

Half of GB adults play electronic games

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Half of GB adults play electronic games; sports games show the fastest growth

According to TGI, a survey from BMRB, almost 24 million Britons now participate in interactive entertainment, which equates to 51% of the population of adults aged 16 or over. By gaming platform, this breaks down to 15.1 million people playing on a home computer, 12.1 million on a games console, 9.5 million on a mobile phone and 4.7 million via the web. All four of these gaming platforms have grown over the past 2 years. The total number of gamers has increased by over one million since 2004, from 22.7 to 24 million.

Men and women are equally likely to be involved in playing electronic games. Around seven in ten of gamers are aged 16-44 (the rest of the results reported below refer to this age group).

Another recent BMRB survey shows that amongst gamers in the 16-44 age bracket, 21% play electronic games every day or most days, a slight increase from 18% a year ago. On days when they do play, the average length of playing time is 80 minutes. This aggregates to around 12 hours per month.

On average, medium and high frequency gamers (defined as those who play at least once a week) report playing a single game for 7 hours per week and they expect to play a game for an average of 23 weeks.

The most popular genres are action adventure and racing, each played by 56-57% of gamers. Sports games have increased in popularity with 53% having played them in the past 6 months, up from 46% in 2005. This correlates with the sporting events that have happened since the 2005 research was conducted, including the Ashes, the Commonwealth Games and the football World Cup. Another growing genre is "virtual world"; almost a fifth (18%) of gamers have played this type of game in the past 6 months. Platform games are declining in popularity with participation having fallen from 43% to 36%. The cycle of new console launches and games development is steering the market away from the platform genres.

Advertising in games is noticed by a high proportion of gamers. Over half (56%) have noticed product placement style advertising in games. Almost half (48%) say that they have seen ads in the background of games (such as on bill-boards at the side of sporting arenas). Almost a quarter says that they have played games that are sponsored by brands.

Attitudes toward commercial activity around gaming have changed slightly over the past year. Over two-fifths (44%) of gamers think that having real brands or companies in games adds to the experience. This has increased slightly, from 41%, a year ago. A third of gamers say that they like playing games that companies sponsor (an increase from 24% in 2005). A comparable proportion (35%) says that they like watching sponsored TV programmes.

A quarter of gamers say that they prefer playing games to watching TV and a majority recognise the addictive appeal of gaming. Four-fifths agree with statement "Playing electronic games can become addictive". There is also a very close relationship between movies and electronic entertainment. Just over four-fifths say that if they enjoyed a game they would often enjoy the related movie if there was one. A similar proportion says that if they enjoyed a movie they often enjoy the associated game.

Key questions were;

1. Thinking about the past 6 months, have you played any electronic games?
2. And what did you play them on?
3. How often do you play electronic games?
4. On a day when you play electronic games, how long - on average - do you play for?
5. Which of the following types of electronic game have you played in the past 6 months?
6. Thinking about the game you have played the most in the past week, for how many hours have you played that game in the past week?

7. And, including the time since you started playing it, how many weeks in total do you think you will play this game for?
8. Thinking about the game you have played in the past 6 months, have you noticed any advertising in the background of these games?Â
9. Thinking about the game you have played in the past 6 months, have you noticed any product placement in these games?
10. Thinking about the game you have played in the past 6 months, have you played any sponsored games?
11. Which of the following statements do you agree with?
- On TV, I like watching programmes that companies sponsor
 - I like playing electronic games that companies sponsor
 - Seeing real brands or companies in electronic games adds to the gaming experience
 - I prefer playing electronic games to watching TV
 - Playing electronic games can become addictive
 - If I enjoy a movie I will often enjoy the game of that movie if there is one
 - If I enjoy a game I will often enjoy the movie of that game if there is one