

Newzoo's Generations Report:

# How Different Generations Engage with Games

# Welcome to Our Generations Report!

Gaming is massive and it's only getting bigger. It is one of the world's most popular pastimes and consumers are engaging with games in more ways than ever before.

But gaming isn't just for younger generations. While Gen Z and Millennials are much more likely to spend their free time on gaming than any other form of entertainment, there is a growing number of older consumers (re)engaging with games.

Unlike other forms of entertainment, games fulfill a wide range of needs. Not only are games a means for relaxing, escapism, and filling time, they also provide spaces to socialize, compete, and create—especially for digital-native generations.

To that end, there is more to gaming than simply playing. And the future looks bright and transformative. With emerging technologies and the burgeoning metaverse trend, gaming is developing further into a virtual space that empowers entertainment and social interaction. Our sector is blurring the lines between traditional and contemporary forms of entertainment and the whole spectrum of generations is on board.

**Jutta Jakob**, Head of Consumer Insights  
Newzoo



## Details of the Research

### Methodology

**Total sample:** Representative sample of online population aged 10-65/10-50 (coverage in regional and age scope differs by market)

**Sample size:** n=72,068 (33 markets)

**Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI):** Fieldwork conducted in Jan-Apr 2021

### Generations:

- Gen Z (10-24 y.o.) (n=22,652)
- Millennials (25-40 y.o.) (n=26,123)
- Gen X (41-55 y.o.) (n=16,854)
- Baby Boomers (56-65 y.o.) (n=6,439)

### Country scope

#### 33 markets:

**North America:** United States and Canada

**EMEA:** United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Turkey, Sweden, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, and Finland.

**APAC:** China, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Australia, and New Zealand.

**Latin America:** Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina

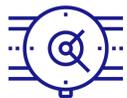
# How Does Engagement with Video Games Differ by Generation?

1

## Gaming takes a larger share of leisure time with younger generations

Games are a major form of entertainment for all consumers. This is especially true for younger generations, who spend more leisure time on games than on any other entertainment medium. In fact, the share of time spent on gaming increases with each new generation.

For brands and advertisers, games present strong opportunities for reaching a broad, diverse audience. These opportunities will only increase as games continue to dominate consumers' mindshare and leisure time.



**25%**

Share of leisure time that Gen Z spend gaming vs. 10% of Baby Boomers

2

## The younger the generation, the more diverse their gaming engagement

Gamers have diverse demographic profiles and engage with the pastime in many ways beyond playing.

Most older generations tend to play games more casually, typically playing on mobile to fill time. In contrast, younger generations tend to engage with gaming in many other ways, including viewing game-related content, discussing the latest developments in community spaces, listening to podcasts, and discussing video games with their friends.



**67%**

of Millennial gamers play games & watch video game content vs. 51% of Gen X

3

## Most people play to unwind, but younger generations have many motivations

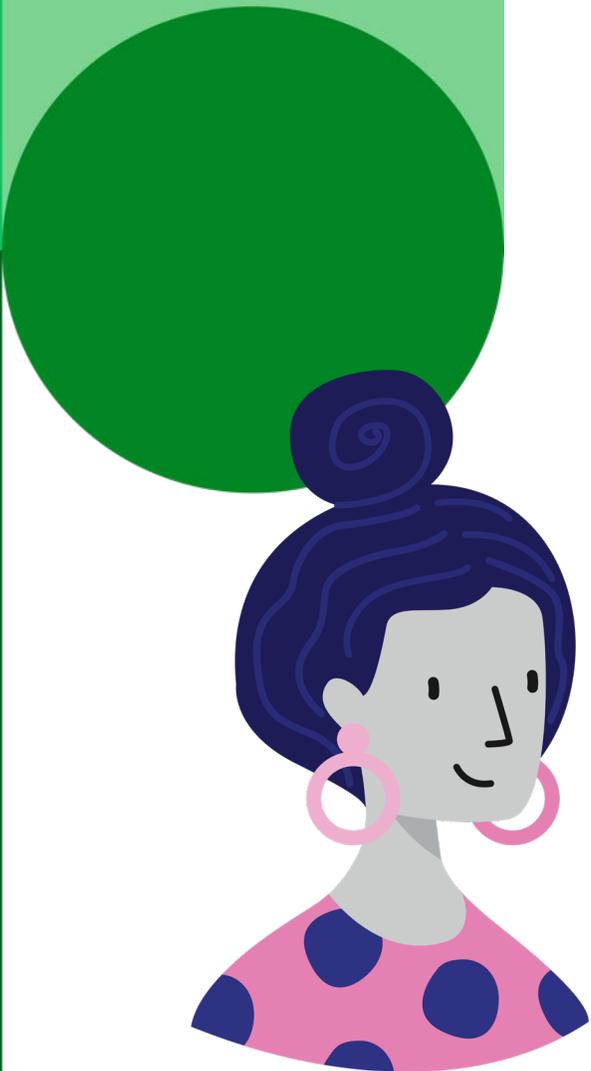
Across all generations, relaxing and unwinding is the most common reason for playing games. A whopping 92% of Baby Boomers who games report playing to relax.

While younger generations do play to unwind, they are also motivated by other reasons, including competition, socializing, and a sense of achievement. This is one of the reasons younger gamers are more likely to play multiplayer games.



**79%**

of Baby Boomers play single-player mode most often on PC games vs. 45% of Gen Z



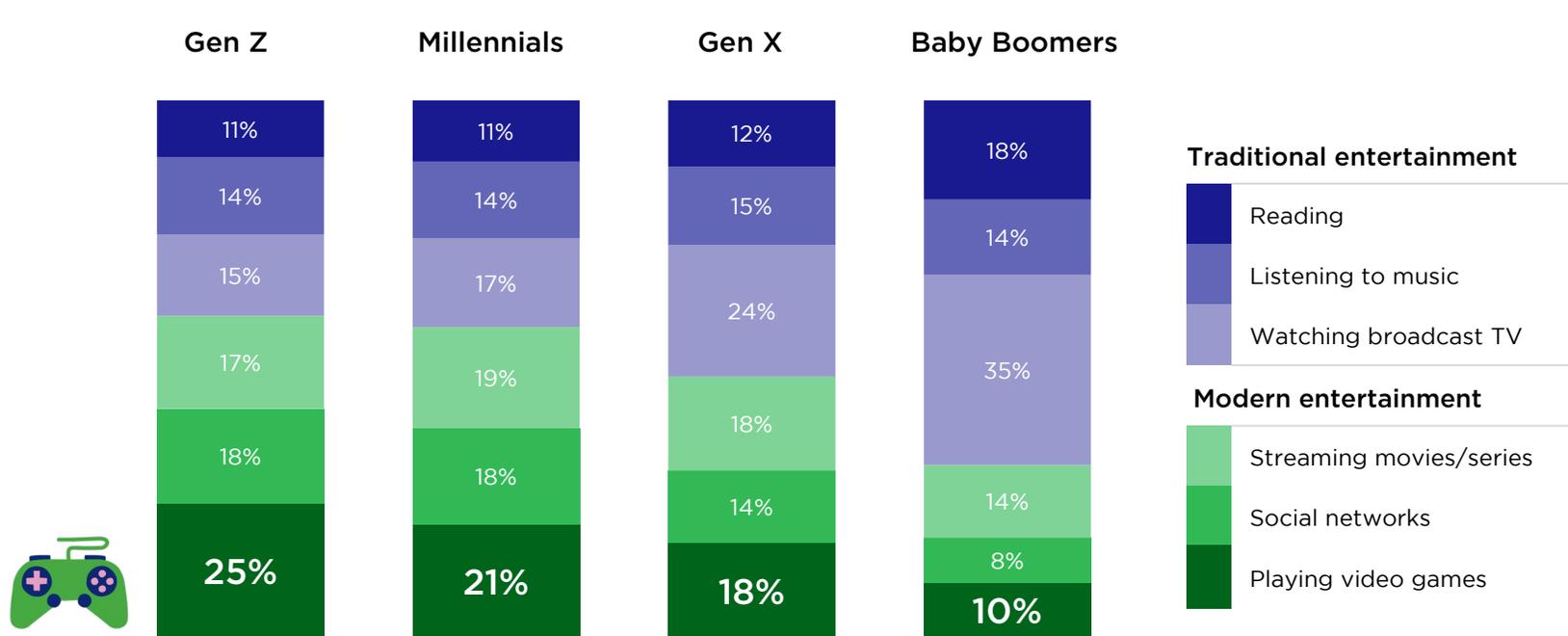
1. Games offer a form of **entertainment for all generations**

# Gaming Takes Larger Share of Leisure Time with Each Generation

Gen Z and Millennials spend more time gaming than on any other form of entertainment

## % Leisure Time Spent per Entertainment Platform (Outside of Work)

Base: Total sample



### Key Insights

Gaming has flourished into the focal point of entertainment and leisure time. Younger generations spend a significant amount of time on more modern forms of gaming engagement, including viewing game content and socializing in-game. However, they still spend more time playing than any other form of gaming engagement.

In fact, Gen Z and Millennials cite that they spend more leisure time playing games than using social media or streaming movies and TV series. Games therefore represent an important way for brands to reach their current audience (or target new ones).

Source: Newzoo CI Games & Esports (\*Global=weighted average across 33 markets).

Total sample: Representative sample of online population aged 10-65/10-50 (coverage in regional and age scope differs by market)

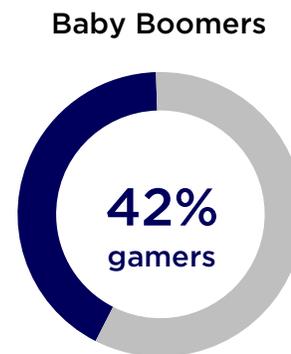
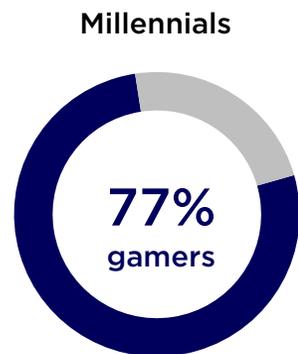
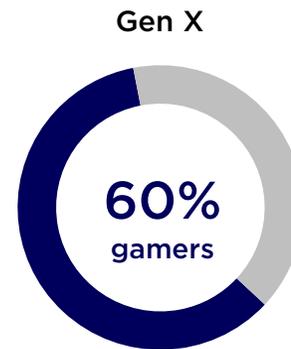
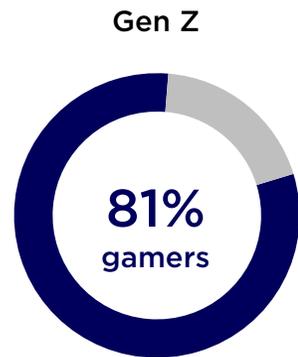
Base: Total sample (n=72,068), Gen Z (n=22,652), Millennials (n=26,123), Gen X (n=16,854), Baby Boomers (n=6,439)

# 8/10 Gen Z and Millennial Consumers Are Playing Video Games

Consumers under 40 average around 7 hours of playtime a week, significantly more than older gamers

## Share of Each Group that Played Games in the Past 6 Months

Base: Total sample



### Key Insights

A remarkable 81% of Gen Z reports playing games. While this share decreases with each older generation, an impressive 42% of Baby Boomers play games.

We see a similar trend for time spent playing: the older the generation, the less time they dedicate to playing games every week. On average, Gen Z spends 7 hours and 20 minutes playing games—half an hour more than the Millennial average. This makes sense as Millennials—while still digital-native—typically have less leisure time due to full-time work and other life commitments. Meanwhile, Baby Boomers play for just 2-and-a-half hours per week; they tend to dedicate more leisure time to more traditional forms of entertainment.

Source: Newzoo CI Games & Esports (\*Global=weighted average across 33 markets).

Total sample: Representative sample of online population aged 10-65/10-50 (coverage in regional and age scope differs by market)

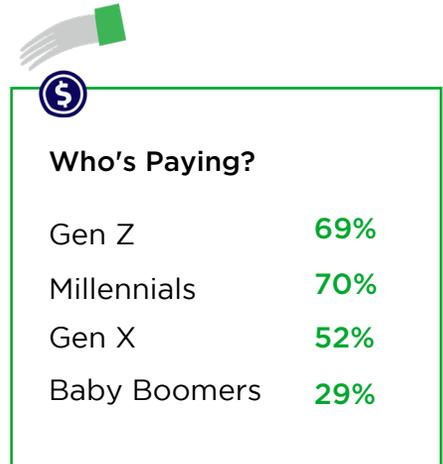
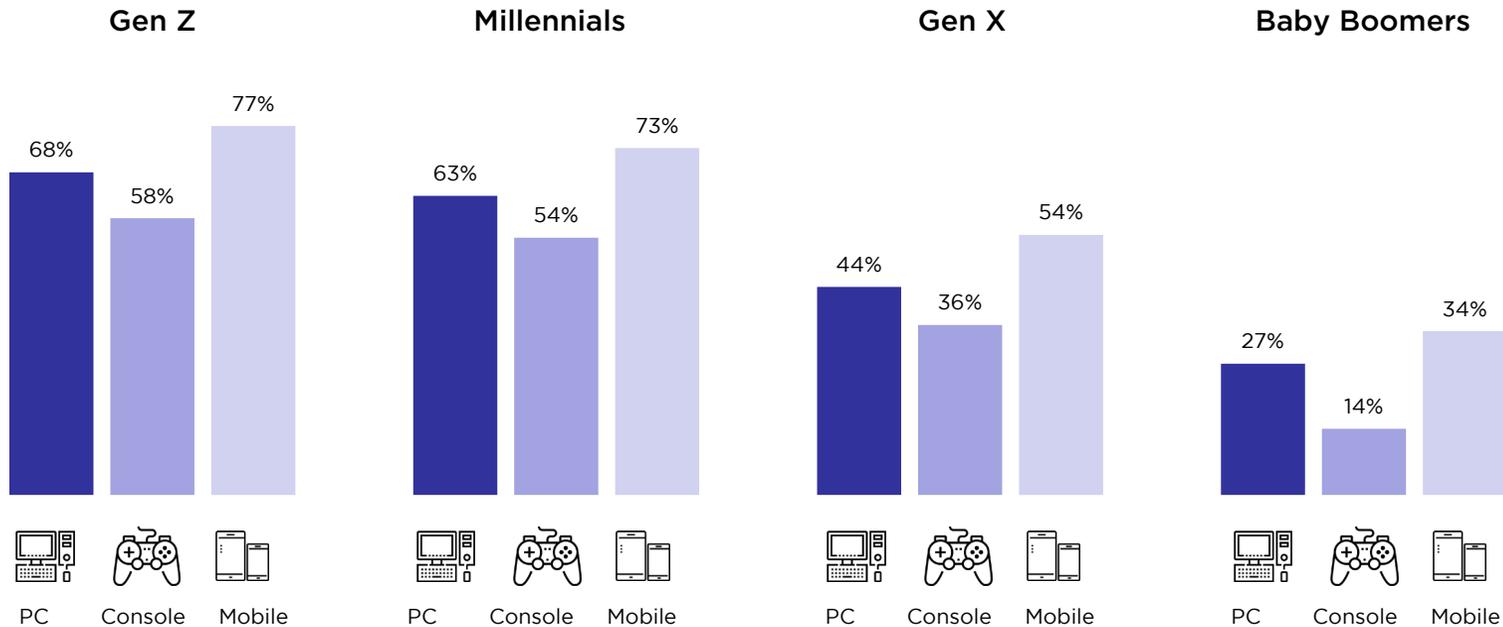
Base: Total sample (n=72,068), Gen Z (n=22,652), Millennials (n=26,123), Gen X (n=16,854), Baby Boomers (n=6,439)

# Gen Z and Millennials Use a Wide Variety of Platforms to Play

Younger generations are the mostly likely to spend on games too

## % Players by Platform (past 6 months)

Base: Total sample



Share that spent money on games on any platform in last 6 months  
Base: Total players

Source: Newzoo CI Games & Esports (\*Global=weighted average across 33 markets).

Total sample: Representative sample of online population aged 10-65/10-50 (coverage in regional and age scope differs by market)

Base: Total sample (n=72,068), Gen Z (n=22,652), Millennials (n=26,123), Gen X (n=16,854), Baby Boomers (n=6,439)

Base: Total players (n=52,000), Gen Z (n=18,598), Millennials (n=20,451), Gen X (n=10,416), Baby Boomers (n=2,535)



2. Gamers have **diverse profiles** and wish to engage beyond just playing

# Understanding the Multi-Dimensional Needs of Today's Gamers

## Newzoo's Gamer Segmentation™

Now more multi-dimensional and fragmented than ever, gamers are not interchangeable. Community engagement, socializing, esports, and gaming video content are as important as playing. Hardware and peripheral ownership is, in many cases, another vital component of the fun. These new dimensions of gaming demand a new set of Gamer Personas that capture gamers' unique, passionate fans and their needs.

### Game Fans



#### The Ultimate Gamer

"Gaming is in my DNA! There are few things I love more. I spend my free time and money on games."



#### The All-Round Enthusiast

"I am interested in all forms of gaming, from playing to watching and everything in between."



#### The Community Gamer

"If it's game-related, I'm there! News, videos, podcasts, forums, games—I love it all. And I'll never shy away from a community discussion!"

### Regular Players



#### The Hardware Enthusiast

"I am always following the latest hardware news and trends. Whether it's for work or play, I want an optimized experience."



#### The Bargain Buyer

"I enjoy playing high-quality games, preferably free-to-play or discounted titles. I will only spend on hardware when necessary."

### Casual Gamers



#### The Backseat Viewer

"I used to game a lot. Whenever I watch a big esports event and watch others playing games, that passion is reignited."



#### The Popcorn Gamer

"Playing video games may not be my favorite hobby, but I definitely enjoy watching others play."



#### The Time Filler

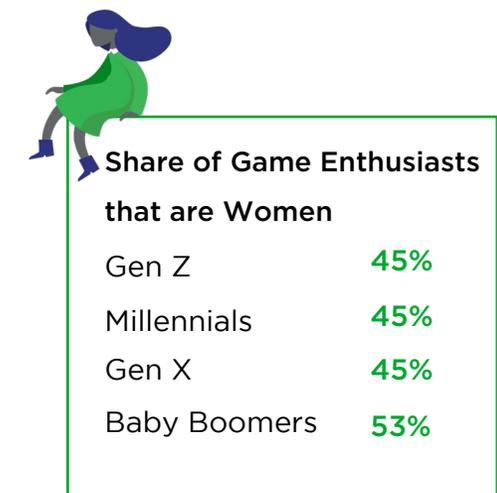
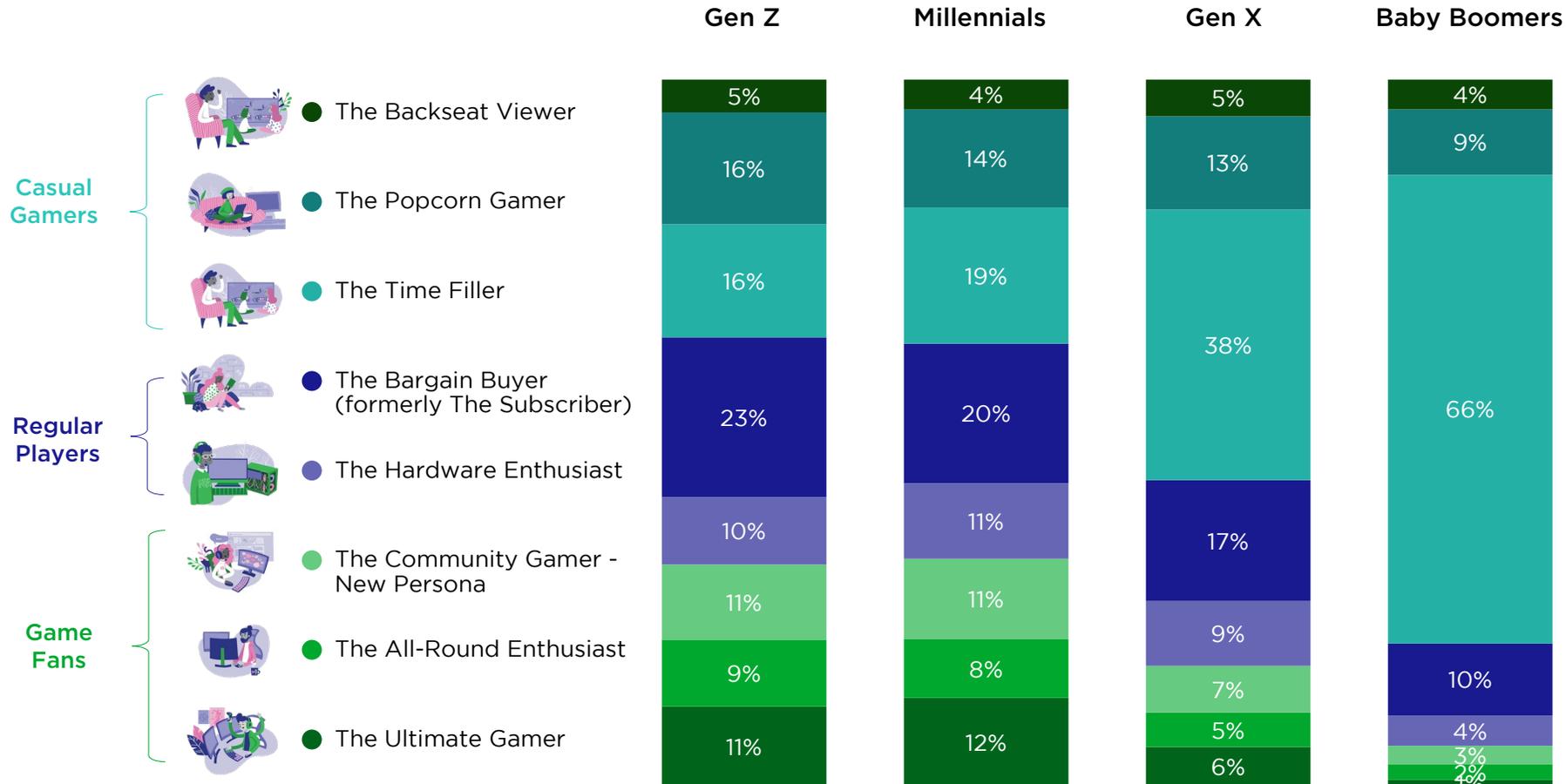
"I only game when I have time to spare or at social events. Mobile games are my go-to."

# Young Gamers Have More Diverse Engagement Styles than Older Ones

Young game enthusiasts engage through communities, viewing, and playing, while older gamers engage casually by playing

## Share of Each Persona Per Generation

Base: Game Enthusiast



Source: Newzoo CI Games & Esports (\*Global=weighted average across 33 markets).

Base: Game Enthusiasts (n=54,384), Gen Z (n=19,472), Millennials (n=21,332), Gen X (n=10,908), Baby Boomers (n=2,627)

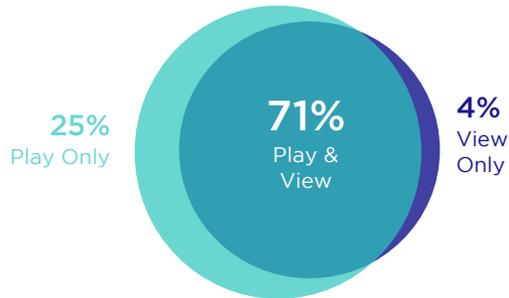
Game Enthusiast = All people who engage with gaming content through playing, viewing, and/or owning.

# Viewing and Playing Go Hand in Hand for Younger Gamers

Over 2/3 of young game enthusiasts both watch and play games

## Generation Z

**Overlap of Players & Viewers\***  
As a share of both groups combined



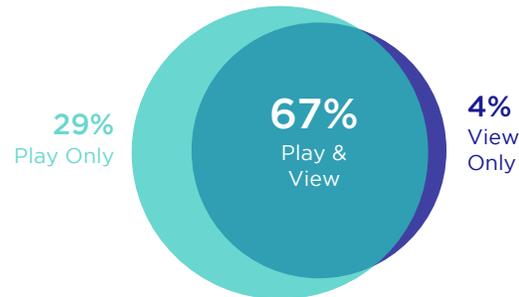
### Top gaming content watched

Base: Viewers

1. Gameplay (53%)
2. Comedic gaming videos/compilations (44%)
3. Favorite streamers/content creators (43%)

## Millennials

**Overlap of Players & Viewers\***  
As a share of both groups combined



### Top gaming content watched

Base: Viewers

1. Gameplay (53%)
2. Comedic gaming videos/compilations (43%)
3. Favorite streamers/content creators (39%)



### Key Insights

The majority of Gen Z and Millennial gamers both play and watch gaming content. For many younger gamers, gaming content creators are the new rock stars. Streamers like Ninja and Pokimane are building large followings by doing what they love: playing games in front of an engaged audience.

Many young gamers see this lifestyle as aspirational. Platforms like Twitch and YouTube allow for more interaction between fans and creators than more traditional cultural figures, strengthening the connection between viewers and streamers.

\*Viewers: Those watching live streamed or pre-recorded gaming video content

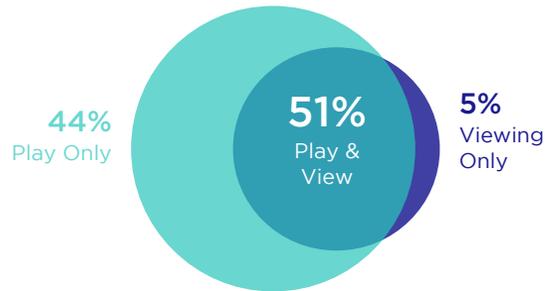
# Older Generations Watch Game Content for More Practical Reasons

Reviews are relatively more popular with Baby Boomers than any other generation

## Generation X

### Overlap of Players & Viewers\*

As a share of both groups combined



### Top gaming content watched

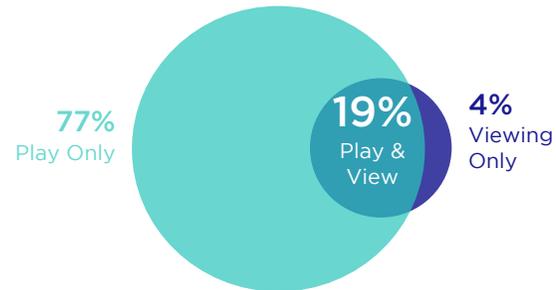
Base: Viewers

1. Gameplay (45%)
2. Tips & tricks (35%)
3. Comedic gaming videos/compilations (34%)

## Baby Boomers

### Overlap of Players & Viewers\*

As a share of both groups combined



### Top gaming content watched

Base: Viewers

1. Reviews (31%)
2. Gameplay (28%)
3. Tips & tricks (27%)



### Key Insights

Older gamers are less likely to watch game-related video content than their younger counterparts. Still, more than half of Gen X gamers watch, but this drops dramatically to just under a quarter for Baby Boomers. Practical content tends to be more popular with these older generations, who are more likely to watch tips and tricks on how to proceed in a game and reviews to inform purchasing decisions.

\*Viewers: Those watching live streamed or pre-recorded gaming video content

# Gaming is Part of Day-to-Day Social Life and Identity

Engagement goes even further than playing or viewing for younger generations

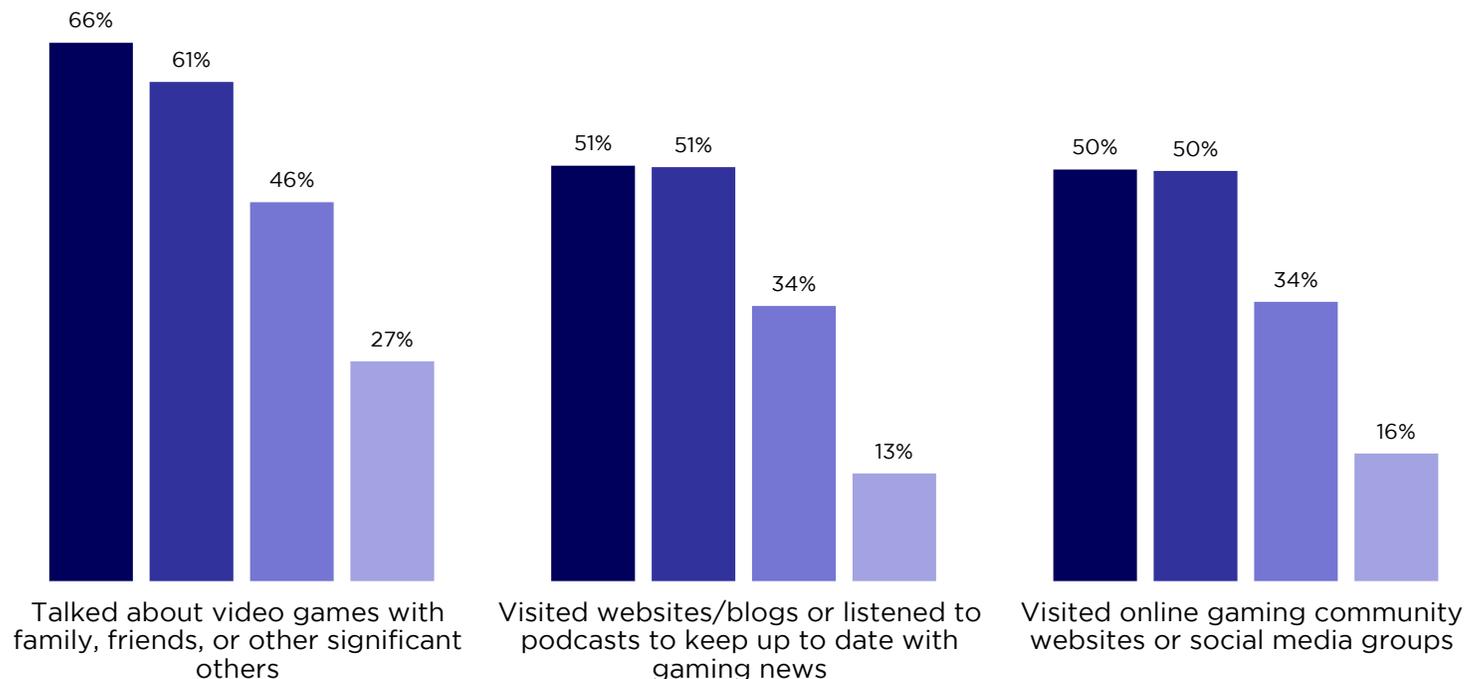
## Past 6 Months Social Gaming Engagement (% Often/Sometimes)

Base: PC, console, or mobile players

● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X ● Baby Boomers

# 40%

of Generation Z and 37% of Millennial gamers indicate that they engage with games often, whether by talking about games, visiting online communities, website, and blogs, or listening to podcasts. These shares are significantly higher than those for Gen X gamers (22%) or Baby Boomer gamers (10%).





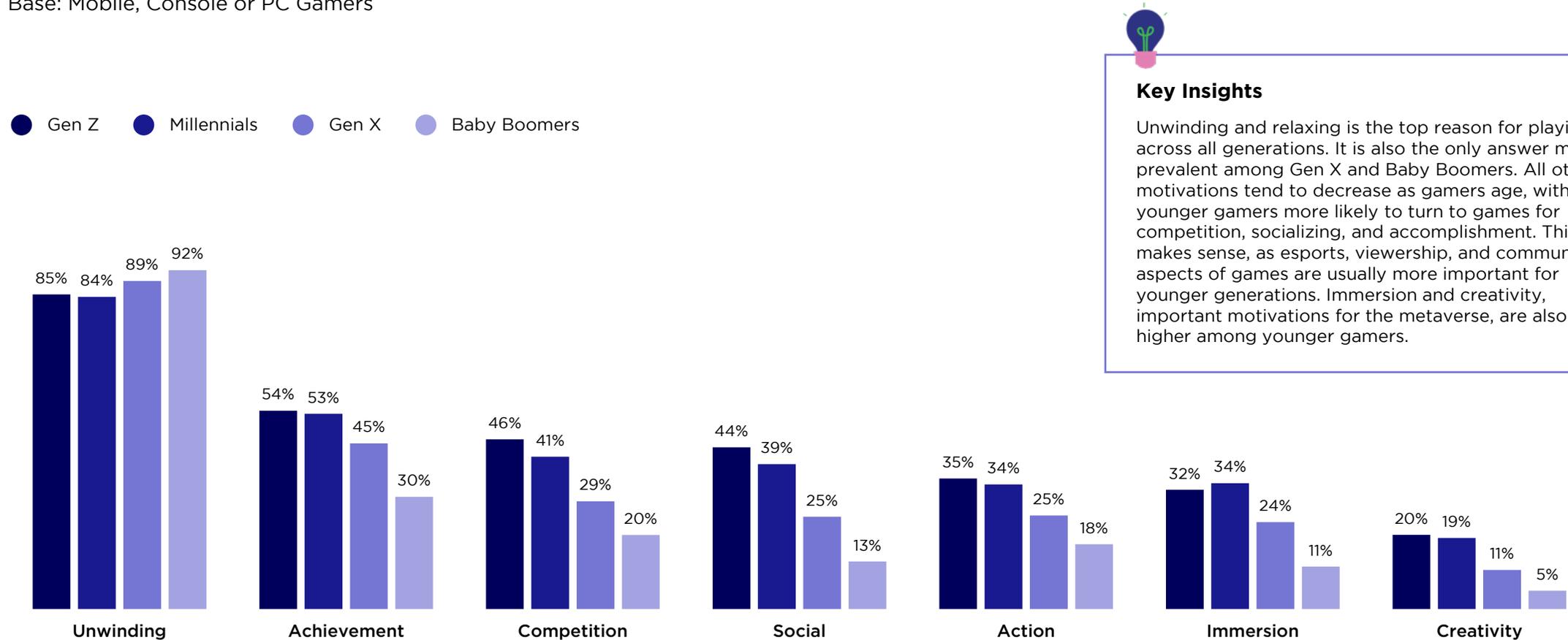
3. Games fulfill a **wide range of needs**  
for all generations

# Games Fulfill a Wide Range of Needs for Every Generation

Young players turn to games to socialize, compete, and create, while older gamers primarily play to unwind & relax

## Reasons to Play Games

Base: Mobile, Console or PC Gamers



### Key Insights

Unwinding and relaxing is the top reason for playing across all generations. It is also the only answer more prevalent among Gen X and Baby Boomers. All other motivations tend to decrease as gamers age, with younger gamers more likely to turn to games for competition, socializing, and accomplishment. This makes sense, as esports, viewership, and community aspects of games are usually more important for younger generations. Immersion and creativity, important motivations for the metaverse, are also higher among younger gamers.

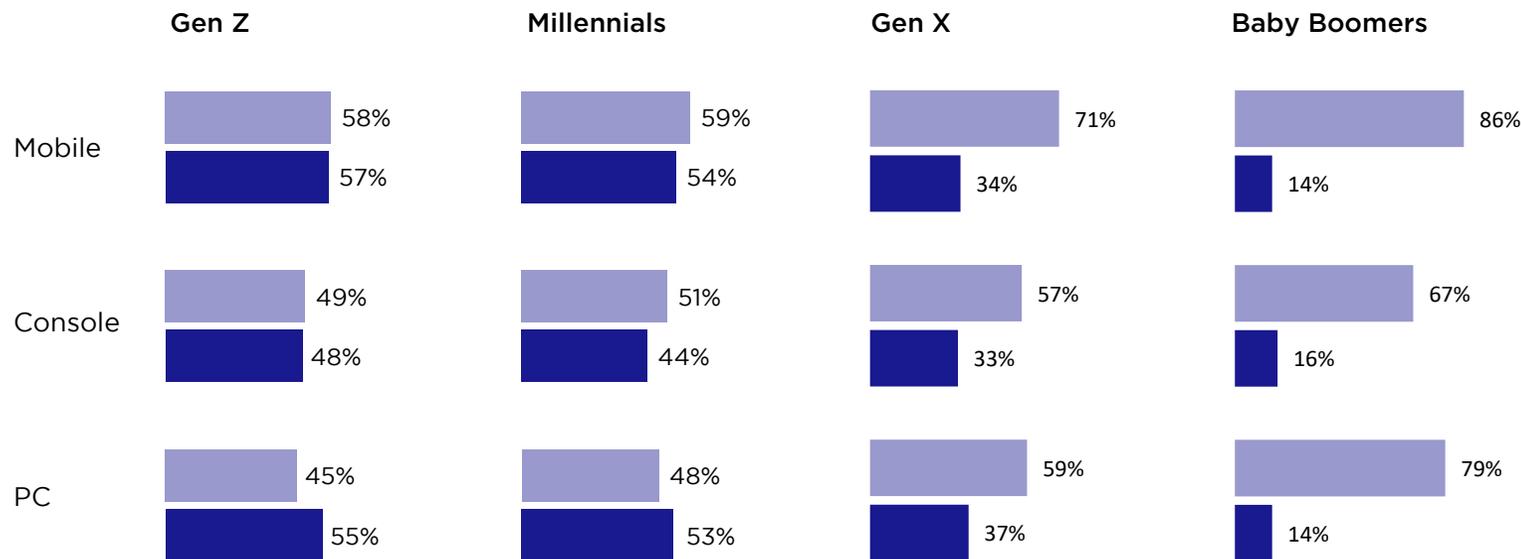
# Different Needs Are Reflected in Generations' Preferred Game Modes

Driven by social and competitive aspects, younger generations are more likely to play multiplayer titles

## Game Mode Played Most per Platform

Base: Mobile, console, or PC Gamers

● Single player mode ● Multiplayer mode



### Key Insights

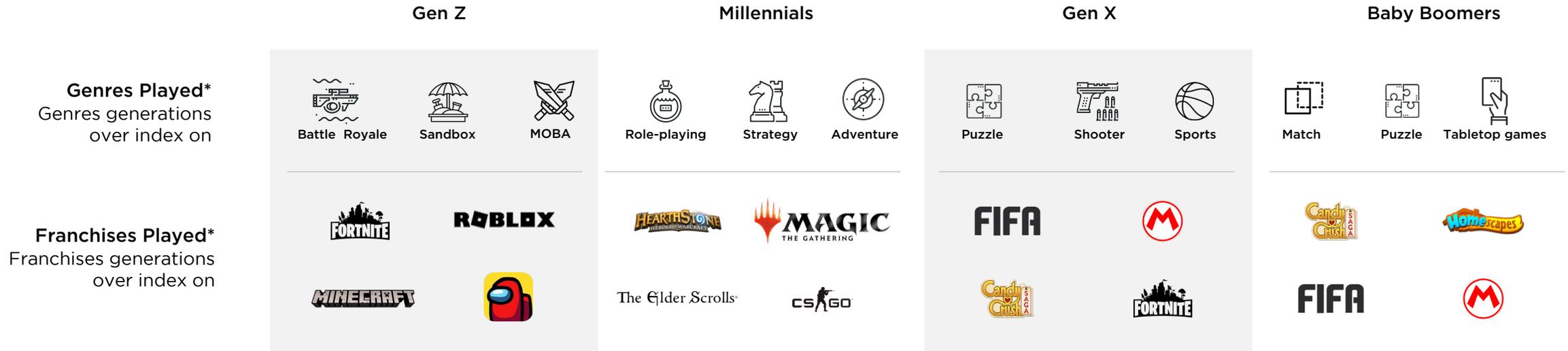
As younger gamers love to play to socialize and compete, it's no surprise that they enjoy multiplayer game modes. Multiplayer games are also the de-facto titles for many top streamers, which—as we've discussed—are more popular among younger groups.

Just like in real-world spaces, everybody needs a moment to themselves sometimes. While Older generations tend to prefer single-player games, they are also popular with younger generations, just to a lesser degree.

Older players are more driven by casual reasons to play, such as relaxing and unwinding. Therefore, they prefer single-player experiences to multiplayer ones, which tend to be more competitive than relaxing in many cases.

# Gen Z Favor Genres That Empower Creative Freedom & Socialization

These tend to be more core genres like Battle Royale & Sandbox, while older gamers prefer casual genres like Puzzle & Match



\*Played in the past 6 months



## Key Insights

Many Millennials likely remember levels from their favorite childhood games better than a map of their hometown. But this is just the tip of the iceberg compared to gaming experiences Gen Z are growing up with.

For a long time, there was a clear boundary between game worlds and the real world. Titles like Fortnite, Roblox, and Minecraft are blurring these lines, allowing gamers to socialize digitally by meeting up with friends, creating, competing, exploring, and even watching musical performances together.

Modern games are blending the digital and physical worlds. Interactions in digital worlds are increasingly mirroring real-world interaction. As more games innovate in these spaces, consumers will spend even more time in these virtual worlds—a trend that has been accelerated (but not caused) by the pandemic.

The possibilities for brands and publishers to reach new audiences are practically endless. In fact, both groups are getting more involved. Simply put: we are collectively participating more in simulated worlds, which brings us to one of gaming's hottest trends: the metaverse.

4. Gaming as a form of entertainment is ready for **its next big innovation**



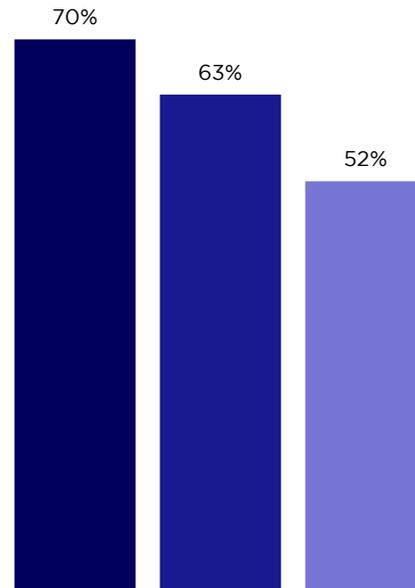
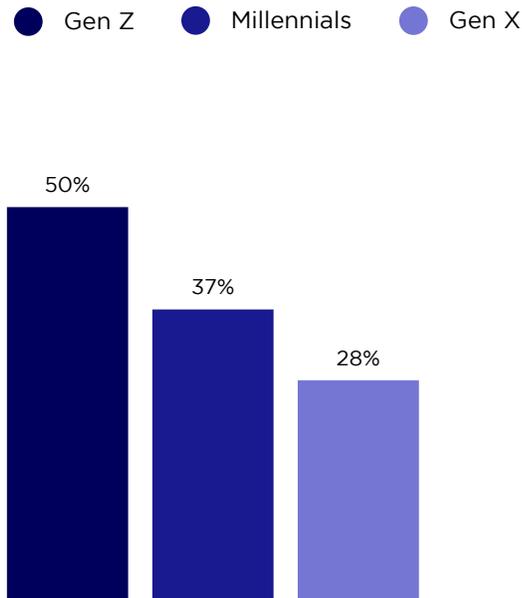
# The Metaverse: The Next Big Innovation in Gaming?



Gamers are currently hanging out in game worlds and more expect to do so

Hanging out **currently** in game worlds *without* playing the main game (% occasionally/often)

Expect to hang out **in the future** in game worlds *without* playing the main game



**70%**  
of Gen Z gamers expect to hang out in game worlds without gaming vs. 52% of Gen X

Base: Consumers aged 14-50

## The Metaverse

Gaming has evolved over the last decade to become an experience, encompassing playing, viewing, and socializing.

The next stage for gaming—and perhaps the internet as a whole—is the metaverse. In terms of gaming, we recognize the metaverse trend as the growing importance of virtual (game) worlds and digital persistence in unlocking creative spaces and identities for social experiences.

Put simply, the metaverse integrates non-gaming experiences, such as virtual concerts and fashion shows, into games. The broad appeal of non-gaming experiences is powerful: activities like virtual concerts attract non-gamers in a way games themselves cannot.

Publishers are organizing and creating these non-gaming experiences, while players are driving metaverse-like experiences by using games as a platform to express their identity, host social events, or create their own games and modes..

Want to learn more about the Metaverse? Check out our free Report [here](#).

# The Metaverse is Creating New Opportunities to Engage with Consumers

The metaverse is pushing boundaries for digital socializing, entertainment, and self-expression



## Interest in Game World Activities (% Interested/Very Interested)

Base: Consumers aged 14-50 who are open to socialize in game worlds

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X
#1	Attending a get-together with friends (76%)	Attending a get-together with friends (74%)	Getting together with family to catch up (75%)
#2	Watching a film or TV show (75%)	Getting together with family to catch up (74%)	Attending a get-together with friends (71%)
#3	Hosting special events (73%)	Hosting special events (71%)	Watching a film or TV show (69%)



Consumers under 50 are interested in similar activities in the metaverse. **Publishers** could consider prioritizing a few modalities around socializing and watch parties.

## Most Anticipated Metaverse Features/Benefits (Mean score out of 7)

Base: Consumers aged 14-50 who are open to socialize in game worlds

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X
#1	Ability to choose your avatar's physical appearance (5.39)	Ability to choose your avatar's physical appearance (5.27)	Free content and special offers by advertisers/sponsors (5.20)
#2	Ability to create content for other players (5.32)	Free content and special offers by advertisers/sponsors (5.21)	Ability to choose your avatar's physical appearance (5.15)
#3	Free content and special offers by advertisers/sponsors (5.29)	Special credits allowing to buy items in one game, and take them into others (5.21)	Ability to create content for other players (5.14)



All generations are interested in free content and special offers from advertisers. **Brands** could consider tying their brand placement to free content/items.

# Get Access to the Largest Gamer Research Study in the World

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