

# Esports - UK - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the esports industry.
- Trends in how many consumers watch esports, game streams or live stream their own gameplay.
- Which genres of game esports fans watch and the platform they use to watch content.
- Attitudes towards esports including intention to watch after COVID-19 outbreak.
- Esports behaviour including purchasing of gaming accessories from esports events.

Older Millennial gamers are the most likely to live stream their own gameplay (46%), despite the fact that Generation Z have the strongest interest in esports and non-competitive game streams. The inclination to live stream is likely linked to the fact that Older Millennials are the most likely to own one of the latest generation static consoles, enabling them to make particularly engaging content.

The COVID-19 lockdowns were key in driving interest in gaming for Older Millennials in general, with many of this age group maintaining their new gaming habits even after social distancing measures were relaxed. In August 2021, 66% of Older Millennials who own static or portable consoles were gaming once a week or more, compared to 57% during the first lockdown in April 2020. The growth in gaming has contributed to their interest in esports, with 51% of Older Millennial gamers watching competitive gaming in August 2021.

Six in 10 esports viewers expect to spend less time watching esports after the COVID-19 outbreak. While this is likely to limit growth of the market, it should be noted that the UK esports market has performed well during the pandemic so even if there is a slight decrease in time spent watching, it is still in a stronger position than pre-COVID-19. Additionally, esports viewers may expect to



“The interest in watching gameplay among Older Millennials has increased significantly across the last year to the point where they are the most likely to live stream themselves playing video games.”

– **Zach Emmanuel, Consumer Technology Analyst, 20 October 2021**

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reduce their time spent watching but that does not necessarily mean they will stop watching esports altogether.

Those who watch esports on Facebook Gaming are more likely to have been to an esports studio (61%) or an esports bar (57%) than those who watch esports on YouTube or Twitch. This indicates that those on Facebook Gaming are more interested in the social side of esports and therefore it could be appealing to them to get incentives such as a free drink at the bar if they bring friends from their Facebook friend list.

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- **McLaren opens gaming studio for its esports team**

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