

RESEARCH REPORT:
VIDEO GAMERS IN EUROPE - 2005



Prepared for the Interactive Software Federation of Europe
(ISFE)



By Nielsen Interactive Entertainment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Video Games Have Become A Mainstream Entertainment Option

- The findings of the survey demonstrate that video games have become a resolutely mainstream media option. Amongst those playing games in Europe two-thirds play on average for at least an hour a day. In addition, nearly 70% of video gamers believe they will spend the same amount, or more time, in the future playing video games.
- While time spent playing video games (on average just under 9 hours per week) is less than watching television (11.6 hours per week) and listening to music (10.5 hours per week), this outweighs the time spend on other other activities such as surfing the internet (7.9 hours), listening to the radio (6.5 hours) or watching DVDs (5.5 hours).
- Nonetheless, it should also be noted that video gamers also report a significant number of hours per week in activities such as reading books (just over five hours a week) and reading newspapers and magazines (just over four and a half hours a week).

European Video Gamers Participate In A Wide Range of Activities

- This relatively heavy media consumption is reflective of gamers' interest and participation in a wide range of entertainment and leisure options. For instance, the most widespread leisure activity amongst gamers is chatting and spending time with their friends (84% say they do this on regular basis), followed by going to the movies, going out to cafés or bars, going out to eat or exercising outdoors (all done on a regular basis by at least 50% of gamers).
- Furthermore, in terms of favourite ways in which to spend leisure time, gamers show a marked interest in taking exercise. When asked for their number one favourite leisure activity just over a third of gamers said socialization with their friends, followed by taking outdoor exercise (chosen by 15%), going the gym/ health centre (chosen by 10%) and going to a café or bar (also 10%)

Video Games Have Become An Increasingly Social Activity

- Part of the success of video games appears to be directly related to the increasingly social nature of the activity. Two thirds of gamers play video games with other people for at least an hour a week (with one third playing with others for more than four hours a week).
- In terms of motivations to play games in general, the social component is again to the forefront: 60% of gamers say that "being able to play with friends" is an important reason to play, closely followed by "a sense of challenge" (56%) and "the opportunity to think strategically" (42%).
- While actually playing a game, gamers value most 'high quality graphics' (identified as very important by 78% of respondents), followed by a 'good story' (64%) and 'repeat value' (63%). It should also be noted that many gamers are also looking for some relation to the real world: 58% also say that "realism in the game" is very important.



Online and Mobile Gaming

- One third (33%) of European gamers say they play games online (with France and Germany reporting the highest proportions of online gamers – 44% and 40% respectively).
- Once more, online games that allow people to connect with one another show the most popularity. Amongst those playing online via their PC, 62% say that they have played free games that allow them to play against other people, while 47% say they have played free games that they play by themselves.
- The growing significance of mobile gaming is indicated by the fact that almost four in ten European gamers (39%) say they have played a game on their mobile phone. The vast majority of those who have played on their mobiles have done so via games already loaded onto their mobile phone (86%) while just over one third (34%) have downloaded a game for their phone from a web site. However, it should be noted that future interest on playing games on mobile phones is currently relatively muted.

Video Games Piracy

- The games industry is faced with a significant piracy problem. Nearly half of European gamers (44%) report having obtained a game that “they now believe to have been copied”.
- This problem shows significant variation across the European countries surveyed – the UK has the lowest rate of admitted piracy (16% of gamers), followed by France (36%), Germany (47%), Italy (52%) and Spain (69%).

Parents and Video Games

- Almost two thirds (65%) of parents in the sample report that their children play video games. Playing video games has also become an increasingly collective activity between parents and children: 90% of parents whose children play games say they play video games together.
- While parents believe that video games have strong benefits (for instance in assisting development of hand/eye co-ordination amongst children), parents opinions are mixed in other areas (for instance on the value of video games as an educational tool).
- As a result, parents are maintaining a considerable degree of control over their children’s video game consumption. Over three quarters (76%) say they choose which video games their children play and 83% say they control the amount of time their children play video games.

NOTE: given that respondents in the survey were not above 39 years of age, it is likely that the attitudes herein are likely to be reflective of beliefs and behaviour regarding relatively younger children)



BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY:

BACKGROUND

This survey was commissioned by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE) in order to examine consumer attitudes and usage of video games in five European countries – Germany, France, the UK, Spain and Italy. The purpose of this study is to provide both general consumer insight and a deeper understanding the role and usage of video games in European societies.

In order to do so, this study has investigated not only the usage of video games in themselves but their usage in relation to other media and leisure activities. The study also provides initial findings with regard to a number of specific issues such as the extent of consumer reported usage of pirated games; usage of online and mobile games; and parents' attitudes to video games.

METHODOLOGY

Two thousand telephone interviews of 15 minutes duration were conducted in the countries concerned, based on 400 respondents per country. Fieldwork was conducted in March 2005 using a questionnaire designed in conjunction with ISFE and its membership.

SAMPLE

The sample comprised 2000 respondents: 400 in each of Spain, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and France. All respondents were required to personally play video games on a PC, home-based or portable console but no other criteria (such as a minimum numbers of purchased games) were required.

This sample should therefore be taken as representative of a broad cross-section of gamers. Respondents were aged between 14 and 39 year olds and specified to be 80% male and 20% female. It should therefore be noted that, while representative of a widespread gaming audience, the data does not include attitudes of gamers under the age of 14 years of age.

The sample was broadly divided into four age quartiles: 14 to 17 year olds, 18 to 24 year olds, 25 to 29 year olds and 30 to 39 year olds. Minimum quotas were applied for usage of consoles and, allowing for cross ownership and usage, 70% of the sample play games on PC, 61% play on a PS2, 23% play on handheld platform such as Gameboy Advance, 20% play on an Xbox and 16% play on a Nintendo GameCube. As specified in the main report, platform usage figures show considerable variation across territories.

EXPLANATION OF SCALES

Within the course of the survey, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements. In cases where a five point scale was used (ranging from '5' representing 'strongly agree' to '1' representing 'strongly disagree'), those answering with a 4 or 5 to any given statement have been classified as 'agreeing'. In cases where a 10 point scale was used, those answering 10, 9 or 8 to any given question have been classified as 'agreeing'. In questions where future interest was asked a 5 point scale was used ranging from 5 ('definitely interested' to 1 ('not at all interested'); those answering 5 or 4 for these questions have been classified as expressing 'positive interest'.

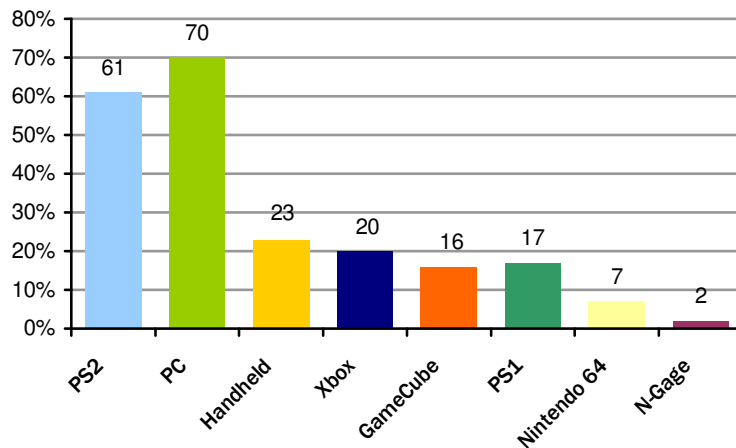


SECTION 1: USAGE OF VIDEO GAMES

Reported Platform Ownership and Usage

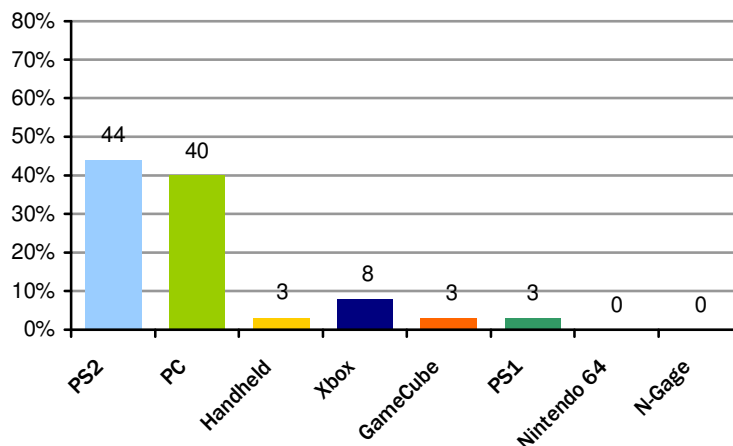
In terms of overall usage of different platforms for playing video games, the PC is the most prevalent platform used (cited by 70% of respondents), followed by the PS2 (61% of total respondents). However, as would be expected platform usage shows significant variation across countries. For instance, while 77% of German game players say they play video games on a PC, this figure drops to 65% in France and the UK. Conversely, only 38% of German game players say they use a PS2, while 79% of UK and 78% of Spanish game players say they play on this platform.

Platforms currently used for playing games
(base: all respondents, all countries)



However, when asked which platform they use most often for playing video games the PS2 comes to the forefront – while the PC has more gamers in totality, amongst those with a choice of platforms the PS2 is used more frequently (cited by 40% of gamers in total).

Platforms used most often for playing games
(base: all respondents, all countries)

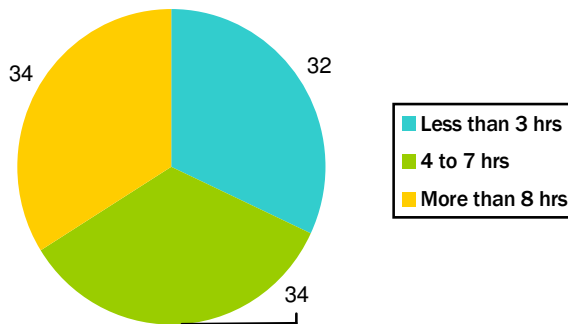


Again this is very much the case in the UK (61% say they use the PS2 most often), followed by Spain (56%), Italy (42%), France (37%) and Germany (23%). In terms of the other platforms, the PC is relatively strong in Germany (used most often by 63%), followed by France (44%), Italy (39%), Spain (32%) and the UK (21%). The Xbox is used most often by 11% of German and British respondents, 9% in Italy, 7% in France and 5% in Spain. While relatively few respondents in the survey say they play handhelds the most often, we would expect greater representation for Gameboy Advance and Gameboy Advance SP with the inclusion of respondents under the age of fourteen.

Time Spent Playing Games

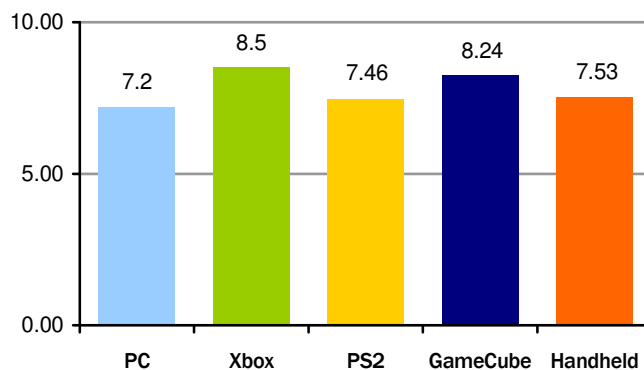
Just under one third (32%) of gamers in Europe play between one and three hours per week, just over one third (34%), play for between four and seven hours per week, while 34% play for more than seven hours per week. As might be expected given the heavy enthusiasm for gaming in the UK apparent across the survey, gamers in the UK spend more time playing video games than their counterparts in Europe, while men and younger gamers also spend relatively more time.

**Time spent playing games per week
(base = total sample)**



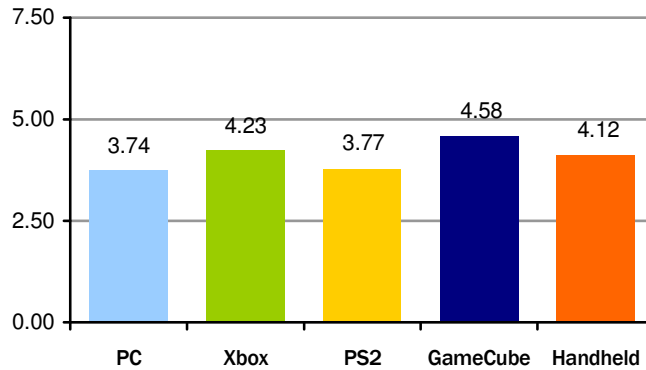
It should also be noted that, average hours per week shows variation across platform ownership. In particular, while the Xbox and Nintendo GameCube have lower total penetration than PS2, those owning these platforms tend to play more often.

**Mean number of hours spent playing games by platform owned
(base: total sample, all countries)**



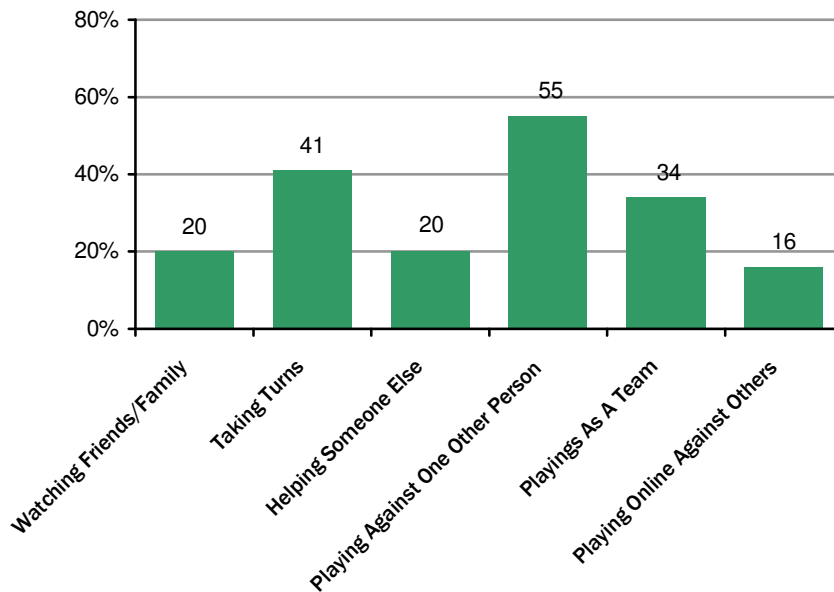
Of time per week spent playing games, a significant proportion is spent playing with other people – on average 3.77 hours per week. While the European countries show some variation (the Germans and the Spanish are marginally more social games players), Xbox and Nintendo GameCube owners again show a greater tendency to play with other people.

Mean number of hours spent playing games with other people by platform owned (base: total sample, all countries)



When game players are playing together, their primary usage of the time is within a competitive context: over half (55%) say they play against one other person. However, a more co-operative element of gameplay is also evident – 41% of those playing with other people say that they take turns playing a game and 34% say that they play as part of a team.

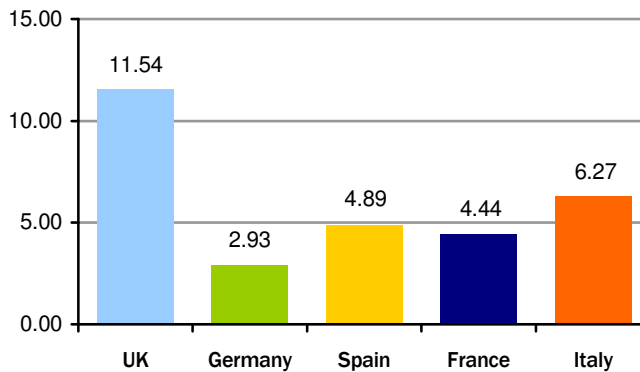
Ways in which video games are played together (base: those playing with others more than 1 hour per week)



Ownership and Purchase Patterns of Video Games

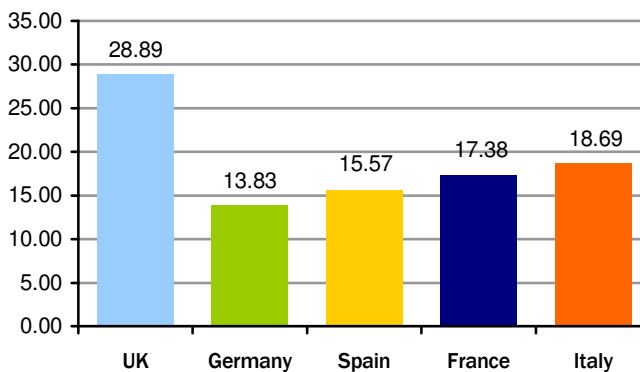
On average, video game players in Europe buy six games per year. However, purchase patterns across countries show a significant discrepancy with consumers in the UK reporting that they buy almost four times as many video games as, for instance, the Germans. Further analysis of the data also shows that those between the ages of fourteen and seventeen years old buy the most games on average (6.58 games per year), as do those owning a Xbox (8.72 games per year) or Nintendo GameCube (8.81 games per year).

**Mean number of games bought per year
(base: total sample, all countries)**



Correspondingly, similar patterns emerge in looking at the number of video games owned in current collections. While on average, European gamers have just under nineteen (18.87) video games in their current collections, respondents in the UK far supersede this (28.89 games on average), with those owing a Nintendo GameCube (24.66 games in collection), Xbox (23.06 games) or handheld device (22.92 games).

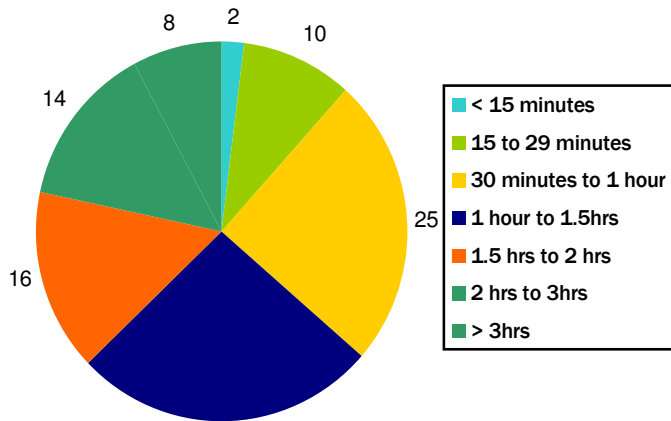
**Mean number of video games owned
(base: total sample, all countries)**



Time Spent Playing Per Session

In terms of the time spent playing video games in an average session, most European gamers (52%) play for between an hour and an hour and a half. The UK's heavier gaming culture is evident in the longest average gameplay sessions in Europe (just over one hour and forty minutes), while the French and Germans in general play for just over an hour and a half, the Spanish for an hour and fifteen minutes and the Italians for the shortest time periods (just over an hour).

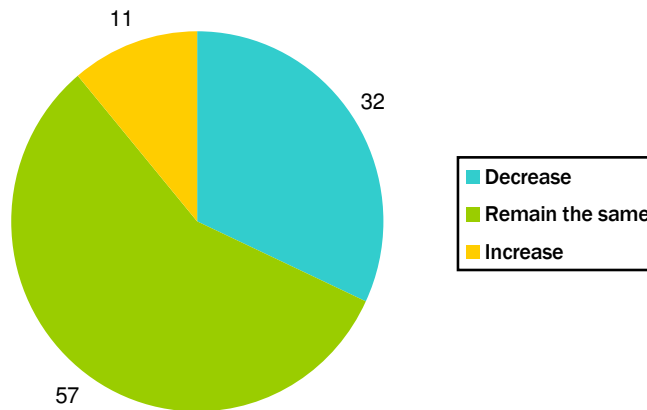
Time usually spent playing video games in one sitting (base = total sample)



Future Expectations for Playing Video Games

When asked about the amount of time they expect to spend playing video games in the future, most respondents (57%) indicated that they expect this to remain the same, 11% say time spent will increase, while approximately a third (32%) said that time spent will decrease. Amongst this latter group, the sentiment is most pronounced amongst the French (41% believe time spent will decrease) and the Italians (39%).

Expectations for time spent playing video games in the future (base = total sample)

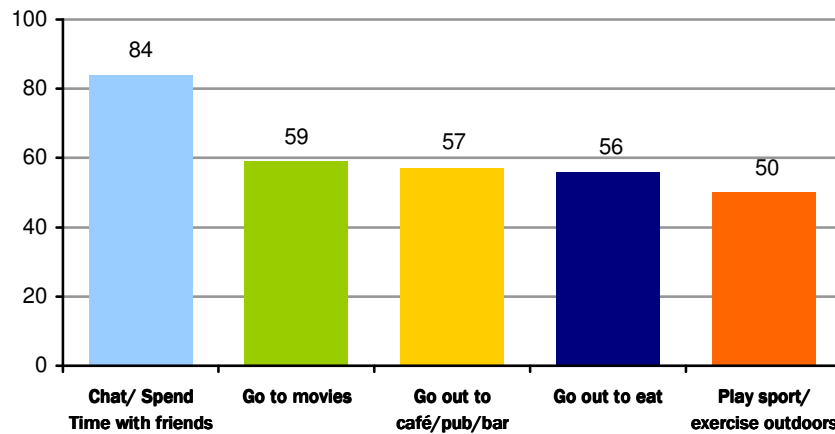


VIDEO GAMES AMONGST LEISURE OPTIONS

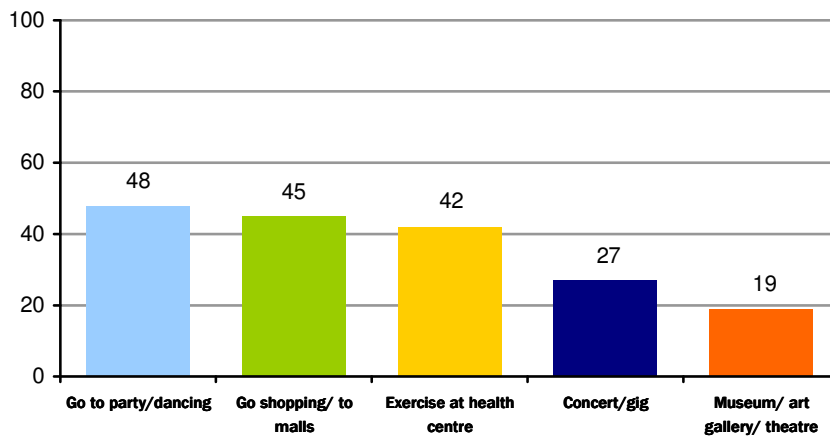
Participation in Leisure Activities Outside the Home

European video gamers engage in a wide range of other leisure activities, the most widely spread of which is socialization with friends (84% say that they chat or spend time with friends on a regular basis). The next most popular activity is going to the movies (59% do so on a regular basis), while half regularly play sport or exercise outdoors, just over a quarter (27%) go to music concerts and just under a fifth (19%) visit museums, art galleries or theatres.

Participation in leisure activities - most widely engaged activities, % respondents (base:all respondents, all countries)



Participation in leisure activities - less widely engaged activities, % respondents (base:all respondents, all countries)



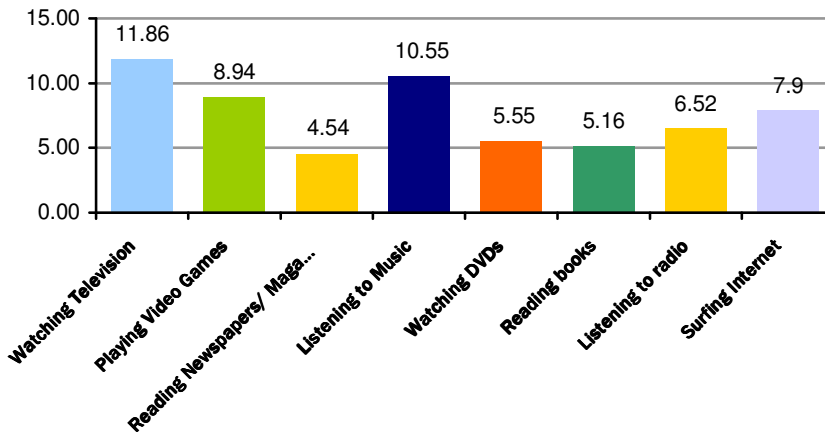
Furthermore, analysis of gamers' favourite leisure activities outside the home (rather than just those that they regularly participate in) reveals them pursuing an active lifestyle – while 36% of respondents choose socialization with friends as their favourite activity, 15% choose outdoor exercise and 10% choose exercising at a health centre or going out to a café, pub or bar.



Media Consumption Within the Home

In terms of media consumption within the home, television is the activity on which the most hours are spent on a weekly basis (a mean of 11.6 hours per week). This is followed by listening to music (just over ten and a half hours) and playing video games (just under nine hours). Gamers also report a significant proportion of time dedicated to other activities such as reading books (just over five hours a week) and reading newspapers and magazines (just over four and a half hours a week).

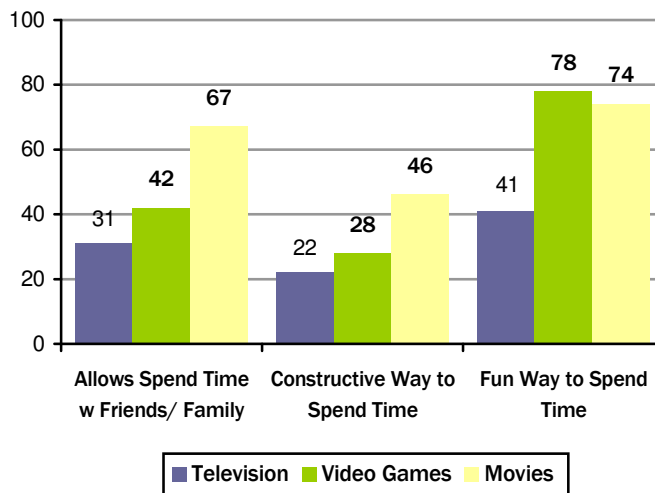
Ave. time spent per week (base:all respondents, all countries)



Benefits of Video Games in Relation to Other Media

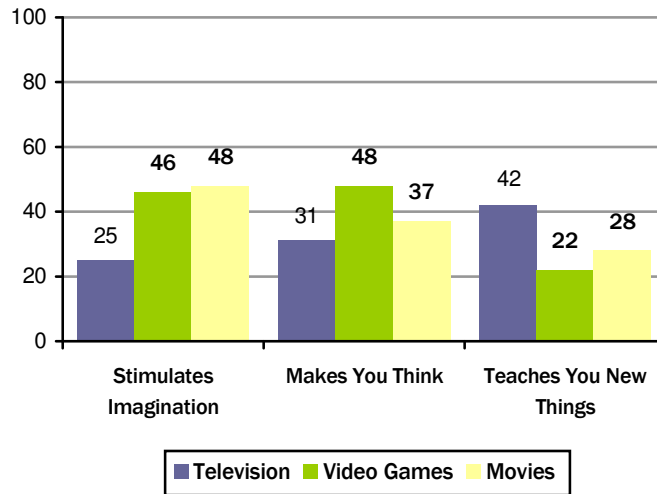
Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with certain statements about playing video games, watching television and going to the movies. Going to the movies is seen as the most social activity (67% agreement) and the most constructive way to spend time of the options offered. Nonetheless, playing video games outweighs television by both these measures and is also seen to be the most fun.

Attitudes to Relative Media - % Those Agreeing (base: total sample, all countries)



In evaluating the benefits of entertainment options by other criteria, just under half of European video game players agree that movies and video games stimulate your imagination, while only a quarter agree that television does so. Video games' weakest – and television's strongest – attribute is in 'teaching new things' (just over a fifth of gamers agree that games do this). However, video games are cited as the media option most likely to 'make you think' (just under 50% agreeing with this statement).

Attitudes to Relative Media - % Those Agreeing
(base: total sample, all countries)

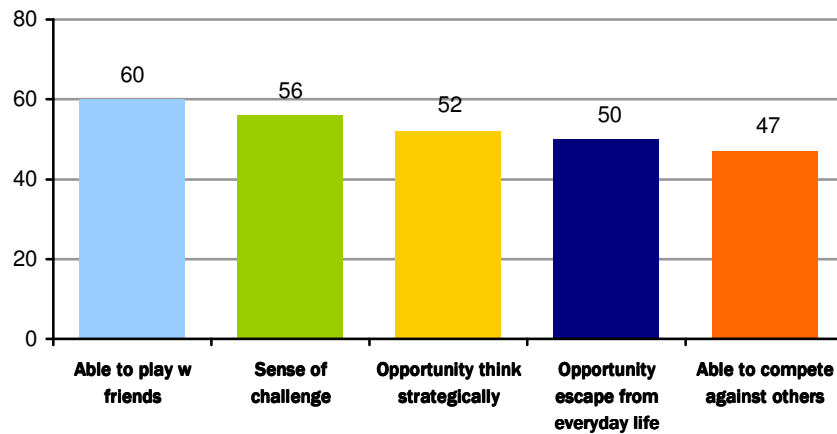


REASONS TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES

Reasons to Play Video Games in General

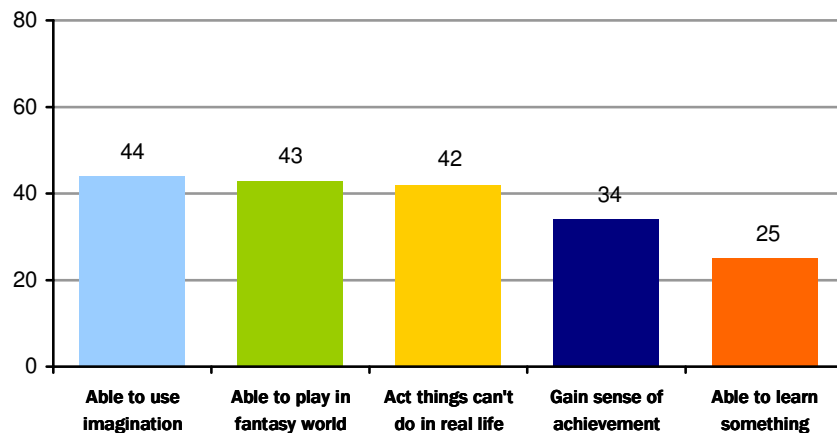
When asked as to their reasons for playing video games in general – rather than a particular experience expected from a specific title – European gamers again emphasise the social component of gaming. Six in ten gamers agree that ‘being able to play with friends’ is an important reason, followed by over half who perceive a sense of challenge and the opportunity to think strategically as important reasons.

Most Important reasons to play video games: % agreeing (base:all respondents, all countries)



The next tier of reasons are generally related to the escapism and use of imagination gamers identify as part of playing games. Not only do 50% of gamers directly cite the ‘opportunity to escape from everyday life’ as an important reason to play games but over four in ten also identify ability to use your imagination, to play in a fantasy world and act out things you can’t do in real life as important reasons. However, games are not seen as a particularly strong means of learning (only identified by 25% of the sample).

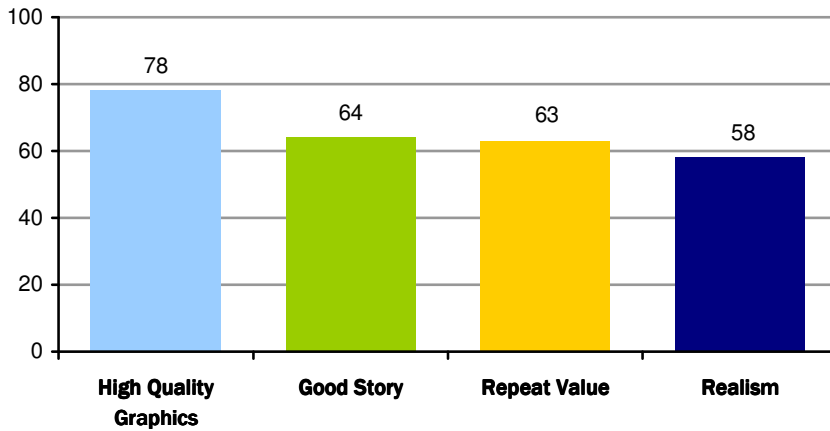
Secondary reasons to play video games: % agreeing (base:all respondents, all countries)



Importance of Factors While Playing A Game

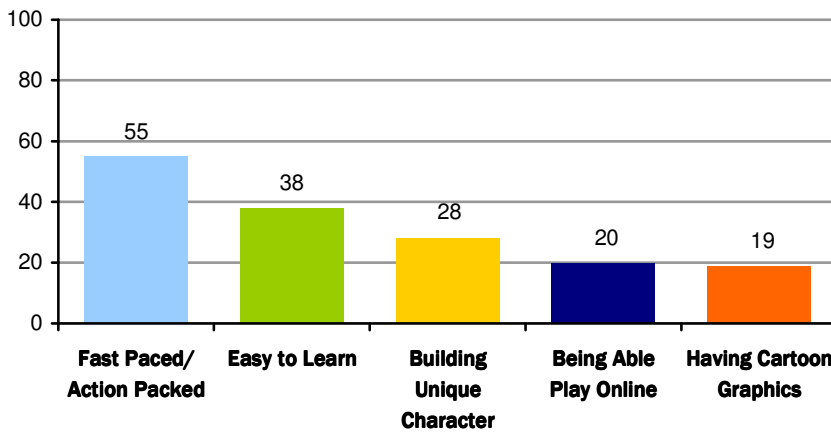
When considering the importance of specific factors while actually playing a game (as opposed to factors when choosing a game), gamers across Europe uniformly identified high quality graphics as the most important component of their gameplay experience. However, in Spain in particular respondents identified the importance of a good story, while older respondents (and those in Germany, France and Spain) place relatively greater importance on repeat value.

Most important factor when playing video games: % agreeing (base:all respondents, all countries)



Amongst the other factors influencing gameplay experiences, over half European gamers (particularly in the UK and Italy) consider a fast or action-packed experience to be important, while almost four in ten (38%) believe that a game should be easy to learn (a factor that is progressively more important amongst older respondents). Conversely, while only considered important amongst one in five gamers, the ability to play online is valued relatively more by younger gamers.

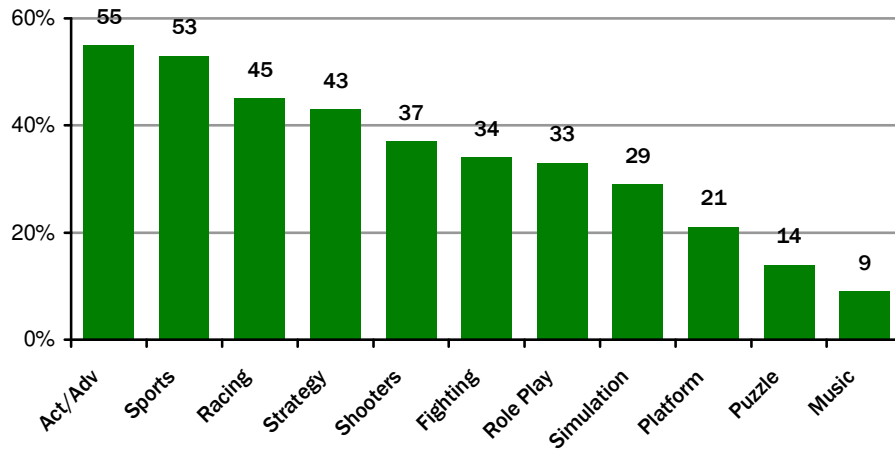
Most important factor when playing video games: % agreeing (base:all respondents, all countries)



Favourite Types of Game

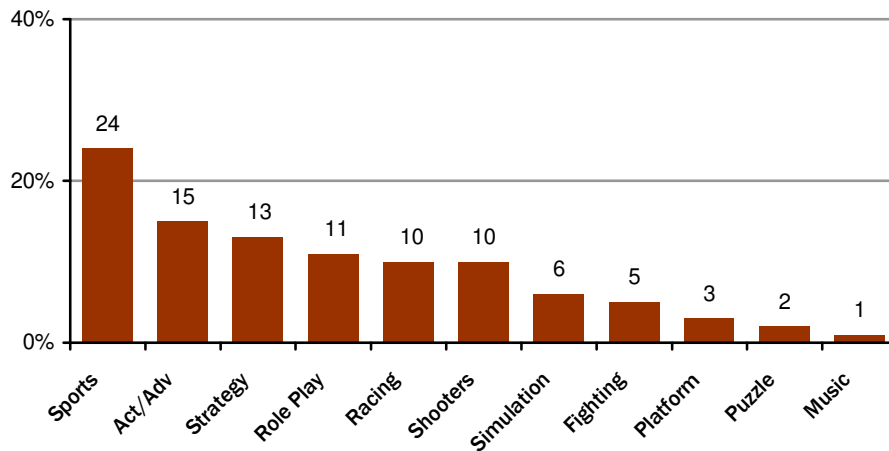
The most popular genres across Europe are Action/ Adventure (enjoyed by 55% of gamers) and Sports (53%). These are followed by experiences such as Racing (45%), Strategy (43%), Shooters (37%) and Fighting (34%). It should also be noted that the European countries continue to exhibit considerable variation. For instance, in Germany the most widely enjoyed genre is Strategy, while Racing games are enjoyed relatively more widely in the UK and Spain.

**Types of Game: % of Respondents saying enjoy genre
(Base: total sample, all countries)**



However, in terms of genres preferred, rather than just enjoyed, Sports games are identified as the type of game enjoyed most. This remains consistent across the European countries, with the exception of Germany (where Strategy games are enjoyed the most). Conversely, the UK and Italy have the fewest respondents who enjoy Strategy games the most. It should also be noted that a genre such as Role Playing Games (RPGs), while enjoyed by a relatively small proportion of gamers, is viewed favourably amongst those who do play. In contrast, Racing and Shooters are enjoyed by large numbers but are relatively low on the preferred list.

**Types of Game: % of Respondents saying enjoy genre the most
(Base: total sample, all countries)**

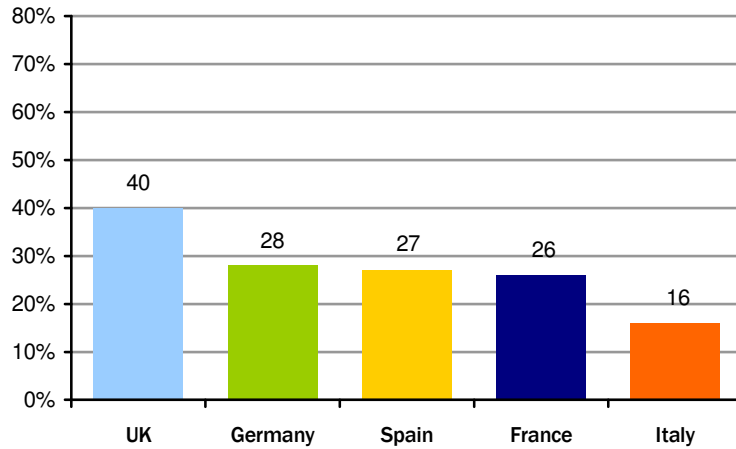


USAGE OF MOBILE, ONLINE AND OTHER GAMES

Games Requiring Physical Exercise

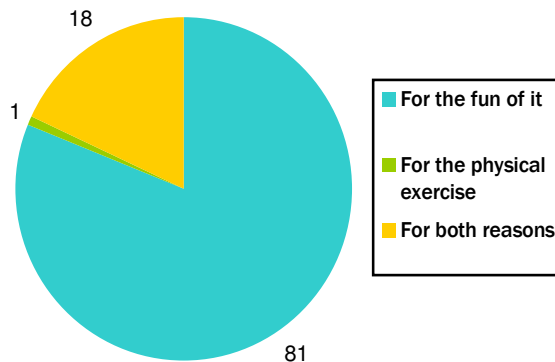
When asked if they had ever played a game requiring physical exercise such as Eye Toy, Dance Dance Revolution or Donkey Konga, 28% of respondents across Europe said that they had done so. Playing games of this sort is marginally more common amongst females (30%) as opposed to males (27%) and skews distinctively towards younger demographics (36% of 14 to 17 year olds have played these games but only 22% of those over 30 years old). European countries also exhibit significant variation, with 40% of respondents in the UK saying they have played these sorts of games but only 17% in Italy.

Have played games requiring physical exercise (base: all respondents, all countries)



The fun of these sorts of games – rather than the direct benefits of the exercise - is the overwhelming motivation to play these sorts of games. However, it should be noted that almost one fifth of respondents cite exercise as playing a role in their desires to play these games.

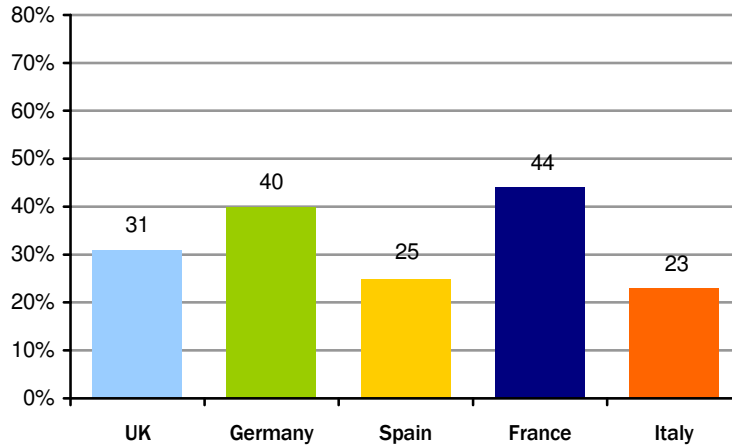
Reason for playing game with physical exercise (base = those who have played)



Playing Games Online

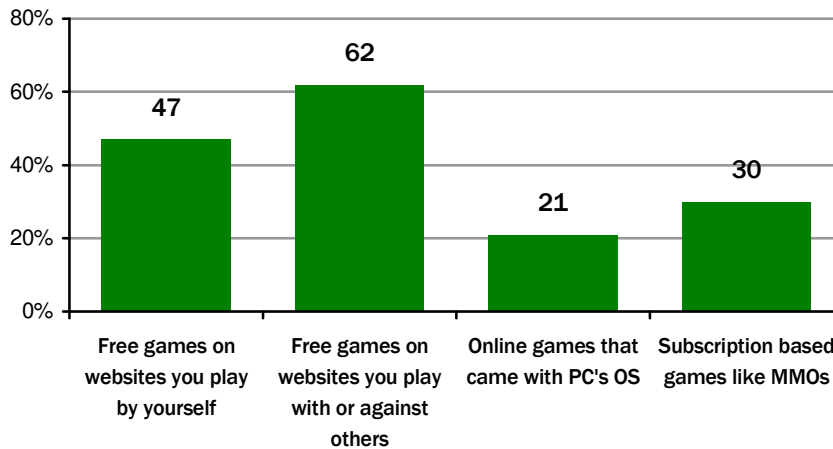
Exactly one-third (33%) of the respondents across Europe said that they play video games online. In terms of gender, males (35%) are more likely than females (22%) to be playing online with online play concentrated in the 18 to 29 age group (36% playing online). In terms of countries, French and German gamers are the most likely to be playing video games online, followed by the British.

Play games online (base: all respondents, all countries)



Of those playing online, the vast majority of general gamers are doing so through their PC, with approximately 16% of online gamers playing through a console in some form. Of those playing online games through their PC, free games that can be played against other people are the favourite sort of game (played by 62% of those playing online), followed by free games that can be played alone (played by 47%).

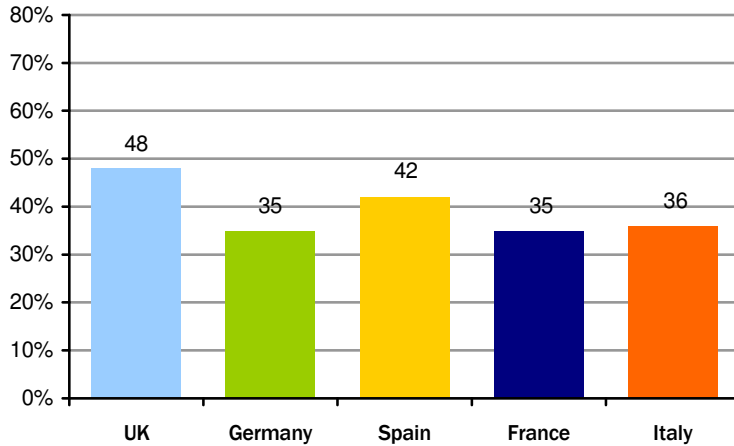
Sorts of game played online on PC: % of respondents saying they play (Base: those playing online on PC)



Playing Games on Mobile Phones

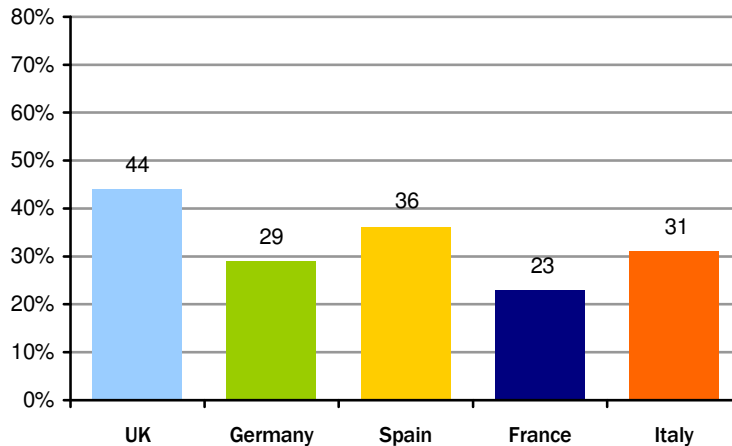
Almost four in ten (39%) of gamers also say that they play games using their mobile phone. This is particularly prevalent amongst females (44% of whom say they play) and younger groups (51% of 14 to 17 year olds in the sample say they play games on their mobile and 45% of 18 to 24 year olds). In terms of countries, the UK and Spain lead the way in mobile game playing.

Play games using mobile phone(base: all respondents, all countries)



In terms of future interest in playing games on mobile phones amongst European game players as a whole, positive interest is relatively meagre at 32% of the total sample. Two in ten respondents (20%) say they are undecided as to whether they will play games on their phone in the future and almost half (47%) say they will either 'probably' or 'definitely' not. In large part this is led by French and German respondents who show high levels of negative interest (60% in Germany and 58% in France) and correspondingly low levels of positive interest in playing mobile games in the future:

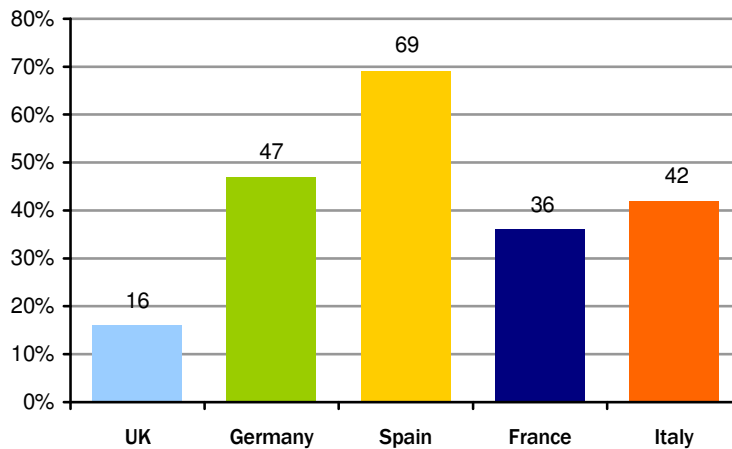
Positive interest in playing mobile games in future(base: all respondents, all countries)



VIDEO GAMES AND PIRACY

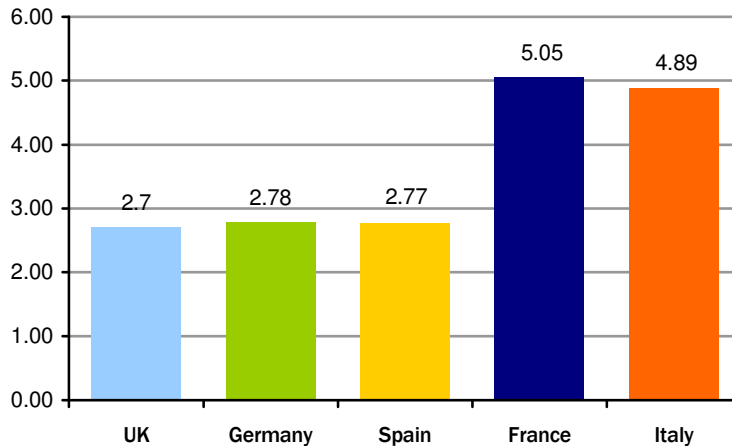
The European video games industry has a significant self-reported piracy problem: 44% of video gamers report that they have obtained a game they believe to have been counterfeited or copied. This question was asked in the same manner as previous research conducted for ISFE in 2004 and re-iterates the findings of the earlier enquiries (in which 50% of respondents admitted to obtaining a pirated game – albeit in a survey conducted face to face rather than by telephone). The extent of admitted piracy shows a very significant differential across countries, with almost 70% of Spanish gamers admitting having obtained a pirated game.

Have obtained game believe to have been counterfeited(base: all respondents, all countries)



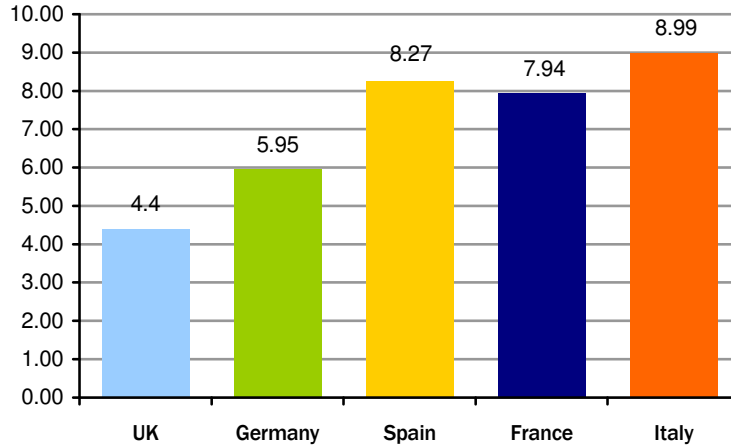
However, while use of pirated product is most widespread amongst Spanish gamers, the problem appears to be more intense in other countries. Further analysis of the survey data reveals that, of those using pirated games, French and Italian gamers obtain the most pirated copies per year (just over and under five games per year on average).

Mean number of pirated games obtained per year (base: those have obtained copied games)



The data also reveals that, of those who have obtained a copied game, the average number of copied games in collections is just over seven and a half (7.62) on an overall European basis. While further subject specific research and calculations in this area are advisable, when this figure is taken in conjunction with the total number of games European gamers report in their current collections (18.87), it appears that upto 40% of current gamers collections may be comprised of 'copied' games.

Mean number of pirated games in current collection (base: those have obtained copied games)

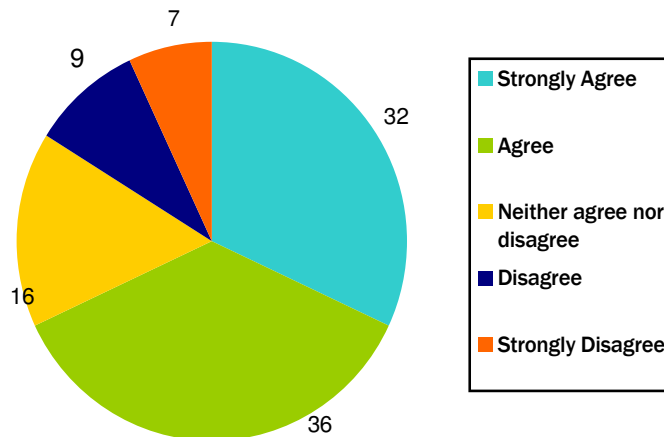


PARENTS AND VIDEO GAMES

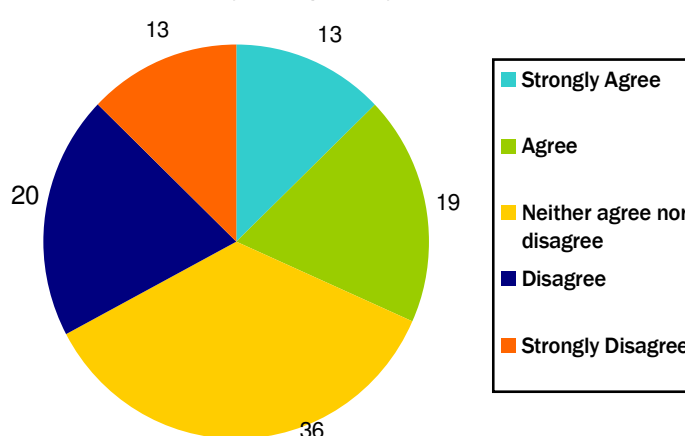
Amongst this sample of respondents, 18% had children under 18 years of age living at home. Amongst these parents almost two thirds (65%) said that their child plays video games. Of the parents whose children play video games, 90% say that they play games with their children. While this certainly appears to be indicative of video games as a strongly communal activity amongst parents and children, due to the relative youth of the sample (upto 39 years old) it should be noted that these findings are likely to be reflective of behaviour with relatively younger children.

Analysis of the attitudes of parents towards video games reveals that while parents are broadly favourable towards their children playing video games, they do have some reservations and control their children's access to the medium. For instance a clear majority (68%) of parents believe that video games can improve their child's hand/eye co-ordination. However, opinion is considerably more mixed as to the value of video games as an educational tool with approximately a third of parents believing this to be the case, a third disagreeing and a third in between.

'Video Games can improve your child's hand/eye co-ordination'
(base = parents)



'Video Games are a good educational tool'
(base = parents)

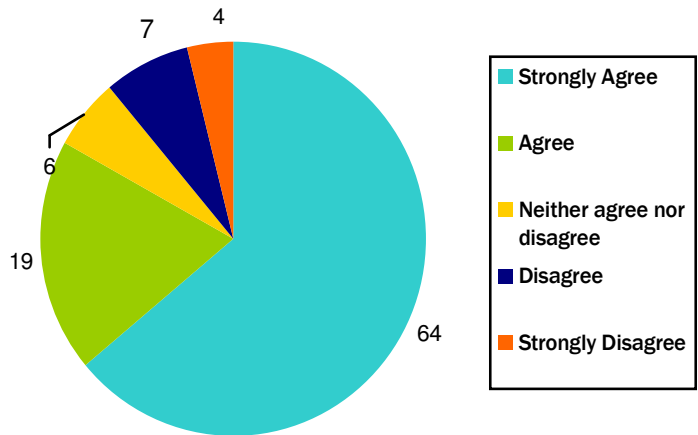


Attitudes are more polarized when evaluating the influence of video games as a social motivator: while 24% of parents agree that “video games are a good social activity for your child”, 30% are undecided and almost half (46%) disagree. Parents also exhibit some concerns on the potential impact of violence in video games; while 40% of parents disagree with the statement that “video games encourage actual aggressive behaviour in children), 27% are unsure and 33% agree with this statement.

Accordingly parents report taking a strong stance in monitoring what video games their children play. Not only do 83% of parents say that their child has to ask permission before buying a video game but, as outlined below, the majority of parents also monitor the amount of time their children are playing and check the age ratings on video games.

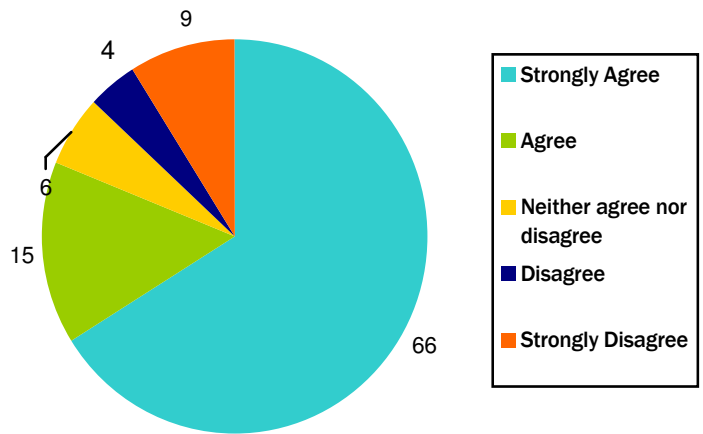
'You control the amount of time your child plays video games'

(base = parents)



'You always check the age rating on games your child plays'

(base = parents)



CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

A MEDIUM GROWING IN IMPORTANCE

The results of the survey provide further confirmation that video games have become a mainstream entertainment option, enjoyed and engaged in by a wide variety of Europeans. This is reinforced by the range of leisure activities gamers engage in - playing sports, going to the cinema, eating out restaurants, spending time with friends at home and in cafés. Clearly, former stereotypes of the typical gamer as a teenage boy spending hours alone in his bedroom is both out-dated and misleading.

MOTIVATIONS TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES

In large part, the mainstream profile of the modern games player can be explained through the wide range of motivations cited to play games. Clearly, games are fun to play and have been a central to friends' and families' entertainment for generation after generation. However, the video games experience of 2005 appears to have built upon this to offer an experience which, in addition to being fun, offers the ability to play with other people, think strategically, over-come challenges and live out fantasies. Furthermore, the range of individual games offers variations and different emphases with the experience: ranging from intense strategic games to the quick buzz of a fast-moving racing game.

GAMES IN COMPARISON TO OTHER MEDIA

Analysis of respondents' reactions to games in comparison to television and cinema are also revealing. Video games receive high comparative ratings as a 'fun way to spend time', 'making you think' and 'stimulating imagination'. The only measure in which games compare relatively lowly is in their current ability to 'teach new things'.

Nonetheless, the survey results show games outweighing television in almost every category. For the gamers surveyed here there are indications that the appeal of television as an entertainment option is waning. While television remains the primary media form in terms of its ability to act as both a source of information and entertainment.

Cinema still presents a very attractive entertainment proposition. Noticeably, the most prominent characteristic of movies in addition to being a 'fun way to spend time' is the capacity to offer a social experience ("allows you to spend time with friends and family"). In our analysis, this is likely to be directly related to the movies' status as the more constructive way to spend time in comparison to television and video games. In short, if a media or entertainment experience is both fun and offers the chance to both spend time with friends it is more likely to fulfill the equation of 'time well spent'.

BUILDING ON GAMES' SUCCESS

We believe some of the attributes of movies offer indications as to how video games will continue to cement and build their place as in the mainstream. While the social component is already a strong attribute of video games, the ability to build on this by offering easily accessible experiences is likely to make video games even more prevalent as a subject of mutual connections and conversation in environments ranging from school to the office to the living room.

The research also offers some indications as to how to build video games' user base: for instance, older gamers want an easily accessible experience with good repeat value



(presumably because, while they want to play games, their time to research and purchase multiple titles is relatively limited).

In another potential growth area, women show a higher propensity than men to play games on their mobile phones. However, the survey also reveals that future interest in playing games on mobiles is relatively muted. From other work conducted by Nielsen Interactive, we believe that consumers may be confused – or potentially even feel misled – by mobile gaming propositions. While a high potential area, the marketing of mobile games needs to be treated with care.

VIDEO GAMES AND PIRACY

The downside of video games' success is a major piracy problem: 44% of European gamers report they have obtained a game they believe to be counterfeited or copied. Given that this figure is based on self-reporting in a sensitive area, the real figure is likely to be higher. From our experience across media sectors such as DVD and music, we would emphasise that this is a problem that requires addressing from both a supply and demand side perspective. In order to be successful in dealing with the issue, a two pronged strategy - incorporating both greater enforcement action by European governments and direct messaging to consumers – is likely to be required.

PARENTS AND VIDEO GAMES IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Analysis of the responses from parents in the survey indicates that games have become an increasingly central and communal part of the household. Almost two thirds of parents say that their children play video games and, of these parents, 90% say they play games with their children. Clearly, by doing so, parents see benefits in video games. Nonetheless, it should also be pointed out that some parents also express concerns regarding video games and, accordingly, control the amount of time their children play.

Qualitative evidence from Nielsen Interactive's wider work indicates a pragmatic approach amongst parents; most are happy for their children to play video games on the condition that – as with watching television or DVDs etc - they also engage in other activities. Accordingly, a new generation is growing up with familiarity and appreciation for video games as a fun, challenging and sociable activity they are likely to continue to pursue.

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