



# Gamers hallucinate and get flashbacks

by **EMMA SWORD**

**VIDEO** gamers hallucinate, suffer flashbacks and struggle to sleep after playing, a study has found.

Some gamers saw screen menus pop up in front of their eyes while chatting with friends, while others saw coloured images when driving.

Psychologists Angelica Ortiz de Gortari and Professor Mark Griffiths and their team at Nottingham Trent University found many gamers saw distorted versions of real world surroundings following play. Analysing the perceptual experiences, referred to as game transfer phenomena (GTP), of 483 gamers on 54 online video game forums, the researchers found GTP can occur while gaming, right after play or after some delay.

Visual illusions are known to be able to easily trick the brain, and staring at visual stimuli can cause 'after-images' or 'ghost images'. But the researchers found evidence that GTP was triggered by associations between video game experiences, and objects and activities in real-life contexts.

Ms Ortiz de Gortari said the psychological profile of the gamers is unknown because the data was collected in online game forums. 'However, different gamers reported similar experiences in the same games. This highlights the relevance of the video games' structural characteristics but gamers' habits also appear to be crucial,' she added.

Prof Griffiths said some gamers may be more susceptible than others to experience GTP. He said the study shows there is a need to investigate the effects further to encourage healthy and safe video game playing. The study appears in the International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction.



PICTURE: REUTERS

## Lamb of God

A woman dressed as a character from the Nativity scene puts a lamb across the shoulders of Pope Francis as he arrives at the Church of St Alfonso Maria dei Liguori on the outskirts of Rome. The event was part of the feast of the Epiphany



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