

# Big Kids on the Block

## Johnny Dee

1 Last Saturday, an account manager from south-east London spent seven hours sitting in her Vauxhall Zafira parked outside the house of a stranger she knew only as the Giraffe. "It was," she says, "one of the most exciting things I've ever done." The woman, who would like to be known as Agent Squirtel, in order to protect her identity from rogue commandos, was taking part in StreetWars Killer, a water-pistol assassin game that has turned 150 Londoners into paranoid snipers with super-soakers. At about 8am her target emerged from his house and she gave chase down the street, successfully aiming her gun at his upper torso. It was only then that she realised she had squirted the wrong man: it was the Giraffe's flatmate, Dave. "He was OK about it," she says. "It was a hot day, he said he would dry out."

2 StreetWars is just one of many large-scale urban games being played in cities all across the world. All of them are similar in that information spreads via the internet. To anyone who chances upon them on the street, they seem like surreal, random events. All of them also utilise wireless technology such as GPRS<sup>1)</sup>, use real streets rather than boards or computer screens as their game's grid, and all resemble childhood games in their simplicity.



3 "They definitely appeal to people with a Peter Pan complex<sup>2)</sup>," says Yutai Liao, a San Francisco graphics designer whose alter ego, the Mustache Commander, is behind the StreetWars craze. "Where's the law that states that once you get to a set age you can only have fun by going to dinner parties with other adult friends?" The average age of competitors, says Liao, is 25.

4 Frank Lantz, a US college lecturer who encouraged his students to play a human game of Pac-Man, believes the social aspect is the main reason why urban games are becoming a trend. "A lot of these games use new technology but they're also about a return to the classic values of pre-computer gaming: face-to-face social interaction," he says.

not 1 GPRS = General Packet Radio Service, used by GSM mobile phones

not 2 Peter Pan complex = when you suffer from this, you don't want to grow up

“I also think there's something appealing about 14 to run around public space creating a spectacle.”

- 5 Indeed, not everyone can be good at football or kung fu, 15 we're all pretty good at hide and seek.

**Games:**

<b>Pac-Manhattan</b> Human-sized Pac-Man game  Players:10	<b>StreetWars Killer</b> Water-pistol assassination  Players: 150	<b>Botfighters</b> Robots in disguise  Players: 40.000+
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- 1p **10** Which of the following is true of paragraph 1?  
It describes  
**A** a day out for office workers.  
**B** Agent Squirtel's job.  
**C** an appointment with Dave.  
**D** a police squad's exercise.  
**E** a specific part of a reality game.
- 1p **11** Which of the following is **not** true about StreetWars according to paragraph 2?  
**A** It is a city outdoor event.  
**B** It is played worldwide.  
**C** It started out as a children's game.  
**D** You need the internet to take part in it.  
**E** You play it with the help of technical appliances.
- 1p **12** What is true about Yutai Liao according to paragraph 3?  
**A** He dislikes dinner parties for grown-ups.  
**B** He is the initiator of the StreetWars games.  
**C** He says that people under 25 do not like playing this game.  
**D** He would like to be known as Peter Pan.
- 1p **13** 'urban games are becoming a trend' (alinea 4)  
→ Wat is hier volgens Frank Lantz de belangrijkste reden voor?
- 1p **14** Kies bij 14 in alinea 4 het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.  
**A** being forced  
**B** having an excuse  
**C** pretending  
**D** refusing
- 1p **15** Kies bij 15 in alinea 5 het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.  
**A** because  
**B** but  
**C** therefore  
**D** unless

**Bronvermelding**

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.