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Interactive Australia 2007 : facts about the Australian computer and video game industry

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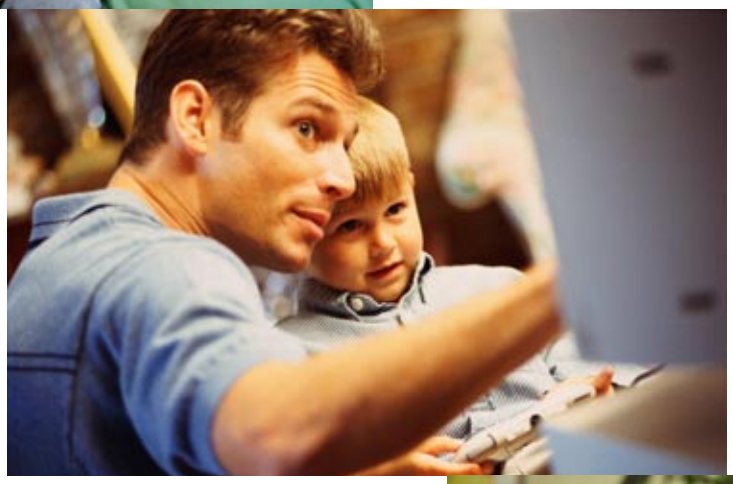
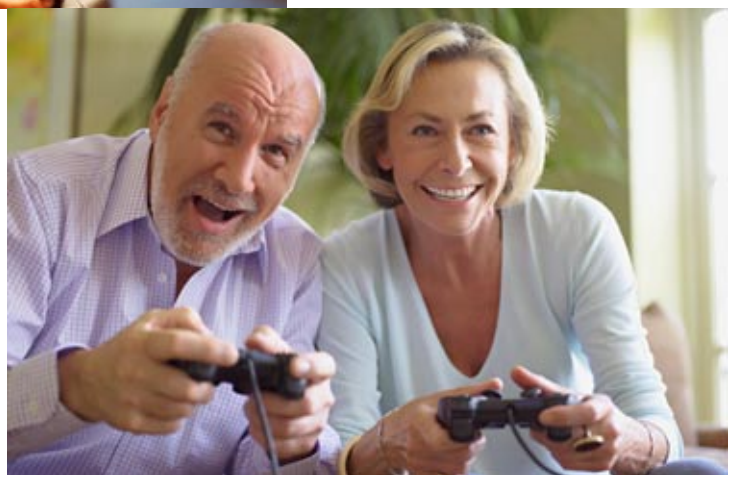
INTERACTIVE AUSTRALIA 2007



Facts About the Australian Computer and Video Game Industry



ieaa interactive entertainment association of australia

BOND UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

National research prepared by Bond University for the Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia

About This Report

Interactive Australia 2007 provides data on who is playing games in Australia, what their attitudes and behaviours are like compared with non-gamers, the nature of the games market, the importance of games in the family experience and the role of online access in game purchasing and play.

The study is based on a national random sample of 1,606 Australian households who responded to more than 75 questions and over 300 data points in a 15-minute online survey run by ACNielsen Surveys Australia in late September 2006. Two units of analysis are explored in the study: the household and the player individual within the household.

The research was completed by the Bond University Centre for New Media Research (CNMRE) who served as a research consultant to the Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia (IEAA). The study was designed by Dr Jeff Brand. The data analysis and interpretations are those of the author and Jill Borchard.

This booklet is a summary of the key research findings.

A copy of the full report is provided on the attached CD.

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Key Findings

- 79% of Australian households have a device for playing computer and video games.
- The average age of Australian gamers is 28 years.
- Interactive games are attracting new players. 41% of gamers are female. 8% are seniors.
- Parents and children are increasingly playing together. 35% of gamers are parents.
- 61% of gamers play for up to an hour at one time.
- Playing computer games does not compete with non-media and outdoor leisure activities. Instead it competes with other media such as TV, film and music.
- Parents in game households say the positive aspects of game play are more than just enjoyment and happiness. 73% say games help their children learn about technology, 68% say games help their children learn maths, 64% say games help children learn to plan.
- 70% of games classified by the OFLC in 2006 were rated G or PG.
- 62% of Australians in game households say the classification of a game has no influence on their buying decision
- Australians are very confused about the difference between the M and MA15+ classification
- Broadband penetration decreased steadily with age. Game households were 12% more likely than non-game households to have broadband.
- Playing online games ranks 10th among the list of activities Australians identify as their common uses of the internet. Email, web browsing, banking and paying bills are the top uses.

What Australians Think

"I think games are the best form of entertainment as they are interactive and the players' decisions and reactions affect the outcome."

Male, 35, Ganmain, NSW

"Video games are great for thinking outside the square…quick reaction…great planning…lots of fun for families to socialize…I love it."

Male, 43, Meadowbank, NSW

"Computer games can be a nice way to relax, escape reality for a while and are social fun with mates."

Male, 25, ACT

I think video games are great and also very good for us women to be able to relax and have time out from the every day household jobs."

Female, 52, Emu Plains, NSW

"I use video games as another way, perhaps the main way, of staying mentally active. My sons tend to look to new release games for variety, where I love my chess, it's always new."

Male, 58, Gold Coast, QLD

"Games are a fun way to spend a few hours, and they are a great value for money form of entertainment."

Female, 25, Smithfield, SA

"Games can be educational and enhance IT skills for the young. For me it's all about amusement."

Female, 67, Specimen Hill, VIC

This research conducted by collected information about 1,606 households and 3,386 individuals.

Table of Contents

Level 1 – Introduction	4
Level 2 – Players	5
Level 3 – Australian Market	8
Level 4 – Family Matters	10
Level 5 – Online	14
Level 6 – Women & Games	15
Level 7 - Future Directions	16

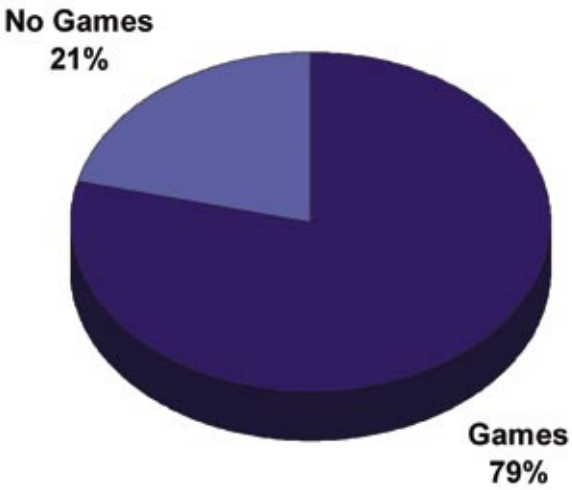
"You know the arguments by now: video games are either turning our kids into brain-dead, addicted cyber-lumps or training a super-race of analytical multi-taskers. Of course, the video game debate is a replay of the television argument that still rages half a century later. My father, a primary school teacher for some 40 years, thinks TV is one of the greatest educational tools ever invented. I feel the same way about video games. And, I believe, there's only one sure way to battle the so-called evils of on-line gaming - play right alongside your kids."

Wendy Harmer
The Age, 31st October 2006
http://www.theage.com.au/news/games/ warlike-family-fun/ 2006/10/30/1162056925501.htm/

Level 1: Introduction

Household Install Base

- In 2007, **1606** Australian households were surveyed at random about their use of computer and video games.
- **79%** have computer or video games.
- Of these **1268** "game" households.



Install Base by Device

- **95%** use a personal computer for games.
- **59%** use a home console for games.
- **19%** use a hand-held device for games.

And…

- **1/3** have one game device.
- **1/3** have two or three game devices.
- **1/3** have four or more game devices.
- **65%** of households with games have more than one player.

Mobile Phone Gaming

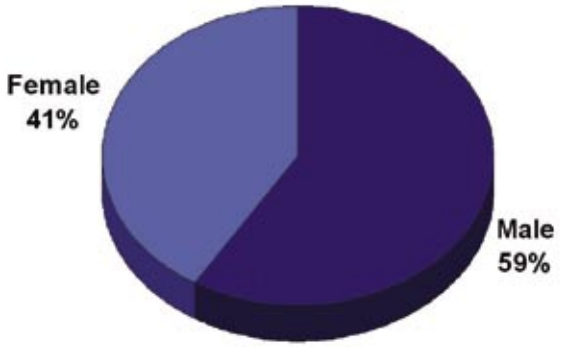
Mobile phones, smart phones and personal digital assistants are also used for games in 52% of game households.

Level 2: Players

Gender

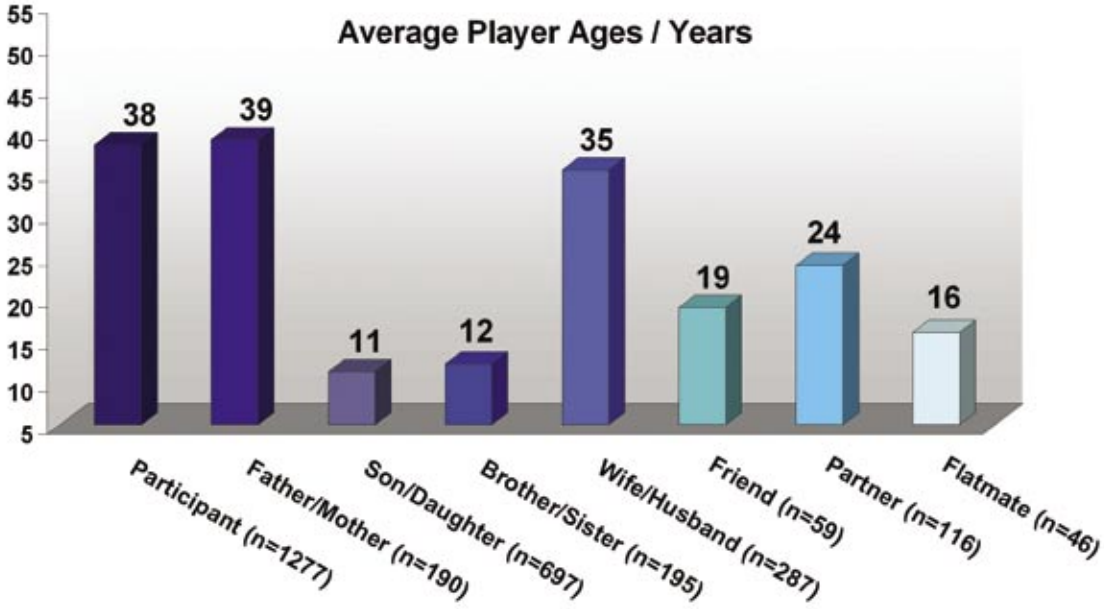
- The faces of the Australian gamers are **changing**…

Women and older Australians…
are the fastest growing audiences for games.



Age

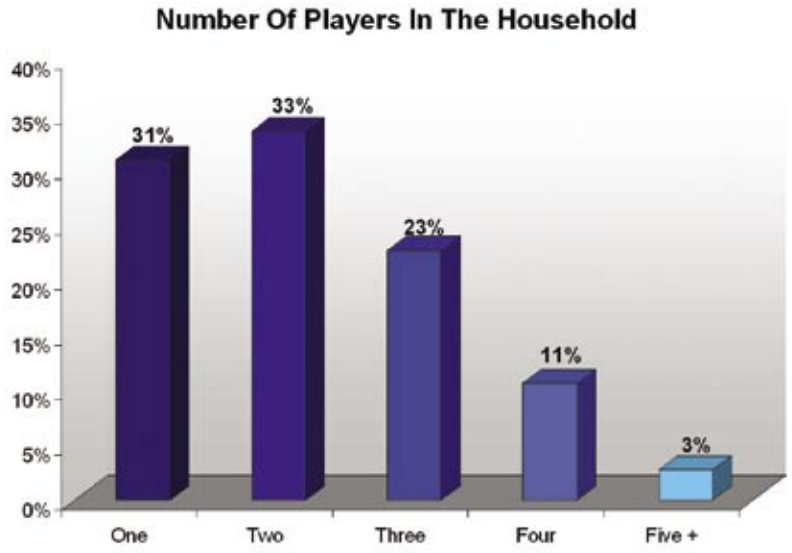
- The average age of Australian gamers is now 28 years of age.
- In this study, the **oldest** player is **84** years young.
- By **2014**, the **average** age of gamers will be the same as the average age of non-gamers: **42** years old



Level 2: Players

Multi-Player Households

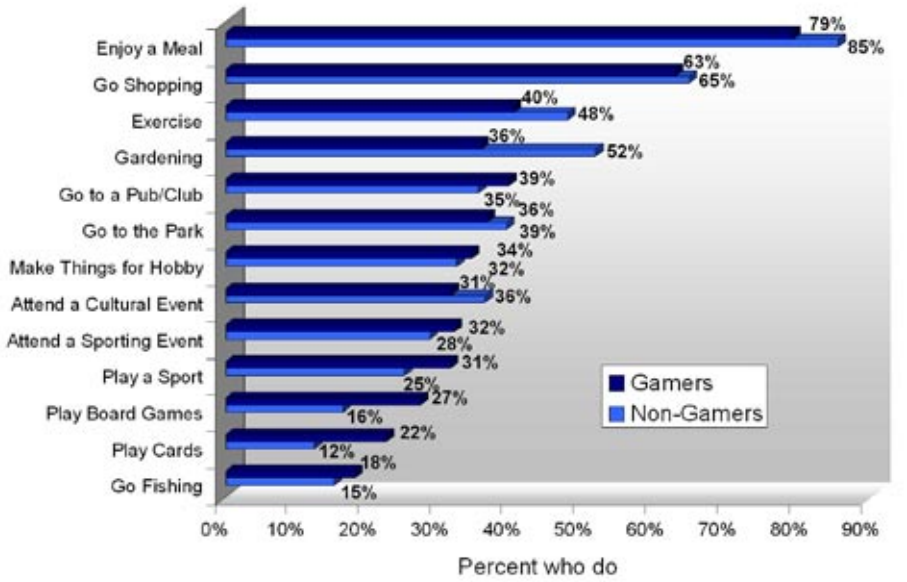
- Games are a **social activity** and Australian **families** like to play together: Two-thirds of respondents say others in their household also play games.



Non-Media Activities of Gamers

The pattern of leisure among gamers and non-gamers makes it clear that computer games do not compete with non-media and outdoor activities. Instead, they compete with other media such as TV, film and music.

Australians who play computer and video games… are a lot like Australians who don't play.

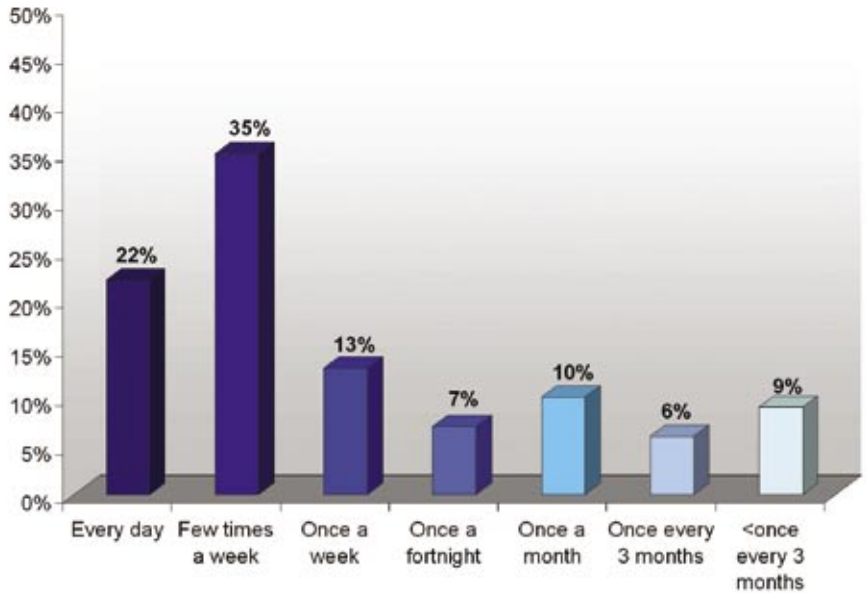


Players

Level 2: Players

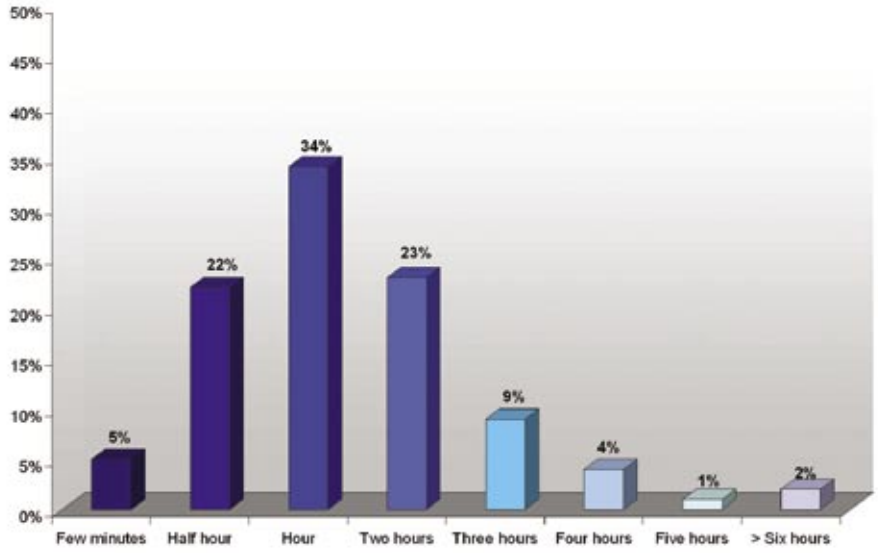
Frequency of Play Amongst Gamers

- Australian gamers play regularly, but not to excess.



Social Play Patterns

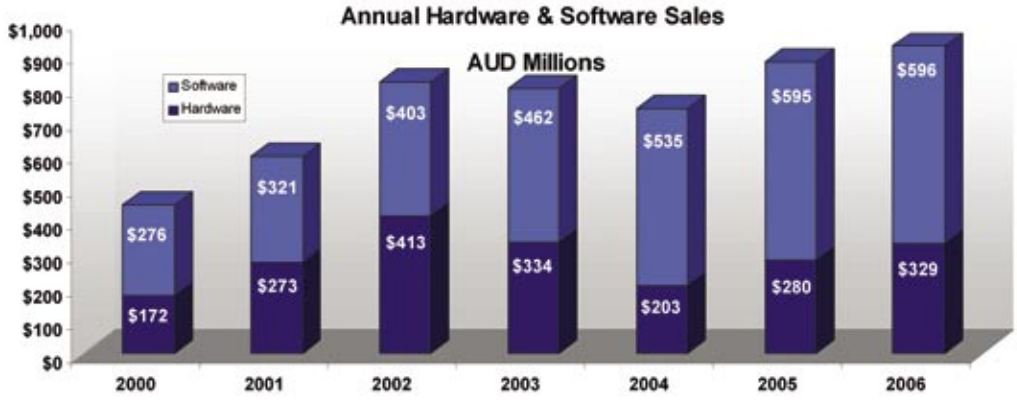
- Social and casual gaming are in.
- **56%** regularly play with others in the same room.
- **14%** regularly play with others online.
- Only **19%** prefer to play alone.



Level 3: Australian Market

Australian Industry Snapshot

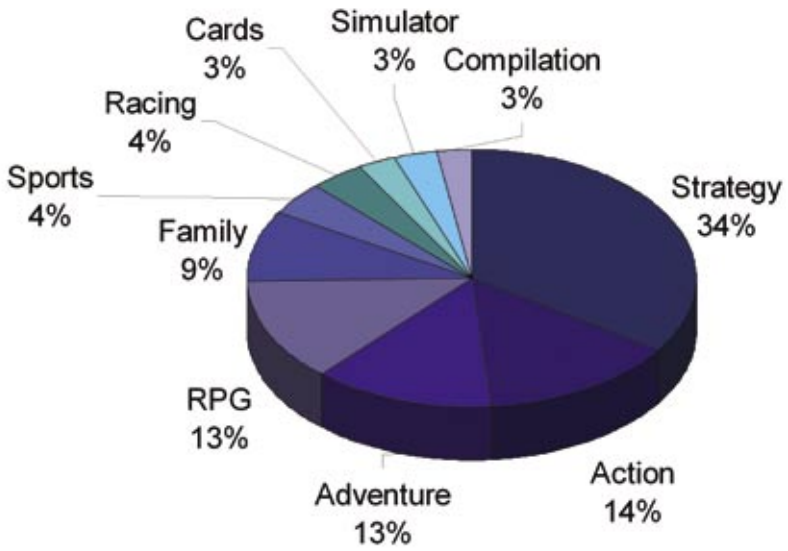
According to GFK, the Australian industry experienced **7%** growth in 2006 and recorded total sales of AUD **$925 million**. Australians purchased nearly 12.5 million games in 2006. Australia has 40 game development companies that have produced more than 200 games earning AUD **$100 million** in export sales each year.



Who Plays What

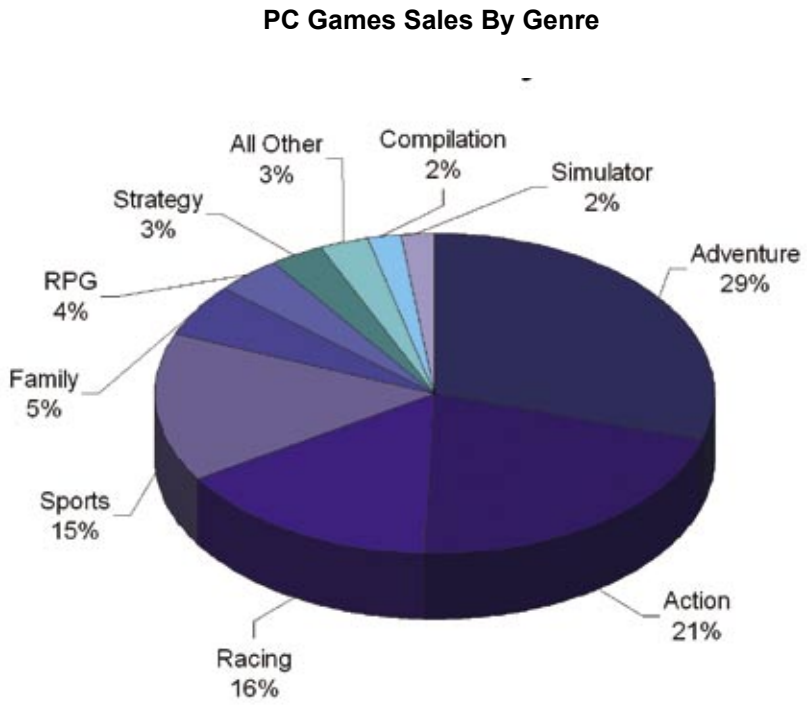
- Australian gamers continue their love of strategy mixed with action and adventure.

Sales Of Console Games By Genre



Level 3: Australian Market

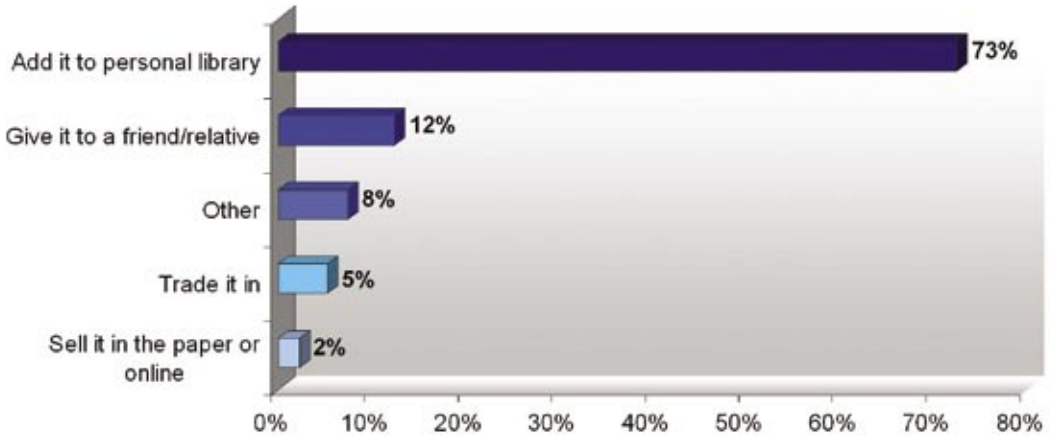
Who Plays What - cont.



Gamers Use of Completed Games

- What do Australians do with their old games?

  Two–thirds keep them.



Level 4: Family Matters

Parents

Computer and video games are **valued family entertainment**: More than a 1/3 of Australian gamers are parents.

- **77%** of parents play computer games with their children.

Of parents who play games with their children:

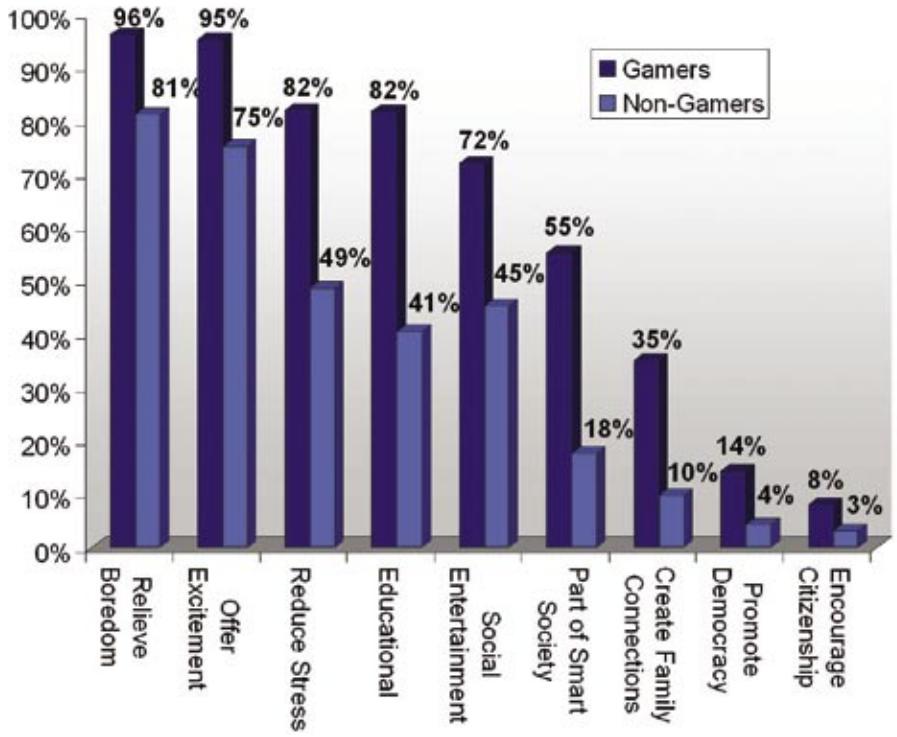
- **69%** play with their children regularly.

Parents Views About Positive Aspects of Game Play

- **73%** of parents say computer games teach children about technology.
- **68%** of parents say computer games teach children maths.
- **64%** of parents say computer games teach children to plan ahead.
- **58%** of parents say computer games teach children about science.
- **48%** of parents say computer games teach children language.

Value of Games to Society

When asked about what roles games play in society, gamers are more positive than non-gamers about the **value of games for society**.

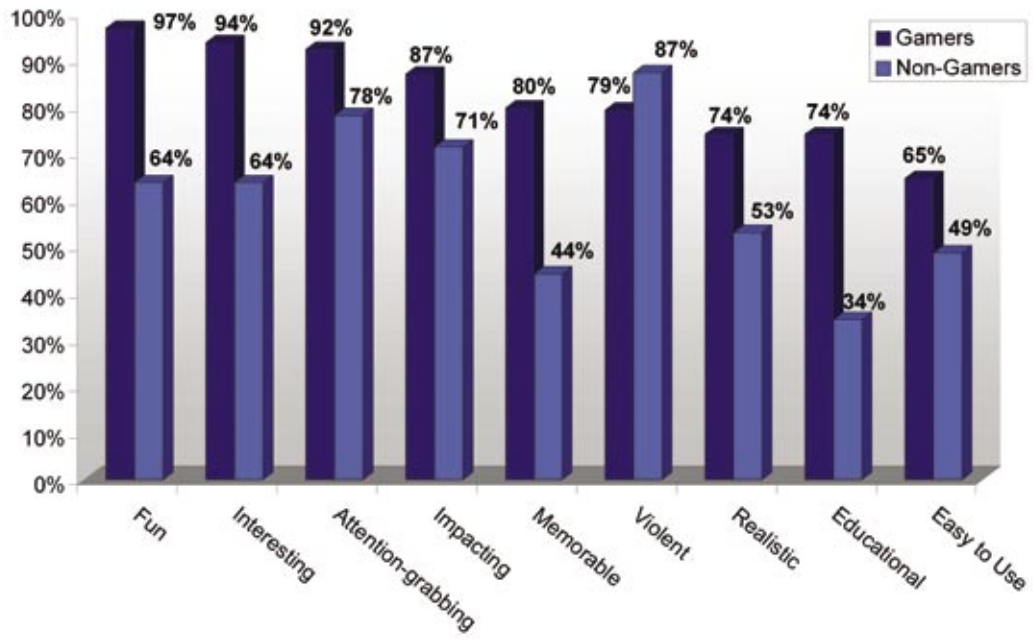


Family Matters

Level 4: Family Matters

Perceptions About Effect of Interactive Content

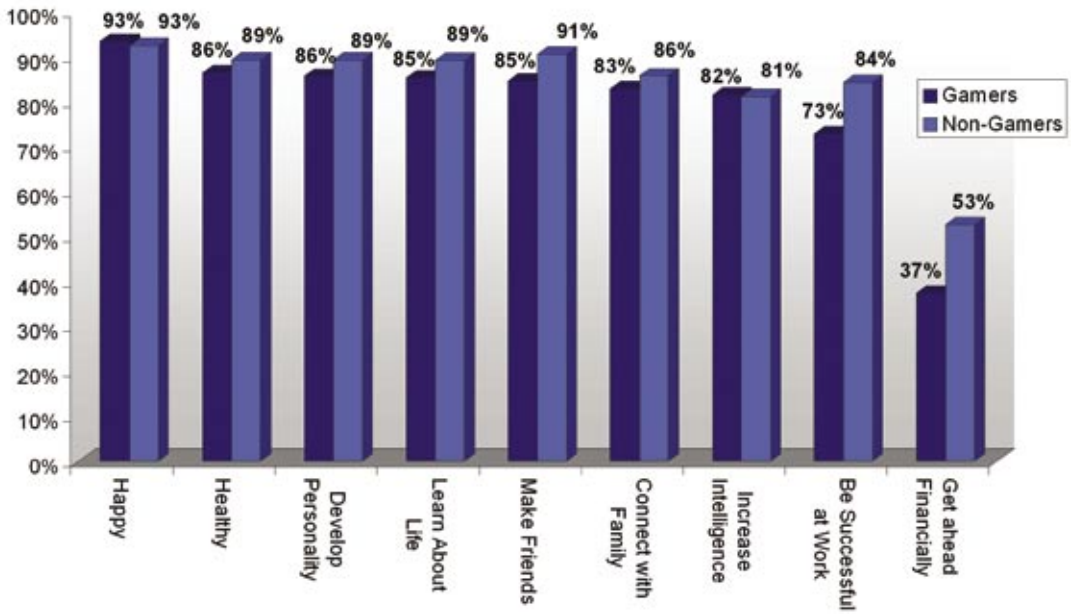
- Gamers said interactivity makes media experiences fun and interesting.
- Non-gamers said interactivity was more likely to make media experiences violent and sensational.



Level 4: Family Matters

Perceptions About Effect of Interactive Content - cont.

- Interactivity is social and **social play** is important to Australians, whether they play games or not.
- **84%** of all Australians believe that playing together is important for forming family connections.
- **81%** of all Australians believe people need play and leisure to be happy.
- Over half of all Australians say computer games are **more social** forms of entertainment than other **media**.
- All Australians recognise that leisure is an important part of a **healthy, happy and productive life**.

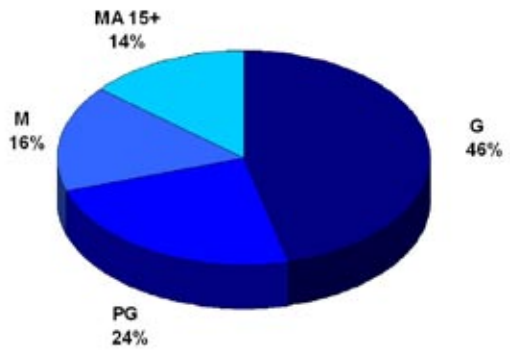


Family Matters

Level 4: Family Matters

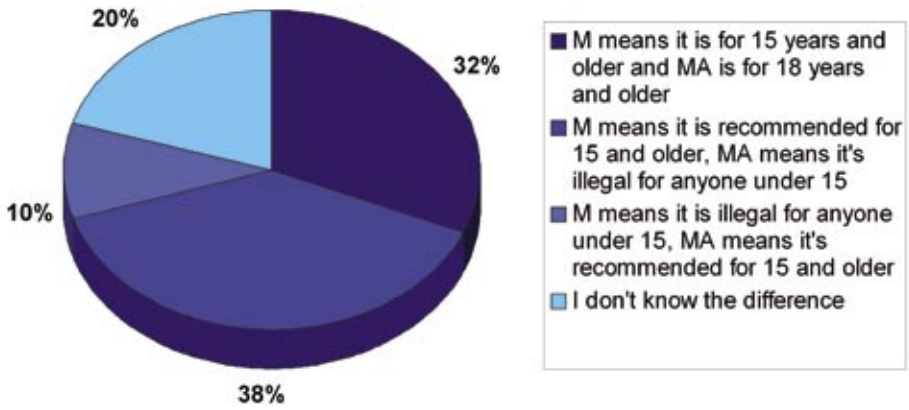
Classification

- All computer games sold in Australia are classified by the Office of Film and Literature Classification.
- In 2006, **753** classification decisions were made.
- **86%** of game classifications were in the G, PG, and M classifications.
- **46%** of games were classified G games.
- **70%** of games sold in Australia are rated G or PG.



Awareness of Classification System

- **62%** of Australians in game households say the classification of a game has no influence on their buying decision.
- Australians are very **confused** about the difference between the **M and MA15+** classification.



Its logical that a common classification system for games and film would help parents make informed entertainment choices. Research from GamePlay Australia 2005 shows **88%** of Australian support a common classification system for film and games.

Level 5: Online

Gamers and Internet Connections

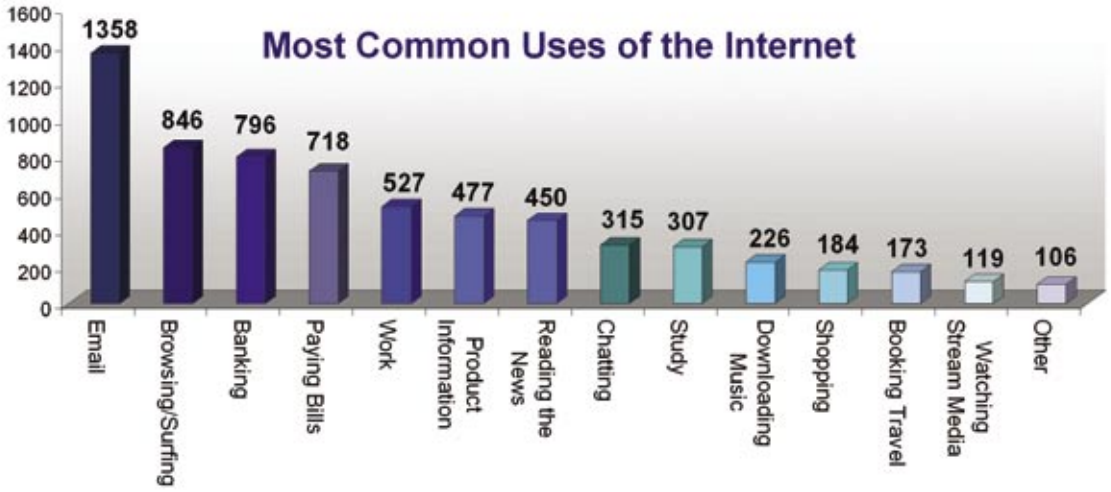
Australian game households have embraced online communication.

- **95%** have an internet connection.

  Of these:
- **80%** have broadband.

Duration and Use of the Internet

- **59%** of adults in game households are online between 1 and 3 hours a day.



Online

Level 6: Women and Games

"Aside from The Sims and similar examples the better part of money spent by developers is in action, platform and first person shooters. It frustrates me that the media associated with gaming is generally aimed at males, yet it is the media that tells us women are a bigger percentage of gamers. I think there are plenty of ideas that would do well to have some extra funding in the development stages and would bring women into the market as recognised buyers of games."

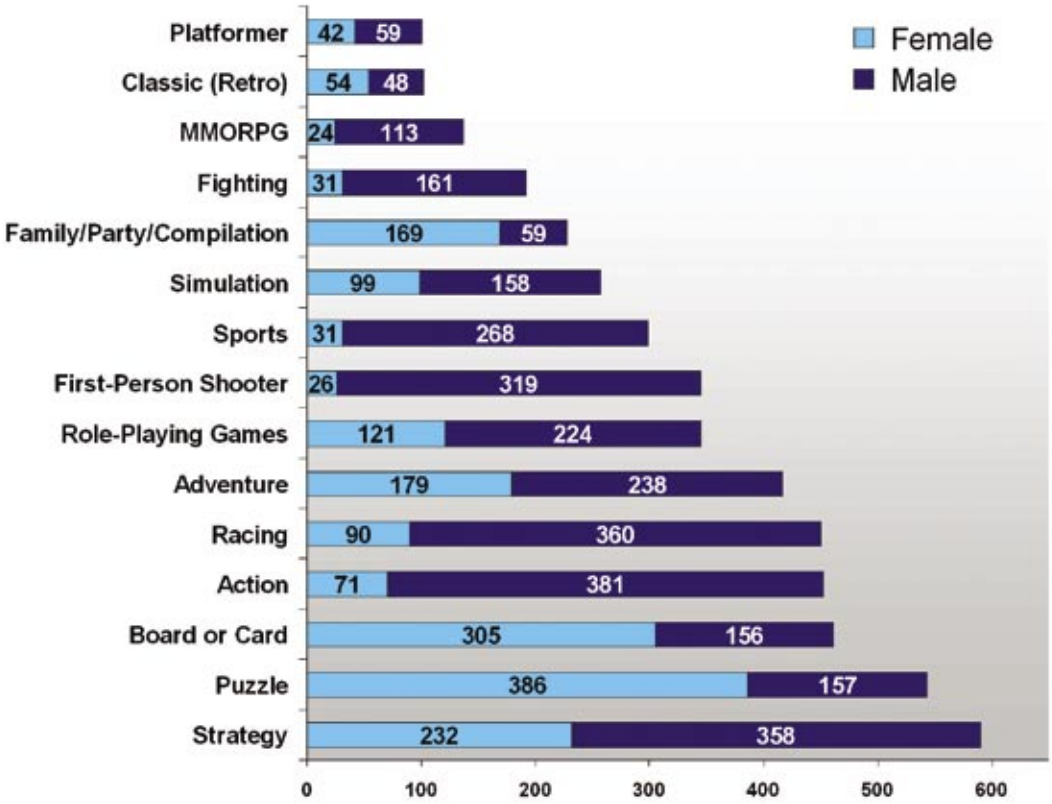
Female, 27, Caloola, NSW

Growing Influence

Women are critical to interactive entertainment and their influence on the development of computer and video games will grow.

Of women in game households:

- **65%** say games appealing to women have become more popular.
- **73%** say games appealing to women have improved in quality.
- **80%** say games appealing to women have been online and on PCs.



Level 7: Future Directions

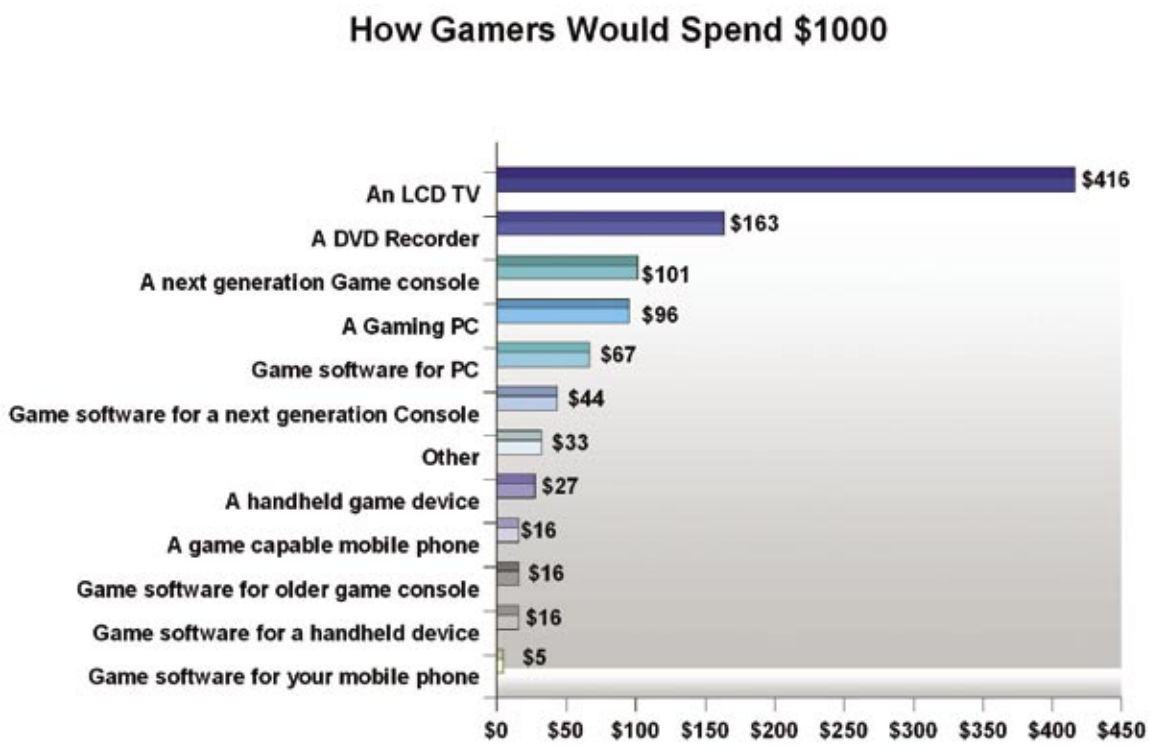
Total sales of computer and video games grew by 7% in the 2006 calendar year to $925 million and Australians purchased more than 12.5 million games.

Market Growth

In 2007 the Australian market is projected to grow at an annual compound rate of 16% according to Price Waterhouse Coopers. With more next generation systems launching in 2007, the total market will easily exceed sales of 1 billion dollars.

Spending

Gamers were asked how would they would spend $1,000 on interactive entertainment hardware and software directly or indirectly related to games. Many indicated they would spend all of the money on hardware. The average shows consumer priorities into the coming year.



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