

GAMING AND YOU A report by Qutee on how gamers view the personal and social impact of gaming

The curated Gaming and You data discussion on Qutee in April 2018 was led by a panel of leading gaming/tech influencers - @capguntom @phy @lionheartx10 @huzzy @homelespenguin @oakelfish & @therambler146. 95% of the 835 gamers who participated were aged between 18 and 34, with 51% living in the US, 19% in the UK, and the remaining 30% living in other parts of the world.

Executive Summary

Methodology

886 **★** 4,500

The Gaming and You data discussion generated over 4.5k poll votes and 886 comments. 654 sentiments were recorded across 251 discussion topics, with some of the most popular issues discussed being

community, stress, skills, friends, hobbies, enjoyment, and problems

Related academic research in references section

WHY GAMING SHOULD **BE SEEN AS A FORCE** FOR SOCIAL GOOD By Tim Wilson, founder of Qutee From UK soccer stars playing Fortnite together between World Cup matches, to the rise of international eSports competitions with multi-million dollar prize pots, gaming has become more popular and more high-profile than ever before. A new Call of Duty launch generates headlines all over the globe FIFA releases cause round the block queues while demand for new online games crash web servers Where gamers were once caricatured as teenage geeks sat alone in their bedrooms, today gaming has rightly become far more accepted as successive generations have grown up recognising its value both as a form of entertainment as well as a beneficial, educative and productive pastime. The academic world also acknowledges these benefits, with several studies in recent years pointing to the positive impact

Over 30% of gamers believe gaming improves cognitive skills and problem solving.

society.

than 5.

Gamer Insights

89% of gamers feel gaming is beneficial to

However, 93% of gamers feel the media's obsession with violence and gaming is unjustified.

Almost two thirds of gamers have made up to 5 friends through gaming; a further 37% say they have made more

44% say that the most important benefit of gaming is

Over one third of gamers say that gaming has inspired future careers and hobbies outside of IT/development, including history, art and science.

23% of gamers believe that gaming addiction should be ranked alongside alcohol, drug, and gambling addictions.

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gaming can have on everything from multi-tasking and problem solving to improved spatial attention and driving skills (Anderson et al. (2010), Green et al. (2012), Colzato et al. (2014). And yet, there remains a sense of otherness about the gaming community. For many, it's the idea that gaming is still a subculture, reserved for those in the know rather than the masses, despite all of the market statistics implying that gaming is now clearly a part of the mainstream. This view may limit the accessibility of gaming, but it does not damage it, per se.

incidents) **Unique insight** many violent video games. into a thriving and vibrant but also hugely

misunderstood community."

release from problems elsewhere in gamers' lives.

GAMERS IN PROFILE

The average video gamer is 35 years old and has been playing for 13 years according to ESA 2017 accessed via

54% of the most frequent players play with friends

according to ESA 2017, accessed via ukie.org (pp 17).

Gaming and You: Analysis

Perhaps the most notable finding across the Gaming and You polls is that 43.6% of gamers surveyed feel that the main benefit gaming brings to society is improved emotional well-being. This is striking given the current level of public discourse around gaming's negative impact on mental health and well-being.

Given that every year, approximately 1 in 5 experience a mental health problem in the US, a figure that rises to 1 in 4 people in the UK*, the potential for video gaming to support mental health and emotional well-being mustn't be overlooked. As @jordanmcgrath comments:

"I'm a 17 year old lad who suffers from severe depression and anxiety and gaming is my way of escaping from the real world... [to] get away from all that's going on in my life. Playing games has helped me so much and it's my way of leaving all my problems behind."

ukie.org (pp 16).

society more broadly

Gaming and You is not designed to deliver the final say on the value that gaming brings to the world. Far from it – it's the start of a better informed conversation.

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ukie.org (pp 48).

These findings were reinforced by circa 900 informed, provocative and largely in-depth comments left by gamers in the main discussion thread, as well as by the overall rating of the Gaming and You discussion, through which 89% of gamers rated gaming as beneficial to society. What do you think is the main benefit of gaming to society as a whole?

As part of the Gaming and You discussion, a panel of leading gaming influencers ran several polls to gauge gamers' attitudes to a range of topics from friendship and mental health to skills and careers. There were more than 4,500 interactions across the poll questions, generating a wealth of insights into how gamers feel their pastime has impacted on their personal development and

"Gaming for me has provided an escape from my struggling mental health. At a time when I feel like I have no one, I can load up a game and get myself lost in its world and ignore the problems Improve going on around me. Additionally, a gamer shared how gaming is being used as a means to connect with others facing emotionally challenging

Another gamer, @the_wat14, explains:

quality. REFERENCE:

*https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers

How many good friends have you made via gaming?

ve always been astounded by the kindness some people show when playing... Overall I just really love spending time with friends from all over the world which I have only gotten the chance to meet through gaming. Similarly, @tusken1602 comments: "You have no idea if your teammates are Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, or Jewish. And the best part about it is: it really doesn't matter The global aspect of gaming has meant that borders and languages do not

The continued proliferation of digital media within our lives has resulted in more and more of us forging friends online as well as offline, meeting like-minded people and making lifelong friends on social media, discussion

A whopping 41% of comments in the Gaming and You discussion touched on the topic of friends and friendship, demonstrating just how important the social element of gaming is to gamers today. 36.5% of gamers surveyed had made at least six great friends through gaming, rising to two thirds (63.4%) who had made between 1 and 5 good buddies. This is an important

counterweight to the outdated stereotype of gamers as being antisocial. The discussion paints a picture of a dynamic and engaged community of people sharing interests, stories and support with gaming friends from all over the

forums and comment threads, and of course, via gaming.

world

6-15 (175 votes | 29%) More than 25 (27 votes | 5%) act as barriers to forming friendships. Games such as League of Legends and World of Warcraft have a global reach of millions of players, with different demographics. This was spoken about extensively in the discussion, with players talking about friendships formed with people from every age group, gender and race, from every corner of the world, without judgment or bias.

"Gaming allows for worldwide friendships. Distance means nothing to the gaming community and this is amazing. More and more people are able to interact with each other... I know people from America, Europe, Asia and Australia... Age means nothing in the gaming world, so you can have a 12 year-old gaming with 30 year-old. If these friendships were to occur in "real life," if they met up and went out with each other, then they would seem old, but in the gaming world, age doesn't matter."

Overall the Gaming & You discussion provides evidence of the sometimes life-changing relationships being forged everyday through video-game play, as well as gaming's ability to seamlessly connect people from other backgrounds and cultures. Magamers noted challenges with socialising and forming bonds in the offline world, the value of these gaming friendships is eminently clear.

"Gaming basically holds my life together", @theobouveyron comments, while @langerhan94 recalls how "Gaming helped me out of a slump that could have had disastrous effects on my future." A few of the gamers noted how playing video games is literally a life-saving mechanism against the risks of suicide and depression. In a moving example, @simuk explains the significance of enjoying video games at a particularly challenging moment in his life: "With my wife near death in hospital and me at home alone with a baby and two older kids to look after with a head injury, PTSD and no job that gaming saved not only my life but also saved my family."

Not only are video games seen as a life saver in some circumstances, but many gamers in the discussion cited the importance of gaming as a response

"My school and family life were still shitty... but I finally had an escape from it all in these games. When I played them I forgot everything wrong in my life and I only thought about what was going on on the computer

to day-to-day bullying or family problems. The discussion recorded 18 instances of comments featuring the term 'bullying' or a variance of this.

While it may come as no surprise to learn that three quarters of gamers (75.1%) claim the main draw for playing video games is fun and relaxation it's still an important area for consideration when placed in the context of our

qualitative data from the Gaming and You discussion

What is the primary reason you play games?

screen. The first thing gaming gave me was a stress relief and mental freedom." Has gaming piqued your interest in any new hobby or career?

For one fifth (19.6%) of gamers, playing video games has piqued their interest in a career in game development – not a bad move given the global industry is currently worth \$108.4bn and is predicted to grow 13.3% by the

Perhaps more surprisingly, 15% of gamers credited their pastime with igniting an interest in history.

"It prompted my love for history, that I will probably end up taking at university. Gaming has literally shaped my life." Take a game like Hearts of Iron 4, set prior to and during the Second World

War. The game can be played via the lens of Democracy, Fascism or Communism, and in locations across the globe. With a game that pursues historical accuracy in such depth, it's easy to see how gaming could ignite further interest in a given area of history. Even games such as Assassin's Creed or Call of Duty, that take a looser interpretation of history, can

knowledge of the English language. An initial desire to better understand a game's narrative grew into a commitment to become bilingual, which saw

@francoismillard gain a business analyst role with an international company:

"Long story short, it is thanks to gaming that I got the job I have now. It is thanks to gaming that a desire to be better [at English] grew in me."

The range of new hobbies and careers cited by gamers are noted in fields as

diverse as the creative areas of animation, art and design (3.5%, 7.4% and 4.6%), IT, maths and science (12% and 4.8%) and even sports (6.7%). This

shows that not only is gaming a hobby, it can also be an avenue through which people find their true passions and even career paths.

nevertheless be a gateway to enhanced learning.

end of 2018.

REFERENCE: *https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/global-games-market-reaches-137-9-billion-in-2018-mobile-games-take-half/ Do you think gaming addiction should be ranked alongside drug/alcohol/gambling addiction?

This was a contentious area of debate for gamers. A substantial pool (50.9%) indicated that gaming addiction shouldn't be considered along the same lines as other addictions, pointing to cultural commentators exaggerating its prevalence or significance as a societal issue. In contrast, nearly one quarter (23.4%) of gamers voted for gaming addiction to be ranked as equivalent to addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling.

party nor read a good book. It's just like alcohol and cigarettes, a waste of money and health."

"Addiction is a weakness and it isn't created by things that make us happy, it's created by certain people's minds that don't know when to stop. Still, again, like in any other aspect, gaming has to be done with

Unsurprisingly, one further quarter (25.7%) of gamers were unsure of their view, evidencing the complexity of the debate around addiction. The World Health Organization issued a classification for 'gaming addiction' in January of this year, spurred on by growing recognition of the problem within South East Asia, while in May 2018 the UK saw its first case of NHS-diagnosed

A particularly disgruntled gamer @lowens commented: 's just sad the hours I wasted on FIFA ToT fled on. With no added benefit to my life.

A different perspective from @SloMo Hacker

moderation

addiction

Ultimately, gamers weren't shy in conceding that for some, addiction to gaming is real, palpable and damaging to lives and families, however they were equally keen to emphasise how valuable gaming in moderation can be to people's lives. Of the 36 comments topic-tagged with addiction, 27 of them discussed the potential for the damaging impacts of gaming addiction. What do you think of the media and politicians' obsession with violence and gaming? Discussion around the possible link between violence and gaming reaches

back as far as the days of Wolfenstein 3D (1992). Of the gamers surveyed, the overwhelming response was that the media and politicians' portrayal of violence and gaming is unjustified, garnering a total 93% of the vote. Just 3% of gamers said it was justified. This topic clearly strikes a chord with gamers,

lootzerui shared a frustration with how much blame is placed on gaming in

with only 4% sitting on the sidelines as unsure

FORMS EXPERIEN **HOBBIES**

The same cannot be said for the ongoing propagation of anti-gaming sentiments by commentators within both the media and the political realm. These range from the old-fashioned (it's socially isolating) to the unfavourable (gaming addiction destroys lives) to the wholly unsubstantiated (violence in video games is a precursor to real-world This is not to say that the gaming world is a magical utopia devoid of problems and issues we face elsewhere in our lives. Gaming can cause isolation, it can be addictive and dangerous, and there may even have been isolated examples of criminals explaining away their unlawful behaviour as a consequence of playing too There is a debate to be had about the value that gaming brings, to individuals as well as to society at large. But what we have now is not a debate – it's one-way traffic emanating from some of gaming's most vocal and most influential critics, while millions of gamers worldwide are left voiceless and unable to get their perspectives heard or considered by those with We set up our Gaming and You data discussion in April 2018 to correct this injustice and level the playing field for gamers. Working with a host of leading gaming influencers, we invited gamers to share their thoughts and feelings about what gaming means to them, the benefits they've realised through their pastime and why they see gaming as a positive force within society, or indeed where they have any reservations. The response we received was as astonishing as it was profound – a unique insight into a thriving and vibrant but also hugely misunderstood community. This is a world in which yes, depression, isolation, social anxiety and myriad other troubles are indeed commonplace. However, in the vast majority of comments, not as the cause, but as a vital support mechanism – as the escape and Our Qutee platform processed, analysed and categorised hundreds of comments ranging from the enlightening and insightful to the deeply moving and humbling. In this report, we're honoured to be able to present their views back to the wider world.

2.341 billion active video game users worldwide according to Statista. Figure expected to grow to 2.725 billion by 2021. 75% of the most frequent gamers feel that video gaming rides mental stimulation or education, according to ESA 2017 via ukie.org (pp 17).

In 2017, there were 32.4m gamers in the UK and 180 million gamers in the US, according to New Zoo, accessed via

Nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious background have no significant effect on whether people are likely to play games, according to Nesta 2017, accessed via ukie.org (pp 48).

Improves emotional well being (253 votes | 44%)

Forms strong friendships (100 votes | 17%) Improves problem solving skills (95 votes | 16%)

Improves cognitive skills (85 votes | 15%) times: Improves social skills (18 votes | 3%) "At work, I have seen a lot of young children go through some harrowing situations. There are those who have seen their dad hit their mum, those who have lost their parents or siblings, been sexually abused... I have used being a gamer in this situation and many others, to engage with children and break the ice when talking with them on the streets... In these situations being a gamer has had a positive effect, allowing me to interest and relate to the children and value adults that I deal with day in day out." interact and relate to the children and young adults that I deal with day in, day out. A further 17.2% of gamers felt that gaming's greatest societal benefit was in building friendships, while more than one third (34%) pointed to gaming's ability to improve problem-solving, cognitive and social skills. "Gaming provides a shared social medium for people to interact in. A simple dialogue may be difficult to initiate and sustain for certain people, particularly those with anxiety - a growing concern in modern society. So, space, where people can roleplay and focus on a shared task, can be much easier to interact in... There's less pressure when you're anonymous online, making it easier to talk or simply share a task with others. You can geek out about the same things - get excited with others you may barely know - and that's beautiful. Isolation is hell, so I'm very thankful for gaming for this very

As gamer @kaspergronninglyngso puts it: 1-5 (380 votes | 63%) **16-25** (17 votes | 3%)

> Fun (334 votes | 59%) Relaxation (92 votes | 16%) Competition (83 votes | 15%) Achievement (26 votes | 5%) **Social** (22 votes | 4%) **Team play** (11 votes | 2%)

Game development (111 votes | 20%) **History** (86 votes | 15%) For @francoismillard, gaming provided the reason to work on bettering their **None** (80 votes | 14%)

Other (69 votes | 12%)

Design (26 votes | 5%)

Animation (20 votes | 4%)

No (285 votes | 51%)

Unsure (144 votes | 26%) **Yes** (131 votes | 23%)

Unjustified (475 votes | 93%) Justified (14 votes | 3%)

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Unsure (19 votes | 4%)

Math or Science (27 votes | 5%)

IT (68 votes | 12%)

Art (42 votes | 7%) **Sports** (38 votes | 7%)

Except hours I didn't train, nor

the US as a cause for rising violence, noting that "I don't understand the flak that gaming gets in America for...violence of all things? Politicians say it promotes violence... I'm pretty sure it's having guns everywhere that leads to the school shootings in the first place". Meanwhile, @redheadted-dc commented: "It's impossible to rule out the influence of @redheadted-dc commented: "It's impossible to rule out the influence of violence in media. Many are desensitized to death, crying more often for the fictional death of a dog than that of a person... this influence does not solely come from gaming... Access to guns isn't something to be ignored ... and individual psychology can become as extreme as anything else... In all likelihood, such an individual may resort to violence regardless of their participation in gaming... Gaming didn't cause that violence." Overall, the prevailing view within the Gaming and You discussion is that socially, politically and within the media, there is a palpable trend of

scapegoating gaming as a reason for the increase in real-world violent behaviour, at the expense of a broader exploration of key issues such as social and political disenfranchisement, poor gun control and education and

lack of support for emotional and mental wellbeing in society.

GAMERS' VIEWS: ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES The Gaming and You discussion generated almost 900 comments from more than 800 gamers and gaming influencers, with an average comment length of 536 characters (as a point of comparison, the average tweet is only 28 characters long). There are far too many rich conversational comments to include in this report, however we've compiled a snapshot of views below that provide additional perspective on the main themes covered by the gamers:

On building friendships online

gaming.

@Sir_Slay2

@tusken1602

discussing the videos.

done in a long time." @Langerhan

@brooksjonesblkhawk

On inspiring future careers

with only 3% agreeing that it was justified and 4% unsure.

"We tend to use it [gaming] as a way to expel some pent-up angst.

On the problem of gaming addiction

"Runescape is the game I played that lead to me being a computer scientist!"

world." @deangallaghe

new careers.

profession @neilhighley

@redheadted-dc

@Sir_Slayz

become dangerous. @redheadted.dc

@trgryellow

accordingly in the future.

?Gaming and You

addressing the subject via our polls.

On emotional wellbeing

"School was rough for me, I had no friends as a result of bullying and so in a sense I could never play with any school friends. But then I discovered the communities surrounding the YouTuber Lionheartx10 during my time at school and that

"It's addicting because it is the most enjoyable thing to do of most sets of options, unlike other addictions where people want to stop but can't." @evanburgess "I believe gaming to be just as positive as any when compared to other hobbies, but only as a hobby." "Playing too much can cause addictions and it is proven that playing games too much can affect your mood. It really just depends how long you play, who you are playing with, communication, and what game you're playing." @jamesnguyen "Some of the negative is not being able to walk away. I know most people probably have a hard time with this..."

RAISING THE STANDARD OF ONLINE DEBATE

What makes the Gaming and You discussion different from many of the other conversations currently taking place online is Qutee's ability to derive data from the discussion by automatically tracking, archiving and analysing gamers' comments as they're posted, as well as publishing live poll data in a graphical form for everyone to see.

Qutee allows influencers, brands, publishers – anyone with a digital community - to easily capture qualitative and quantitative insights about their audiences' experiences. Starting in the gaming sector, Qutee's goal is to improve the standard of online discussion, so that players finally get the quality of debate they deserve, while influencers – not to mention game developers and publishers – get a better understanding of what their communities are thinking, allowing them to improve their content

4% of the gamers discussed the issue of gaming and addiction, as part of the Gaming and You discussion, in addition to

"...many adults don't accept gaming as a sport or as a good thing... that it promotes violence even though games are a good way to vent your anger rather than resorting to violence IRL."

"Video games can provide violence as a solution to every problem, but that's quite an unhealthy perspective. In that regard, gaming can become an issue. Of course, there's a level of removal that fiction provides. At some age, kids are easily able to discern reality from fiction such as video games. After gaining that awareness, it's reasonable to assume that violent video games generally won't directly translate into violent behavior. Before that age, however, it can potentially

ABOUT QUTEE Founded in 2015 by CEO Tim Wilson and CTO Flint Barrow, Qutee's mission is to permanently raise the standard of debate online, for everyone's benefit

The US/UK startup is the developer of the world's most advanced digital comments and discussion platform. It helps any digital content creator – from tech influencers to media companies, publishers and brands – to engage with audiences in a more meaningful way by delivering real insights from online data discussions. The platform is already generating 1000s of comments from engaged communities for key gaming & tech influencers such as Capguntom,

Qutee is privately backed and fully owns the intellectual property behind its technology platform. Board advisory members include Elizabeth Linder, who previously launched Facebook India and led Facebook EMEA government relations, and Jim Hodgkins, ex-CEO of the world's leading psychographic

consumer data company VisualDNA.

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42% of the conversations that took place within Gaming and You were about friendships, making friends, or community; which highlights the importance that gaming has in building relationships between gamers and creating strong social bonds. "I have met a lot of people through gaming and have become some of my closest friends, there are bad parts of the community but these can easily be deleted by a mute or block button." "Through gaming I have met friends for life, and have had the privilege of living with these friends for the past 2 years." Sharing a house and many memories with these guys will live with me forever and for that I am extremely grateful to "Gaming allows me to stay in touch with all my friends who live in other states. "There is a kind of community that builds within a game: a community that encourages people to be bold, to be themselves, and to shed their cultural insecurities. In an online game, there are no "races," or "genders." 11% of conversations which took place in Gaming and You were about stress, health, or depression. The commentary from the gamers demonstrates the overwhelming sentiment that video games relieve stress, helping those suffering from depression well as other general life problems.

was where it all started to get better. I began to interact with other people in the comments section sharing ideas and "Whilst studying and preparing for my dissertation I began to feel very lonely and borderline depressed. I didn't have any friends around me at the time and getting out of bed every morning was becoming a real struggle. I now have a large group of friends that I game with everyday, I no longer feel lonely, my studies are going well and I feel happier than I have "While not going into details I had a very rough upbringing [and] I grew into a very introverted child and then teenager...I was really big on World of Warcraft. I've been to several weddings of my old guild members. They've been there for me when I needed an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on. Gaming found me love." "In secondary school I was bullied a lot of the time and used gaming as an escape to do something different and make a new persona. I think gaming matters as a whole to the world because it's shaped how children and some adults see the "I've also seen someone who had suicidal thoughts open up to a guild-mate in World of Warcraft. They talked it out, and he wound up getting the help he needed." 8% of the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for "Games sparked my curiosity; how come spells don't exist? And that we are bound by universal laws which ultimately lead me to study the sciences at A-level. Gaming allows fantasy and curiosity to leave our minds." "Gaming is a great entrance to IT in general. A lot of the people PC gaming will get to understand the building blocks of computer science without realising. Whether it is how computer systems are built, to CPU speeds, networking terminology, general IT infrastructure, etc. It also can foster analytical reasoning and mathematics, which is a bedrock to learning an "Those with twitch reflexes, the ability to process large amounts of information instantaneously, cooperate with a team, operate under pressure, and any number of additional skills may find a stage in gaming. It's often a bit mesmerizing to watch the most skilled people on the planet compete, doing things you could only imagine or hope to achieve." On the link between violence and gaming Only 2% of the total conversation on Gaming and You covered the link between violence and gaming - perhaps no surprise given that in our polls, 93% of the gamers stated that the media and politicians obsession with gaming and violence was unjustified,

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WHY GAMING SHOULD **BE SEEN AS A FORCE** FOR SOCIAL GOOD By Tim Wilson, founder of Qutee

From UK soccer stars playing Fortnite together between World Cup matches, to the rise of international eSports competitions with multi-million dollar prize pots, gaming has become more popula and more high-profile than ever before. A new Call of Duty launch generates headlines all over the globe; FIFA releases cause round the block queues while demand for new online games crash web servers

Where gamers were once caricatured as teenage geeks sat alone in their bedrooms, today gaming has rightly become far more accepted as successive generations have grown up recognising its value both as a form of entertainment as well as a beneficial, gaming can have on ev

educative and productive pastime. The academic world also acknowledges these benefits, with severa studies in recent years pointing to the positive impact verything from multi-tasking and problem solving to improved spatial attention and driving skills (Anderson et al. (2010), Green et al. (2012), Colzato et al. (2014). And yet, there remains a sense of otherness about the gaming community. For many, it's the idea that gaming is still a subculture, reserved for those in the know rather than the masses, despite all of the market statistics implying that gaming is now clearly a part of the mainstream. This view may limit the accessibility of gaming, but it does not damage it, per

The same cannot be said for the ongoing propagation of anti-gaming sentiments by commentators within both the media and the political realm. These range from the old-fashioned (it's socially isolating) to the unfavourable (gaming addiction destroys lives) to the wholly unsubstantiated (violence in video games is a precursor to real-world incidents) This is not to say that the gaming world is a magical utopia devoid of problems and issues we face elsewhere in our lives. Gaming can cause isolation, it can be addictive and dangerous, and there may even have been isolated examples of criminals explaining away their unlawful behaviour as a consequence of playing too

Unique insight many violent video games. into a thriving There is a debate to be had about the value that gaming brings, to individuals as well as to society at large. But what we have now is not a debate – it's one-way traffic emanating from some of gaming's most vocal and most influential critics, while millions of gamers worldwide are left voiceless and unable to get their perspectives heard or considered by those with and vibrant

power

but also hugely misunderstood We set up our Gaming and You data discussion in April 2018 to correct this injustice and level the playing field for gamers. Working with a host of leading gaming influencers, we invited gamers to share their thoughts and feelings about what gaming means to them, the benefits they've realised through their pastime and why they see gaming as a positive force within society, or indeed where they have any reservations. community." ponse we received was as astonishing as it was profound – a unique insight into a thriving and vibrant but also hugely

release from problems elsewhere in gamers' lives

misunderstood community. This is a world in which yes, depression, isolation, social anxiety and myriad other troubles are indeed commonplace. However, in the vast majority of comments, not as the cause, but as a vital support mechanism - as the escape and Our Outee platform processed, analysed and categorised hundreds of comments ranging from the enlightening and insightful to the deeply moving and humbling. In this report, we're honoured to be able to present their views back to the wider world. Gaming and You is not designed to deliver the final say on the value that gaming brings to the world. Far from it – it's the start of a better informed conversation..

Qutee

GAMERS IN PROFILE 2.341 billion active video game users worldwide according 75% of the most frequent gamers feel that video gaming to Statista. Figure expected to grow to 2.725 billion by 2021. provides mental stimulation or education, according to ESA 2017 via ukie.org (pp 17). The average video gamer is 35 years old and has been In 2017, there were 32.4m gamers in the UK and 180 million playing for 13 years according to ESA 2017 accessed via amers in the US, according to New Zoo, accessed via ukie.org (pp 16) ukie.org (pp 48). 54% of the most frequent players play with friends Nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious according to ESA 2017, accessed via ukie.org (pp 17). background have no significant effect on whether people are likely to play games, according to Nesta 2017, accessed via ukie.org (pp 48).

As part of the Gaming and You discussion, a panel of leading gaming influencers ran several polls to gauge gamers' attitudes to a range of topics from friendship and mental health to skills and careers. There were more than 4,500 interactions across the poll questions, generating a wealth of insights into how gamers feel their pastime has impacted on their personal development and society more broadly.

These findings were reinforced by circa 900 informed, provocative and largely in-depth comments left by gamers in the main discussion thread, as well as by the overall rating of the Gaming and You discussion, through which 89% of gamers rated gaming

What do you think is the main benefit of gaming to society as a whole?

as beneficial to society.

Gaming and You: Analysis

Perhaps the most notable finding across the Gaming and You polls is that 43.6% of gamers surveyed feel that the main benefit gaming brings to society is improved emotional well-being. This is striking given the current level of public discourse around gaming's negative impact on mental health and well-being. Given that every year, approximately 1 in 5 experience a mental health problem in the US, a figure that rises to 1 in 4 people in the UK*, the potential for video gaming to support mental health and emotional well-being mustn't

be overlooked. As @iordanmcgrath comments: "I'm a 17 year old lad who suffers from severe depression and anxiety and gaming is my way of escaping from the real world... [to] get away from all that's going on in my life. Playing games has helped me so much and it's my way of leaving all my problems behind." Another gamer, @the_wat14, explains:

"Gaming for me has provided an escape from my struggling mental health. At a time when I feel like I have no one, I can load up a game and get myself lost in its world and ignore the problems going on around me."

Improve going on around me." Improves emotional well being (253 votes | 44%) Forms strong friendships (100 votes | 17%)

Improves cognitive skills (85 votes | 15%)

Improves problem solving skills (95 votes | 16%)

1-5 (380 votes | 63%)

16-25 (17 votes | 3%) **6-15** (175 votes | 29%)

More than 25 (27 votes | 5%)

Improves social skills (18 votes | 3%) "At work, I have seen a lot of young children go through some harrowing situations. There are those who have seen their dad hit their mum, those who have lost their parents No benefit to wider society (20 votes | 3%) Promotes a more tolerant culture (9 votes | 2%) gamer in this situation and many others, to engage with children and break the ice when talking with them on the streets... In these situations being a gamer has had a positive effect, allowing me to interact and relate to the children and young adults that I deal with day in, day out."

"Gaming provides a shared social medium for people to interact in. A simple dialogue may be difficult to initiate and sustain for certain people, particularly those with anxiety - a growing concern in modern society. So, space, where people can roleplay and focus on a shared task, can be much easier to interact in... There's less pressure when you're anonymous online, making it easier to talk or simply share a task with others. You can geek out about the same things - get excited with others you may barely know - and that's beautiful. Isolation is hell, so I'm very thankful for gaming for this very

*https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers How many good friends have you made via gaming?

World of Warcraft have a global reach of millions of players, with different demographics. This was spoken about extensively in the discussion, with players talking about friendships formed with people from every age group, gender and race, from every corner of the world, without judgment or bias. "Gaming allows for worldwide friendships. Distance means nothing to the gaming community and this is amazing. More and more people are able to interact with each other... I know people from America, Europe, Asia and Australia... Age means nothing in the gaming world, so you can have a 12 year-old gaming with 30 year-old. If these friendships were to occur in "real life," if they met up and went out with each other, then they would seem old, but in the gaming world, age doesn't matter.

Overall the Gaming & You discussion provides evidence of the sometimes life-changing relationships being forged everyday through video-game play, as well as gaming's ability to seamlessly connect people from other backgrounds and cultures. Many gamers noted challenges with socialising and forming bonds in the offline world, the value of these gaming friendships is

challenging moment in his life: "With my wife near death in hospital and me at home alone with a baby and two older kids to look after with a head injury, PTSD and no job that gaming saved not only my life but also saved my family." Not only are video games seen as a life saver in some circumstances, but **Fun** (334 votes | 59%) many gamers in the discussion cited the importance of gaming as a response to day-to-day bullying or family problems. The discussion recorded 18 instances of comments featuring the term 'bullying' or a variance of this. Relaxation (92 votes | 16%) Competition (83 votes | 15%) @Ronin_Reborn comments: Achievement (26 votes | 5%) "My school and family life were still shitty... but I finally had an escape from it all in these games. When I played them I forgot everything wrong in my life and I only thought about what was going on on the computer screen. The first thing gaming gave me was a stress relief and mental Social (22 votes | 4%) Team play (11 votes | 2%) freedom.

A particularly disgruntled gamer @lowens commented: "It's just sad the hours I wasted on FIFA, LoL [League of Legends] and so on. With no added benefit to my life. Except hours I didn't train, nor party nor read a good book. It's just like alcohol and cigarettes, a waste of money and health."

Ultimately, gamers weren't shy in conceding that for some, addiction to gaming is real, palpable and damaging to lives and families, however they were equally keen to emphasise how valuable gaming in moderation can be to people's lives. Of the 36 comments topic-tagged with addiction, 27 of them discussed the potential for

What do you think of the media and politicians' obsession with

Overall, the prevailing view within the Gaming and You discussion is that socially, politically and within the media, there is a palpable trend of scapegoating gaming as a reason for the increase in real-world violent behaviour, at the expense of a broader exploration of key issues such as social and political disenfranchisement, poor gun control and education and lack of support for emotional and mental wellbeing in society.

regardless of their participation in gaming... Gaming didn't cause that

The Gaming and You discussion generated almost 900 comments from more than 800 gamers and gaming influencers, with ar average comment length of 536 characters (as a point of comparison, the average tweet is only 28 characters long). There are far too many rich conversational comments to include in this report, however we've compiled a snapshot of views below that provide additional perspective on the main themes covered by the gamers:

"Through gaming I have met friends for life, and have had the privilege of living with these friends for the past 2 years. Sharing a house and many memories with these guys will live with me forever and for that I am extremely grateful to require " "Gaming allows me to stay in touch with all my friends who live in other states." "There is a kind of community that builds within a game: a community that encourages people to be bold, to be themselves, and to shed their cultural insecurities. In an online game, there are no "races," or "genders." 11% of conversations which took place in Gaming and You were about stress, health, or depression. The commentary from the gamers demonstrates the overwhelming sentiment that video games relieve stress, helping those suffering from depression as "School was rough for me, I had no friends as a result of bullying and so in a sense I could never play with any school friends. But then I discovered the communities surrounding the YouTuber Lionheartx10 during my time at school and that was where it all stated to get better. I began to interact with other people in the comments section sharing ideas and "Whilst studying and preparing for my dissertation I began to feel very lonely and borderline depressed. I didn't have any friends around me at the time and getting out of bed every morning was becoming a real struggle. I now have a large group of friends that I game with everyday, I no longer feel lonely, my studies are going well and I feel happier than I have done in a long time." "While not going into details I had a very rough upbringing [and] I grew into a very introverted child and then teenager...I was really big on World of Warcraft. I've been to several weddings of my old guild members. They've been there for me when I needed an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on. Gaming found me love." "In secondary school I was bullied a lot of the time and used gaming as an escape to do something different and make a new persona. I think gaming matters as a whole to the world because it's shaped how children and some adults see the world."

@Sh4rkbite "Video games can provide violence as a solution to every problem, but that's quite an unhealthy perspective. In that regard, gaming can become an issue. Of course, there's a level of removal that fiction provides. At some age, kids are easily able to discern reality from fiction such as video games. After gaining that awareness, it's reasonable to assume that violent video games generally won't directly translate into violent behavior. Before that age, however, it can potentially hereage dangerous." become dangerous. @redheadted.dc On the problem of gaming addiction 4% of the gamers discussed the issue of gaming and addiction, as part of the Gaming and You discussion, in addition to the Gaming and You discussion and You discusaddressing the subject via our polls.

data discussions. The platform is already generating 1000s of comments from engaged communities for key gaming & tech influencers such as Capguntom Huzzy, Oakelfish and Phy.

A further 17.2% of gamers felt that gaming's greatest societal benefit was in building friendships, while more than one third (34%) pointed to gaming's ability to improve problem-solving, cognitive and social skills.

@redheadted-dc explains that:

quality.

Additionally, a gamer shared how gaming is being used as a means to connect with others facing emotionally challenging

The continued proliferation of digital media within our lives has resulted in more and more of us forging friends online as well as offline, meeting like-minded people and making lifelong friends on social media, discussion forums and comment threads, and of course, via gaming. A whopping 41% of comments in the Gaming and You discussion touched on the topic of friends and friendship, demonstrating just how important the social element of gaming is to gamers today. 36.5% of gamers surveyed had made at least six great friends through gaming, rising to two thirds (63.4%)

who had made between 1 and 5 good buddies. This is an important counterweight to the outdated stereotype of gamers as being antisocial. The discussion paints a picture of a dynamic and engaged community of people sharing interests, stories and support with gaming friends from all over the

"I've always been astounded by the kindness some people show when playing... Overall I just really love spending time with friends from all over the world which I have only gotten the chance to meet through

"You have no idea if your teammates are Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, or Jewish. And the best part about it is: it really doesn't matter."

The global aspect of gaming has meant that borders and languages do not act as barriers to forming friendships. Games such as League of Legends and

What is the primary reason you play games?

While it may come as no surprise to learn that three quarters of gamers (75.1%) claim the main draw for playing video games is fun and relaxatio it's still an important area for consideration when placed in the context of our

"Gaming basically holds my life together", @theobouveyron comments, while @langerhan94 recalls how "Gaming helped me out of a slump that

A few of the gamers noted how playing video games is literally a life-saving mechanism against the risks of suicide and depression. In a moving example, @simuk explains the significance of enjoying video games at a particularly

interest in a career in game development – not a bad move given the global industry is currently worth \$108.4bn and is predicted to grow 13.3% by the end of 2018.*

Perhaps more surprisingly, 15% of gamers credited their pastime with

"It prompted my love for history, that I will probably end up taking at university. Gaming has literally shaped my life." Take a game like Hearts of Iron 4, set prior to and during the Second World War. The game can be played via the lens of Democracy, Fascism or Communism, and in locations across the globe. With a game that pursues historical accuracy in such depth, it's easy to see how gaming could ignite further interest in a given area of history. Even games such as Assassin's Creed or Call of Duty, that take a looser interpretation of history, can

drug/alcohol/gambling addiction?

prevalence or significance as a societal issue

the damaging impacts of gaming addiction.

violence and gaming?

with only 4% sitting on the sidelines as unsure

violence.

gaming

On emotional wellbeing

well as other general life problems.

discussing the videos.

@Langerhan

@Ronin_Reborn

@deangallagher

@evanburgess

wound up getting the help he needed. @brooksjonesblkhawk

On inspiring future careers

This was a contentious area of debate for gamers. A substantial pool (50.9%) indicated that gaming addiction shouldn't be considered along the same lines as other addictions, pointing to cultural commentators exaggerating its

In contrast, nearly one quarter (23.4%) of gamers voted for gaming addiction to be ranked as equivalent to addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling.

"Addiction is a weakness and it isn't created by things that make us happy, it's created by certain people's minds that don't know when to stop. Still, again, like in any other aspect, gaming has to be done with

Unsurprisingly, one further quarter (25.7%) of gamers were unsure of their view, evidencing the complexity of the debate around addiction. The World Health Organization issued a classification for 'gaming addiction' in January of this year, spurred on by growing recognition of the problem within South East Asia, while in May 2018 the UK saw its first case of NHS-diagnosed

Discussion around the possible link between violence and gaming reaches back as far as the days of Wolfenstein 3D (1992). Of the gamers surveyed, the overwhelming response was that the media and politicians' portrayal of violence and gaming is unjustified, garnering a total 93% of the vote. Just 3% of gamers said it was justified. This topic clearly strikes a chord with gamers,

@lootzerui shared a frustration with how much blame is placed on gaming in the US as a cause for rising violence, noting that "I don't understand the flak that gaming gets in America for...violence of all things? Politicians say it

that gaming gets in America for...violence of all things? Politicians say it promotes violence... I'm pretty sure it's having guns everywhere that leads to the school shootings in the first place. Meanwhile, @redheadted-dc commented: "It's impossible to rule out the influence of violence in media. Many are desensitized to death, crying more often for the fictional death of a dog than that of a person... this influence does not solely come from gaming... Access to guns isn't something to be ignored ... and individual psychology can become as extreme as anything else... In all likelihood, such an individual may resort to violence regardless of their participation in gaming. Gaming didn't cause that

igniting an interest in history. Gamer @dat terrance comments:

REFERENCE:

qualitative data from the Gaming and You discussion.

could have had disastrous effects on my future.

As gamer @kaspergronninglyngso puts it:

Similarly, @tusken1602 comments:

gaming.

eminently clear.

Has gaming piqued your interest in any new hobby or career?

Game development (111 votes | 20%) nevertheless be a gateway to enhanced learning History (86 votes | 15%) For @francoismillard, gaming provided the reason to work on bettering their knowledge of the English language. An initial desire to better understand a game's narrative grew into a commitment to become bilingual, which saw None (80 votes | 14%) **Other** (69 votes | 12%) afrancoismillard gain a business analyst role with an international company: IT (68 votes | 12%) "Long story short, it is thanks to gaming that I got the job I have now. It is thanks to gaming that a desire to be better [at English] grew in me." **Art** (42 votes | 7%) **Sports** (38 votes | 7%) The range of new hobbies and careers cited by gamers are noted in fields as diverse as the creative areas of animation, art and design (3.5%, 7.4% and Math or Science (27 votes | 5%) Design (26 votes | 5%) 4.6%), IT, maths and science (12% and 4.8%) and even sports (6.7%). This shows that not only is gaming a hobby, it can also be an avenue through which people find their true passions and even career paths.

*https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/global-games-market-reaches-137-9-billion-in-2018-mobile-games-take-half/

Do you think gaming addiction should be ranked alongside

No (285 votes | 51%) Unsure (144 votes | 26%) Yes (131 votes | 23%)

Animation (20 votes | 4%)

Unjustified (475 votes | 93%) Justified (14 votes | 3%) Unsure (19 votes | 4%)

Qutee

WORLD

WE HOBBIES

GAMERS' VIEWS: ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

"I have met a lot of people through gaming and have become some of my closest friends, there are bad parts of the community but these can easily be deleted by a mute or block button."

On building friendships online conversations that took place within Gaming and You were about friendships, making friends, or com highlights the importance that gaming has in building relationships between gamers and creating strong social bonds

@neilhighley "Those with twitch reflexes, the ability to process large amounts of information instantaneously, cooperate with a team, operate under pressure, and any number of additional skills may find a stage in gaming. It's often a bit mesmerizing to watch the most skilled people on the planet compete, doing things you could only imagine or hope to achieve." @redheadted-dc On the link between violence and gaming Only 2% of the total conversation on Gaming and You covered the link between violence and gaming - perhaps no surprise given that in our polls, 93% of the gamers stated that the media and politicians obsession with gaming and violence was unjustified, with only 3% agreeing that it was justified and 4% unsure. "We tend to use it [gaming] as a way to expel some pent-up angst."

"I've also seen someone who had suicidal thoughts open up to a guild-mate in World of Warcraft. They talked it out, and he

Study. Stud Health Technol Inform. 2009;144:189-92 Cyberpsychol Behav. 2009;12(2):241 $Király\ O,\ Urbán\ R,\ Griffiths\ MD,\ et\ al.\ The\ mediating\ effect\ of\ gaming\ motivation\ between\ psychiatric\ symptoms\ and\ problematic$ online gaming: an online survey. J Med Internet Res. 2015;17(4).

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8% of the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for the Gaming and You conversations focused on how gaming develops abilities or skills, often igniting gamers' passion for the Gamera and Gamer"Games sparked my curiosity; how come spells don't exist? And that we are bound by universal laws which ultimately lead me to study the sciences at A-level. Gaming allows fantasy and curiosity to leave our minds." "Runescape is the game I played that lead to me being a computer scientist!" @flint "Gaming is a great entrance to IT in general. A lot of the people PC gaming will get to understand the building blocks of computer science without realising. Whether it is how computer systems are built, to CPU speeds, networking terminology, general IT infrastructure, etc. It also can foster analytical reasoning and mathematics, which is a bedrock to learning any profession

?Gaming and You ABOUT QUTEE

Qutee is privately backed and fully owns the intellectual property behind its technology platform. Board advisory members include Elizabeth Linder, who previously launched Facebook India and led Facebook EMEA government relations, and Jim Hodgkins, ex-CEO of the world's leading psychographic consumer data company VisualDNA. SUPPORTING ACADEMIC REFERENCES: van Rooij, A. J., Ferguson, C. J., Colder Carras, M., Kardefelt-Winther, D., Shi, J., & Przybylski, A. K. (2018, February 8). A weak scientific basis for gaming disorder: Let us err on the side of caution. https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/KC7R9

Qutee allows influencers, brands, publishers anyone with a digital community - to easily capture qualitative and quantitative insights about their audiences' experiences. Starting in the gaming sector, Qutee's goal is to improve the standard of online discussion, so that players finally get the quality of debate they deserve, while influencers – not to mention game developers and publishers – get a better understanding of what their communities are thinking, allowing them to improve their content accordingly in the future

"Playing too much can cause addictions and it is proven that playing games too much can affect your mood. It really just depends how long you play, who you are playing with, communication, and what game you're playing."

@jamesnguyen "Some of the negative is not being able to walk away. I know most people probably have a hard time with this... @trgryellow RAISING THE STANDARD OF ONLINE DEBATE What makes the Gaming and You discussion different from many of the other conversations currently taking place online is

"I believe gaming to be just as positive as any when compared to other hobbies, but only as a hobby. **Qutee**

"...many adults don't accept gaming as a sport or as a good thing... that it promotes violence even though games are a good way to vent your anger rather than resorting to violence IRL." "It's addicting because it is the most enjoyable thing to do of most sets of options, unlike other addictions where people want to stop but can't."

Qutee's ability to derive data from the discussion by automatically tracking, archiving and analysing gamers' comments as they're posted, as well as publishing live poll data in a graphical form for everyone to see.

Ryan, R M, Rigby, C S & Przybylski, A; The motivational pull of videogames: A self-determination theory approach, Motiv Emotion, 2006: vol. 30, pp. 347-363 Russoniello CV, O'brien K, Parks JM. EEG, HRV and Psychological Correlates while Playing Bejeweled II: A Randomized Controlled Snodgrass JG, Lacy MG, Francois dengah HJ, Fagan J, Most DE. Magical flight and monstrous stress: technologies of absorption and mental wellness in Azeroth. Cult Med Psychiatry. 2011;35(1):26-62. Wack E, Tantleff-dunn S. Relationships between electronic game play, obesity, and psychosocial functioning in young men.

Founded in 2015 by CEO Tim Wilson and CTO Flint Barrow, Qutee's mission is to permanently raise the standard of debate online, for everyone's benefit. The US/UK startup is the developer of the world's most advanced digital comments and discussion platform. It helps any digital content creator – from

tech influencers to media companies, publishers and brands – to engage with audiences in a more meaningful way by delivering real insights from online

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