

## **Young people involved in developing prototypes of role games that encourage physical exercise**

### **Playing games used to inspire physical exercise**

The prototypes of games to be published in the autumn of 2006 are being developed together with young people with regard to their functionality. VTT's new mobile game concepts that encourage physical exercise combine the challenges of playing computer games with active exercise. According to a survey carried out by VTT, playing computer games does not reduce the amount of physical exercise that young people get, but playing games can be used to motivate them to get more involved in it.

Sportive games are a new way of combining gaming with physical exercise. Currently, there are few such games in the market. The most common are dance mats and games controlled by camera vision. Half of the young people participating in the survey had tried sportive games (51%), and every tenth of them had a game at home (9%). Adults have tried sportive games less than young people (21%). The attitude towards sportive gaming is positively neutral. Of the participants in the survey, young people were more interested in sportive games than adults.

Playing computer games becomes less frequent with age, but it is common among computer users of the pensioner age group. The reasons for playing games are different. However, there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference between young people and adults: for young people, playing computer games is a form of socializing. For young people, playing games has social motives, whereas for adults, the social motives of playing games are not significant. In the survey carried out as part of VTT's Exergame project, there were 1,489 respondents between 13 and 76 years of age.

Although it is often felt that playing computer games reduces physical exercise among young people, the study did not establish any connection between physical exercise and playing games. Young people that play games a lot were physically just as active as other young people in their age group that play games less. The time spent on playing games did not correlate with obesity either.

### **Boys and old men play the most**

Playing computer games is most common among young people. Of the 13 - 18-year-old boys participating in the survey, only 2% claimed that they do not play games at all, whereas of the girls, 12% stated the same. Most of the boys (67%) play computer games every day or almost every day. Regular gaming is markedly less common among girls, only every fifth (20%) of the girls in the same age group play games as much. The young people that play games on a daily basis also spend a lot of time at it. Of those that play games every day or almost every day, the majority of the boys (53%) and half of the girls (52%) spend over an hour playing. This means that playing games is less common among girls than boys, and they also spend less time on playing at a time.

Over half of the girls that play games (55%) spend less than half an hour at a time.

Adults and pensioners also stated that they play computer games. Most of the 19 - 65-year-old respondents (76%) stated that they play computer games, but the proportion of those that play games on daily basis was relatively small (15%). Adults typically play for less than an hour at a time (77%). Adult men play games more than adult women. Every second (52%) pensioner (over 65 years old) stated that they play computer games, which was more than expected. Every fifth (22%) pensioner plays games on a daily basis. However, almost all pensioners spent less than an hour playing at a time (93%).

Additional information:

Sonja Kangas  
Research Scientist (Project Manager)  
020 722 6052

Piritta Lampila  
Research Scientist (Consumer research)  
020 722 6192