# Marketing Video Games to Aging Demographics: A Generational Profile Analysis

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# MARKETING VIDEO GAMES TO AGING DEMOGRAPHICS: A

# GENERATIONAL PROFILE ANALYSIS

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# ABSTRACT

Marketing Video Games to Aging Demographics: A Generational Profile Analysis

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Marketing video games to aging demographics like Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials requires a unique approach by video game studios and consumer products divisions alike. The strategies employed for younger generations such as Generation Z and Generation Alpha differ from conventional methods, requiring a fresh outlook and a need for more innovative and inventive approaches. To comprehend the current aging audience more effectively, it's essential to examine four crucial factors: accessibility, exposure, media habits, and motivations to play video games. Examining these factors by generation, we can better grasp how to effectively market video games to these demographics. It's important to note that aging demographics will be just as significant as younger demographics since they actively shape the younger generations' exposure and access to video games, as well as their media habits and motivations. This analysis will concentrate on three demographics: Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), and Millennials (1981-1996).

*Keywords*: *video game demographics, Millennials, Baby Boomers, Generation X, marketing*

**Table of Contents**

# LIST OF FIGURES

**INTRODUCTION**

As the global video game market continues to expand, understanding its audience is crucial. In 2022, the market was valued at approximately 217.06 billion US dollars and is predicted to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 13.4% from 2023 to 2030, according to Grand View Research (2021). Video games have become increasingly accessible in the past decade due to network connectivity, the proliferation of smartphones and other consoles, and additional factors such as media habits, social media exposure, etc.

To gain insight into the current audience, it's essential to analyze four key factors: accessibility to video games, exposure to video games, and media habits and motivations to play video games. By segmenting these factors by generation, particularly the most prominent generations as of 2023, we can better understand how to market video games effectively to these demographics in the coming decade. Aging demographics will be as important as younger demographics as they will shape the younger generations' exposure and access to video games, as well as their media habits and motivations. The three demographics this analysis will focus on are Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), and Millennials (1981-1996).

The Baby Boomer generation emerged after the conclusion of World War II when the world saw a significant increase in birth rates due to economic resurgence. Between 1946 and 1964, the United States witnessed an estimated 76 million births (Britannica, 2023). Generation X succeeded the Baby Boomer generation, encompassing individuals born between 1965 and 1980. The introduction of the birth control pill in the 1960s caused a decline in birth rates, resulting in an estimated 65 million births during this period (Britannica, 2023). Generation Y, otherwise known as Millennials, followed Generation X, born between 1981 and 1996. The

Millennial demographic is named for being the first generation to reach adulthood in the new millennium. Millennials account for roughly 72 million births in the US (Britannica, 2023).

Although Generation Z (1997-2012) is a prominent player in the success of video games today, the focus of this research will rely on the aging demographics listed as they have the most capital amassed to date and therefore control how video games are shaped from a monetary standpoint. While video games have long been associated with younger demographics, the industry is beginning to see a shift as more and more older players dive into the gaming world than ever before. Understanding the evolution of video games and the generational divide in demographics can help us better understand what a player wants, why they play video games and the types of games they may prefer.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Baby Boomers (1955-1964)**

Accessibility to video games refers to the ease with which an individual can access or play video games. However, the Baby Boomer generation, born between 1955 and 1964, experienced limited accessibility to video games due to a lack of technology. Growing up in the post-war era, technology was still in its early stages of development, and video games, as we know them today, were non-existent. During the Baby Boomers' earliest youth, the primary sources of news were public newspapers and radio. However, the 1950s saw the monumental rise of television, which significantly transformed the world. In the late 1940s, black and white television sets were introduced into American households, and by 1951, their numbers had escalated to over 12 million, and by 1955, half of all US households had a TV (Stephens, 1993).

The introduction of television accelerated the spread of news, influenced shopping behaviors, and impacted the popularity of trends. Even today, television exerts a powerful influence on societal attitudes and continues to play a significant role in the success of video games. Television advertising might have had a role to play in why a smaller percentage of Boomers play video games as opposed to generations that came after them.

The Baby Boomer generation has a lower representation in the video game industry, attributed to their limited access to modern technology during their youth, and because video games were still evolving as they grew into adulthood. The emergence of arcades in the 1970s coincided with the Baby Boomers' entry into adulthood, which suggests this is a key factor in why the Boomer generation has decreased participation in video gaming. Currently, only around 42% of the Baby Boomer generation worldwide engage in video gaming (Newzoo, 2023).

With the rise of smartphones and mobile gaming, video games are now more accessible to the Boomer generation and the barrier of entry is lower today than it ever has been before. The availability of gaming apps and easy access to games via mobile devices has reduced the learning curve for Boomers, enabling them to engage with this form of entertainment more easily. Smartphones and other mobile devices became a norm and necessity and therefore outpaced other devices for the Boomer generation. The absence of accessibility to video games during their youth may have contributed to their limited engagement with other gaming platforms that emerged such as consoles and PC gaming. Bridging the gap between accessibility for platforms outside of mobile might be a difficult task for consoles at this stage, but it is worth noting that consoles may seem more complex to operate than a smartphone to a Baby Boomer. The key difference in accessibility between these devices is that smartphones became a necessity while consoles and PC platforms did not.

The level of exposure to video games is a determining factor in how each generation interacts with them. Similar to accessibility, exposure can impact a group's proficiency with certain technologies. Baby Boomers had limited exposure to video games from their youth into adulthood. As a result, most Baby Boomers do not play video games on traditional devices such as PCs and consoles, opting instead for mobile gaming.

According to a recent study by Newzoo, at least 42% of Baby Boomers worldwide play video games, with 70% of these individuals preferring mobile games, followed by 45% who play on PCs, and only 19% who play on consoles. Given their lack of exposure to video games during their youth, Baby Boomers may be less inclined to purchase consoles and gaming PCs, as they may not feel the need or curiosity to explore them.

The age of exposure to any technology appears to play a significant role in how a person interacts with new or unfamiliar technology. Technology adoption defines how a person or group may be inclined to accept or adopt new or changed technology. Baby Boomers grew up in an era with far fewer technological advancements, and as a result, are less likely to adapt to technology that they had no exposure to. According to one study conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2017, some 34% of older internet users say they have little to no confidence in their ability to use electronic devices to perform online tasks, while 48% of seniors say that this statement describes them very well: "When I get a new electronic device, I usually need someone else to set it up or show me how to use it."

Moreover, another study suggests that technology adoption is driven by different motivating factors depending on the demographic. The Technology Acceptance Model includes three main elements: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived fun. In this study, Baby Boomers found mobile data services more difficult to use than other generations but simultaneously found that the perceived usefulness was greater than the difficulty in learning how to use the technology (Yang, K., & Jolly, L. D., 2008).

Research has also demonstrated that exposure to video games may impact psychological needs and fulfillment, adding further dimensions to the influence of video games. Exposure to video games has many implications and bears further study across the board to best understand how this affects different generations and their psychological and technical needs. It is clear that the less experienced and less comfortable a generation is with a technology, or in this case, video games, or video game platforms, the less confident they will be in their ability to learn about and use the devices or programs.

Baby Boomers are a significant consumer group who are often overlooked by marketers in favor of younger, more tech-savvy generations. However, understanding their media habits can provide valuable insights into how best to reach and engage this age group. Baby Boomers prefer traditional media, such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines (Baig, 2023). When it comes to media consumption, broadcast television is their main source of news, while they have begun to use social media more frequently as time elapses.

Approximately 48% of Baby Boomers who use social media spend anywhere between 10 minutes to an hour a day on social media (Taylor, 2023), with Facebook being the most predominantly utilized platform, followed by YouTube. They tend to be less adaptable to technology, preferring more simplistic advertising, and gravitate toward media providers and brands that tend to reinforce their beliefs (Baig, 2023). Therefore, companies looking to target Baby Boomers should consider advertising on these traditional media platforms while focusing on building trust and transparency.

Despite their preference for traditional media, Baby Boomers are increasingly using digital media, especially social media, which can be an effective way to reach them. According to data from Pew Research, Baby Boomers spend more than half of their daily leisure time, four hours, and 16 minutes, in front of screens, mostly watching TV or videos. Smartphone ownership has increased as well, with more Boomers using smartphones than ever before. In the US, adults over 65 who owned a smartphone increased from 13% to 61% from 2012 to 2022, indicating a significant increase in adaptation to digital technologies (Pew Research, 2022).

**Smartphone ownership and social media use among older adults continue to grow**

*% of U.S. adults who say they ...*
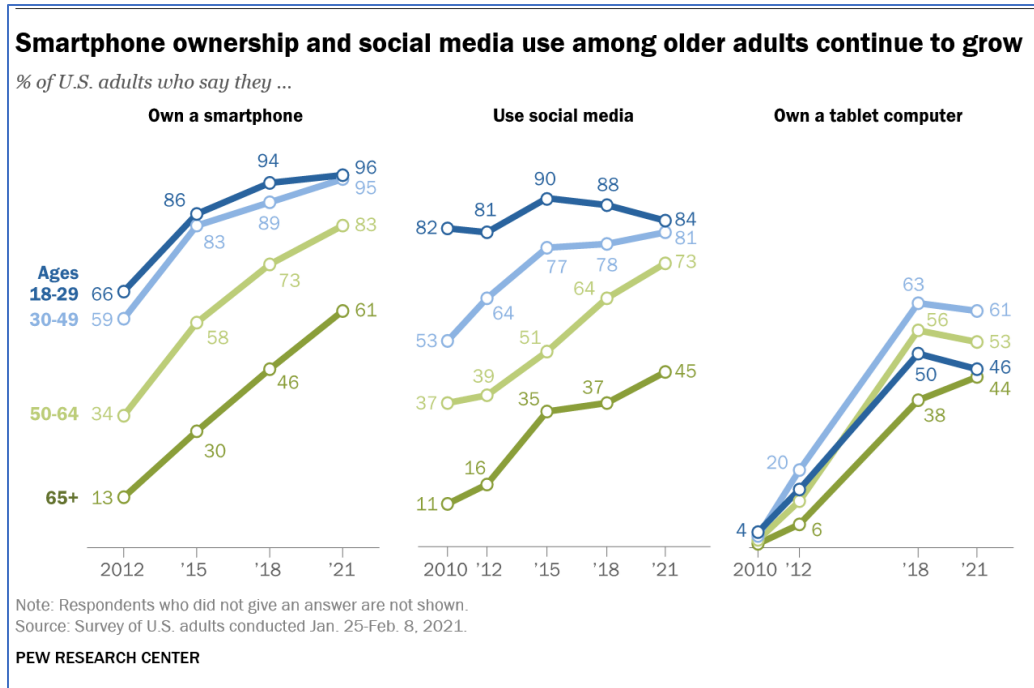
(Source: Pew Research, 2021)

Even though technological competence is increasing, and the generational gap is narrowing, businesses targeting Baby Boomers must ensure that their online content is user-friendly and straightforward. This is important since Baby Boomers may not be as tech-savvy or as comfortable using new technology as younger generations. Video game companies looking to cater to Baby Boomers should be aware of the game genres that appeal to them. In general, classic casual games such as puzzle games, and card games appeal to this generation. It's worth noting that for Baby Boomers, video games serve primarily as a source of stress relief.

The motivation for playing video games refers to the underlying reasons behind an individual's decision to engage with such games, whether by playing, watching, or interacting with them. While Baby Boomers may not seem like the typical audience for video games, they are prevalent in the mobile gaming market. Therefore, it's vital to comprehend their motivations for engaging in the gaming space.

For Baby Boomers, video games offer an engaging way to unwind, stay mentally sharp, and pass the time. According to Newzoo data, 92% of Baby Boomers who play video games do so to unwind. Additionally, video games offer a social outlet for Baby Boomers, who may have more free time now that they are retired or nearing retirement. Multiplayer games allow Baby Boomers to connect and interact with friends and family, even if they are not physically in the same location. This social aspect of gaming can help combat feelings of loneliness and isolation that some Baby Boomers may experience.

For over a decade, researchers have explored the psychological motivations behind video game consumption, referencing Self Determination Theory (SDT). It has been studied that people tend to exhibit the highest level of intrinsic motivation for activities that fulfill three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Baby Boomers who play video games may experience all three simultaneously.

To create games that appeal to this demographic, game developers and marketers need to understand the motivations of Baby Boomers for playing video games. By recognizing the unique needs and desires of Baby Boomers, game creators can develop games that are engaging, challenging, and socially connected, ensuring that this generation continues to enjoy the benefits of gaming for years to come.

**Generation X (1965-1980)**

As previously mentioned, accessibility to video games refers to the ease with which individuals can access and play them. Data indicates that Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, is more likely to engage in gaming than previous generations. Approximately 63% of individuals within Generation X play video games worldwide, as reported by Newzoo in 2023. Despite technology's slow but gradual advancement during their youth, Generation X was among the earliest generations to experience video games in a shared environment, specifically, at arcades.

During the 1970s, arcades underwent a significant transformation from coin-operated machines, such as pinball, to electronic games, starting with Atari's Pong. Atari's success led to the creation of several enduring classics, including Space Invaders, Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, and Scramble. The success of arcade games continued into the early 1990s, with titles like Namco's *Pole Position*, a racing game, and Capcom's *Street Fighter*, a fighting game (Betson, 2023). The popularity of arcade games among Generation X greatly contributed to the rise of home video game consoles such as the Atari 2600, Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), and Sega Genesis. These consoles allowed gamers to play their favorite video games from the comfort of their own homes, without the need for a pocket full of quarters. The introduction of home consoles led to the creation of many beloved franchises, including *Super Mario Bros.*, *The Legend of Zelda*, and *Sonic the Hedgehog*. As technology continued to advance, so did the accessibility of video games.

Generation X faced a unique obstacle in terms of video game exposure. Positioned as an in-between generation, Gen Xers had greater access to technology relative to Baby Boomers, but considerably less access when compared to Millennials. This meant that while Gen Xers had

some exposure to early video games like *Pong*, they were not as immersed in the gaming world as Millennials, who grew up with advanced gaming consoles, computers, and online gameplay in the home. However, despite this obstacle, many Gen Xers still found ways to enjoy and appreciate video games and are still avid participants in the video game world today.

Generation X had a strong association with arcades during their youth, which served as the primary source of video game entertainment, while at the same time, arcades were typically located in an environment made for shopping and socializing. Generation X found arcades to be an excellent social outlet to spend leisure time with friends, while early video game consoles provided the same entertainment within the comfort of their own homes. The introduction of home consoles in 1972 marked a significant rise in popularity, leading to the success of subsequent generations and the modern-day video game industry.

Despite the initial widespread success of video games, the gaming industry faced a significant threat during the early 1980s known as the gaming crash. This crisis was precipitated by the oversaturation of consoles in the market, resulting in an influx of hastily developed, subpar games that left consumers dissatisfied. However, companies like Nintendo navigated through this challenging period by rebranding their Nintendo Entertainment System as a comprehensive home entertainment system for families (Taylor, 2023). By reframing their products as home entertainment systems rather than mere gaming consoles, both Nintendo and Sega successfully differentiated themselves from their competitors. This strategic shift revitalized the home console industry, with these systems becoming a focal point for family entertainment, while arcades remained popular social hubs for the younger generation.

The exposure to arcades and home consoles among Generation X individuals varied significantly based on their birth years, leading to diverse experiences within the same

demographic. The divide within Generation X is primarily determined by birth year, with those born around 1965 potentially feeling more akin to Baby Boomers due to their early adulthood during this transformative era. Conversely, individuals born closer to 1980 enjoyed a broader spectrum of home console experiences and may relate more to Millennials in terms of video game exposure. This divergence within Generation X presents challenges in devising targeted marketing strategies tailored to this multifaceted demographic.

Understanding the media consumption habits of Generation X can be a valuable reference point for video game developers and marketers seeking to cater to this demographic more effectively. Unfortunately, this group is often overlooked, with the common belief that they don't make much of an impact. However, studies indicate that approximately 63% of Generation Xers participate in video gaming, representing a significant increase in the number of gamers compared to the previous generation (Newzoo, 2021). This suggests that as video games have evolved, so has their audience.

In terms of entertainment consumption, video gaming ranks second among Generation Xers, with broadcast television being their preferred choice. Similar to the Baby Boomer generation, the preferred platform for video gaming among Generation Xers is mobile, followed by PC and console. Generation Xers prefer puzzle and match games, with adventure gaming coming in third.

Additionally, data suggests that Generation X spends as much time as younger age groups consuming media from the internet. While broadcast television still comprises a significant portion of their entertainment, almost a third of their daily television time is devoted to online streaming (Mander, J., & Kavanagh, D., 2019). Furthermore, YouTube and Facebook are the preferred platforms for Generation X. When it comes to consuming media, they tend to

want to do so on their terms, utilizing streaming services, podcasts, and social media platforms to curate their entertainment and news sources. Authenticity holds value for them, and they exhibit skepticism toward marketing messages that feel contrived or manipulative (Baig, 2023). Generation X may be more likely to be receptive to marketing tactics that acknowledge the issues and root their messages in real-world, relatable scenarios (Wiley, 2022).

Brand loyalty is high for Generation Xers and their preferred social media sites are mainly used to stay up to date on current news and events. Social media is used by Generation Xers to keep in touch with friends, fill their spare time, engage with entertaining content, and network with others when they are not using it for news and events according to a study by GlobalWebIndex in 2019.

A recent study by Newzoo in 2021 reported that approximately 60% of Generation Xers participate in video gaming, dedicating approximately 18% of their leisure time to this activity. Relaxation and unwinding are the primary motivations behind their engagement with video games. Interestingly, socialization, which was a notable motivating factor for the youth of this generation, doesn't seem to be as prominent of a motivating factor for playing video games today. The top games that this generation prefers, such as puzzle and match games, are typically played solo. This might suggest that marketing to this generation should attempt to refocus their nostalgia for arcades and gatherings into today's consoles and multiplayer platforms. Reminding this generation of the social aspect of playing video games could prove to be a motivating tactic.

**Millennials (1981-1996)**

      Millennials are a generation that has embraced video games, with a unique ability to appreciate both legacy and modern technologies as they have emerged. Individuals born between 1981 to 1996, commonly referred to as Millennials, were raised in an era of unprecedented technological progress. Because of this, the Millennial generation has been able to adapt to advancing technology like no other generation before them. Over the course of their lives, computers, television, and video games evolved significantly, transitioning from traditional disc-based formats to digital iterations, with several intermediate stages in between. This has made accessibility to video games easy for Millennials.

      Video games have become an essential part of Millennial culture and at least 77% of Millennials play video games, according to Newzoo data. As children, they grew up playing classic first-edition console games like *Super Mario Bros.* and *Sonic the Hedgehog*, before transitioning to more complex titles like *Grand Theft Auto* and *Call of Duty* in their teenage years. As they entered adulthood, video games continued to be a significant source of entertainment and even career opportunities, with the rise of e-sports and streaming platforms like Twitch.

      Millennials also have a unique appreciation for retro gaming, with many seeking out and collecting vintage consoles and games from their childhood. This nostalgia-driven trend has led to a resurgence of interest in classic video games, with companies releasing updated versions of old favorites and even new games inspired by retro aesthetics. Unfortunately, in 2023, the Video Game History Foundation publicized its findings on the commercial availability of classic video games and determined that 87% of retro games in the U.S. are "critically endangered." Essentially, most of the retro video games are unavailable to play or buy on today's technology.

Despite this, video game enthusiasts can still find old games and consoles online via second-hand sites such as eBay, indicating a need has arisen for conventional and remastered technology as well as old games.

Millennials have a perceived impact on conventional forms of media but straddle the line between technological advancement and traditional sources. For example, according to data from Statista, while print magazine readership is low, young adults, including Millennials tend to be the most prominent consumers of printed books. Additionally, Millennials listen to less radio than previous generations, yet they are the largest consumers of online radio across the nation. The issue might be a direct result of accessibility to media than the form media takes. If traditional media companies can find ways to deliver their content on a platform with more significant support for mobility and on-demand access, they may be able to attract the younger generation of media consumers, based on the data.

Millennials were the first generation to have immediate and continuous **exposure** to video games. Moreover, the introduction of the World Wide Web in 1993 revolutionized their interaction with the world, marking a significant milestone for all preceding generations (Ring, 2023). The internet fundamentally changed the way people played games, allowing for online multiplayer and digital downloads. Mobile gaming also became increasingly popular, with the rise of smartphones and tablets.

Data retrieved from a study conducted across multiple countries from Newzoo suggests this might be why Millennials and younger generations are more connected, as well as more prone to socialize with one another via media and video games. Today, video games are more accessible than ever, with a wide variety of platforms, genres, and styles to choose from. With

the continued growth of virtual reality and augmented reality, the future of gaming may transform into more of a social landscape than a competitive one.

Millennials have a mixed array of media habits, due to growing up in the age of ever-evolving technology. Millennials are quick to adapt to new technology, but they have a nostalgia for traditional forms of media. For example, print magazine readership is low, but Millennials tend to be the highest consumers of printed books. Millennials listen to much less traditional radio than previous generations but are the largest consumers of online radio in the country. The issue doesn't seem to be the media itself, but rather its accessibility. If companies in the traditional media industry can find a way to deliver their products on a platform with greater support for mobility and on-demand access, they may be able to find success among this younger generation of media consumers. This may be why video game companies are beginning to remaster and refresh old content, as to appeal to older and younger demographics in a new way.

Research indicates that approximately 88% of Millennials subscribe to video streaming services, while 60% subscribe to music streaming services. They spend an average of around 105 minutes per week watching video content on their smartphones, an option unavailable with cable TV. Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video are among the most vital TV networks and video sources for Millennials, further emphasizing the popularity of streaming services.

The motivation for playing video games for Millennials ranges from methods of relaxation to socialization. According to data gathered across multiple age ranges, countries, and demographics, Millennials engage in video gaming mostly as a method of relaxation, followed by a motivation to earn gaming achievements, and to compete with others in gaming (Newzoo, 2021).

Unlike previous generations, e-gaming and streaming platforms have facilitated a social environment where Millennials and younger generations can observe others playing games through platforms such as Twitch and YouTube. Newzoo's data shows that 67% of Millennial gamers both play and watch game content. The social element of discussing video games and trends has gained popularity as a means of staying informed about current trends, influencers, and games.

**Methodology**

The methodologies used to generate generational profiles for Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials were a mix of both qualitative research and quantitative research. Measuring how and when each demographic was exposed to video games involved an analysis of historical records, surveys, journals, and interviews. Baby Boomers grew up in an era where technology had just barely begun to expand into television channels and relied heavily on a radio presence, for example. Generation X was exposed to the beginning of technological advancements and their experiences with games came in the form of arcades and the first home consoles. Millennials had an entirely different level of exposure with the infancy of console gaming inside the home, and a different era of video game genres altogether. The age of exposure is difficult to quantify in quantitative numbers but can be grouped into a larger qualitative set of events and time.

I used qualitative data in my analysis to evaluate how video game marketing went from word of mouth to radio to television as well. Televised ads and interviews were an important factor in my research to better understand the state of the world at the time of each generational profile's youth. One of my sources delves into an interview that discusses the impact of video games and gamers' respective habits. Understanding and breaking down research on each generation's spending habits, media habits, and playing habits can lead to a better understanding of what drives each group as consumers and gamers.

Methods used to investigate and research the field of video game marketing include a variety of journals, news articles, interviews, surveys, and research groups. Video game marketing has been relevant since the early 1970s but has only been made more widely promoted in recent years with the development and widespread use of social media. I used information

gathered from social media as a central method to investigate rough numbers of demographics in the field of video games.

The current state of video game marketing has remained much the same as it was one or even two decades ago, despite evidence to suggest that the video game community has changed in that timeframe. Survey data suggests that the gender of gamers is split down the middle, nearly 50/50, male and female, and yet video game developers and video game marketing continue to market to a primarily young, male demographic. The reality is that gamers are no longer the stereotypical young white male, but rather, more diverse, and older. The Millennial generation who grew up on some of the first console games are now in their mid-20s at their youngest, while Generation Xers are anywhere from their mid-40s to late 50s. A demographic that tends to be completely left out of any video game marketing consideration is Baby Boomers, who are in their 60s to mid-70s as of 2024, but evidence in my analysis as well as in the research I have used suggests that none of these demographics should be overlooked by video game developers and their marketing tactics.

**Future Research**

Video games have become increasingly more than just a form of entertainment. They have become a tool for education, imparting knowledge of history, science, and even language, prompting educational institutions to integrate them into their teaching methods for enhanced engagement and interactivity. In my research, I discovered the advantages of incorporating video games in educational environments. Video games in an educational setting have proven to aid students in both acquiring and retaining knowledge over the long term, as opposed to mere short-term memorization for tests. Delving deeper into the educational applications of video games through further research could provide valuable insights as we navigate the digital era.

Additionally, video games have created a lucrative career path for those who are passionate about gaming. From game developers to professional e-sports players, there are now numerous job opportunities available within the gaming industry. This has not only created job growth but has also contributed to the overall economy by generating billions of dollars in revenue. Exploring the financial dynamics of the gaming sector, including the rise of influential personalities and their social impact on marketing and video game interaction, presents an intriguing avenue for investigation.

Online gaming allows players to socialize and connect with others from all around the world. It provides a platform for people to come together and build strong relationships, regardless of distance or location. This has been especially important during the pandemic, where virtual connections have become more important than ever. Uncovering how beneficial socialization is in the digital world would be an interesting study to pursue based on my initial findings for these profiles.

Moreover, research indicates that video games can enhance motor skills and mental well-being. Certain game genres have been shown to boost hand-eye coordination, memory retention, and decision-making abilities, impact teamwork and collaboration, and alleviate stress and anxiety. While early studies from over three decades ago have explored the cognitive benefits of video games, a more comprehensive investigation into their effects on cognitive, motor, and psychological functions seems warranted.

Video games have significantly transformed our engagement with technology and interpersonal connections, offering vast opportunities for careers, entertainment, education, and self-improvement. It is increasingly vital to dedicate further research to comprehending the social, cognitive, and collaborative implications of video games. I trust that the research I have conducted and compiled will prove beneficial for future research endeavors.

**Findings and Conclusion**

The video game industry is expected to grow at an annual rate of 8.76% between 2024 and 2027, resulting in a projected market volume of 363.2 billion dollars by the year 2027 (Statista, 2023). According to Statista data, the biggest revenue by market will include mobile games and in-game advertising, followed by online games. The same study concludes that the market drivers for the revenue change include changing gamer preferences, increasing smartphone penetration, increased internet speed, new business models, and the impact of inflation. The leading countries in terms of revenue for video game markets are China, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.
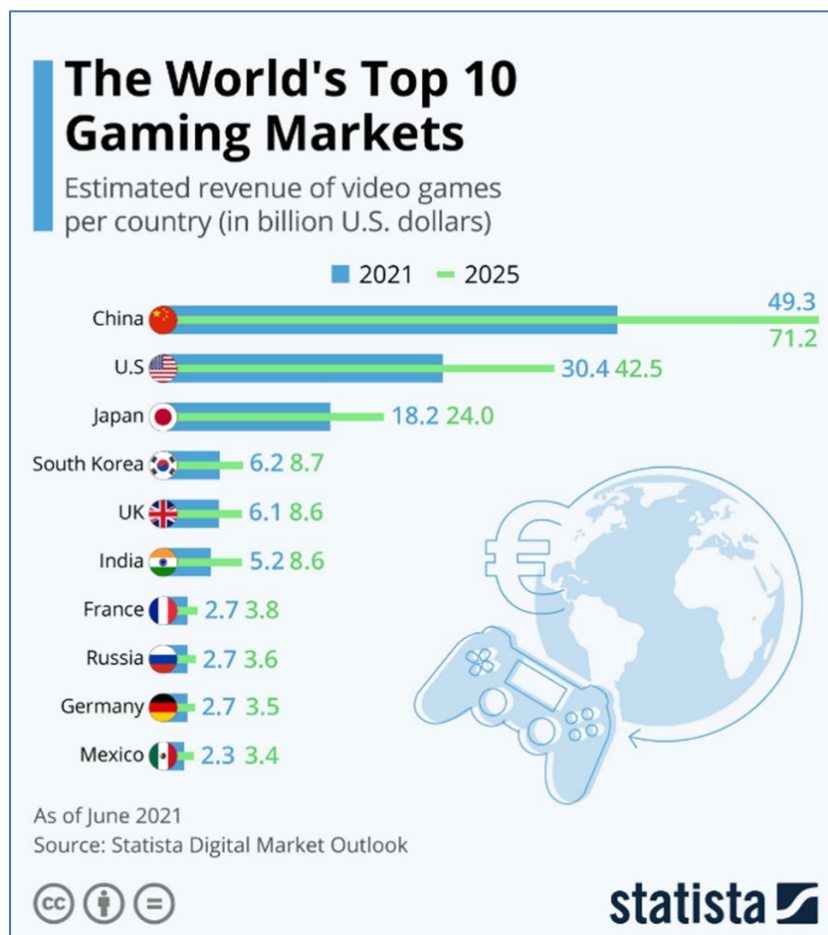


**(Source: Statista, 2021)**

One of the focal points of my research centered on the transition of media, including video games, towards predominantly digital formats. A notable development occurred just this year, in January 2024, when Microsoft declared the cessation of physical game production. This evolution has sparked considerable discussion in my field of research, particularly considering that many video games from just one or two decades ago have become inaccessible due to technological obsolescence or discontinuation. An emerging argument stemming from the phasing out of physical media is that consumers may no longer possess true ownership of the media or games they acquire. This has raised substantial apprehension regarding the future landscape of not only gaming but digital media as a whole.

Another noteworthy research discovery suggests that the age at which individuals are exposed to technology, including video games, could be pivotal in shaping their technological proficiency. Baby Boomers and Generation X individuals were raised during eras when broadcast television served as the predominant entertainment medium. Data indicates that both these demographics continue to exhibit a preference for broadcast television in their leisure activities, and this inclination persists despite the significant evolution and advancements in television.

Millennials were introduced to the prominent entities in the video game console industry that continue to thrive today, including Nintendo, which most recently launched the Switch, Sony, which unveiled the PlayStation 5 console, and Microsoft, which released the Xbox Series X console. These three industry giants have been at the forefront of the console market from the 1990s to the early 2000s, which was prime time for the Millennial youth. Millennials and younger generations constitute the target market for these companies, as their audience base is primarily drawn from the younger demographic.

Drawing parallels between the viewing habits of Generation Xers and Baby Boomers favoring broadcast television, and Millennials gravitating towards gaming consoles they were introduced to and continue to embrace, hints at a possible correlation. This observation implies that early exposure to specific technologies and media during one's youth could influence their preferences and adeptness in adopting newer technologies and media habits.

One could infer that utilizing media for marketing purposes could significantly impact one's familiarity and engagement with various technologies and games. This raises inquiries into the mechanisms through which media shapes our inclinations towards particular technologies. It underscores the critical importance of effective marketing strategies. Further investigation is essential to delve into these potential correlations and relationships. Understanding how early exposure to technology shapes both our technological proficiency and adaptability could prove invaluable to future generations. Additionally, examining how media preferences established during one's youth continue to influence individuals in adulthood may provide insights into the lasting effects of early media exposure.

Based on my research, it is apparent that the video game industry is steadily expanding in popularity and social acceptance across different age groups. The perception of gaming has transitioned over time, from being viewed as a futuristic tech to raising concerns about violence in games and its effects on the youth, to its present-day status as a means of social interaction and widespread acceptance as a hobby. With each succeeding generation, the amount of time spent on video games as a form of leisure activity has increased, along with a steady growth in the number of individuals who identify themselves as gamers. Undoubtedly, video games have significantly influenced how individuals spend their leisure time and fostered connections among people with shared interests.

**Baby Boomers**

Marketing video games to the Baby Boomer generation begins with ease of use and necessity. More than 61% of Baby Boomers use a smartphone, and 32% of the Baby Boomers who play video games, do so on mobile devices. Mobile is the preferred gaming platform for Baby Boomers, and it has made its way to that placement due to the necessity of the mobile device. To market to the Baby Boomer demographic, video game companies should appeal to the necessity of the mobile device, while utilizing a marketing approach that conveys ease of use.

Simplistic and straightforward marketing tactics appeal to this generation. Utilizing platforms that have previously established themselves for this generation will be the most effective way to get marketing in front of Baby Boomers. Platforms such as Facebook and YouTube are the most accessed social media platforms by Baby Boomers, while advertising on broadcast television may also be effective, but might prove more difficult for companies with smaller marketing margins.

Baby Boomers tend to spend their leisure time on more traditional media, and their motivations to play video games are to unwind and keep up a mental sharpness. Puzzle, match, and word games are the preferred game genres, but this may stem from these games being simplistic in use and easy to pick up or put down at will. The table below demonstrates each generation's preference in genres and the top franchises played.
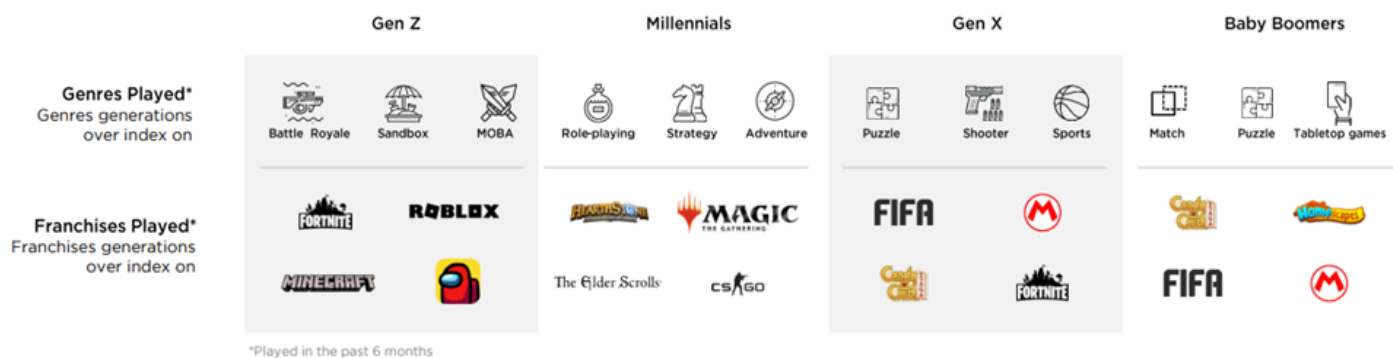


**(Source: Newzoo, 2021)**

**Generation X**

Marketing video games to Generation X entails crafting authentic and genuine messaging. A significant portion of Generation X individuals, with at least 60% engaging in video gaming, predominantly do so on mobile devices, closely followed by PCs and then consoles. The wide selection of games available today enables Generation X to easily revisit nostalgic titles from their youth. To effectively target this demographic, marketing strategies should adopt a sincere and relatable tone, considering Generation X's inclination towards skepticism regarding traditional advertising methods.

Despite Generation Xer's considerable viewership of broadcast television during leisure hours, gaming remains a prominent pastime for this generation. Amidst their position bridging Baby Boomers and Millennials, gaming holds a notable presence in their recreational pursuits. Noteworthy game genres for Generation X include puzzle, shooter, and sports games.

To effectively engage with this demographic, marketing efforts should focus on prominent social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube. Ensuring authentic messaging in marketing tactics, with nostalgic notes might convey the most effective methods.

**Millennials**

Marketing video games to Millennials necessitates a focus on personalization. Millennials exhibit a preference for actively seeking out tailored media and information that they deem important. Ensuring the accessibility of video games across diverse demographics can significantly enhance engagement levels. Moreover, both Millennials and younger generations actively consume and engage with video game content more so than their predecessors.

Recent trends indicate that leveraging influencers and content creators may offer an effective strategy for reaching Millennials. These individuals not only foster trust within their audience but also possess the ability to influence opinions and promote video game content through their streaming platforms. Furthermore, younger generations tend to rely more on the social aspect of motivations to play and engage with video games and other social media content. The graph below shows the increase in player motivations, with social motivations leading the charts among Millennials and younger generations. This data suggests that appealing to the social aspect of gaming can help drive and engage the Millennial generation most effectively.



**Player motivations[1] | % Top Box**
Base: Total players
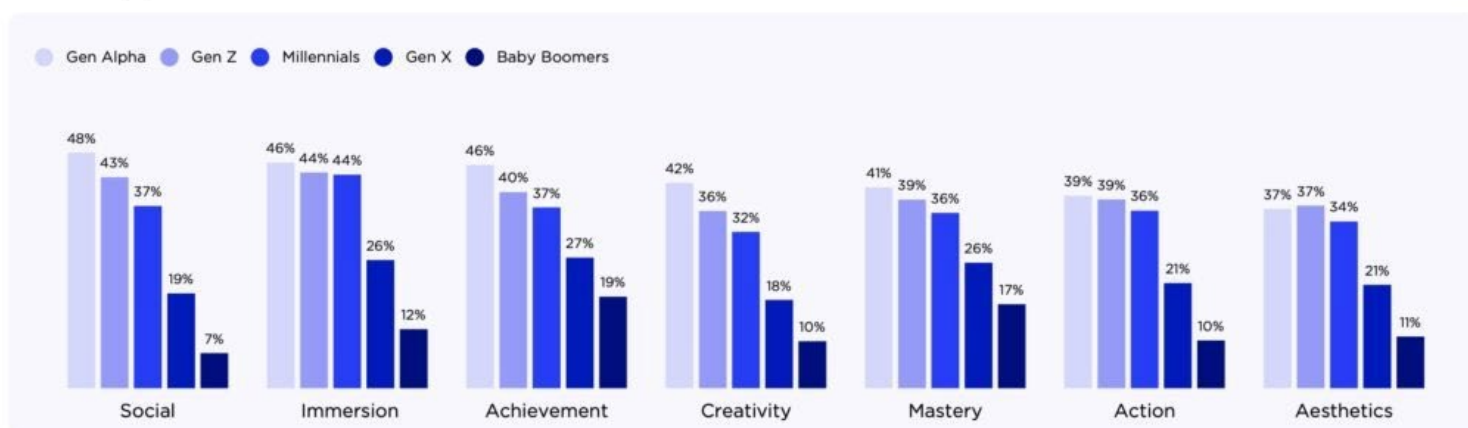
**(Source: Newzoo, 2021)**

Millennials tend to gravitate toward nostalgic tropes. Marketing video games to this generation might be more effective when appealing to nostalgic themes. Motivations for this generation include relaxation and competitive gameplay. The most appealing game genres for Millennials include strategy games, roleplaying games, and adventure-based games.

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