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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games



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Representation In Games

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Lecture Contents

- 1 **Why Diversity Matters**
- 2 **Tokenism**
- 3 **Gender In Games**
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- 5 **Cultural Representation**
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Why Diversity Matters



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

Games can be used to promote **diversity** and **inclusivity**. They are a great **window into the lives of others** and allow us to explore concepts we might bring back to the real world.

Achieving an **authentic representation of the human experience** is paramount to a game's success; diversity and inclusion are vital for capturing and retaining player attention. [1]

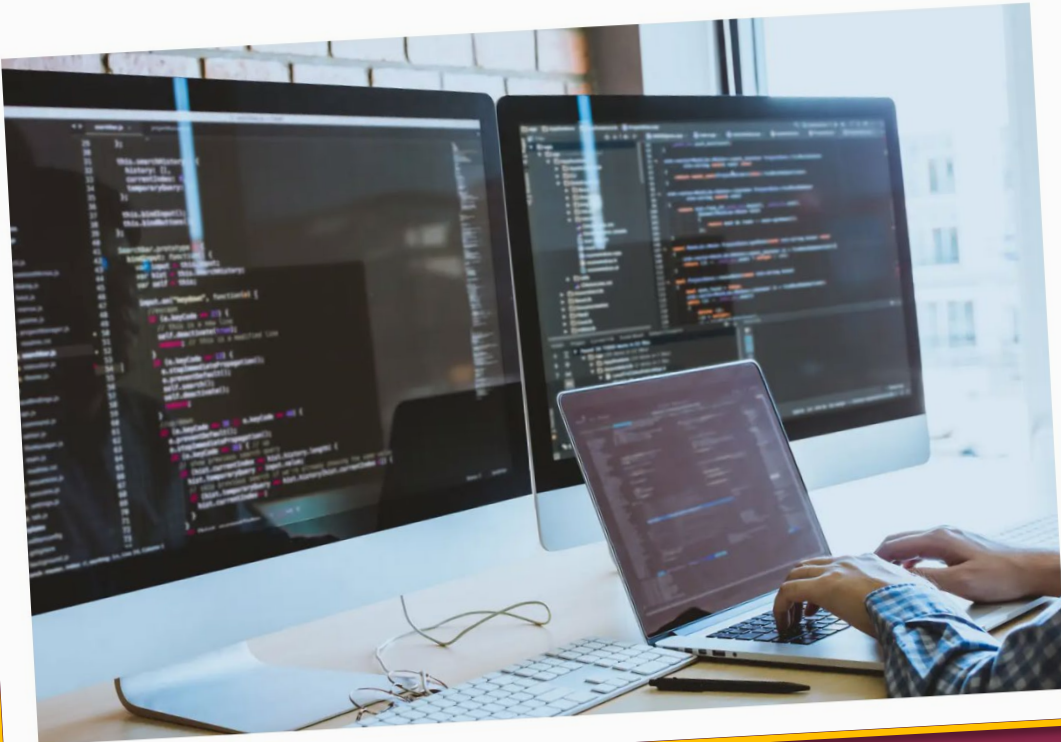


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Report: 77% of devs expect games industry to grow in 2025

90% of studios plan to release at least one new game this year, according to game backend provider Metaplay



WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

The gaming industry has grown exponentially over the past few decades, becoming a powerful **cultural** and **economic** force. As this industry continues to evolve, the importance of diversity and inclusion in gaming has become increasingly evident.

Diverse and inclusive gaming environments not only **foster creativity** and **innovation** but also ensure that games **reflect** the diverse world we live in. [2]



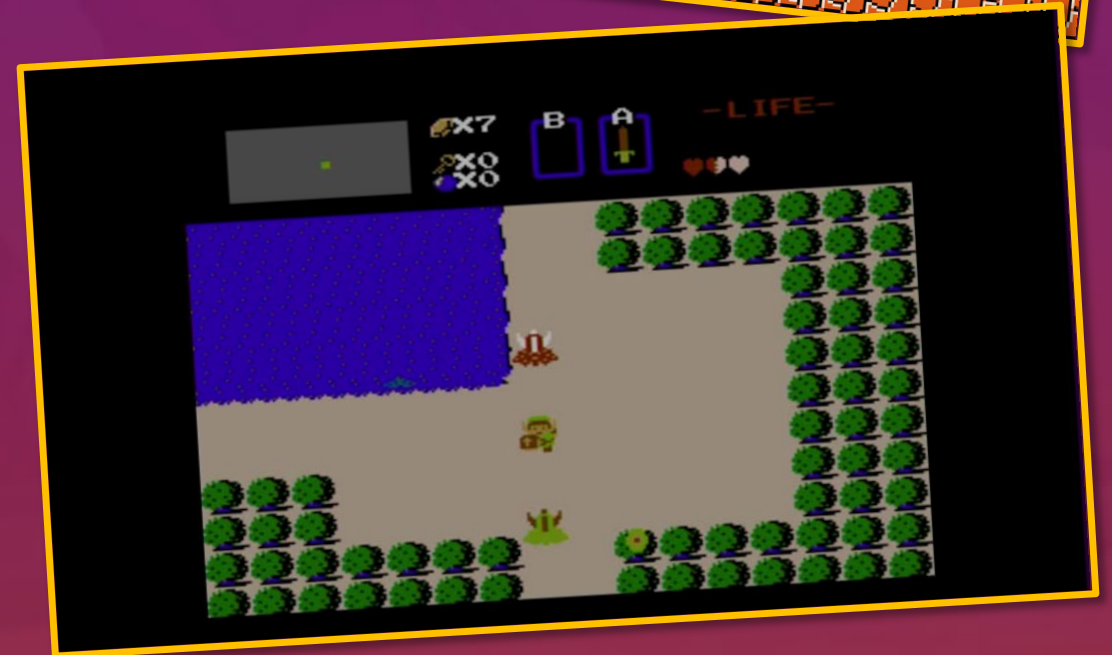
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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

The history of representation in video games **mirrors societal attitudes**. Early games like *Super Mario Bros.* and *The Legend of Zelda* reflected a narrow worldview, featuring male heroes saving distressed damsels.

While these classics hold a **nostalgic** place in the hearts of many, they also laid the groundwork for decades of **limited character archetypes**.^[3]





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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

As gaming grew into a multibillion-dollar industry, the lack of diversity became more glaring. Characters from minority groups often appeared as **stereotypes** rather than fully realized individuals.



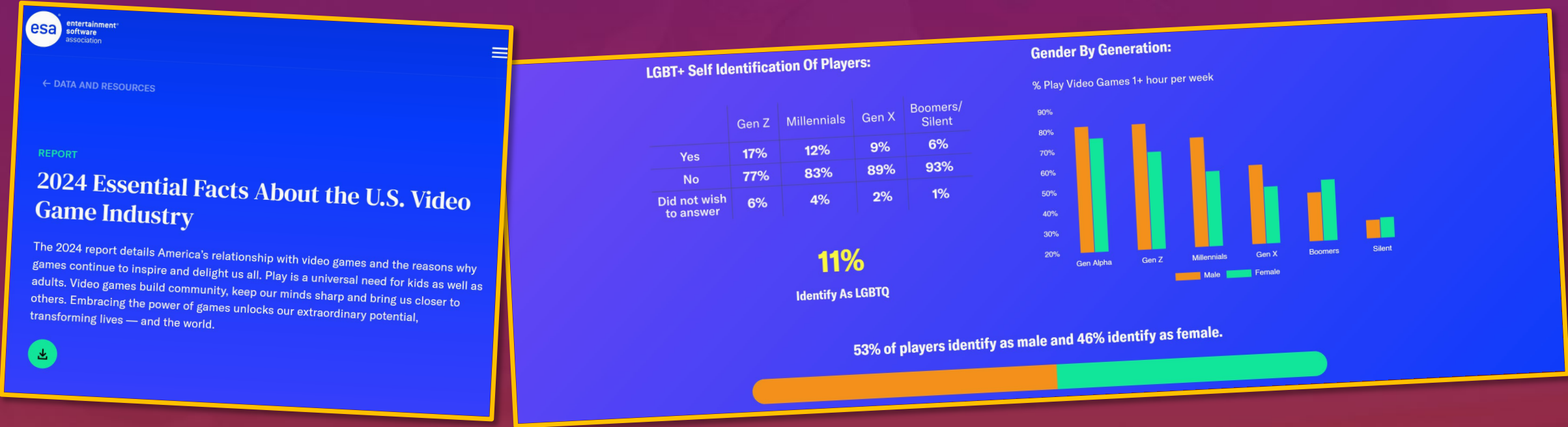
Black characters were frequently portrayed as **aggressive** or **thuggish**, **women** as overly **sexualized**, and **LGBTQ+** representation was virtually **nonexistent**. For players who didn't fit the mainstream mold, gaming often felt like a club they weren't invited to join. [3]



WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

However, the 2010s brought a shift. Developers began recognizing that their **audiences** were far more **diverse** than their games reflected.

Studies revealed that nearly **half of gamers were women**, and players from **all ethnicities** and **sexual orientations** actively engaged with the medium. Slowly but surely, representation began to evolve. [3]





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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

There's been an effort in recent years to make video games and gaming spaces **more inclusive**. While some gamers praise the **increasing focus on diversity**, others dismiss the effort, suggesting that it's **unnecessary**.

Like many topics around diversity, some argue that studios are **pandering to the will of a small minority** whose desires **don't reflect** those of most players. [1]

But what do players *actually* think?



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

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Like many topics around diversity, some argue that studios are **pandering to the will of a small minority** whose desires **don't reflect** those of most players. [1]

But what do players *actually* think?

As players of games yourselves, what do you think?



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

In 2024, the **University of Silicon Valley** created a **blog post** about the importance of inclusivity and diversity in gaming. In this, various **positive outcomes** were identified, such as: [2]

- ① Enhancing Creativity and Innovation
- ② Reflecting the Real World
- ③ Expanding the Audience
- ④ Promoting Positive Social Change
- ⑤ Fostering a Positive Community
- ⑥ Encouraging Diverse Talent



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

In 2024, the **University of Silicon Valley** created a **blog post** about the importance of inclusivity and diversity in gaming. In this, various **positive outcomes** were identified, such as:

① Enhancing Creativity and Innovation

Diversity in gaming brings a wealth of **perspectives**, **experiences**, and **ideas** that can lead to more **innovative** and **creative** games. When game development teams include people from different backgrounds, they can draw on a **wider range of cultural references** and **storytelling traditions**.

This results in games that are richer, more varied, and more engaging for a **broader** audience. [2]



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

In 2024, the **University of Silicon Valley** created a **blog post** about the importance of inclusivity and diversity in gaming. In this, various **positive outcomes** were identified, such as:

② Reflecting the Real World

Games that reflect the diverse world we live in can **resonate more deeply** with players.

Including characters of different **races**, **genders**, **sexual orientations**, and **abilities** allows players to see themselves represented in the games they play.

This representation can foster a sense of **belonging** and **validation**, making gaming a more welcoming and inclusive space for everyone. [2]



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

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③ Expanding the Audience

Diverse and inclusive games can attract a **wider audience**. By creating games that appeal to **different demographics**, game developers can tap into **new markets** and grow their player base.

This not only benefits the players but also boosts the industry's **profitability** and sustainability. [2]



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

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④ Promoting Positive Social Change

Inclusion in gaming can promote positive **social change** by challenging stereotypes and breaking down barriers. Games have the power to **influence attitudes and perceptions**, and inclusive games can help combat **prejudice** and **discrimination**.

By presenting diverse characters and stories, games can educate players and encourage **empathy** and **understanding**. [2]



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

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5 Fostering a Positive Community

An **inclusive** gaming community is a **positive** gaming community. When all players feel welcome and valued, it creates a more **supportive** and **respectful** environment.

This can lead to **better player interactions**, reduced **toxicity**, and a more **enjoyable gaming experience** for everyone. [2]



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

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6 Encouraging Diverse Talent

Promoting **diversity** and **inclusion** in gaming can also encourage more diverse talent to enter the industry. When aspiring game developers see that the industry **values and respects** diversity, they may be more motivated to **pursue careers** in gaming.

This can lead to a more diverse workforce, further enhancing **creativity** and **innovation** in the industry.

[2]



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WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

Representation in gaming isn't just a matter of **aesthetics**. It's a fundamental element that defines **how players connect** with the medium.

Seeing yourself reflected in the games you play can be a **powerful** experience, fostering a sense of **belonging** and **validation**.

When characters are **diverse** and thoughtfully crafted, they **resonate with audiences** on a deeper level, making the stories more **meaningful** and the gameplay more **immersive**. [3]



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Representation In Games

Representation In Games

Tokenism



TOKENISM

Another challenge is avoiding **tokenism**. Just including a **diverse character** isn't enough - representation must be **meaningful**. Characters need to be **complex, multidimensional**, and **central** to the story rather than relegated to side roles or included merely for **appearances**.

Tokenism can **undermine** the progress it aims to achieve, making it crucial for developers to approach representation with **care** and **respect**.

Moreover, **cultural nuances** add another layer of complexity. Gaming is a **global** industry, and what resonates with one audience might not work for another. Developers must navigate these differences thoughtfully to ensure that representation feels **authentic** rather than **forced**. [3]



TOKENISM

An interesting development in character creation is the emergence of various ‘**tests**’. These have evolved from **creative works** instead of being devised academically and **make observations on biases** contained in popular media.

While not strictly enforced, they do indicate trends that potentially limit the role of characters who are perceived to be minorities within race, gender or sexuality.

Two of these are presented as **Case Studies** in this session:

- **The Bechdel Test**
- **The Vito Russo Test**

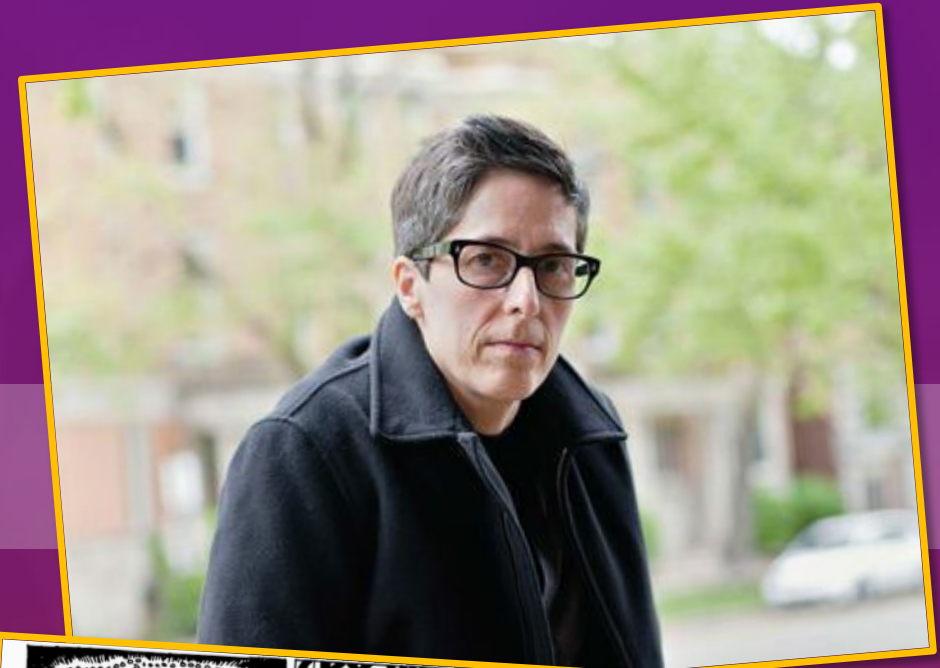


TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

Alison Bechdel is a **cartoonist** who rose to prominence with *Dykes to Watch Out For*, a popular comic strip.

It was in one 1985 instalment called “The Rule” that she **accidentally created** a huge new segment of media commentary. [4]





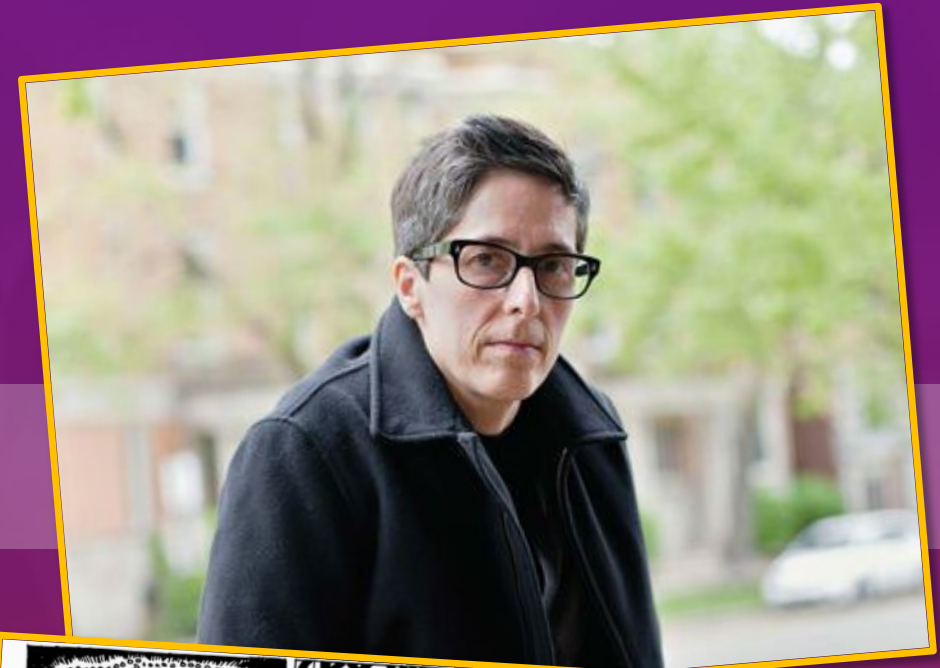
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TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

To pass the test, a film, game or TV episode has to satisfy **three points**. They must:





TOKENISM

To pass the test, a film, game or TV episode has to satisfy **three points. They must:**

- ## 1) Include at least two women





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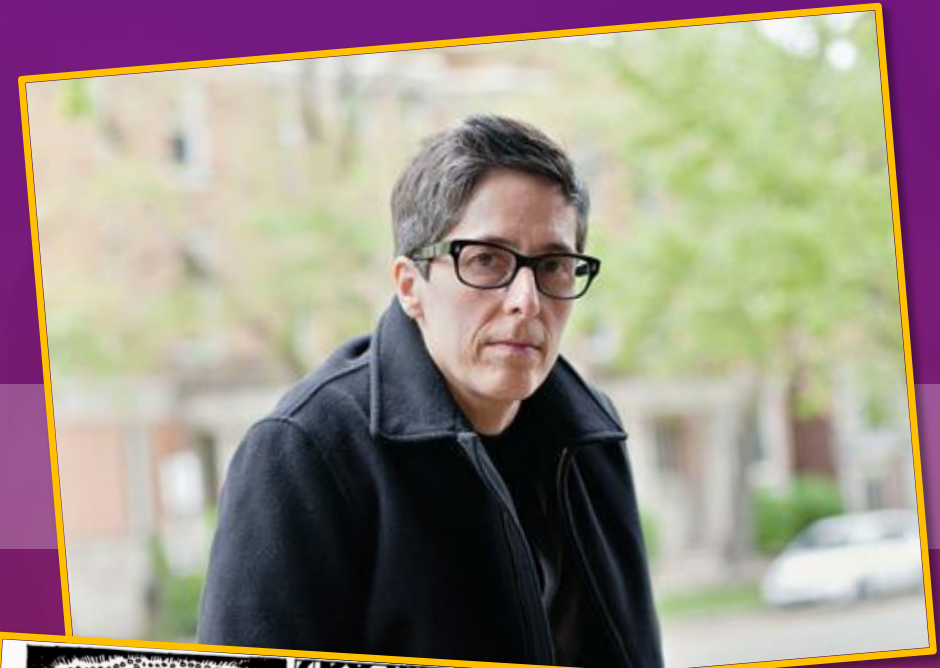
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TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

To pass the test, a film, game or TV episode has to satisfy **three points**. They must:

- 1) Include at least two women
- 2) Who have at least one conversation





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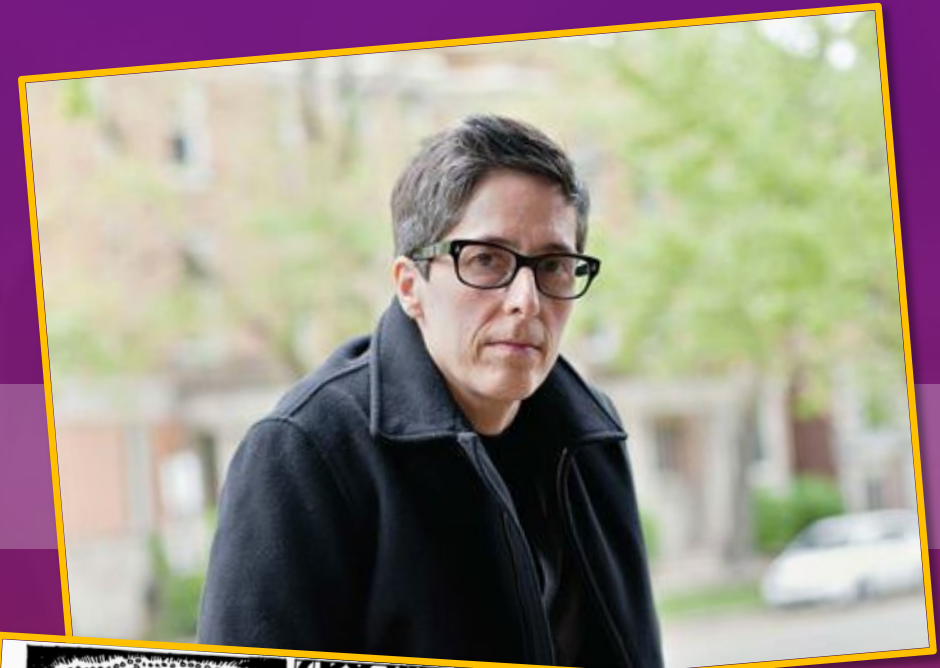
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TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

To pass the test, a film, game or TV episode has to satisfy **three points**. They must:

- 1) Include at least two women
- 2) Who have at least one conversation
- 3) About something *other* than a man



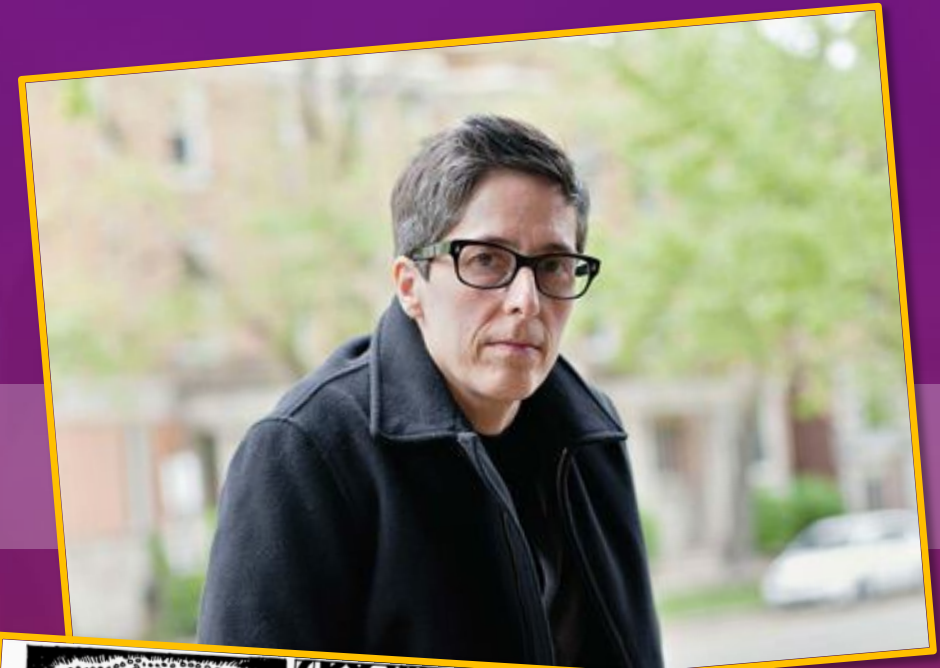


TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

It is important to note that the Bechdel Test no way determines whether or not the **female characters** that allow a movie to pass said test are “**strong**” or even “**good**” characters. [5]

Having two women speak in a movie, TV show or game **does not equal feminism**. The test simply brings to light issues of **gender bias** in pop culture.





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games



TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

Examples of Games that Pass the Bechdel Test: [6]

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

Lucy Stillman and Rebecca Crane continue talking to each other, exchange personal emails.

Bayonetta

Bayonetta and Jeanne talk endlessly about their nonsensical backstories.



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TOKENISM

The Bechdel Test

Examples of Games that Pass the Bechdel Test: [6]

Halo 2

Cortana and Miranda Keyes talk about another Halo.

Mirror's Edge

Faith Connors talks to Celeste and Kate Connors about a conspiracy throughout the whole game.





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TOKENISM

The Vito Russo Test

The **Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)** is a non-profit organization focused on **LGBTQ advocacy and cultural change** that was founded in **1985**.

Taking inspiration from the **Bechdel Test**, which examines the way female characters are portrayed and situated within a narrative, **GLAAD developed its own set of criteria** to analyze how LGBTQ characters are included within a film. [7]





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TOKENISM

The Vito Russo Test

The “**Vito Russo Test**” takes its name from celebrated film historian and **GLAAD co-founder Vito Russo**, whose book *The Celluloid Closet* remains a foundational analysis of LGBTQ portrayals in Hollywood film.

The intention is that these criteria can help guide filmmakers to create more **multidimensional** characters, while also providing a **barometer for representation** on a wide scale. [7]





TOKENISM

The Vito Russo Test

To pass the Vito Russo Test, the following must be true: [7]



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TOKENISM

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TOKENISM

The Vito Russo Test

To pass the Vito Russo Test, the following must be true: [7]

- 1) The film contains a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.
- 2) That character must not be solely or predominantly defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity. I.E. they are made up of the same sort of unique character traits commonly used to differentiate straight characters from one another.



TOKENISM

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- 1) The film contains a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.
- 2) That character must not be solely or predominantly defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity. I.E. they are made up of the same sort of unique character traits commonly used to differentiate straight characters from one another.
- 3) The LGBTQ character must be tied into the plot in such a way that their removal would have a significant effect. Meaning they are not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or (perhaps most commonly) set up a punchline. The character should “matter.”



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Representation In Games

Gender in Games



GENDER IN GAMES

Stereotypes are "a set of shared beliefs about the **personal characteristics**, usually **personality traits**, but also **behaviours**, of a **group of people**". They are shorthand for categorising groups of people, generate **judgement** about them and can be used to **legitimise hierarchy and inequality** between social groups.

Gender stereotypes are **beliefs about the attributes of women and men** that are reflected in the representations of video game characters. [8]

Gender representation in video games can be defined in one word: **stereotyped**. Men are **hyper masculine** and women are **hypersexualized**. [9]



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GENDER IN GAMES

Male characters are represented as **hyper masculine**: extremely muscly, **aggressive** and **violent**. They have to fit the “alpha male” description, which means they have to be strong and aggressive physically and in their sexuality.

Men fitting these **norms and standards set by society** are considered “**real men**”. Violence is seen as a **male attribute**. Additionally, “real men” cannot show any emotion and must always be **stoic**. [9]





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GENDER IN GAMES

In video games, this description of the **alpha male** is given through the representation of male characters, they often wear **extensive armour**, which sometimes is twice the size of their body, with **impressive** and generally **disproportionate** weapons.

However, male stereotypes are often viewed in a **better light** than female stereotypes. [9]





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GENDER IN GAMES

Contrary to men, that are considered violent and strong, **women** are represented as **fragile** and **hypersexualized**. Their **clothes** bring attention to their bodies rather than their **personalities**.

They are often **voluptuous**, **thin** and their clothes leave them “partially nude and ill-fitted for the tasks they have to accomplish”. Many female characters have **accentuated bodies** and wear clothes such as **open backs** or **swimsuits**. [9]



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GENDER IN GAMES

However, even though female characters are **hypersexualized**, they are **not necessarily incompetent** or submitted to their **male counterparts**.



Apart from their appearance, most characters embody “characteristics borrowed from male norms (for example **intelligence and strength**)” and women seem as **capable** as men. [9]



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GENDER IN GAMES

A good example of **meaningful female representation**, which easily could have been just another male character, is in ***Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice***.

Senua isn't written and designed specifically as a female character; **she just happens to be female**. This is an extremely important distinction: in Senua's story, there is nothing **gender-specific** in her character arc.
[10]





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Similarly, **Aloy** from Sony's Horizon: Zero Dawn franchise is a **smart, resourceful warrior**, capable of fighting just as well as (and better than) many men. She just happens not to be one. [10]





GENDER IN GAMES

The video game industry has inherited a **gendered division of labour** by employing mostly men, which affects the **content**.

Historically, the **video game industry** and the **IT industry** are deeply connected. In its early days, the IT industry mainly hired women for “jobs that required limited technical skills, offered **low salaries** and with **limited possibilities of promotion** to higher positions compared to their male colleagues”.

The video game industry mainly stemmed from the IT industry, so a **gap between genders** persisted in **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics** (STEM). Women faced a glass ceiling that prevented them from getting a better job solely based on their gender. [10]



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GENDER IN GAMES

This same logic applies today: women still are a **minority** in IT in **higher education**.

As the video game industry is a **male-dominated environment**, most women working in it **align** on gender norms or masculine norms to **succeed**.

Even if the number of **female players has increased** through the years, the number of female employees working in the video game industry has only **slightly** increased, to reach around **20%** in 2019. [10]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games



GENDER IN GAMES

This **lack of equality** in video games creative development has a clear **impact on the content**. Indeed, the absence of feminine representation throughout the creative process leads to the creation of **negative** and **stereotypical** female characters.

One of the best examples is **Lara Croft**, the famous big-breasted heroine of **Tomb Raider** in 1996. At first it was a **joke between colleagues**, but the image stuck and is now a **recognizable trait** of the heroine. [10]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

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GENDER IN GAMES

Video game content suffers from a **lack of perspective** and often falls into **male gazing**. The male gaze was a concept introduced for the first time in 1975 by **Laura Mulvey**.

It is the way an often **white, masculine** and **heterosexual** man's vision **influences the content of a media** and transforms it into an object of **desire**. Women are therefore often **sexualized** and considered as **accessories**. [10]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

GENDER IN GAMES

In recent years games development has seen **changes**, and although the **stereotypes** for both male and female representation are still clear to see, developments have been made in player-directed character creation and **more diversity** in design.

Additionally, with a more **diverse customer base** than ever before, games are no longer being made purely by – or for – white men and/or boys. However, it is generally thought there is still **more that could be done**. [10]





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GENDER IN GAMES

Consider recent games like *Hogwarts: Legacy*, which trumpeted the flexibility of its **character design** when it launched in January 2023.

With **players** able to **choose their own** body type, voice, features and even whether they were a witch or wizard, the gamers promised that people from across the spectrum, including trans people, would be able to see **themselves** in the game. [10]



Eirika, Endwalker

@EirikaEmblem · Follow



They really named the trans woman in Hogwarts Legacy
Sirona

SIRona

And her last name is Ryan

"Ah yes I am noted transwoman Male McMan"

7:51 PM · Feb 6, 2023



59



Reply



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GENDER IN GAMES

However, this in itself poses a problem by **putting an onus on the player to create that character**, instead of including a fully fleshed-out trans character in the game itself.

When the game launched, many **social media** users pointed out that the only person who fits that description is **never explicitly labelled as trans**: a woman called Sirona (to add to the drama, the name itself also came in for criticism for including the word '**sir**'). [10]



Eirika, Endwalker

@EirikaEmblem · Follow



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GENDER IN GAMES

Examples of **Trans representation** in modern AAA video games is almost non-existent.

One exception is from **BioWare**, when it introduced players to **Krem** from **Dragon Age: Inquisition**. Krem holds a high position in a mercenary company and has been hailed as one of the best trans video game characters so far.

He's non-playable, but the **detailed backstory** is what makes Krem exceptional in terms of good representation. [10]





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Despite being labelled as **female** at birth, Krem joined an **all-male military** so he could keep his family out of poverty.

Because this is a **criminal offence** in Dragon Age, he was forced to flee when his identity was discovered, but was **rescued** by the mercenary group he heads up now.

This is an example of a character who **just happens to be openly trans** and his experience is incredibly **human** – just like *The Last of Us 2*, which introduced gamers to **Lev**, another trans male whose identity was accepted by the people around him. [10]





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Representation In Games

Sexuality In Games



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SEXUALITY IN GAMES

Despite its universal relevance to human nature, our sensibilities often interpret sex and sexuality as an **uncomfortable** subject.

The games industry is certainly no stranger to this phenomenon, and it has yet to fully embrace sex as a source of **narrative** or **mechanical significance**. [11]





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SEXUALITY IN GAMES

There have been many attempts, but whenever sex is mentioned in relation to a video game, the general assumption is that it must be either **pornography** or **parody**. [11]





SEXUALITY IN GAMES

As with other forms of representation, **sexuality** is another underdeveloped area in game design.

It could be argued that this is more of a **niche**, and that certain games do not include this as it is not integral to the **gameplay**. That said, players do feel more **invested** in any experience that allows them to personalise and represent their own **lifestyles and beliefs** in a digital world.

Character-driven games, particularly those with **creation tools**, are more likely to contain these features, though sexual representation can also be observed in a cast of **non-player characters** in some games. This helps promote a feeling of acceptance and diverse environments with players of **all sexual preferences**.



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Nintendo says 'No' to gay game characters

8 May 2014



The game features a cast of "Mii" characters or personalised avatars of real players

Nintendo has said it will not allow gamers to play as gay characters in its life-simulation game Tomodachi Life.

A fan had launched a social media campaign urging Nintendo to allow same-sex relationships between characters in the game - modelled after real people.

Nintendo said it "never intended to make any form of social commentary" with the launch of the game.

Tomodachi Life has been a big hit in Japan and the firm is set to launch the

SEXUALITY IN GAMES

In 2014, Nintendo's *Tomodachi Life* was criticised by some players after it was revealed that the game only allowed **heteronormative** relationships.

A fan had launched a **social media campaign** urging Nintendo to allow **same-sex relationships** between characters in the game. [12]



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SEXUALITY IN GAMES

Nintendo of America Inc, said in a statement that "The relationship options in the game represent a playful alternate world rather than a real-life simulation." and that no form of social commentary was intended. [12]

Nevertheless, some players felt that they were being **excluded** by this decision, which would have impacted on some consumers opinions of the game – and also its publisher.



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SEXUALITY IN GAMES

The Sims series has been a consistent example of **sexual representation in games** since its first iteration in 2000.

A programming **mistake** in an early version of the game accidentally included same-sex relationships – which were originally ruled out as these were seen to be **too controversial for game content** in the late 1990s - and this was not discovered until the game was demonstrated at the **E3 expo**.





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The public response to this feature contributed to the **popularity** of the franchise, as it allowed players an extra level of customization. Now **they could engage in romantic pursuits of their choosing** as well as visual customization for their virtual personalities.

This feature has been maintained in all subsequent versions of The Sims, with 2014's Sims 4 also including an ability to officially define your character's **sexual orientation**.



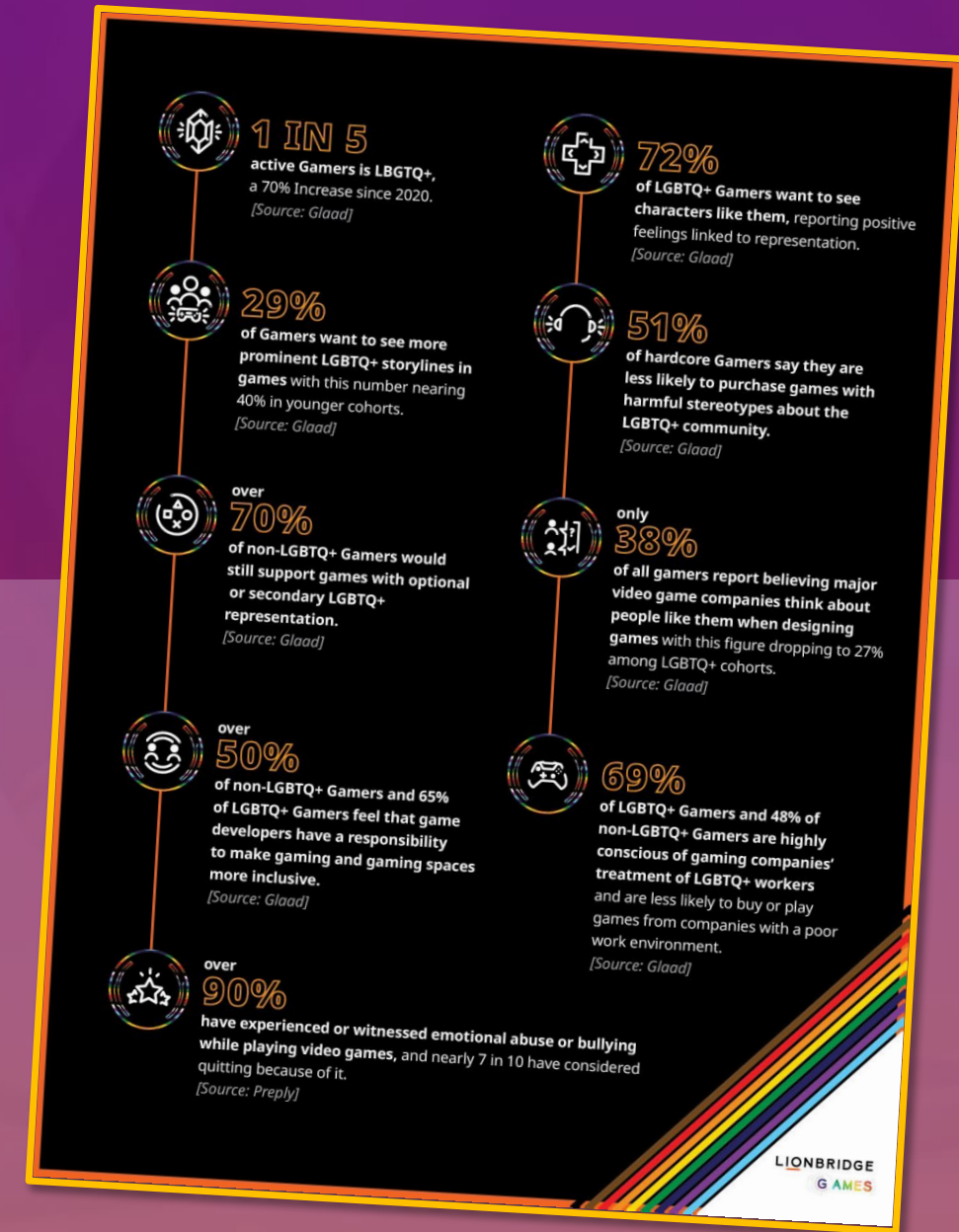


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SEXUALITY IN GAMES

Information on LGBTQ+ from **Lionbridge Games** based on data obtained from GLAAD and Preply in 2024 makes claims that: [1]





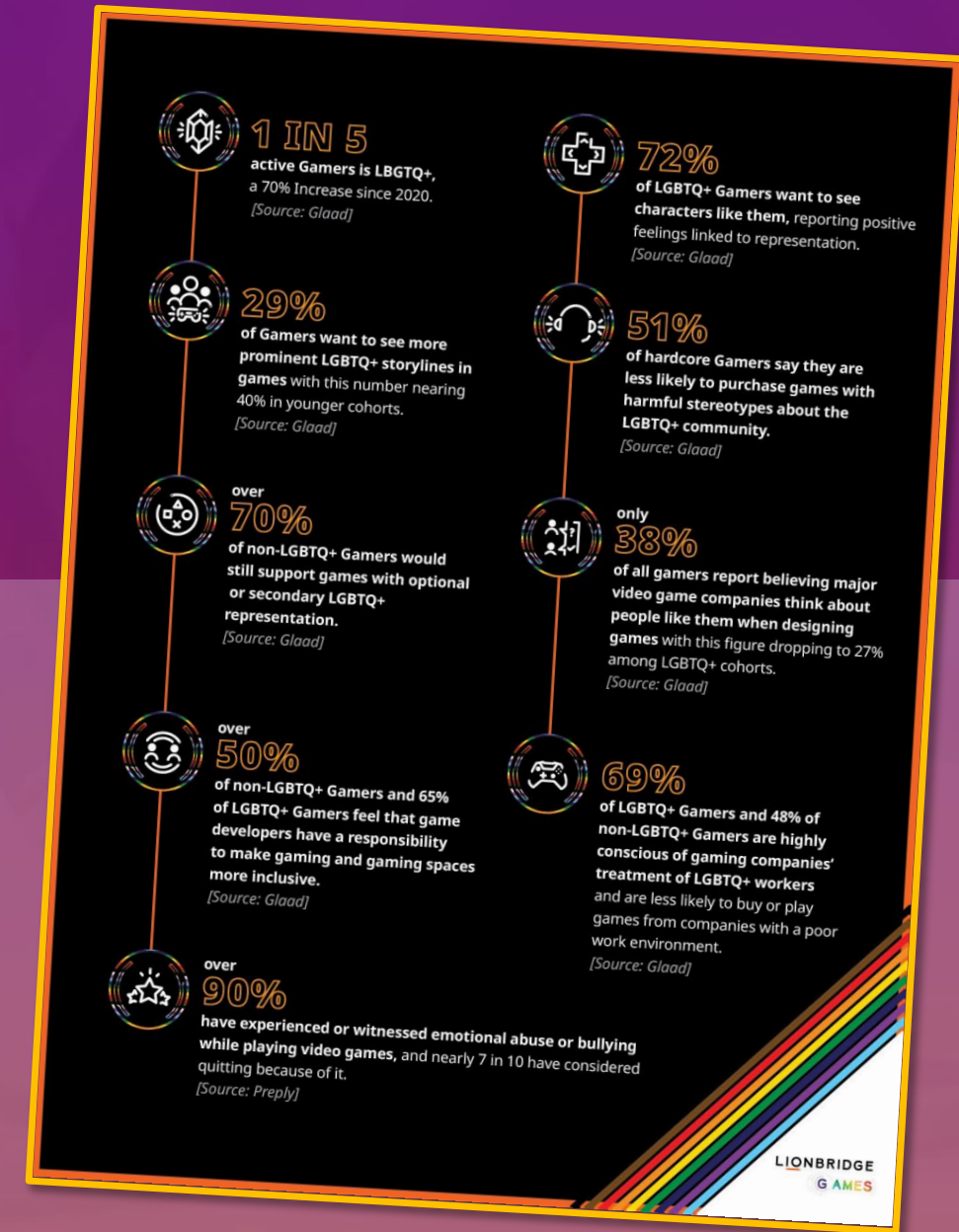
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SEXUALITY IN GAMES

Information on LGBTQ+ from **Lionbridge Games** based on data obtained from GLAAD and Preply in 2024 makes claims that: [1]

- ▶ 1 in 5 gamers is LGBTQ+ - a 70% increase since 2020





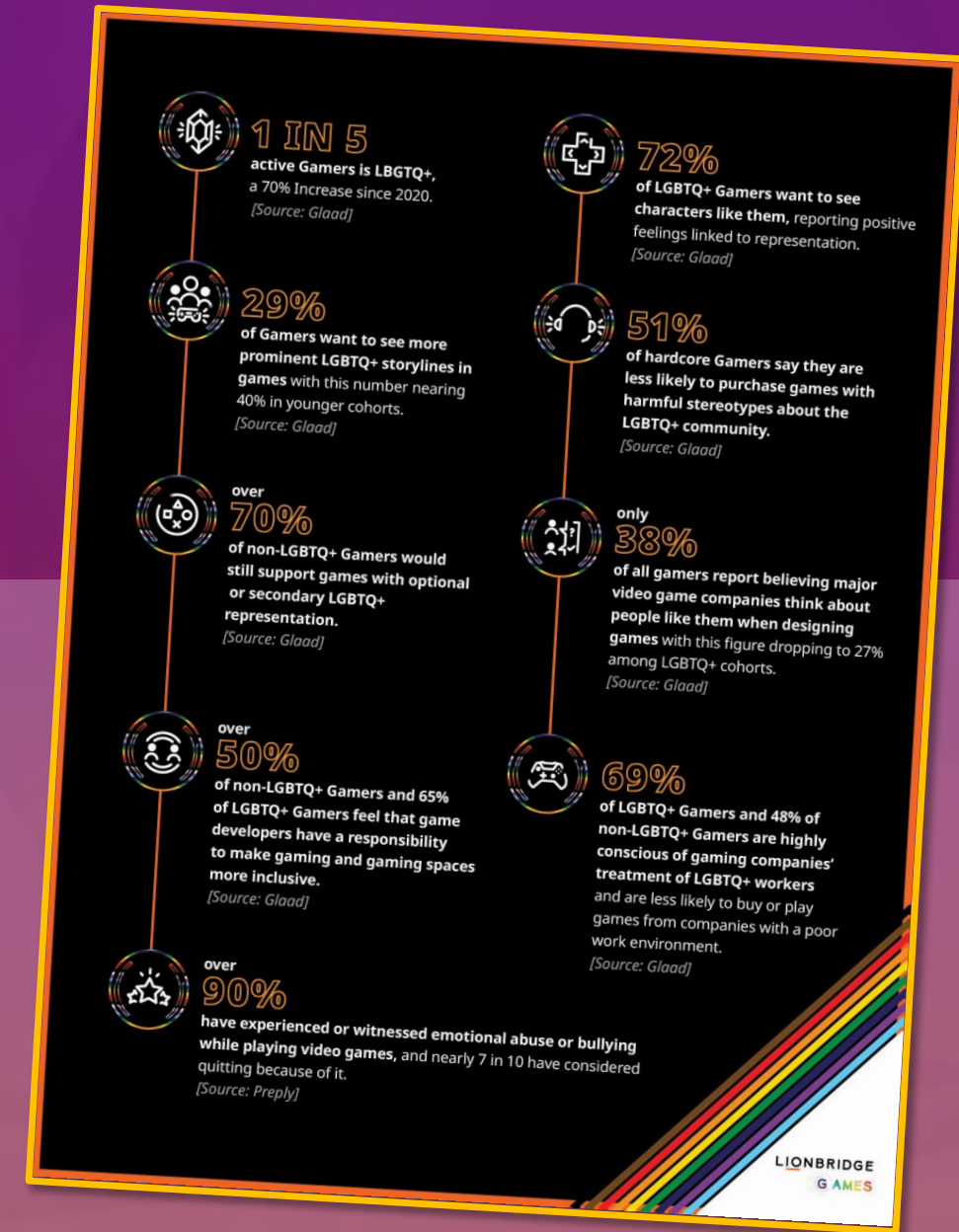
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Representation In Games

SEXUALITY IN GAMES

Information on LGBTQ+ from **Lionbridge Games** based on data obtained from GLAAD and Preply in 2024 makes claims that: [1]

- ▶ 1 in 5 gamers is LGBTQ+ - a 70% increase since 2020
- ▶ 29% of gamers want to see more prominent LGBTQ+ storylines in games, with this number nearing 40% in younger cohorts





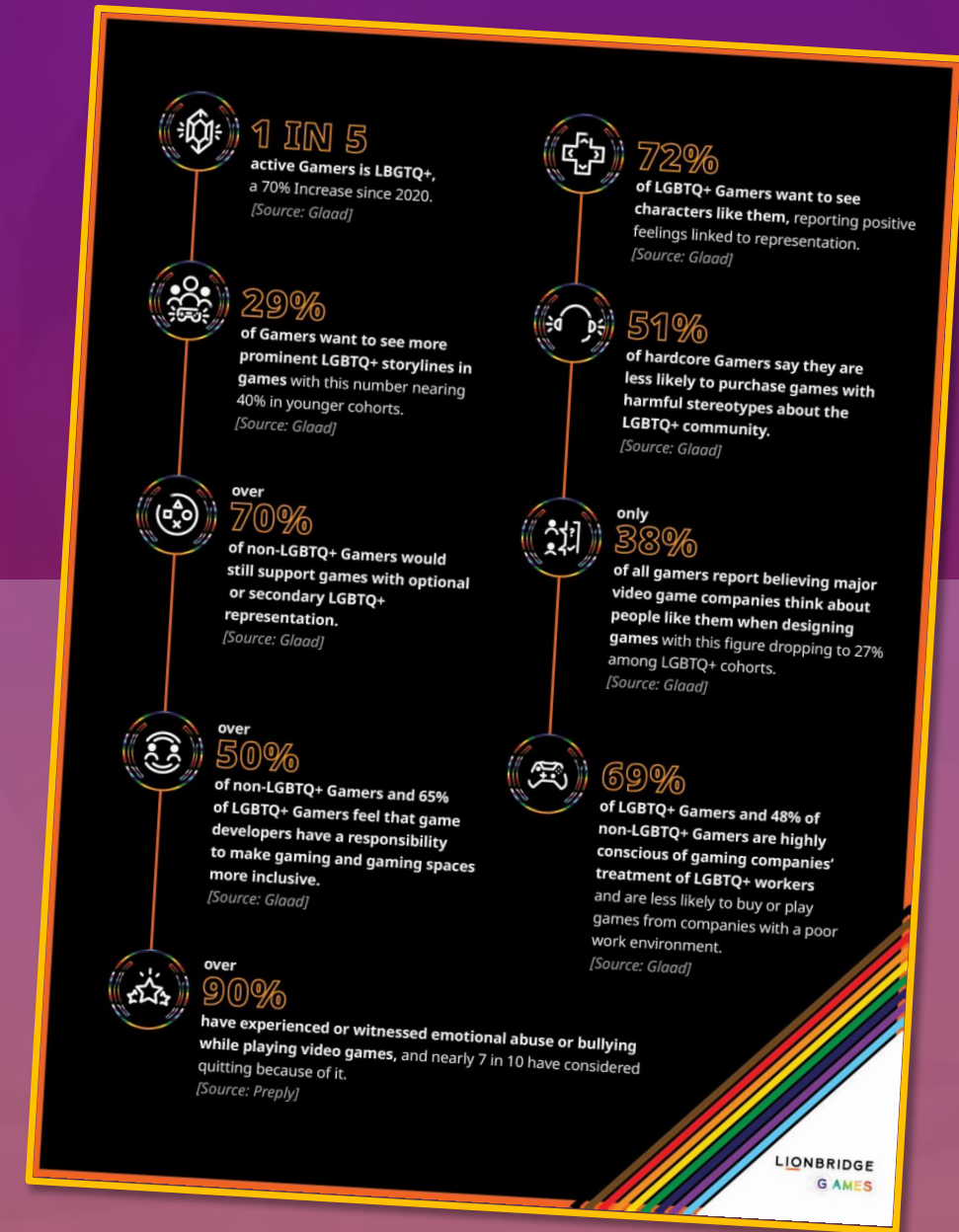
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- ▶ Over 70% of LGBTQ+ gamers would still support games with optional or secondary LGBTQ+ representation





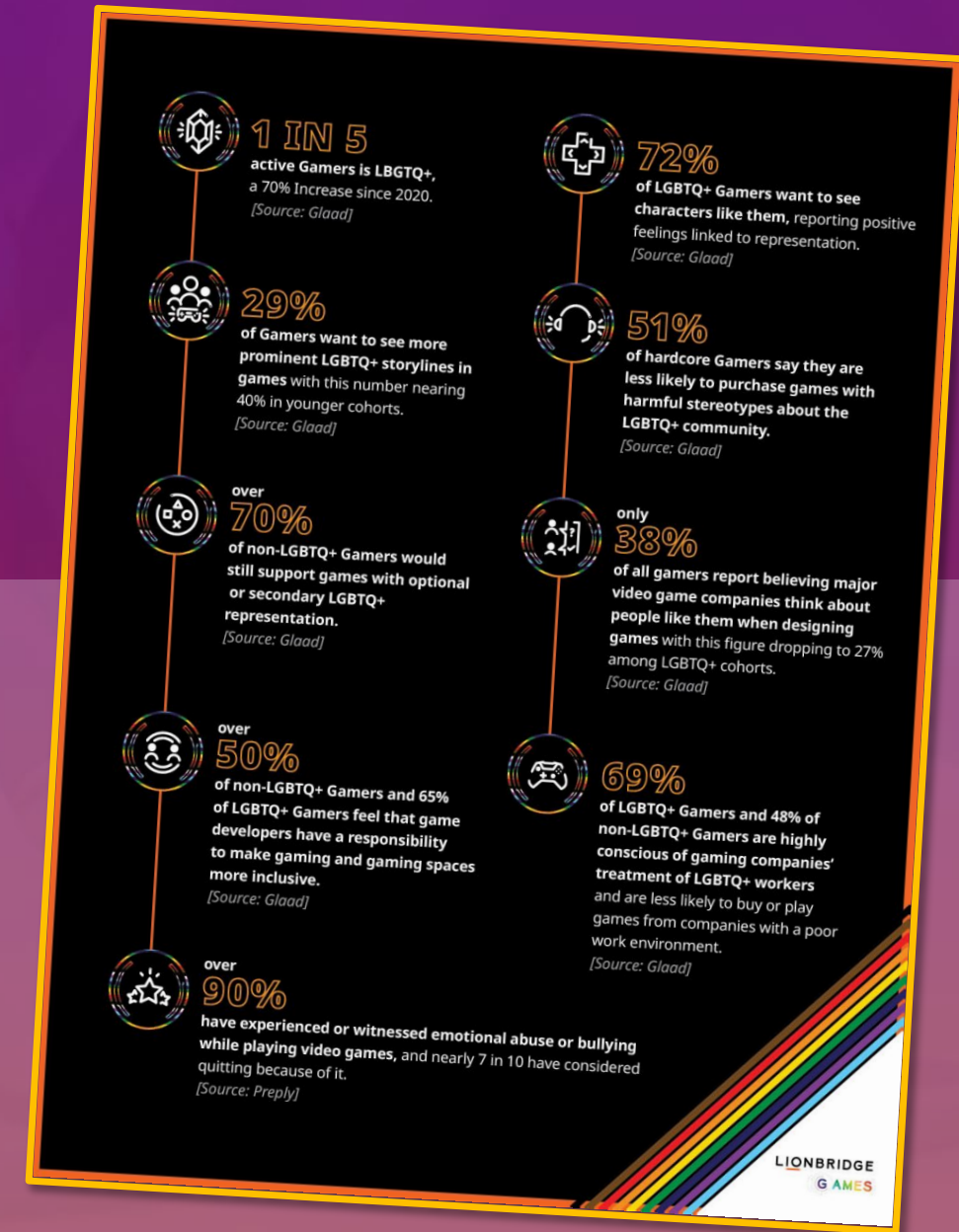
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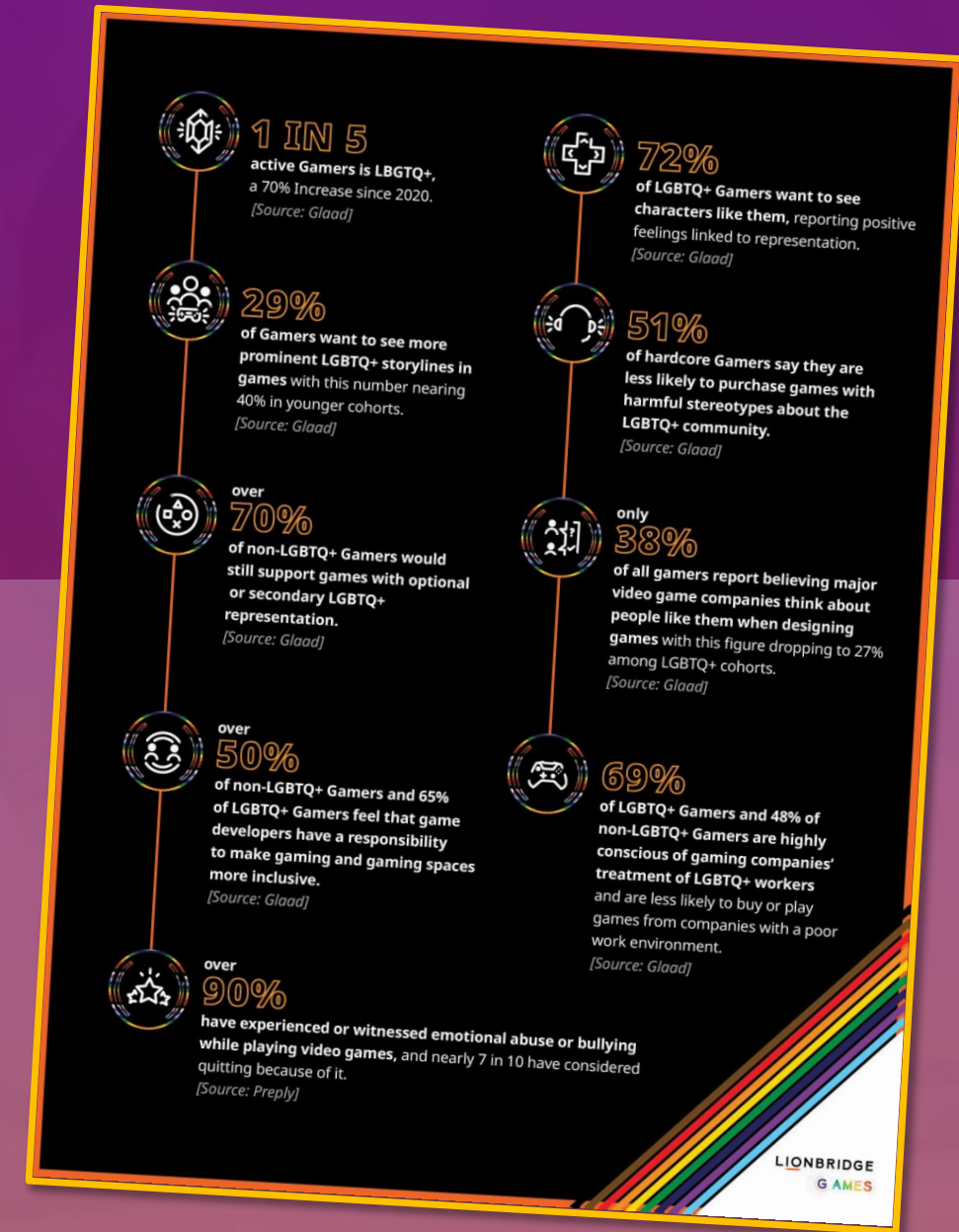
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- ▶ Over 90% have experienced or witnessed emotional abuse or bullying while playing video games and nearly 7 out of 10 have considered quitting because of this





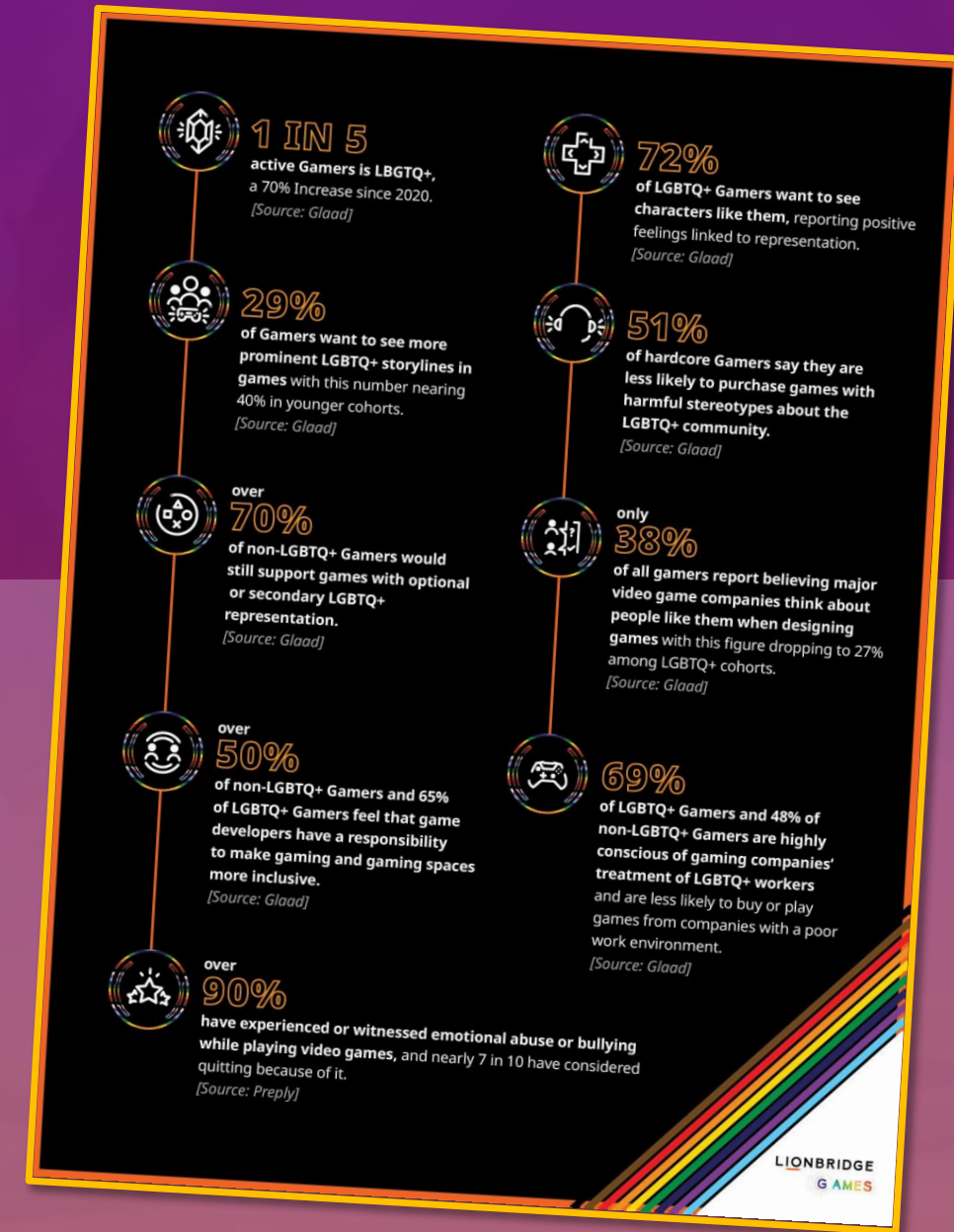
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- ▶ Over 90% have experienced or witnessed emotional abuse or bullying while playing video games and nearly 7 out of 10 have considered quitting because of this
- ▶ 72% of LGBTQ+ gamers want to see characters like them reporting positive feelings linked to representation





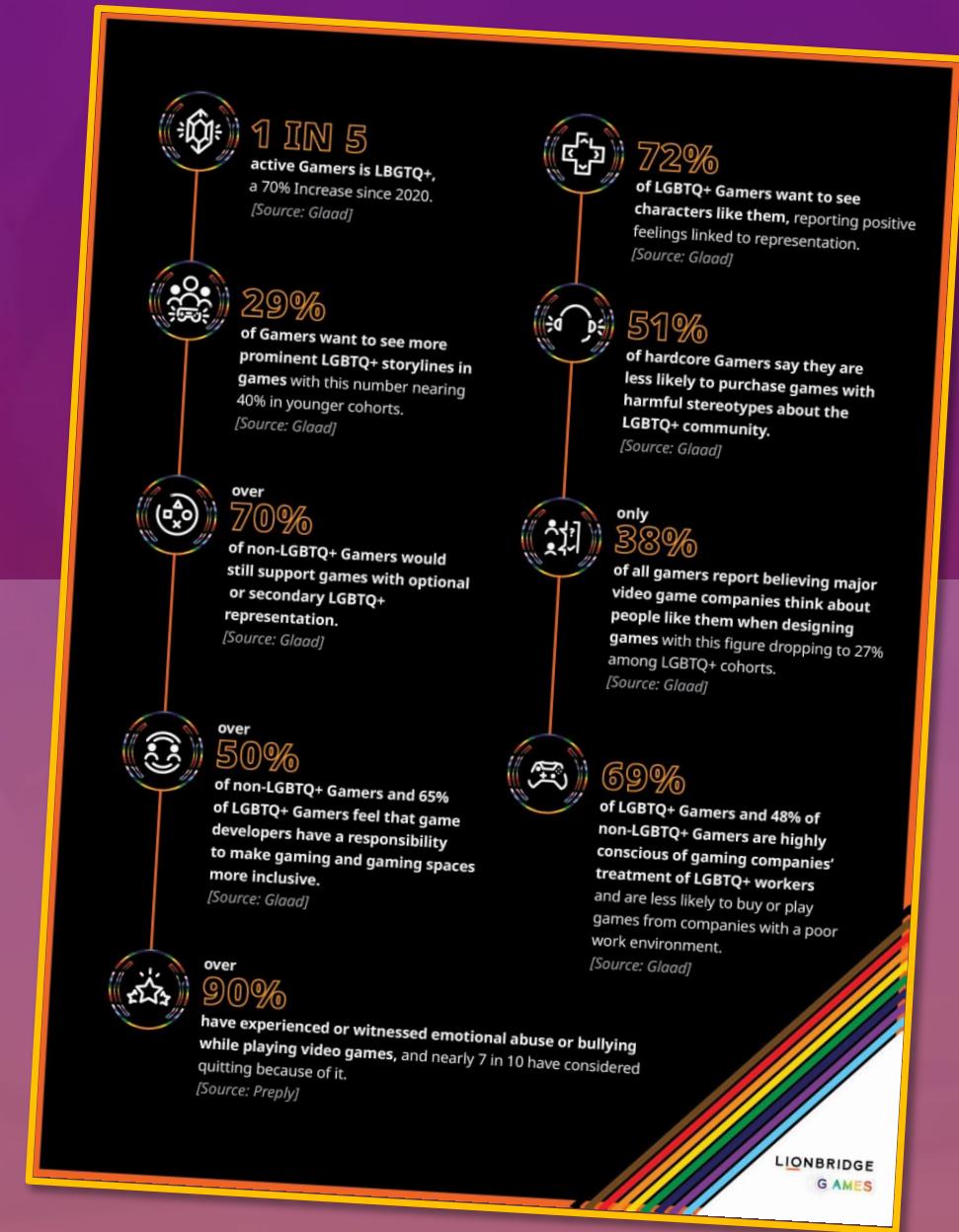
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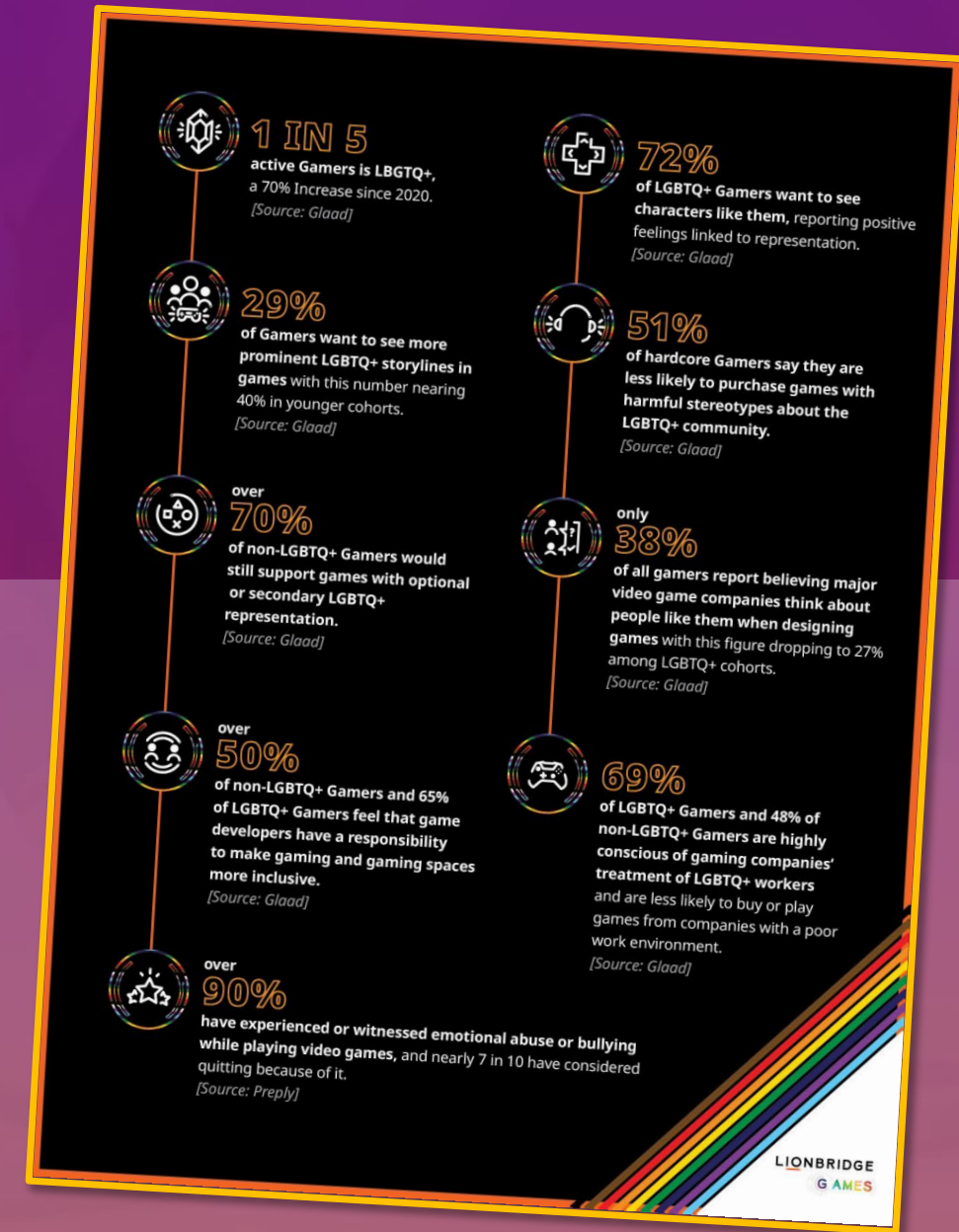
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- ▶ 51% of hardcore gamers say they are less likely to purchase games with harmful stereotypes about the LGBTQ+ community
- ▶ Only 38% of all gamers report believing major video game companies think about people like them when designing games with this figure dropping to 27% among LGBTQ+ cohorts





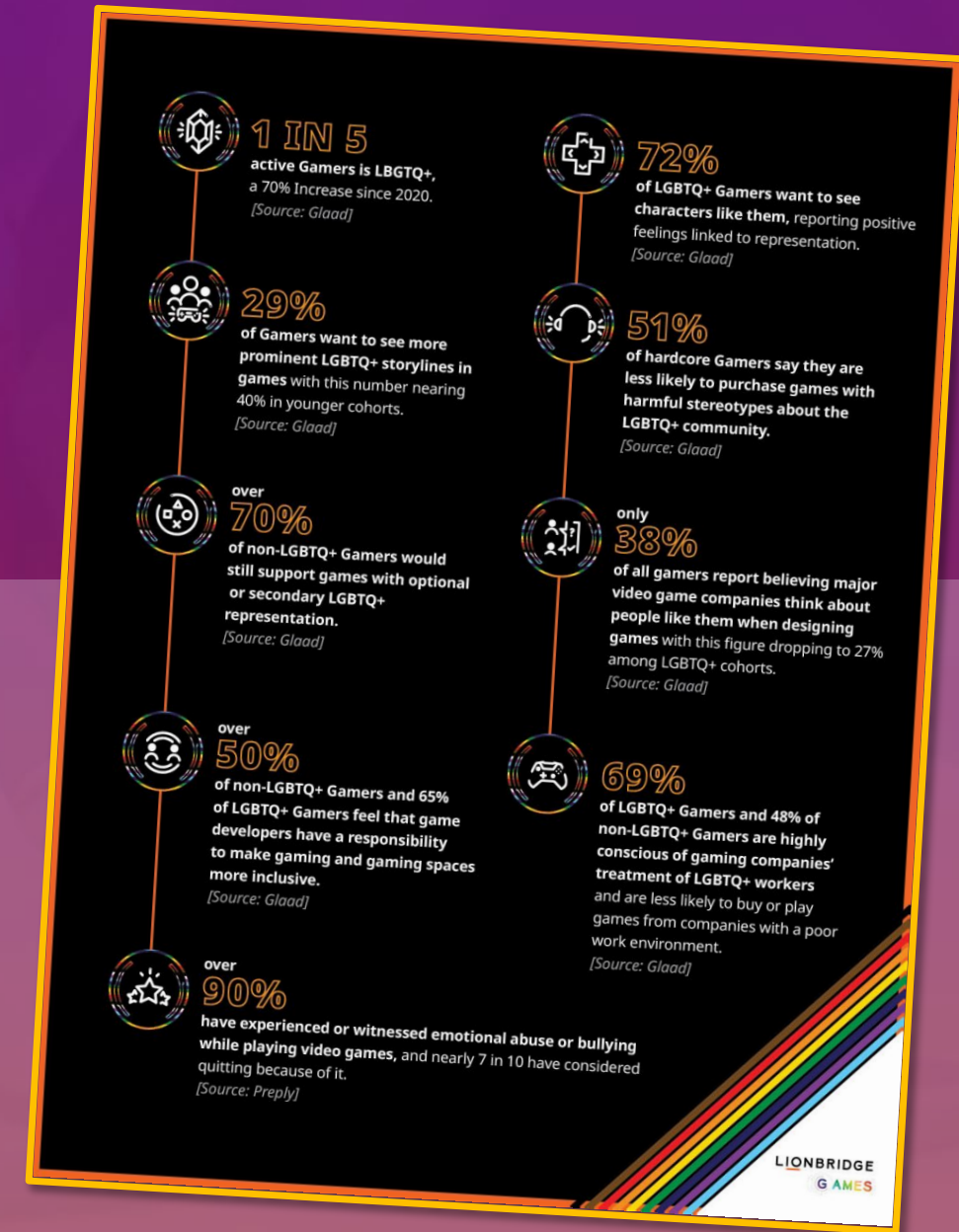
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Representation In Games

SEXUALITY IN GAMES

Information on LGBTQ+ from **Lionbridge Games** based on data obtained from GLAAD and Preply in 2024 makes claims that: [1]

- ▶ 69% of LGBTQ+ gamers and 48% of non LGBTQ+ gamers are highly conscious of gaming companies treatment of LGBTQ+ workers and are less likely to buy games from companies with a poor work environment





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

Representation In Games

Cultural Representation



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Race and ethnicity representation in gaming is a complex issue where the industry's **intent** often clashes with **execution**.

Characters of **diverse backgrounds** are not always depicted with the **depth and authenticity** they deserve, leading to a critical examination of diversity in gaming.

While diversity and representation in gaming have become **focal points** for developers, the true measure of success lies in the nuanced portrayal of characters beyond **superficial traits**, embracing the full breadth of cultural and racial identities. [13]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Games have often fallen into the trap of perpetuating **racial** and **ethnic stereotypes**, with characters reduced to **caricatures**. These portrayals are harmful and also diminish the gaming experience, undermining the potential for diversity in gaming.

The industry must move away from these **reductive depictions**, recognising the power of games to shape societal views and the importance of authentic representation. [13]





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

The gaming industry is **increasingly aware** of the need for cultural sensitivity, understanding that diversity in gaming extends beyond mere inclusion to **meaningful** representation.

Diversity and representation in gaming call for a delicate balance between **portraying varied cultures authentically** and respecting their **nuances**.

Efforts to navigate this landscape involve **collaborative storytelling**, comprehensive **research**, and community **engagement**, ensuring that games are culturally diverse and respectful. This shift towards cultural sensitivity represents a **maturing** of the industry and a recognition of its global impact. [13]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Cultural representation in games is crucial, as it validates the **identities** of diverse players and enriches the gaming experience.

Ensuring diversity in gaming means going **beyond tokenism** to embrace the **narratives** and **aesthetics** of different cultures, allowing players to see their **heritage and traditions** reflected and respected on a global stage, thereby fostering a sense of **pride** and **connection**. [13]





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games



1979 Revolution: Black Friday, iNK Stories, 2016 (1:31) [14]



CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Successfully navigating cultural nuances and **avoiding stereotypes** is a significant step towards **authentic diversity** and representation in gaming.

This requires diligent **research**, **sensitivity to historical contexts**, and a willingness to **engage** with culture experts. Such careful portrayal prevents the perpetuation of **harmful clichés** and promotes a gaming industry that celebrates **cultural diversity**. [13]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

To bolster **diversity and representation** in gaming, the industry is taking strides to **enrich** racial diversity among characters. Studios are consulting **cultural experts** and sourcing narratives from those with **lived experiences**.

This shift towards inclusivity aims to foster a gaming universe that is reflective of the world's diversity, promoting **equal representation** and fostering a **broad**er, more **engaged** gaming community.



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

Representation In Games

Suggestions for Greater Inclusivity



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

Accessibility for underrepresented groups remains a significant barrier, **limiting** both participation and portrayal.

Addressing these issues demands **actionable strategies**, a shift in industry **mindset**, and a commitment to systemic change to pave the way for a truly diverse gaming ecosystem. [?]





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

The **lack of diversity** in gaming development teams is a critical barrier. Predominantly homogenous groups, due to their own cultural bias, may lead to a **narrow portrayal** of characters and experiences, diminishing the **global relatability** of games.

Diverse development teams can infuse various perspectives, fostering a **richer narrative tapestry** and enhancing the relevance and reach of gaming content to a broader audience. [?]





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

Confronting the challenges to diversity in gaming, the industry has seen initiatives like **inclusive hiring practices** and **mentorship programs** for underrepresented developers.

Real-world solutions also involve **community-led critiques** prompting studios to revisit narratives, ensuring **broader representation** in gaming that aligns with diverse audiences' realities. [?]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

Collaborative approaches with cultural communities are key to ensuring authenticity in diversity and representation in gaming. Direct **engagement** with these communities in the development process leads to **genuine depictions** and helps avoid **cultural appropriation**.

This collaboration fosters **trust** and signals the industry's commitment to representing cultures with the **depth** and **respect** they deserve. [?]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

Greater diversity in gaming profoundly impacts **player experience** at all levels.

When gamers **see themselves** mirrored in characters and stories, the connection **deepens**, allowing for a more **authentic** and **immersive** experience. [?]





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

This representation nurtures **a sense of belonging** and validates the experiences of a diverse player base, further cementing gaming's role as a **universally resonant form of entertainment** thereby triggering organic growth in the industry. [?]





GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

Diversity and representation in gaming hold substantial **social and cultural weight**. Diverse gaming content acts as a springboard for **community dialogue** and understanding, challenging **stereotypes** and fostering **empathy**.

By presenting many perspectives, games become more than leisure. They emerge as **cultural artefacts** that reflect and shape **societal values**, advancing a more inclusive global culture. [?]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INCLUSIVITY

Embracing diversity in the gaming industry **fuels creativity** and sparks **innovation**. A diverse array of voices and perspectives leads to **fresh ideas** and untapped storytelling potential, driving the industry forward.

This infusion of varied experiences breeds **original content** and inspires novel gameplay mechanics, expanding the boundaries of what games can be and can achieve. [?]



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

Representation In Games

Examples



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Representation In Games

EXAMPLES

Gender & Sexual Representation:

One Night, Hot Springs

(npckc, 2018)

(Steam Library)

Sims 4

(Maxis/EA, 2014)

(Epic Launcher)

Cultural Representation:

1979 Revolution: Black Friday
(Demo)

(iNK Stories, 2016)

(Steam Library)



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