

The On-line Game Explosion

A collection of articles highlighting the growing popularity of on-line games





Nielsen to Actively Measure Video-Game Usage in Households

Friday , October 20, 2006

REUTERS 

LOS ANGELES — Nielsen Media Research, whose TV viewer surveys have long determined how much advertisers pay for commercials, is getting into the digital joystick business with a new ratings service for video games.

[Nielsen](#) on Wednesday announced plans to launch [GamePlay Metrics](#), designed to give the video game industry a precise system of electronic measurements to standardize the burgeoning market for the buying and selling of ads in its products.

The new service also will track the activities of gamers across other media platforms, including television and the Internet.

• [Click here to visit FOXNews.com's Video Gaming Center.](#)

Nielsen's plan underscores the growing importance of the [video game industry](#) to advertisers, who already have their products placed in many titles, particularly those dealing with sports or set in cities.

Still, unlike television, where ratings are used to help negotiate commercial rates, the video game industry has yet to come up with standard measurements to use when buying and selling advertising space.

[The Nielsen [press release](#) said that GamePlay Metrics was an expansion of its existing People Meter technology, which keeps track of signals coming into a television sets used by "Nielsen families," presumably including video and audio feed from home gaming consoles. GamePlay Metrics will place devices directly on the consoles themselves to more closely monitor daily usage.]

Nielsen's latest venture will also provide advertisers with data about the playing habits and tastes of gamers, typically the hard-to-reach young male demographic highly prized by advertisers.

The sale of video game hardware and software generates global revenues of about \$30 billion a year, while advertising and brand displays have grown increasingly prevalent in the virtual landscapes inhabited by gamers.

Forecasters expect the emerging market for in-game ads to reach \$1 billion to \$3 billion by 2010, but that is a fraction of the more than \$60 billion spent on all television advertising.

"The value of an entertainment medium is directly proportional to how well it is measured," Jeff Herrmann, vice president of Nielsen's newly created wireless and interactive division, said in a statement. "A reliable and accurate standard of measurement for video gaming will drive advertising investment in this medium."

In an interview with Reuters, Herrmann added this would "ultimately ensure that the consumer gets a

better game" by providing a new revenue stream to offset the steep costs of developing more sophisticated titles.

He said Nielsen's own studies have suggested that virtual product placement and brand integration in some genres, such as sports and games in urban settings, can actually enhance the experience of users by making them seem more realistic.

He acknowledged that other formats, such as fantasy and science fiction, may not lend themselves as easily to advertising.

"The industry is very sensitive to that point, and contextual relevance matters quite a bit," he said.

Nielsen spokeswoman Karen Gyimesi said the new video game service will build on the ratings sample the company already has in place for television, with some preliminary gaming data being made available in early 2007.

But she said the full service would probably not be up and running until the middle of next year.

Nielsen, a unit of media and market research company VNU, has been measuring TV audiences since the 1949-50 broadcast season.



Get 'Lost' in New Video Game

Hit TV Show to Be Made Into Video Game by Ubisoft Montreal

By JONATHAN SILVERSTEIN

May 22, 2006 -- - ABC's hit television creeper "Lost" is following in the footsteps of other small-screen blockbusters like "CSI" and "24" and is finding new life in the gaming world.

Though still in the very early stages of development, Touchstone Television and game maker Ubisoft announced today that a deal to make the game is final and that it's now in the hands of the programming geniuses at Ubisoft's Montreal studios.

"With our Montreal studios involved you can expect an extremely high level game," said Pascal Bonnet, director of licensing for Ubisoft "'Lost' is a hit all over the world and we want to bring the 'Lost' universe to the next level."

Bonnet says that less than two weeks ago at the video game industry's biggest trade show -- the Electronic Entertainment Expo, or E3 -- he met with the show's producers, including co-creator J.J. Abrams, to discuss the project.

Bonnet wouldn't share much, but did say the idea is to create a video game as unique and engaging as the unconventional TV show.

"Lost" creators J.J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof and producers from the show will serve as executive producers on the game.

Not Just for Gamers; Not Just for Fans

The "Lost" video game will be released for both home and handheld consoles, as well as for PCs, and is scheduled to hit stores sometime next year.

While the details have yet to be ironed out, Bruce Gersh, senior vice president of business development with ABC Entertainment, says ABC hopes to broaden the show's appeal with an interactive experience unlike any other.

"As we are developing this game, we'll be keeping in mind the core viewer, but also the core player," he said. "We're gonna have a lot of fun with it."

Gersh points out that while the show's characters will likely be involved in some way, the creation of the game may lead to new characters that could have the chance to jump out of the game and into the show.

"We did that with the 'Alias' game," he said. "It was a small character, but he appeared in the game first."

"Lost" fans will be happy to know that the studio behind the upcoming game is one known and respected by gamers worldwide.

Among others, Ubisoft Montreal is responsible for the Tom Clancy "Splinter Cell" series of games, "Far Cry Instincts" and the recent "Prince of Persia" titles.

Unusual Marketing for an Unusual Show

The move to turn "Lost" into a video game is in line with the current trend of bringing hit television shows to game players.

But it's a trend that Gersh says is not new and says more about the audience than the marketing strategy.

"Serialized dramas have classically tapped into the gamer audience," he explained. "But it has to fit the brand. There are lots of great television shows that are successful but would never make sense as a video game."

Gersh says when those opportunities do arise, they represent unique revenue streams that can not only generate additional profits, but can spread the word about an already successful show.

In fact, the marketing team on "Lost" has been vigorous in its pursuit of ways to generate buzz that appeal to the show's audience.


Things like a Web site for the ill-fated Oceanic Airlines, on which the show's doomed castaways were flying when they crashed, and phony television commercials for the show's mysterious Honso Foundation keep fans involved, not just watching.

It may be one of the reasons the show is the fastest-selling series in Buena Vista International Television's history, appearing in 210 territories worldwide.

"The creative appeal of 'Lost' transcends borders with its character-driven stories and addictive mysterious mythology," Touchstone Television executive vice president Julia Franz said in today's press release. "It's not enough for fans worldwide to just watch 'Lost,' the game is a wonderful opportunity to organically extend this creative phenomenon into an interactive consumer experience."

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'Oblivion' big winner at Spike TV video game awards

Posted 12/11/2006 11:42 AM ET 

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*, a fantasy role-playing game, was the top winner at the Spike TV Video Game Awards in Los Angeles Friday, taking home five prizes, including "Game of the Year" and "Most Addictive."

Gears of War, an alien shooting title, captured four honors, including "Studio of the Year" for developer Epic Games.

Nintendo's new Wii video game console, which has wooed gamers with its intuitive one-handed motion sensing controller, took home the prize for "Breakthrough Technology."

The awards show will air on Viacom's Spike TV on Dec. 13.

A partial list of winners follows:

Game of the Year: *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* (Take-Two Interactive Software Inc./Bethesda Softworks)

Studio of the Year: *Gears of War* developer Epic Games

Best Performance by a Human — Male: Patrick Stewart in *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*

Best Performance by a Human — Female: Vida Guerra in *Scarface: The World is Yours* (Vivendi/Radical Entertainment)

Most Addictive: *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*

Critics' Choice: *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* (Nintendo)

Cyber Vixen of the Year: "Alyx Vance" in *Half-Life 2: Episode 1* (Valve)

Best Original Score: *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*

Best Graphics: *Gears of War* (Microsoft Corp. /Epic Games)

Breakthrough Technology: Nintendo Wii

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NBC sports branded wireless video games coming to mobile phones

Posted Tuesday, August 9, 2005

AEGF Mobile Games, a partnership between Abandon Entertainment and GF Capital Management & Advisors, and NBC Sports, today announced a partnership on an exclusive worldwide mobile gaming license to create NBC Sports branded games. Under the deal, AEGF will use NBC Sports content to create unique and challenging wireless video games available on mobile phones, many of which will be directly interactive with NBC Sports broadcasts. The announcement was made by AEGF Mobile Games Principal, Marcus Ticotin and NBC Sports President Ken Schanzer.

Among the first NBC Sports mobile games are themed games in golf, hockey, horse racing, poker and skiing.

"As co-publisher of the best-selling massively multiplayer online role-playing game, Dark Age of Camelot, we understand the power of branded entertainment," says Ticotin. "The explosive growth in the mobile gaming marketplace is starting to mirror that of online gaming, and armed with powerful, household brands such as NBC Sports, we're confident that we can capture the imagination of a new breed of gamer."

NBC Sports President Ken Schanzer said: "Wireless video games are a natural extension of the NBC Sports brand. This is a great way to utilize our content to reach out to the all-important 18-34 male demo in an entertaining and relevant way."

Find this page online at:

<http://www.phonecontent.com/bm/news/games/1080.shtml>

Girl Gamers Grow Up

By [Robyn Greenspan](#) Associate Editor, E-Commerce Guide

February 12, 2004

Moms may be vying with their kids for computer time, but not for work or home related tasks. Research from [America Online \(AOL\)](#) has found that females over 40 years old spend the most time per week playing online games at 9.1 hours, which accounts for 41 percent of their connection time. Comparatively, teens spend 7.4 hours per week playing games, while females under 40 log 6.2 hours.

The U.S. survey, conducted during December 2003 and January 2004 by Digital Marketing Services (DMS) of more than 3,600 individuals who have played online games

within the last three months, revealed that a significant portion of 40-something women used gaming almost daily as a way to relieve stress, increase skill levels and inspire social interaction. While only 22 percent of teens admitted to playing games every day, 41 percent of 40-something women were daily gamers.

Gaming seems to be addictive among adults, as they were more likely to stay up all night playing games online than their teenage counterparts. Additionally, more 40-something women logged on to play before work, late night (midnight to 2am), and the middle of the night (2am to 5am) than any other market segments that were measured.

Word and puzzle games were most popular with the women over 40, with 49 percent preferring them over casino (27 percent), arcade (16 percent), trivia (7 percent), and sports (1 percent) games. The 40-something women were also more likely to take their online gaming friendships offline at 21 percent. Only 7 percent of teens were likely to pursue gaming friendships outside of the computer, and 9 percent of males have sparked romantic interest via gaming.

The survey found that gamers play in lieu of other activities, such as exercising, reading or watching TV. Women over 40 avoid working out more than the other groups, and females overall are more likely to read books than any of the other segments.

Do you play online games more than...?						
	Adults	Teens	Males	Females	Females Under 40	Females 40+
Working out/exercising	64%	61%	59%	66%	61%	71%
Hiking/outdoor activities	58%	51%	51%	62%	58%	65%
Reading books	45%	50%	50%	42%	41%	44%
Renting/watching movies	44%	41%	40%	45%	36%	55%
Watching TV	22%	23%	19%	24%	20%	28%

Source: DMS and AOL

[Hitwise's](#) January 2004 traffic measurements to sites devoted to the production, download, review, sale or playing of computer games, console games, board games and other types of games lends some support to AOL's age-related findings, revealing that the majority of visitors are in the 35 to 44 year old range. However, according to Hitwise, more males than females are gravitating toward those type of sites.

Most Visited Game-Related Sites, January 2004, U.S.	
Site	Market Share
Yahoo Games	12.22%
Pogo	11.99%
Sandboxer	4.23%
Neo Pets	3.76%
MSN Gaming Zone	3.12%
Gamefaqs	2.66%
Yahoo Fantasy Basketball	2.36%
Yahoo Fantasy Sports	1.78%

CheatPlanet	1.15%
GameSpot	1.08%

Source: Hitwise

Hitwise noted that Yahoo Games has been the #1 gaming site since February, 2003 but it was knocked from first place by Pogo for one week only — the week ending January 17, 2004. While AOL users are included in Hitwise's measurements, AOL's gaming sites are not included among the site category data.

Virtual Items Gaining Real World Value

People are beginning to buy and sell virtual items from online games for real world money

Virtual economies are economies that exist in virtual worlds, particularly Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) like Everquest, The Sims Online, Second Life, World of Warcraft and Lineage. In these games players can exchange characters, weapons, real estate, etc. for other goods or virtual currency. Most game manufacturers, such as Sony Online and Blizzard, actively encourage these virtual economies; however some of these economies have started to spill over into the real world, causing concern for game players and designers.

The growth of online gaming has led to players buying and selling in-game items for real-world money on sites such as eBay. The money changing hands for these items is substantial: a space station in the game Project Entropia recently went for \$100,000. This sort of transaction is made possible by the very mechanisms that make a virtual economy possible:





- Software that records the state of the game world and players
- Software that records which items belong to which user and allows users to transfer these items and skills whenever they want.
- Scarcity, which means that users have to use "real" resources, such as time and money, to obtain items and skills
- Specialization, which means that certain resources are only available to certain players

There is active debate in the online gaming community and industry about selling game items for real money. Some feel that since players have spent hours toiling over the game to acquire the skills and items, they should be free to do what they want with them. The game Second Life even recognizes intellectual property rights for assets created in the game. Others believe that the game developers actually own the virtual items and should be able to control any such transactions. Some also argue that allowing players to sell game items for real-world money turns these games into gambling venues. So far, these transactions are not illegal, although they may violate the terms and condition of some games.

One side effect of this practice is a wave of virtual crime that has engulfed the online gaming community. Seduced by the lure of easy money and the blurring of the line between virtual and real money, unscrupulous players have begun forming gangs to extort money from new players, writing computer programs that beat up and rob other characters, and creating online brothels where players pay for cybersex. These trends will only grow as online gaming becomes more popular and the value of online commodities increases.

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- [Real-Money Trading](#)  (Wikipedia)
- [Sex and the Simulated City](#)  (Detroit Free Press)
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Find this article online at:

http://www.mysecurecyberspace.com/articles/statistics/virtual-items-gaining-real-world-value.html#msc_article.statistics.virtualeconomy



Online Games Market to Hit \$4.4 Billion by 2010

> > > Entertainment

By [Enid Burns](#) | August 30, 2006

The online game market is expected to reach \$4.4 billion by 2010 according to data released by [Parks Associates](#). The research firm also identified six distinct groups of gamers based on time spent and motivation.

By 2010, the online game market is expected to reach \$4.4 billion, up from \$1.1 billion in revenues last year. That figure is based on interviews and estimates of different segments of the game industry including publishers, distribution services, casual Web-based services, and also derivative revenue like in-game advertising and commodity exchange.

Several game publishers have reported disappointing earnings in recent years. The monetary increase in the game market is at least in part reliant to the release and adoption of next-generation consoles like the Microsoft Xbox 360, which began selling last year, and the Sony PlayStation 3 and Nintendo Wii, both of which are yet to hit the market.

"Lower revenue numbers are largely due to platform success, that's why they are influenced by the platform lifecycle," said Parks Associates Director of Broadband and Gaming Sectors Michael Cai.

In addition to traditional game industry companies like publishers, hardware and console manufacturers, the research included other sources new to the gaming sector including portals like Yahoo, Real Networks and AOL; and NHN Corporation, which operates an online gaming site in Korea and recently opened U.S. operations.

"Those companies are going to help the market grow, along with dominant players like Microsoft, EA, and other [traditional industry companies]," said Cai.

Supporting these revenues are PC gamers who spend an average of 18.5 hours per week playing games, and 70 percent of PC gamers take part in multiplayer mode online. In comparison, console gamers play an average 13.6 hours per week, portable games are played 8.9 hours on average, and mobile games about 4.6 hours.

In a survey of 2,000 U.S.-based online gamers, respondents were asked questions about time spent, motivation and attitudes toward gaming. From the findings, six distinct groups emerged.

"Traditionally, the industry talks about casual and hard-core gamers," said Cai. "They don't speak the same language when they talk about casual gamers." Cai also said the definitions of casual and hard-core gamers differs. Casual gamers are often classified as those who play Web-based games. Others put gamers who play less than 10 hours per week, regardless of the game, into the casual group. The six segments identified are:

- **Power Gamers** who represent 11 percent of the gamer market, and 30 cents on the dollar on retail and online games.
- **Social Gamers** play games as a way to interact with friends.
- **Leisure Gamers** spend 58 hours per month playing mainly casual titles.
- **Dormant Gamers** have fewer opportunities to game because of scheduling issues with family, work or school.
- **Incidental Gamers** lack motivation and play out of boredom but spend 20 hours or more a month playing online games.
- **Occasional Gamers** play puzzle, word and board games almost exclusively.

"If you lump all non-core gamers into the casual group, you run the risk of losing focus," said Cai. "A game that appeals to one segment within the non-core or non-power gamer segment doesn't necessarily appeal to others."

In-game advertising has opportunities within each segment. "Overall, the majority of gamers aren't necessarily against advertising, but the approach may need to be different," said Cai. "Power gamers are more likely readily embrace product integration. But if you look at other segments, they have different interests."

Find this article online at:

<http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=3623306>



Study Finds Average Gamer is Forty-One

A new study from Comscore has found that the average gamer is 41 years of age and has an average income of \$55,000. The study also found there are now more female gamers -- 52 percent were female.

comScore Media Metrix, the leader in digital media measurement, today released the second quarter results of Game Metrix, a quarterly syndicated study analyzing gamers' cross-platform behaviors and attitudes. The study combines the passive observation of online behavior, including visitation to online gaming and gaming information sites, with the results of a survey of 800 respondents who provided their attitudes regarding gaming and other usage information.

Contrary to popular belief that gamers are primarily teenage boys, results of the study indicate that video games have much broader appeal. On average, gamers are 41 years of age with an average annual income of \$55,000. Further, females account for 52 percent of the gaming audience. The average gamer has been online for nine years and 84 percent have broadband access at home. The study also found that previous gaming experiences and word-of-mouth are the main motivating factors behind purchases of new games. The top reasons were "I played it before and liked it"; "It's a

sequel to a game that I like"; and "I heard good things about it." Other purchase reasons including reading a review, watching an ad, price and "wanted to demo the game."

"The most popular drivers for purchasing games seem to fall into two basic categories - game experience and word-of-mouth," commented Erin Hunter, executive vice president of comScore's Media and Entertainment Group. "These findings underscore the importance of marketing to, and listening to, experienced gamers. Familiarity with a particular game can influence both the gamers' direct purchase behavior, as well others' purchase behavior through positive word-of-mouth."

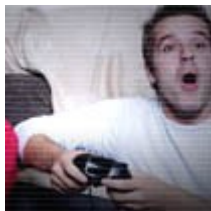
The study also found that heavy gamers (who played games at least 16 hours per week or played games on two or more devices for at least 11 hours per week) were more acceptable of some forms of in-game advertising. You can read the results from the study [here](#). Adotas has an [article](#) about the new study of gamers.

Posted on September 27, 2006

Find this article at: <http://www.gamersgame.com/statistics/>



ComScore Study Reveals Wide Appeal of Games, In-Game Ads



ComScore Media Metrix has been performing a quarterly syndicated study that analyzes gamers' cross-platform behaviors and attitudes. The second quarter results of the study, called Game Metrix, have been released, revealing that video games have a much broader appeal than previously thought. On average, gamers are forty-one years old and have an average income of \$55,000. Females account for more than half of the gaming audience, and most gamers have been online for at least nine years.

Game Metrix data combines passive observation of online behavior with the results of a survey of eight hundred respondents who provide their attitudes on gaming. Within the survey, the two most prevalent responses among gamers for reason of game purchases centered on previous gaming experience and word-of-mouth.

The survey also included attitudes about in-game advertising and showed that heavy gamers, those who played at least 16 hours of games per week, were more likely to accept and embrace in-game advertising than light/medium gamers who played video games for less than 11 hours per week. More than half of heavy gamers also believed that advergaming is "is inevitable and will be in all or most games in the future."

“From the advertiser’s standpoint, gaming is a potentially powerful medium for reaching consumers who may not be reachable via more traditional means,” said Erin Hunter, Executive VP of comScore’s Media and Entertainment Group. “Previously, little was understood about attitudes toward advergaming among the gamer segments. The Game Matrix study indicates that heavy gamers are fairly receptive to in-game advertising, provided that the messages appear organically within the context of the game. And a sizable portion of this consumer segment seems to agree that product placement in video games may in fact enhance the game to more closely resemble reality.”



In-Game Makes a Play at ad:tech

Written on November 6th 2006

This year, ad:tech New York will be examining advertising in video games, one of the explosive new advertising mediums to hit the global scene this past year. Games have been around since the 1970’s. But they are no longer confined to dark video arcades or the living rooms of teenagers agape with the latest in 8-bit graphics and sound.

“I think we’re at the point where asking who a gamer is now is sort of like asking who is a moviegoer. It’s everybody,” states Jennifer McLean, senior director of marketing for in-game advertising company Double Fusion.

Double Fusion inserted the Jeep brand into game Tomb Raider: Legend. Tomb Raider players experienced at least 10 hours of game play, during which they interacted with virtual versions of the Jeep Commander and the Jeep Rubicon. 10 hours is short for a typical mainstream game.

While gamers do tend to be affluent early adopters with a high percentage of broadband penetration, the demographics of “who is a gamer” is a remarkable pastiche, with different targetable variations depending a game’s platform and genre. Console gamers tend to be younger and mostly male due to how consoles are marketed and the selection of games available. Console-based casual gaming platforms like Xbox Live Arcade and Nintendo’s upcoming Wii console, which will be aiming for the family market, may eventually affect that audience. Casual gamers tend to engage a higher percentage of women and that audience tends to be a little older. The audience for PC games varies more widely by genre than console games, with MMO players evenly split 50/50 males to females, but generally to skew male.

It's important to look at the gaming market holistically, according to Brandon Berger, partner and senior strategist for digital innovation at OgilvyInteractive. Since you can reach everyone from teens to moms, and in-game branding can include everything from in-game banners and sponsored content to sports sponsorships, advergaming, and downloadable content, in-game advertising needs to be objective-driven. There's such a breadth of marketing areas and targets to reach within the gaming market that Berger prefers to call it the "gaming universe."

The variations in the gaming audience allow advertising to be targeted "psychographically," according to McLean. Rather than aiming at the generic 18-34 year old male stereotype of yesteryear, advertisers need to choose their audience by picking the right games to associate with. For a manufacturer of consumer goods that will almost certainly mean seeing in-game advertising as a demographic buy like Jeep's Tomb Raider campaign.

But the growing online nature of games has also opened the door for time-sensitive campaigns like those required by the film and entertainment industry and given a greater opportunity for ad measurement and ROI statistics. Double Fusion touts their advertising service as one that can measure whether or not a gamer has actually seen an ad, unlike other forms of impression-based advertising which only count whether or not an ad has left the server.

While the game market is growing broader every day, gamers are also getting older. The executives who making the in-game ad buying decisions are the ones that have grown up with games and understand the importance of things like immersion and that in order to be effective, brands have to mesh with the game in which they appear. "It's not so much that the advertising market is now emerging," says Berger. "It's more about the advertising community embracing this medium as a viable opportunity."

Both Brandon Berger and Jennifer McLean will be participating in panel discussions at Ad:Tech about in-game advertising. To them, in-game advertising is part of the future. "There's 112 plus million gamers in the United States over the age of 13 years old," Berger adds. "The medium combines the interactivity of the Web with the linear immersive storytelling power of television... and it does all this in a way that a user experiences and engages with a brand to the point where the brand can become the hero."

<http://www.adotas.com/2006/11/in-game-makes-a-play-at-adtech/>

Greatdaygames' Jessica Rovello chats about who plays casual online games

By [Michael Lafferty](#)

"People have known that women are the driving force behind the casual games segment for many years."

To anyone that has been paying attention, the casual game market not only continues to thrive and drive new sites, but caters to people of all ages and genders.

Casual games are considered to be those that, on the surface, can take only minutes to play, usually include using a browser to log onto a Web site that features puzzle, word, strategy and card games, but can be so addictive as to attract with the lure of quick games, but the next thing the player knows, an hour or two has slipped past.

Jessica Rovello is the chairman and co-founder of greatdaygames.com, a site that features a wide variety of games from sports games like miniature golf, to casino and card games, to arcade titles, word games and strategy games like mahjongg. She has been involved in the gaming industry since 1999.

According to her official bio: "As the first female chairman in the highly competitive arena of online games, Jessica Rovello has broken into a field that, until now, has been run, owned and operated exclusively by men. This is despite the fact that the majority of online game players are actually women. Her expertise in consumer marketing for technology and entertainment companies and her love of games has translated into key insights and successful deployments for Arkadium's growing base of clients.

"Before founding Arkadium, Rovello was vice president of marketing and creative services at On2 Technology (AMEX: ONT), a broadband technology company. Prior to joining On2, she was Director of Online Services for Artisan Entertainment, an independent film company, where she produced 15 highly visible Web sites, including the site for The Blair Witch Project, one of the most successful independent films in history."

Like any successful site, part of the task is to track users, to see what the target audience is and then to provide content that will be used. Rovello has been doing that for a while and has uncovered some interesting numbers about the type of gamer that frequents casual game sites. GameZone had the chance to talk to Rovello about some of the statistics she uncovered in tracking those who visit and play games on greatdaygames.com.

Question: How long have you been tracking gender percentages in gaming and how long has it been since you have seen a marked increase in the number of female gamers?

Jessica: We have been tracking gender statistics from Greatdaygames.com since its launch in March of 2006. We were not surprised to see that the stats have been skewed female since the site launched and have stayed that way. Women have been the driving force in the online casual games segment for many years.

Q: Do you have any numbers that might show age groups?

Jessica: We know that players between the ages of 35-54 spend over an hour per session playing casual games at Greatdaygames.com. We also have plenty of anecdotal information from older users (60+) who email us regularly, so we know that the age of our players can skew even higher at times.

Q: What types of games do you generally find that females play?

Jessica: Card, puzzle and strategy games mainly. We find that the most popular games that women play are ones that they have been playing their entire lives. What we have done is to offer variations on these popular games to keep things fresh. For example, Mahjongg is one of our most popular games. We offer seven different versions of Mahjongg as well as five versions of Sudoku. What is most interesting is that the more versions we offer the more people play.

Q: Why do you think there is surprise, or even stigma attached to the notion that girls and women play games, too?

Jessica: It is not a surprise to anyone that is in the industry. People have known that women are the driving force behind the casual games segment for many years. The surprise element comes in when people only associate the industry with console games - the majority of which are marketed to young men.

Q: What do you think is the biggest misconception when it comes to female gamers?

Jessica: There are two. One is that if you play games like Mahjongg and Solitaire you are not a gamer. On the contrary, if you play any online game for multiple hours a week, you are a gamer. The second is that when people design games with female gamers in mind they think they can throw in a pony and a rainbow and suddenly it is for women. Many of the games for women look like they have been designed for a young girl, not a mature female. We take a much different approach at www.greatdaygames.com. Our games are designed with input from our community of gamers. The site also offers prizes and other incentives that resonate with this target audience including Target, Sephora, and Bed, Bath and Beyond gift cards.

Q: And in the same vein, what do you think is the biggest misconception among females when it comes to gaming?

Jessica: Women who play games do not consider themselves gamers, because that is what their sons and brothers are doing. My thought is that women think to be a gamer you have to be playing Halo on Xbox or waiting in line for 24 hours so you can buy the Wii.

Q: Do you think the trend, of more females playing games, will continue? Is it an untapped market in your opinion and should developers be looking to capitalize on it, or is it merely a matter of being exposed to a wider variety of games that will draw in more female gamers?

Jessica: The trend will most definitely continue. It is certainly an untapped market and everyone in this industry knows that the bread and butter of the casual games market are women. This is yet to be realized in the core market - console, hardcore PC and MMP games. But the landscape is changing thanks to the latest consoles, which include browsers. We were excited to see that the Wii is being marketed as female friendly and that some of our existing online games can be played using the Wii console.

http://psp.gamezone.com/news/12_29_06_03_30PM.htm

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Online Games Trail Only Board Games in Popularity

By [Cara Wood](#)

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A recent study claims that online gaming is the second most popular way to play games nationwide after board games. Online gaming is ahead of packaged software games, playing along with TV game shows and mobile games.

The recent survey of 1,000 U.S. adults was conducted by market researcher [Synovate](#) for gaming destination [Uproar](#), a property of [Vendare Media](#).

The category of Board games was chosen by 39.8 percent of respondents as "most rewarding," whereas 23.6 percent chose online games. Only 3 percent said mobile devices was their favorite way to play.


Additional findings indicate that women were half as likely as men to enjoy packaged software games (12 percent versus 25 percent), and more likely to

prefer both online games (26 percent versus 22 percent) and TV game shows (17 percent versus 13 percent).

Men are twice as likely as women to find mobile gaming most rewarding (4 percent versus 2 percent).

Full-time workers were nearly twice as likely as the self-employed to enjoy online gaming (27 percent versus 16 percent), and more than four times as likely to enjoy mobile gaming (4 percent versus 1 percent).

The survey was given through an e-mail invitation for visitors to Uproar site. The network averages about 1 million unique visitors a month and two out of three are women, according to the company.

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