

## Why do we smile when dying virtually? : insights on player experience from physiological and self-report measures

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Video games are mainly played as a self-selected activity. Those playing games generally do so to have an enjoyable experience. Nevertheless, in many games, and First Person Shooters (FPS) in particular, the player's character comes to a miserable end. Recent studies seem to suggest that players actually enjoy getting killed in a FPS game (e.g. Ravaja et al., 2008). In the current paper we question whether people really do enjoy getting killed in digital games. Our findings show increased EMG activity of the zygomaticus major upon dying, however, they also indicate that zygomaticus major activity decreased as people died more frequently. Self-report measurements further showed a clear negative effect of player death on pleasure ratings, without a sign of weakening with repeated player deaths. While dying may not be fun in itself, in the face of the game, and catering for a sense of challenge, it may be enjoyable.