2019
ESSENTIAL FACTS
About the Computer and Video Game Industry
The Entertainment Software Association (ESA) released 2019 Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry in May, 2019. Ipsos conducted the annual research for the ESA. The study is the most in-depth and targeted survey of its kind, gathering data from more than 4,000 Americans about their video game playing habits and attitudes. The 2019 Essential Facts also includes data provided by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) and The NPD Group.

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2018 was a record-breaking year for our industry, with total video game sales exceeding $43.4 billion. Over 164 million adults in the United States play video games, and three-quarters of all Americans have at least one gamer in their household. It’s now more important than ever to understand who America’s video game players really are and what’s driving them.

That’s why I’m thrilled to share the *2019 Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry*. For the first time, we at the Entertainment Software Association have taken a comprehensive look at the individual Americans who enjoy video games and their lifestyles in order to better understand their profiles and interests.

The resulting data speaks for itself. Video game players represent a diverse cross-section of the American population spanning every age, gender, and ethnicity. They live healthy lives, are civically engaged, and are socially active. More than three-quarters report that video games provide them with mental stimulation (79%) as well as relaxation and stress relief (78%). The role of video games in the American family is also changing: nearly three-quarters (74%) of parents believe video games can be educational for their children, and more than half (57%) enjoy playing games with their child at least weekly.

The *2019 Essential Facts* simply illustrates what we in the industry already know to be true: we are living in the golden age of video games, and video game players are thriving.

*– Stan Pierre-Louis, Chief Executive Officer, Entertainment Software Association*
65% of American adults play video games. The average age of a gamer is 33 years old.
90% of parents pay attention to the games their child plays.

59% of gamers are certain they will vote in the next presidential election.

75% of Americans have at least one gamer in their household.

Gamers are more likely to have a creative hobby (drawing, singing, writing, etc.)

- 56% of gamers
- 49% of Average Americans

Gamers are more likely to play a musical instrument

- 32% of gamers
- 27% of Average Americans

Gamers are divided with 46% female and 54% male.
AVERAGE GAMER

65% of American adults play video games

The most common devices used for video game play among adult gamers

- 60% Smartphone
- 52% Personal computer
- 49% Dedicated game console

Most popular game genres

- 71% Casual
- 53% Action
- 47% Shooter

Gamers feel that video game play has a positive impact on their lives

- 52% of gamers are college educated
- 79% of gamers say games provide mental stimulation
- 78% of gamers say games provide relaxation and stress relief

65% of American adults play video games
54% of gamers are male
Average age for men
32

46% of gamers are female
Average age for women
34

- Overall average age of gamers is 33
- They have been playing for 14 years on average
When it comes to adult gamers

63% play with others

Adult gamers spend

4.8 hours a week played with others online

3.5 hours a week played with others in person
### Social & Lifestyle: Gamers as Compared to Average Americans

**Gamers play throughout the day**
- 52% after work
- 31% while waiting for appointments
- 27% during break at work/school
- 16% during a commute

**Gamers get the same amount of sleep at night**
- 6.8 hrs
- 7 hrs

**Gamers are just as likely to**
- Take camping/hiking trips: 2.7 trips per year (Gamers) vs. 2.5 trips per year (Average Americans)
- Vacation internationally: 0.8 trips per year (Gamers) vs. 0.7 trips per year (Average Americans)
- Exercise: 4.1 hrs/wk (Gamers) vs. 3.9 hrs/wk (Average Americans)

**Gamers are more likely to**
- Have a creative hobby (drawing, singing, writing, etc.): 56% (Gamers) vs. 49% (Average Americans)
- Play a musical instrument: 32% (Gamers) vs. 27% (Average Americans)
- Meditate regularly: 32% (Gamers) vs. 27% (Average Americans)
- Be vegetarian: 17% (Gamers) vs. 13% (Average Americans)

**Gamers are civically engaged**
- 59% are certain they will vote in the next presidential election

**Political Affiliations**
- 37% Democrat
- 33% Republican
- 18% Independents
- 12% Other
Parents of Gamers

Parents of Gamers

87% of parents are aware of ESRB ratings > 98% of them are confident that ratings are accurate

90% of parents pay attention to the games their child plays

77% of parents regularly use the ESRB ratings

Parents limit the amount of time spent on the following activities

- Playing Computer & Video Games: 49%
- Browsing the internet: 40%
- Streaming TV Shows: 38%
- Participating in social media: 34%
- Watching TV (Live): 34%
- Watching TV (Pre-recorded): 26%
- Watching TV (On-Demand): 23%
- Going to the Movies: 20%

ESRB RATING DATA

Of the 2,768 physical and downloadable console games assigned ratings by the ESRB in 2018:

- E (Everyone): 42% received
- E10+ (Everyone 10+): 19% received
- T (Teen): 30% received
- M (Mature 17+): 9% received
Among parents of gamers

57% of parents play games with their child at least weekly

74% of parents believe video games are educational
70% of families have a child who plays video games.
75% of Americans have at least one gamer in their household.

When it comes to households, 21% of gamers are under 18.

87% of parents require permission for new game purchases.

91% of the most frequent purchasers of console, PC, and mobile games in gamer households are adults.

Average age of most frequent game purchasers for:
- PC: 38
- Smartphone: 37
- Console: 33
Male Millennial Gamers

AGES: 18-34

FAVORITE GENRES: Action, Shooters & Sports Games

FAVORITE GAMES: God of War, Madden NFL and Fortnite

Female Millennial Gamers

AGES: 18-34

FAVORITE GENRES: Casual & Action Games

FAVORITE GAMES: Candy Crush, Assassin’s Creed, Tomb Raider
FAVORITE GAMES:

- **69%** of male Millennial gamers most often play games on their game console.
- **83%** of male Millennial gamers most often play Action games.
- **66%** of male Millennial gamers prefer to play with friends.

- **61%** of male Millennial gamers have a creative hobby (drawing, painting, singing, writing) outside of video game play.

- **59%** of male Millennial gamers have a creative hobby (drawing, painting, singing, writing) outside of video game play.

- **60%** of female Millennial gamers most often play Casual games.
- **45%** of female Millennial gamers prefer to play with friends.

- **69%** of female Millennial gamers most often play games on their Smartphone.

FAVORITE GAMES:

- **49%** Racing games (e.g., Need for Speed, Mario Kart)
- **44%** Puzzle games (e.g., Tetris)
- **42%** Party games (e.g., Super Mario Party, Go Vacation)

- **67%** of female Millennial gamers have a creative hobby (drawing, painting, singing, writing) outside of video game play.

MILLENNIAL GAMERS (18-34)
Female Gen X Gamers

AGES: 35-54

FAVORITE GENRES:
Casual Games, including Puzzle and Classic Arcades

FAVORITE GAMES:
Tetris & Pac-Man

Male Gen X Gamers

AGES: 35-54

FAVORITE GENRES:
Sports, Racing & Shooters

FAVORITE GAMES:
Forza, NBA 2K, Call of Duty
FAVORITE GAMES:

70% of female Gen X gamers most often play games on their Smartphone

81% of female Gen X gamers most often play Casual games

48% of female Gen X gamers prefer to play alone

55% believe video games can be educational

48% believe they provide mental stimulation

FAVORITE GAMES:

55% Puzzle games (e.g., Tetris)

48% Card/Casino games

34% Classic Arcade games

GEN X GAMERS (35-54)

62% of male Gen X gamers most often play games on their Smartphone

70% of male Gen X gamers most often play Casual games

40% of male Gen X gamers prefer to play with friends

55% Racing games (e.g., Need for Speed, Mario Kart)

52% Sports games

43% First Person Shooters (e.g., Call of Duty, Battlefield)

62% believe video games can be educational

68% believe they provide mental stimulation
BOOMER GAMERS (55-64)

Male Boomer Gamers
AGES: 55-64
FAVORITE GENRES: Card, Puzzle and Virtual Board Games
FAVORITE GAMES: Solitaire & Scrabble

Female Boomer Gamers
AGES: 55-64
FAVORITE GENRES: Card, Puzzle & Virtual Board Games
FAVORITE GAMES: Mahjong & Monopoly
FAVORITE GAMES:

- **66%** of male Boomer gamers most often **play games on their PC**
- **78%** of male Boomer gamers most often **play Casual games**
- **65%** of male Boomer gamers prefer to **play alone**

**FAVORITE GAMES:**

- **58%** Card/Casino games
- **35%** Puzzle games (e.g., Tetris)
- **28%** Virtual Board games (e.g., Scrabble)

**25%** of Male Boomers have been video game players for **25+ years**

**BOOMER GAMERS (55-64)**

- **58%** of female Boomer gamers most often **play games on their Smartphone**
- **77%** of female Boomer gamers most often **play Casual games**
- **58%** of female Boomer gamers prefer to **play alone**

**FAVORITE GAMES:**

- **59%** Card/Casino games
- **45%** Puzzle games (e.g., Tetris)
- **27%** Virtual Board games (e.g., Scrabble)

**22%** of Female Boomers have been video game players for **25+ years**

**ESSENTIAL FACTS 2019**
## Top 20 Best-Selling Video Games of 2018 by Units Sold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ESRB</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Call of Duty: Black Ops IIII</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Red Dead Redemption II</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NBA 2K19</td>
<td>Everyone (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Madden NFL 19</td>
<td>Everyone (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grand Theft Auto V</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Super Smash Bros. Ultimate</td>
<td>Everyone 10+ (E10+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Marvel’s Spider-Man</td>
<td>Teen (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Far Cry 5</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>God of War 2018</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Monster Hunter: World</td>
<td>Teen (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Minecraft</td>
<td>Everyone 10+ (E10+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six: Siege</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Assassin’s Creed: Odyssey</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>FIFA 19</td>
<td>Everyone (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mario Kart 8</td>
<td>Everyone (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Rocket League</td>
<td>Everyone (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds</td>
<td>Teen (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Battlefield V</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Call of Duty: WWII</td>
<td>Mature (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Super Mario Odyssey</td>
<td>Everyone 10+ (E10+)</td>
</tr>
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Source: The NPD Group/Retail Tracking Service/Digital Games Tracking Service
### Best Selling Video Game Super Genres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooter</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
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### Top 5 influences for purchase

1. **Price**: 66%
2. **Quality of graphics**: 63%
3. **Interesting story/premise**: 57%
4. **Familiar from past experiences**: 48%
5. **Continuation of favorite game series**: 46%

### Gamers say the following are useful when deciding on a purchase

1. **YouTube videos**: 39%
2. **User reviews from communities or digital storefronts**: 30%
3. **Professional reviews from online video game magazines/websites**: 29%
4. **Streaming**: 20%

### Other facts

- 49% of gamers have made a microtransaction in the last year.
- 29% of gamers pay a monthly subscription for a video game or game service.
The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS) was founded in 1996 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and recognition of the interactive arts. The organization has more than 30,000 members consisting of game developers in the United States and around the world. The mission of the AIAS is to promote and advance the worldwide interactive entertainment community; recognize outstanding achievements in the interactive arts and sciences; and host an annual awards show, the D.I.C.E. (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain) Awards, to enhance awareness of the interactive art form. Other special programs and initiatives led by the AIAS also include the prestigious D.I.C.E. Summit and D.I.C.E. Europe, bringing together the top video game designers and developers from around the world and business leaders from all major publishers to discuss the state of the industry, its trends and the future; and Into the Pixel, an exploration and celebration of the art of video games. Please visit our website at: www.interactive.org

The IGDA supports and empowers game developers around the world in achieving fulfilling and sustainable careers through connecting worldwide game developers at all stages of their careers to peers with shared interests and goals, advocating on issues that are important to the professional and personal success of game developers, and providing educational resources for students, game developers, and game development studios that help solve game development’s most difficult challenges.

The ESRB is a non-profit, self-regulatory body that assigns age and content ratings for video games and mobile apps so parents can make informed choices. It also enforces advertising guidelines adopted by the video game industry and helps companies implement responsible online and mobile privacy practices under its Privacy Certified program.

Created by the American entertainment software industry, the ESA Foundation works to make a positive difference in the lives of America’s youth by providing scholarships to the next generation of industry innovators and supporting charitable organizations and schools that leverage entertainment software and technology. The ESA Foundation receives its primary funding proceeds from the signature annual fundraiser Nite to Unite and other charitable initiatives.

NPD is the leading global provider of market information and business solutions covering brick-and-mortar, e-commerce, and emerging channels in more than 20 industries. We combine our unique data assets with analytic solutions to help our clients measure performance, predict trends, and improve results, advising them to help drive successful growth. Practice areas include apparel, appliances, automotive, beauty, books, consumer electronics, e-commerce, entertainment, fashion accessories, food consumption, foodservice, footwear, home, juvenile products, mobile, office supplies, retail, sports, technology, toys, travel retail, games, and watches/jewelry.
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Riot Games
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Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc.
Tencent America
THQ Nordic
Ubisoft, Inc.
Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, Inc.
Wizards of the Coast
XSEED Games
ESA offers a wide range of services to interactive entertainment software companies, including: conducting business and consumer research; providing legal and policy analysis and advocacy on First Amendment, intellectual property, and technology/e-commerce issues; managing a global content protection program; owning and operating E3; and representing video game industry interests before federal and state governments.

To learn more, visit theESA.com, email at info@theESA.com, and follow us on Twitter @theESA.