let's	my	ourselves	we'll
i'll	lets	myself	us	we're
i'm	me	our	we	we've

**Custom dictionaries**

***Film genres***

Action	Fantasy	Rom Com
Adventure	Gangster	Romance
Biopic	Horror	Romantic Comedy
Blaxploitation	Melodrama	Sci-fi
Chick Flick	Musical	Science Fiction
Comedy	Mystery	Screwball
Crime	Noir	Slapstick
Detective	Parodies	Slasher
Disaster	Parody	Spoof
Documentary	Porn*	Spy
Drama	Road Film	Thriller
Epic	Road Movie	War



Weepies

Weepy

Western

*Game genres*

3PS  
Action  
Adventure  
Arcade  
Beat 'em Up  
Beat em up  
Dance  
FPS  
Fighter  
Fighting  
First Person Shooter\*  
First-Person-Shooter\*  
Fitness  
MMO\*

Pinball  
Platformer\*  
Point and Click\*  
Puzzle  
RPG\*  
RTS  
Racing  
Real time strategy  
Real-time strategy  
Real-time-strategy  
Rhythm  
Rogue-like  
Role playing  
Role-playing

Rouge Like  
Shmup  
Sim  
Simulation\*  
Sports  
Survival Horror  
Tactics  
Third Person Shooter  
Third-Person-Shooter  
Tower Defense  
Turn based strategy  
Turn-based strategy  
Turn-based-strategy

*Technical film terms*

a-list\*  
a-movie\*  
accelerated motion  
act  
actor\*  
actress\*  
acts  
ad lib  
adaptation  
allegor\*  
allusion\*  
anachron\*  
anamorphi\*  
angle\*  
antagonist\*  
anthropomorph\*  
anti climact\*  
anti climax  
anti hero  
anti heroes  
anti-climact\*  
anti-climax  
anti-hero

anti-heroes  
aperture\*  
archetyp\*  
arret\*  
art-house  
arthouse  
aspect ratio\*  
asynchron\*  
audience\*  
audio  
auteur\*  
avant garde  
avant-garde  
b list\*  
b-film\*  
b-list\*  
b-movie\*  
back stories  
backdrop\*  
background  
backlight\*  
backlit  
balance

bit part  
bit role  
blocking  
bowdler\*  
bracketing  
buddy film\*  
buddy movie\*  
buzz track  
calling card\*  
cameo\*  
camera  
campiness  
campy  
caricature\*  
cartoon\*  
cast\*  
cathar\*  
cautionary tale\*  
censor\*  
cgi\*  
character\*  
chemistry  
chiaroscuro\*

choreograph\*  
cinema verité  
cinéma vérité  
cinematograph\*  
cinéma vérité  
claymat\*  
cliffhanger\*  
climact\*  
climax\*  
close up\*  
close-up\*  
closeup\*  
coda  
comedic relief  
comic relief  
coming of age  
coming-of-age  
compilation\*  
costume\*  
coverage  
cross-cutting  
cross-over  
crosscutting  
crossover  
cult following  
cyberpunk\*  
deadpan  
decoupage  
deus ex machina  
dialogue  
diege\*  
diffusion\*  
directi\*  
director\*  
dissolve  
doppelganger  
double exposure  
dunning  
dystopi\*  
edit\*  
ellipsis  
enfant terrible  
ensemble  
epilogue\*  
episod\*  
exploitation

expressioni\*  
fade  
farce\*  
fast motion  
fast-motion  
femme fatale\*  
film\*  
fish out of water  
fish-out-of-water  
flash ahead  
flash forward\*  
flash-ahead  
flash-forward  
flashback\*  
focus  
foreground  
foreshadow\*  
fourth wall\*  
fram\*  
freeze-frame\*  
genre\*  
grindhouse\*  
guilty pleasure\*  
handycam  
hard boil\*  
hard-boil\*  
hero  
heroes  
heroine\*  
high-concept  
homage\*  
hybrid  
icon\*  
indie\*  
ingenue\*  
inter-cutting  
intercut\*  
intercutting  
intermission\*  
juxtapos\*  
landmark  
leitmotif\*  
lighting\*  
lip sync  
looping  
macguffin\*

madcap  
magic bullet  
mainstream  
make up  
makeup  
mcguffin\*  
metaphor\*  
mime  
miscast  
mise en scene  
mise en scène  
mise-en-scene  
mise-en-scène  
mockumentar\*  
modern\*  
monologue\*  
montage\*  
morph  
morphs  
motif  
movie\*  
narrat\*  
naturali\*  
neo-realis\*  
new wave  
newsreel  
nihilis\*  
non diege\*  
non-diege\*  
nouvelle vague  
obligatory  
off stage  
off-camera  
off-stage  
offstage  
one liner  
one-liner  
oscar bait  
overact\*  
overture\*  
pace\*  
pacing  
pan  
pantomime  
parallel\*  
parod\*

persona*	second banana	stop-motion
player*	second fiddle	story
plot	segment*	straight man
point of view	sequel*	studio*
point-of-view	sequence*	stylize*
post modern*	set-piece	subplot*
post-modern*	sfx	subtext*
potboil*	shaky	super-impos*
pov	shot	superimpos*
premise	sight gag*	surreal*
prequel*	signature*	symbol*
product place*	silver bullet	talking head*
production*	sleeper	theory
prologue*	sleeper-hit	time lapse*
protagonist*	sleeper-hits	tone
punchline*	slow motion	tour de force*
re-enactm*	slow-mo	trademark*
real time	slow-motion	trilogies
realis*	slowmo	trilogy
red herring*	soliloqu*	twist
reenactm*	sound effect*	typecast*
remake*	sound*	underact*
retrospect*	special effect*	utopia*
revisioni*	spin-off*	vaudevill*
revival house	spinoff*	vignette*
role*	star vehicle*	visual gag*
satir*	starlet*	voice over*
scene*	steadicam	voice-over*
schlock	steadycam	wardrobe*
score	stereotyp*	wipe
scoring	stock footage*	wobbly
screenplay*	stop animat*	z-film*
screwball	stop motion	z-movie*
script	stop-animat*	zoom*

***Technical game terms***

abstract game*	antagonist*	beta
act	anti hero*	buggy
acts	anti-climact*	bugs
adaptation	anti-climax*	calling card
advergame*	anti-hero*	camera
aesthetic	archetyp*	campiness
allegor*	back stories	campy
allusion*	balanc*	cathar*

cautionary tale*	freedom*	parod*
character*	fun	perk*
cheat*	game*	persistent
choice*	gameplay	perspective
chunk*	gamer*	pigeon-hol*
cinematic*	gaming	pigeonhol*
climact*	genre*	player*
climax*	glitch*	plot
clipping	goal*	point of view
coda	graphic*	point-of-view
code	grind*	port
codes	gui	ported
compilation*	hero	porting
consequence*	heroes	pov
console	heroine*	premise
control	homage*	prequel*
controls	hub	product place*
cut-scene*	hubs	production*
cyberpunk	hud	progression*
design*	hybrid	prologue*
deus ex machina	icon*	protagonist*
developer*	indie*	publisher*
dialogue	isometric	qte
direction	juxtapos*	real time
director	level	real-time
dystopi*	leveling	realis*
economies	levels	remake*
economy	loot	reward*
edutainment	lose	rules
effort	ludus	sand box
emergent	mechanics	sandbox
epilogue*	metaphor*	satir*
episod*	minigame*	save
exploit*	mode*	saves
farm	modern*	scene*
farming	monologue*	schlock
flash ahead	motif	score
flash forward	multiplayer*	scoring
flashback*	narrati*	script
flow*	neo-realis*	segment*
fmv*	nihilis*	sequel*
fps	nostalgi*	sfx
frame Rate	outcome*	signature
framerate	pace*	skill*
frames per	pacing	sleeper
second	parallel*	sleeper hit

sleeper-hits  
slow motion  
slow-mo  
slow-motion  
slowmo  
soliloqu\*  
sound\*  
spin-off\*  
spinoff\*  
stage  
stages  
stereotyp\*  
story  
strategy  
studio\*

stylize\*  
subplot  
subtext\*  
subversive  
surreal\*  
symbol\*  
tactic\*  
tearing  
theory  
time lapse\*  
tone  
tour de force  
trademark\*  
transmediality  
triangularity

trilogies  
trilogy  
turn based  
turn-based  
tutorial\*  
twist  
utopia\*  
valorization  
voice over\*  
voice-over\*  
win  
world  
worlds

### ***Fandom***

Fan  
Fans  
Fanatic\*

## APPENDIX D

### HOW METAScores ARE CALCULATED

Retrieved from <http://www.metacritic.com/about-metascores>

#### How We Create the Metascore Magic

##### A peek behind the curtain

Creating our proprietary Metascores is a complicated process. We carefully curate a large group of the world's most respected critics, assign scores to their reviews, and apply a weighted average to summarize the range of their opinions. The result is a single number that captures the essence of critical opinion in one Metascore. Each movie, game, television show and album featured on Metacritic gets a Metascore when we've collected at least four critics' reviews.

##### Why the term "weighted average" matters

Metascore is a weighted average in that we assign more importance, or weight, to some critics and publications than others, based on their quality and overall stature. In addition, for music and movies, we also normalize the resulting scores (akin to "grading on a curve" in college), which prevents scores from clumping together.

##### How to interpret a Metascore

Metascores range from 0-100, with higher scores indicating better overall reviews. We highlight Metascores in three colors so that you can instantly compare: green scores for favorable reviews, yellow scores for mixed reviews, and red scores for unfavorable reviews.

##### How We Calculate Our Scores: The Long FAQ

#### **Score calculation questions**

##### **Q: Are user votes included in the METAScore calculations?**

A: No. While we solicit votes from our site visitors on movies, games, and music, and television shows we do not include those votes in the METAScore. The METAScore is a weighted average of the published critic reviews contained in the chart on that page, and thus does not include any votes or comments from our users. However, you may, of course, see the average user vote by glancing at the USER SCORE to the right of the METAScore on every summary page.

**Q: What's with these green, yellow, and red colors?**

A: Assuming you are looking at our website and not at your Christmas tree, it's fairly simple: "good" METASCORES are coded in green; "average" METASCORES are yellow, and "bad" METASCORES are red. (This same color coding is also used for the individual critic and user grades.) If the numbers are too complicated to read, you can simply look at the pretty colors to tell what the reviews said.

Here's how the scores break down:

General Meaning of Score	Movies, TV & Music	Games
Universal Acclaim	81 - 100	90 - 100
Generally Favorable Reviews	61 - 80	75 - 89
Mixed or Average Reviews	40 - 60	50 - 74
Generally Unfavorable Reviews	20 - 39	20 - 49
Overwhelming Dislike	0 - 19	0 - 19

**Q: Well then, can I see all of your grade conversion scales?**

A: Absolutely! Some of the conversions are obvious (for example, if a critic uses a 0-10 scale, his/her grade is simply multiplied by ten). Some of the less obvious conversions are displayed below:

**4-Star Scale**

<b>Their Grade</b>	<b>Converts to</b>
4	100
3.5	88
3	75
2.5	63
2	50
1.5	38
1	25
0.5	12
0	0

**Letter Grades**

<b>Their Grade</b>	<b>Converts to</b>
A or A+	100
A-	91
B+	83
B	75
B-	67
C+	58
C	50
C-	42
D+	33
D	25
D-	16
F+	8
F or F-	0



## APPENDIX E

### CODING MANUAL FOR EVALUATING THE CRITICS

**Unit of data collection:** A review--each review is contained within a separate text file.

#### **Instructions:**

**Filename** – Create a text document with which to store the review. Name it

“MED###.txt” for easy retrieval, where “MED” refers to the medium or platform and

“###” refers to the instance of the review gathered. For example, the third review

gathered for the PlayStation Portable would be saved as “PSP003.txt.” Consult the codes

below for file naming.

- Dreamcast – DC
- Game Boy Advance – GBA
- iOS – IOS
- Movie – M
- Nintendo 64 – N64
- Nintendo Game Cube – NGC
- PlayStation – PS
- PlayStation Portable – PSP
- Nintendo Wii – WII
- Xbox 360 - XBX

**Title** – Enter the title of the work reviewed here

**Medium** – Enter “1” for video game or “0” for movie

**Platform** – Enter the same code used in naming the file here.

**ConMob** – This corresponds to whether a game is on a home console or mobile device.

For a game on a home console (e.g., Dreamcast, Nintendo 64, Nintendo Game Cube,

PlayStation, Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360), enter “Console.” For a game on a mobile device

(e.g., Game Boy Advance, iOS, PlayStation Portable), enter “Mobile.” For a movie, enter “999.”

**Generation** – This corresponds to the console generation (see “GameFAQs System List”). For fifth-generation platforms (e.g., PlayStation, Nintendo 64), enter “5.” For sixth-generation platforms (e.g., Game Boy Advance, Nintendo Gamecube, Dreamcast), enter “6.” For seventh-generation platforms (e.g., iOS, Nintendo Wii, PlayStation Portable, Xbox 360), enter “7.” For movies, enter “999.”

**MScore** – The Metascore is the aggregate score assigned to the work by Metacritic based on the reviews it collected. Enter that score here. A review **MUST** have a Metascore to be included in this study.

**UScore** – This refers to the average score users assigned to the work. Enter that score if it exists (must be rated by at least four users). Enter “999” otherwise.

**PScore** – This refers to the score the publication gave the work. Metacritic standardizes all publication scores to be out of 100. After choosing a review, enter the standardized publication score for that review according to Metacritic.

**RevYear** – The year the review was written. Sometimes this is available on Metacritic in the excerpt from the review. Sometimes it is located in the review itself. If neither location has a review year listed, enter “999.”

**Rel\*Year** – This corresponds to a work’s year of release. Copy the existing value from “RevYear” unless that value is missing (i.e., “999”). In cases where it is missing, copy the work’s release year from the summary page on Metacritic.

**Publication** – Enter the name of the publication where the review is from.

**PubType** – Publication type. Code “0” for a general audience publication. This includes any newspapers, magazines, or websites that include an audience that primarily does not work in the medium being reviewed. Code “1” for an industry insider which is a publication with a readership primarily comprised of filmmakers/game developers and/or scholars. Code “2” for any independent or other reviews sampled. These are generally publications with one or two authors that do not fit into either of the other two categories.

**Author** – Enter the name of the author who wrote the review. If unknown, enter “999.”

**Gender** – Enter the “M” for a male author or “F” for a female author. If there is no picture or the name is ambiguous, try to find a profile or biography page. If gender cannot be 100 percent determined or if the review has no author listed, enter “999.”

**URL** – Copy the URL the review is located at and enter it here.

**Critical thought and style (circle yes or no)**

101. Does the review describe how the work compares to other works with similar ambitions and/or themes?

Yes                  No

102. Does the review mention any previous efforts by the work’s creator(s)?

Yes                  No

103. Does the review mention at least one individual person responsible for the work (either writer, producer, director or equivalent) by name (e.g., Will Wright, Steven Spielberg)? Note, this excludes actors unless the actor also wrote, directed, or produced.

Yes                  No

104. Does the review mention at least one development team/group or production/publishing company responsible for the work by name (e.g., Konami, Legendary Pictures)?

Yes                  No

105. Does the review mention what the work’s creator was attempting to do *and* how well it was done?

Yes                  No

106. Does the review describe how the work uses *previous* techniques to create a new or novel effect?

Yes                  No

107. Does the review describe any new or novel techniques used in the work?

Yes                  No

108. Does the review make any mention of genre?

- Yes No  
 109. Does the review discuss the emotions that the work induces in those exposed to it?  
 Yes No  
 110. Does the review discuss/evaluate the *performance(s)* of any actors and/or voice actors?  
 Yes No  
 111. Does the review make any mention of gender relationships or gender portrayals?  
 Yes No  
 112. Does the review mention any political subtext or agenda present within the work?  
 Yes No  
 113. Does the review make any attempt(s) to tie the work in with the current social and/or political environment?  
 Yes No

**Types of criticism (circle one)**

201. Does the review summarize the plot?  
 Yes No  
 202. Does the review recommend readers should watch/play the movie or game?  
 Yes No Partially (some should watch/play it)  
 203. Does the review discourage readers from watching/playing the movie or game?  
 Yes No Partially (some should avoid it)  
 204. Does the review offer suggestions on how the work could be improved?  
 Yes No  
 205. Does the review mention specifically how much the movie/game costs to watch or play (in dollars or another currency)?  
 Yes No  
 206. Does the review make any evaluative statement in regard to the value or price of the movie/game?  
 Yes No  
*IF YES,*  
 206a. Does the review suggest the value of the movie/game is higher than its asking price (i.e., it is a bargain or good value)?  
 Yes No  
 206b. Does the review suggest the movie/game is priced too high?  
 Yes No  
*(F 206 is NO, leave "(999)" in both cells 206a and 206b)*

**Usability heuristics (for GAME reviews ONLY, circle yes or no)**

301. The review discusses the consistency of the game's responses to user input. This may include hit detection, physics, consistent character movement, and/or enemy behavior.  
 Yes No  
 302. The review discusses customizable game settings (e.g, video, audio, difficulty, game speed)

- Yes                      No
303. The review discusses the functionality of any computer-controlled units/characters (AI)
- Yes                      No
304. The review discusses how the player actually views the game. This may include fixed or manually controlled camera angles, and/or customizable views (e.g., cockpit, overhead, etc.).
- Yes                      No
305. The review discusses how a player may skip or is forced to watch non-playable and frequently repeated content.
- Yes                      No
306. The review discusses the input mapping/controls of the game (i.e., which buttons or keys do what actions). The review may suggest they are intuitive or unintuitive, and may also mention if they are customizable in any way.
- Yes                      No
307. The review discusses the sensitivity and responsiveness of the game's controls.
- Yes                      No
308. The review discusses how the game presents status information to the player. This may include player score, health, ammunition and/or locations of objectives, teammates, or enemies.
- Yes                      No
309. The review discusses the visual representation of the game's interface. This may include menu systems that are too numerous or too complex, or maps that are too cluttered to read. Conversely, it may include very clean interfaces that are easy to interpret.
- Yes                      No
310. The review discusses any sort of in-game instructions, training, tutorials and/or help available to players.
- Yes                      No





Filename	Title	Medium	Platform	ConMob	Generation	Mscore



## APPENDIX F

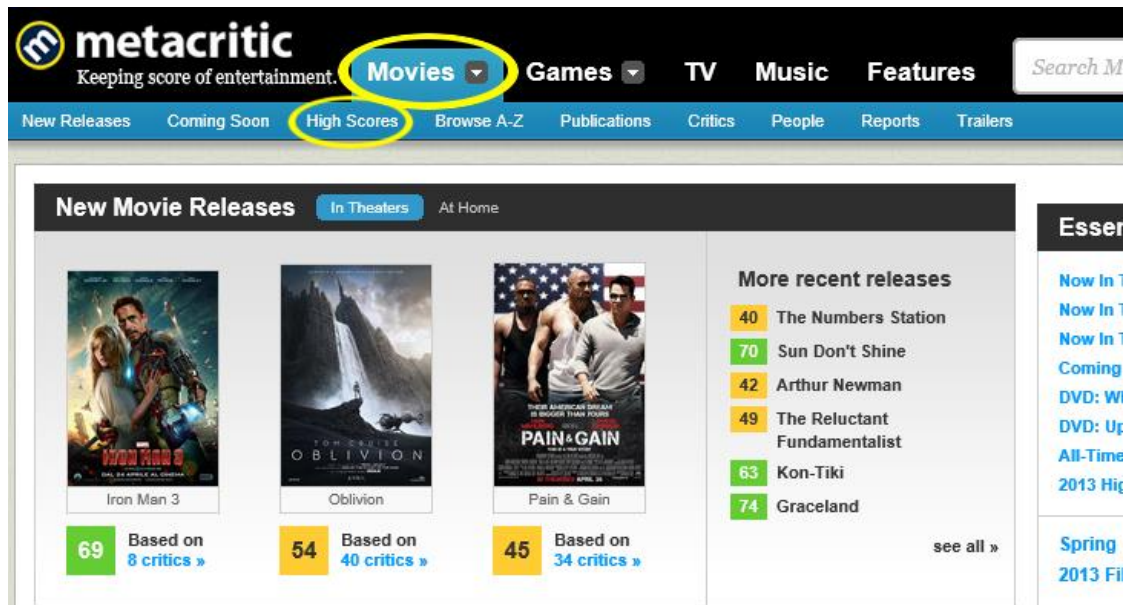
### HOW TO OBTAIN REVIEWS

This section depicts the sample process for this paper. Instructions accompany each figure.

From the Metacritic home page (metacritic.com), click on “Movies” or “Games” toward the top of the page, then click on “High Scores,” also located near the top. Alternatively, visit

[www.metacritic.com/browse/movies/score/metascore/all?sort=desc&view=condensed](http://www.metacritic.com/browse/movies/score/metascore/all?sort=desc&view=condensed) for a list of movie reviews and

[www.metacritic.com/browse/games/score/metascore/all/ps3?sort=desc&view=condensed](http://www.metacritic.com/browse/games/score/metascore/all/ps3?sort=desc&view=condensed) for a list of game reviews.



Metacritic will now present a list of movie or game reviews in order of average score (i.e., "Metascore"). If a specific game platform is desired, the top of the page allows the user to filter by console.


Game Releases by Score			
		All	PS3
		Xbox 360	PC
		Wii U	3DS
		PS Vita	iOS
		Wii	DS
		PSP	PS2
Last 90 days		All time	By Year
		Show:	All
			Move Only
98	Grand Theft Auto IV	User: 7.6	Apr 29, 2008
96	Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	User: 8.6	Oct 13, 2009
96	Batman: Arkham City	User: 8.3	Oct 18, 2011
95	LittleBigPlanet	User: 6.6	Oct 27, 2008
95	Red Dead Redemption	User: 8.6	May 18, 2010
95	Portal 2	User: 8.1	Apr 19, 2011
95	The Walking Dead: A Telltale Games Series	User: 8.8	Dec 11, 2012
94	Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	User: 5.9	Nov 10, 2009
94	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	User: 8.6	Nov 5, 2007
94	BioShock	User: 8.5	Oct 21, 2008
94	Mass Effect 2	User: 8.2	Jan 18, 2011
94	Street Fighter IV	User: 7.2	Feb 17, 2009
94	Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots	User: 8.7	Jun 12, 2008
93	The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	User: 7.8	Mar 20, 2007

Through systematic random sampling, proceed through the list, clicking on the sampled movie and game reviews. Clicking on a title presents the user with a summary page.



**100** Eurogamer Portugal  
Jun 2, 2011

Portal 2 is an instant classic, a driver of innovation and originality, where everything is far from settled by the law of the bullet, but within the limits of physics.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#) 


**100** Playstation Official Magazine UK  
May 17, 2011

A great example of mould-breaking gaming at its best. [June 2011, p.100]

[All this publication's reviews](#)


**85** BigPond GameArena  
Apr 19, 2011

The only other gripe - and this was true for Portal as well - is that Portal 2 has zero replayability...It's more Portal, not a better Portal. Regardless, if you're looking for a challenging puzzle game and a great coop experience, Portal 2 is a must buy.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#) 

**70** Gamekult  
May 2, 2011

Emancipation complete for Portal, which gets rid of his "bonus game" condition with a second episode that is certainly no revolution but still manages to justify its new status.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#) 

[See all 54 Critic Reviews](#)

From here, click on see all "X" critic reviews for the full list of reviews.

Place the appropriate range of numbers (e.g., “54” in this scenario) into random.org and click generate to determine the selected review.

# RANDOM.ORG

Search RANDOM.ORG  
Google™ Custom Search

True Random Number Service

## What's this fuss about *true* randomness?

Perhaps you have wondered how predictable machines like computers can generate randomness. In reality, most random numbers used in computer programs are *pseudo-random*, which means they are generated in a predictable fashion using a mathematical formula. This is fine for many purposes, but it may not be random in the way you expect if you're used to dice rolls and lottery drawings.

RANDOM.ORG offers *true* random numbers to anyone on the Internet. The randomness comes from atmospheric noise, which for many purposes is better than the pseudo-random number algorithms typically used in computer programs. People use RANDOM.ORG for holding drawings, lotteries and sweepstakes, to drive games and gambling sites, for scientific applications and for art and music. The service has existed since 1998 and was built and is being operated by [Mads Haahr](#) of the [School of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity College, Dublin](#) in Ireland.

As of today, RANDOM.ORG has generated [1.28 trillion random bits](#) for the Internet community.

True Random Number Generator

Min:

Max:

Result:

**5**

Powered by [RANDOM.ORG](#)

The full list of reviews for a particular title. After visiting random.org, count down from the top the appropriate number of reviews and click "Read full review."

95

**Metascore**  
Universal acclaim  
based on 54 Critics

**Critic score distribution:**  
Positive:  53  
Mixed:  1  
Negative: 0

Critic Score

[Most active](#)
[Publication](#)
[Most clicked](#)
view 30 | 100 per page

100

**Eurogamer Portugal** Jun 2, 2011

Portal 2 is an instant classic, a driver of innovation and originality, where everything is far from settled by the law of the bullet, but within the limits of physics.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#)

100

**Playstation Official Magazine UK** May 17, 2011

A great example of mould-breaking gaming at its best. [June 2011, p.100]

[All this publication's reviews](#)

100

**Gaming Age** May 3, 2011

Portal 2 has enough appeal to welcome any gamer no matter what type they claim themselves to be. The end result is a gaming experience you will not soon forget.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#)

100

**GamerNode** Apr 26, 2011

It's hard to overstate my satisfaction. Play Portal 2 as soon as you can.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#)

100

**Game Revolution** Apr 22, 2011

Impatience aside, Portal 2 is an exceptionally well-crafted, intelligent, entertaining, humorous game. You will laugh. You will feel like a freaking genius. You will want more. And yes, you will probably be hearing quotes from Portal 2 for the next three years.

[All this publication's reviews](#) | [Read full review](#)

Copy and paste this text into a search engine if the "Read full review link" doesn't work.

Review date (not available for all reviews)

Publication title

Publication score (PScore)

Click this link for the full review. If it does not work, and the review cannot be found through search engines, right-click this link, copy the URL, and use that link in the WayBack Archive.

Below is a sample review for the game *Portal 2* on the website GameRevolution. Copy and paste the review text into a text file. Note that the box at the top is not part of the review text.

## Portal 2 Review

**GAME** **REVIEWS** **NEWS** **SCREENS** **VIDEOS** **CHEATS** **FAQS** **DOWNLOADS**

By: **danielrbischoff**  
04/22/11

GENRE First Person Shooter, Puzzle  
PLAYERS 1-2  
PUBLISHER Valve  
DEVELOPER Valve  
RELEASE DATE Out Now

EVERYONE 10+  
**E**  
CONTAINS FANTASY VIOLENCE, MILD LANGUAGE  
What do these ratings mean?  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION  
EMAIL TO A FRIEND

Do not copy material like this that is not part of the review body text.

**"Science has now validated your birth mother's decision to abandon you on a doorstep."**

I wasn't abandoned on a doorstep. The odds are good that **Portal 2's** protagonist Chell wasn't abandoned on a doorstep either. But I'm not about to discuss odds with an AI such as GLaDOS, though. If you haven't played the original first-person puzzler, [Portal](#), you'll likely miss out on what makes [Portal 2](#) so amazing. So go ahead, go play the game.

We'll wait. (There'll be [spoilers](#) of the first game in this review anyways.)

See? Wasn't that amazing? It was impossible to avoid every **Portal** meme, joke, and character back in 2007... or 2008. Or 2009. Maybe in 2010 you were safe, but it was too late even then. Valve's monstrosity of a hit came out of [The Orange Box](#), and while much has been made about the dollar value of a standalone sequel like **Portal 2**, it's safe to say that you *have to play Portal 2*.



I won't shove you out the door without an explanation. You deserve better than that. Still, you should be ready to grab your wallet, purse, or change jar and pay whatever it takes to play Valve's physics-bending mind-expanding machine. **Portal 2** is more of what made the original so good, but it's also *more than* what made the original so good.

If the review link is broken, try copying the excerpt of the review from Metacritic and using a search engine like Google or Bing. If that still does not turn up the full review, visit <http://archive.org/web/web.php> and paste the URL from Metacritic into the text box there. Click “Take Me Back,” and see if this site has an archived version of the review.





APPENDIX G

LIST OF REVIEWS USED IN STUDY

<b>Game/Movie Reviewed</b> <b>Listed by descending Metascore within</b> <b>each platform/medium</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Publication</b>
<i>NBA 2K2</i>	Dreamcast	Tim Lewinson	Gaming Age
<i>Phantasy Star Online</i>	Dreamcast	Jeff Gerstmann	GameSpot
<i>Test Drive V-Rally</i>	Dreamcast	Tom Potter	Core Magazine
<i>Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike</i>	Dreamcast	Jeff Gerstmann	GameSpot
<i>Ooga Booga</i>	Dreamcast	Scott Steinberg	Playboy
<i>Vanishing Point</i>	Dreamcast	Dan Weidman	Happy Puppy
<i>NFL Blitz 2001</i>	Dreamcast	Tim Martin	Sports Gaming Network
<i>Sega Bass Fishing 2</i>	Dreamcast	GamingNoise-Chip	Planet Dreamcast
<i>Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX</i>	Dreamcast	Sean Miller	Electric Playground
<i>Cannon Spike</i>	Dreamcast	Derek Collins	Happy Puppy
<i>Soldier of Fortune</i>	Dreamcast	J.M. Vargas	DC Swirl
<i>POD: Speedzone</i>	Dreamcast	Brian Gray	DC Swirl
<i>18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker</i>	Dreamcast	Anthony Chau	IGN
<i>Stupid Invaders</i>	Dreamcast	CeleryFace	Planet Dreamcast
<i>Sno-Cross Championship Racing</i>	Dreamcast	Mr. Domino	Planet Dreamcast
<i>Atari Anniversary Edition</i>	Dreamcast	Johnny Liu	Game Revolution
<i>Q*Bert</i>	Dreamcast	Anthony Chau	IGN
<i>Sonic Shuffle</i>	Dreamcast	Anthony Chau	IGN
<i>World Series Baseball 2K1</i>	Dreamcast	Brian Gray	DC Swirl
<i>ECW Anarchy Rulz</i>	Dreamcast	Tim Maxwell	Happy Puppy
<i>WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame\$!</i>	Game Boy Advance	Grandlethal	Into Liquid Sky
<i>Super Mario Advance</i>	Game Boy Advance	T.J. Deci	All Game Guide
<i>Mega Man Zero</i>	Game Boy Advance	Dan Wong	Game Critics
<i>Pokemon FireRed Version</i>	Game Boy Advance	Mike Smith	Yahoo! Games
<i>Pac-Man Collection</i>	Game Boy Advance	Andrew S. Bub	GameSpy
<i>Konami Collector's Series: Arcade Advanced</i>	Game Boy Advance	T.J. Deci	All Game Guide
<i>Mega Man Zero 4</i>	Game Boy Advance	(unknown)	Siliconera
<i>Monster Rancher Advance</i>	Game Boy Advance	Skyler Miller	All Game Guide
<i>Egg Mania</i>	Game Boy Advance	Craig Harris	IGN
<i>Jet Grind Radio</i>	Game Boy Advance	Gareth Chappell	Gamestyle
<i>All-Star Baseball 2004 featuring Derek Jeter</i>	Game Boy Advance	Stew XX	Cheat Code Central
<i>Wings</i>	Game Boy Advance	Zach Meston	GameSpy
<i>Madden NFL 06</i>	Game Boy Advance	Michael Lafferty	GameZone
<i>Virtual Kasparov</i>	Game Boy Advance	T.J. Deci	All Game Guide
<i>Disney's Treasure Planet</i>	Game Boy Advance	Avi Fryman	GameSpy
<i>MotoGP</i>	Game Boy Advance	Patrick Klepek	Gaming Age
<i>Classic NES Series: Dr. Mario</i>	Game Boy Advance	Agustin Olvera	GameCube Advanced
<i>Spider-Man 2</i>	Game Boy Advance	IRONMONKEY	GamePro
<i>Samurai Jack: The Amulet of Time</i>	Game Boy Advance	Craig Harris	IGN
<i>Disney's Kim Possible: Revenge of Monkey Fist</i>	Game Boy Advance	Anise Hollingshead	GameZone
<i>X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse</i>	Game Boy Advance	Skyler Miller	All Game Guide
<i>Shaman King: Legacy of the Spirits, Soaring Hawk</i>	Game Boy Advance	Ryan McPherson	eToychest
<i>Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder</i>	Game Boy Advance	Hilary Goldstein	IGN
<i>The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: Attack of the Twonkies</i>	Game Boy Advance	Austin Starr	Nintendojo
<i>The Simpsons: Road Rage</i>	Game Boy Advance	Lawrence Wong	Game Over Online
<i>Cruis'n Velocity</i>	Game Boy Advance	Craig Harris	IGN
<i>xXx</i>	Game Boy Advance	Craig Harris	IGN
<i>Barbie Groovy Games</i>	Game Boy Advance	Nix	IGN
<i>Smuggler's Run</i>	Game Boy Advance	Frank Provo	GameSpot
<i>Sitting Ducks</i>	Game Boy Advance	Robert Faulhaber	eToychest
<i>Real Racing 2</i>	iOS	Tracy Erickson	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Chaos Rings</i>	iOS	Jim Sterling	Destructoid
<i>Bejeweled (2011)</i>	iOS	Brad Nicholson	TouchArcade
<i>N.O.V.A. 2 - Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance</i>	iOS	Chris Reed	Slide to Play
<i>Snuggle Truck</i>	iOS	Kevin (App Smile)	AppSmile
<i>Modern Combat 3: Fallen Nation</i>	iOS	Alex Siever	App Safari
<i>FIFA SOCCER 12 by EA SPORTS</i>	iOS	Carter Dotson	148Apps
<i>Infinity Field</i>	iOS	Mark Smith	Game Chronicles
<i>Frisbee Forever</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy

<i>War Pinball</i>	iOS	Will Wilson	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>SpaceChem Mobile</i>	iOS	Kevin (App Smile)	AppSmile
<i>Aquaria</i>	iOS	Chris Schilling	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Bug Princess</i>	iOS	Rob Rich	148Apps
<i>Run Roo Run</i>	iOS	Paul Byron	AppGamer
<i>Dinosaur Slayer</i>	iOS	Tarryn van der Byl	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Junk Jack</i>	iOS	Rob Rich	148Apps
<i>Shake Spears!</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>Foodies</i>	iOS	Bobby Gooding	148Apps
<i>Axe in Face</i>	iOS	(Multiple)	The A.V. Club
<i>JAZZ: Trump's Journey</i>	iOS	Nigel Wood	TouchGen
<i>TRANSFORMERS G1: AWAKENING</i>	iOS	Tracy Erickson	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Swords and Soldiers</i>	iOS	Daemon Hatfeild	IGN
<i>Solomon's Boneyard</i>	iOS	Tony Lau	App Safari
<i>Bounce on 2: Drallo's Demise</i>	iOS	Bonnie Eisenman	148Apps
<i>Monster Soup</i>	iOS	Jason Wadsworth	148Apps
<i>Zen Bound 2</i>	iOS	Levi Buchanan	IGN
<i>Robo5</i>	iOS	Nissa Campbell	TouchArcade
<i>Gravity Guy</i>	iOS	Nadia Oxford	Slide to Play
<i>The Dark Meadow</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>Call of Duty: World at War: Zombies</i>	iOS	Levi Buchanan	IGN
<i>Forever Drive</i>	iOS	Kevin (App Smile)	AppSmile
<i>Ramps</i>	iOS	Kevin (App Smile)	AppSmile
<i>KAMI RETRO</i>	iOS	Caleb (No Dpad)	No DPad
<i>NFL RIVALS</i>	iOS	Andrew Webster	Slide to Play
<i>Ninja Pong</i>	iOS	Phil Eaves	Slide to Play
<i>Order Up!! To Go</i>	iOS	Greg Dawson	148Apps
<i>Crazy Escape</i>	iOS	Lisa Caplan	148Apps
<i>Monster Island</i>	iOS	Damien McFerran	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>R-Type</i>	iOS	Levi Buchanan	IGN
<i>Hungry Shark</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>Fling a Thing</i>	iOS	Rob Rich	148Apps
<i>Hero Academy</i>	iOS	Colette Bennett	TouchArcade
<i>Laser Dolphin</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>Muffin Knight</i>	iOS	Carter Dotson	148Apps
<i>Can Knockdown 2</i>	iOS	Jose Ramos	TouchGen
<i>Bird Zapper!</i>	iOS	Bonnie Eisenman	148Apps
<i>Robot Unicorn Attack</i>	iOS	Levi Buchanan	IGN
<i>Guitar Hero</i>	iOS	Chris Reed	Slide to Play
<i>Halcyon</i>	iOS	Nathan Mustafa	TouchGen
<i>Bop It!</i>	iOS	Tracy Yonemoto	App Safari
<i>Aerox</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>Eternal Legacy</i>	iOS	Darius Reimm	App Safari
<i>Tunnel Shoot</i>	iOS	Bonnie Eisenman	148Apps
<i>1112 Episode 02</i>	iOS	Hope (No DPad)	No DPad
<i>DEO</i>	iOS	Andrew Webster	Slide to Play
<i>Batman: Arkham City Lockdown</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>The Show Must Go On</i>	iOS	(unknown)	Tap!
<i>D.A.R.K.</i>	iOS	Chris Buffa	Modojo
<i>Pirate's Treasure</i>	iOS	Nigel Wood	TouchGen
<i>Etolis: Arena</i>	iOS	Kevin (App Smile)	AppSmile
<i>The Oregon Trail: American Settler</i>	iOS	Eric Ford	TouchArcade
<i>Avenging Spirit</i>	iOS	Levi Buchanan	IGN
<i>Tank Riders</i>	iOS	Dave Flodine	AppSpy
<i>Tiny Lights</i>	iOS	Torbjorn Kamblad	TouchGen
<i>Puffle Launch</i>	iOS	Jason Bourke	ImpulseGamer
<i>Touch Detective</i>	iOS	Kristan Reed	Eurogamer
<i>NFL 2011</i>	iOS	Paul Byron	AppGamer
<i>Sonic the Hedgehog 2</i>	iOS	Tracy Erickson	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Six-Guns</i>	iOS	Torbjorn Kamblad	TouchGen
<i>Drawin' Growin'</i>	iOS	Steve McCaskill	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Cowboys Vs Zombies</i>	iOS	Chris Hall	148Apps
<i>TNA Wrestling iMPACT</i>	iOS	Troy Woodfield	TouchArcade
<i>Race illegal: High Speed 3D</i>	iOS	Andrew Nesvadba	AppSpy
<i>Pan's Labyrinth</i>	Movie	Jonathan Rosenbaum	Chicago Reader
<i>Reversal of Fortune</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>Do the Right Thing</i>	Movie	Vincent Canby	The New York Times
<i>United 93</i>	Movie	Ty Burr	Boston Globe
<i>The Arbor</i>	Movie	Eric Kohn	indieWIRE
<i>Little Women</i>	Movie	Lisa Schwarzbaum	Entertainment Weekly

<i>The Conversation</i>	Movie	(unknown)	TV Guide
<i>Talk to Her</i>	Movie	Peter Rainer	New York Magazine
<i>Los Angeles Plays Itself</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown</i>	Movie	(unknown)	TV Guide
<i>That Obscure Object of Desire</i>	Movie	Dave Kehr	Chicago Reader
<i>The Day I Became A Woman</i>	Movie	Marrit Ingman	The Austin Chronicle
<i>Raising Victor Vargas</i>	Movie	Peter Rainer	New York Magazine
<i>The White Diamond</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>The Exorcist (Re-edited)</i>	Movie	Robert Koehler	Variety
<i>Lilya 4-Ever</i>	Movie	Keith Phipps	The A.V. Club
<i>Juno</i>	Movie	David Edelstein	New York Magazine
<i>The Hours</i>	Movie	Dennis Lim	The Village Voice
<i>District 9</i>	Movie	Kyle Smith	New York Post
<i>Saraband</i>	Movie	Sean Axmaker	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
<i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i>	Movie	(unknown)	TV Guide
<i>Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work</i>	Movie	Carrie Rickey	Philadelphia Inquirer
<i>The Fighter</i>	Movie	Adam Smith	Empire
<i>Manufactured Landscapes</i>	Movie	Michael Phillips	Chicago Tribune
<i>My Joy</i>	Movie	Aaron Cutler	Slant Magazine
<i>A Time for Drunken Horse</i>	Movie	Chris Kaltenbach	Baltimore Sun
<i>Waste Land</i>	Movie	Steve Ramos	Boxoffice Magazine
<i>The Weather Underground</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>Under the Sea 3D</i>	Movie	Wesley Morris	Boston Globe
<i>Stephanie Daley</i>	Movie	Joe Morgenstern	Wall Street Journal
<i>Morning Sun</i>	Movie	Hua Hsu	The Village Voice
<i>Rembrandt's J'Accuse...!</i>	Movie	J. Hoberman	The Village Voice
<i>Shaun of the Dead</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>Stuff and Dough</i>	Movie	V.A. Musetto	New York Post
<i>MC5: A True Testimonial</i>	Movie	Elvis Mitchell	The New York Times
<i>Lawless Heart</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Beauty in Trouble</i>	Movie	V.A. Musetto	New York Post
<i>Waitress</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Inception</i>	Movie	Joe Williams	St. Louis Post-Dispatch
<i>The Legend of Drunken Master</i>	Movie	Elvis Mitchell	The New York Times
<i>The Keys to the House</i>	Movie	Manohla Dargis	The New York Times
<i>Mysterious Skin</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Show Me Love</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>Meet the Parents</i>	Movie	Thomas Desson	Washington Post
<i>China Blue</i>	Movie	Michelle Orange	The Village Voice
<i>Spider-Man</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>A Song For Martin</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>God Grew Tired of Us</i>	Movie	Kyle Smith	New York Post
<i>In Darkness</i>	Movie	Todd McCarthy	The Hollywood Reporter
<i>Nowhere in Africa</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>The Talent Given Us</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>Land of the Dead</i>	Movie	Jonathan Rosenbaum	Chicago Reader
<i>The Godfather: Part II</i>	Movie	(unknown)	TV Guide
<i>Deep Blue</i>	Movie	Jonathan Holland	Variety
<i>Warrior</i>	Movie	Mary Pols	Time
<i>Fixing Frank</i>	Movie	Robert Koehler	Variety
<i>The Boys of Baraka</i>	Movie	Eric Campos	Film Threat
<i>The Barbarian Invasions</i>	Movie	Paula Nechak	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
<i>Blank City</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>How to Eat Watermelon in White Company (and Enjoy It)</i>	Movie	Joshua Land	The Village Voice
<i>Pulse</i>	Movie	J. Hoberman	The Village Voice
<i>Cedar Rapids</i>	Movie	Liam Lacey	The Globe and Mail
<i>Cinderella Man</i>	Movie	Peter Travers	Rolling Stone
<i>Imelda</i>	Movie	Carina Chocano	Los Angeles Times
<i>Talk to Me</i>	Movie	Keith Phipps	The A.V. Club
<i>Crazy Love</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Chain Camera</i>	Movie	Lawrence Van Gelder	The New York Times
<i>Krrish</i>	Movie	Ronnie Scheib	Variety
<i>Bread and Tulips</i>	Movie	Jessica Winter	The Village Voice
<i>Hair</i>	Movie	David Parkinson	Empire
<i>El Crimen Perfecto (The Perfect Crime)</i>	Movie	Jorge Morales	The Village Voice
<i>Home</i>	Movie	Andrew Schenker	The Village Voice
<i>25th Hour</i>	Movie	Mick LaSalle	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>Lynch</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Visual Acoustics</i>	Movie	Ella Taylor	The Village Voice
<i>Rudo y Cursi</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times

<i>Batman</i>	Movie	Hal Hinson	Washington Post
<i>Innocent Voices</i>	Movie	Stephen Holden	The New York Times
<i>Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels</i>	Movie	Lisa Alspecor	Chicago Reader
<i>American Teen</i>	Movie	James Berardinelli	ReelViews
<i>Barber Shop</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Catfish</i>	Movie	Noel Murray	The A.V. Club
<i>A Map of the World</i>	Movie	Janet Maslin	The New York Times
<i>Viva Riva!</i>	Movie	Philip Wilding	Empire
<i>A Room For Romeo Brass</i>	Movie	Jack Matthews	New York Daily News
<i>Water Lilies</i>	Movie	Joe Neumaier	New York Daily News
<i>A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries</i>	Movie	Kenneth Turan	Los Angeles Times
<i>Cavite</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>The Innkeepers</i>	Movie	Steven Rea	Philadelphia Inquirer
<i>The Sixth Sense</i>	Movie	Mick LaSalle	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>Slingshot</i>	Movie	Richard Kuipers	Variety
<i>Giant</i>	Movie	V.A. Musetto	New York Post
<i>Return</i>	Movie	Joe Neumaier	New York Daily News
<i>16 Blocks</i>	Movie	Lisa Schwarzbaum	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story</i>	Movie	Damon Wise	Empire
<i>The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>A Man Named Pearl</i>	Movie	Wesley Morris	Boston Globe
<i>The Foot Fist Way</i>	Movie	Robert Wilonsky	The Village Voice
<i>This Girl's Life</i>	Movie	Scott Foundas	Variety
<i>The Nutty Professor</i>	Movie	James Berardinelli	ReelViews
<i>Dogma</i>	Movie	David Edelstein	Slate
<i>What Is a Man Without a Mustache?</i>	Movie	Michael Atkinson	The Village Voice
<i>The Golden Bowl</i>	Movie	Desson Howe	Washington Post
<i>My Big Fat Greek Wedding</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Trollhunter</i>	Movie	David Rooney	The Hollywood Reporter
<i>Screen Door Jesus</i>	Movie	Marc Savlov	The Austin Chronicle
<i>La Tropical</i>	Movie	Patrick Z. McGavin	Chicago Reader
<i>Blue Crush</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>Delta</i>	Movie	David Parkinson	Empire
<i>Cube</i>	Movie	Anita Gates	The New York Times
<i>Sheriff</i>	Movie	Cliff Doerksen	Chicago Reader
<i>The Adjustment Bureau</i>	Movie	Michael Phillips	Chicago Tribune
<i>L'iceberg</i>	Movie	Jim Ridley	The Village Voice
<i>The Beaver</i>	Movie	Andrew Barker	Variety
<i>Gunnin' for That #1 Spot</i>	Movie	Chris Nashawaty	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Sarah's Key</i>	Movie	Pam Grady	Boxoffice Magazine
<i>Heartbreaker</i>	Movie	Joe Williams	St. Louis Post-Dispatch
<i>The Boys &amp; Girl from County Clare</i>	Movie	Sid Smith	Chicago Tribune
<i>Bang Rajan</i>	Movie	J.R. Jones	Chicago Reader
<i>Meat Loaf: In Search of Paradise</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus</i>	Movie	Stephen Holden	The New York Times
<i>Small Voices</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Prime</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Glory Road</i>	Movie	Matt Singer	The Village Voice
<i>Osmosis Jones</i>	Movie	David Sterritt	Christian Science Monitor
<i>13 Going on 30</i>	Movie	Elvis Mitchell	The New York Times
<i>You've Got Mail</i>	Movie	Steve Davis	The Austin Chronicle
<i>The Gift to Stalin</i>	Movie	David Fear	Time Out New York
<i>Up at the Villa</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Army of Darkness</i>	Movie	Michael Gingold	TV Guide
<i>Turtle: The Incredible Journey</i>	Movie	Kirk Honeycutt	The Hollywood Reporter
<i>Watchmen</i>	Movie	Bob Mondello	NPR
<i>Waterworld</i>	Movie	Janet Maslin	The New York Times
<i>Falling</i>	Movie	Julia Wallace	The Village Voice
<i>The Merry Gentleman</i>	Movie	Kyle Smith	New York Post
<i>The Relic</i>	Movie	Peter Stack	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>The Truth About Charlie</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Bra Boys</i>	Movie	Scott Foundas	The Village Voice
<i>Woman Thou Art Loosed</i>	Movie	Todd McCarthy	Variety
<i>The People vs. George Lucas</i>	Movie	Mike Hale	The New York Times
<i>One Missed Call</i>	Movie	Michael Atkinson	The Village Voice
<i>Love Etc.</i>	Movie	Alison Willmore	The A.V. Club
<i>Freeze Me</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Spork</i>	Movie	Kyle Smith	New York Post
<i>In Too Deep</i>	Movie	Gary Dauphin	The Village Voice
<i>Shooter</i>	Movie	Todd McCarthy	Variety

<i>Amateur</i>	Movie	Jonathan Rosenbaum	Chicago Reader
<i>Gnomeo and Juliet</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Eight Legged Freaks</i>	Movie	Dennis Harvey	Variety
<i>The Curse of the Jade Scorpion</i>	Movie	Peter Rainer	New York Magazine
<i>Educating Rita</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>Gracie</i>	Movie	Joe Leydon	Variety
<i>Justin Bieber: Never Say Never</i>	Movie	Michael Rechtshaffen	The Hollywood Reporter
<i>Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>Losin' It</i>	Movie	(unknown)	Variety
<i>Everyone's Hero</i>	Movie	Stephen Hunter	Washington Post
<i>Moog</i>	Movie	Stephen Holden	The New York Times
<i>Lucía, Lucía</i>	Movie	Marc Savlov	The Austin Chronicle
<i>Swiri</i>	Movie	Michael Wilmington	Chicago Tribune
<i>New Guy</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Madea Goes to Jail</i>	Movie	J.R. Jones	Chicago Reader
<i>Cowboys &amp; Aliens</i>	Movie	Kimberley Jones	The Austin Chronicle
<i>The Good German</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Texas Killing Fields</i>	Movie	Neil Young	The Hollywood Reporter
<i>Formula 17</i>	Movie	Jeanette Catsoulis	The New York Times
<i>Me, Myself &amp; Irene</i>	Movie	Rita Kempley	Washington Post
<i>Ten9Eight: Shoot for the Moon</i>	Movie	Ty Burr	Boston Globe
<i>Trudell</i>	Movie	Erin Meister	Boston Globe
<i>I'm Gonna Git You Sucka</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>One Day</i>	Movie	Roger Moore	Orlando Sentinel
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	Movie	(unknown)	TV Guide
<i>The Private Archives of Pablo Escobar</i>	Movie	Ed Halter	The Village Voice
<i>By Hook or by Crook</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>Crash</i>	Movie	Desson Howe	Washington Post
<i>The Skeleton Key</i>	Movie	(unknown)	Boston Globe
<i>Dangerous Minds</i>	Movie	Barbara Shulgasser	San Francisco Examiner
<i>Clay Pigeons</i>	Movie	Michael O'Sullivan	Washington Post
<i>The Woman Chaser</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Saw</i>	Movie	Robert K. Elder	Chicago Tribune
<i>El Cantante</i>	Movie	Nathan Rabin	The A.V. Club
<i>Ayurveda: Art of Being</i>	Movie	Dave Kehr	The New York Times
<i>Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?</i>	Movie	Mark Bell	Film Threat
<i>Elizabeth: The Golden Age</i>	Movie	James Berardinelli	ReelViews
<i>The Hottest State</i>	Movie	Linda Stasi	New York Post
<i>How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days</i>	Movie	Stephanie Zacharek	Salon.com
<i>Kate &amp; Leopold</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Two Weeks</i>	Movie	Ruthe Stein	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>Dudley Do-Right</i>	Movie	Janet Maslin	The New York Times
<i>Devil</i>	Movie	John P. McCarthy	Boxoffice Magazine
<i>The Great Role</i>	Movie	Eddie Cockrell	Variety
<i>Dear John</i>	Movie	Brian Lowry	Variety
<i>Not Easily Broken</i>	Movie	Claudia Puig	USA Today
<i>The Lovely Bones</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Jackass: The Movie</i>	Movie	Kimberley Jones	The Austin Chronicle
<i>Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian</i>	Movie	Perry Seibert	TV Guide
<i>Beverly Hills Chihuahua</i>	Movie	Mark Bell	Film Threat
<i>Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel</i>	Movie	Michael Rechtshaffen	Film Journal International
<i>Sahara</i>	Movie	Mick LaSalle	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>Jakob the Liar</i>	Movie	Jean Oppenheimer	Dallas Observer
<i>The Virginity Hit</i>	Movie	Kyle Smith	New York Post
<i>2009: Lost Memories</i>	Movie	Jeannette Catsoulis	The New York Times
<i>Ciao America</i>	Movie	Scott Foundas	Variety
<i>World Traveler</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>Tim and Eric's Billion Dollar Movie</i>	Movie	Andy Webster	The New York Times
<i>Gigantic</i>	Movie	Kyle Smith	New York Post
<i>Don't Say a Word</i>	Movie	Mike Clark	USA Today
<i>Dirty</i>	Movie	Robert Koehler	Variety
<i>Evan Almighty</i>	Movie	James Berardinelli	ReelViews
<i>Battle: Los Angeles</i>	Movie	Scott Bowles	USA Today
<i>Biker Boyz</i>	Movie	Sean Axmaker	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
<i>Clue</i>	Movie	(unknown)	Variety
<i>Captain Corelli's Mandolin</i>	Movie	Lisa Schwarzbaum	Entertainment Weekly
<i>On_Line</i>	Movie	J.R. Jones	Chicago Reader
<i>Gone in Sixty Seconds</i>	Movie	Jack Matthews	New York Daily News
<i>Eichmann</i>	Movie	Mark Keizer	Boxoffice Magazine
<i>Mission to Mars</i>	Movie	Jonathan Rosenbaum	Chicago Reader

<i>The Ledge</i>	Movie	Peter Rainer	Christian Science Monitor
<i>Hair Show</i>	Movie	Ned Martel	The New York Times
<i>Grandma's Boy</i>	Movie	Gregory Kirschling	Entertainment Weekly
<i>The Last Song</i>	Movie	Roger Moore	Orlando Sentinel
<i>Sunset Strip</i>	Movie	Dave Kehr	The New York Times
<i>September Tapes</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>Price of Glory</i>	Movie	Todd McCarthy	Variety
<i>Surveillance</i>	Movie	Robert Adele	Los Angeles Times
<i>Life or Something Like It</i>	Movie	Lisa Schwarzbaum	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Punisher: War Zone</i>	Movie	Michael Sragow	The Baltimore Sun
<i>Blackwoods</i>	Movie	Robert Koehler	Variety
<i>Texas Rangers</i>	Movie	A.O. Scott	The New York Times
<i>Fool's Gold</i>	Movie	Elizabeth Witzman	New York Daily News
<i>Passion of Mind</i>	Movie	Desson Howe	Washington Post
<i>Imagining Argentina</i>	Movie	Ruthe Stein	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>When a Stranger Calls</i>	Movie	Jan Stuart	Los Angeles Times
<i>Boxing Helena</i>	Movie	Gene Siskel	Chicago Tribune
<i>The One</i>	Movie	Jan Stuart	Los Angeles Times
<i>Double Take</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>One Missed Call</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>For da Love of Money</i>	Movie	Dave Kehr	The New York Times
<i>Mr. Smith Gets a Hustler</i>	Movie	Dave Kehr	The New York Times
<i>The Zodiac</i>	Movie	Owen Gleiberman	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Marci X</i>	Movie	Wesley Morris	Boston Globe
<i>BloodRayne</i>	Movie	Gregory Kirschling	Entertainment Weekly
<i>Chooch</i>	Movie	Ken Fox	TV Guide
<i>Darkness</i>	Movie	Peter Hartlaub	San Francisco Chronicle
<i>Down to You</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Perception</i>	Movie	Carla Blumenkranz	The Village Voice
<i>The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask</i>	Nintendo 64	Marques Hicks	Gaming Maxx
<i>Wave Race 64</i>	Nintendo 64	Glenn Rubenstein	GameSpot
<i>International Superstar Soccer '98</i>	Nintendo 64	Peer Schneider	IGN
<i>Banjo-Tooie</i>	Nintendo 64	Adam Houkal	Core Magazine
<i>Madden NFL 2001</i>	Nintendo 64	Ryan Mac Donald	GameSpot
<i>San Francisco Rush 2049</i>	Nintendo 64	Matt Casamassina	IGN
<i>NFL Blitz 2000</i>	Nintendo 64	CJ (Nintendorks)	Nintendorks
<i>Mario Kart 64</i>	Nintendo 64	Scott McCall	All Game Guide
<i>007: The World is Not Enough</i>	Nintendo 64	Joe (Game Revolution)	Game Revolution
<i>Mario Party</i>	Nintendo 64	Dr_Moo	Game Revolution
<i>Army Men: Air Combat</i>	Nintendo 64	Barrett	Nintendorks
<i>Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine</i>	Nintendo 64	(unknown)	CNET Gamecenter
<i>Duke Nukem 64</i>	Nintendo 64	Peer Schneider	IGN
<i>Mickey's Speedway USA</i>	Nintendo 64	Johnny Liu	Game Revolution
<i>Disney's Donald Duck Goin' Quackers</i>	Nintendo 64	Gerald Villoria	GameSpot
<i>Mega Man 64</i>	Nintendo 64	Justin Speer	GameSpot
<i>Hey You, Pikachu!</i>	Nintendo 64	Fran Mirabella III	IGN
<i>WCW Backstage Assault</i>	Nintendo 64	Cory D. Lewis	IGN
<i>Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue</i>	Nintendo 64	Matt Casamassina	IGN
<i>Viewtiful Joe</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Joe Mackie	Gaming World X
<i>NBA 2K2</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Jonathan Lee	Gaming Age
<i>NBA Street V3</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Dean (CheatCC)	Cheat Code Central
<i>The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Burn the Witch	Warcry Network
<i>The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	PJ Hruschak	Cincinnati Enquirer
<i>Metal Arms: Glitch in the System</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Justin (Worth Playing)	Worth Playing
<i>Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Kevin (GC Europe)	GameCube Europe
<i>MLB Slugfest 20-03</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Fran Mirabella III	IGN
<i>NHL Hitz 20-02</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Wooly Doug	GameShark
<i>Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Ryan Davis	GameSpot
<i>Call of Duty 2: Big Red One</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Carl Armstrong	Gaming Illustrated
<i>MX Superfly</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Marc Saltzman	Electric Playground
<i>Robotech: Battlecry</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Pong Sifu	GamePro
<i>The Sims 2</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Juan Castro	IGN
<i>Naruto: Clash of Ninja</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Slo Mo	GamePro
<i>NFL Blitz Pro</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Alex Navarro	GameSpot
<i>Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Jason Hill	Sydney Morning Herald
<i>Ty the Tasmanian Tiger</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Andy (GC Europe)	GameCube Europe
<i>Disney's Meet the Robinsons</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Frank Provo	GameSpot
<i>Mystic Heroes</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Matthew Gallant	GameSpot
<i>Superman: Shadow of Apokolips</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Cory D. Lewis	IGN
<i>The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: Attack of the Twonkies</i>	Nintendo Game Cube	Austin Starr	Nintendojo

<i>Looney Tunes: Back in Action</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Bas Oosterveld	GameCube Europe
<i>P.N. 03</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Brian Crecente	Gamezilla!
<i>X2: Wolverine's Revenge</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Hilary Goldstein	IGN
<i>Kirby Air Ride</i>	Nintendo GameCube	(unknown)	Cheat Code Central
<i>Rayman Arena</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Fran Mirabella III	IGN
<i>Virtua Striker 2002</i>	Nintendo GameCube	G-Wok	Game Revolution
<i>Gotcha Force</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Brian Crecente	Gamezilla!
<i>Reign of Fire</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Chandra Nair	TotalGames.net
<i>Bionicle Heroes</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Mike Davis	GameZone
<i>One Piece: Pirates' Carnival</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Ken Hutchinson	Game Chronicles
<i>TMNT: Mutant Melee</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Alex Navarro	GameSpot
<i>The Sum of All Fears</i>	Nintendo GameCube	Ryan Mac Donald	GameSpot
<i>Gran Turismo 2</i>	PlayStation	Nelson Taruc	GameSpot
<i>PaRappa the Rapper</i>	PlayStation	(unknown)	Absolute PlayStation
<i>Syphon Filter</i>	PlayStation	Doug Perry	IGN
<i>Tekken 2</i>	PlayStation	(unknown)	Absolute PlayStation
<i>Oddworld: Abe's Exodus</i>	PlayStation	Johnny_B	Game Revolution
<i>Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete</i>	PlayStation	Brad Shoemaker	GameSpot
<i>FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer</i>	PlayStation	Ben Stahl	GameSpot
<i>Persona 2: Eternal Punishment</i>	PlayStation	Jeff Gerstmann	GameSpot
<i>Brave Fencer Musashi</i>	PlayStation	Doug Trueman	The Adrenaline Vault
<i>Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX</i>	PlayStation	Dan Wieldman	Happy Puppy
<i>Tales of Destiny II</i>	PlayStation	David Smith	IGN
<i>Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare</i>	PlayStation	Jayne Bowen	Games Domain
<i>Toy Story Racer</i>	PlayStation	Johnny Liu	Game Revolution
<i>Dance Dance Revolution Disney Mix</i>	PlayStation	Jeff Gerstmann	GameSpot
<i>Supercross 2001</i>	PlayStation	David Smith	IGN
<i>NBA ShootOut 2001</i>	PlayStation	Marques Hicks	Gaming Maxx
<i>ESPN MLS GameNight</i>	PlayStation	Chris Carle	IGN
<i>Pro Pinball: Big Race USA</i>	PlayStation	Scott Steinberg	Happy Puppy
<i>Vanishing Point</i>	PlayStation	Doug Perry	IGN
<i>High Heat Major League Baseball 2002</i>	PlayStation	Mike Nam	Happy Puppy
<i>Martian Gothic: Unification</i>	PlayStation	Frank Provo	GameSpot
<i>NFL GameDay 2002</i>	PlayStation	Ryan Mac Donald	GameSpot
<i>Driver 2</i>	PlayStation	Ryan Mac Donald	GameSpot
<i>Peter Pan in Disney's Return to Neverland</i>	PlayStation	Jeremy Dunham	IGN
<i>Cool Boarders 2001</i>	PlayStation	Joe Dodson	Game Revolution
<i>Ford Racing</i>	PlayStation	David Zdryko	IGN
<i>Evil Dead: Hail to the King</i>	PlayStation	Chip Carter	Happy Puppy
<i>Spec Ops: Ranger Elite</i>	PlayStation	Trevor Rivers	GameSpot
<i>Disney's Dinosaur</i>	PlayStation	Brad Shoemaker	GameSpot
<i>MIV Sports: Skateboarding featuring Andy Macdonald</i>	PlayStation	Jeff Gerstmann	GameSpot
<i>The Simpsons Wrestling</i>	PlayStation	Frank Provo	GameSpot
<i>Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22</i>	PlayStation	Shelby (CheatCC)	Cheat Code Central
<i>Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars</i>	PlayStation Portable	Tom Bramwell	Eurogamer
<i>Disgaea: Afternoon of Darkness</i>	PlayStation Portable	Matt Cabral	Cheat Code Central
<i>X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse</i>	PlayStation Portable	Greg Mueller	GameSpot
<i>Sega Genesis Collection</i>	PlayStation Portable	Joao Diniz Sanches	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Lumines II</i>	PlayStation Portable	Cole Smith	Cheat Code Central
<i>FIFA 07 Soccer</i>	PlayStation Portable	David Hillyer	Game Chronicles
<i>Rock Band Unplugged</i>	PlayStation Portable	Justin Haywald	IUP
<i>Twisted Metal: Head-On</i>	PlayStation Portable	Matt Swider	Gaming Target
<i>Crimson Gem Saga</i>	PlayStation Portable	Sarah LaBoeuf	Gamervision
<i>MLB 11: The Show</i>	PlayStation Portable	Paul Stuart	Extreme Gamer
<i>Burnout Dominator</i>	PlayStation Portable	Dave McCarthy	Eurogamer
<i>Madden NFL 08</i>	PlayStation Portable	Richard Grisham	GamesRadar
<i>Patapon 3</i>	PlayStation Portable	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Star Ocean: First Departure</i>	PlayStation Portable	Cole Jones	GameShark
<i>Silent Hill: Shattered Memories</i>	PlayStation Portable	Matt Casamassina	IGN
<i>NBA 06</i>	PlayStation Portable	Dan Leahy	GameSpy
<i>Fate/Unlimited Codes</i>	PlayStation Portable	Carolyn Petit	GameSpot
<i>Gods Eater Burst</i>	PlayStation Portable	Matt Edwards	Eurogamer
<i>Cars</i>	PlayStation Portable	Joao Diniz Sanchez	Pocket Gamer UK
<i>Arctic Adventures: Polar's Puzzles</i>	PlayStation Portable	Greg [Watchful]	TheSixthAxis
<i>Prinny 2: Dawn of Operation Panties, Dood!</i>	PlayStation Portable	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Death Jr. II: Root of Evil</i>	PlayStation Portable	Thomas Wilde	Worth Playing
<i>Final Fantasy Anniversary Edition</i>	PlayStation Portable	Craig Hansen	Digital Entertainment News
<i>Armored Core: Formula Front - Extreme Battle</i>	PlayStation Portable	Luke (PALGN)	PALGN
<i>Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai - Another Road</i>	PlayStation Portable	Jeremy Jastrzab	PALGN
<i>Ys: The Ark of Napishtim</i>	PlayStation Portable	Josh Ferguson	Just RPG

<i>Bounty Hounds</i>	PlayStation Portable	Benjamin Turner	GamesRadar
<i>Midway Arcade Treasures: Extend Play</i>	PlayStation Portable	Robert Falcon	Modojo
<i>Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2</i>	PlayStation Portable	(unknown)	The Gamers' Temple
<i>Sonic Rivals 2</i>	PlayStation Portable	Andrew Calvin	The Next Level
<i>Frantix - A Puzzle Adventure</i>	PlayStation Portable	Greg Mueller	GameSpot
<i>Jackass the Game</i>	PlayStation Portable	Scott Sharkey	1UP
<i>Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition</i>	Nintendo Wii	Matthew Walker	Cheat Code Central
<i>Bomberman Blast</i>	Nintendo Wii	Marcel van Duyn	Nintendo Life
<i>Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11</i>	Nintendo Wii	Zach R.	GameFocus
<i>Dead Space: Extraction</i>	Nintendo Wii	Kevin Hall	The Gamers' Temple
<i>GoldenEye 007</i>	Nintendo Wii	Danielle Riendeau	GameShark
<i>EA Sports Active More Workouts</i>	Nintendo Wii	Nick Cowen	Telegraph
<i>You, Me &amp; the Cubes</i>	Nintendo Wii	Dan Whitehead	Eurogamer
<i>WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 2010</i>	Nintendo Wii	Franklin Hughes	N-Europe
<i>LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures</i>	Nintendo Wii	Tom Orry	VideoGamer
<i>Guilty Gear XX Accent Core Plus</i>	Nintendo Wii	Ryan Clements	IGN
<i>Art Style: light trax</i>	Nintendo Wii	Kristan Reed	Eurogamer
<i>Guilty Gear XX Accent Core</i>	Nintendo Wii	Andrew Calvin	The Next Level
<i>LIT</i>	Nintendo Wii	Scott Bartie	Nintendo Life
<i>Animal Crossing: City Folk</i>	Nintendo Wii	Abbie Heppe	G4 TV
<i>Dokapon Kingdom</i>	Nintendo Wii	Erik Ottosen	Worth Playing
<i>Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage</i>	Nintendo Wii	Stevie Mostyn	Play.tm
<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice For All</i>	Nintendo Wii	Jamie Obeso	Gamer Limit
<i>Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3</i>	Nintendo Wii	(unknown)	Nintendo Gamer
<i>Pearl Harbor Trilogy - 1941: Red Sun Rising</i>	Nintendo Wii	Ian Knott	Gameplanet
<i>G-Force</i>	Nintendo Wii	Greg Miller	IGN
<i>Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party 2</i>	Nintendo Wii	Amanda L. Kondolojy	Cheat Code Central
<i>Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World</i>	Nintendo Wii	D.F. Smith	G4 TV
<i>Defendin' DePenguin</i>	Nintendo Wii	Zach R.	GameFocus
<i>Mario &amp; Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games</i>	Nintendo Wii	James Newton	Nintendo Life
<i>Sonic Unleashed</i>	Nintendo Wii	Dan Whitehead	Eurogamer
<i>TV Show King</i>	Nintendo Wii	Colin Whitt	Nintendo Life
<i>Conduit 2</i>	Nintendo Wii	DowntownJimmy	Extreme Gamer
<i>Back to the Future: The Game</i>	Nintendo Wii	Zach Kaplan	Nintendo Life
<i>Ben 10: Protector of Earth</i>	Nintendo Wii	Ellie Gibson	Eurogamer
<i>Manhunt 2</i>	Nintendo Wii	Kevin VanOrd	GameSpot
<i>Dead Rising: Chop Till You Drop</i>	Nintendo Wii	Brendon Lindsey	GameShark
<i>The Legend of Spyro: The Eternal Night</i>	Nintendo Wii	Sam Bishop	IGN
<i>How to Train Your Dragon</i>	Nintendo Wii	(unknown)	Game Boyz
<i>Driver: Parallel Lines</i>	Nintendo Wii	Paul Govan	Play.tm
<i>Wii Play</i>	Nintendo Wii	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Safecracker: The Ultimate Puzzle Adventure</i>	Nintendo Wii	Nathan Meunier	Cheat Code Central
<i>Tales of Elastic Boy - Mission 1</i>	Nintendo Wii	Kristan Reed	Eurogamer
<i>Sonic and the Black Knight</i>	Nintendo Wii	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Rainbow Islands: Towering Adventure!</i>	Nintendo Wii	James Newton	Nintendo Life
<i>Samurai Warriors: Katana</i>	Nintendo Wii	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Brunswick Pro Bowling</i>	Nintendo Wii	Ellie Gibson	Eurogamer
<i>Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None</i>	Nintendo Wii	Wesley Yin-Poole	VideoGamer
<i>Snowboard Riot</i>	Nintendo Wii	Paul Lind	Nintendo Life
<i>Dance on Broadway</i>	Nintendo Wii	Syd Bolton	Armchair Empire
<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2</i>	Nintendo Wii	Chris Scullion	Official Nintendo Magazine UK
<i>Happy Feet</i>	Nintendo Wii	Kevin VanOrd	GameSpot
<i>Power Rangers Samurai</i>	Nintendo Wii	Pedro Hernandez	Nintendo World Report
<i>Family Party: 30 Great Games</i>	Nintendo Wii	Aaron Thornton	IGN
<i>Chrysler Classic Racing</i>	Nintendo Wii	Brian Dumio	Worth Playing
<i>Speed Zone</i>	Nintendo Wii	Sanford May	Worth Playing
<i>Sexy Poker</i>	Nintendo Wii	Spencer McIlvaine	Nintendo Life
<i>Jillian Michaels' Fitness Ultimatum 2009</i>	Nintendo Wii	Paul Starke	Nintendojo
<i>Monochrome Racing</i>	Nintendo Wii	Peter Willington	Nintendo Life
<i>Portal 2</i>	Xbox 360	Andy Robinson	Computer and Video Games
<i>Rock Band</i>	Xbox 360	Robert Cram	MS Xbox World
<i>FIFA Soccer 10</i>	Xbox 360	David Kennedy	Game Over Online
<i>Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood</i>	Xbox 360	Joaby	Big Pond Game Arena
<i>NBA 2K11</i>	Xbox 360	David Hinkle	Joystiq
<i>Joe Danger: Special Edition</i>	Xbox 360	Daemon Hatfield	IGN
<i>GRID</i>	Xbox 360	Randy Kalista	Gaming Nexus
<i>Fight Night Champion</i>	Xbox 360	Lee Ceniawa	Armchair Empire
<i>Madden NFL 10</i>	Xbox 360	Ron Burke	Gaming Trend
<i>F.E.A.R.</i>	Xbox 360	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Devil May Cry 4</i>	Xbox 360	Terrence Johnson	ZTGameDomain



<i>Borderlands</i>	Xbox 360	Ken McKown	ZTGameDomain
<i>DiRT</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Orry	VideoGamer
<i>Pac-Man Championship Edition</i>	Xbox 360	Will Freeman	VideoGamer
<i>Viva Pinata: Trouble in Paradise</i>	Xbox 360	Jay Acevedo	GameFocus
<i>The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Hoggins	Telegraph
<i>College Hoops 2K7</i>	Xbox 360	Richard Grisham	GamesRadar
<i>Uno</i>	Xbox 360	Scott Tobias	The A.V. Club
<i>Mass Effect 2: Overlord</i>	Xbox 360	Brad Gallaway	GameCritics
<i>Condemned 2: Bloodshot</i>	Xbox 360	Ure Paul	ActionTrip
<i>MotoGP '06</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Orry	VideoGamer
<i>NBA Live 10</i>	Xbox 360	Leon Hendrix III	Cheat Code Central
<i>Sesame Street: Once Upon a Monster</i>	Xbox 360	Dan Whitehead	Eurogamer
<i>Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007</i>	Xbox 360	Gary Cutlack	Computer and Video Games
<i>Pinball FX 2: Ms. 'Splosion Man</i>	Xbox 360	Jeff Paramchuck	DailyGame
<i>Madden NFL 12</i>	Xbox 360	Matthew Kato	Game Informer
<i>NFL Blitz</i>	Xbox 360	Peter Eykemans	IGN
<i>Pro Evolution Soccer 2010</i>	Xbox 360	Craig Anderson	Console Monster
<i>Sonic Generations</i>	Xbox 360	Steve Boxer	The Guardian Games Blog
<i>Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising</i>	Xbox 360	Paul Clark	Gamer Limit
<i>The Godfather</i>	Xbox 360	Cyril Lachel	Gaming Nexus
<i>Transformers: War for Cybertron</i>	Xbox 360	Jeff Buckland	AtomicGamer
<i>DeathSmiles</i>	Xbox 360	Jesse Costantino	Game Revolution
<i>Age of Booty</i>	Xbox 360	Justin Calvert	GameSpot
<i>Sam &amp; Max: Beyond Time and Space</i>	Xbox 360	Chuck Osborn	Official Xbox Magazine
<i>The Maw</i>	Xbox 360	Chad Grischow	Planet Xbox 360
<i>Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood - The Da Vinci Disappearance</i>	Xbox 360	Greg Miller	IGN
<i>Dead Rising 2: Case West</i>	Xbox 360	DowntownJimmy	Extreme Gamer
<i>Comic Jumper: The Adventures of Captain Smiley</i>	Xbox 360	Ken McKown	ZTGameDomain
<i>Just Cause</i>	Xbox 360	Jeremy Jastrzab	PALGN
<i>Tom Clancy's HAWX</i>	Xbox 360	Sean (Gamervision)	Gamervision
<i>Crimson Alliance</i>	Xbox 360	Cyril Lachel	Gaming Nexus
<i>Amped 3</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Bramwell	Eurogamer
<i>Wallace &amp; Gromit's Grand Adventures, Episode 3: Muzzled!</i>	Xbox 360	Marc Sakol	My Gamer
<i>Dark Sector</i>	Xbox 360	Mark Smith	Game Chronicles
<i>Guitar Hero: Smash Hits</i>	Xbox 360	Ken McKown	ZTGameDomain
<i>WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008</i>	Xbox 360	Ryan Wombold	ZTGameDomain
<i>Luxor 2</i>	Xbox 360	Alex Navarro	GameSpot
<i>Call of Duty: Black Ops - Rezurrection</i>	Xbox 360	(unknown)	Computer and Video Games
<i>Scene it? Movie Night</i>	Xbox 360	Justin Testa	ZTGameDomain
<i>Operation Flashpoint: Red River</i>	Xbox 360	Matt Lees	Official Xbox Magazine UK
<i>Pinball FX</i>	Xbox 360	DowntownJimmy	Extreme Gamer
<i>Spider-man: Web of Shadows</i>	Xbox 360	(unknown)	Game Boyz
<i>Vandal Hearts: Flames of Judgment</i>	Xbox 360	Simon Parkin	Eurogamer
<i>Schizoid</i>	Xbox 360	David Wriglesworth	Console Monster
<i>Resident Evil Code: Veronica X HD</i>	Xbox 360	Eduardo Reboucas	Game Revolution
<i>The Last Remnant</i>	Xbox 360	D.F. Smith	G4 TV
<i>Strania</i>	Xbox 360	Shane Ryan	Thunderbolt
<i>Robotron: 2084</i>	Xbox 360	Nate Ahearn	TeamXbox
<i>Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3</i>	Xbox 360	Nathaniel Cohen	Gaming Nexus
<i>Exit 2</i>	Xbox 360	Justin Testa	ZTGameDomain
<i>TNT Racers</i>	Xbox 360	Brett Todd	GameSpot
<i>The Adventures of Tintin: The Game</i>	Xbox 360	Matt Cabral	Official Xbox Magazine
<i>Fatal Fury Special</i>	Xbox 360	Jeff Gerstmann	GameSpot
<i>The King of Fighters XIII</i>	Xbox 360	Veggie Jackson	Gamervision
<i>Wanted: Weapons of Fate</i>	Xbox 360	Lee Abrahams	Xbox 360 Achievements
<i>Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs</i>	Xbox 360	Jonas Allen	DailyGame
<i>Blacklight: Tango Down</i>	Xbox 360	Brent Roberts	XboxAddict
<i>Surf's Up</i>	Xbox 360	Scott Strickland	MS Xbox World
<i>Air Conflicts: Secret Wars</i>	Xbox 360	Dave Gamble	Gaming Nexus
<i>Jurassic Park: The Game</i>	Xbox 360	Ross Andrews	Planet Xbox 360
<i>Spectral Force 3</i>	Xbox 360	Dale Nardozi	TeamXbox
<i>GEON: emotions</i>	Xbox 360	Scott Strickland	MS Xbox World
<i>Cars Mater-National Championship</i>	Xbox 360	Amanda L. Kondoloyj	Cheat Code Central
<i>Puzzle Chronicles</i>	Xbox 360	David Collins	GameFocus
<i>Don King Presents: Prizefighter</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Price	TeamXbox
<i>Dragon Ball: Raging Blast</i>	Xbox 360	David Chapman	TeamXbox
<i>Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Tenkaichi</i>	Xbox 360	Robert Workman	Planet Xbox 360
<i>Lost: Via Domus</i>	Xbox 360	Craig Nye	Thunderbolt
<i>Tetris Splash</i>	Xbox 360	Ryan Davis	GameSpot
<i>Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard</i>	Xbox 360	Reggie Carolipio	Worth Playing

<i>The First Templar</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Mc Shea	GameSpot
<i>Fairytale Fights</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Orry	VideoGamer
<i>Dead Block</i>	Xbox 360	Shane Ryan	Thunderbolt
<i>Puzzle Arcade</i>	Xbox 360	Tom Orry	VideoGamer
<i>Summer Athletics: The Ultimate Challenge</i>	Xbox 360	Kristan Reed	Eurogamer
<i>Dungeons &amp; Dragons: Daggerdale</i>	Xbox 360	(unknown)	GameTrailers
<i>Sniper: Ghost Warrior</i>	Xbox 360	Jamin Smith	VideoGamer
<i>Discs of Tron</i>	Xbox 360	Cyril Lachel	Gaming Nexus
<i>Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes</i>	Xbox 360	Blake Morse	Game Revolution
<i>Winter Sports 2: The Next Challenge</i>	Xbox 360	Jeff Haynes	IGN
<i>The Warriors: Street Brawl</i>	Xbox 360	Conrad Zimmerman	Destructoid

## APPENDIX H

### LIST OF SAMPLE REVIEWS FOR RELIABILITY CHECK

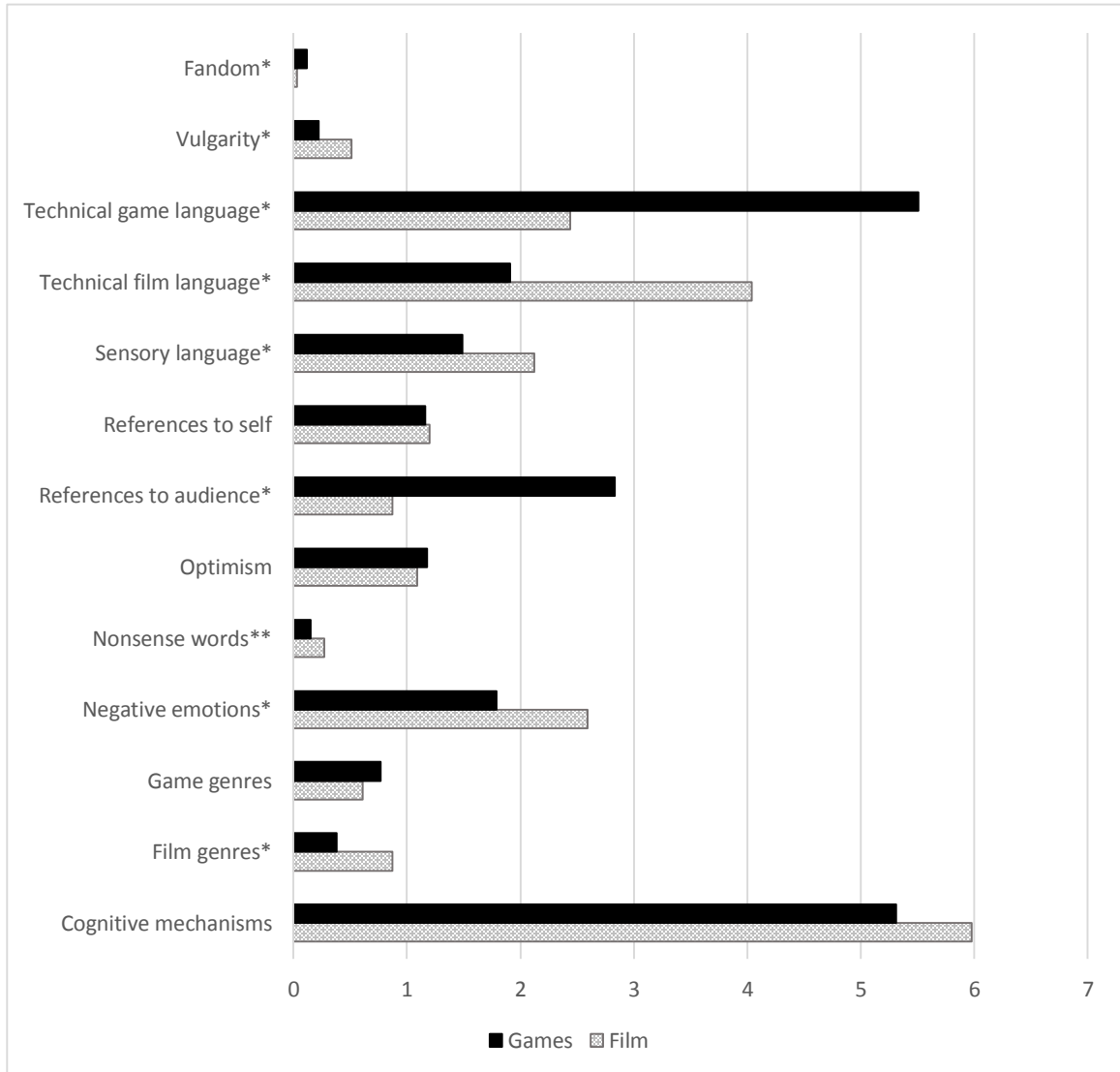
<b>Game/Movie Reviewed</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Publication</b>
<i>The Last Waltz</i>	Movie	William Arnold	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
<i>Hard Eight</i>	Movie	Keith Phipps	The A.V. Club
<i>Deep Blue</i>	Movie	Maitland McDonagh	TV Guide
<i>Pink Ribbons, Inc.</i>	Movie	Carrie Rickey	Philadelphia Inquirer
<i>The Matrix Reloaded</i>	Movie	Roger Ebert	Chicago Sun-Times
<i>City of Ghosts</i>	Movie	(Unknown)	Variety
<i>Nanny McPhee Returns</i>	Movie	Bill Goodykoontz Gannett	Lansing State Journal
<i>Dangerous Minds</i>	Movie	Peter Travers	Rolling Stone
<i>The Other End of the Line</i>	Movie	Tim Grierson	The Village Voice
<i>5 Days of War</i>	Movie	Mark Jenkins	NPR
<i>Gregory Crewdson: Brief Encounters</i>	Movie	Ronnie Scheib	Variety
<i>Beware of Mr. Baker</i>	Movie	Nick Pinkerton	The Village Voice
<i>The Rabbi's Cat</i>	Movie	Tasha Robinson	The A.V. Club
<i>Uprising</i>	Movie	Ronnie Scheib	Variety
<i>Price Check</i>	Movie	Gabe Toro	Indiewire
<i>The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel</i>	Movie	Claudia Puig	USA Today
<i>The Fitzgerald Family Christmas</i>	Movie	Mary Pols	Time Magazine
<i>Fracknation</i>	Movie	Miriam Bale	New York Daily Magazine
<i>Mama</i>	Movie	Louis Black	Austin Chronicle
<i>The Girl</i>	Movie	Chris Packham	The Village Voice
<i>Silent Night</i>	Movie	Joe Leydon	Variety
<i>Funeral Kings</i>	Movie	Ian Buckwalter	NPR
<i>Cheerful Weather for the Wedding</i>	Movie	Wesley Morris	Boston Globe
<i>Jack and Diane</i>	Movie	Nick Schager	The Village Voice
<i>Lay the Favorite</i>	Movie	Peter Bradshaw	The Guardian
<i>The Walking Dead</i>	PC	Stephen Riach	Game Over Online
<i>Planetside 2</i>	PC	Victor Grunn	Gaming Trend
<i>Scribblenauts Unlimited</i>	PC	(Unknown)	IGN
<i>Baldur's Gate: Enhanced Edition</i>	PC	Atlas Burke	Gaming Trend
<i>Thomas Was Alone</i>	PC	John Robertson	Incgamers.com
<i>Call of Duty: Black Ops 2</i>	PC	Marsh Davies	PC Gamer
<i>Street Fighter X Mega Man</i>	PC	Chris Carter	Gamer Limit
<i>Pid</i>	PC	(Unknown)	Gamespot
<i>Miner Wars 2081</i>	PC	Phil Cameron	Eurogamer
<i>Seducer Me</i>	PC	Andy Chalk	The Escapist
<i>Journey</i>	PlayStation 3	Tom Hoggins	Telegraph
<i>UFC Undisputed</i>	PlayStation 3	Will Johnson	Digital Chumps

<i>Beyond Good &amp; Evil HD</i>	PlayStation 3	Adam Pavlacka	Worth Playing
<i>Assassin's Creed</i>	PlayStation 3	(Unknown)	GameTZ
<i>Greed Corp</i>	PlayStation 3	Josh Fernandes	PlayStation Lifesyle
<i>Back to the Future: The Game</i>	PlayStation 3	Ben Dutka	PSX Extreme
<i>Savage Moon</i>	PlayStation 3	Tyler Sager	Gaming Nexus
<i>Daytona USA</i>	PlayStation 3	(Unknown)	Digital Chumps
<i>Switchball</i>	PlayStation 3	Simeon Paskell	D-Pad Magazine
<i>Superstars V8 Racing</i>	PlayStation 3	Anthony LaBella	Gamer Node
<i>Cars: Mater-National</i>	PlayStation 3	Ben Dutka	PSX Extreme
<i>Dragon Ball: Raging Blast 2</i>	PlayStation 3	Josh Laddin	Game Revolution
<i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time Re-Shelled</i>	PlayStation 3	Daemon Hatfield	IGN
<i>Interpol: The Trail of Dr. Chaos</i>	PlayStation 3	Alex C.	The Sixth Axis
<i>Dream Chronicles</i>	PlayStation 3	Kristan Reed	Euro Gamer

APPENDIX I

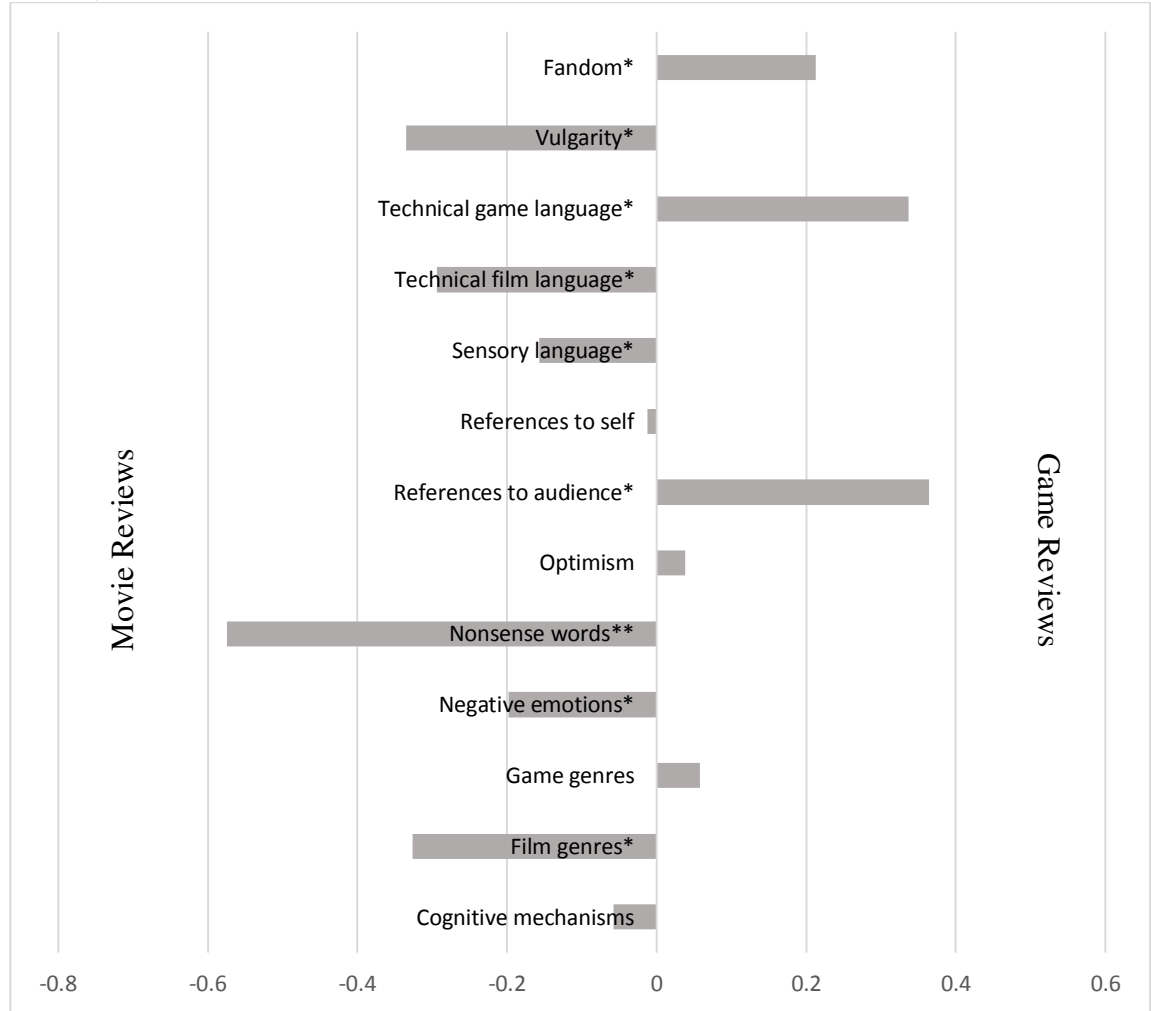
MEAN COMPARISON AND CORRELATION OF DICTIONARY SCORES

**Figure 2. Mean Comparison of Dictionary Scores (Percent of Total Words in a Review) Between Review Types**



Variables with significant ANOVAs. \* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .05$

**Figure 3. Correlations of Dictionaries to Review Types (Controlling For Word Count)**

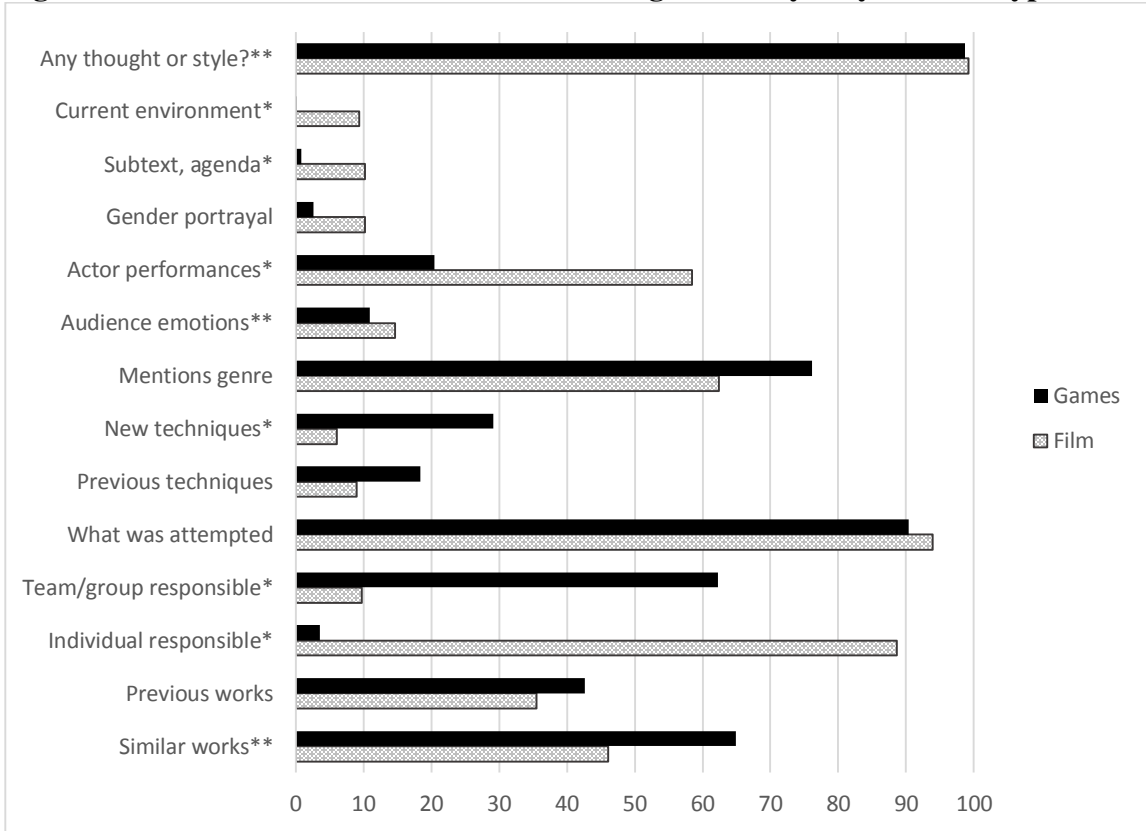


\*p < .001; \*\*p < .05

APPENDIX J

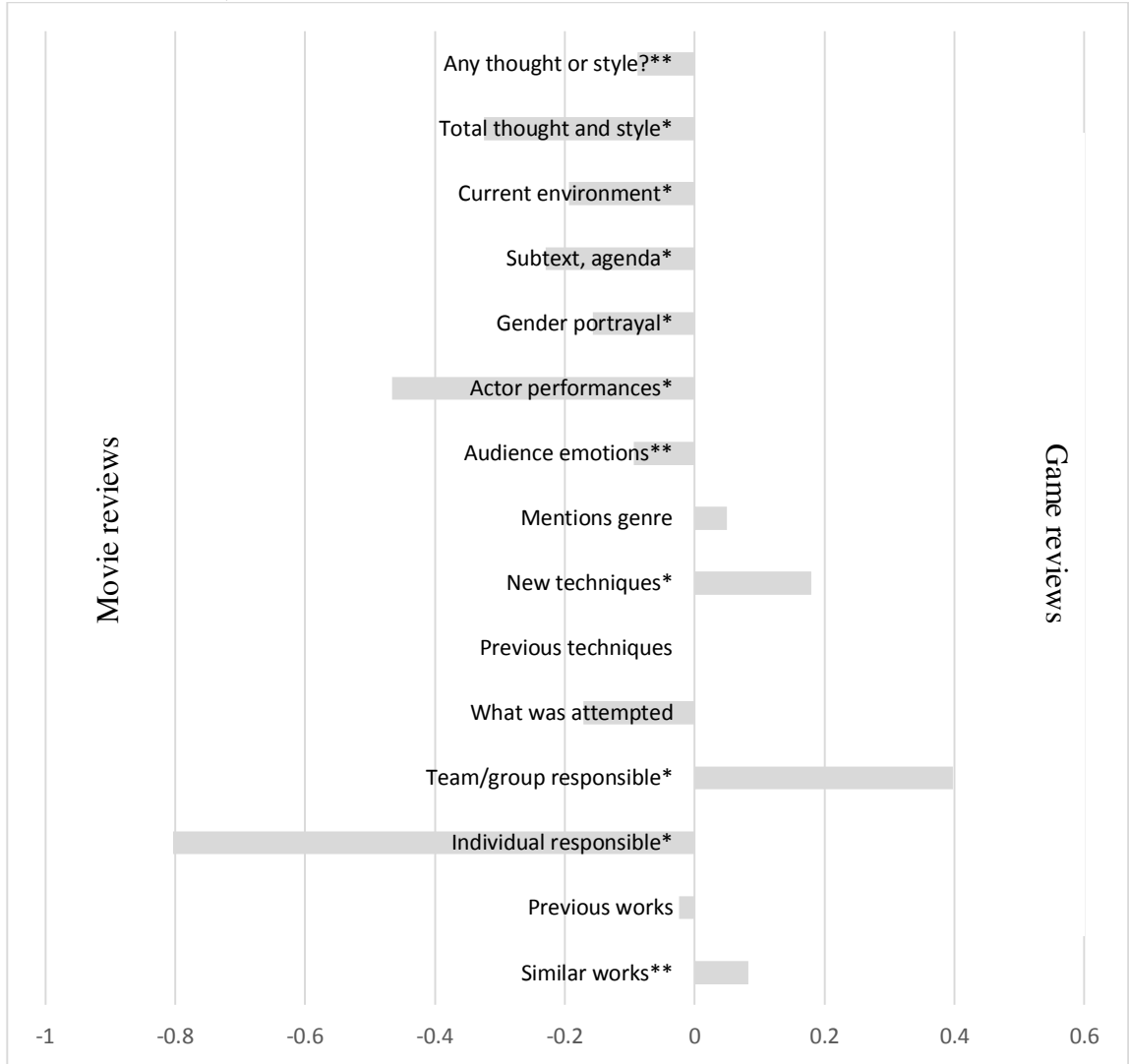
MEAN COMPARISON AND CORRELATION OF CRITICAL THOUGHT AND  
STYLE

**Figure 4. Percent Occurrences of Critical Thought and Style By Review Type**



**Variables with significant ANOVAs. \* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .05$**

**Figure 5. Correlations of Critical Thought and Style to Review Types (Controlling for Word Count)**



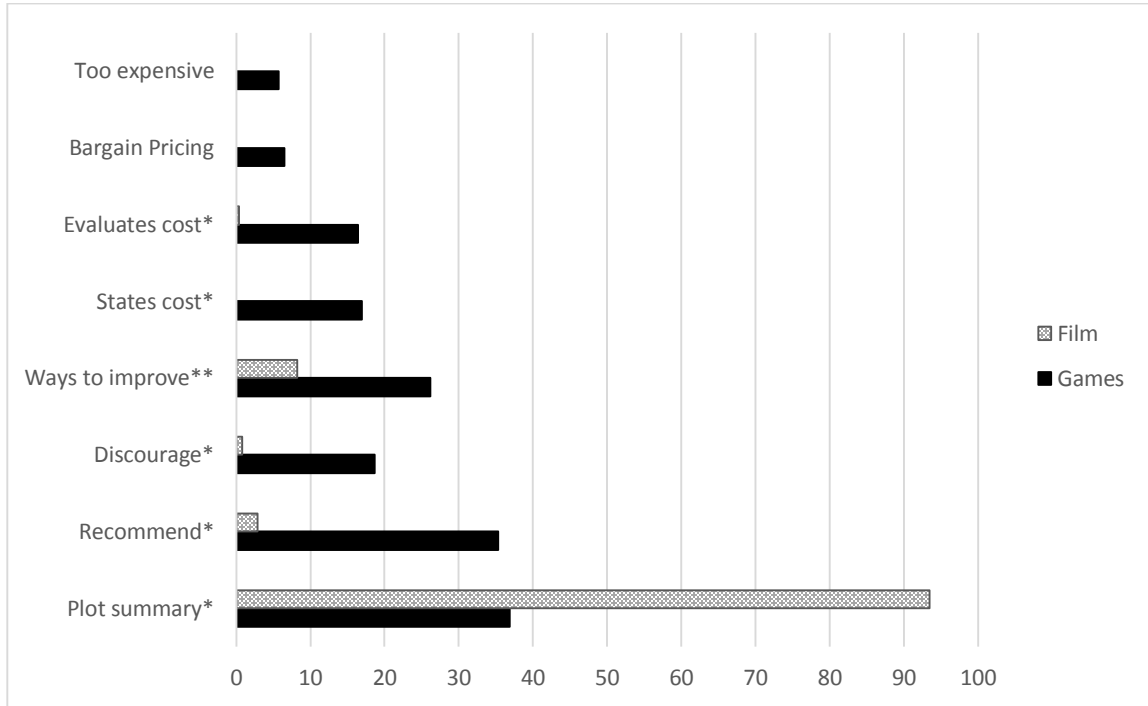
**\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .05$**



APPENDIX K

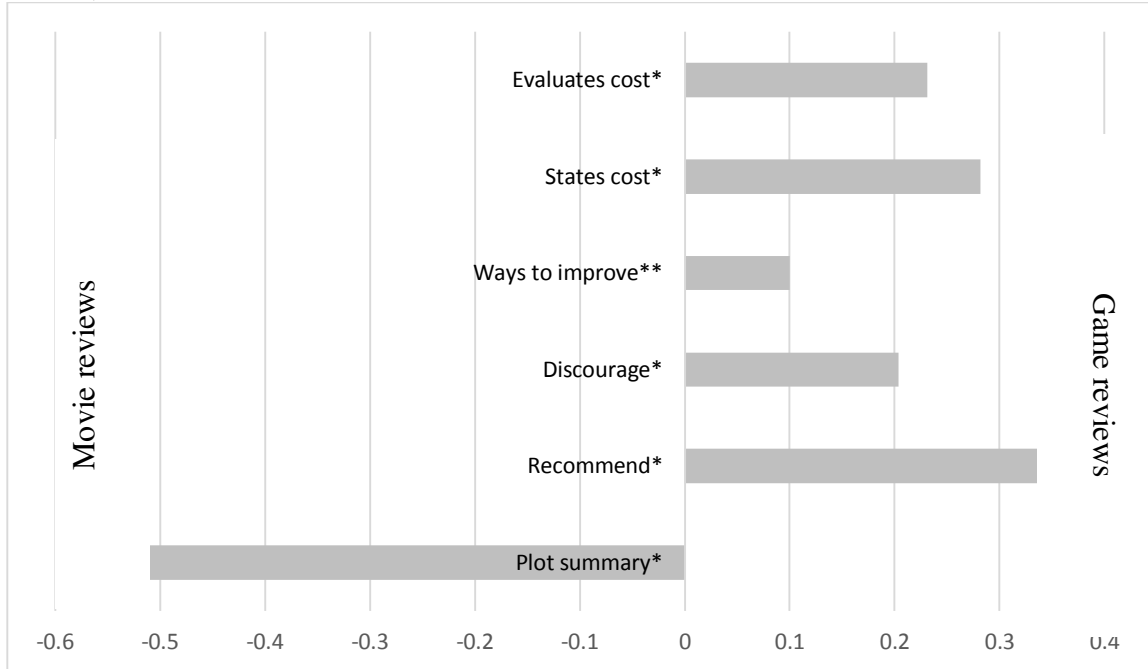
MEAN COMPARISON AND CORRELATION OF REVIEW PURPOSE

Figure 6. Percent Occurrences of Review Purpose Between Review Type



\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .05$

**Figure 7. Correlations of Review Purpose to Review Types (Controlling for Word Count)**

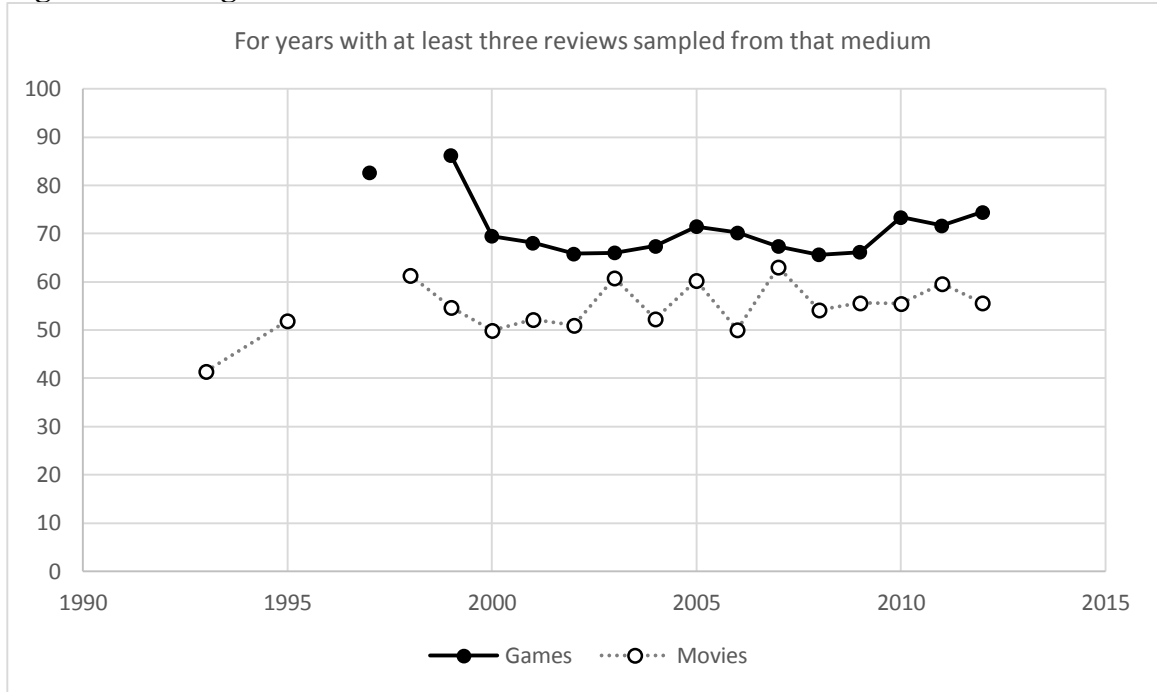


*\*p < .001; \*\*p < .05*

APPENDIX L

AVERAGE METAScores OVER TIME

Figure 8. Average Metascores Over Time



APPENDIX M

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FILM REVIEW TYPES

**Table 8. Mean Comparison of Dictionary Scores Between General Readership, Industry Insider, and Independent Film Reviews**

	Mean (percent of total words in a review that match the dictionary)	Std. Dev.	Sig.	N
Cognitive mechanisms			<b>0.014</b>	245
General readership	5.61	0.060		212
Industry insider	7.08	0.066		25
Independent	12.28	0.161		8
Film genres			0.809	190
General readership	0.85	0.009		164
Industry insider	1.00	0.012		19
Independent	0.91	0.003		7
Negative emotions			0.058	239
General readership	2.44	0.022		206
Industry insider	3.61	0.038		25
Independent	3.30	0.035		8
Nonsense words			0.376	5
General readership	0.22	0.001		3
Industry insider	0.34	0.001		2
Independent	-	-		0
Optimism			<b>0.001</b>	203
General readership	0.97	0.010		173
Industry insider	1.77	0.014		22
Independent	1.73	0.017		8
References to audience			0.259	132
General readership	0.87	0.011		118
Industry insider	0.37	0.003		7
Independent	1.34	0.016		7
References to self			<b>0.027</b>	150
General readership	1.18	0.015		130
Industry insider	0.74	0.008		13
Independent	2.59	0.028		7
Sensory language			<b>0.040</b>	235
General readership	2.02	0.024		203
Industry insider	2.23	0.025		24
Independent	4.45	0.065		8

	Mean (percent of total words in a review that match the dictionary)	Std. Dev.	Sig.	N
Technical film language			<b>0.004</b>	245
General readership	3.68	0.040		212
Industry insider	5.62	0.050		25
Independent	8.71	0.147		8
Vulgarity			0.858	43
General readership	0.52	0.006		35
Industry insider	0.36	0.002		4
Independent	0.56	0.004		4
Fandom			<b>0.020</b>	15
General readership	0.40	0.002		12
Industry insider	0.11	-		1
Independent	0.21	<0.001		2

Note: Significant entries in bold.

**Table 9. Significant Differences in Critical Thought and Style Categories Between General Readership, Industry Insider, and Independent Film Reviews**

	Percent Occurrence	Sig.	N			
Mentions team/group responsible		<b>0.011</b>	245			
General readership	8					
Industry insider	24					
Independent	25					
Actor or voice actor performances		<b>0.038</b>	245			
General readership	57					
Industry insider	80					
Independent	38					
Total thought and style	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	<b>0.003</b>	245
General readership	0	9	4.41	1.529		
Industry insider	1	9	5.32	1.701		
Independent	2	8	5.75	2.493		

Note: Significant entries in bold.