

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Consumers are mobile gamers, mobile gamers are consumers

September 22, 2021



Mobile gaming is gaining on websites as an effective advertising channel. Image credit: AdColony

By NORA HOWE

Over the last several years, gaming has quickly become a vastly popular channel, with mobile gaming stepping further into the spotlight since early 2020.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

As interest in mobile gaming continues to grow, it presents new opportunities for brands to reach some of the most engaged digital consumers in the market. In the 2021 "Life of the Mobile Gamer" report, [AdColony](#) and [GWI](#) explored how mobile gamers engage with advertising on this channel, what drives their purchasing decisions and how they consume entertainment.

"Desktop and websites have been around longer they're what people know and trust, and brands understand them more than they do apps," said Jean Ortiz-Luis, content marketing manager at AdColony, Los Angeles.

"However, with the amount of time users spend on apps, it's only a matter of time before apps become the preferred way to view ads," she said. "App developers and brands need to build a better user experience in order to gain enough trust to facilitate the switch."

The findings are drawn from GWI's online research among U.S. internet users who are mobile gamers aged 16-64 through an online survey. GWI only interviews respondents aged 16-64 and their figures are representative of the online populations of each market, not its total population.

The survey garnered a total of 1,044 respondents in the U.S. over an eight-day period in Q2 2021.

Advertising to mobile gamers

When it comes to defining the mobile gamer, AdColony found that there is no easy way to identify this consumer because there is a broad range.

Nearly half, 49 percent, of U.S. consumers are committed gamers, meaning they play mobile games once to several times per day. Meanwhile, 16 percent play once to several times a week while 13 percent play once to several times a month.

Around half of female respondents indicated that they are committed gamers, with similar numbers for male respondents. More than half of users 18-24 years of age are playing daily, while 53 percent of consumers 35-54 are also playing mobile games every day.

While 61 percent of consumers gaming every day did not finish high school, 51 percent have a Master's degree and are playing mobile games every day. Similarly, their income levels are spread evenly from less than \$50,000 to more than \$250,000 with 65 percent of committed mobile gamers having an income level over \$250,000.



Mobile gamers include a variety of individuals with different interests, consumer behaviors and incomes. Image credit: AdColony

The majority of mobile gamers, 61 percent, play puzzle games, 42 percent play word games and 31 percent play strategy games. More than half, 53 percent, play mobile games while watching television or when on a break, such as during lunch, at 43 percent.

Since mobile gamers span a vast spectrum of characteristics and identities, there are ample opportunities for brands to reach their target audiences through advertising.

According to AdColony, 34 percent of mobile gamers have clicked on an advertisement they have seen while playing. Almost 1 in 4, 24 percent, visited a company's website from an ad seen while playing a game.

"Contextual shopping involves brands targeting people with whom they have found success in the past, but the trick is to learn target behaviors instead of individuals," Ms. Ortiz-Luis said. "This not only respects privacy, but it allows for a better and broader audience to be shaped.

"Knowing exactly who they are is great for that specific customer, but it doesn't help get a bigger picture," she said. "By doing this, brands can know a larger spectrum of their consumers and advertise at a variety of different places, truly encompassing contextual shopping."

Across most regions, consumers are spending more time on mobile apps than before. App Annie found that the global average of time spent in apps hit 4.2 hours per day in Q1 2021, a 30 percent increase from 2019.

However, despite the increased use of mobile apps, attitudes toward website advertising appear to be more positive than in-app advertising.

Two in three gamers, 66 percent, find advertising on websites less disruptive to their online experience, while 64 percent find ads on websites more relevant to them than in apps.

Some brands have leaned into gaming collaborations as opposed to direct advertising spots.

Italian fashion house Gucci partnered with social app Zepeto in a gaming-centric push to engage consumers. The collaboration allowed users to dress their Zepeto 3D avatars in pieces from Gucci's latest collections ([see story](#)).

In terms of pricing and payments, 60 percent of consumers believe there are more coupons and discounts exclusive to websites, with 61 percent more confident in sharing payment information via websites than apps.

More than half, 56 percent, find it is more convenient to purchase products on a brand's website than through an app; however, 50.2 percent find it is faster to do so through an app.

British fashion house Burberry partnered with Mythical Games on a new gaming collaboration

While apps are slightly falling behind websites as the preferred purchasing channels, in-game and in-app technology is continuing to evolve and brands would be remiss not to leverage current opportunities to reach consumers who

are increasingly relying on apps.

In-app vs in-store

In response to the pandemic, consumers relied heavily on mobile devices to make purchases for a variety of products.

The biggest standout for advertisers looking to convert discoveries to purchase is the ease of checkout. Website and mobile are evenly split when it comes to speed of checkout, which should encourage brands and retailers to optimize their checkout processes.

One in three mobile gamers downloaded an app to make a purchase.

According to a study by The Washington Post, Dell, and Intel, 70 percent of consumers believe secure mobile payments, both in-app and in-store, will be the predominant form of payment by 2030, and 73 percent of millennials reported they expect to make all payments via their mobile phones.

Platforms like Google Pay and Apple Pay, which streamline the checkout experience further, have continued to grow.

Ecommerce service Shopify's platform growth has exploded, which also smooths out the buying process.

Social video-sharing platform TikTok recently built on its relationship with Shopify, and will begin testing TikTok Shopping with a group of Shopify sellers in the U.S., U.K and Canada.

TikTok Shopping aims to provide merchants with new features that will help them produce engaging and organic content that sends users directly to checkout. This partnership is part of TikTok's strategy to make it easier for its users to explore and purchase products they discover while on the app ([see story](#)).

The number of shoppers who bought from Shopify merchants increased by 52 percent from 2019 to 2020, according to a February 2021 earnings report from the company.

"It's important that brands lead people where they want to go when they click on an ad," Ms. Ortiz-Luis said. "Nothing is more irritating than finding yourself searching for what you intended to buy on a brand page instead of directly viewing a product from an ad.

"Simplicity and ease are key," she said. "Most in-app commerce is essentially impulse buying, so brands need to remove obstacles that could give consumers a chance to reconsider their purchase."