

Gaming Goes Mainstream, but Play Varies by Gender and Age

ARTICLE |

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Gone are the days of the male-dominated gaming landscape, as the activity has expanded to include a wider variety of players on more devices. For marketers, it's important to understand the nuances of the gaming audience to effectively reach these players.

Gaming has gone mainstream, with 86% of internet users worldwide noting that they have gamed on at least one device within the past month. That figure climbed to 92% among those ages 16 to 24, according to a March 2019 report from [GlobalWebIndex](#).

What Devices Do Internet Users Worldwide Use to Play Video Games?

% of respondents, by demographic, Q3 2018

	Smartphone	Desktop/ laptop	Game console	Any device
Gender				
Male	66%	54%	27%	88%
Female	66%	41%	18%	83%
Age				
16-24	74%	55%	24%	92%
25-34	73%	51%	27%	91%
35-44	67%	45%	25%	86%
45-54	53%	42%	18%	76%
55-64	37%	37%	9%	71%
Income level				
Bottom 25%	66%	50%	19%	88%
Mid 50%	67%	49%	22%	86%
Top 25%	66%	47%	31%	87%

Note: n=113,932

Source: GlobalWebIndex, "Gaming: The trends to know in 2019," March 7, 2019

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Boosted by global smartphone ownership, mobile has become the most popular channel for gaming—and this holds true for all ages and income levels. Women are 25 percentage points more likely to play games on their smartphones than on PCs, and they are over three times more likely to play games on their phones than on consoles.

These players are typically engaging with a wide variety of free games—only one in five mobile gamers have purchased a mobile game in the past month—but can be monetized in ways such as in-game fees and rewarded video ads.

The report data shows that gaming tendencies of both genders are fairly similar; the percentage of men who said they play games on their smartphones was the same as that of female respondents (66%). More than half of males play on PCs, and over a quarter play on consoles. But men are 13 percentage points more likely than women to game on PCs and 9 points more likely to play on consoles.

People in higher income brackets are more likely to be console gamers than are those in lower income brackets. Also, console gamers are roughly 40% more likely to be in the top 10% income bracket.

While console games are typically not ad-supported, the console itself allows consumers to engage with various forms of online TV, browse

the internet, upload content to social networks and shop online. So for the marketer missing out on reaching these gamers via in-game ads, they can reorganize their approach for other console-related activities.

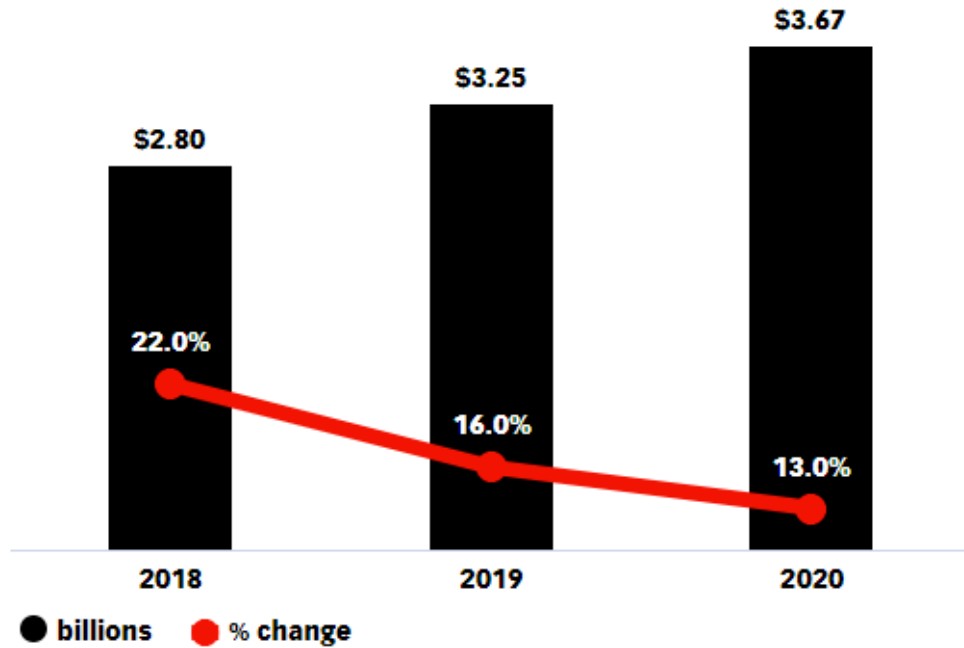
As respondents get older, the ratio of men to women who play games on their phones and PCs evens out, as does the popularity of the devices they're engaging with. Fifty-three percent of internet users in the 45-to-54 cohort play games on their smartphone, topping desktop popularity by 11 points. But players ages 55 to 64 are equally as likely to play games on their phones as on desktops. These older players typically prefer online board/card games (12%), puzzle/platform (11%) and shooter games (11%).

And while not all players consider themselves "gamers," eight in 10 respondents who do not list gaming as an interest still play on their smartphones. Marketers have the ability to capture both gamers and nongamers with the proper targeting and timing.

This year, we forecast that US advertisers will spend \$3.25 billion on ads placed within video games on mobile, desktop or console platforms, a 16.0% increase over 2018.

Gaming Ad Revenues

US, 2018-2020



Source: eMarketer, February 2019 (see below for notes and methodologies).

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That figure is expected to reach \$3.67 billion by the end of 2020.