

# Netflix's Cyberpunk series shows why streamers want video game adaptations

Article

**The news:** Maligned upon release two years ago, the Polish video game **Cyberpunk 2077** is having a renaissance thanks to a **Netflix** adaptation that propelled sales and showed the

power of video game-to-TV adaptations that are taking over streaming services.

**Cyberpunk's comeback story:** When acclaimed Polish game studio **CD Projekt Red** finally released the highly anticipated game in 2020 after years of development, it was a catastrophe. Plagued with controversy, the barely functional game was in such poor shape that it was removed from the **PlayStation** store.

- Last month, its fortunes reversed. An anime adaptation by acclaimed Japanese studio **Trigger** released exclusively on Netflix has propelled the game back into the zeitgeist, leading it to dominate sales charts for weeks—yesterday, CD Projekt Red announced the game had **sold 20 million copies**.
- The Netflix series represents the growing power of international and foreign-language media—Cyberpunk began life as an '80s tabletop game in England, was adapted to a video game by an acclaimed Polish game studio, and adapted again by a Japanese studio for release under an American media company.
- But more than that, it also shows why streaming services are racing to partner with game developers and publishers for adaptations of popular franchises, especially as domestic subscriptions slow.

**A win-win scenario:** Cyberpunk's adaptation isn't the first crossover event of its kind, but its success shows that both developers and streamers can increase their audience by taking game franchises beyond video games.

- Just about every major streaming service has a video game adaptation that's already aired or is in the works. Cyberpunk isn't even Netflix's first: It released **League of Legends**-based show "**Arcane**" last year, a live action "**Resident Evil**" show, and has released anime adaptations of games like **Tekken** and **Castlevania**, to name a few.
- **Amazon Prime Video** is working on an adaptation of **Sony's God of War** franchise, as well as a **Fallout** series; **Paramount+** recently aired a show based on sci-fi shooter **Halo**; **HBO Max** just released a trailer for its adaptation of **The Last of Us** which will be co-produced by the game's original director; and **Apple TV+** has a workplace comedy about a game studio produced in part by publisher **Ubisoft**.
- Why the sudden surge in adaptations? Games surged to a height of popularity during the pandemic, driving subscription-starved streamers to turn to them for new ideas and viewers.

- Video game adaptations also expand Netflix’s audience ahead of the launch of its ad-supported tier. Through Netflix and other streamers, advertisers have a brand-friendly way to reach gaming audiences, rather than having to navigate the fraught and often [controversial space](#) that is online video game content.

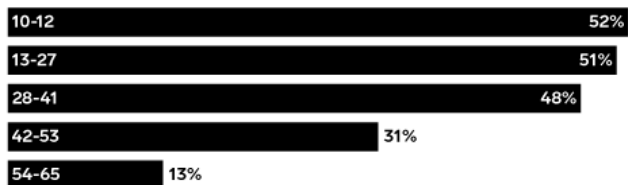
**The big takeaway:** Partnering with streaming services is a no-brainer for game developers and publishers looking to expand the value of their intellectual property. But streamers will have to court publishers; games have grown just fine without streaming adaptations, while streamers are the ones on the back foot.

- Publishers of new, big hits have rapidly sought out streaming deals. **Bandai Namco** announced that it’s looking to expand the IP of hit game **Elden Ring** “beyond games,” and **Electronic Arts** is working with Amazon to adapt last year’s game **It Takes Two**.

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**Share of Internet Users Worldwide Who Spend Money on Video Games, by Age, April 2022**

*% of respondents in each group*



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Source: Newzoo, "How Consumers Are Engaging with Games in 2022," June 15, 2022

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