

# 5 reasons why you should change your perception of gaming in 2020



**We've all heard countless reasons why gaming is supposed to be bad. But we bet no-one's told you about its advantages. Like the medical benefits it can present. Or the new tribe of gamers who are defining the industry and the revolutionary new platforms they're using that are changing the world. Which is why we've covered all this and more in our latest report.**



**Wondering why we should be paying attention to trends in gaming? Maybe these statistics will give you some food for thought:**

- 84% of Millennials and Gen Z (24 - 35-year olds) believe it's cool to play video games (Ypulse)
- More than 666m people are watching gaming video content – that's more than HBO, Netflix, ESPN and Hulu combined (Nielsen)
- Over 1.2m people in the UK actively watch eSports (Kantar 2019)
- 2019 will be the first year that global eSports revenue will top \$1bn (Newzoo)

Nevertheless, negative perceptions about gaming still stand, which Internet Matters discovered in its 2019 survey of UK parents. The charity is dedicated to helping parents keep their children safe online and found that, of those surveyed:

- 50% were worried that their children would be exposed to violence
- 50% were worried that their children would be contacted by strangers online through games
- 45% were concerned their children would become 'addicted' to gaming



A substantial 45% mentioned Fortnite in particular as a game they were worried about their children playing. However, it's worth noting that only around half of the parents surveyed had even tried video games themselves.

These concerns aren't new. Over time, we've all seen articles linking shootings to video game violence, as have we read about online predators and heard our parents tell us our eyes will go square if we sit too close to the TV.

Let's be honest. We're all familiar with the stereotype of video gamers being 'geeks' and 'nerds' who lack friends and live in their parents' basements. With such a negative perception and a gaming industry that's only growing stronger by the minute, it's no wonder people are so concerned about their children, colleagues and friends.

What isn't being talked about is the wealth of positive trends that gaming continues to present.





# Gaming is leading to scientific and surgical benefits

As it turns out, gaming can have profound benefits for humanity and there has been a large amount of research to support this.

## **Surgeons need to be using software**

A study by JC Rosser Jr et al found that surgeons who played video games for more than three hours a week had 37% fewer errors and had a 27% faster completion rate performing keyhole surgery and suturing compared to surgeons who never played video games.

Overall time and error scores were 33% reduced for participants who played video games in the past, and 42% better if they had played in excess of three hours per week. Surgeons who currently play video games showed similar positive results compared to colleagues without any video game experience.

## **Gamers are working to crack the genetic code for breast cancer**

A number of video games like Phylo have been designed to aid research in science and medicine.

Phylo allows players to solve pattern matching puzzles which simultaneously help solve the Multiple Sequence Alignment problem (MSA). MSA is a way of arranging the sequences of DNA, RNA or protein to find regions of similarity. It typically involves computer algorithms, however users who play Phylo can optimise the areas that computers cannot.

In completing a level of Phylo, you are helping biologists get one step closer to tracing the source of and ridding the world of certain genetic diseases like breast cancer.

## Mario improves memory

In a 2015 study in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, researchers from the University of California, Irvine recruited 69 participants, and asked a third to play *Super Mario 3D World* for two weeks, a third to play *Angry Birds*, and the rest to play nothing. The researcher wrote:

**“Because of their engaging experiences and enriching 3D virtual environments, the same video games that have been played for decades by children and adults alike may actually provide our brain with meaningful stimulation.”**

As such, the people who played Mario ended up doing better on follow-up memory tasks, while the other groups showed no improvement pre and post-gaming.

“Video gamers who specifically favour complex 3D video games performed better,” the researchers concluded.

This shows us the potential in memory improvements that gaming can have for our children, a theory which goes against the idea that young people who play video games have shorter attention spans.





### **Tetris could lead to reduced trauma**

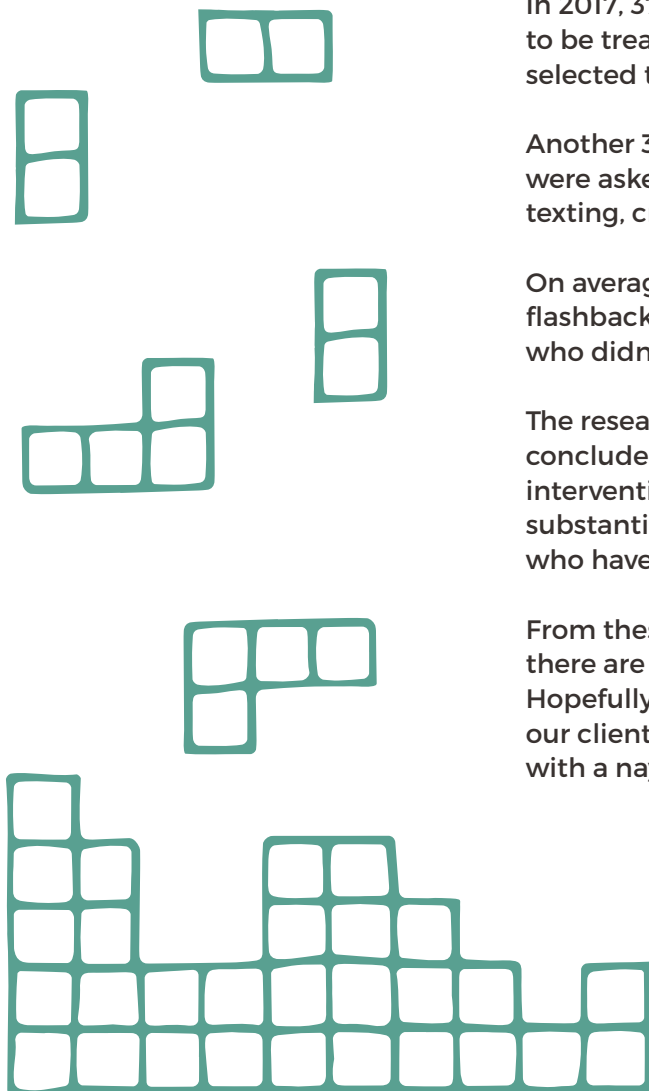
In 2017, 37 patients that arrived at A&E in Oxford to be treated for a traffic accident were randomly selected to play 20 minutes of Tetris.

Another 34 patients didn't get given the game but were asked to log regular activity instead, such as texting, crosswords, and reading.

On average, the Tetris players had 62 per cent less flashbacks to the traumatic traffic event than those who didn't play the game.

The research, published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, concludes that the "brief, science-driven intervention offers a low-intensity means that could substantially improve the mental health of those who have experienced psychological trauma."

From these case studies, we can conclude that there are positive outcomes from gaming. Hopefully, this will be enough 'pub ammo', as one of our clients lovingly calls it, for your next encounter with a naysayer.



# The rise of gaming tribes

Though gaming is becoming more and more popular amongst everyone from your aunt Doris playing Candy Crush, to Tom down the road streaming Fortnite, there is a specific cohort that has gone beyond embracing this trend and began to define it.

**A 2019 report by market researcher Newzoo estimates that the global games market will generate \$152.1bn this year alone.**

According to Stylus, in a world where gaming rules, the boundaries between our real and digital lives are blurring. Aesthetics are increasingly inspired by cyber play, and the individual spirit takes on an otherworldly beauty. Stylus refers to this tribe as Gen G (Generation Gaming) - the Game Nation tribe.

The Game Nation cohort are a hyper-cyber tribe, with a look that's big on streetwear and workwear. Picture singer-songwriter Billie Eilish for example. Her aesthetic of studded chokers, harem pants and military boots is what's known as 'survivalist warrior'. The appeal of this will continue into 2020 and see a more playful look, featuring pops of neon and eye-catching iridescent flourishes. These will all make for the ultimate space-rave feel.

There are also strong references to the 'scene kids' aesthetic of the Myspace era - revived by e-girls and e-boys, whose name is derived directly from gaming culture, made popular on platforms such as TikTok and Twitch.





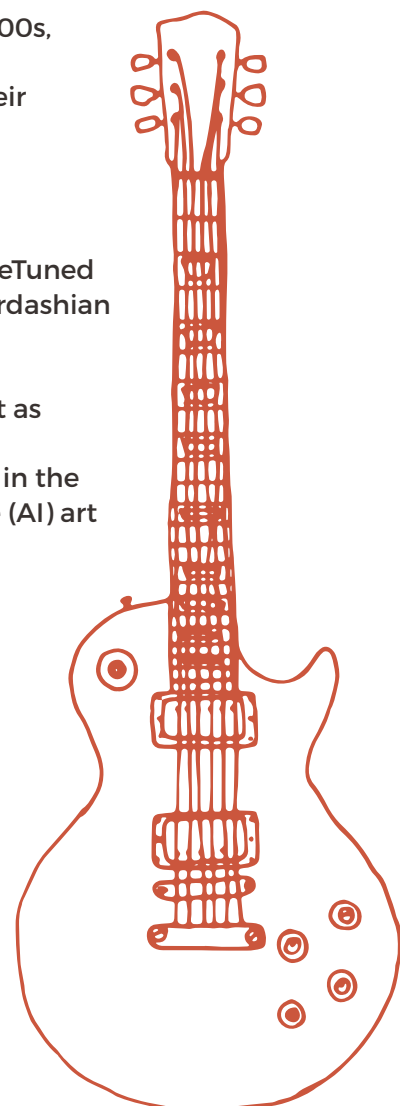
They embrace the aesthetic of the late '90s and mid-2000s, injecting it with an ironic dose of humour, and taking predominantly to social media app TikTok to spread their message. E-fashion is a mix of alternative aesthetics, most notably emo, manga (cosplay) and rave - or a combination of all three.

According to Stylus, E-fashion is the opposite of the FaceTuned Insta beauty and Coke-bottle body perfection of the Kardashian crew and the blandness of the VSCO girl.

Beyond automated reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) is just as important to the Game Nation cohort. Digitisation and hyper-reality are big culture drivers for them, especially in the creative sphere where virtual gigs, artificial intelligence (AI) art and digital fashion are becoming increasingly relevant.

Here's some of their main influencers to watch and don't worry, it's not just streamers:

Music stars Billie Eilish and Kelsey Lu, AI filter star Mate Steinforth, DJ and producer Siobhan Bell, Italian musician Taxi Bi and Insta artist Jazzelle, also known as @uglyworldwide. Also, check out e-girl @eve.frsr and e-boy @meraki.cos. Meanwhile, otherworldly beauty influencers to follow include @spicy.obj and @sydn4sty.





# The revolutionary channels this cohort loves

**Gamers are a tribe that congregate in very different places to your normal audience. They are spread across platforms that are growing like wildfire, so we thought we'd break down the top three.**



## **Twitch**

Twitch is a popular online service for watching and streaming digital video broadcasts. When it was founded in 2011, Twitch originally focused almost entirely on video games but has since expanded to include streams dedicated to artwork creation, music, talk shows, and the occasional TV series.

The streaming service boasts over two million unique streamers every month and more than 17,000 of these users earn money through the Twitch Partner program, a service that provides streamers with added features such as paid subscriptions and ad placements. Twitch was purchased by Amazon in 2014 and it remains one of the highest sources of internet traffic in North America.

The platform now has over 15m daily active users, with each spending on average of 95 minutes per day watching. More than one in five views are of eSports and there are 726,792,858 hours watched on the platform each month (Influencer Marketing Hub).

There is real money to be made on this streaming platform, as American YouTuber Ninja has proven. He's currently the biggest gaming streamer in the world and made a reported \$10m (£8.2m) last year from streaming himself playing Fortnite, one of the world's biggest eSports.

## Discord

Think of Discord as a mixture between WhatsApp and a traditional gaming 'guild' system. The free text and chat application is often run alongside a current stream or game while the user is playing or watching. Above all else, Discord acts as a community tool and helps build open or closed groups of like-minded people, giving them the freedom to interact, vote and be a part of a gamer's stream.

Through their community ties, users can organise tournaments, ask questions, become featured on stream and are given special privileges over normal stream viewers.

As Discord says on its website:

## We built Discord to bring gamers together

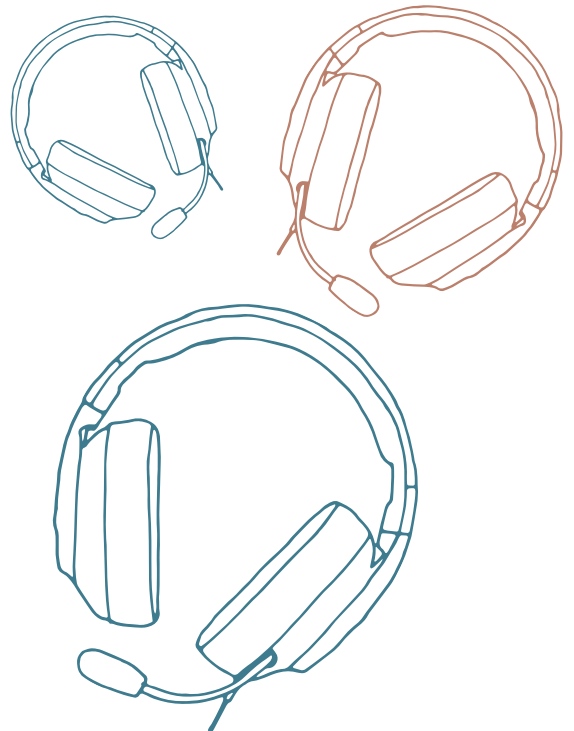
It could be argued that some of our best relationships growing up were built around playing games. Memories of staying up late playing Warcraft 3 with friends or sharing creations in The Sims mean so much to us. Discord's free voice and text chat is about making it easier for you to spend time with the people you care about, create these memories, and land a headshot or two.

## Reddit

'The front page of the internet', was how Reddit defined itself for many years, a place where content is king, and groups respond to information at a more rapid rate than any other platform.

Reddit is nothing new, a discussion thread platform that allows users to find safe spaces across the web in what are known as 'subreddits' to discuss topics they are passionate about with similar individuals.

Reddit is the fifth most visited site in the US, with more than 430m monthly active users and 21bn average screen views per month. It's a powerful platform to engage with these new tribes and see what content is trending before it hits the rest of the internet. If you're ever wondering about what will be trending later in a given week, or what meme will become popular on Instagram in a few days, its best to check the front page of Reddit.



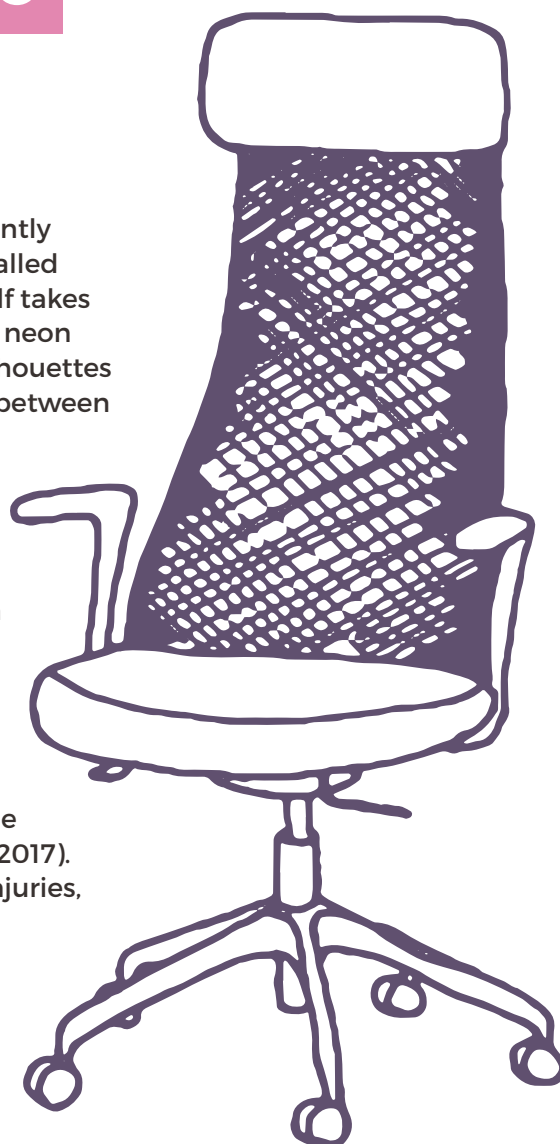
# 4

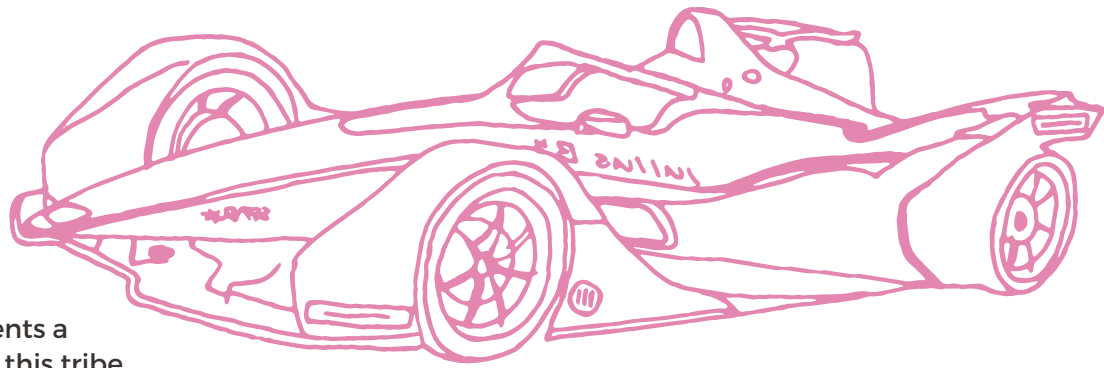
## How brands are leveraging these communities

British youth clothing brand Collusion recently collaborated with girl gamers on a game called Now Loading. Their clothing collection itself takes on gaming's most graphic signatures, with neon colours, retro game characters and easy silhouettes lifted from the screen, offering a clear link between the two worlds.

The collection itself not only borrows aesthetics from gaming, but also mirrors the technology. Shoppers can scan the Collusion QR code on Snapchat to access a filter icon, then place the graphics on the clothing for a "surprise" (Stylus).

As revealed in Designing Amplified Experiences (part of our Active Lives Macro Trend), eSports is big business, with revenue forecast to reach \$1.5bn by 2020 (Newzoo, 2017). Like physical sports, eSports can result in injuries, as the gaming generation have discovered from playing computer games for up to 20 hours per day. Based on this, Ikea's new collaboration aims to improve ergonomic seating design for gamers.





Last but not least is the evolution of racing, which represents a huge opportunity for this tribe.

Formula E is a single-seater motorsport championship that uses only electric cars. In 2017-18, more than 300m viewers globally tuned into at least one Formula E race (Forbes). This is a massive increase from the 18.6m viewers per race for the 2016-17 season (Forbes).

Formula E has seen 347% growth in the number of 13-to-17-year-old fans engaging with its online content relative to last season. Specifically, on the official Formula E Facebook page, two age groups (13 - 17 and 18 - 24) now account for almost half of the total engagement, currently coming in at 49%, which is up 439% from the previous season. The overall number of video views across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube combined is over 318m, which has grown 675% over last season.

It's a no-brainer that Formula E will embrace the gaming audience. Porsche, a Formula E competitor, has already begun doing so by debuting its 99X Electric not at a traditional keynote or on YouTube, but on Twitch. During the car reveal campaign, a total of 14m contacts were generated on Twitch and almost one million viewers were involved virtually and live.

Physical Porsche drivers Neel Jani and André Lotterer were guided by the gaming community and undertook four hours of game time, before unveiling the 99X Electric at Porsche Digital in Ludwigsburg. The highlight clip of the 'Formula E Unlocked' video game can be viewed at [newstv.porsche.com](http://newstv.porsche.com).



# Forget football or rugby – eSports are the ones to watch

**Look online and you'll see that sport can be defined as: an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.**

At RBH, we think this definition can be applied to eSports.

You may have heard about tournaments for some of the more popular games such as Fortnite or Overwatch. This is nothing new, there have been worldwide tournaments for gaming dating decades back. Even Steve Wozniak (co-founder of Apple) used to compete in Tetris tournaments across the globe. However, in recent years eSports has evolved from a niche events opportunity, to a full-blown industry and sport.

We've already discussed the volume of revenue this industry is predicted to grow to, so let's look at two case studies to prove it.

Fortnite is more than what some might see as just silly dancing and colourful worldbuilding. In July 2019, 16-year-old US player Kyle 'Bugha' Giersdorf took home \$3m at the inaugural edition of the Fortnite World Cup in NYC, inspiring more young eSports players to pursue their gaming dreams. The competitive scene of the game is ever growing and has similar coaching and systems in place to traditional sports.





Then there's Overwatch, a team-based, first-person shooting game. After just two years in production, a league was officially commissioned and managed to secure prime-time coverage of full matches on Disney, SkySports, ESPN1 and more.

In 2018, the Overwatch League became the first eSports tournament to be broadcast on ESPN1, a significant leap for the gaming community and one that has been a long time coming. To be broadcast across the world in sports bars, cinemas and at special screenings was crucial for the success of the franchise.

Overwatch takes eSports to the next level, with its own stadiums and world cups, as well as second and third division leagues similar to English football. There are a number of ways to get on the ladder, with talent scouts, coaches, teams and huge sponsorships aplenty.

Whether we play or not, gaming is coming to our screens soon. For us at RBH, we welcome it and can't wait to help our clients engage with these new tribes.





To find out how these insights  
can benefit your business,  
email [joeh@rbh.co.uk](mailto:joeh@rbh.co.uk)