SERIOUSLY SLY PLAYFUL

WHAT GAMERS WANT

In collaboration with

Relative
INSIGHT

Golley
Slater

FORWORD

EMMA

PAUL

Right here, right now, digital platforms are dominating social interactions. Social media and gaming are bringing people together from around the globe. Platforms such as TikTok, Twitch and Discord have not only become spaces for entertainment but also for community-building – and commerce.

Gaming might once have been a solitary activity involving a single player and a screen. But with the rise of multiplayer and co-op games, along with the popularity of watching content creators, gaming has been transformed into a seriously social experience. Platforms like Twitch allow gamers to share their gameplay with a global audience, while Discord provides a space for gamers to connect and communicate in real-time, both in and out of game sessions. This shift has created fertile ground for

brands to build memorable experiences and foster community interactions, with rich rewards for those who do it right.

For consumer brands looking to tap into this vibrant and dynamic gaming community, understanding the psyche of gamers is paramount. Brands are often missing the mark, resulting in what can only be described as the equivalent of dad dancing in the corner of your kids' disco!

We shed light on **what gamers truly want** and how brands can effectively integrate into this unique culture.

What Gamers Want is a gamer-first opinion piece brought to you by passionate gamers and professional marketers, Emma & Paul.

INTRODUCTION

How have we put this think piece together? By listening to the pulse of gaming via social, exploring the gamer reviews on previous brand activation efforts and searching for best in class examples – all to truly understand **What Gamers Want in 2025**.

We've explored the emerging themes from gamers, their attitudes, behaviours and preferences. Then we've unearthed tricks for consumer brands to adopt, so they can effectively reach and appeal to them.

We've also discovered the key areas that are important motivators to gamers:
• Their platform preferences
• Popular culture and fandom
• The gamer economy and micro-transactions
• Self-expression and kudos currency
• The physical gaming environment
• And finally (the biggie), gamers' attitudes to brands and game/brand partnerships.

SECTIONS:

1 GAMER FANDOM
& FRANCHISE

2 THE GAMER ECONOMY
& MICRO-TRANSACTIONS

3 GAMER SELF
EXPRESSION

4 GAMER
ENVIRONMENT

5 GAMERS' ATTITUDES TO
BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

6 GAMER
TYPOLOGIES

WHAT IS A GAMER FANDOM?

Gamers turn into FANS who are heavily invested in a franchise, creating lucrative revenue streams and maximising its popularity and longevity.

FANDOM describes the communities built around a shared enjoyment of an aspect of popular culture – from games, movies and tv shows, to bands, sport and books.

INCLUSIVE SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Fans aren't just enthusiastic consumers, they're producers and creators, spanning every form of creative media. Fan consumerism means anything associated with a franchise can hold significant symbolic value and investment, and a huge part of the fan economy is in trading and collecting.

The 'obsessed geek' stereotype is no more. Fandoms are communities with a strong sense of belonging. The internet is making fandom an inclusive, social experience with a global reach.

Game developers are now spinning up world-class IP that stands toe-to-toe with comic book characters and movies.

The concept of jumping between game and screen has been successful for many: think of TV series **Arcane**, based on League of Legends and the most watched Netflix series in Great Britain in 2020.

It's not alone. **The Witcher** series, ranked the 9th most popular English-language show on Netflix, also took roots from its game. **Squid Game** became a game on Roblox, and **Stranger Things** has rekindled our love affair with retro games that are now cropping up on mobile app stores and on Netflix games.

THE
WITCHER®

Fallout

The recent rise in popularity of the Fallout TV series saw 5 million people jumping back into the new version of the original 90's game.

These symbiotic content cross-overs from game to screen is known as **Transmedia strategy** and publishers are putting greater emphasis on this strategy at the outset of releasing a franchise.

WATCH
PLAY
CONTRIBUTE

With the evolution of transmedia franchises, fans can now **watch it, play it and contribute to it**, creating a brand longevity that goes far beyond its release date.

FAN CREATED CONTENT & GAMES

Games like Fortnite, Roblox offer gamers the chance to create their own content with creator developer modes. While games like CyberPunk, Fallout & Skyrim allow fan mods to be applied to the main game.

This provides longevity to the game and even becomes its own social collaborative platform , growing the game's popularity amongst the fan community and legitimises the creator's work. A great example in Modded content is The Sims.
There are 1000s of custom content creators who have download and install custom style characters, houses and playstyle changes.

COSPLAY
COMMUNITIES

As fans' affection for a franchise extends out of the game and digital space into real life, strong fan communities and sub-cultures develop into cosplay.

Cosplay becomes an interest group in its own right, as fans self-express through dressing up, decorating their rooms and personalising their wearables.

Assassins Creed, Genshin Impact, Baldur's Gate and Fallout are the latest to join franchise cosplay, while Mario, Legion of Fire, Street Fighter and Automata already have a well-established and loyal fanbase.

FAN
FLOCKING

The gaming community easily adopts authentic and talented creators. Born out of a common interest in gaming genre, they personify the genre they're fans of, applying their own creativity and personality to the fandom brand, and in turn achieving subfandom status themselves. Creator can use online platforms such as Throne, where their communities on Twitch can buy them items from their Throne wishlist.

PewDiePie is not an elitist Esports player, but an entertainer primarily on YouTube and Twitch, who broadcasts play-by-play content to his 111m fans. His main earnings are from advertisers on YouTube and member-only subscriptions, but he also has a merch range and limited-edition licensed gaming equipment, making him a brand in his own right.

DISCORD CONNECT

Discord is an intimate circle that connects and provides a more controlled gaming community experience for fans. It's emerged as the most popular server for players to connect with other like-minded players, alleviating issues experienced in public lobbies or the less interactive nature of YouTube and Twitch. Many creators use Discord as well as other non-private media platforms to interact with fans.

Moreover, Discord-exclusive games in platform allow the communities sitting together to further bond. They have recently adapted and launched creator software for games to be developed and launched by the dev community. This now gives brands the ability to interact through modded content.
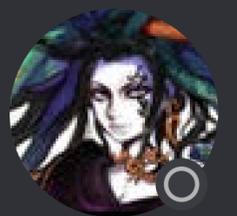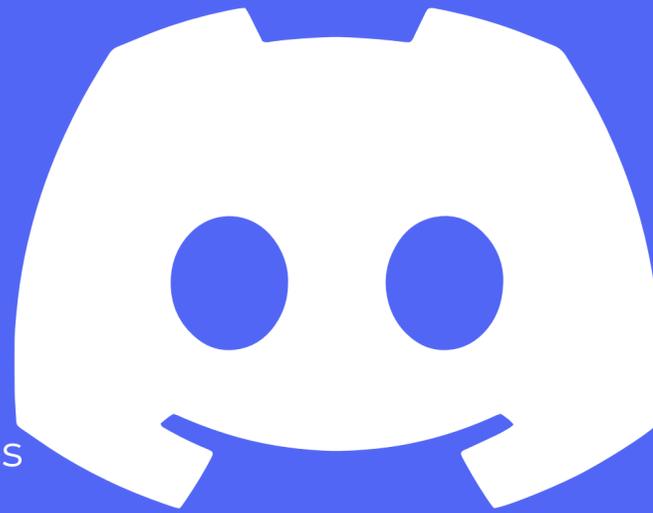
SELF PUBLISHED BRANDS

Gaming creators can now push their earning potential out of advertising and subscriptions by self-publishing. Gamer **Grind Coffee Co** and **Zgame** energy drinks are two UK examples of own-label brands created by fans, for fans. This makes them less reliant on brand partnerships and sponsorship and more discerning about who to be the ambassador for.

BRAND TACTICS

TREND JACKING

Capitalisation on existing popular culture. Is a short-term, responsive way consumer brands can harness the buzz around a specific hyped game or gaming trends in the community. Can be done through cleverly timed PR, experiential or gamification.

SUPPORT GAMING MICRO-INFLUENCERS

Traditional advertising, product placement, giveaways or sponsorship of lesser known creators is a popular choice for brands. It gives them more scope to find the right fit of creators for a short-term campaign boost and doesn't break the bank. This can reach fans on YouTube, Twitch and into the closed communities of Discord and Telegram.

MERCH SALES PROMOTION

Be the vehicle for exclusive user generated content drops (UGC) or physical prizes linked to specific games.

THE RISE OF
PAY TO PLAY ▷

There are many ways that gamers 'pay to play' (P2P). The initial outlay of console games, regular releases of DLC packs, in-game purchasing for game enhancements and personalisation and ad removals – all of these are commonly known as 'micro-transactions'.

Gamers can also pay for services outside of the game itself. Social platforms Twitch and Discord offer users the ability to purchase social currency that can be used to personalise profiles, enhance experiences on platforms or Patreon support the creators they are following.

GAMERS ARE LOOKING FOR A
# WHOLE GAME EXPERIENCE

Attitudes differ towards transactions in gaming platforms. Our studies show that generally, PS5 and Xbox players are less likely to want additional purchasing mechanics past buying the initial game or extended DLC packs.

For paid for games, gamers are looking for a whole game experience in the first transaction – they don't want to be faced with a DLC (downloadable content) to complete the game if it isn't considered a proper extension. Although gamers are open to paying for 'proper extensions' when games expand, they disapprove of DLC purchasing to allow them to access the universe they have already paid for.
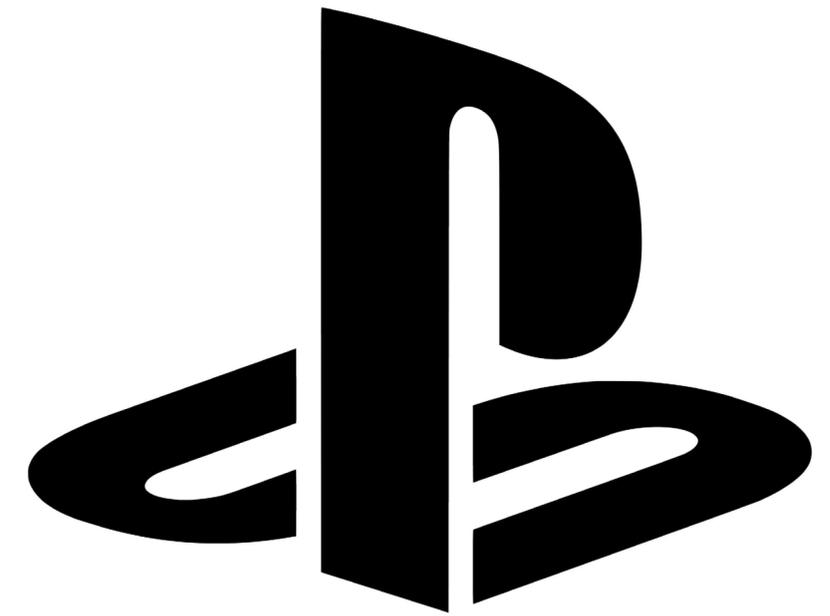
In our social listening we observed games such as Baldur's Gate 3 in 2023 (BG3) being heralded for its **'completeness'** at launch; bucking the trend of micro-transactions.

BG3 is associated with 'anti DLC' and saw the conversations on reddit within BG3 discussions showing x29.4 than in other games to be used unlike Blizzards latest launch into the pay to play mobile game arena with its legacy game syndicate Diablo.
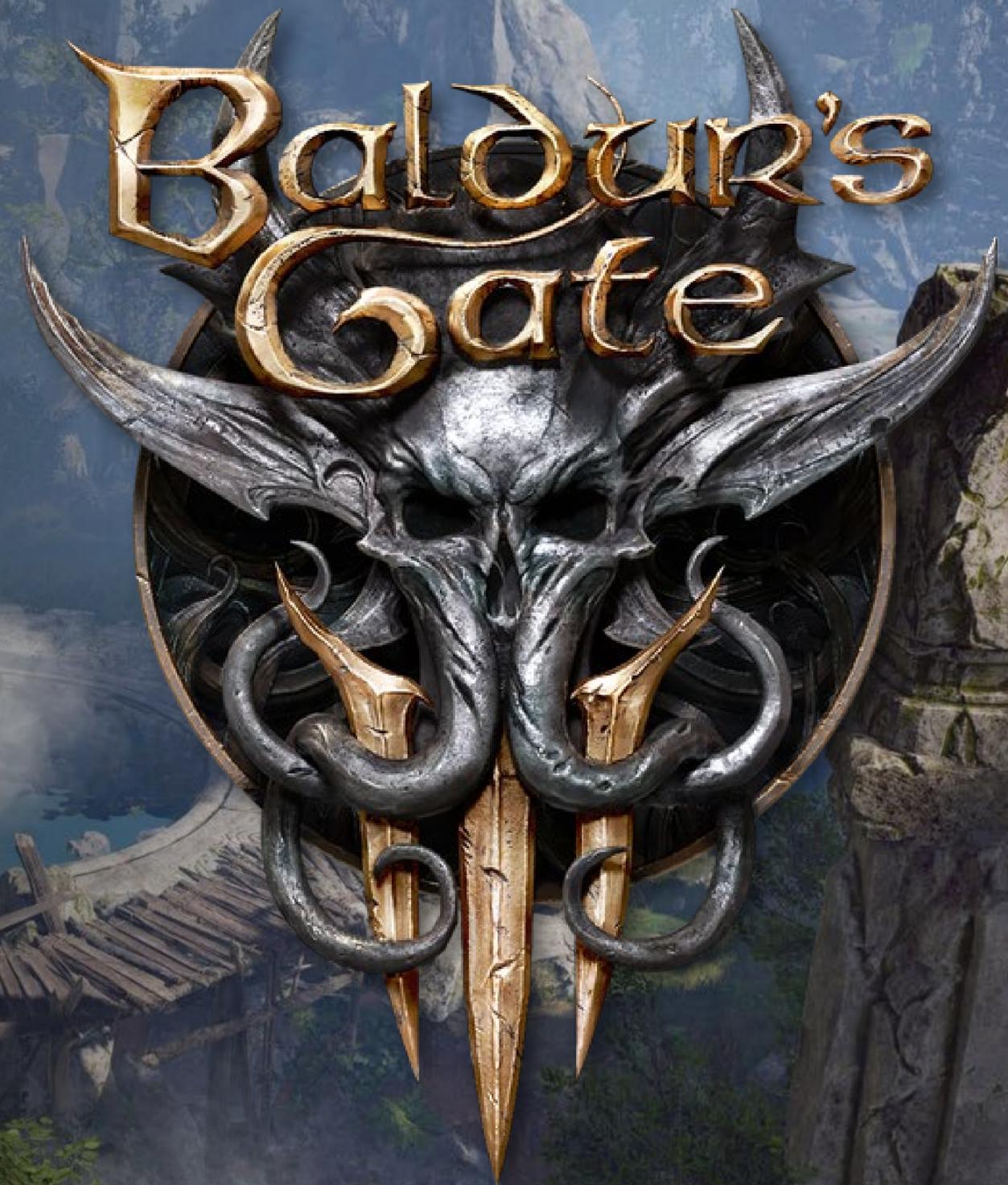
Micro-transactions for PS5 reveal that these gamers are twice as likely to be frustrated by this than other console

devices. Gaming studios are perceived to be greedy, and negative sentiment is highest amongst games where key progression or elevation can be achieved through 'buying' rather than 'earning'.

> yeah, free to play games having micro transactions is understandable since that's the primary form of income, as long as it doesn't get too oppressive
>
> Date: 04 Aug 23   Filename: reddit_for...
> Worksheet: Sheet1   Source: Relative ...

> wow it's almost like Elden Ring a(mostly single player) rpg with no micro- transactions that Won Game of the year already proved that
>
> Date: 05 Aug 23   Filename: reddit_forum_...
> Worksheet: Sheet1   Source: Relative Insight

> so we're saying It's(bg3) success proves people don't want micro transactions, but diablo 4 selling way more copies in far less time isn't a sign that they do? or is it just that this is a good looking game that is reviewing well?
>
> Date: 05 Aug 23   Filename: reddit_for...
> Worksheet: Sheet1   Source: Relative ...

> when your only option is micro transactions to get ahead in a game or to get Uber good looking gear then people will obviously pay. and when every publisher is doing it ... it seems normal and accepted. it's a good psychological trick marketers use to make you accept things like this even when they're a perversion.
>
> Date: 04 Aug 23   Filename: reddit_for...
> Worksheet: Sheet1   Source: Relative ...

> seriously though, people complain so much about micro transactions that don't affect the game at all. Fortnite is completely free and has an insane amount of content and is constantly changing 8 years later
>
> Date: 26 Feb 24   Filename: reddit_forum_...
> Worksheet: Sheet1   Source: Relative Insight

PAYING FOR AESTHETICS
IS BROADLY ACCEPTED

As gamers have a deep desire to express themselves and seek kudos, they will be willing to pay for aesthetics that have limited availability. This allows for collaborations with brands to deliver gamers' wants and needs with limited time drops UGCs/exclusive wearables.

In-game purchases are an intrinsic part of the Fortnite universe. Many brands have created UGC content including character skins for Fortnite fans spanning fashion, automotive and snacking or based on a specific franchise such as Marvel or Deadpool.

For popular massively multiplayer online (MMO) games such as Fortnite, the social aspect of playing together is also a key motivator to purchase new skins and build self-expression. The rarity of wearables heightens the desire for purchasing.

FORTNITE
X

BRAND COLLABS DRIVE DESIRE

Collaborations and collections can drive purchase. Think about capitalising on fans' affinity with franchises – for example by purchasing cosmetics in Fortnite from other games or cartoons or celebrities. Brands can build lots of buzz and speculation about future collaborations ahead of release – Disney and Fortnite do this especially well.

A best-in-class example of this is the brand partnership in Turkey with Coca-Cola & League of Legends, where an on-pack promotion unlocked digital aesthetics and characters when purchasing the product.

LIMITED
EDITIONS

However fans recall negativity around recent changes. Beyond mentions of price rises, the crowded shopping space for different modes can feel overwhelming and messy.

Recent changes to items, and the inclusion of items that previously had to be unlocked/collected into bundles, can take away the appeal.

Fans want items that represent their achievements and let them express themselves, something that's earned, not bought. They also dislike purchasing limited edition items, only to find later that they're being released for free or at a dropped price.

POCKET GAMERS

Amongst mobile or free to play games (FTP), there is a larger acceptance of the need to purchase in game.

The term 'freemium' appears much more commonly within mobile games, with gamers acknowledging that free to play games often come with integral in-game purchase models.

The range of micro-transactions within these can range from additional premium game modes, content and aesthetics, to removal of ads. While all can be somewhat frustrating, 'play to win' titles, where progress is seriously impeded without micro-transactions, are particularly disliked. Smart phone users are 74% more likely to say they'll pay to remove advertisements to smoothen the gaming experience as part of the free to play games.

"LESS ADS. MORE ACTION."

In the gaming community advertising is seen as a massive interruption to game play. Across many mobile Free to Play games, in-app purchase to remove ads are commonplace. This extends to Twitch where adverts on creator pages can now be blocked through payment.

> I prefer to only have a remove ads feature(cost 2- 5) but you could maybe add a donation button too?

Date: 10 Mar 23   Flair: Discussion
Text source: text   Language: en

> ads that go away after a small one time fee, or outright buying the game for a reasonable fee

Date: 10 Mar 23   Flair: Discussion
Text source: text   Language: en

> there's ads during the free trial part but my understanding is that they're gone once you pay. the ads don't provide any gameplay benefit. it just feels like a proper game.

Date: 11 Jan 23   Flair: Seeking Game ...
Text source: text   Language: en

> I paid$ 6 for the mobile version of Dead Space years ago and it was worth it, but I only beat it once. year or so later I had gotten a new phone and wanted to pay through it again, but it was removed from the play store. totally sucks that paid apps are basically glorified rentals. I also bought the mobile Mass Effect game but never got too far into it. that was more of a waste. the are games I would love to just outright but though instead of having ads but oh well.

Date: 25 Jul 23   Flair: Discussion
Text source: text   Language: en

60% OF GAMERS CLAIM THAT SELF-EXPRESSION THROUGH GAMEPLAY IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN EVER BEFORE.

GAMER SELF+ EXPRESSION FREEDOM

For younger generations in this increasingly digital age, our online identity is more important than ever. Gaming has become the new social, and gamers have the freedom to express themselves in so many ways – through character personalisation, usernames and gamer-tags, emblems and emotions and gestures.

Gamers who are exploring their identity online are providing themselves with a real sense of empowerment and confidence that in turn influences their real life. Fans will celebrate their favourite games and characters by cosplaying, through their fashion and styling, by attending conventions and even by transforming their homes with themed interiors.

Titles like Minecraft, Fortnite and Roblox lead the way in giving these gamers a real sense of the self-expression they are searching for.

Brands now have an authentic opportunity to be part of the gaming community and interact with fans in meaningful ways, while increasing their consumer brand perception at the same time.

FLEXING & STANDING OUT IS ONE REASON GAMERS LOVE PERSONALISATION, ESPECIALLY WITHIN A SOCIAL CONTEXT.

KEY TAKEOUTS

Cosmetics can be front of mind, expressing personalisation and individualism amongst other gamers

Within the multiplayer lens of the title, self expression and uniqueness from skins, and other visible assets, such as emotes, can form an integral part of Fortnite. The aesthetics, and uniqueness, of individual characters is a key driver for player, as well as collecting and amassing different visual options, as an unofficial trophy system, and marker of experience.

Actions: Expressionism may be heightened within the social context, with an element to 'show off' when playing with friends.

r/FortNiteBR_ differences **671.2x** more likely 💬 4

Relative Difference x

Topics	x16.8 Cosmetics
Words	x1325.6 skins

my advice for improvements:-locker- if Epic would like to not overhaul the entire ui again, then please just add an option to tie loadouts for wraps and emotes to our character loadout. it's frustrating to have to juggle multiple sections of the interface just to fully change one loadout between matches.-item Shop- the recent addition of the"view others(73)" for The Jam Tracks is great!! that list format is great and having that for all sections like cars, Lego, emotes, etc etc would be very nice. plus there needs to be a better rotation algorithm working on the changes. I haven't played that long and I've already gotten tired of seeing the same skins over and over again in the shop. with so many new players in the game, it would be great to have the algorithm pull at least a bundle or skin that has been absent from the shop for a while. epic can even keep that rarer bundle/ skin to only be up for a day to keep people excited to check each day. these are just my opinions and thank you for allowing us a place to submit feedback such as this.

that's why you pay extra for the Avatar skins. the more simplistic style of flat colors with no lines is easier on the eyes./s of course

Date: 10 Apr 24	Title: Item Shop and Lock...
Subreddit: FortNiteBR	Language: en

I just want customizable clone skins

Date: 15 Apr 24	Title: I've got a good fe...
Subreddit: FortNiteBR	Language: en

GAMER KUDOS IS A BIG THING. AESTHETICS CAN ALSO BE A MARK OF SKILL & EXPERIENCE, WORN WITH A SENSE OF PRIDE & ACHIEVEMENT.

KEY TAKEOUTS

Aesthetics can represent a marker of experience and skill

Aesthetics can also play a role as a marker of experience and skills, especially where cosmetics are earned through achievements and milestones. A sense of pride can be gathered by earning hard to get aesthetic rewards, again playing to expressionism and showing off, but can also be used tactically within game play. Players can gauge the skill level and experience within games using aesthetics, with some experienced players 'targeting' those with default skins, indicating 'easy targets'.

Customisation, personalisation, skins, kudos frequencies   4

	Verbatim Percentage %
Words	3.8% unlock
	1.6% default

---

there's tons of secret stuff to find and come back to when you gain certain abilities, they picked great locations that"feel" like Star Wars. great customization options and lots of collectibles to unlock.

Date: 14 Mar 24   **Title:** Jedi: Survivo...
Original Name: Customise

I usualy focus players with default playable skins, because there is a higher chance that they are new and an easy target.... damn, this dude has a badass looking gear and you can only do it by doing the most challanging content in this game... what an achievment

Date: 10 Jan 24   **Title:** Weapon Charms...
Original Name: Customise

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unique challenges per weapon class and type, etc. and multiple mastery camos: gold, platinum, Priceless, Interstellar, as well as another set of 4 for Zombies. Cod has always been so damn good in the progression systems. I don't need Nicki Minaj to be an in- game unlockable, they've already done enough and more than any other game in this regard for decades.

Date: 13 Apr 24   **Title:** "Battle passe...
Original Name: Customise

I actually just appreciated that depth because it gave me lots to sink my teeth into and lots of materials to collect and spend in various ways.... I love being able to make my character look the way I want. matching gear to the same family of pieces or just ones that compliment it. changing skins on each piece to get the colouring I enjoy. then altering both as I unlock more options. having a character with cohesive gear in a colour pallet I enjoy makes me feel so much more connected to the character and into the game.

Date: 10 May 24   **Title:** In your personal...
Original Name: Customise

OUR SOCIAL LISTENING DISCOVERED

BRAND COLLABS CREATE A SOCIAL BUZZ AMONG GAMERS — THE MORE EXCLUSIVE AND UNIQUE, THE BETTER.

Utilisation of collaborations can drive purchase through capitalising on affinity with other franchises

Special collaborations in the fortnite universe, including within purchasable cosmetics, can excite players; where existing affinity and fandom for other franchises exist; from other games, cartoons, and celebrities. Gamers speak about existing and prior collaborations already made, as well as excitement and speculation at future collaborations.

Collaboration with other franchises can drive purchase intent for gamers, drawing on fandom and affinity with other popular franchises, within gaming and beyond. Where cosmetic purchase is already grounded in expressionism within a social context, collabs with broader assets beyond the fortnite universe further plays into this need.

r/FortNiteBR_ differences   35.1x more likely   4

	Relative Difference x
Words	∞ collaboration
	∞ collabs
	x35.1 collab

I'd say Dante and the rest of the Capcom ones are the most likely because Fortnite has done multiple Capcom collabs and multiple waves. 3 Street Fighter and 2 Resident Evil.

Date: 17 Apr 24   Title: Do You Think The...
Subreddit: FortNiteBR   Language: en

they could easily do rocket racing collabs easily. it'd be cool if you could use a speeder bike or a tie fighter or x wing etc.

Date: 15 Apr 24   Title: I've got a good fee...
Subreddit: FortNiteBR   Language: en

folks said the same about Smash. and Fortnite is even better at making collabs happen than Nintendo is. I'd say the chance of Kingdom Hearts content is not zero. not high, but not zero. especially with an upcoming Disney x Fortnite project confirmed.

Date: 17 Apr 24   Title: Do You Think The...
Subreddit: FortNiteBR   Language: en

GAMERS FEEL AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH THEIR CHARACTERS AND THEIR VIRTUAL PERSONAS BECOME AN EXTENSION OF THEMSELVES.

KEY TAKEOUTS

I want to learn about the language of a data set **'Customisation, personalisation, skins, kudos'** compared with **'Standard English'**

Characters can represent the virtual extension of gamers

The ability of personalisation within gaming can be a fundamental desire for some gamers, with customisation elevating the emotional connection and appeal of titles. Within certain genres, such as RPGs, this can be a particular hygiene factor. However, in FPS, there can be more scrutiny in the role of customisations, with players unable to see their own character; here accessories may play a role, such as weapon skins and charms.

Actions: Customising characters can be a personal thing, which drives emotional engagement and connection towards titles. Gamers can spend 'hours' creating an extension of themselves virtually.

Customisation, personalisation, skins, kudos frequencies 💬 6

	Verbatim Percentage %
Words	16.5% character

> if I'm forced to play a character I didn't create or customize in fable, then yeah I'll be upset.
>
> **Date:** 14 Jun 23 **Title:** Lead lighting...
> **Original Name:** reddit_forum_subs-...

> weapon charms are better than character skins in fps games. at least I can see the charm. imagine paying for a skin for your character just so other people can see it.
>
> **Date:** 10 Jan 24 **Title:** Weapon Charms...
> **Original Name:** Customise

> yeah I am coming to realize that but it just feels wrong not to customize the character fully since I have played similar games and the character Gen alone was a large draw where as the story plays a bigger role in the fun of this game.
>
> **Date:** 07 Dec 23 **Title:** GALE ????
> **Original Name:** reddit_forum_subs-BG3

> I'm not nonbinary, but my first character was nonbinary and they were a masculine dragonborn deeply inspired by Godzilla who is famously ambiguous in their sex from iteration to iteration... I even played around with the bit by giving my character a Blue and a magenta eye both in homage to Trans pride but also to represent common Godzilla blast colors(felt good to win special effects).
>
> **Date:** 12 Mar 24 **Title:**

> fps character skins are actually the perfect example of cosmetic greed. the person buying it doesn't even get to see it or enjoy it. the entire purpose of it is so that other people get to see it. and why do you want them to see it? so they know how much money you can throw away on what amounts to digital vanity. it's bizarre and fucking stupid.
>
> **Date:** 10 Jan 24 **Title:** Weapon Charms ar...
> **Original Name:** Customise

> Def Jam: fight for New York had a ridiculously in- depth character customization system. so many fucking clothing options!
>
> **Date:** 15 Apr 24 **Title:** What's the best ...
> **Original Name:** Customise

GAMING FANDOM IS EXPRESSED BEYOND THE GAME THROUGH SUB-CULTURES LIKE COSPLAY.

Strong fan community and sub-culture extends into cosplay

Affection from fans towards the franchise can extend outside of the game, manifesting into sub-cultures and cosplay in real life.

Actions: Fandom from games extends beyond the digital world, and into the real and physical, influencing fan behaviour, events and purchase towards merchandise and clothing.

r/BaldursGate3_ differences ∞ more likely   💬 4

	Relative Difference x
Words	∞ cosplay
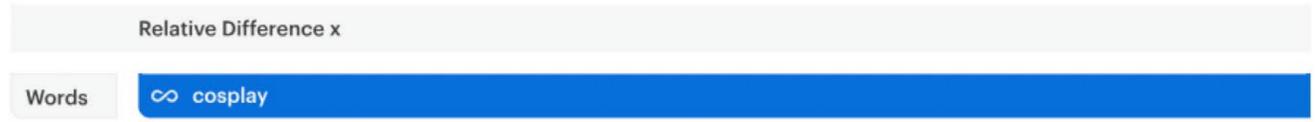
that's an amazing cosplay! where'd you get the outfit and wig and everything?!

Date: 12 Sep 23   Source: Relative In...
URL: https://www.reddit.com/g...

great job op. wish I wasn't working. I might have done a Bg3 cosplay too. got my star trek uniforms for a lazy evening at work ready though

Date: 30 Oct 23   Source: Relative In...
URL: https://www.reddit.com/g...

yeah I started with the same or similar Amazon ones! I'm so excited to see more Bg3 cosplay pop up around. your take is super cute   I still need to finish the game

Date: 13 Sep 23   Source: Relative In...
URL: https://www.reddit.com/g...

I'm not normally overly interested in cosplay, but this is really impressive. like straight from the Bg movie set.

Date: 05 Oct 23   Source: Relative Insight
URL: https://i.redd.it/weyf8u5b0...

SELF-EXPRESSION ELICITS MANY POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND ENJOYMENT FROM GAMERS.

KEY TAKEOUTS

Customisation can be a driven by an element of fun expressionism

Drivers towards customisation within gaming characters and skins can also be grounded on a fundamental sense of 'fun'; choosing customisations and aesthetics which look 'cool', 'unique', or sometimes just 'goofy'. Here, stand out can be key, and less grounded in personal likeliness. ...

Actions: Customisation can remain within the need to 'show off' and 'stand out', with a less personal attachment to aesthetics.

Customisation, personalisation, skins, kudos frequencies   💬 4

	Verbatim Percentage %
Words	8.4% fun
	4.5% cool
	3.3% unique

I love Bg 3 but damn I wish they gave us more fun with character customization, Dg 2 is insane in that aspect

Date: 11 Mar 24   **Title:** Shadowheart:
Original Name: reddit_forum_subs-BG3

that looks awesome! can we get some sliders? I've also been having fun with the chararacter customization.

Date: 11 Mar 24   **Title:** Shadowheart:
Original Name: reddit_forum_subs-BG3

oh yes, the customization is pretty bonkers. hairstyles, beards, clothing, materials, lightsaber parts, blaster parts... you can even find different metals to make your weapons out of. all just cool cosmetic stuff to find.

Date: 01 Jan 24   **Title:** What games did y...
Original Name: Customise

having skins is a great strategy, they're cool, they're fun, they go on sale, etc.... siege having cosmetics is cool

Date: 10 Jan 24   **Title:** Weapon Charms...
Original Name: Customise

just got into this game like a month ago and as a Sw fan Im excited asf. always felt fomo seeing people with Anakin, Maul and red sith trooper skins

Date: 15 Apr 24   **Title:** I've got a go...
Original Name: r/FortNiteBR_

Customisation and personalisation is ultimately enjoyed

Positive emotions, such as happiness and contentment are the overarching sentiments observed broadly across gamer discourse touching on personalisation, customisation and skins.

Customisation, personalisation, skins, kudos frequencies   💬 4

	Verbatim Percentage %
Topics	12.8% Happiness
	2.8% Contentment

> the combat is very good, insanely responsive. it's satisfying and flashy. I love being able to customize your main character so deeply and play as other characters. I really wish Inquisition did not belong into Dragon Age. I can see why people have enjoyed it, but it has strayed way too far from Da:o or even Da2 and I have personally not enjoyed it> my only critique would be the lack of a female gender option. huh? I vaguely remember other people having female mc.

IRL VS INGAME

64%
of gamers think it is easier to be themselves online than in person.

46%
of players would like their IRL presence to be more like their gaming presence.

72%
of gamers would consider a brand more favourably if it positively helped them express their gaming persona in the real world – especially multicultural gamers, women & non-binary, and 18-34 year olds.

THE GAMES LEADING THIS WAVE OF SELF EXPRESSION

ROBLOX

MINECRAFT

GENSHIN IMPACT

grand theft auto

FORTNITE

The SIMS

STARDEW VALLEY

BRANDS ALREADY HELPING GAMERS EXPRESS THEIR GAMING PERSONAS IN IRL

Brands examples:

Tiffany & Co. x Pokémon

TAG Heuer x Mario

Honor of Kings x MAC

Razer x Gillette

Animal Crossing x Colour pop

Minecraft x Crocs

Boss fragrance x Fortnite

Self-expression is a powerful motivation so brands have a chance to be creative and inventive in gamer personalisation both online and offline.

Understanding that gamers are always looking for ways to stand out, fit in, be part of the tribe, getting hyped up about the stuff they love is the best way to connect and becoming accepted by the community.

CREATING FUNCTIONAL & AESTHETIC SPACES

Console and PC gamers have a strong desire to show individuality in their gaming set-ups. They have a deeply emotional connection, which makes planning, coordinating and purchasing decisions very considered. They create their space based on both functionality and aesthetics.

On subreddits, we observed a high proportion of gamers talk about their 'set-ups' as a whole, with monitor, desk and keyboards being called out individually. Comments about the functionality of the set-up include desk length, monitor elevation, storage and cable tidies. These conversations demonstrate a trend toward the need for 'clean' space, ensuring their set up is efficient and not unnecessarily crowded or messy. Gamers stated that a clean set-up can elevate productivity, as well as creating a sense of pride.

Verbatim Percentage %	
Words	9.9% monitor
	8.6% desk
	8.1% setup
	2.8% keyboard
	1% build
	0.6% custom
	0.08% proud

Verbatim Percentage %	
Phrases	0.6% cable management
Words	2.4% clean
	2.3% space
	1.1% management
	1.1% cables
	0.7% headphones
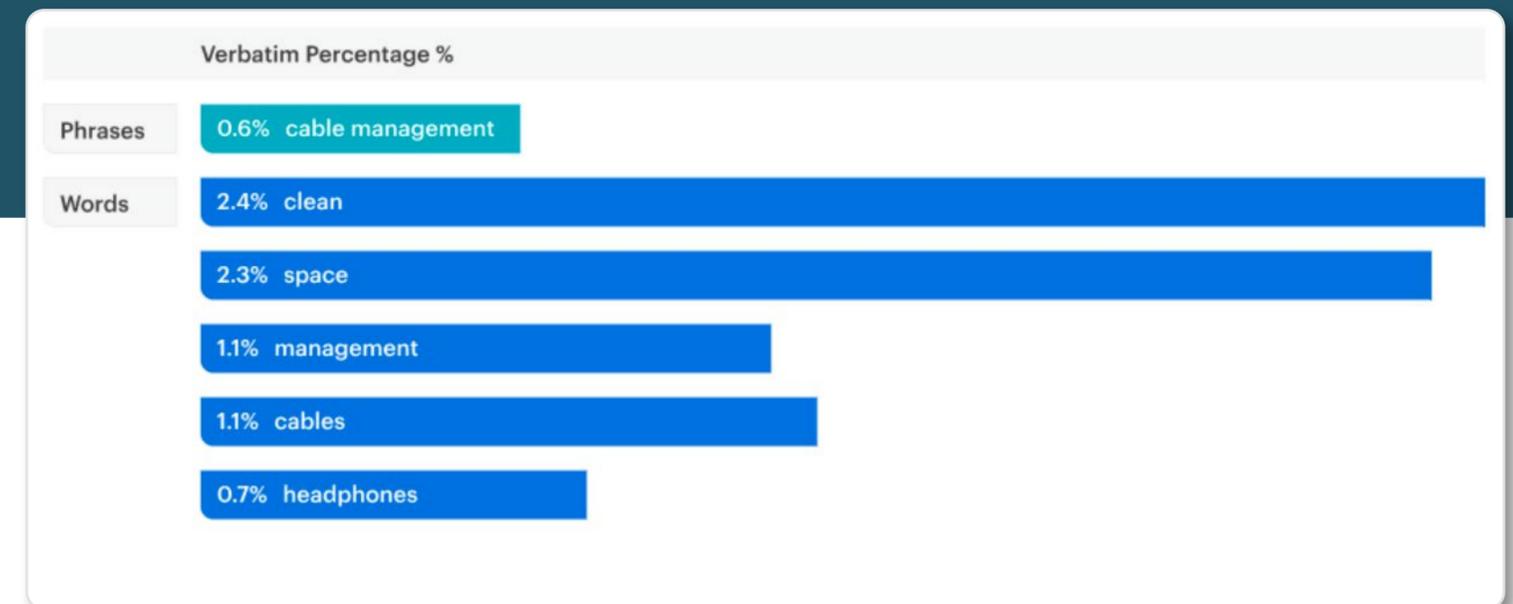
Pride of space doesn't just mean the need for functionality and minimalism. Gamers seek approval for the 'looks' of their environment and share their set-up achievements with incredible pride. These set-ups extend beyond the essentials, into room themes and overall 'looks'.

Verbatim Percentage %

Words

1.7%	speakers
1.5%	wallpaper
1.1%	lights
0.8%	lighting
0.8%	sound
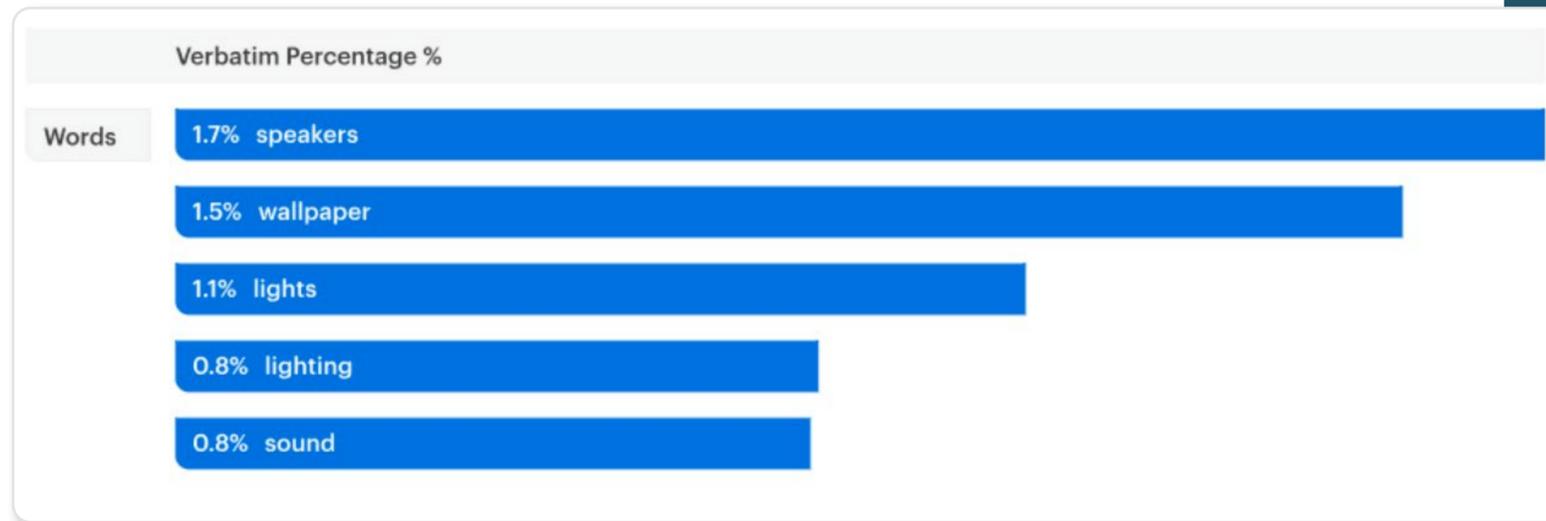
As working from home has become more commonplace since 2020, gamers often need to consider how their dedicated gaming space extends into their home office. They're looking at standing desks, drawers, multi/vertical monitors and lighting to provide comfort – the key driver to achieving a multi-purpose space.

Many furniture retailers have developed versatile L-shaped desks, marketing them as a multifunctional gamer and workstation. With the trend of gamer-dedicated environments on the increase, a number of mainstream furniture retailers, such as Wayfair and IKEA, now offer bespoke ranges of gaming furniture and accessory packages.

#COZYGAMING 51.9K
#COZYGAMER 78.2K
#GAMINGSETUP 1.3M

An immersive space of sanctuary, away from people, so you can settle into playing your favourite games.

Cosy gamers are categorized as those who like to play relaxing non-competitive games. Due to the growing popularity on TikTok of players sharing their experiences and their environment the #cozygamer trend extends now to their environmental set-up. These hashtags have trended for over 12 months and have their own Cosy Gamer fanbase who want to both have and share the perfect cosy retreat. Colour matching lights, keyboards, ornaments, cable accessories and soft drink holders, candles and coasters all feature.

The overall environment and trend of set-ups allows for brands to get into the cosy gamer space. Hot drinks, wholesome snacks and scented candles can all be positioned, while accessories and equipment are a multi-million-pound industry.

Being "into gamers" doesn't mean you have to be "in-game". Brands can and have partnered with gaming accessories for a chance to win the latest equipment – which gives a nod to gamers, not specific games. By doing this, brands are broadening the reach of the gamer typology they want to be associated with – whether that's PC users, consol gamers, mobile gamers, cosy or competitive.

WHO PLAYS WELL

GET YOUR
Nutty
GAME ON

WORLD RECORD EDITION

Coca-Cola Byte release was amplified when they teamed up with controller creators SCUF to create limited edition items for purchase.

Pringles have an "always on" approach to their gaming associations, activated in-game run merch giveaways, and device and assessor give aways.

Nutty, an American chip brand, ran a Pinterest competition to win a games room makeover.

#GetYourNuttyGameOn
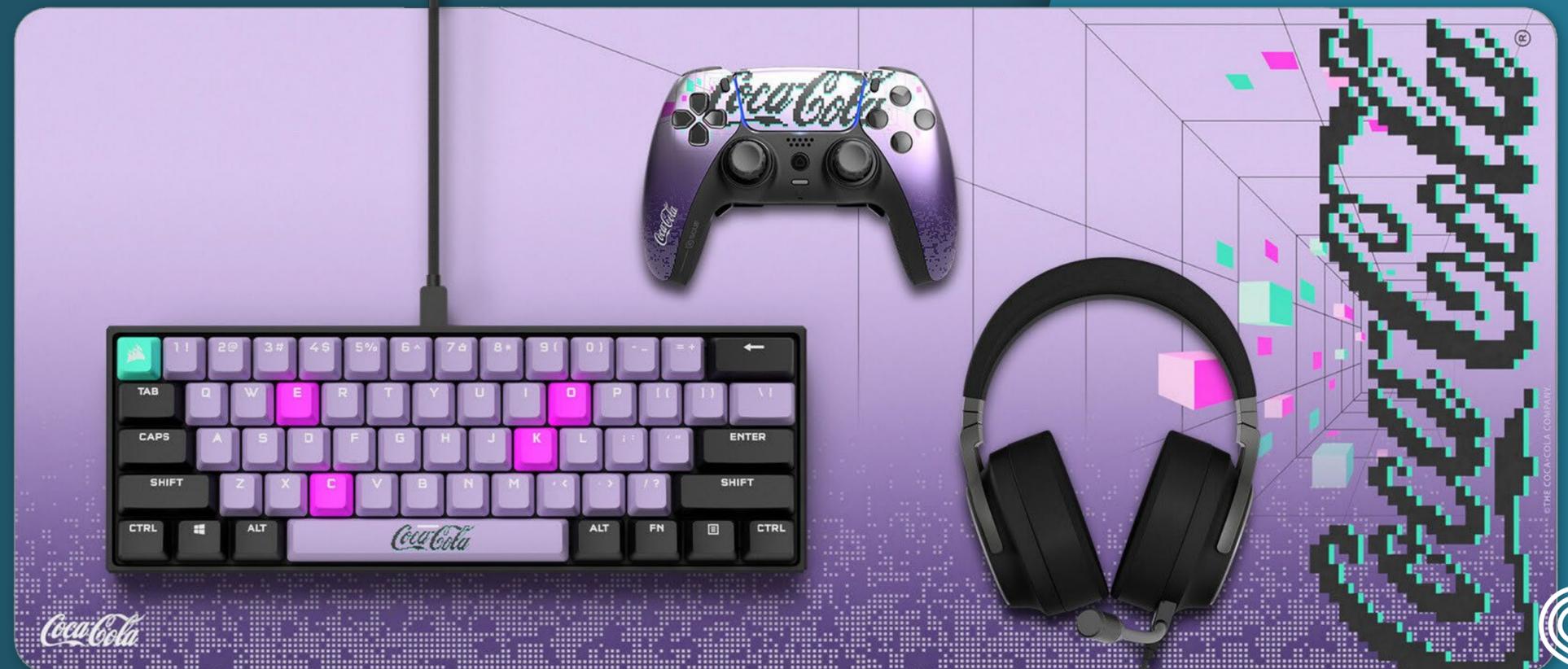
5 GAMERS' ATTITUDES TO BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

THE BRANDS GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT GAMING

In collaboration with

Relative
INSIGHT

Golley
Slater

HOW CAN BRANDS APPEAR GENUINE WITH GAMERS?

Some brands, like KFC & Pringles, have nailed it in the gaming space and are accepted by gamer communities as the real deal. The key to their success is by not taking themselves too seriously, being authentic and offering something gamers want!

HOW TO WIN WITH GAMERS...

1. BE FUN & AUTHENTIC

Respect the community's culture while
remaining true to your brand identity.

2. LISTEN TO GAMING COMMUNITIES

Listening to a gaming platform's community is crucial.
This approach ensures that your brand's presence is not
only accepted but embraced by the community

3. OFFER UNIQUE VALUE & REWARDS

This may come in the form of user-generated content (UGC)
that offer free or paid items exlcusive wearables & emotes or
currency to exchange for buffs & upgrades or maps.

4. ENGAGE THE TRENDSETTERS

Influencers recognised within the community or Micro-influencers
can amplify your reach on specific platforms.

5. BRIDGE THE DIGITAL/PHYSICAL WORLD

Many brands have found ways to bring the showroom/store experience in game
with Roblox like Nike and every gamer feels their gaming space is worth investing
in so consider IRL as well as online!

WINNING WITH GAMERS

To do this, you need to have a unique blend of authenticity, community engagement, delivering value and using the right touchpoints to reach specific gamer audiences.

Let's explore some examples…

> " I remember Assassin's Creed having a crossover with Digiorno pizza. you got codes to unlock naval packs/ cosmetics in Valhalla/ Odyssey and a code to unlock Pharaoh armor in Origins.

> " alot of people discoverd Tony Hawks pro skater through a pizza demo

> " the target near me announced it'd be limited to one per customer before it came out. I still got my(empty) bottle on my shelf

> " even tho it's just marketing 101, I do love this kind of stuff. I remember when Halo 3 came out and Mountain Dew produced Game Fuel for the first time to promote the game I bought a 12 pack of that sugar poison just cause I was so hyped for the game.

SELF EXPRESSION

E.L.F X ROBLOX

E.L.F has a long history of engaging younger gaming generations.

Recently the beauty brand released an in-game collaboration with Roblox, creating E.L.F UP! Tycoon, a Roblox universe where users can build their very own beauty empire.

Gamers and fans of the brand flocked to join in on the fun, generating huge amounts of organic engagement across social media. E.L.F nailed the idea of gaming collaborations, by creating an experience that perfectly catered to their target audience.

COCA-COLA X LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

League of Legends players in Turkey could buy LoL-themed Coca-Cola bottles that came with free codes for in-game loot. Each unique hero-themed bottle featured codes for a Hextech Chest and a key to unlock it. These Chests featured champion and skin shards which could be upgraded to unlock the item completely, or disenchanted to reward Blue or Orange Essence respectively – which can then be spent on champions and skins.

For fans of the game it was the cheapest way of acquiring new champions and skins. For Coca-Cola, it was a valuable promotion on a game extremely popular in Turkey.

Hextech Sandığı — 125 — Aç
Hextech Anahtarı — 125 — Aç
Hextech Zanaatkârlığı Seti — 195 — Aç
10 Hextech Zanaatkârlığı Seti (+1 Set Hediye) — 1950 — Aç

ECONOMY

GILLETTE X TWITCH

A large part of Gillette's campaign involved providing free bits (Twitch's in-platform currency used to donate and unlock channel emotes) with the purchase of Gillette products by using promo code "Bits4Blades" at checkout.

Gillette also promoted the Gillette Gaming Alliance – a team of popular Twitch streamers who have the top three most watched sponsored streams on Twitch.

Alanzoka, dogdog, and DrLupo all have very different gamer audiences, meaning Gillette could avoid audience overlap and reach as many gamers as possible.

Gillette
GAMING ALLIANCE

WANT 250 BITS?
USE CODE BLADES4BITS AT CHECKOUT WHEN YOU BUY FROM GILLETTE ON DEMAND
BROWSE ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS VIA SHARED LINK

Terms and Conditions: Bits code must be redeemed by 06/30/19. Bits are subject to Twitch.tv terms and policies, including the Bits Acceptable Use Policy. Bits redemption requires a Twitch account. Create an account for free at Twitch.tv

stream hatchet

Top 5 #ad Stream Titles: 2/9 - 2/15

STREAM TITLE	CHANNEL	HOURS WATCHED	AVG CCV	AIRTIME
Gillette BORA! GILLETTE GAMING ALLIANCE 2.0 #ad	alanzoka	83,681	19,311	4h 20m
Gillette 11k+ !Gillette partnership today! // Join the Alliance + Earn BITS! #ad	dogdog	54,760	9,663	5h 40m
Gillette Announcing the Gillette partnership today! // Join the Alliance + Earn BITS! #ad	DrLupo	53,897	21,559	2h 30m
WOLCEN! o/ - Sponsored by Wolcen - 60% off Wasteland 2 (one more day only!) at Cohh.tv/Wasteland2 o/ - !Corsair - !Viewsonic	CohhCarnage	50,859	15,258	3h 20m
Metro: Exodus DLC (Sam's Story)! - Sponsored by Metro Exodus! - !Store - !Corsair - !Viewsonic	CohhCarnage	36,798	8,831	4h 10m
	TOTAL	279,995	14,924	20h 00m

The new partnerships with **Gillette** dominated the top 5 holding **68.6%** of total hours watched.

www.streamhatchet.com

PRINGLES NPC COMPETITION

This creative and unique competition offered gamers a chance to work in a video game as an NPC (non-player character), refilling Pringles vending machines. But paying you £20,000 to your bank account for doing a virtual twin job.

The winner will appear in Train Sim World, a train simulation game available via Xbox Game Pass.

Promoted as the world's first official paid job in a videogame.

MINECRAFT X LUSH

If you feel like you're living in Survival mode?
The Minecraft x Lush collection is here to fill your inventory with handcrafted products for the bath and shower to help you blow away the stresses of the day.

Crafting moments of calm IRL and in-game.

Gamers can download a DLC to add Lush to their game. Whether you've been crafting for 15 years or just narrowly survived your first night, why not take a breather (or get a boost) with the free Lush Bath Bombs add-on? Gather fresh ingredients and turn them into bath bombs like a real-life Lush Master Compounder, then use them for unique effects!

BRAND BACK-FIRES

Gamers are a decerning group so explore the ethics of each activation. This Shell activation in Fortnite received many skeptical views from our social listening.

promoting gasoline to a game which is mostly kids and teenagers is fucking insane, especially with climate change being as bad as it is

Date: 05 Oct 23

nothing like a big oil company using a game to indoctrinate children into thinking big oil is good for the world

Date: 05 Oct 23

Project: Gaming exploration • Description: Exploring the gaming landscape

I want to learn about the language of a data set 'Fortnite x Shell' compared with 'Not Fortnite x Shell'

Some partnerships can confuse, and can be singled out as cash cows

There can be more questionable responses to gaming partnership with industries with no seeming affinity to gaming, or specific franchises; as observed in Shell and Fortnite's collaboration. Beyond novel reactions and some level of confusion, the partnership is associated with pure commercial gain, and some aspects of greed, for game studios. However, some gamers voice preference for similar deals, if it subsidies potential costs/charges for gamers themselves.

Fortnite x Shell frequencies   4

Verbatim Percentage %
Words	7.1% money

you taking big Oil money too?

Date: 05 Oct 23

lost a lot of respect for Epic for taking Shell's money while opening up kids to nefarious oil interests.

Date: 05 Oct 23

it costs money to make games, I'd rather Shell pay that money than me

Date: 05 Oct 23

6 GAMER TYPOLOGIES

A SERIOUS LOOK AT DIFFERENT TYPES OF GAMER

In collaboration with

Relative INSIGHT

Golley Slater

From our social listening, it's clear that gamers' motivations, preferences and personalities are diverse, regardless of what platforms and games they play.

We've compiled a simple way to define different gamers, in these four profiles. Gaming transcends traditional demographics, so brands need to consider this channel very carefully if they want to reach gamers who are spending more of their spare time playing in virtual gaming worlds.

https://personality-psychology.com/gamer-profiles-and-personality/

SOCIAL LISTENING REVEALS LOTS ABOUT OUR GAMERS

Socialising

> yes we have friends to play with. Solo is boring

> honestly I think the only real way to play is to use a discord lobby tbh

Exploring

> yeah I started with the same or similar Amazon ones! I'm so excited to see more Bg3 cosplay pop up around. your take is super cute   I still need to finish the game

> I just finished my second play through with romancing Astarion in which I chose the complete different options, and I was actually really sad I didn't get to cuddle with him like how he teased nor hug him when he was crying. I feel like all of our companions would benefit from a cuddle. or maybe just an option to hug would be nice, we can kiss but no hug.

Achieving

> it took me roughly 60- 65 hours to complete acts 1 and 2 on tactician. I found as many hidden things as I could and finished as many quests as I could.

> totally me. Mopped up all achievements for Dead Space 2008 last week

Competing

> I usualy focus players with default playable skins, because there is a higher chance that they are new and an easy target.... damn, this dude has a badass looking gear and you can only do it by doing the most challanging content in this game... what an achievment

GAMER TYPOLOGIES

SOCIALISER

EXPLORER

ACHIEVER

COMPETITOR
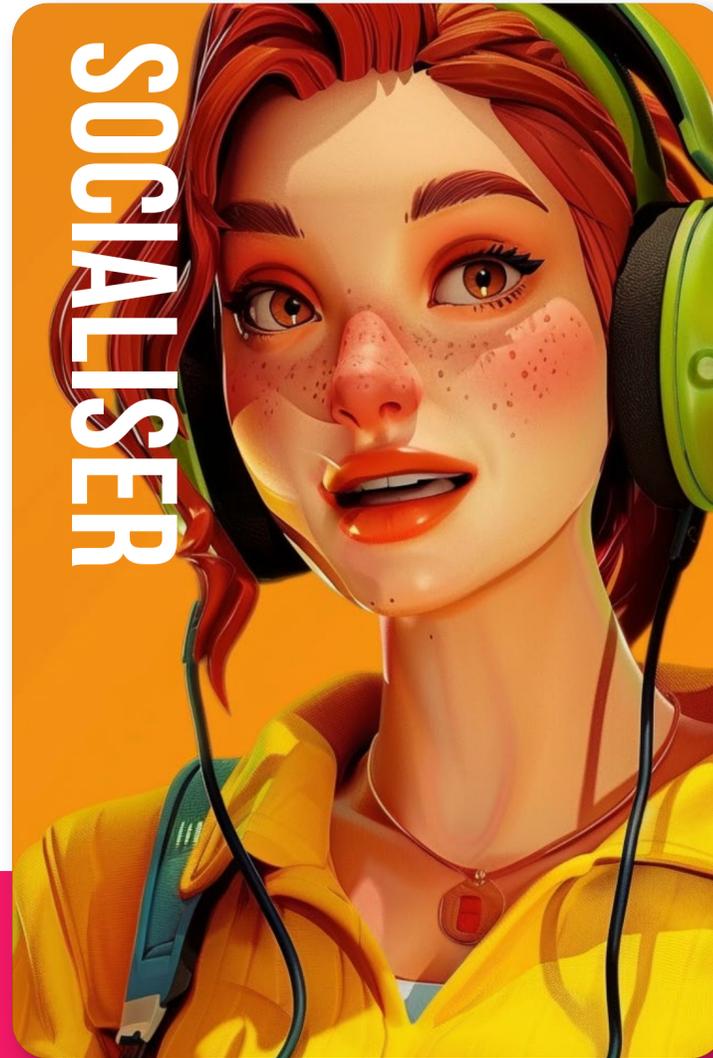
We've created four gamer groups based on their preferences and behaviours.
In most cases our gamers are naturally a mix, but their main motivation is clear.

SOCIALISER

AMONG US

ROBLOX

They enjoy spending time with other gamers, sharing experiences and being part of the community. If they're on Reddit and Discord they are likely there just for bants and to chat than strategies. For the Socialiser, it's more about spending time together than the competition. Gaming offers a reason to be together online, and don't feel they have to be good at gaming to enjoy themselves.

The Socialiser sees gaming as a meaningful way to be social online. They gravitate to multi-player chat-enabled games and platforms like Discord. TikTok gaming offers a fun, spontaneous way to follow latest gaming trends.

S

EXPLORER

SKYRIM

OUTER WILDS

Our free spirits love an open-world, sandbox game, to explore in their own time and at their own pace. Explorers take pride in discovering – they love the story, the lore and the journey. They prefer role-playing games (RPGs) and cosy set-ups. You'll find them watching others on Twitch, watching walk-throughs on YouTube and finding the latest hints & tips!

For Explorers, games are the ultimate escape. They will often engage in the full fan experience, reading the book and watching the TV-series as well as playing the game. If there is a franchise to immerse themselves in, they will buy the merch!

ACHIEVER

ELDEN RING

Baldur's Gate

The completionist – they'll tell you they are proper gamers and they have the badges to prove it. These guys love a 100%, medals, achievements and badges. They want master the game and they revel in the personal challenge. They'll grind till they've got the rewards that satisfy their gamer type. Achievers are ambitious and single-minded, they do it to for their own satisfaction and they enjoy the praise that comes from being a skilled player. They're dedicated and tend to distance themselves from the casual gamer.

Achievers love a challenge. They can be content creators, videoing their achievements and using social to help others with solutions. They use Twitch & YouTube to live streaming their finest moments.

COMPETITOR

CALL OF DUTY®

LEAGUE of LEGENDS

Competitive to the core, the Competitor wants to win at any cost. If Explorers are out to chill, then Competitors love the adrenaline and high stake tension. No NPC's for these gamers, it's all about players vs. players. If there is a leaderboard, these guys will be vying for top spot. They actively look to enhance and improve the stakes, so buying buffs and upgrades is fair play. The Competitor is there to stand out and show off.

Always looking for latest drop to give them the edge, the Competitor is happy to pay. These gamers look to enhance their chances inside and outside the game, from accessories, to snacks and drinks. Gaming is an event to them they often want to flex in.

UNDERSTANDING OUR GAMERS IS THE BEST WAY TO TAILOR YOU BRAND ACTIVATIONS BOTH AUTHENTICALLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Gamers can be protective of their passion. If a company messes with their favourite games or tries to shove something in their face they don't like, they'll let you know. So be respectful, be real and understand the game.

The good news is, it can work! Studies show that gamers are actually more likely to trust and remember brands they see advertised and activating in their favourite games.

OVERALL, TO SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATE INTO THE GAMING COMMUNITY, BRANDS NEED TO GRASP THE CORE ATTRIBUTES THAT DEFINE GAMERS:

TRIBAL

Gamers often belong to tight-knit communities centered around specific games or genres. These tribes have their own cultures, languages, and norms.

PROUD

Gamers take pride in their skills, achievements, and knowledge. They value authenticity and can quickly spot inauthentic attempts to engage with them.

DEDICATED

Gamers invest significant time and effort into their hobby. They are committed and passionate, often spending hours perfecting their gameplay and engaging with gaming content.

SOCIAL

Gamers enjoy connecting with others who share their interests. They participate in forums, watch streams, and join online groups to discuss strategies, share experiences, and build friendships.

EXPERIENCED

Gamers are savvy consumers who are familiar with digital landscapes. They expect high-quality, engaging content and have little patience for subpar experiences.

Created by Emma & Paul

SERIOUSLY PLAYFUL

part of

S Golley Slater

Want to know how we can help you?
Contact us via emma.thompson@golleyslater.co.uk