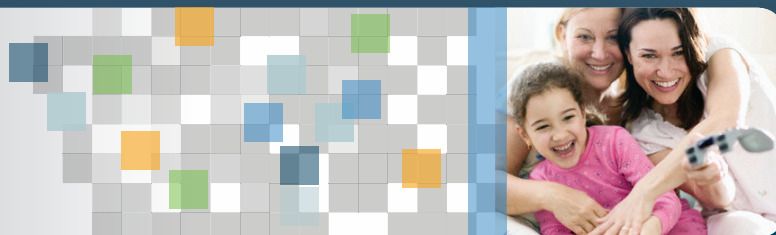


games

AND FAMILY LIFE



entertainment
software
association



Video games are a source of family entertainment, with parents, children and grandparents all vying for the controls. Today's parents increasingly view video games as a positive and often educational way to interact with their children. In fact, games in the "family entertainment" category are one of the most popular segments of the video game market. Parents now have a variety of resources available to help them monitor and evaluate games, ensuring that only the games they deem suitable make it into their children's hands.



FUN FOR EVERY GENERATION

The generation that grew up playing the Atari and humming the tune of Nintendo's *Super Mario Brothers* is now in adulthood, many with children of their own. As this generation and the video game industry mature, these men and women are continuing to play video games, and their children and parents are joining them. The introduction of new games such as Harmonix's *Rock Band* and consoles such as the Nintendo Wii further broaden the identity of a gamer to now embrace every demographic, from grandparents to toddlers.

According to the Entertainment Software Association's (ESA) *2011 Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry*, 72 percent of American households now play video games. The average gamer is 37 years old and has been playing for 12 years. Industry research reveals some other interesting demographic facts about gamers:

- **Women** - Forty-two percent of all players are women and women over 18 years of age are one of the industry's fastest growing demographics. Today, adult women represent a greater portion of the game-playing population (37 percent) than boys age 17 or younger (13 percent).
- **Seniors** - Twenty-nine percent of people over the age of 50 play games, an increase from nine percent in 1999. This figure is sure to continue rising in coming years as nursing homes and senior centers across the nation incorporate video games into their activities.
- **Social and Mobile** - Sixty-five percent of gamers play games with other gamers in person. Fifty-five percent play games on their phones or handheld device.



PARENTS AND VIDEO GAMES

Parents are a growing segment of the game playing population. According to the ESA's 2011 *Essential Facts* report, 45 percent of parents play games with their children at least weekly. These parents also see several benefits of entertainment software. Sixty-eight percent of parents believe that game play provides mental stimulation or education, 57 percent believe games encourage their family to spend time together, and 54 percent believe that game play helps their children connect with their friends. Additionally, 59 percent of parents believe that computer and video games provide more physical activity now than five years ago.

When asked why they play games with their children, parents responded:

- Because their children ask them to (85 percent);
- Because it's fun for the entire family (84 percent); and,
- Because it is a good opportunity to socialize with the child or to monitor game content (81 percent and 57 percent, respectively).

76

The percentage of the 257.2 million video games sold in 2011 rated "Everyone (E)," "Teen (T)" and "Everyone 10+ (E10+)."



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT GAMES

According to research compiled by the NPD Group, on average, an astonishing eight games were sold every second of every day of 2010. Games in the "family entertainment" genre accounted for more than nine percent of all games sold in 2010.

Many family video games reprise characters from popular family movies like DreamWorks Animation's "Shrek." The video game *Shrek Treasure Hunt*, by TDK Mediactive, enables players to take on the role of Shrek through 10 related games. Other family video games capitalize on sports. Traditional family games are even getting into the mix with titles like *Hasbro Family Game Night*, published by Electronic Arts, where parents play classic board games such as *Sorry!*, *Yahtzee* and *Battleship* with their children on the Nintendo Wii console. A number of titles developed for Microsoft's motion-sensing Xbox360 Kinect system also offer family-friendly games, such as *Game Party: In Motion*, which features 16 different mini games including horseshoes, darts and table hockey. Microsoft's *Kinect: Disneyland Adventures* offers families a chance to take a virtual tour of the California theme park, meet and interact with some of Disney's famous characters, and play a collection of 12 mini games based on well-known park rides.

Many parents and teachers take advantage of the educational value that the "edutainment" genre of video games provides. Edutainment games embed typical core studies into video games for kids, so they can hone in on math, science and other skills while playing. One example of an edutainment video game is *DimensionM*, a role-playing video game created by Tabula Digita in which students must answer rapid-fire math questions as they take part in 3-D adventures.

12

The number of years the average game player has been playing computer and video games.



MONITORING VIDEO GAME CONTENT

Parents take an active role in reviewing the computer and video games their children play. According to the ESA's research, nine out of ten parents pay attention to the content of the games their children play, and parents are involved in the purchase or rental of games 91 percent of the time. In addition, 85 percent of all parents (gamer and non-gamer

alike) who vote say that they, not government, retailers or game publishers, should take the most responsibility for monitoring children's exposure to games that may have content inappropriate for minors. Moreover, almost two-thirds of parents agree that it is not the role of government to regulate game sales in an attempt to protect children from video game content.

Parents use the Entertainment Software Rating Board's (ESRB) rating system when making game choices. ESRB is a nonprofit self-regulatory body, that assigns age and content ratings to computer and video games, enforces industry-adopted advertising guidelines and helps ensure responsible online privacy practices. The ratings provided by the ESRB enable parents to make informed decisions about the computer and video games they choose for their families, based both on age-appropriateness and concise, impartial descriptions of content that may have triggered the rating or that may otherwise be of interest. In 2008, the ESRB introduced expanded game rating summaries, which are brief descriptions of the content in a game and provide a rationale for why it received a particular rating. The ESRB also offers a mobile website and rating search app that allows parents to find additional information about a game by taking a photo of a game box, or entering the game's title on their mobile phone.

The entertainment software industry has universally adopted the ESRB rating system; retailers support it and parents and opinion leaders consider it the best entertainment rating system in the country. Independent surveys conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates found that 85 percent of parents with children who play video games are aware of the ESRB rating system, and 98 percent believe it is helpful in choosing games for their children. Additionally, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) credited the video game industry with "outpacing" other entertainment industries in curtailing the marketing of mature-rated products to children. In fact, the FTC's latest undercover shopper survey revealed that video game retailers are the strictest and most effective in enforcing age rating policies. According to the survey, retailers prevented 87 percent of attempted purchases of Mature-rated games by children under the age of 17. The U.S. Supreme Court also affirmed the value of the ESRB in *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association/ESA*. The Court noted in its decision that the ESRB largely meets the needs of parents who wish to monitor their children's game play. Parents can find more information on ESRB's website at www.esrb.org or the mobile site, m.esrb.org.

Many parents also take advantage of parental controls that are included in game consoles. For example, on Sony's handheld PlayStation Portable console and its PlayStation 3 console, parents can block games and movies they do not want their children to view. Microsoft, with the support of the Parent Teacher Association, unveiled a new tool for its Xbox 360 that allows parents to limit the amount of time kids spend on video games. Parents can learn more about Microsoft's features at www.xbox.com/en-US/support/familysettings/.

Parents have also created their own resources for video game information. Andrew Bub maintains GamerDad.com, a site at which he and other volunteer parents rate video games. Gamer parents and professional writers provide articles, community forums, and updated video game reviews to keep parents informed about specific video games.

98

The percentage of parents who believe the ESRB rating system is helpful in choosing games for their children.

94

The percentage of games rated by the ESRB in 2010 that received a rating of "Everyone (E)," "Everyone 10+ (E10+)" or "Teen (T)."



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