

Wii console opens new doors for family bonding

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In a month of growing unrest about youth violence, recent research has shown that 4 out of 5 (83 per cent) of people in the UK believe the Wii console increases family interaction, versus just half for the PS3 (52 per cent) and XBOX 360 (49 per cent). In particular, half believed that both the Nintendo Wii and DS (50 per cent) had a more positive effect on children, compared to just over a quarter (28 per cent) for the XBOX 360.

The research, carried out by GfK NOP in July, reveals that half (49 per cent) of those who regularly use a Wii stated that it helped them to feel close to their children, compared to just 38 per cent for the XBOX 360. Moreover, 4 out of 5 Wii owners (79 per cent) agreed that the Wii is a good source of entertainment for family occasions, dropping to just over half (56 per cent) for PS3 owners.

While console games playing has traditionally been by oneself or with friends, the Wii appears to encourage people to play amongst the family. Close to a half (46 per cent) of Wii owners say they play Child against Parent (compared to a fifth – 21 per cent - for PS3 owners) and 43 per cent of Wii owners play with their Spouse or Partner (compared to just 27 per cent of XBOX 360 owners). Less than one in ten (9 per cent) of all people asked claimed that playing on a Wii is unsociable; while one in three (33 per cent) claim the PS3 is unsociable.

It's not just the kids!

Wii's are not just for the kids either. While actual usage to date is far higher amongst the youngsters (67 per cent of those aged 16-24 have played on a Wii), a healthy 15 per cent of those aged 60+ have played on a Wii – twice as many as have ever played on an XBOX 360 or PS3). Women also find playing the Wii more enjoyable than other activities they do, with 88 per cent saying they enjoy it compared to watching TV (75 per cent), reading books (73 per cent) and using social networks (32 per cent).

The top three reasons given for wanting to buy a Wii were:

1. It appeals to all the family (34 per cent, rising to 45 per cent for the 40-59 age group)
2. It looks fun (23 per cent)
3. It's because of Wii fit (14 per cent, rising to 18 per cent for women)

In the future, over a third of those who use a Wii currently (36%) would like to use it for watching Blu-ray or HD quality DVDs, something only the Sony PS3 can do currently.

Richard Matthews, Director of Insight, GfK NOP states "The Nintendo Wii has been innovative in breaking down age and gender barriers and in changing traditional perceptions of gaming from solitary and anti-social to healthy, educational and interactive. The opportunity now exists for Microsoft and Sony to encourage the development of new content for their devices to appeal to these new audiences."