1. 50% Read the following article and write your comments.

Computer games, it turns out.

When Hezbollah's Special Force became available in stores in the Middle East in February, the group joined the United States Army and the West Virginia-based National Alliance among the growing ranks of organizations now using games to spread political messages and recruit new members. Together, these titles are pushing the frontiers of a practice that's sweeping the $10 billion U.S. electronic game industry: "advergaming," or using computer and video games to sell products and ideas. "We want to reach young people, and this is the medium that will do that," said William Pierce of the white-power National Alliance, on the release of its Ethnic Cleansing video game last year. "As long as [electronic games] are out there, as long as they are affecting most people, we have an obligation to use them to spread our message."

Advergaming Could Become Billion-Dollar Industry

Forget billboards; forget Super Bowl ads. These days just about anybody with something to sell to teens is doing it through games. Nike, Pepsi, McDonald's, Nokia, and ESPN are only a few of the companies now using games to sell their products. Forrester Research, a firm in Cambridge, Mass., that studies the use of new technologies, predicts advergaming will be a billion-dollar-a-year industry by 2005. If it's teen boys you're marketing to, online is especially the way to go. ComScore Media Metrix, which tracks online gaming, says 60 percent of boys ages 13 to 17 and 72 percent of young men 18 to 24 now head to game sites when they go online. Though companies can't track sales due to advergaming, they've been very pleased with the results, says Charlene Li, Forrester's principal analyst, because online registration forms allow them to collect consumer data from players. "Do you know how hard it is to get market research out of teenage boys?" she asks. From there, says Michael Zyda, one of the designers of the Army game, it takes no great leap of logic to imagine that games also have the potential to sell young players on careers, ideas, and identities. (In the eight months since the release of America's Army: Operations, roughly 1.3 million players have logged 7 million hours of online play, and Army recruiters report the game has been very effective in attracting new recruits.)

In the commercial-game industry, though, that leap is controversial. For years, developers have maintained game play has no impact on what players think, or how they behave. But these days, as everyone from fast-food chains to separatist groups scrambles to invest in games' advertising and propaganda potential, industry executives are finding that a difficult position to maintain. "They're really talking from both sides of their mouth," says David Gabal, executive director of Planetary Arts, an independent studio now working on a new online game. "When they talk publicly, or they testify before Congress, they'll talk about how games don't have any kind of profound impact. But when they talk to a major corporation, then go and have their [game's] protagonist walk around with a soft drink of Brand X, they're telling that company that games can influence people's behavior." Indeed, he says, "it's actually a very powerful medium for getting ideas across — even more than movies, or TV — because it puts you inside the action and allows you to make choices." The downside is "there's very little understanding in the game world about what happens inside someone when they play a game." Apart from parents, he warns, advertisers and extremists now seem to be the ones taking games' potential impact, particularly on young players, most seriously.

From Neo-Nazis to Hezbollah

Take Ethnic Cleansing. The game begins as a player emerges from a "ghetto crack house," shooting into a thicket of black-skinned opponents who scream like apes when they're hit. The protagonist — a hooded Klansman or neo-Nazi skinhead — proceeds through 10 levels choked with racist posters and symbols, gunning down caricatured Jews and Latinos. The game generated a flurry of outraged attention on its release — exactly what the Alliance had been hoping would appeal to disaffected 15- to 25-year-olds, roughly 3,100 of whom paid nearly $15 to buy the game online. Hezbollah's new game, Special Force, and Syrian publisher Dar al-Fikr's Under Ash have generated considerably more publicity among gamers. The first two games in Arabic to rank technologically with popular English-language titles, both feature Palestinian protagonists doing battle with Israeli soldiers and settlers. Special Force, which depicts scenarios its creators claim are based on actual Hezbollah firefighting against Israeli forces, recently went on sale at stores in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Bahrain, and United Arab Emirates. Intended for all ages, the game sold out its initial run of 100,000 copies for $7 apiece in its first week.
In an e-mail interview, Haj Fouad, of the Central Internet Bureau of Hezbollah, says it isn't the game's direct aim to boost the group's membership. Rather, "the game intends to interest the players to learn the history of what really happened Israeli occupation during the first intifada. As the game progresses, Ahmad goes from throwing stones at Israeli soldiers to shooting Israeli settlers. Suicide bombings, though, are forbidden, as is shooting civilians. Targeted at youth 13 and older, the game is free to download." Everywhere the Israeli bugs will scream, 'This is violence and terrorism!'" general manager M. Adnan Salim anticipates on the game's Web site.

But, he points out, there are plenty of games already on the market that feature U.S. or Israeli protagonists shooting at Arab "terrorists."

Army Game Helps Boost Recruiting Site

Perhaps the most popular of these is the U.S. Army's Operations. Free online, the game allows players who have completed its "basic training" to participate in a massive multiplayer online game in which they join all-male infantry units and fight a dark-complexioned enemy. Between 15 percent and 30 percent of the roughly 35,000 people a day who access the game's Web site go on to check out the Army's recruiting site. These political advergames are unwittingly giving heft to the arguments of some unlikely allies. Opponents of their genre of violent shoot 'em-ups have long insisted on the power of games to affect what their players want, think, and do. Not that violent game players necessarily become violent kids, or military game players become soldiers, stresses Massachusetts Institute of Technology game expert Henry Jenkins. But he says, "I'm willing to believe they may be productive as a recruiting mechanism, insofar as people who are predisposed toward those ideas may cluster around the games."

2. 20% Read the following article and write your comments on what this associates to Taiwan's industry development in future.

NEW YORK (Dow Jones)—International Business Machines Corp. received a 10-year, $317 million contract from Embratel Participacoes SA to provide information-technology outsourcing services to Brazil's largest telecommunications company. The companies said Tuesday that IBM will consolidate and manage all of Embratel's IT infrastructure, covering 11,500 Embratel employees in more than 100 locations. The contract aims to reduce Embratel's IT expenses by about 30% annually. Embratel provides telecommunications services to IBM in Brazil under a contract signed last September.

3. 30%

Recently you found that one of your employee is emotionally unstable and sometimes even irritates surrounding co-workers. You also get a clue from personal investigation that his emotional reaction mainly due to his family problems. He has some difficulties with his wife. As his supervisor, what would you do?