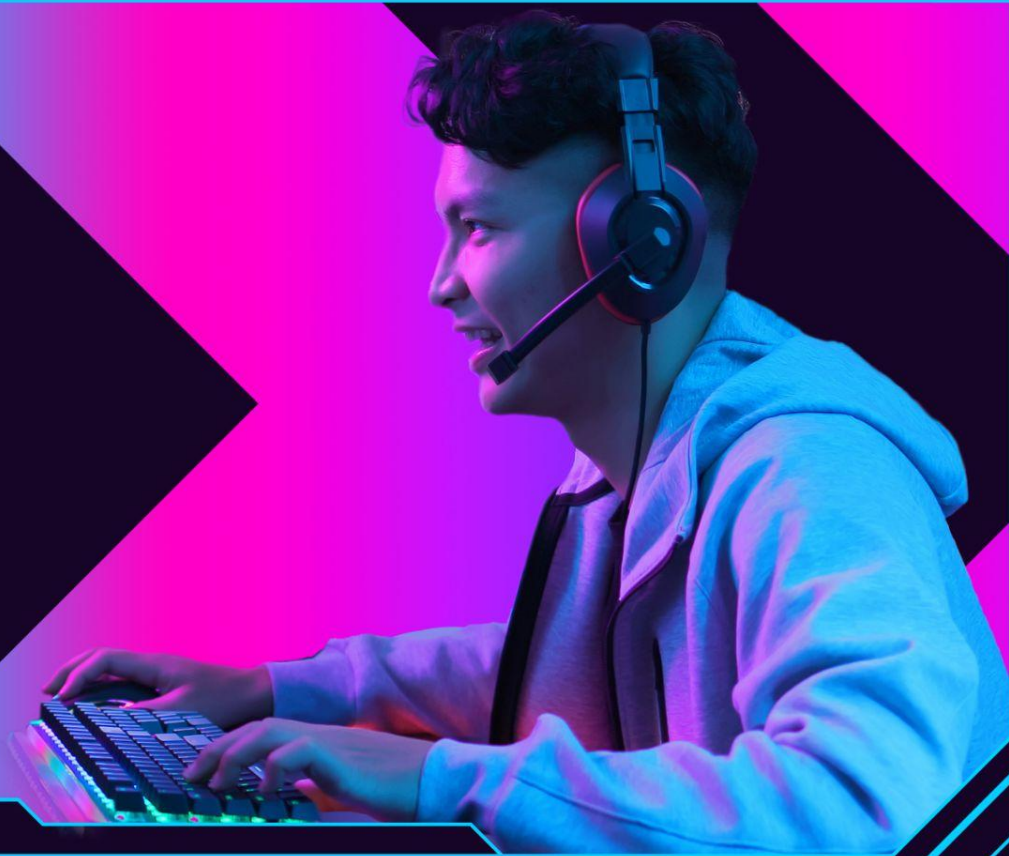


UNiDAYS

GAMING REPORT 2023



Contents.

03

Intro

04

Why do Gen Z play games?

05

What's their go to gaming genre?

06

How much are Gen Z spending on gaming?

07

Additional content is a treasure trove for boosting revenue

08

Crack the Gen Z gaming code

09

Appendix

10

Get in front of Gen Z



Intro.

Gaming brands, listen up. Put the wheels in motion to create lasting bonds with Gen Z now. You'll benefit in the short term, because **Gen Z's enthusiasm for games is sky-high**. According to our study, which featured 2,237 student members across the USA, UK and Australia:

3 in 4

Students currently play video games

60%

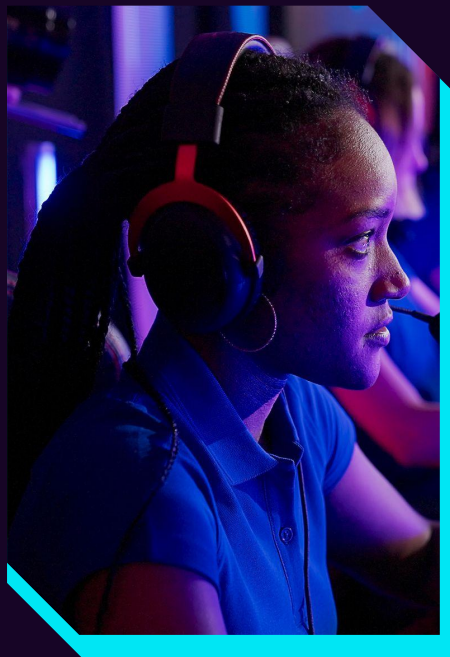
Play weekly

1 in 3

Identify themselves as a "gamer"

2 in 3

Gamers will spend over 5 hours per week gaming



And, brands that win over committed Gen Z gamers will enjoy long-term boons. Oxford Economics [found that¹](#) **Gen Z's future earnings will reach \$3.5 trillion by 2030** — a lot of coin that could potentially be spent on new hardware, video games, subscriptions and in-game purchases.

Level up your understanding of Gen Z's gaming habits and desires to craft irresistible offerings and campaigns that appeal to these tech-savvy trendsetters. We reveal why Gen Z game, the types of games they prefer, their spending capacity and how this intel can be used to benefit your brand.



Why do Gen Z play video games?

1 in 4

Are willing to spend over \$50 per month on gaming

1 in 3

UK gamers and 1 in 4 US and AUS gamers are willing to spend over \$50 on a video game

Over **90% of students play video games because it's fun** compared to 16% who play competitively. Gen Zs might be serious about gaming but they don't care about being number one on the leaderboards. They're having too much fun exploring epic virtual worlds.

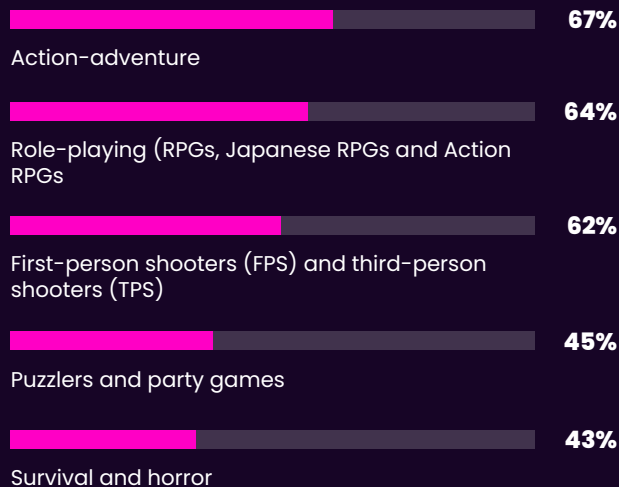
82% press play to relax and support their mental wellbeing. Given the current climate of

uncertainty, it's no surprise that this demographic seek solace in video games that [release dopamine](#)² and provide a means of relaxation (when enjoyed in moderation). Promote these aspects of video gaming and highlight how your products can contribute to this experience. You'll forge powerful alliances by emotionally connecting with Gen Z.

What's their go-to gaming genre?



Gen Z gamers like to play games across every genre, with adventure, action, casual, role-playing, strategy and massively multiplayer online (MMOs) games their top picks. They're favourite subgenres include:



Students love to take on the role of hero: a big draw of action-adventures and role-playing games. Take inspiration from Bungie's "[Become Legend](#)" campaign³ for its game "Destiny", which sold over \$325 million⁴ at retail in its first five days — the biggest new franchise launch of all time. It's a first-person shooter but Bungie honed in on the role-playing element for its campaign. Featuring live-action ads portraying players as heroic and powerful guardians, battling against evil and saving the galaxy.

[Deloitte also found that](#)⁵ **58% of Gen Z adult gamers say playing video games helps them stay connected to others.** No doubt reliance on video games for socialisation has increased since the pandemic, particularly for these digital natives.

Nintendo Switch's "Animal Crossing: New Horizon" was released at the start of the pandemic, which largely contributed to [its success](#)⁶ — giving

gamers a way to socialise with friends and family virtually while staying safe at home. Nintendo also totally nailed it with Gen Z gamers by promoting the [game's social side](#)⁷ in its brand positioning, trailers and ads.

"Animal Crossing: New Horizons" rose to cult status after its release. User-generated content (UGC) was a massive contributor. Fans, both new and loyal, were obsessed with sharing every aspect of their experience, from their custom-built towns to their fashionable outfits. Even [celebrities](#)⁹ took to social media to share their love of the game. As [97% of Gen Z consumers](#)⁹ **say social media is their top source of shopping inspiration**, brands leveraging UGC to promote their games will seize unmissable opportunities to reach this target audience.

How much are Gen Z spending on gaming?

Despite limited funds as they begin working, Gen Z is finding ways to prioritise and fund their passion for gaming:

1 in 4

Gen Z gamers are willing to spend over \$50 per month on gaming in general

1 in 3

UK gamers are willing to spend over £50 on a video game; in the US and AUS, 1 in 4 are willing to spend the same

Most new video games, especially console games, retail for over \$60 these days. When a game is a must-play, student gamers are ready to fork over a lot of cash. Others might wait for it to drop down in price or weigh up its worth via reviews.

Our 2023 travel [research](#)¹⁰ also found that **81% of students say good value for money is a critical purchasing factor.**

Offer discounts or bundle deals that provide great bang for your buck to drive sales. And promote the longevity and replay value of your video games to convince hesitant students that your game is a smart and worthwhile purchase.

Student gamers want new consoles, PCs and laptops. But most don't intend to buy

one this year. When the time is right, they'll use their savings or income from a part-time job. 1 in 5 will use a side-hustle to fund their new devices, such [as selling their old clothes](#)¹¹. 17% will use a credit card, and only 14% will use a Buy Now, Pay Later scheme.

Concerning consoles, upgrades are likely to be circumstantial; PlayStation 6 and Xbox Series X 2 are [not expected until 2028](#)¹² at the earliest. For PC and gaming laptop purchases, share reviews, user-generated content and other trustworthy media to make your product and brand stand out. Because [71% of Gen Z](#)¹³ stay loyal to brands they trust, even if the brand in question makes a mistake.

Additional content is a treasure trove for boosting revenue



Nearly 2 in 3 students have previously purchased additional content, such as expansion packs and in-game cosmetics, for video games.

Take notes from Blizzard Entertainment, which [sold 3.3 million copies](#)¹⁴ of its fifth World of Warcraft expansion pack, “Warlords of Draenor” in 24 hours. This was partly due to the parent game’s popularity, but also thanks to ingenious marketing strategies. For example, in “[The Iron Tide](#)”¹⁵, a pre-expansion patch, players were able to adjust to the game’s changes before the new expansion launched. But it also gave them **a taste of the new content** that would be available in “Warlords of Draenor”, generating anticipation and excitement.

And in “Roblox”, a portal to a digital world many regard as the “metaverse”, [three out of four Gen Zs](#)¹⁶ spend money on digital fashion as an outlet of self-expression. [Deloitte also found](#)¹⁷ **personalising their game character helps 88% of male and 73% of female Gen Z gamers express themselves.**

Add unique virtual fashion and other in-game purchases that resonate with Gen Z’s values. It will give your game an extra boost of personalization and immersion, encouraging in-game purchases and boosting profits.



Crack the Gen Z gaming code

21% of Gen Z adults¹⁸ say gaming is their favourite source of entertainment. This percentage will likely increase if brands continue to cater to Gen Z's values and interests. Delivering fun, relaxing, personalised and immersive gaming experiences that are expertly marketed and cleverly priced.

Remember, when it comes to gaming, Gen Z:

- Want fun and relaxing experiences that help them de-stress
- Love inserting themselves into the role of world-saving heroes
- Play games to stay connected with others
- Are highly responsive to clever marketing strategies, including word-of-mouth marketing, that build hype
- Are willing to splash a lot of cash on gaming per month
- Will eventually buy PCs and gaming laptops from companies that build trust now
- Will pay for additional content like virtual fashion because they enjoy personalising their game character to express themselves

Will you accept the quest of winning over Gen Z? The journey will require great ingenuity, but the rewards will be bountiful. The choice is yours, adventurer. Choose wisely.

Appendix

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|---|---|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Oxford Economics, 2021 | 10 | UNiDAYS, 2023 |
| 2 | Game Quitters UK | 11 | UNiDAYS, 2023 |
| 3 | YouTube, 2014 | 12 | Pocket-lint, 2022 |
| 4 | Wikipedia, 2023 | 13 | Edelman, 2022 |
| 5 | Deloitte, 2022 | 14 | Eurogamer, 2014 |
| 6 | Statistica, 2022 | 15 | IGN, 2014 |
| 7 | YouTube, 2020 | 16 | Roblox, 2022 |
| 8 | Twitter, 2020 | 17 | Deloitte, 2021 |
| 9 | The Influencer Marketing Factor, 2021 | 18 | Deloitte, 2022 |

Get in front of Gen Z

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