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Facts and TV Statistics

"It's Just Harmless Entertainment" Oh really?

- A new survey conducted by the Pew Research Center showed that 75% of the 1,505 adults polled from March 17-21 would like to see tighter enforcement of government rules on broadcast content, particularly when children are most likely to be watching; 60% want broadcast TV indecency standards extended to cable TV; and 69% want higher fines for media companies.
- In a recent (03.20.05) Time Magazine Poll 53 percent of respondents said that they think the FCC should place stricter controls on broadcast-channel shows depicting sex and violence. 68 percent believe the entertainment industry has lost touch with viewers' moral standards. 66 percent said there is too much violence on open-air TV, 58 percent said too much cursing and 50 percent said there is too much sexual content on TV. 49 percent say FCC regulation should be extended to cover basic cable.
- ABC's *Desperate Housewives* is the most popular broadcast-network television show with kids aged 9-12 according to Nielsen stats. It airs at 10/9. (Jan. 05)
- According to Nielsen the top TV shows for 12-17 year old girls were: *American Idol*, *The O.C.*, *Will & Grace*, and *One Tree Hill*. The top TV shows for 12-17 year old boys were: *The Simpsons*, *Malcolm*, and *The O.C.*
- 2004 Super Bowl: Nielsen estimates that 6.6 million kids 2-11 were watching at about the time that CBS's little halftime fiasco developed when Justin Timberlake ripped off a piece of Jackson's bodice, exposing her right breast to the nationwide audience. Another 7.3 million teens 12-17 were tuned in at that time as well.
- On December 10th, 2003, Fox failed to bleep the f-word and the s-word during the Billboard Music Awards.
 - # of 2-11 yr olds Watching = Over 1 million
 - # of 12-17 yr olds Watching = Over 1 Million
 These two groups comprised more than 20% of the total viewing audience.
- Estimated number of TV homes: 109.6 million
- Average time kids spend watching TV each day: 4 Hours
- Children spend more time watching television than in any other activity except sleep. - **Huston and Wright, University of Kansas. "Television and Socialization of Young Children."**
- 54% of kids have a TV in their bedroom. - **Ibid**
- 44% of kids say they watch something different when they're alone than with their parents (25% choose MTV)
- 66% of children (ages 10 to 16) surveyed say that their peers are influenced by TV shows
- 62% say that sex on TV shows and movies influences kids to have sex when they are too young
- 77% say there is too much sex before marriage on television
- 65% say that shows like *The Simpsons* and *Married... With Children* encourage kids to disrespect parents.
- Witnessing repeated violent acts can lead to desensitization and a lack of empathy for human suffering

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- Television alone is responsible for 10% of youth violence. - **Leonard Eron, Senior Research Scientist at the University of Michigan**
- According to the American Psychiatric Association, "The debate is over... For the last three decades, the one predominant finding in research on the mass media is that exposure to media portrayals of violence increases aggressive behavior in children."
- A majority of parents say they are "very" concerned about the amount of sex (60%) and violence (53%) their children are exposed to on TV. After being read arguments on both sides of the issue, nearly two-thirds of parents (63%) say they favor new regulations to limit the amount of sex and violence in TV shows during the early evening hours, when children are most likely to be watching (35% are opposed). - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04.**
- A majority (55%) of parents say ratings should be displayed more prominently and 57% say they'd rather keep the current rating systems than switch to a single rating for TV, movies, video games, and music (34% favor the single rating). - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04.**
- About half (52%) of all parents say most TV shows are rated accurately, while about four in ten (39%) say most are not. - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04.**
- Many parents don't understand what the various ratings guidelines mean. For example, 28% of parents of young children (2-6 years old) know what the rating TV-Y7 means (directed to children age 7 and older) while 13% think it means the opposite (directed to children under 7); and only 12% know that the rating FV ("fantasy violence") is related to violent content, while 8% think it means "family viewing." - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04.**
- Fifteen percent of all parents have used the V-Chip, which was required to be included in all TV sets over 13 inches after January 2000; one in four (26%) haven't bought a new TV since then, 39% have bought a new TV, but don't think it includes a V-Chip, and 20% know they have a V-Chip, but haven't used it. Among those who have a V-Chip and know it, 42% have used it. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of parents who have used the V-Chip say they found it "very" useful. - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04.**
- When read the competing arguments for subjecting cable TV to the same content standards as broadcasters, half of all parents (52%) say that cable should be treated the same, while 43% say it should not. - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04.**
- A study of 1792 adolescents ages 12-17 showed that watching sex on TV influences teens to have sex. Youths who watched more sexual content were more likely to initiate intercourse and progress to more advanced noncoital sexual activities in the year following the beginning of the study. Youths in the 90th percentile of TV sex viewing had a predicted probability of intercourse initiation that was approximately double that of youths in the 10th percentile. Basically, kids with higher exposure to sex on TV were almost twice as likely than kids with lower exposure to initiate sexual intercourse. - **Study Conducted by RAND and published in the September 2004 issue of *Pediatrics*.**
- 46% of high school students in the United States have had sexual intercourse. Although sex is common, most sexually active teens wish they had waited longer to have sex, which suggest that sex is occurring before youths are prepared for its consequences. 1 case of an STD is diagnosed for every 4 sexually active teens.
- In a sample of programming from the 2001-2002 TV season, sexual content appeared in 64% of all TV programs. Those programs with sexually related material had an average of 4.4 scenes per hour. Talk of sex is more frequent (61%) vs. overt portrayals (32%). 1 out of every 7 programs includes a portrayal of sexual intercourse.
- Portrayals that included sexual risks (stds or becoming pregnant), abstinence or need for sexual safety was depicted in 15% of the shows with sexual content. Hence, sexual content on TV is more likely to promote sexual activity among US adolescents than it is to discourage it.
- Factors positively associated with initiation of intercourse among virgins are: Watching Sex on TV, having older friends, getting low grades, engaging in deviant behavior. Positive factors for virgins to abstain are: parental monitoring, parent education, living with both parents, having parents who would disprove of adolescent sex, being religious, and having good mental health.
- "In a recent national survey conducted by Nielsen (4/29/04), 78% of American families who had recently been part of the Nielsen 'People Meter' panel wanted more shows 'without

profanity or swear words.'

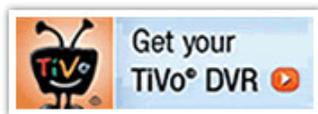
- "In a national opinion poll conducted for *TV Guide* (8/2/03), 57% of TV viewers said they 'noticed an increase in offensive material on television lately.'"
- "In a national opinion poll conducted for Common Sense Media ("New Attempt to Monitor Media Content," *NY Times*, 5/21/03), 64% of parents with at least one child between the ages of 2 and 17 believed media products in general were inappropriate for their families. Only one in five parents 'fully trusted' the industry-controlled rating systems.
- "In a national survey by Public Agenda ("Parents feel they're failing to teach values," *USA TODAY*, 10/30/02), 'about 90% [of parents] say TV programs are getting worse every year because of bad language and adult themes in shows that air from 8 to 10 p.m.'
- Over 1000 studies - including a Surgeon General's special report in 1972 and a National Institute of Mental Health report 10 years later - attest to a causal connection between media violence and aggressive behavior in some children. Studies show that the more "real-life" the violence portrayed, the greater the likelihood that it will be "learned." - **American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, Volume 95, Number 6 - June 1995**
- By age 18, a U.S. youth will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence. - **American Psychiatric Association**
- The average youth living in the U.S. watches television 25 hours a week and plays computer games an additional seven hours. - **National Institute on Media and the Family, 1998 study**
- Media violence may cause aggressive and antisocial behavior, desensitize viewers to future violence and increase perceptions that they are living "in a mean and dangerous world." - **American Academy of Pediatrics**
- Children younger than 8 "cannot uniformly discriminate between real life and fantasy/entertainment... They quickly learn that violence is an acceptable solution to resolving even complex problems, particularly if the aggressor is the hero." - **ibid**
- "Violence is like the nicotine in cigarettes. The reason why the media has to pump ever more violence into us is because we've built up a tolerance. In order to get the same high, we need ever-higher levels... The television industry has gained its market share through an addictive and toxic ingredient." - **Lt. Col. David Grossman quoted in The Arizona Republic, May 27, 1999 by Tim Madigan, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, A18.**
- Two overviews of existing studies conducted by the Surgeon General's office in 1972 and 1982 called television violence "a contributing factor to increases in violent crime and antisocial behavior." - **May 9, 1999. The New York Times. Lawrie Mifflin. "Many Researchers Say Link is Already Clear on Media and Youth Violence."**
- "Not every child who watches a lot of violence or plays a lot of violent games will grow up to be violent. Other forces must converge, as they did recently in Colorado. But just as every cigarette increases the chance that someday you will get lung cancer, every exposure to violence increases the chances that some day a child will behave more violently than they otherwise would." - **Ibid Attributed to L. Rowell Huesmann of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.**
- "A steady diet of violent content over time creates a culture that tells kids that violence is the accepted way we solve our problems." - **Ibid - Attributed to Kathryn C. Montgomery, President of the Center for Media Education.**
- Television violence can lead to imitation
- The cumulative impact of violence-laden imagery can lead to a "mean-world" perspective, in which viewers have an unrealistically dark view of life. - **The Christian Science Monitor, November 18, 1996**
- Television reaches children at a younger age and for more time than any other socializing institution except the family. - **Ibid**
- Research has shown that "mindless" television or video games may idle and impoverish the development of the pre-frontal cortex, or that portion of the brain that is responsible for planning, organizing and sequencing behavior for self-control, moral judgment and attention. - **American Academy of Pediatrics - Understanding TV's effects on the developing brain, Jane M. Healy, Ph.D. (From May 1998 AAP News)**

- Children often behave differently after they've been watching violent programs on television. Children who watched violent shows were more likely to strike out at playmates, argue, disobey authority and were less willing to wait for things that children who watched nonviolent programs. - **American Psychological Association, Family and Relationships -Get the Facts: Children and Television Violence**
- Reducing the amount of time grade-school children spend watching television games and watching television can make them less aggressive toward their peers. - **Stanford Report, January 14, 2001 -Limiting TV viewing reduces aggression in children, study says by Krista Conger**
- In considering decisions about contraceptives, STDs and sexual health choices, teens are almost as likely to get their information from TV (60%) as from a health care provider (62%). - **Kaiser Family Foundation, 5/23/01**
- 86% of Britons feel their government should step in to regulate sexually explicit television and magazine images aimed at children, according to a BBC poll of more than 1,000 people. While the strongest support came from 55- to 64-year-olds (92%), a surprising 78% of 18- to 24-year-olds also believe tougher restrictions are necessary to discourage adolescent sex. Britain is currently experiencing a surge in STDs (up 57 percent from 1995) and HIV cases (up 20 percent from last year), along with a rising rate of teenage pregnancies. [**Telegraph.co.uk, 9/7/04 stats**]

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