

job when he found himself forgetting where he was going, whom he was supposed to be seeing or, when he finally got there, what he was selling. Another sales assistant treated by Sawaguchi, also aged 28, was fired because she was unable to recall written words.

David Cantor, director of the Psychological Services Institute in Atlanta, Georgia, thinks people "have reached a limit of what they can store in their brains." Really?

Mouse Arm

One of the biggest myths going, in our opinion, is that "mouse arm" is a repetitive strain injury. It is not. It is instead due to an electrical field which changes with each click of the mouse.

Conventional thinking goes like this: "Using a mouse demands a small but constant tension in your hand. Combine that with an awkward position, do it eight hours a day for a year, and you can expect one of two things—pain in your shoulder and the back of your neck or inflammation in your lower arm and elbow."

But a lot of people have wondered why clicking a mouse is turning out to be so much worse than pressing keys on a typewriter. They have developed intricate theories of ergonomics to account for the difference, and invented all sorts of re-designed mice to try to cure the problem. Some of them work. Most don't. The marketers of one mouse that is shaped and held like a pen claim its secret is that "the user's hand and forearm are in a more natural position." They seem to have forgotten what writer's cramp is. But maybe they've stumbled upon an electrically safer design.

Some who are electrically sensitive have discovered that an ordinary mouse can be used without arm pain merely by insulating the clicking finger with one or more rubber tips, available in any office supply store. But because the computer-using world is in such complete denial about EMFs, most computer users will continue to have wrist and arm

problems, and teenagers will continue to be sent for tendon-releasing surgery which does not cure the problem.

In the United States the number of workmen's compensation filings for mouse-related injuries doubled each year between 1988 and 1993. In pediatrics it goes by the name, "video wrist." In Sweden, it is said that every second computer user shows some symptoms of mouse arm, and that every eighth Swede suffers from the illness. In Norway it is called "mouse sickness" because it includes not only wrist, arm, and neck problems, but fatigue and loss of coordination.

Video Game-Related Seizures

In December 1997 a Japanese "Pokemon" cartoon made headlines when at least 700 children had seizures from watching it on TV (see *No Place To Hide*, July 1998). The cartoon was modeled after Nintendo games.

As long ago as 1994, Seattle pediatrician William Graf wrote that "video game-related seizures are more frequent than commonly recognized. Because recent developments in video game technology encourage increasing numbers of persons, especially children and adolescents, to engage in these games, video game-related seizures are a cause of growing concern both in the United States and abroad." He and two colleagues wrote an article in the medical journal *Pediatrics* about 10 such patients they had seen during a three-year period. They also analyzed 25 other cases they had discovered in the literature. All but two of the patients were children or teenagers. The cases ranged from "absence" seizures to convulsions to confusional states to unconsciousness. The majority of them had never had a previous seizure. Some had EEG abnormalities; others did not. Some became seizure-free by abstaining from video games. Others did not. Anti-convulsant medication seemed to make little difference as to outcome.