WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES

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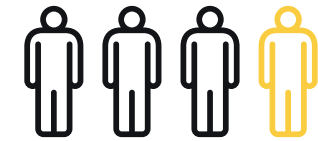# INTERESTING FACTS FROM THE WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES: DID YOU KNOW?

2,3 billion

More than 2.3 billion people in the world actively play video games (Newzoo, 2018).

Every fourth child in Croatia aged 9 to 17 plays online games daily or almost daily (EU Kids Online Croatia, 2017).

56%

56 % of children aged 9 to 17 point out that their parents always allow them to play online games with other people (EU Kids Online Croatia, 2017).

Every fourth pre-school child plays game consoles (Buljan Flander, G. and Brezinšćak, T. 2018)
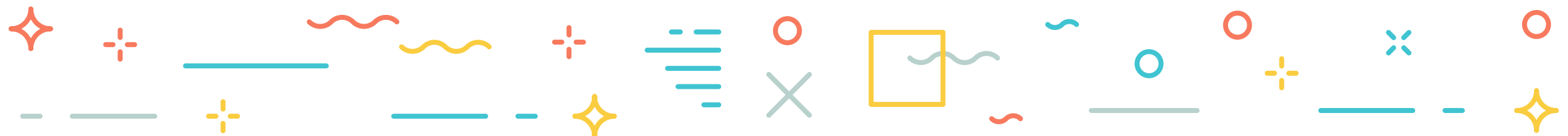
INTERESTING FACTS FROM THE WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES: DID YOU KNOW?

34 years old

An average video game player is 34 years old (Entertainment Softwer Association, 2018).

70 million

The best-known YouTube influencers of today have achieved their success by playing video games and giving critical reviews on various video games. Among them, we should mention PewDie-Pie who has more than 70 million followers on that social network.

Wii Sport, Super Mario Bros, Pokemon Red, and Tetris are among the bestselling video game consoles (Statista, 2018).

85%

It is estimated that more than 85 percent of the video games on the market contains violent content (American Psychological Association, 2015).
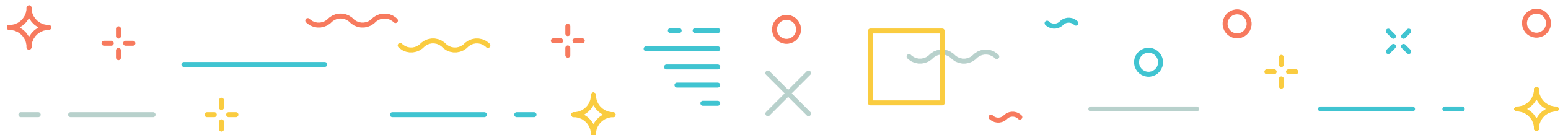
TYPES OF VIDEO GAMES

1 **Role Playing Games** (RPGs): games in which a player, as a character, must do some tasks or find certain things to advance and move to the next level of the game. Very often, such games allow players to almost completely independently create their own player (from a name to clothing and weapons).

2 **Sports games**: games where players play different sports, or play games like basketball, football ...

3 **Electronic dolls**: electronic pets that owners must care for (feed them, put them to sleep, etc.). The most famous examples of this genre: Tamagotchi.

4 **Martial arts**: This involves fighting between opponents that can be done with bare hands or with some aids. In such games, players usually compete.

TYPES OF VIDEO GAMES

5 **Strategy games**: At the center of such games is planning and designing tactics to beat the opponent.

6 **First Person Shooter** (FPS): the player follows the content of the game through the eyes of the character. He usually sees the hands holding the weapon in front of him. A player can often use different types of weapons to destroy and defeat the enemies. Such games imply that a player, either in a team or alone, kills as many opponents as possible.

7 **Simulation Games**: Games that allow for the reconstruction of different life situations such as learning to manage different devices such as aircraft, cars, or different machines. Players can drive airplanes or cars, build houses, do surgeries, etc.

8 **Edutainment games**: entertaining video games with a primarily educational purpose.

Source: Laniado, N., Pietra, G. (2005) Our child, video games, internet, and television. Rijeka: Studio Tim.
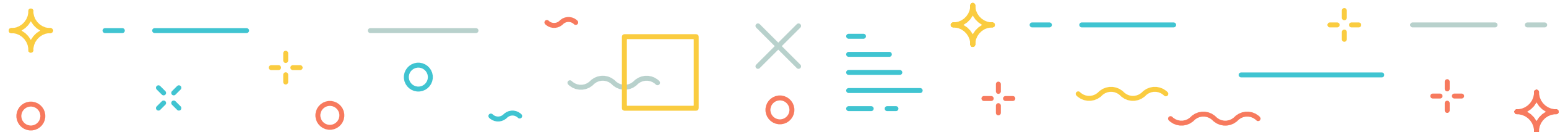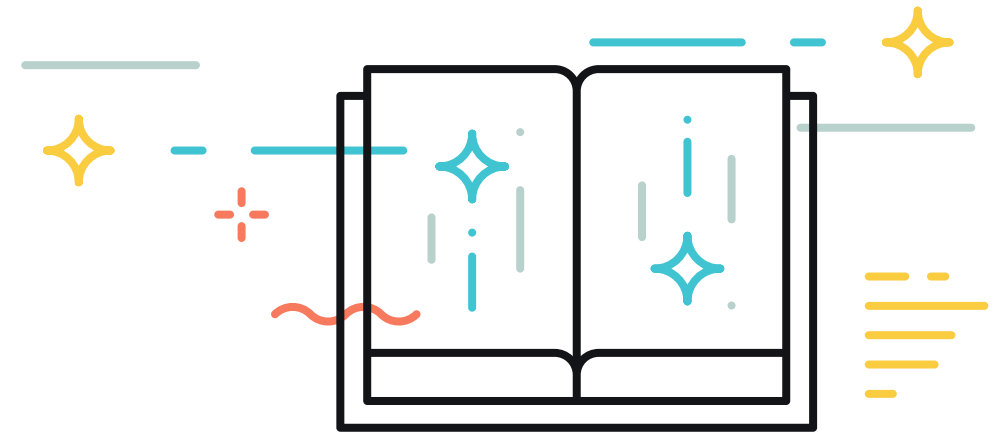
POSITIVE ASPECTS OF VIDEO GAMES

Video games have many advantages and positive sides. Many consider them the media with the greatest educational potential. Why are video games so good?

1 They help with absent-mindedness - especially, according to those that know about it, so-called "action games". Our focus on the various stages of the game can be useful in other life circumstances (when we need focus to utilize our mental abilities).

2 They increase visual acuteness/sharpness: the visual response time becomes shorter, the human eye is faster, which without a doubt presents the advantage of motor reactions in different realities.

3 They support the logic of faster problem-solving. Games like jigsaw puzzles or adventure games, as well as word games, can help develop abilities related to faster problem solving and the ability to logically reason. For example, a well-known game of Sudoku significantly increases this kind of ability.

4 They develop intuition and hypothetical thinking. In order to make progress in video games and move to higher levels, children need to think ahead of each step they are going to make, as well as anticipate situations that may happen.
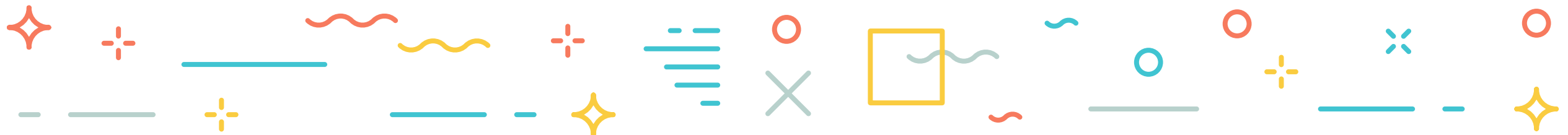
POSITIVE ASPECTS OF VIDEO GAMES

5 They can be used as an aid in upbringing and education. Research has shown that children who spend part of their free time playing video games with educational content enhance their cognitive abilities - faster than others.

6 Getting to know new people and making new friends. If children play online games, they will probably meet new people and maybe make some new friends, even at the other end of the world. This can be a whole new experience and provides the opportunity to get to know other cultures and customs. However, one should bear in mind that among virtual friends there could be those that do not have positive and good intentions.

7 A video game can teach children something new about life. Virtual games whose subjects are, for example, animals can teach children how to correctly treat other living creatures, how to adopt new ways and new rules of conduct and coexistence with domestic animals, pets, and how to take care of them.
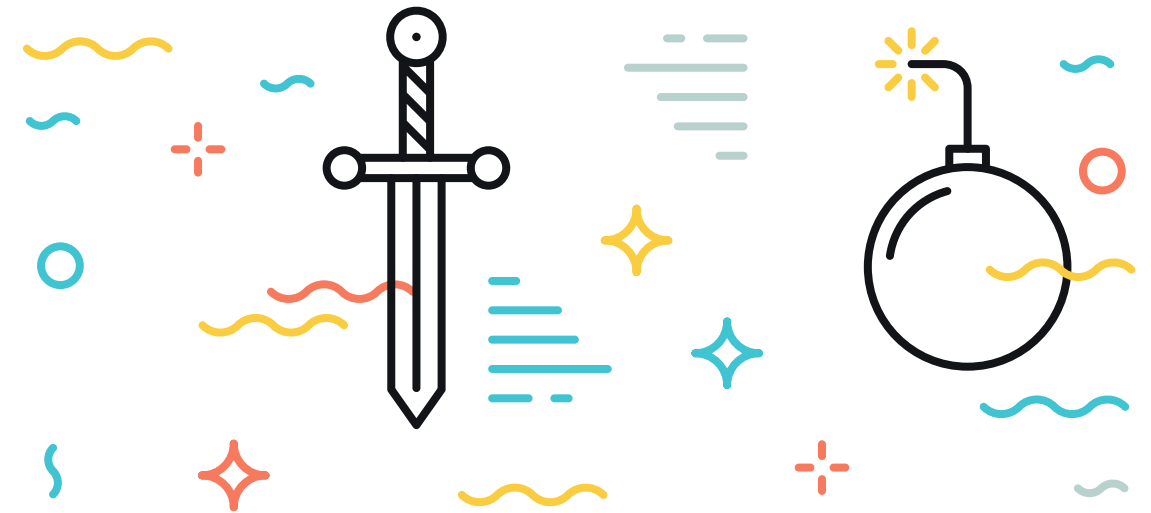
8 They can be a fun experience not only for children but for adults as well. Is there anything wrong with fun, nice, relaxed, and fair? No. Some video games can even help in getting fit. Namely, research has shown that children playing Wii use far more energy than those who just sit and play PlayStation 4 (PS4), Xbox 360 or on a cell phone or computer.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF VIDEO GAMES

Despite many positive aspects of video games, the public often speaks only of the negative ones. It is important for you, as parents, to pay attention to the following:

1 Addiction to video games. Some people are in great danger of becoming completely addicted to video games. They neglect all the activities that should be paramount (work, school assignments, extracurricular activities, socializing with family members and peers). Experts warn that some (adults) have developed such a strong addiction that they no longer go to work, and some children do not go to school; some do not eat regularly so as not to stop playing; some eat very fast to get back to the game, which is unhealthy and harmful, and some forget that they have to move, practice and be physically active. More intensive video game play is often associated with weaker school performance, weaker relationships with parents and friends, and the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Boys are more likely to develop video game addiction compared to girls and most of th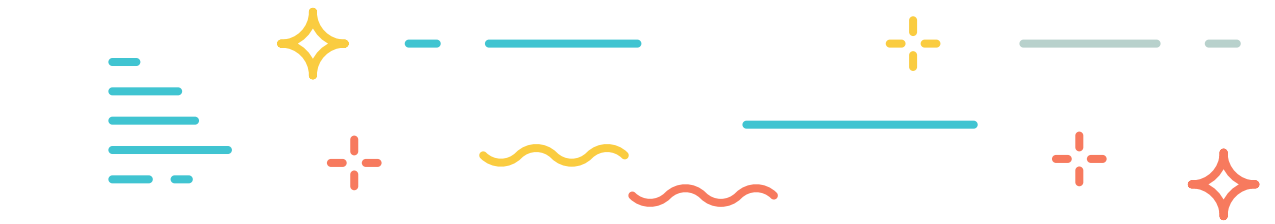e games are tailored to the interests of boys as well as children of low self-esteem and poorer school performance because playing video games serves as a compensatory mechanism for a bad self-image (Bilić, Ljubin Golub, 2011).

The most important symptoms of video game addiction are uncontrolled desire to play, loss of control over addictive activity, and more time playing; abstinence symptoms, i.e. feeling of restlessness and irritation when not playing, preoccupation with addictive behavior, and neglecting alternative satisfactions, school and home responsibilities; the inability to stop playing video games, i.e. the persistence of addictive behavior despite the problems that this behavior causes; lying to conceal attachment to video games (Young, 2009 according to Bilić, Ljubin Golub, 2011).

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF VIDEO GAMES

2 Video games cannot completely replace physical activity. Experts have proven to us that video games (even those on Wii) do not give the body everything it needs, are not a suitable replacement of "training" in the yard, park, playground, or gym. Extended use of video games can lead to visual impairment, weight gain (due to excessive consumption of unhealthy food), but also spinal damage due to very often poor posture in front of the computer. It is therefore very important to compensate for hours playing video games with real physical activity.

3 Video games can lead to getting used to violence. Some people are in danger of becoming insensitive to violence if their "fun" activity is often (and in some cases always) dedicated to very violent video games. It is a known fact that the video game industry - in order to attract the attention of users and increase sales - tends to create stories that are particularly cruel, and which can damage mental health in the long term and make media users insensitive to violence (and to the real suffering of others). It should also be emphasized that in video games players are actively involved in media content and are no longer just passive receivers, as is the case with watching television. Therefore, experts warn that violent video games are more harmful than television violence because by participating, repetition, and rewarding for violent acts players become more susceptible to violence.

4 Finally, video games can give us wrong expectations of real life. The virtual world has nothing in common with everyday life. The virtual world is a distorted, non-existent and unreal image of our real world. It is therefore very important to explain to children the differences between the real and the virtual world, especially when it comes to the consequences of different acts and behaviors.

WHY IS THE IMPACT OF VIDEO GAMES ON CHILDREN STRONGER THAN THE EXPOSURE TO ANOTHER MEDIA CONTENT?

Experts have long established that the exposure to video games may have a greater impact than the exposure to other media content, especially when it comes to violent media content. The following key elements particularly contribute to this (Bilić, 2010: 266):

1 Identification with a character in a video game is greater than identification with television and other media characters, primarily because the players usually choose the person they want to embody in the game. In an ever-growing number of video games, they can completely create that person: how they will be dressed, the hair color, the powers they will have, weapons, etc. All these elements help one identify with the character.

2 Rewarding perpetrators for violence may adversely affect the behavior of the viewer, especially his violent behavior. Media users will more often mimic behavior if the person they watch is rewarded for such behavior. This impact is even greater in video games because the person is no longer just a passive observer, but an active participant. In video games, players are often rewarded for violent behavior with extra points or better equipment. Hits to the head or heart are even rewarded with extra points.

WHY IS THE IMPACT OF VIDEO GAMES ON CHILDREN STRONGER THAN THE EXPOSURE TO ANOTHER MEDIA CONTENT?

3 Learning by repeating – most media content is intended for short-term use. Namely, most people will watch or read movies, series or news programs only once. On the other hand, people will rarely finish the game the first time they play it. To end the video game and go through all the levels, most players will repeat the same situation and level several times, sometimes even hundreds of times. "Repeating the same aggressive acts increases the chances of their adoption. It is also well known that people learn faster with an active inclusion than with passive observation." (Bilić, 2010)
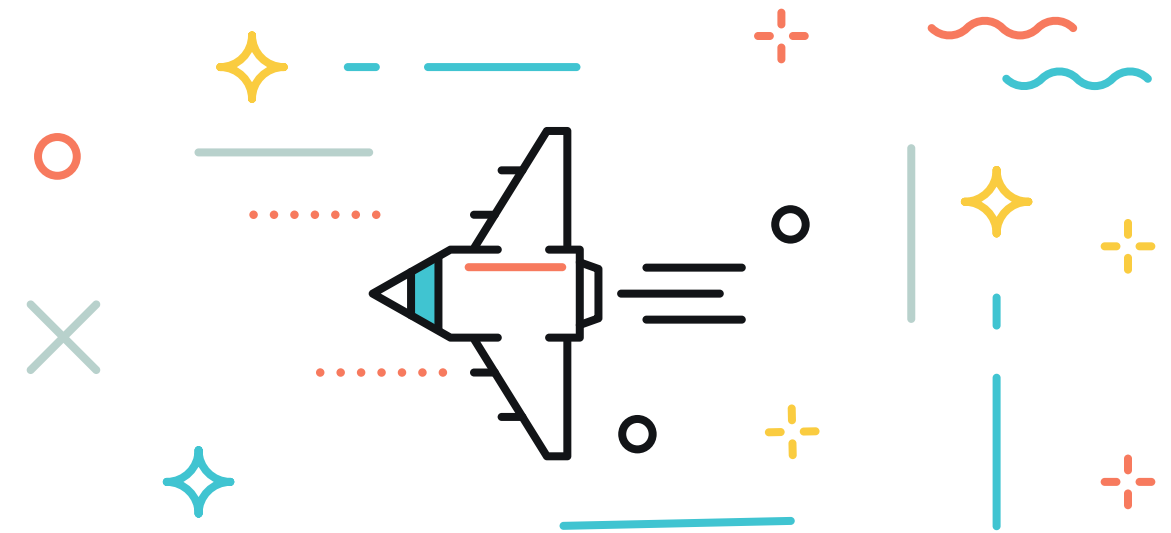
4 Complete sequence of aggressive actions - for players to complete the game and defeat their enemies, it is important to anticipate every one of their actions, make decisions about which weapon to use, from which corner to attack the opponent, etc.

5 Continuity of violence - since most video games are violent, it is highly likely that players will constantly be exposed to violent content during play.

RISKS OF ONLINE VIDEO GAMES

Contrary to the games you must buy in a store, it is much easier to break the age rule for the game on the internet. This way adolescents can get inadequate games, such as violent games.

Other players may behave inappropriately, they can offend other players, manipulate, cheat, or be aggressive.

During the play, children and teenagers can give other players some personal information or go to meet an unknown player.

By using the links in the game, children may find content that is forbidden to minors, such as pornography. • When it comes to addiction to electronic games, it is mostly to online games, so-called "Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games," such as World of Warcraft, Lord of Rings Online and Eve Online, as players quickly identify with their "avatars" (i.e. their own virtual characters) that they are trying to develop and improve. As in the group they must face different challenges, it encourages them to continue the game, which can lead to addiction to electronic games in adolescents and adults.

More on: http://www.giovaniemedia.ch/it/opportunita-e-rischi/videogiochi.html#sthash.kgldopP2.dpuf.
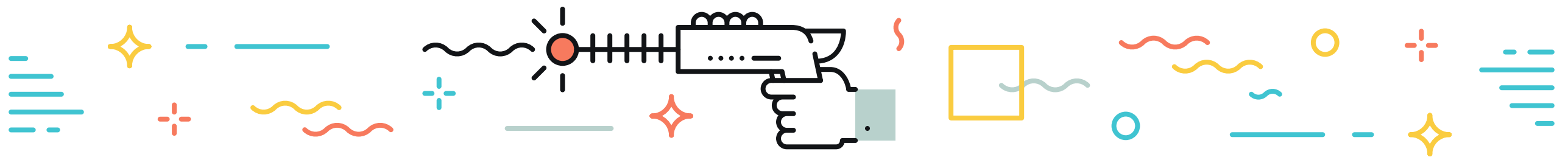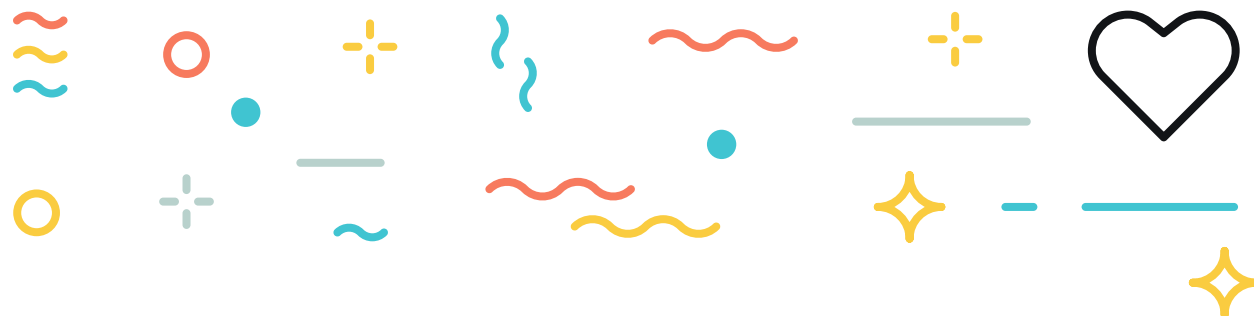
GAMES SUITABLE FOR A SPECIFIC AGE

PEGI system classification of games carefully monitors whether a game is suitable for a specific age group or not, so it protects children and young people. The symbols you find on the packaging or wrapping of a game will clearly tell you if the game is suitable for children of 3, 7, 12, 16 or 18 years of age. At the same time, you will see a mark/sign if there is violence, sex, drugs, intimidation, discrimination, vulgarities in the game, and whether it is an online game.

You can find more about this on
http://www.giovaniemedia.ch/it/opportunita-e-rischi/videogiochi.html#sthash.kgldopP2.dpuf.

AGE RATING	RATING
3 www.pegi.info **PEGI 3**	The content of this video game is considered suitable for children up to three years of age. But do not forget that these games can also contain violence that is displayed in a funny context. A child should not connect video characters to real-life people. The game should not contain sounds or images that can frighten small children. There must not be vulgar expressions in them.
7 www.pegi.info **PEGI 7**	This group includes games that might be like those from the "PEGI 3" group, but they contain some scenes and sounds that could intimidate children and are still considered suitable for children over the age of seven.
12 www.pegi.info **PEGI 12**	These games should not be played by children younger than 12 because there is violence, but also nudity. Vulgar expressions should not be very pronounced and there should not be profanities, especially those relating to a specific sex.
16 www.pegi.info **PEGI 16**	In these games, the scenes of violence or sex are almost the same as in real life. Children who would play these video games should know how to deal with inappropriate vocabulary, understand how to deal with tobacco and drugs, and what to think about acts of crime.
18 www.pegi.info **PEGI 18**	These video games are for adults only. In them, players can see serious violence and even special types of violent acts.

GAMES SUITABLE FOR A SPECIFIC AGE

The descriptions on the back cover of the game provide the main information about why the game is classified in a certain way. There are eight descriptions: violence, inappropriate vocabulary, fear, drugs, sex, discrimination, gambling and online games with other people.

Source: http://www.giovaniemedia.ch/it/opportunita-e-rischi/videogiochi.html

MEANING	PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION	EXPLANATION
Inappropriate language	BAD LANGUAGE	The game contains vulgar expressions.
Discrimination	DISCRIMINATION	The game contains violence or something that could lead to it.
Drugs	DRUGS	The game mentions or shows drug abuse.
Intimidation /fear	FEAR	A game that could excite or scare children.
Gambling	GAMBLING	A game that encourages or teaches gambling.
Sex	SEX	A game that contains nudity and/or sexual behaviors.
Violence	VIOLENCE	The game contains scenes of violence.
Online		The game can be played online.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

1 Today's children spend a lot of spare time with video games. Get to know the world of video games, learn about their types, explore why children like them so much and play the games together.

2 Before your child starts playing a certain video game, explore it, study its content and age for which it is intended. If it is not suitable for your child's age, explain why it is not good to play it and in return offer them a quality video game suitable for their age.

3 Talk to your child about the content of video games. Explain why some games are age- appropriate, and others are not and what the key differences are between the real and virtual world of video games.

4 Play video games together with children. They can be a great source of entertainment, but also of many new experiences. Not only will you spend time together, but you will also be able to react and talk to children in case of inappropriate content. Establish a relationship of trust through play and fun. Show your child that you care and enjoy the activities that are dear and important to them. Playing games can also stimulate talking between parents and children on a variety of topics, take advantage of it.

5 Set rules for time and volume of video games. School obligations must have priority over the video games. Explain to children that more than two hours of video games per day can lead to addiction.

6 If your child is a big video game fan, encourage them to share games with their siblings and peers. By doing so, you encourage the development of their social skills, as well as tackling together all the challenges they encounter while playing the game.

7 Video games can increase confidence in children, develop hypothetical and logical thinking, improve motor skills, and accelerate reactions. Help the children find quality video games that will enable them to develop all these skills.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

8 Video games are an excellent educational medium. Together with children, look for educational video games and entertain yourself with learning.

9 Encourage children to spend their spare time not only in playing video games but also in other activities with their peers.

10 Find out if your child plays online games. Such games often allow correspondence with other players. Warn them that correspondence with unknown persons may be dangerous and not to give personal information to such persons or meet them in person.

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ADVICE FOR PARENTS BY FORMER GAMER DOMINIK
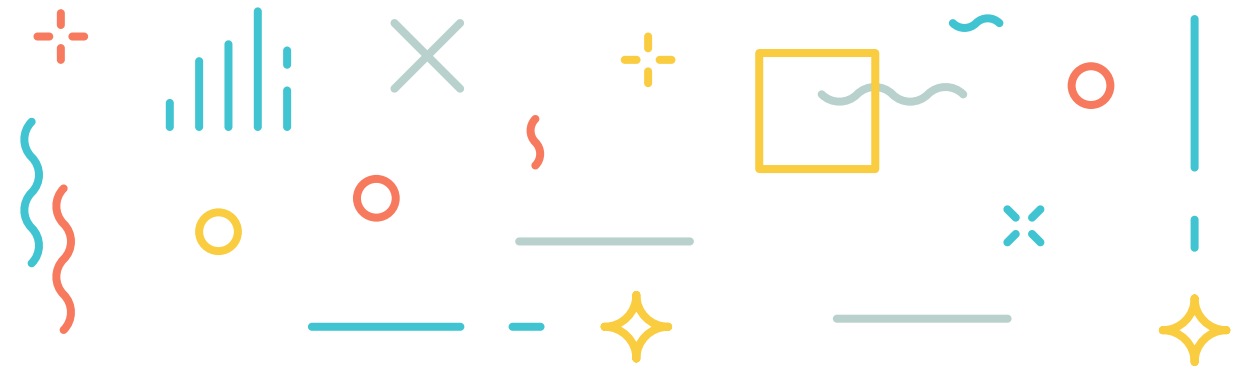
1 Never be lenient in your decision and be persistent in what you have agreed on with your child.

2 Don't fall for stories that your child plays a harmless game that everyone around them plays as well.

3 When you hear different nicknames and internet names, talk to your child about them and find out who they are talking with.

4 Keep track of internet communication, especially voice, because your child may often be a victim of violence through such communication.

5 Do not order them to stop playing the game, try to find out why they play so much and be their ally and friend.

6 Talk spontaneously about the time your child spends on the Internet because there is a chance they will open up and say something that you would like or should hear.

7 Let the internet by no means be your escape from the time you must dedicate to your child as an excuse that they are just having fun and that they are ok.

8 Talk to your child about their day. If you notice too many unusual internet terms while you talk to them, the themes from the games or if what you talk about is linked exclusively to the game, there is a possibility that you need to be worried.

9 You cannot encourage a child to make a positive change if you do not do as well. Suggest a walk together, play social games or spend leisure time in a different way.

10 Never impose strict penalties like: If you do not do that, I'll forbid you to play video games. Try to bring the child to understand why something needs to be done. A punishment is never a solution.

PART FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The information in the manual so far is mostly written for parents and adults who have encountered children and young people playing online games. It is important to point out that it is the children and young people that know the most about the world of gaming, and we would now like to encourage you to share your mutual experiences and learn more things from each other. This activity can be a useful opportunity for parents to learn something from children because this way you share your thoughts and encourage greater mutual understanding. If you are a child or a young person, we would love to share some of the things we know that came from experience with many young people who play online games where they had many pleasant and unpleasant situations. Even if you do not play online games, we believe that there are young people near to you that you know play them and this is a chance to learn more about what players can be exposed to during games. There are many different games. Some of them include individual gaming, while some include communication with other players you may know, or they could be complete strangers to you. There are many steps you can take before you start playing an online game and find out what is important to take care of while playing, so that your gaming experience is fun, comfortable, and that you and others around you are safe.
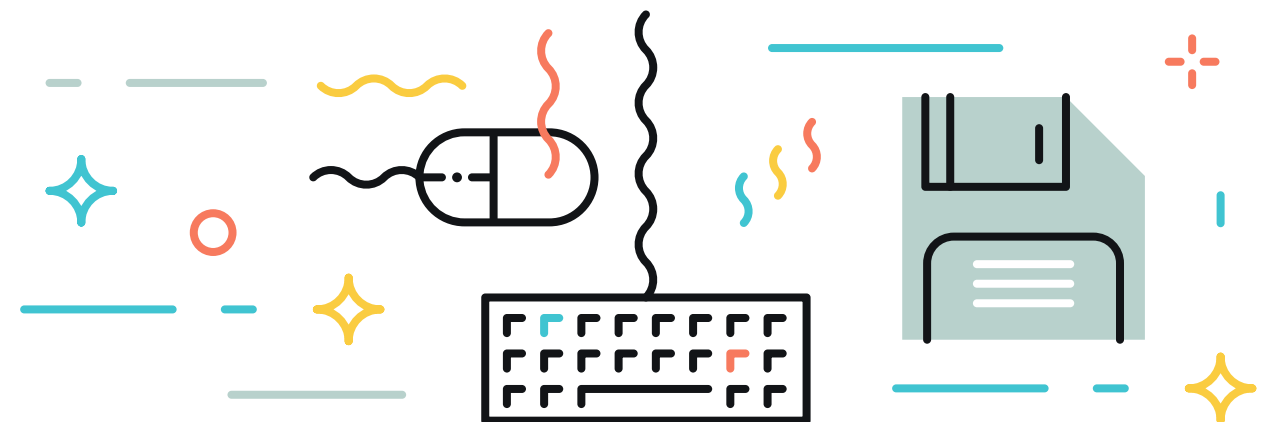
THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU START THE GAME:

1 Selecting online games

• check the age limit for the online game

The age level shows how much inadequate content the game includes. Inadequate content is the content that includes various pornographic and violent content, as well as those that encourage hate and discrimination of any kind. Some gaming platforms show the age limit for the game, while others do not. It is important to respect the age limit because it protects you from the content you should not be exposed to, and if it does not exist, we advise you to talk to an adult before deciding about whether to play it or not.
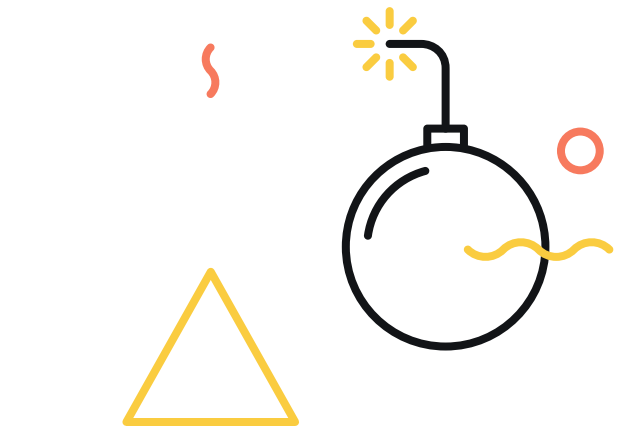
2 Privacy settings

• sharing personal information

One of the important steps to maintaining security while playing games is the privacy settings on different gaming platforms. These settings help you choose which content you want to share and with whom. Personal information includes your first and last name, address, phone number, school and class, birth date, e-mail address, and username and password. It is important to protect this information because if others see and have access to them, they may abuse them.

• Check out how to further protect yourself

Many games have the option of reporting and blocking if you feel uncomfortable for any reason while you are playing. If someone harasses you, you can block or "silence" that person so that you do not receive their messages and they will no longer be able to contact you. It would be good to do this step before you start playing so that you know all the possibilities and ways how you can quickly protect yourself in case of unpleasant situations. It is important you know how to recognize the situations when you might want to report, block someone or seek help from an adult. You should not feel bad because of other players nor should you make others feel bad because of your behavior during the game. Inappropriate behavior within the game includes insult, exclusion, cheating, theft of online content or personal information, and hacking of the account.

TIPS DURING THE GAME:

1 **Contact an adult person (parents, other family members, an expert associate at school, mental health expert):**

• if you get upset during the game or you do not like something

• if you are unsure of some of the steps asked from you during the games.

Some game applications you download for free on your cell phone ask you to pay with real money to get them in the game. That's why it's important to be careful and that the adult allows you to buy extra things in the game.

2 **Take care of yourself and other players during the game!**

• Remember! It's ok to lose. Respect other players and take care of yourself during the game because no one has the right to disturb you by saying that it is just about the game. Although it may seem that the situations in the game will remain just in the game, the feelings that you or other players have during the game are real and affect your daily life.

• Remember! You have enough time for everything - find the time in the day for some other activities, especially for those that are not online.

• If the games become a source of stress, take a break and relax. It's important that you become aware that games can affect your everyday life. These are the steps you need to think about and change something:

1. if you do not see friends and family because of the games

2. if you play games instead of doing school assignments or other tasks

3. if it's hard to stop thinking about playing

4. if you cannot quit even when you need to sleep.

If you have additional questions, concerns and want more information on on-line gaming, you can contact us at the free chat of Hrabri telefon, children's line at 116 111 or send us an e-mail to savjet@hrabritelefon.hr
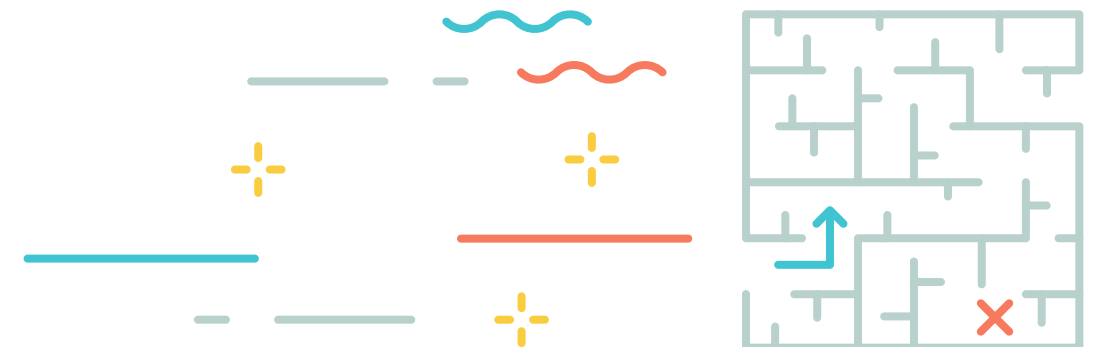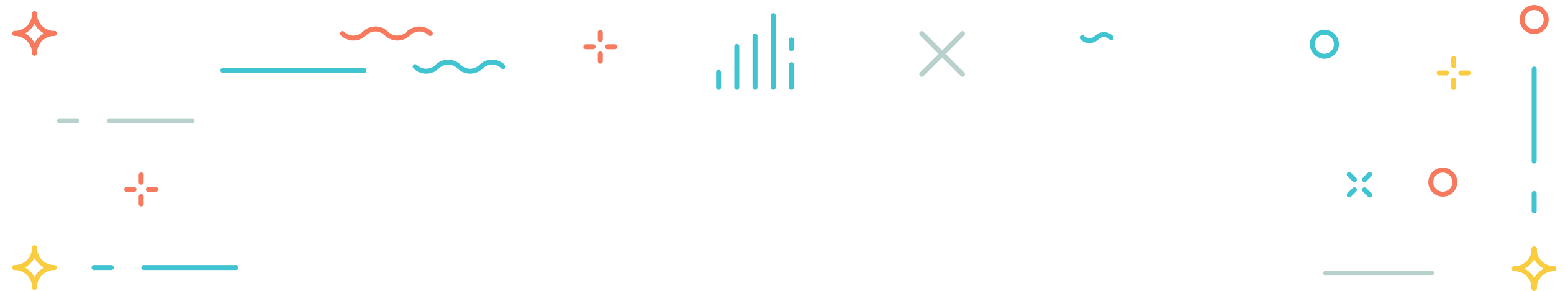
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