



# Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age

By Dorothy G. Singer, Jerome L. Singer

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As Dorothy and Jerome Singer show, violent images in games and TV are as toxic as many observers have feared by stimulating destructive ideas and troubling aggression. But should all electronic media be banned from children's lives? Calmly and authoritatively, the Singers argue that in fact some screen time can enrich children's creativity and play, and can even promote school readiness. With guidance from parents and teachers, empathy, creativity, and imagination can expand and intensify in the electronic age.

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## Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age By Dorothy G. Singer, Jerome L. Singer Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5668785 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Palgrave Macmillan
- Published on: 2005-03-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .88" h x 6.62" w x 9.60" l, 1.11 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 224 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Brings to light some potentially important issues for how various forms of media may facilitate or hinder the likelihood of young children engaging in symbolic and imaginative play...The book should be required reading for persons with an interest in the question of how the shifts in childhood leisure time activities may be affecting culture as a whole. (Robert T. Hitlan and M. Catherine DeSoto *PsycCritiques* 2006-03-08)

Concise and readable, this book offers a compelling examination of the ways in which video games, television, and the Internet (both e-mail and the Web) help to shape the lives of contemporary children, adolescents, and adults. Singer and Singer focus on the younger set, and they begin with a discussion of the mind's capacity for growth and self-knowledge. They move through an authoritative discussion of the impact of television on individual consciousness to arrive at a reasoned but impassioned indictment (no other word seems possible) of violent "point and kill" video games, which reduce all social transactions to the level of primal violence. In the chapter titled 'Adrift in Cyberspace,' the authors discuss the implications of children set free in that vast territory. The volume concludes with an argument for the "role of play in early learning," in which corporate sponsors do not commodify children's imaginations. Lucid, reasoned, elegantly written, and meticulously documented, this is a volume of considerable importance and value. (W. W. Dixon *Choice* 2005-07-01)

Senior Research Scientist Dorothy G. Singer and Professor Emeritus Jerome L. Singer provide the reader with a compelling examination of how television and video games both foster and impede a child's imagination and creativity...As electronic media becomes more prevalent in the lives of children, *Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age* is essential reading for all concerned educators and parents. (Javier Gonzalez *Childhood Education*)

In the prevailing climate of judicial criticism of the growing medication of children for Attention Deficit Disorder, a book about the effect of the ever-increasing electronic bombardment of today's youth is timely...The studies presented in this book are likely to be of interest to family lawyers dealing with parenting cases involving heavy usage of electronic babysitting and criminal lawyers interested in probing the causation of mitigating psychological disorders. If the electronic screen is the square, here is the argument that we should all think outside it. (Yasmine Swifte *Law Society Journal* 2007-07-01)

#### Review

*Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age* is a fascinating description of the way that TV, video games, and computers shape both our real life actions and our imaginative worlds. The Singers combine impressive scholarship with deep insight about the dangers and potential benefits of the increasing role of electronic media in the lives of children and adults--and in the end, offer an optimistic view of our wired future. (Marjorie Taylor, Professor of Psychology, University of Oregon)

#### About the Author

**Dorothy G. Singer** is Senior Research Scientist in the Psychology Department at Yale University, where she co-directs the Yale Family Television Research and Consultation Center.

**Jerome L. Singer** is Professor Emeritus in the Psychology Department at Yale University, where he co-directs the Yale Family Television Research and Consultation Center.

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#### **Michael Jones:**

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