



# ***GAMING IN 2020***

**Insights for Brands, Publishers and Marketers to Understand the Modern-Day Gamer**

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# Study Methodology

- This report was generated through an online quantitative survey fielded from August 31st-September 2nd, 2020, among young men and women in the U.S. Whistle interviewed a nationally representative sample (based on age, gender, ethnicity, and region) of 317 13- to 34-year olds.
- Gen Z is defined as 13-24 years old in this deck, while Millennials are defined as 25-34 years old
- Unless otherwise specified, all data points referring to “gamers” reflects daily + weekly + monthly gamers



# 5 Myths About Gamers Debunked

## Gaming is anti-social

Seven in Ten 13-34 year olds say online gaming is an important part of their social life, up 41% from 2018 data

## Gaming is a niche activity

You'd have to pay an average 13-34 year-old gamer \$53K to give up video games for a year, more than Netflix (\$48K)

## Gaming is just for fun

Relative to other Gen Z athletes, Esports players believe they have the best shot of becoming a professional

## Gamers don't want to see advertising in their games

Nearly three in four gamers are open to sponsors being shown in game while they're playing

## It's impossible to reach gamers

Over two in three gamers are interested in consuming lifestyle gaming content, documentaries, and podcasts

# Gaming is Growing in Importance

Gaming is **increasingly** important to Gen Z and Millennials' social lives and identities.

Survey Question	% Of 13-34 Year Olds Who Agree	Change Vs. 2018 Survey
Online gaming is an important part of <b>my social life</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>+41%</b>
Gaming is an important part of <b>my identity</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>+24%</b>
Playing video games help me to <b>stay connected with my friends</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>+22%</b>

## ► Digging Deeper

COVID-19 has accelerated the importance of gaming in young people's lives. While already a point of social connection at the end of 2018, 84% of gamers now say that playing video games helps them stay connected with friends. Once COVID-19 conditions greatly improve it will be interesting to see if the percentage of young people using video games to connect with friends continues to grow or reverts backwards with the end of a lockdown and a return to normal lives.

# Connecting Family & Friends During COVID-19

Most gamers are **playing with others**, making gaming a major point of connectivity during COVID-19 and social distancing.

81%

OF GAMERS AGREE



During COVID-19, gaming has been an important way to **stay connected** with friends or family



% Who Primarily Game With Others



% Who Primarily Game Solo

63

37



## Digging Deeper

[GRM Daily](#) described how EA is pushing connectivity in the new FIFA 21 as “The FIFA 21 pitch notes state that providing meaningful ways to play with your friends was one of our key goals for the title this year. When FUT 21 is released, playing online cooperatively with a friend will be possible in Squad Battles, Division Rivals, and FUT Friendlies.” The new game will make it easier and provide more ways to play with friends.

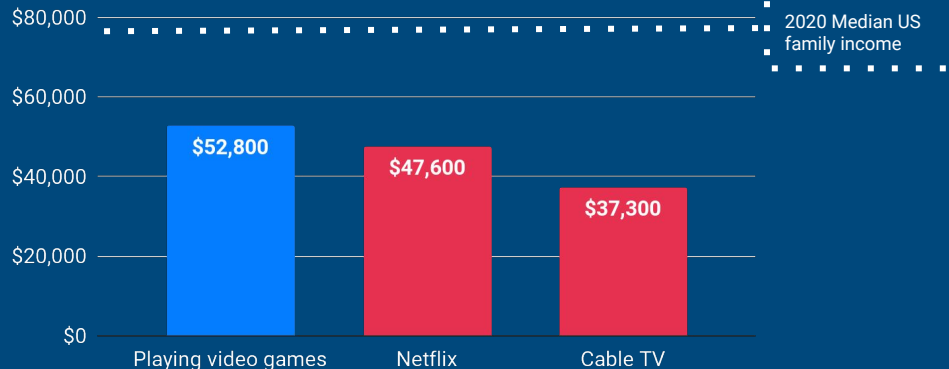
# Gaming is Valued Higher than Netflix or Cable

You'd have to pay an average 13-34 year old gamer \$52.8K (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the \$78.5K median US family income in 2020) to give up playing video games for a year, more than you would have to pay them to give up Netflix (\$47.6K) or Cable TV (\$37.3K).

## Digging Deeper

The results reveal that Gen Z and Millennials highly value their time gaming. Shockingly, 18-34 year olds who play video games daily value playing video games (\$59.1K per year) more than sex (\$58.3K)!

How much would you have to be paid to give up each of the following things for a year?



# First Person Shooters: #1 for Millennials, #3 for Gen Z

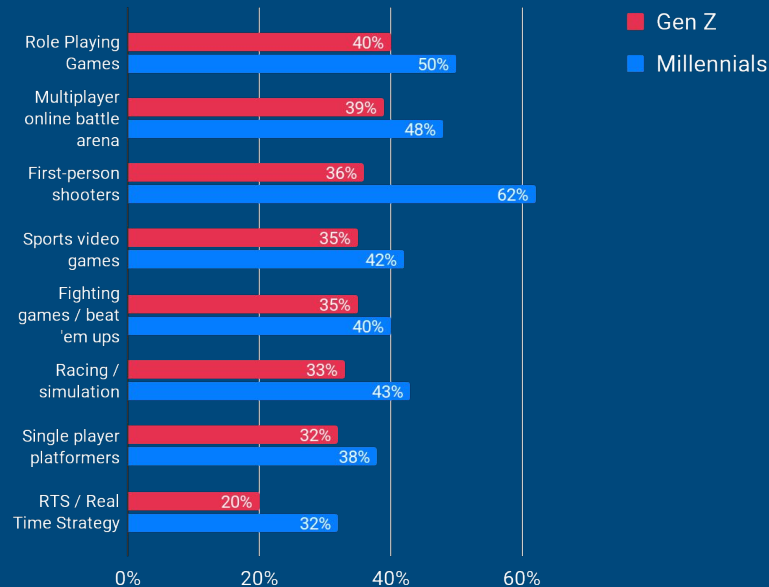
First-person shooters are the most popular genre with Millennials, while most of Gen Z did not grow up playing games like Call of Duty and Halo. RPGs and Multiplayer online battle arenas are Gen Z's two favorite types of games.



## Digging Deeper

The average Millennial gamer is interested in 3.6 types of game genres, 33% more than the average Gen Z gamer at 2.7.

Percentage of gamers interested in the following types of gaming genres

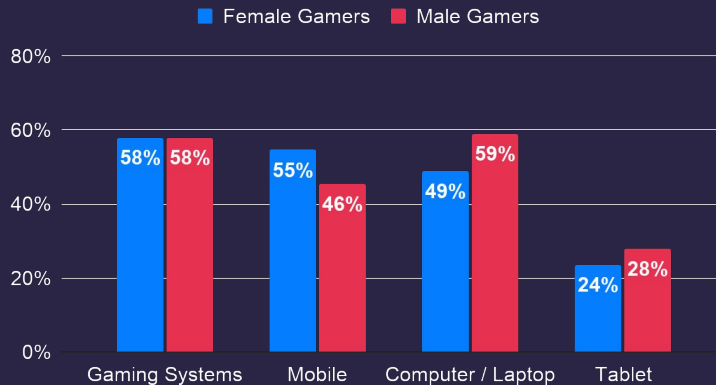




# Females Game on Mobile, Males Game on Devices

Females are more likely to game on mobile, while males are more likely to game on a computer, laptop or tablet. 58% of male and female gamers play on gaming systems like Xbox or PlayStation, making it the most commonly used type of device for gaming overall.

On what devices do you play video games?



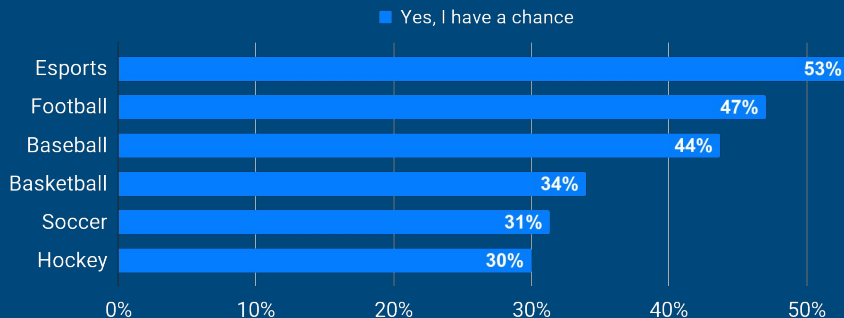
## Digging Deeper

This data lines up with some of the findings that video game makers are seeing; females like and are playing more mobile games while males are playing more shooting games that require more devices.

# Gen Z Can See Themselves Going Pro in Gaming

Esports players believe they have the best shot of becoming a professional relative to other young athletes with over half thinking that they have a chance to go pro.

Do you think you have a chance to go pro in the following sports that you play? (Among Gen Z)



## Digging Deeper

Gen Z gamers can easily relate to famous professional gamers who are young and speak like they do. This level of relatability helps influence a high number of Gen Z to believe that they have a shot to go pro in Esports, as do the varying games that offer different avenues in comparison to a professional league like the NBA that has a very limited number of roster spots. The desire to go pro extends to Millennials as well; 71% of Millennials who play video games weekly would quit their job if they had a chance to go pro playing esports.

This is another example of Gen Z wanting career paths that previous generations find hard to imagine.

# Hard-Core Gamers Have Skipped Sleep and Work to Play More

The passion within the gaming is unique, with daily gamers even skipping work and school in order to play.

## ▶ Digging Deeper

While gaming has entered the mainstream allowing everyday young people to be gamers, there remains a dedicated group of hard-core daily gamers. These numbers increase when looking specifically at males relative to females and Millennials relative to Gen Z.

91%

play video games **for at least an hour a day**



73%

have **skipped sleeping** enough in order to play a video game



56%

have **skipped work or school** in order to play a video games



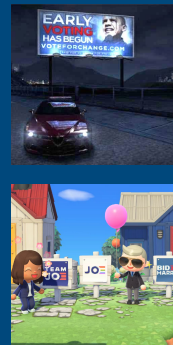
# In-Game Marketing is Accepted and Effective

While brand integrations are already prevalent in sports games (on jerseys and in stadiums), gamers are open to branded integrations across other gaming genres.

**74%** are open to sponsors being shown in game while they are playing



**70%** are more likely to consider brands that advertise in video games they play



President Obama's 2008 campaign was an early adopter of in-game marketing, a strategy VP Biden's campaign is also utilizing today in *Animal Crossing*



## Digging Deeper

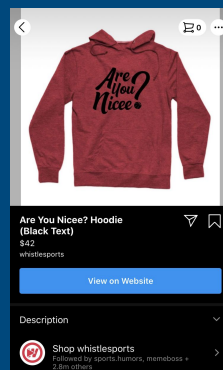
Two in three gamers (66%) agree that ads within a video game are less intrusive than TV commercials. Brands who capitalize on this can expect to see increased purchase intent as 72% of 13-34 year old gamers have seen an advertisement in a video game that has made them want to make a purchase.

# Gamers Want Shopping Integrations

Making it easy for users to make purchases from ads that they like presents huge value to advertisers given the acceptance of marketing from gamers.

**80%** of gamers agree

Video games and systems should **allow players** to quickly **shop for products** that are **advertised within the game**



Instagram shop has made buying products on Instagram's platform a simpler experience, raising the value to brands and consumers



## Digging Deeper

Improving the shopping experience within a video game is a massive way that a game or gaming system can grow their value to advertising partners. Recently, Facebook saw great success at integrating the shopping and payment process with Instagram Shop, allowing users to make purchases while remaining in the app. As Microsoft is launching a new Xbox in November while Sony will be introducing a new iteration of the PlayStation, [Amazon](#) and [Google](#) are expanding into the growing gaming market. This research suggests Amazon and Google will have opportunities to and should integrate ads and shopping into their plans.

# Gamers Want Diverse Characters to Play With

Gaming needs to become more inclusive on multiple fronts, including more female-led games, more minority characters, and more realistic depictions of body types. In fact, **85% of female gamers think female characters in games are shown in unrealistic ways.**

## ► Digging Deeper

75% of Gen Z females play video games weekly, but you wouldn't know it from the overall representation of characters in games and in the overall gaming community. One female respondent said that she wanted to see "more games designed specifically for girls", and 75% of female gamers agree that there aren't enough female-led games. Brands who tap into these feelings can help spread positivity while building diverse followings.

### Question:

When it comes to video games, what do you most want to see in the next 10 years?

"Less female characters that are put in just for the looks of the character. More realistic female characters, not ones with unbelievable body parts"

"More minority characters"

"More female-led games"

"I want to see more acceptance for women within the community"

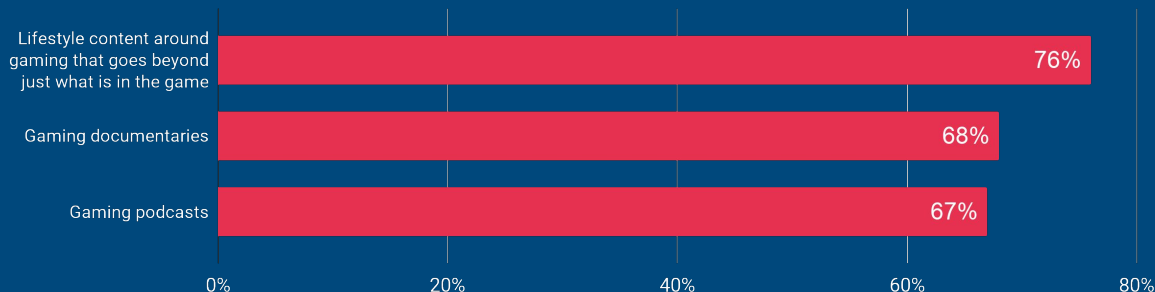


This year, Whistle featured 14 year old female Fortnite player FaZe Ewok in our series, [Exploring Esports](#)

# There Are Content Opportunities Beyond Gameplay

Outside of traditional gameplay and streams, brands and content publishers can reach audiences through lifestyle content, docs & pods.

Percentage of gamers interested in consuming the following types of content



## Digging Deeper

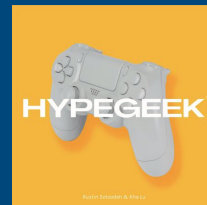
72% of single gamers aged 16-34 would be interested a dating app specifically for gamers, which shows just how far gamers want the gaming culture integrated into their lives.



Exploring Esports is a Whistle original series that gives you a never before seen look into gaming



An episode of Whistle's docu-series, No Days Off, that features Sceptic currently has been viewed 9.9 million times on YouTube

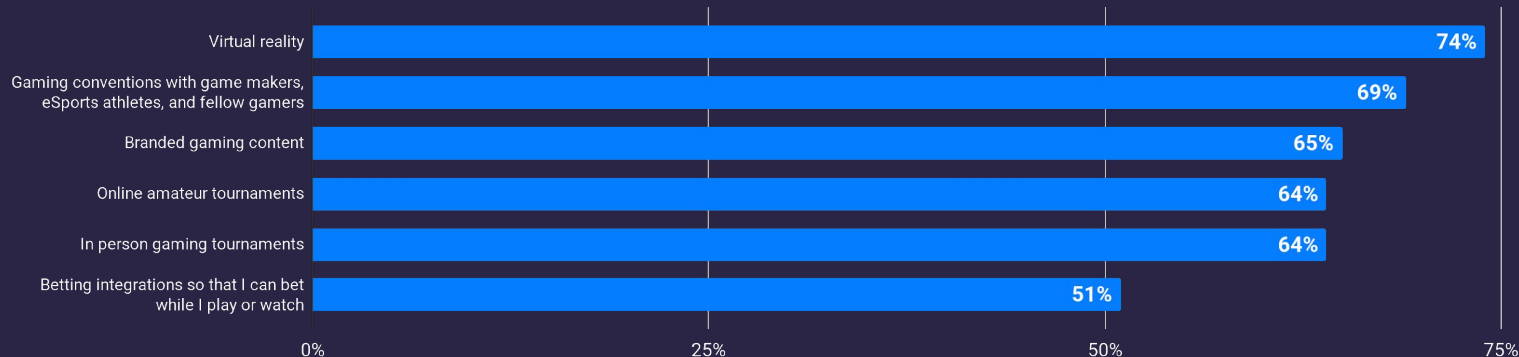


Part of Whistle's podcast network, HYPEGEEKS are the foremost thought leaders of gaming culture. Each week, their podcast breaks down what you need to know in the world of gaming and esports

# How to Connect with Gamers Moving Forward

The majority of gamers desire a broad range of gaming touchpoints in the future, including more virtual reality, gaming conventions, branded gaming content, tournaments and betting integrations.

Which of the following do you want more of in your gaming experience in the future?



## ► Digging Deeper

As gaming continues to grow in popularity and importance with young consumers, opportunities for connection will further extend beyond the game. Technology companies can improve the gaming experience with VR, conventions and tournaments provide in person opportunities to foster greater relationships, brands can build lasting positive sentiment with consumers through branded content, and betting companies can begin integrating themselves into the gaming experience.



**Thanks for reading!**

**Questions? Reach out to [insights@thewhistle.com](mailto:insights@thewhistle.com)**

**For more insights, go to <https://teamwhistle.com/insights>**