



Violence and the media

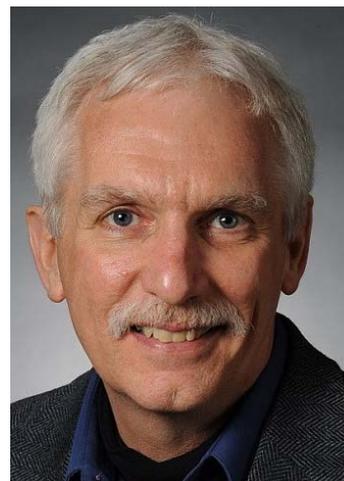
The stories and the science

Speakers —Topics and abstracts

Distinguished Professor Craig Anderson

Media violence science, video game industry lies, and responsible public policy

The television, film, and video game industries have a long history of misleading the general public about media violence effects on consumers, explicitly claiming that there is no scientific consensus despite the fact that consensus emerged decades ago. How have the media violence industries succeeded in keeping the general public confused? How have the news media and the courts contributed to confusion? Finally, what is the proper role scientific evidence in the creation of responsible public policy?



Professor Doug Gentile

Do the news agencies report or cause the news?

Although there is a great deal of data connecting media violence to children's aggressive attitudes and behaviours, almost none of the data connects media violence to extreme violence, such as school shootings. Perhaps we have been looking in the wrong places. Research on copycat crimes and agenda-setting document ways in which the news media can have influences on attitudes and behaviour that may suggest questions about ethical journalism practices about reporting violence.



Professor Elizabeth Handsley

Australian media law and policy: in search of an evidence-based approach

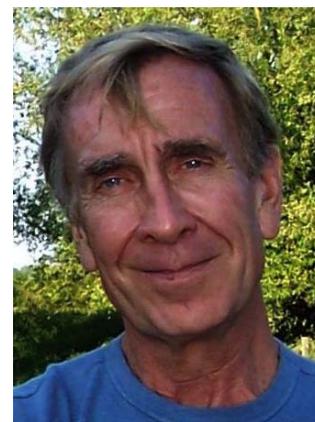
Professor Elizabeth Handsley of Flinders Law School will analyse the role that scientific research has played in shaping Australian media law and policy. Special attention will be paid to the application of violence as a classifiable element under the National Classification Scheme for publications, films and computer games. Recommendations will be made as to how to build research evidence into the system and its operation.



Why it is hard for some to believe that media violence causes aggression

To most of us here, the research of the last 50 or so years that Professor Krahe has reviewed is compelling in demonstrating two cause-effect relations: 1) short exposures of almost anyone to violent scenes or to playing violent video games cause an increase in the likelihood of their behaving aggressively immediately afterwards, and 2) habitual exposure to violent scenes or playing violent games changes many children's developing psychology to cause an increase in the likelihood of their behaving more aggressively even many years later. Why then, do so many laymen and scientists have difficulty believing it?

The answer has two parts. First, most people do not realize that there are certain well-understood neurological and psychological processes in the human mind that make these outcomes inevitable for most people exposed to violence. The innate neurological processes of priming and mimicry make the short term effects inevitable, and wired-in observational learning processes and emotional desensitization processes make the long-term effects inevitable unless countered by other learning processes. Second, certain other psychological processes unconsciously motivate people who believe violent behaviour is bad for society but who have a vested interest in violent media to deny that violent media could cause violent behaviour. In this talk I will elaborate both the psychological processes that make it inevitable that exposure to violence increases the risk of violence and the psychological processes that cause certain people to deny such effects.



Professor Barbara Krahe

Media violence use as a risk factor for aggression and violence: Evidence from experimental and longitudinal studies

A discussion of the strength of the association between media violence use and aggression

- A summary of findings from recent meta-analyses
- Experimental findings on short-term effects, including the question of moderating variables (e.g. user: gender, age, display of violence: realism, immersion)
- Select longitudinal findings on long-term effects

A discussion of the strengths and limitations of experimental and longitudinal methods and an argument for combining both approaches with interventions designed to reduce media violence use in order to facilitate more stringent tests of the causal effects of violent media contents on aggressive behaviour.



Dr Wayne Warburton

Media violence and domestic violence: Subtle and not so subtle links

The human brain wires up every second of every day in response to what we experience. In the modern world people typically have a lot of exposure to media, and thus it is a key influence on what people think and feel, and on how they behave. In terms of domestic violence, there are a number of ways that media can influence people, both in subtle and obvious ways. This talk will explore media portrayals of women and violence against women, and the role of media in the social acceptance of practices that increase the risk for DV, such as heavy drinking and misplaced notions of 'honour'. Ways that media can be used to reduce the risk of DV in both the short- and long-term will also be suggested.

