Female Gamer Survey
2019
Background
In 2018, we conducted an online survey with female gamers in the UK.

In 2019, we re-ran the same study but this time including gamers from the US as well.

We retained the same survey structure, but also added questions around eSports and attitudes towards mobile gaming.
We spoke to a range of console and PC gamers

All respondents were female, aged 16+ and played video games on a PC or console at least monthly...

PlayStation 42%
Nintendo 45%
Xbox 38%
PC 42%

Console only 58%
PC Only 19%
Gaming habits
How female gamers compare in the UK and US

Overview:
Overall, female gamers in the US and UK are very similar in their general gaming behaviours, but there are slight differences in more specific behaviours and attitudes.

Perceptions:
The UK tends to have a slightly more negative perception of the games industry in terms of its gender equality and representation.

More gamers in the US have experienced abuse from male counterparts while gaming.

Streaming:
Female gamers in the US are more likely to stream themselves or others gaming, and watch eSports (with the latter having a bigger presence in the US).

Mobile:
Gamers in the US seem to take mobile gaming more seriously, more likely to play RPG/strategy/action-adventure genres, whereas the UK don’t feel it’s as good an experience as on PC/console.

We’ll pull out some of these differences as we go through...
Gaming habits: female gamers are playing an average of 7hrs a week, with online multiplayer becoming more popular.

**Top genres on console/PC**
- 65% Action/Adventure
- 57% Puzzle/card
- 36% Strategy
- 30% Platform games
- 28% Simulation
- 27% Shooters
- 27% Music/dance

**Genres <27% not shown**

Top genres amongst males tend to be: Shooters, Sports, Action/Adventure, Strategy

**Proportion playing online multiplayer games has increased since last year...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>52%</td>
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</table>

Q1.6 Time spent / Q1.4 Genres / Q1.7 Multiplayer
Base: All female gamers (1007)
2 in 5 don’t consider themselves as ‘proper’ gamers. They tend to play to relax and unwind, but still want to feel challenged.

What’s important to them?
- Feeling challenged: 46%
- Clear levels/ progression: 45%
- Attractive visuals: 45%
- Gameworld exploration: 34%
- Immersive storyline: 31%

Elements low in priority are multiplayer/community related.

Base: All female gamers
When looking for the next game to play, most seek advice from their peers, although online reviews also play a key role.

Most look to friends/peers for advice on which games to play
- Friends’ recommendations: 52%
- Word of mouth: 52%

Online channels are also very influential
- Online player reviews: 39%
- Gameplay videos/walkthroughs: 26%
- Online expert reviews: 25%
- Game charts/rankings: 18%

UK are more likely to use online reviews from either players (41%) or experts (29%).

Base: All female gamers (1007)
1 in 3 are watching other gamers online regularly, but many feel there is a lack of female streamers.

**Watch other people play games online (weekly+)**

- **34%**
  - 38% (US)
  - 30% (UK)

**Attitudes to streaming? (those who stream weekly+)**

- **58%** There aren’t enough female gamers streaming
- **45%** A lot of content seems sexist

**Why do they stream others?**

- **52%** Learn tips
- **48%** Pure entertainment
- **42%** Follow favourite gamers
- **37%** For the humour

**By gaming frequency**

- <6hrs: 28%
- 6-15 hrs: 43%
- 16+ hrs: 49%

Base: All female gamers (1007), Those who stream others weekly+ (321)
1 in 4 watch eSports regularly, although majority feel there needs to be better female representation here

- **Watch eSports (weekly+)**
  - 24%
  - 26% (US)
  - 22% (UK)

- **By gaming frequency**
  - <6hrs: 20%
  - 6-15hrs: 32%
  - 16+hrs: 32%

- **% Agree**
  - 65%: eSports community should organise more **mixed gender tournaments**
  - 60%: There is a great **lack of female gamers** in eSports
  - 60%: I would **watch more** eSports if there were **more female teams** or tournaments
  - 59%: Gaming community isn't doing **enough to encourage** female gamers in eSports

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*Base: All female gamers (1007), Those who watch eSports (221)*
Abuse and discrimination
Level of abuse has not changed since 2018

1 in 3 female gamers have experienced abuse or discrimination from male gamers

Where?

- 65% Playing online
- 36% In online forums/discussions
- 28% Playing with friends offline

1 in 2 amongst those who game online

US gamers are most likely to experience abuse from male counterparts:
- 40% US
- 28% UK

Base: All Female gamers (1007), Those who have experienced abuse (318)
Female gamers are experiencing a range of abuse

- 32% being sent inappropriate content or messages from male gamers
- 31% verbal abuse from male gamers while playing online multiplayers
- 31% sexual harassment from male gamers
- 30% negative actions of gameplay in online games from male gamers

- 26% excluded from participation in games because of gender
- 22% verbal abuse from male gamers offline
- 15% abuse on social media/other digital channels
- 14% threats of rape from male gamers

Base: Female gamers who have experienced abuse (319)

US gamers appear to experience a broader range of abuse both online and offline.
Abuse and comments are often very graphic

I was told that there are never real girl gamers, that we just say we’re into video games so we can get dick. He also then said if he knew where I lived he would stalk me down and rape me.
Aged 25-34 | PS4, Nintendo Switch

“What’s your snapchat, bitch give me your Snapchat... fine go make me a sandwich in the kitchen because that’s all women are good for.”
Aged 16-24 | PS4

I was told that he would find where I live and rape and kill me in my sleep and then possibly kill my whole family.
Aged 16-24 | Xbox One, Wii, PC

I’ve had rape and sexual assault used as a joke and when I said ‘hey that’s not cool or funny’ I was told ‘Ugh, come on, I’m only kidding. Women like you are so uptight.’
Aged 25-34 | Nintendo Switch, Wii, PC
This has significant impact on their online gaming...

Fear around revealing gender in online games has dropped slightly since 2018

- **U.S.** 33%
- **U.K.** 28%

These patterns are consistent across the US and UK, although online gamers in the US are more likely to avoid revealing their gender.

Base: All female gamers (1007), Those who play online multiplayer games (428)
Progress has been made but more needs to be done to reassure female gamers that there are mechanisms in place to help prevent abuse.

There has been positive change since last year...

More of those who have experienced abuse, feel there are adequate processes in place to deal with such instances...

...However, there’s still a way to go.

- The challenge of finding the **balance** between free speech and ensuring online gaming is a **safe environment** is a tough one.
- Riot games started researching into this over 5 years ago and have found ways to reduce the level of verbal abuse, however, it is a **slow process**.
- Some of the methods being used by Riot, and others like Ubisoft and Blizzard, include **rewards for sportsmanship** and virtuous behaviour, using **tips** or **stats** to encourage positive comments, **self-policing** from players etc.
Attitudes to the industry
Representation of females in the games industry has improved but there are still disparities in pay

Both the UK and US are similar in their perceptions of the industry, being largely positive. Although the UK are more likely to view it as masculine and sexist

Perceptions of female representation in the industry have improved slightly, but there is still a way to go

‘Women are very/ quite well represented in the gaming industry’

52% think they aren’t well represented

A recent gamesindustry.biz article reported an increase in the gender pay gap in the UK games industry, despite women increasing their representation throughout gaming. Of the 19 games-related companies GamesIndustry.biz identified, every single one paid women a lower median wage than men.

Base: All female gamers (1007)
Female character development has seen improvements all round, although 3 in 5 still feel they are often oversexualised.

- Female characters are often oversexualised
- There are not enough strong female characters
- Female characters are under-represented
- There is lack of racial diversity with female characters

I often feel I can relate to female characters in video games.

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**Base:** All female gamers (1007)
Similarly to last year, most female gamers recognise that progress is being made

- **48%** Number of female characters has improved
- **43%** Depiction of female characters has improved
- **42%** More games are being designed with females in mind
- **40%** The industry is doing more to encourage female gamers

% of those agreeing with the statement
Base: All female gamers
Mobile gaming
Majority of female gamers also play mobile games regularly, although these are more likely to be puzzle games than action/adventure...

Genres played on mobile

- Word puzzle: 52%
- Quiz: 41%
- Arcade: 39%
- Card/dice: 37%
- Strategy: 35%
- Match 3/Linker puzzle: 32%
- Action/Adventure: 35%

Gamers in the US are more likely to be playing mobile games regularly...

- 81% US
- 66% UK

US gamers play a broader range, especially more ‘midcore’ genres:
- Strategy: 38%
- Action/adventure: 36%
- Shooter: 18%

UK gamers are more likely to play Quiz: 47%

Base: All female gamers (1007)
Mobile games are usually played more casually, but doesn’t mean they can’t offer a similar experience to PC/ console

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes to mobile games</th>
<th>% selecting statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I play to switch off &amp; unwind</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only play for short bursts</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to be challenged</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would never pay for mobile games</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only play mobile games to kill time</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not as serious as console/ PC</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wouldn't class them as video games</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not as immersive as console/PC</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get bored with them very quickly</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mobile games tend to be played in shorter bursts, to relax and unwind...however, players still want to feel challenged.

Although 1 in 5 think mobile games aren’t as serious as PC/console games, this doesn’t mean to say they can’t be immersive and engaging.
Half of mobile gamers are females, however, games are often still perceived as being geared towards men

In the US, around 65% of females aged 10-65 play mobile games*. The majority actually prefer to play on mobile. However, the opportunity is not being fully utilised as many games are still being made with males in mind.

- A lot of midcore/hardcore mobile games are geared towards males: 48%
- Mobile games for young children instil gender stereotypes in their design: 44%
- A lot of mobile games use sexist stereotypes in their design: 43%
- I am put off by games that look overly 'girly': 42%

**Base: All female gamers (1007)**

*According to a recent study conducted by Google Play and NewZoo*