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Gamers Growing Up

By [Robyn Greenspan](#)

Diverse demographic groups are catching on to something that young males knew all along — game playing is fun. Research from an [Entertainment Software Association \(ESA\)](#) survey, conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., found that a range of age groups are getting in on the action, and the activity is becoming quite popular with women.

The ESA, formerly the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), found an increase in the number of 50+ game players at 17 percent — up from 13 percent in 2000 — with the average gaming age at 29. The average age of the gamer in 2000 was 28.

Who's Playing Games?		
	Computer Games	Video Games
Under 18	29.7%	37.9%
18-35	28.7%	39.5%
35+	41.6%	22.7%
Male	58.1%	71.5%
Female	41.9%	28.5%

Source: ESA

Women over the age of 18 and older make up a larger percentage of the gaming population — 26 percent — than boys aged 6-to-17 (21 percent), and girls aged 6-to-17 account for 12 percent of all gamers. Not surprisingly, males over the age of 18 represent the largest group of gamers at 38 percent.

"It's clear that Americans of all generations and genders are making games an important part of their entertainment lives," said ESA President Douglas Lowenstein. "With half of all Americans playing computer and video games, the signs point to interactive entertainment as the entertainment choice of the 21st century."

The survey further revealed that 39 percent of the gaming population reportedly had total household incomes below \$50,000 per year, while 41 percent earn more annually. Since \$6.9 billion was spent in the U.S. on entertainment software in 2002, gaming may account for a big chunk of the family budget.

U.S. Entertainment Software Sales	
2002	\$6.9 billion
2001	\$6.35 billion
2000	\$6.0 billion
1999	\$6.1 billion
1998	\$5.5 billion

Source: The NPD Group/NPD Funworld/TRSTS and NPD Techworld

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of parents plan to purchase at least one computer or video game in 2003, as will 56 percent of all Americans under age 45, and 41 percent of all Americans will make a purchase during 2003.

The popularity of online games has risen since 1999 when only 18 percent participated. The 2003 poll revealed that more than one-third (37 percent) of the most frequent game players go online to play — up from 31 percent in 2002.

Nearly 16.5 million U.S. Internet users visited online gaming sites for the week ending August 17, 2003, according to [Nielsen//NetRatings](#), with the majority clicking on Yahoo! Games. Yahoo! Games was ranked as the top gaming site in July 2003 by [Hitwise](#), with substantial market share going to the portal's sports fantasy sites as well.

Top Gaming Sites for the week ending August 17, 2003 (U.S., home)		
Brand or Channel	Unique	Active

[Linux/Open Source Developer](#)
[Interactive Marketing](#)
[xSP Resources](#)
[Small Business](#)
[Wireless Internet](#)
[Downloads](#)
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Yahoo! Games	4,236,000	4.86%
EA Online	3,782,000	4.34%
MSN Games	2,187,000	2.51%
AOL Games	1,950,000	2.24%
GameSpot	1,124,000	1.29%
Kraft Entertainment	848,000	0.97%
Ign.com	655,000	0.75%
UGO Games	591,000	0.68%
GameWinners	560,000	0.64%
GameSpy	557,000	0.64%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings

Top Gaming Sites, July 2003

Site	Market Share
Yahoo! Games	11.64%
Pogo	9.60%
Yahoo! Sports Fantasy Baseball	5.02%
Neo Pets	4.44%
Gamefaqs	3.28%
MSN Gaming Zone	3.01%
Yahoo! Fantasy Sports	2.61%
Yahoo! Sports Fantasy Football	1.54%
GameSpot	1.28%
Gamewinners.com	1.24%

Source: Hitwise

August 29, 2003



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