

Video Games and Consoles - UK - October 2010

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What is this report about?

The video game industry has found it hard to replicate the extremely strong performance seen in 2008. The recession saw consumers tightening their belts and cutting back on discretionary spend, while the current generation of consoles are reaching maturity, making it harder to draw new gamers into the market.

This report examines these issues, as well as factors such as concern over violent games, the opportunities offered by the broadening gaming demographic, and the impact that the economic climate has had on the market. The value of both hardware and software sales are considered, and consumer research identifies how attitudes towards gaming vary between traditional gamers and those who are newer to the market.

What have we found out?

- The gaming demographic has broadened, but there is still a gulf between what new and traditional gamers are looking for. Online gaming has little appeal for women and older gamers, and remains the preserve of younger men.
- Developers and publishers need to be wary of the amount of violence in their games if they want to maximise appeal. Women are particularly likely to be put off by overly gory games.
- For most people, consoles are still something for playing games on - it's only among the enthusiasts that media features and other non-core services become particularly important.
- The difficult economic environment will mean that the next few years will be tough for anyone of working age. Bringing in older games and appealing to grandparents could minimise the impact of the post-recession austerity.
- Digital distribution will totally change the shape of the gaming industry - the question is 'when', rather than 'if'. Already, a third of Xbox 360 and PS3 owners have paid to download a game.
- Mintel's consumer research confirms that motion-based controllers appeal more to the mass-market than to committed gamers. The combination of the power of the PS3 and Xbox 360 and the precision of PS Move and Kinect could help counteract this limited appeal.

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