

MARKETING

Future of influencer promotions lies with gamers: YouGov

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Gaming influencers are on the rise as effective brand promoters. Image courtesy of Gucci

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Brands have increasingly shifted their focus and marketing spending on digital influencers to promote products and messages through channels including YouTube, Instagram and Twitch.

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The COVID-19 pandemic caused an increase in consumer gaming time, which has only fueled the growth and value of popular gamers. According to [part one](#) of YouGov's three-part "Power of Gaming Influencers" global report series, the demand for live gaming is growing significantly on platforms like Twitch, with channels nearly tripling over the course of two years.

In connection with YouGov's BrandIndex and Profiles, data in the report was collected through a survey of 19,000 individuals across 17 markets within the global influencer gaming influencer sectors.

Gamers are influencers

YouGov found that more than 40 percent of the global adult population follows a social media influencer across a range of interests, and almost 10 percent follow a gaming influencer. This number rises to 17 percent among consumers aged 18-34 and 23 percent among men aged 18-34.

The United Arab Emirates has the largest percentage of influencer followers at 75 percent across the 17 markets, followed by Indonesia at 73 percent.



Gucci collaborated with Sims creators for Gucci Off The Grid. Image credit: Gucci

At least 12 percent of consumers worldwide follow food, health or celebrity influencers, while 9 percent follow gaming influencers.

However, this fluctuates significantly within specific demographic groups.

For instance, 21 percent of Gen Z consumers follow gaming influencers, and these influencers are the top influencer group followed by men, similar to sports, music and food influencers.

In 12 out of the 17 countries surveyed, gaming influencers tops the list of influencer types followed by men aged 18- to 34-years-old. Gaming influencers also rank in the top three in 15 out of 17 international markets, and are more popular than sports influencers in 14 out of 17 countries surveyed among this demographic.

Looking across the three major gaming live streaming platforms, outside of China, audiences are increasingly consuming content from gaming influencers.

The amount of time spent consuming live gaming content has more than doubled since 2019, from 3.8 billion hours to 9 billion in Q2 2021. While YouTube Gaming and Facebook Gaming have both seen increases in viewership, Twitch has dominated the gaming live stream market, driving nearly 7 billion viewed hours in Q2 2021.

YouGov found that China and Indonesia have the highest number of gaming influencer followers, representing a fifth of the population in both markets.

Gaming influencer followers are less prevalent in Europe with Denmark, Great Britain and Sweden, all with less than 5 percent of their respective populations following gaming influencers.

YouGov found that 68 percent of adults across the 17 international markets surveyed currently game at least once per week. Frequency of playing video games is on the rise, and this is generating a larger gaming influencer fan base.



Twitch streamer Fuslie during a Lexus livestream where viewers chose the interior lighting scheme and the vehicle's exterior wrap. Image courtesy of Lexus

For those actively engaged in gaming, playing video games one or more hours per week, the global proportion who follow gaming influencers increases from 9 percent overall to 15 percent.

Twenty percent of heavy gamers those who play video games 11 or more hours per week follow gaming influencers. Within this group, Asia has the highest number of gaming influencer followers, thus is most likely to drive growth of the gaming influencer sector.

Luxury gamification

Already, gamification has permeated the luxury space, and brands are recognizing the value of tapping well-known figures within the gaming sector.

Italian fashion label Gucci was an early adopter of gamification, realizing the myriad of ways it could unite what many view as two forms of entertainment and expression.

In 2018, Gucci introduced personalized avatars in partnership with mobile application Genies. Not only could users dress their clones in Gucci apparel and accessories, but the platform also allows consumers to purchase clothing they see their digital selves wearing ([see story](#)).

Last year, the brand also partnered with two Sims custom creators for its Off the Grid capsule collection. Through the collaboration, players were able to download the virtual Gucci designs and build items.

In January, Toyota Corp.'s Lexus expanded its "All In" campaign into the gaming world, with a two-hour Twitch livestream where viewers could rebuild the Lexus 2021, hosted by popular Twitch streamer Fuslie.

This was the first time a brand had utilized the interactivity of Twitch and its community of gamers to build a custom car through livestream. The event prompted viewers to vote for their favorite interior and exterior modifications ([see story](#)).

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