



GUIDE TO

# GAMING

An introduction to the world of gaming

by  
IAB UK's Gaming Group



# CONTENTS

<b>3</b>	<b>THE STATE OF PLAY</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS GUIDE</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>SECTION 1: IN THE GAME</b>
<b>6</b>	What is in-game advertising?
<b>10</b>	What does in-game advertising look like in practice?
<b>12</b>	<b>SECTION 2: AROUND THE GAME</b>
<b>13</b>	Why take notice of 'around the game' formats?
<b>15</b>	What does 'around the game' advertising look like?
<b>15</b>	In-app advertising for mobile games: Four formats you need to know
<b>17</b>	<b>SECTION 3: AWAY FROM THE GAME</b>
<b>18</b>	Gaming content & influencers
<b>19</b>	Environments & marketing opportunities
<b>20</b>	Events
<b>21</b>	Esports marketing opportunities



# THE STATE OF PLAY

**Gaming is one of the most flexible and versatile mediums available today through which brands can connect with their target consumers. It offers brands unique opportunities to develop relationships with a growing and diverse audience, as well as to drive brand preference and loyalty. This guide will help brands and advertisers understand the gaming landscape, uncover the diversity of the gaming audience, and learn how they can enter the space in the right way - by enhancing the player experience and creating a positive association.**

Gaming's status in pop culture has grown ever more powerful as time's gone by. Its meteoric rise began in the 1970s when arcade games like Space Invaders and Pacman were dominating the gaming scene. As the tech evolved, we saw the start of the console wars in the 1980s when Sega and Nintendo battled for supremacy.

Now, in 2021, we are entering a new era of gaming where we are seeing more competition from the tech giants with their gaming products, **a new generation of consoles has been released**, the rise of cloud gaming, the growing influence of esports and professional esports players who are reportedly earning seven-figure salaries!

**Gaming outranks most forms of entertainment and is one of the most valuable industries in the world; estimated to be worth an enormous \$159.3 billion with an audience of 2.7bn global gamers expected to be in play by the end of 2020.**

As the technology for gaming becomes more sophisticated, the graphics, game mechanics, gaming content and general immersive experiences of gaming will grow to encapsulate an even wider and more diverse audience.

Clearly, the time is ripe for brands to get involved. Captivating in-game activations include **Stormzy** appearing in **Watch Dogs: Legions** for his single Rainfall, the **Christopher Nolan** films featuring in **Fortnite**, **Burger King's** sponsorship of **Stevenage Football Club** to leverage the club's online presence in FIFA and even the **UK Government** turning to gaming to deliver important public health messages.

**BUT HOW CAN BRANDS BOARD THIS UNSTOPPABLE FORCE IN THE SAFEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE WAY POSSIBLE?**

**THE ANSWER:  
BREAK  
GAMING  
DOWN.**





# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS GUIDE

**Over 2.7 billion people play games globally, often on multiple devices - including consoles, PCs and mobiles. Hardware innovations and blockbuster software titles are adding to the experience every year, meaning more people are playing games for longer. They are also watching other people play games more than ever before. As such, gaming represents a unique environment for advertisers, with almost every audience group found somewhere in the gaming world.**

So how can advertisers get the most out of the gaming opportunity? Understanding the audience is key. Like other channels and platforms, gaming is split into many subsets, each with their own quirks and qualities. The mix of formats and audiences requires a multifaceted planning process including consideration of devices and genres.

Games can be played across a variety of devices and platforms. These include the traditional console and PC gamer, and more recently, the advent of smartphone gaming. We are also seeing continued growth in the use of streaming platforms, and the arrival of 5G will allow for high-speed cross-device gaming for users, as well as the potential for innovative cloud gaming solutions. From rewarded in-game video, interactive end cards, integrated media and native live broadcasts, each strategy has specific benefits and provides new creative freedoms.

Whilst the opportunities in gaming are plentiful, understanding the environment is crucial. IAB UK have broken it down into three categories:

## IN THE GAME

In-game advertising opportunities, looking specifically at how brands can directly influence gameplay visuals/audio with their messaging or alter the gaming experience through skins and sponsored content.

## AROUND THE GAME

The opportunities available to brands during the gaming experience but not within the gameplay itself. Examples of this include in-app rewarded video, interstitials and overlaid audio ads.

## AWAY FROM THE GAME

Opportunities within gaming that exist away from the gameplay experience itself. This includes streaming, esports, influencer and content marketing.

Attention is often a key metric for campaigns, and gaming delivers like no other medium. Most games require the player to be immersed and reacting to events on screen, quickly and in real-time. As the advertising is around a

passion point, the audience will see a brand in a more favourable light, provided the marketing or advertising message enhances the gameplay or environment rather than detracts from it. For example, user-initiated video ads allow brands to reward players at key moments of gameplay to drive reach, frequency and engagement.

There are several different entry points to this entertainment channel. From in-game activations that require standard IAB UK formats, allowing advertisers to quickly and easily run a gaming campaign, to multichannel and device activations that require a more custom creative approach. The 'away from the game' category has major overlaps with experiential, traditional sponsorships and partnerships, so even though this is a new space for some advertisers, the blueprint for a successful gaming campaign will be familiar from a content delivery standpoint.

With clear and succinct strategy, incorporating gaming as a media channel is an efficient and effective way of building campaigns with the potential to build deeper relationships with a growing and varied consumer base, in an environment like no other. This paper will help you to understand the fundamentals of achieving successful outcomes in a channel with a highly engaged and passionate audience base.



# ⚡ SECTION 1 ⚡ IN THE GAME



Here we will be taking a look at the opportunities that are available to marketers within the gameplay experience itself. Known as “in-game advertising”, this section will cover how brands can directly influence or alter gameplay audio and visuals to include their messaging, or create custom skins or sponsored content for users to interact with during playing sessions.



# WHAT IS IN-GAME ADVERTISING?

**In-game advertising offers programmatic and direct buying opportunities for non-intrusive communications from brands through the medium of gaming. It is no overstatement to say that this format represents an undiscovered frontier in the media world, with creativity and immersion at its core.**

The essence of in-game advertising is the ability for brands to blend seamlessly into the gameplay experience by inserting messaging, creative or content for gamers to enjoy. For instance, it's possible to create a level in an existing game, or to present a billboard within the setting of a game. But it's important that advertisers think about what the overall game experience is designed to offer and then add to the realism and the enjoyment, rather than detracting from it. This can be a difficult balance, but done in the right way, in-game advertising can provide an unparalleled immersive experience for consumers.

Gaming is one of the largest entertainment channels; its reach rivalled only by social media. It grew exponentially in 2020, especially during lockdown. Yet advertising spend across the medium is relatively rare. This is primarily down to a lack of awareness of the opportunities that are available to marketers and it means that in-game advertising represents a massive opportunity for early adopters.







## WHO ARE THE AUDIENCE?

Historically, gamers have been inaccurately viewed as a niche audience. There is a misconception that gaming is just for younger males, but recent studies – such as Activision Blizzard Media’s research into “**Gamer Moms**” and “**Gamer Dads**” – have highlighted that this perception is outdated and that gaming audiences are actually far more diverse. Very often, in hyper-casual gaming in particular, the audience comprises affluent adults of both genders, with significant purchasing power.

So, the demographics are much broader than many first assume. What was once viewed as a vehicle to target a niche minority should now be viewed more broadly, as a tool to target varied and contrasting audience segments across all target demographics.

What’s more, many games provide a gateway to hard-to-reach consumers that brands are failing to engage with through more traditional media channels. Marketers are already taking advantage of this, a great example being the Government’s use of in-game advertising to broadcast the ‘Stay Home, Save Lives’ messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In gaming, advertisers can get extremely close to the end consumer. There aren’t many media that offer such an intimate and personal experience. Gamers are fully immersed; often involved in long gameplay sessions with extremely high attention levels. The more engaged and entertained they are by the content, the more willing they are to spend time, as well as money.



# WHAT ARE THE KEY METRICS TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS?

Primarily used as a top-of-funnel format, in-game advertising can offer detailed in-view measurement data in addition to brand uplift studies. It may be easier to think of as 'virtual out-of-home'. It's possible to know, for instance, how long an ad has been viewed for. This enables brands to have complete oversight with regards to how audiences are consuming and interacting with their messaging and adjust it accordingly.

# WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE IN-GAME AD?

It's crucial to bear in mind is that interruptive ad experiences are unwelcome in gaming, especially in pre-paid experiences. You can't just slap an ad into a gaming environment and hope for the best. It needs to feel natural. Try to provide a deeper experience, with contextual sensitivity ensuring an appropriate pairing of brand and overall experience.

Gaming's hyper-engaged audiences demand native integrations that add to the overall experience rather than interrupt, given that gamers tend to be deeply immersed and seeking moments of pure escapism. This means brand suitability is of great importance. A deep understanding of which environments will most naturally synergise with your messaging will pay dividends for both endemic and non-endemic brands.

This is particularly true in open-world or sports simulation gameplay experiences; environments in which advertising can add to the authenticity of the experience for the gamer. Imagine driving past a billboard of a famous brand, or watching a replay of a goal with messaging visible across the pitch-side displays, for instance. Being present without being an intruder is the key to success in in-game advertising. If advertisers focus on experiences that their brand can add to, they will be on the right track.





## CONTEXT IS KING

It's important to build everything around context from day one. The better you can contextually match a brand message with a gaming experience, the better for the end user, with ads adding to the immersive, experiential nature of the game.

Technology exists today to enable brands to develop billboards that mirror out-of-home executions in the real world, or to create virtual shops within games themselves. In both cases, this can add to the realism of the experience.

Consumers are more likely to engage with creative executions – just take **Travis Scott's show within Fortnite earlier this year**, which was staged in collaboration with Nike and attracted over 27 million attendees. This partnership isn't typical of entry level in-game activity, but provides an excellent example of how integrating with the mechanics and respecting the culture of a game can have an enormous impact on performance.

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THIS FORMAT?

In-game advertising is not an easy win. It requires careful thought and planning, with much depending on creativity, fit, execution and respect for the context and end user. But it offers the ultimate in brand safety (a context in which dwell times are huge, but the environment is tightly controlled) and the potential to reach a truly diverse range of audiences, many of whom can be challenging to engage with through other means.





# WHAT DOES IN-GAME ADVERTISING LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

**In-game advertising offers vast scale and unique data points on potential audiences, making it a highly effective advertising format that gives brands unique opportunities to reach engaged users.**

There are two key factors to consider when it comes to in-game ads:

## THE COOKIE-LESS ENVIRONMENT

Games for console and desktop are not built in html and therefore cookies are not available. This means the format is fully future proofed regarding Google's announcement that it will be phasing out third-party cookies.

## NO CALL TO ACTIONS (CTAs)

Many in-game ad formats do not provide a traditional click out, making measurement in this format a very different beast. This is a necessary requirement of the in-game format as ads seek to be part of the gaming environment without disrupting the user experience.

In this medium, considering the environment and technical differences, media buyers will primarily be presented with branding opportunities.

Targeted brand campaigns are an option, providing that users and publishers have agreed to pass the necessary data through for targeting purposes.

Campaigns can run either on a direct IO or programmatic basis - both methods afford advertisers transparency as client impression trackers can be implemented. For greater control, programmatic campaigns offer media buyers self-service access to their preferred DSP, giving them greater power over campaign delivery.

From a measurement perspective, it should be split into three parts: direct, sponsorship and programmatic.

## DIRECT

campaigns should, at a minimum, deliver a transparent breakdown of impressions by game/inventory, geo location, device and other general demographic data. Additional metrics would depend on each vendor's integration with the publisher to see what metrics can be afforded.

## SPONSORSHIP

campaigns should have, as a minimum, a transparent breakdown of impressions per game/inventory and device.

## PROGRAMMATIC

campaigns should have, as a minimum, a transparent breakdown of impressions per game/inventory, geo location, device and other general demographic data. The impression breakdown for campaigns delivered this way should be done by game/inventory and device, and should be discrepancy checked with the relevant DSP partner.



**Direct and programmatic activation routes should enable advertisers to insert their own impression tracking pixel to verify the validity of the impressions delivered, whether it be direct via an ad server or via their preferred DSP partner.**

Another thing to consider in terms of measurement is the importance of viewability as a metric for success. With CTAs unavailable, advertisers can utilise viewability to measure campaign performance by analysing the time in view of each ad placement. This allows for performance comparison by game, placement, geo location and demographic. Viewability is calculated differently for the gaming space than for current web and mobile content due to the additional complexity of 3D rendered environments. Brands should thoroughly understand the specifics of in-game viewability (that accounts for varying angles of approach and changing percentage of in-view metrics as the game world progresses) rather than applying web and mobile solutions.

In addition to this, research companies can supplement reporting by measuring brand awareness, recall, uplift, perception and purchase intent independently. Approaches to this research will differ between providers, but some of the more successful methods include eye-tracking and sentiment studies that measure the response between exposed and unexposed groups.

As mentioned previously, a key factor in delivering in-game campaigns at scale is the range of creative options available. As with any media channel, a variety of creative options will impact on the advertising strategy and tactics that are used to hit certain KPIs and will ultimately affect advertisers' ability to spend efficiently.

Direct campaigns allow for more bespoke and customised deliveries that are unique to certain in-game environments (this will require an agreement to be established between publisher and advertiser). Brands should have the choice to work more closely with publishers via technology platforms that provide a more transparent supply chain. Scalability on these campaigns will depend on the audience size per-game and whether it is agnostic to a variety of games.

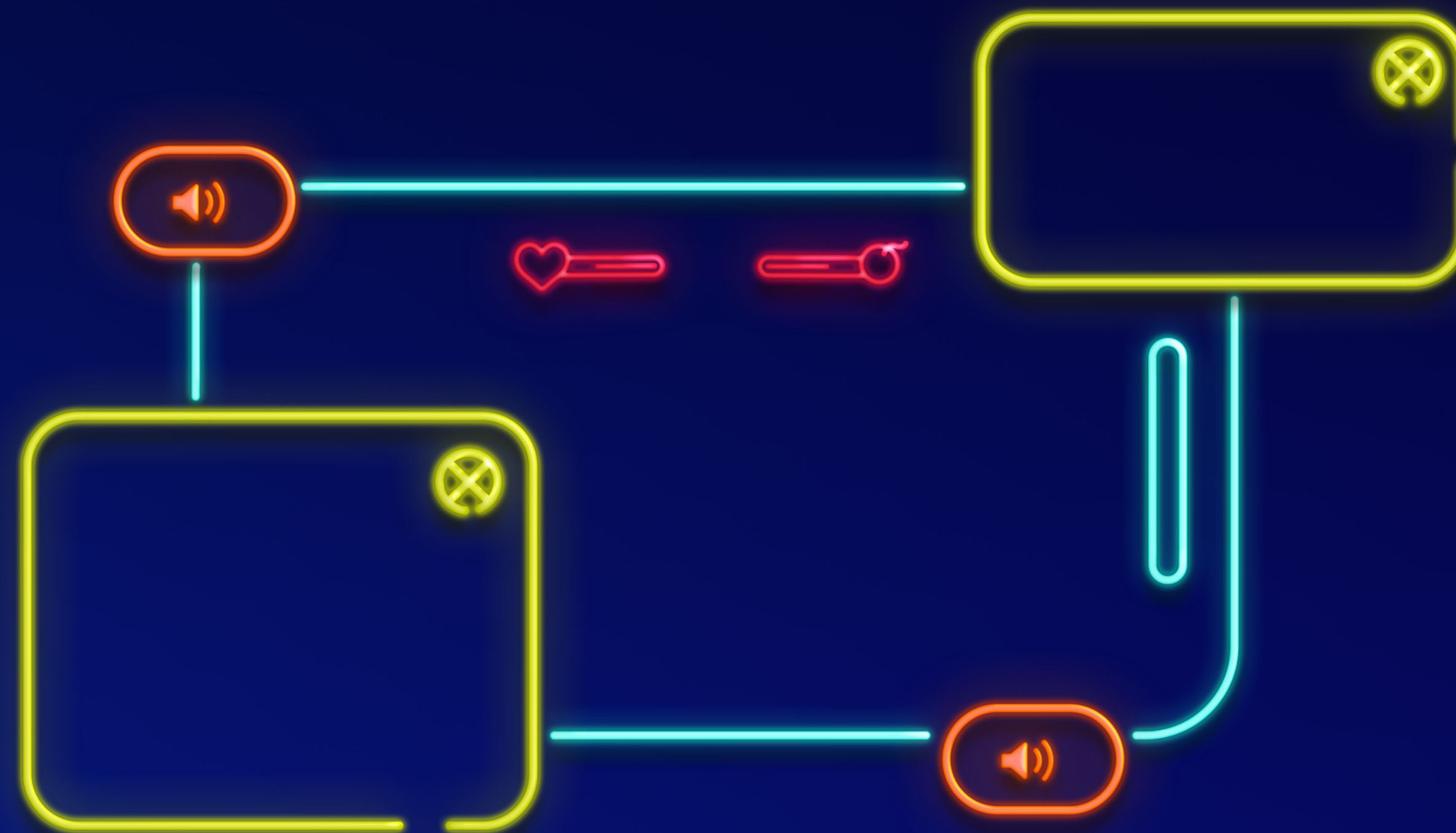
Sponsorship campaigns offer brands the opportunity for highly creative executions but may lack standard digital metrics for targeting and measurement. This form of advertising does not require any integrations, making it easier to execute. The main point of discussion here would be an agreement on creative delivery between advertiser and publisher.

Programmatic campaigns can be delivered in standard display formats while following OpenRTB 2.5 protocols. Providing the brand, agency and DSP are well-versed and have agreed upon the temporary process of programmatic delivery, then this provides an incredibly scalable solution to test, learn and retrieve results.



# ⚡ SECTION 2 ⚡

## AROUND THE GAME



In this section, we will be taking a look at the opportunities that are available to marketers during gameplay sessions, but not within the gameplay itself. Predominantly found in mobile gaming apps, what we're calling 'around the game' formats include rewarded video ads, interstitials and overlaid audio ads.



# WHY TAKE NOTICE OF 'AROUND THE GAME' FORMATS?

Around the world, people are playing mobile games more than ever: the vertical accounted for **33% of all app downloads**, **74% of consumer spend** and **10% of total time spent in-app** in 2019. With people spending more time at home - and on their phones - 2020 saw this figure increase further. Data from the Adjust platform shows that gaming apps saw a **47% increase in sessions** and **75% increase in installs** in Q1 2020 compared to Q1 2019.

For mobile marketers, this means that people are also engaging more with advertising, but this comes with greater competition and advertisers need to make sure their ads stand out.

Mobile games cover a multitude of genres - from triple-A variants of console games, to hyper-casual games - but the majority monetise their properties using a 'freemium' model. This can combine multiple monetisation strategies - such as in-app purchases and subscription models - as a way to create recurring revenue while increasing engagement, improving user experience, and boosting in-app earnings.

However, one of the more popular strategies for driving app revenue is via in-app advertising. Ads are normally integrated directly into the app experience and can increase the number of users who make in-app purchases, as well as improving retention and time spent.





**Until recently, there has been a misconception about who gamers actually are - with many believing that a typical gamer only plays hardcore games on a console or PC.**

The reality is that mobile gamers, like smartphone users in general, are everywhere. The smartphone has removed the need for expensive hardware and the touchscreen, camera, gyroscope and location services have given birth to genres of games that exist purely on smartphones.

GlobalWebIndex research has pinpointed gaming and, in particular, mobile gaming as the most cross demographic medium out there, across all regions.

“

Gaming is now among the most truly cross-demographic activities tracked by GlobalWebIndex. In fact, thanks to mobile gaming in particular, it's difficult to find a region or demographic where the majority of individuals aren't gaming in some form or another.

This can be illustrated by using AppAnnie data to analyse the audience composition of two of the leading games in the App Store. First, **Call of Duty mobile - the most successful game launch of all time** that took just one week to reach 100 million installs globally when it was launched last year. As a triple-A title, this skews towards a male audience (66% male) that is slightly younger - making it highly desirable for brands looking to reach the elusive millennial/Gen Z demographic.

Towards the other end of the spectrum, **Subway surfers was the most downloaded game of the last decade globally**, with over 1.5 billion installs. Sitting more in the casual end of the market, this title skews more towards an older, female audience (58% of its total audience being female, aged between 25 and 44).

Mobile gaming represents a new horizon for the games industry, in which demographics are far more varied, making the market an attractive option for advertisers looking to broaden their options.

The engaged nature of mobile gamers means that they are receptive to advertising, with in-game formats consistently outperforming mobile category benchmarks - from proxy metrics such as viewability and video completion rate (95%+ and 90% respectively according to the latest MOAT figures) through to brand metrics (3.5x increased brand lift and 5x increased purchase intent) and performance metrics, such as footfall and sales uplift.

This, combined with the fact that mobile gaming offers a professionally curated, accessible and premium environment, makes it an extremely valuable option for advertisers.

WHO ARE  
OUR GAMERS?

CALL OF DUTY

♂  
66%

SUBWAY  
SURFERS

♀  
58%



# WHAT DOES 'AROUND THE GAME' ADVERTISING LOOK LIKE?

In this section, we'll look at four of the most common ad formats available in mobile games, as well as key metrics across various gaming types, and some words of advice on frequency capping.

## IN-APP ADVERTISING FOR MOBILE GAMES FOUR FORMATS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### PLAYABLE ADS

Voted the **most effective in-app ad format**, playable ads allow customers to play a section of a game, or gamified content, within the ad itself without needing to install another app. This engagement-driven approach to advertising is also likely to lower churn rate because those who download the app or interact with the ad will have a very clear expectation before they do so.

### REWARDED VIDEO ADS

Rewarded video ads are 15-30 second videos placed within gameplay, which then "reward" users for their attention - whether that's with in-game currency or extra lives. This format is win-win for gaming companies and users: advertisers get their videos watched by users, while gamers receive a better user experience.

Rewarded video ads are so well-received that **network Unity Ads** describes them as the "hottest revenue generator" on the market. But we recommend advertisers stay selective when placing video ads in a game. While they can be more engaging than static ads, they also include movement that can be confusing for users when misplaced.

Finally, advertisers must remember that not all gamers will use sound, so make sure the call to action is conveyed both with and without audio.

### INTERSTITIAL ADS

Interstitial ads are full-screen ads that can be placed at various intervals within a gaming session. As these ads take up the entire screen, they create a very noticeable break for the user - make sure to test the best and worst times to serve users an ad. If a game involves linear progression levels, for example, advertisers will have several opportunities to place interstitial ads during the momentary breaks between those levels.

However, **one study** found that full page video interstitial ads trigger a fight-or-flight response at a rate twice that of embedded opt-in ads. The same interstitial ad viewers fixated 22% of their time spent looking for the 'X' button. To avoid this, ads need to be exceptionally well-produced, appropriate and relevant to the user.

### BANNER ADS

Banner ads - the same as those you see on desktop - can also be used within mobile games. Two major benefits of banner ads are that they usually cost less than other ad formats, and they are relatively unobtrusive for the viewer. Banner ads can also include rich media elements, such as dynamic images and videos. Making the most of these is a great way to make banner ads more noticeable, increase engagement and avoid 'banner blindness' - where users become so accustomed to seeing banner ads that they fail to notice what is actually displayed.





## METRICS

For gaming apps, return-on-investment (ROI) and lifetime value (LTV) remain two of the most important metrics to gut check the impact of campaigns.

It's also helpful to benchmark cost-per-install/acquisition and conversion rates against industry standards, where possible. These can vary across the vertical, depending on the game genre.

## FREQUENCY CAPPING

While users often appreciate advertising and understand its benefits (i.e. free gameplay and perks in return for undivided attention), retention rates do show a decline if too many ads are packed into one session. Specifically, the more ads shown per session (per minute), the more likely a user is to churn.

Learning the optimal frequency of ads for a mobile game is critical to success. While it can take time, it's worth experimenting to find the frequency that generates the most revenue without irritating users and increasing churn rate. This should also include understanding the ideal frequency of ads before users are desensitised to the message displayed.

Campaign performance will also be determined by the type of game being advertised in. Strikingly, hyper-casuals (easy-to-play games with minimal interfaces) can display more ads than gameplay within a minute and still generate profit. But no hyper-casual app can be this aggressive without foregoing a lot of additional revenue. Balance, experimentation and optimisation are important to understand what works for a brand, but ultimately ads are only as effective as the creatives that users see. Today's brands need to combine plenty of testing with different creatives and the right infrastructure to find the best combination. It's this combination of factors that will lead to success.



# ⚡ SECTION 3 ⚡ AWAY FROM THE GAME



The final section of this guide will cover the opportunities that exist within gaming away from the gameplay experience itself. These 'away from the game' formats include streaming, esports, influencer and content marketing.

Interest in gaming doesn't fade the moment users stop playing a game on their mobile, console or desktop. Like any other hobby or interest, it remains omnipresent in our lives, from the content we consume to the items we purchase and the people we admire. As gamers move away from the game, so should the brands trying to reach them.

**So where do gamers go once the game is over?**

**And what are the marketing opportunities available to brands in these additional gaming environments?**



## WHERE THE GAMERS GO: WHAT CAN'T THEY GET FROM THE GAME?

Once players leave the game, potential engagement opportunities open up, allowing audiences to click, scroll, swipe and listen to brand messages, offering a full user journey through to branded landing pages, online stores, video content and more.

So where do they go when they stop gaming? Let's start by considering what gamers can't get from the game. What information isn't available on a gaming app, console or desktop? What would make them exit the game and go elsewhere?

The simple answer is - more gaming content. This content can come in many forms - video, audio, articles, social platforms and events. To simplify 'away from the game' marketing opportunities, we've split the environments into three categories, sharing details on how these marketing activities work and what metrics you can achieve:

**1**  
GAMING CONTENT  
& INFLUENCERS

**2**  
EVENTS

**3**  
ESPORTS

## GAMING CONTENT & INFLUENCERS

To improve gameplay, discover a new game, learn more about which console to use or simply be entertained by a gaming internet personality, gamers can turn to their search engine or video platform of choice. And for brands, the wealth of content available means that they can be incredibly granular with targeting.

Take the example below:

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Animal Crossing users in their 30s

### 'AWAY FROM THE GAME' ENVIRONMENTS

Websites featuring trailers for the new Animal Crossing game, websites sharing tips on Animal Crossing, websites highlighting the features on the new Nintendo Switch, websites featuring reviews of Animal Crossing, social pages and videos of influencers that play Animal Crossing or podcasts discussing Animal Crossing.

These environments aren't just restricted to game-specific content. Technology is an integral part of gaming, such as information about hardware and software that can speed up gameplay, optimise storage and offer a greater gaming experience. Comparing computer processors, headphones, battery life and more is a core part of gaming, with content around these topics being an ideal place to reach gaming audiences.



# ENVIRONMENTS & MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

## ENVIRONMENT

**Gaming or related news sites, apps and video platforms**

**Streaming channels**

## MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Display advertising across publications e.g. sharing new console details, gaming news, gaming tips or influencer news. A variety of creative formats are available depending on the publication including pre-roll, outstream/instream, takeovers etc.

Content sponsorship opportunities: work with the publication on bespoke content to support your brand. For example, a laptop brand discussing keyboard functionality and the benefits for gameplay could be featured in an esports publication.

Partnerships on video collaborations including gaming review shows and brand placement in a gaming video series.

Display advertising around the stream, pre-roll, rich media formats.

Sponsored streaming or video content, including influencer reads, in-stream dynamic, or sponsored influencer reviews/partnerships.

## MEASUREMENT

Click-through rate (CTR), impressions, readership, view-through rate (VTR), completion rates, social following increase, sales uplift if linking to sales product, referral stats through tracking.

CTR, impressions, VTR, completion rates, sales uplift if linking to purchase opportunity, engagement with influencer activity, use of special offers or affiliate links.

## COMMENTS

Make the link between your brand and the story natural and ensure it adds value to the viewer. Examples include how they can improve their gameplay, how they can play for longer, reduce lag, get a more effective gaming setup, gaming snacks, best headphones for gamers, what console to buy next, learning more about the game's characters and how to unlock new features.

Pre-roll reaches audiences waiting for a stream or mid-stream, aligning the brand with esports, gaming influencers and the game in play. Influencer marketing is also an option, and streaming platforms offer the opportunity to use more traditional display and video advertising as well.

Consider time targeting, the games you are interested in, the streamers and the platform – some have tighter restrictions on conduct than others.



# EVENTS

Outside of esports events and online content, there is a thriving gaming community that under normal circumstances (pre-COVID-19) would be attending conferences and meet-ups to reconnect and share excitement around new game releases and console announcements.

These environments are increasingly present across digital and physical spaces simultaneously and provide a great opportunity for marketers to create positive affinity between brands and gaming audiences.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Physical gaming conferences, meet-ups and esports events**

## MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Bespoke sponsorship activities including:

- Co-branding on promotional activities across digital and print
- △ Co-branding event merchandise
- Social content from the event organisers, related influencers / celebrities
- Brand exposure at the physical event and throughout any online presence

## MEASUREMENT

Digital media such as video content, social media or advertising: CTR, VTR, impressions, completion rates, increase in followers, social engagement etc.

Other metrics: viewership e.g. live attendees, PR metrics for brand exposure and sales uplift.

## COMMENTS

This allows you to align your brand with both the games, consoles and influencers featured at the event, as well as the event as a whole. Sponsorships follow a similar structure, however there is often an opportunity to discuss bespoke packages. An additional benefit, depending on contract details, includes high quality content that can be repurposed across digital channels.

Consider the games, consoles and influencers featured at the event as this will directly impact the event's demographic.



# ESPORTS MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Esports is an incredibly exciting growth area in the world of gaming. However, it's important to bear in mind that if you were looking to reach a football fan, you wouldn't expect your only option to be sponsoring the World Cup. You would be looking into sports news sites, fantasy football, FIFA and more. So, when it comes to esports, take the same controlled approach, at least when starting out.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Streaming platforms

### Esports news and content sites

## MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Display advertising around the stream, pre-roll, rich media formats.

Sponsored stream content directly through the influencers.

Display advertising across esports publications e.g. sharing esports event details, esports news, gaming tips and influencer news. A variety of creative formats are available depending on the publication.

For example, pre-roll, outstream/instream and takeovers.

Content sponsorship opportunities. Work with the publication on bespoke content to support your brand.

Partnerships on video collaborations. For example, esports shows, brand placement and sponsorships.

## MEASUREMENT

CTR, impressions, VTR, completion rates, sales uplift if linking to purchase opportunity.

Engagement with influencer activity, use of special offers or affiliate links.

CTR, Impressions, readership, VTR, completion rates, social following increase, sales uplift if linking to sales product, referral stats through tracking.

## COMMENTS

Pre-roll reaches audiences waiting for a stream or mid-stream, aligning the brand with esports, gaming influencers and the game in play. While influencer marketing is an option, streaming platforms also offer a unique opportunity to use traditional display advertising.

Consider time targeting, the games you are interested in, the streamers, the platform – some have tighter restrictions on conduct than others. Also, the demographic of the streamer and which social platform is most relevant for your brand.

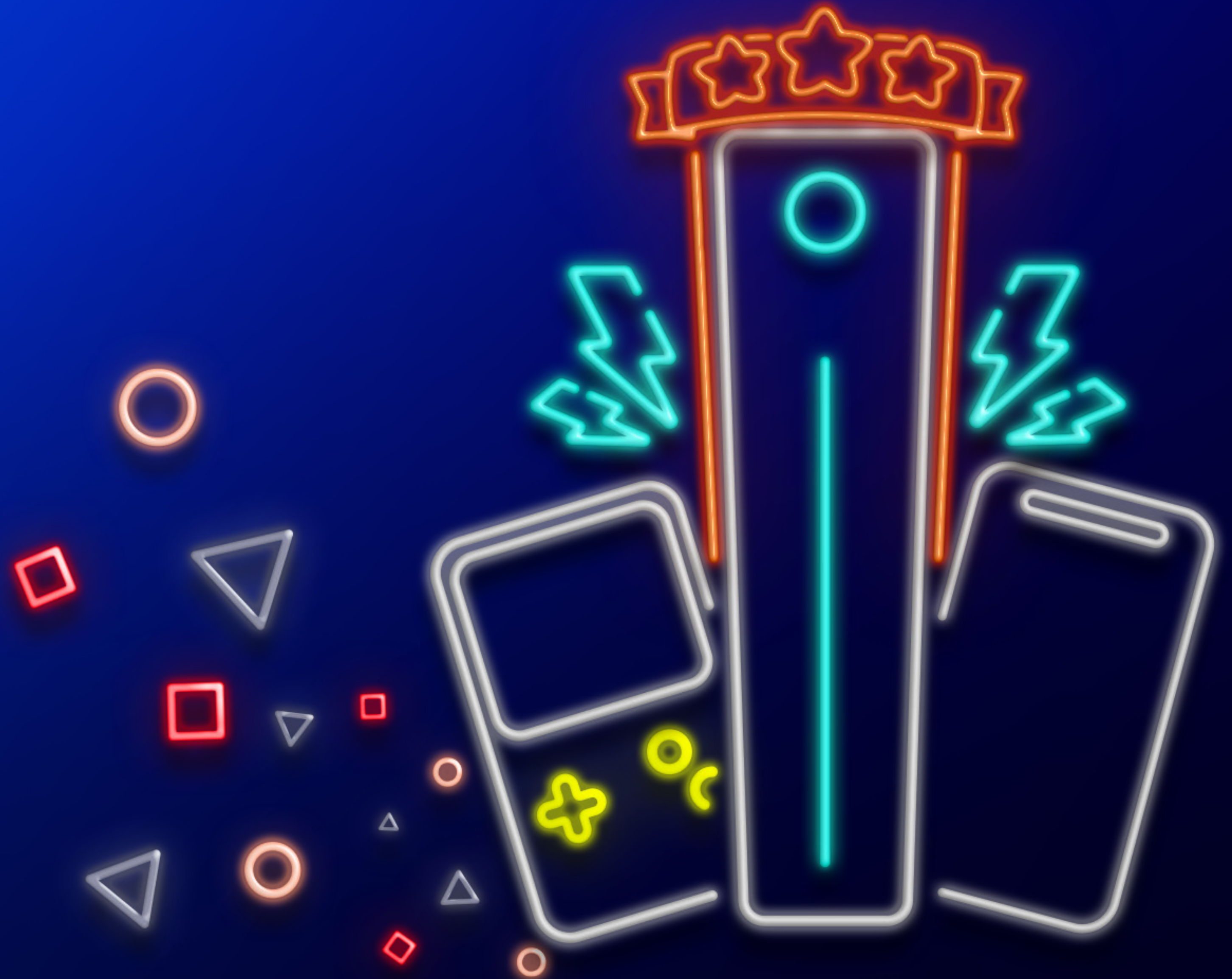
Make the link between your brand and the story natural and ensure it adds value to the reader.



## IN SUMMARY, GAMING IS A HUGE AND GROWING OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS.

As this guide shows, it offers unique and creative options for advertisers to seamlessly integrate into gaming environments that, when done right, can add to the realism and quality of the experience for the user. Advertisers looking to enter the gaming space should also consider the 'around the game' and 'away from the game' opportunities to amplify their messaging and create further traction with the diverse gaming demographic - when the game stops, and the console is powering down, people don't stop being gamers.

This guide was created by the IAB UK Gaming Group.  
Please contact [antonio@iabuk.com](mailto:antonio@iabuk.com) to find out more





# THANK YOU

## CONTRIBUTORS



Activision Blizzard Media Ltd is the gateway for brands to the leading interactive entertainment company with hundreds of millions of monthly active users around the world. The idea is simple: great game experiences offer great marketing experiences.



Adjust is a global app marketing analytics platform committed to ensuring the highest privacy and performance standards. The company's mission is to make mobile marketing simpler, smarter and more secure for the more than 50,000 apps working with Adjust.



Advertly delivers seamless advertising to connect brands and people through its revolutionary display advertising technology built for games. The platform offers true in-game ad inventory at scale and allows content creators to monetise the complete experience with unobtrusive, easy-to-integrate, immersive ads.



Bidstack bridges the gap between game developers and advertisers by enhancing the gaming experience with real-world ads. It unlocks gaming for advertisers allowing them to reach a captive audience in a creative and effective way. Game developers leverage the platform to open up a new, incremental revenue stream.



Dentsu Aegis has launched DGame, a specialist division, to deliver best-in-class solutions that help brands reach and engage with gaming audiences. DGame will provide Dentsu's clients with a unique suite of services across gaming, streaming and esports, which has an estimated audience of two billion people.



Iron Source builds technologies that help game developers take their games to the next level, including the industry's largest in-app video ad network, a robust mobile ad mediation platform, and a data-driven user acquisition platform.



Venatus is a global advertising technology platform, focused on gaming and entertainment. Venatus was created in 2010 to provide advertisers with direct access to gaming audiences. It has remained at the forefront of the industry, gaining unique access to gaming and esports publishers for global brands.

## EDITORS



## GROUP MEMBERS

