

## **98769 - Ruling on programming electronic games**

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### **the question**

Is it permissible to design computer games (without music) that are used on mobile phones and computers, and to sell them?.

### **Detailed answer**

The danger from electronic games is twofold:

- 1 - The way in which they are played and the way in which they are structured and made by the programmers.
- 2 - The way these games are used and the way people interact with them.

With regard to the way they are played and what they contain of images, levels, characters and aims: this is a responsibility that is borne by the programming companies that produce the electronic games. They are the ones who can direct these games towards sublime goals, such as instilling decent values and morals, and developing thinking skills and intelligence, and teaching one how to deal with emergency situations well, as well as offering a permissible form of entertainment and leisure activity to those who play these games.

Undoubtedly those who specialize in programming electronic games know more details about the games that they produce and market, and perhaps they can understand everything that educators say about it being essential to have goals for these games and to monitor the way they are used, especially when there are studies and research which call for saving our children from the greed of those who produce and deal in these games.

Games which focus only on killing, stealing and aggression are not like games that develop courage, defence of sacred limits, fulfilling trusts and restoring people's rights.

Games that limit thinking and focus the mind on a few scenes and actions, are not like those that encourage the mind towards inventive and productive thought.

But we hope that these games will be based on moral and useful values, such as regularly performing duties, the most important of which is prayer, and making good use of one's time, and paying attention to seeking knowledge and studying, and honesty, sincerity and loyalty, and so on, not only inserting or building these values within the structure of the game, but also by attracting the attention of users to them in one way or another, so that it will stick in the minds of those who play these games, most of whom are very young.

It is very dangerous to try to imitate the games that are produced by companies that do not care about values, and whose only aim in production is to provide enjoyment and pleasure and to make money at the expense of the family and society. Most of these bad productions come to us from non-Muslim programmers, but unfortunately there are also many Muslim companies who ignore the teachings of their religion and the values of their societies.

Hence you find that many of these games – if not most of them – allow nakedness, gambling, witchcraft and music, and are filled with images of crosses and myths that contradict belief in the unseen, Paradise and Hell, the angels and the resurrection after death. If the Muslim programmer were to think about the global programming companies that are keen to instill their beliefs and call others to their religion, despite its being false and invalid, then how can he fail to call others to his religion and good morals through what he makes and produces?

We have discussed some of the above ideas when speaking of the ruling on animation in the answer to question no. [71170](#).

As for the danger that comes from using these games and the way in which one interacts with them, this is a broad topic that the programmer has nothing to do with except from the aspect of his keenness to teach people the best way of using them so as to attain benefits and ward off harm. There is no reason why he should not offer this advice at the beginning

of every game that the company produces, or by means of a sheet inserted in every game CD. He can also advise the parents who agree to buy these games for their children.

The aim of these guidelines is to offer beneficial advice for this kind of leisure, so that it will not take up all the children's time and keep them from performing other religious and worldly duties, and to warn against the dangers from overuse, such as health risks to the eyes, back, hearing and so on. It will also draw attention to the suitable age groups for each game, as it is well known that games that are suited for adults are not suitable for young children, and vice versa. So it is essential for each age group to stick to that which is suitable. All of this needs advice and guidance which only the programmer who fears Allaah knows, and who is well aware and responsible towards his religion and his community.

To sum up:

There is nothing wrong with making the programs that adhere to the shar'i guidelines mentioned above, in sha Allaah, but he should pay attention in his work to the points noted above; rather the programmer may be rewarded for the good that he spreads to counteract the evil that is so widespread. Allaah is watching his heart and his intentions.

See also the answer to question no. [2898](#) for details on the ruling on electronic games.

And Allaah knows best.