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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Multiplayer & Social Experiences



GAMES FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Multiplayer and Social Experiences

Multiplayer & Social Experiences

Lecture Contents

- 1 Overview**
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Overview



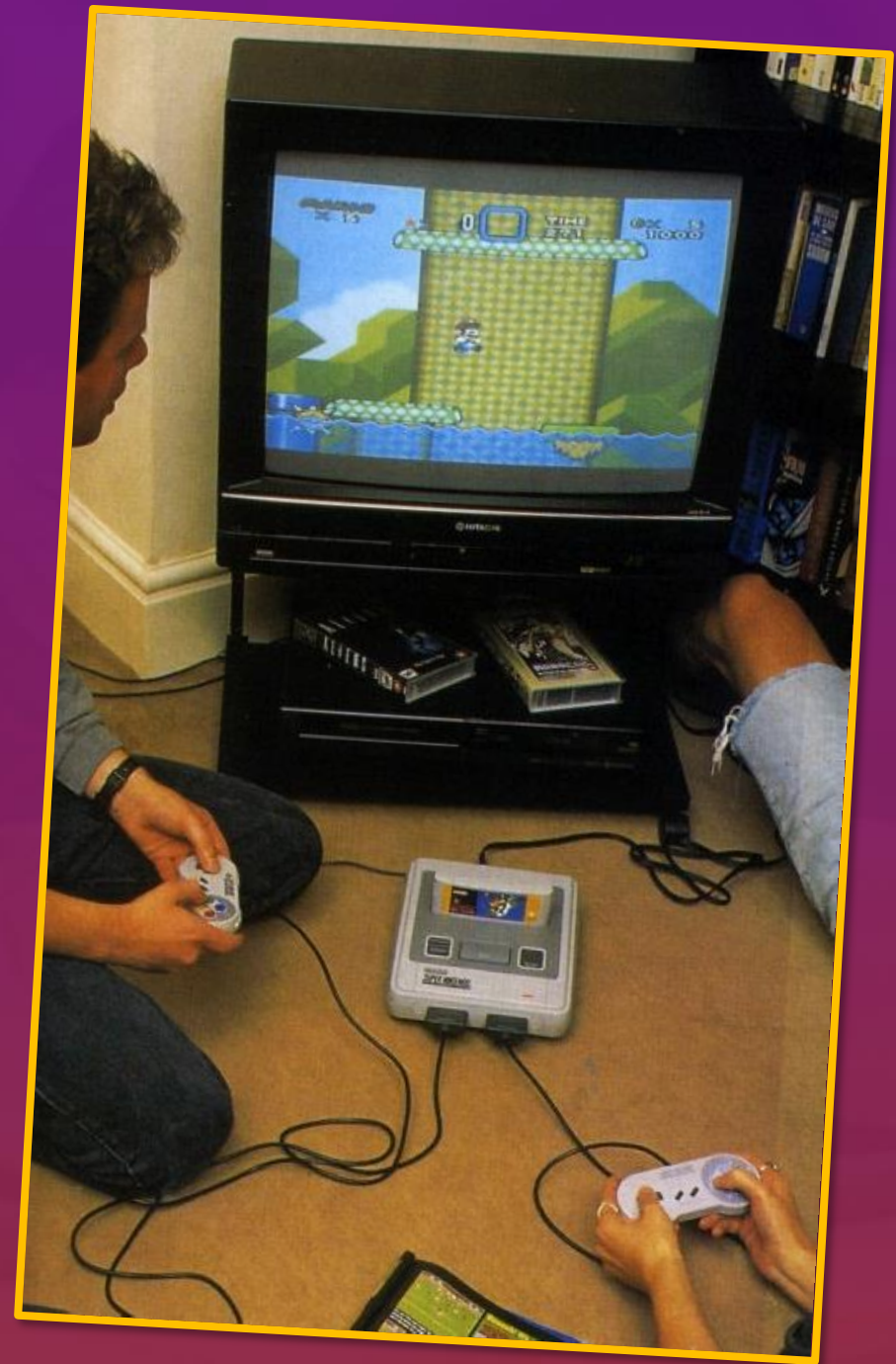
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Multiplayer & Social Experiences

OVERVIEW

In the world of videogames, multiplayer gaming stands as a cornerstone that has revolutionized how we play and interact.

From the early days of **local two-player games** to the **massive online arenas** of today, multiplayer gaming has consistently evolved, offering new ways for players to connect, compete, and collaborate. [1]





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OVERVIEW

A multiplayer video game can be played by **more than one person** in the same game environment simultaneously – either locally, on the same computing system, or through networks shared by multiple systems.

Online multiplayer refers to **games played over the internet** and networked multiplayer refers to **games played on different systems through a local area network (LAN)**. In a multiplayer game, players or teams of players can compete with each other or cooperate toward a common goal.

Multiplayer games involve a **social element** not found in single-player titles and can also offer a **higher level of challenge** as compared to playing against AI. [2]



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Multiplayer & Social Experiences

OVERVIEW

Modern multiplayer games often share certain **common characteristics**, such as [2]:

- Various **game modes**, which may involve **competition** (PvP) or **cooperation** (PvE)
- A **progression system** with **unlockable content** for players to earn
- A steady stream of **new content** (this also applies to **live-service** games in general)
- A system by which players can **communicate** using voice and/or text
- A **dedicated server** or a **single terminal** hosting the game



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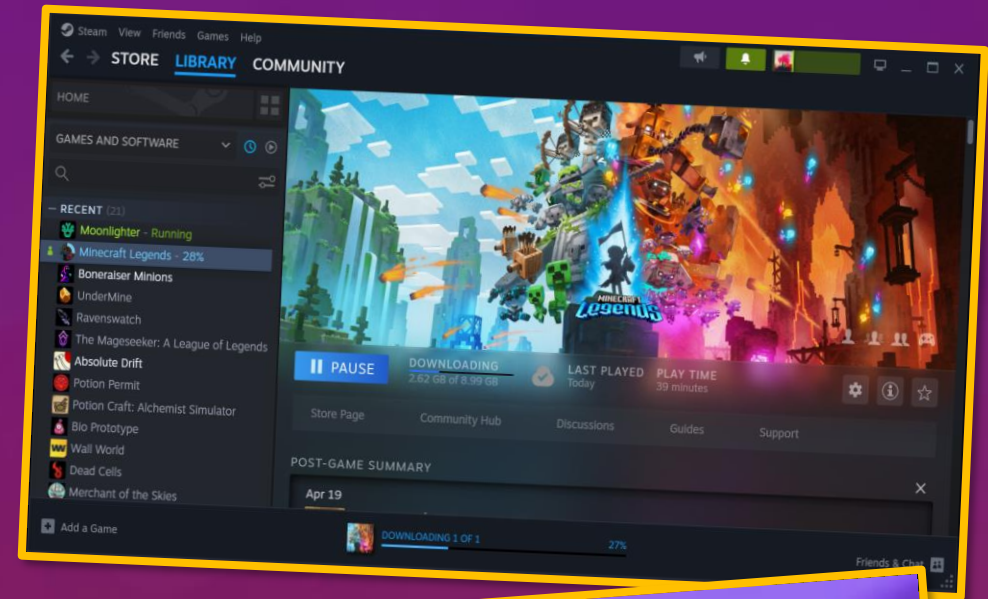
Multiplayer & Social Experiences

OVERVIEW

A look at Steam stats reveals that **multiplayer games are among the most-played**, with thousands of daily users.

There were **932 million online gamers** by 2020 and as of 2022, 54% of the most active gamers worldwide play multiplayer games at least **once a week**, for seven hours on average.

As of 2022, **83% of US gamers play with each other**, either in person or online. In comparison, the figure was **65%** in 2020. [2]





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Multiplayer & Social Experiences

Among Us: the ultimate party game of the paranoid Covid era

Launched into obscurity in 2018 but now hugely popular, this online version of wink murder, with its focus on fabrication and blame-shifting, is scarily on point



☛ All the fun of a drunken board-game night ... Among Us. Photograph: InnerSloth

There are 10 crew members trapped on a spacecraft, carrying out menial tasks to maintain vital systems, but at least one of them is an imposter who wants to sabotage their work and if possible, murder them. What sounds like the premise of a particularly bleak science-fiction movie is in fact the set-up of one of the most popular video games of the year. Developed by a three-person team at InnerSloth and launched to virtual obscurity in 2018, Among Us has suddenly become one of the biggest games on PC and mobile, attracting more than 85m players in the last six months. It's so successful, InnerSloth recently abandoned plans to work on a sequel, instead piling their resources into the original. No one, it seems, is more surprised about the success of this game than its creators.

OVERVIEW

This spike is attributed to **Covid-period lockdowns** – in fact, the multiplayer game **Among Us** (2018) surged in popularity during the pandemic, amassing a user base of nearly **half a billion players**.

The global online gaming market size was valued at **\$56 billion** in 2021 and is expected to grow to **\$132 billion** by 2030. [2]



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Multiplayer History & Evolution



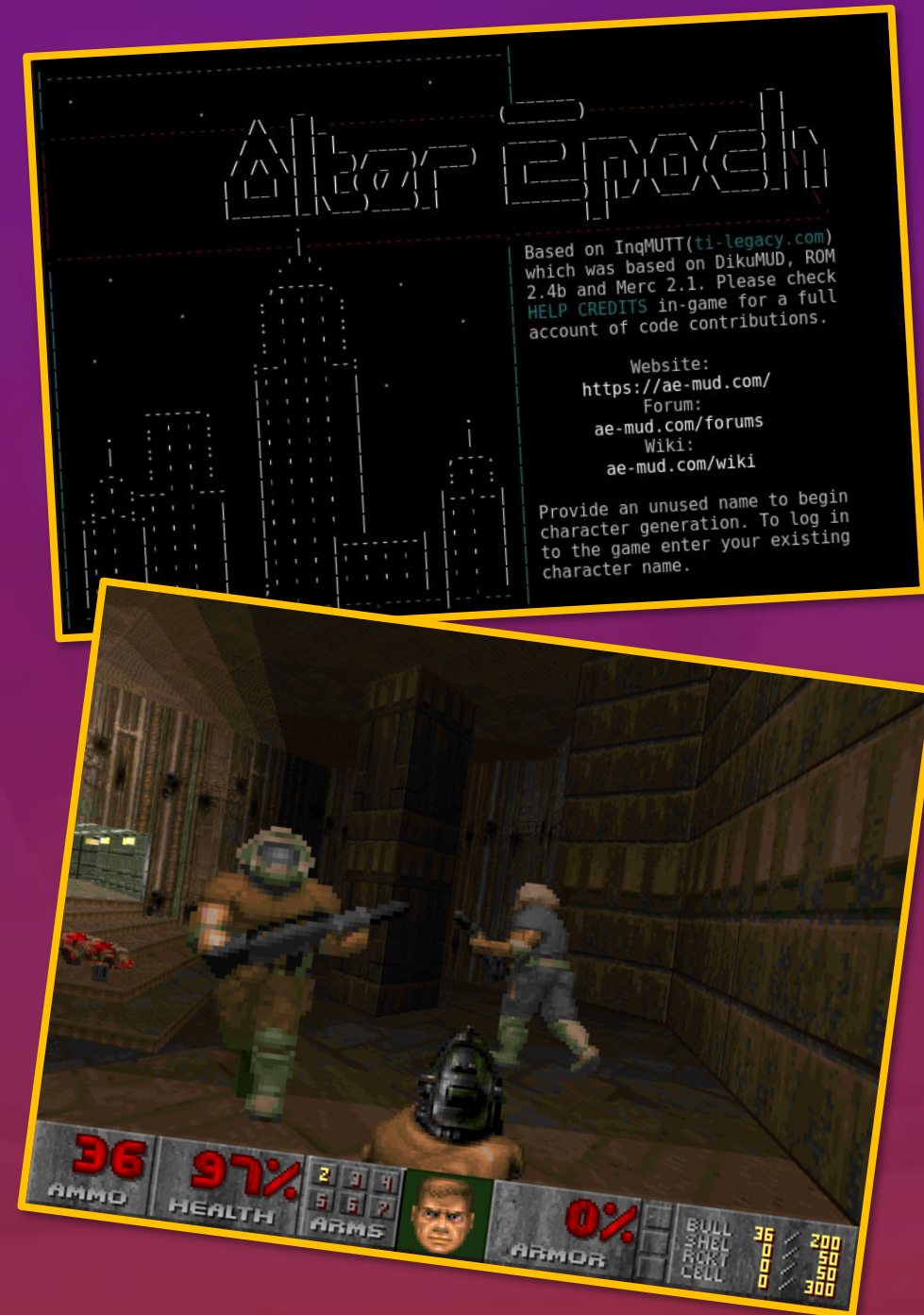
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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The early years of online multiplayer saw the advent of **multi-user dungeons**, (MUDs), where multiple players engaged in **text-based games** through **typing commands**.

This was followed by the arrival of multiplayer **First-Person Shooters** (FPS) in the '90s with games such as **Doom** and **Quake** not only pioneering the FPS genre as we know it today but also **created multiplayer modes** that allowed gamers to team up with or fight against each other.





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

Over the course of the decade, as the **internet** became commonplace, many MMORPGs emerged to the fore, whose graphics brought to life the text-based experience of the early MUDs. [2]





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EMPIRE

Total games since 07/29/84 = 440137
Total users since 07/29/84 = 100090
Average # users per day = 61

Number of people now in Empire (including you): 3

	PLAYERS	TOTAL WINS	THIS MONTH
☛ •Romulans	1	801	3
☛ •Kazari	1	855	0
☛ •Federation	0	1244	1
☛ •Orions	1	978	6

Universe Conquered 06/04/89 at 22.33.23.
By: paley / cerl For: Federation

Enter Your Pseudonym

Copyright © 1977, 78, 83 -- by Charles Miller & Gary Fritz

MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

Multiplayer gaming traces its roots back to the early 1970s. The first notable instance was the game **Empire** in 1973, a **turn-based strategy game** for PLATO network systems.

This era also saw the advent of **Pong**, often celebrated as the first video game to gain widespread popularity. Though initially a **two-player arcade game**, it laid the foundation for future multiplayer experiences. [1]



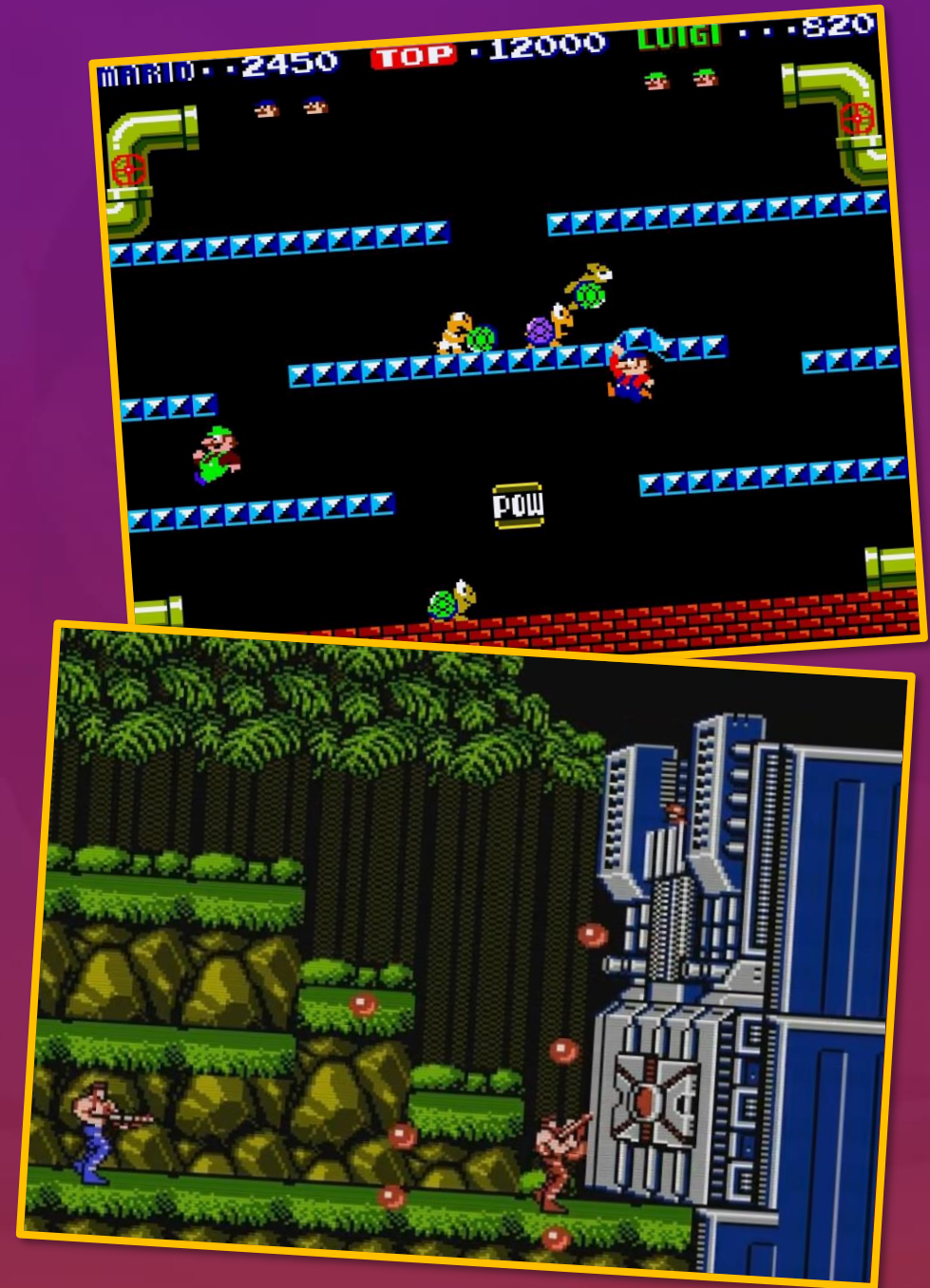
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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The 1980s witnessed a surge in **local multiplayer** games, driven by the popularity of arcade games and the introduction of **home console systems** like the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). Games like *Mario Bros.* and *Contra* became synonymous with **cooperative and competitive** local play.

The concept of playing together in the same room brought a **social** element to gaming, making it a popular pastime. [1]





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The 1990s marked the beginning of online multiplayer gaming. With the internet becoming more accessible, games like “Doom” (1993) introduced network play, allowing players to compete over LAN (Local Area Network) connections.

This era also saw the rise of MMOs (Massively Multiplayer Online games) like Ultima Online (1997) and EverQuest (1999), which allowed thousands of players to interact in a shared virtual world. [1]





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw console gaming embracing **online multiplayer**. Sega's Dreamcast was one of the first consoles to offer **built-in internet connectivity**, paving the way for its successors.

The **PlayStation 2** and **Xbox** further popularized online gaming with services like **Xbox Live**, creating communities around games like **Halo 2**. [1]





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The 2000s were defined by the **explosive growth** of online multiplayer gaming.

PC games like **World of Warcraft** (2004) and **Counter-Strike** (2000) amassed massive player bases.



Online gaming became more mainstream, with social interactions and communities forming the backbone of the gaming experience. [1]



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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

This era also witnessed significant innovations in multiplayer game **mechanics**.

Games began to incorporate **cooperative story modes**, **competitive esports**, and large-scale battles.

League of Legends (2009) and *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* (2007) exemplified these trends, offering diverse multiplayer experiences.





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The 2010s saw the rise of mobile gaming, making multiplayer experiences more accessible than ever.

Games like *Clash of Clans* (2012) and *Pokémon GO* (2016) brought multiplayer gaming to a broader audience, emphasizing casual, on-the-go play.

A significant development of this decade was the advent of cross-platform play, allowing players on different systems to play together.





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

Cloud gaming services like **Google Stadia** and **NVIDIA GeForce Now** further expanded the possibilities, enabling high-quality gaming experiences on less powerful devices.

The late 2010s and early 2020s have seen virtual reality (VR) becoming an **exciting frontier** for multiplayer gaming.

VR offers an immersive experience, with games like **VRChat** and **Beat Saber** providing unique ways to interact and play. [1]





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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

Looking ahead, the future of multiplayer gaming seems poised for even greater heights.

Technologies like **AI** and **machine learning** are being integrated to create more dynamic and responsive gaming environments.

The concept of persistent virtual worlds, where actions have long-lasting effects, is becoming more tangible with games like **Star Citizen** and **EVE Online**. [1]

Inside Star Citizen showcases more AI behavior, river weeds, and a new vehicle physics model

By **Chris Neal** - May 13, 2022 11:30 AM

13



It's time once more for **Star Citizen** to put out its **weekly video series**, and in this week's episode followers of the game get to see a wide variety of feature updates and development progress vignettes in another all Sprint Report edition.

As the type of video suggests, this episode moves through a number of previews, leading off with another look at AI landing maneuvering updates, which are noted for not only improving immersion but also allowing for enemy NPC reinforcements to be dropped off during missions. Additional AI behaviors demonstrated in the video include varied walk speeds for non-hero NPCs and pathing behavior that recognizes when a player and an NPC are having a conversation and makes sure to not walk in-between characters when that happens.



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This Is EVE (Uncensored)- EVE Online (3:41) [3]



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MULTIPLAYER HISTORY & EVOLUTION

The history of multiplayer gaming is a testament to the human desire for **social connection** and shared experiences.

From humble beginnings to the complex, connected worlds of today, multiplayer gaming has continually evolved, reflecting the **technological advancements** and cultural shifts of its time.

As we look to the future, it's clear that multiplayer gaming will continue to innovate, offering new and exciting ways for players to **connect, compete, and collaborate** in the virtual world. [1]



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Social Benefits of Games



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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Social video games are games that involve interaction **with other players** rather than simply one user with their device.

The play can be synchronous or asynchronous, simple or complex, console or mobile, free or monetized. The defining characteristic is that the game **enables the players to communicate in some way** during gameplay.

Some social video games encourage **collaborative problem solving** through providing specific quests or challenges, while others support **open-ended play** in a common environment. The socialization opportunities provided by these games are limited only by the imaginations of the users. [4]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Video games are attractive as a social outlet not just for adults, but also for **teens and children**.

Roblox, a favorite among children aged 9–12 in the United States, reported an average of 31.1 million users per day during most of 2020 - an increase of 82% over the year before.





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Video games, especially **collaborative** social video games, are popular among young people because they are **often more engaging and interactive** than other online activities such as streaming, video calls, or even single-player gaming.

They not only provide entertainment and distraction but also give children and adolescents **a chance to learn by doing**, to practice the social and emotional skills that they otherwise are not able to exercise in real life right now, leading to a **sense of well-being** during a time that can otherwise be isolating and frightening.

[4]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Nearly a quarter of teenagers claim **to give their gaming handle** instead of their phone number when meeting new people, both online and in person.

According to the same source, nearly 80% of teens say that gaming with friends helps them feel more **connected to each other**, even in pre-pandemic times. [4]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

To well-meaning parents, video games often look like a **waste of time** - a waste of a childhood. The games they grew up with didn't have controllers, keyboards, screens, or a headset.

In this case, the headset is the key. Although the players are **physically isolated**, they're **spending time with friends** in the same way that people do when they talk to one another on the **phone**. 77% of boys play online video games with friends at least once a month. [5]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

In research conducted in 2006, 5,800 messages sent while playing an online multiplayer game were examined to discover whether these messages were **socio-emotional** or task-oriented.

Socio-emotional messages are ones which **helped players connect with one another**, such as “Thanks for the help,” “Yeah, I agree with you,” and “Wow, that was funny.” Task-oriented messages are **focused on the game itself**, such as “How do you open this door?” or “Just practice some more.” [5]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

The research found that there were **more than 3.2 times as many socio-emotional messages** as task-oriented ones. Additionally, these emotion-based messages were over 2.6 times more likely to be **positive** than **negative**.

That means that, contrary to parents' fears, the vast majority of the messages people sent while playing this game were used to interact with others in a **positive way**. [5]





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Scottish CoD Players #17 (Edit) – MarleyThirteen (0:53) [6]



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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

There is also evidence to suggest that video games can be a **safe place** to experiment with social interactions for **vulnerable people** [5]. These include:



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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

There is also evidence to suggest that video games can be a **safe place** to experiment with social interactions for **vulnerable people** [5]. These include:

- People with autism spectrum disorders



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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

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- People with autism spectrum disorders
- People with insecure attachment styles (those whose unreliable relationships early in life have led to a feeling of mistrust in most other relationships)



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- People with insecure attachment styles (those whose unreliable relationships early in life have led to a feeling of mistrust in most other relationships)
- Shy people



SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

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- Shy people
- People with depressive symptoms



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- People with autism spectrum disorders
- People with insecure attachment styles (those whose unreliable relationships early in life have led to a feeling of mistrust in most other relationships)
- Shy people
- People with depressive symptoms
- People with social anxiety



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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Video games and other online spaces are “safe” for these individuals because they allow people to communicate when they want to, with **little or no pressure to respond immediately** and without requiring them to be in the same **physical space** with others. [5]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Successful conversations require a wide variety of skills that many take for granted, such as **reading body language**, understanding **tone of voice**, maintaining **eye contact**, and rapidly **comprehending and responding** to information. [5]





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SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GAMES

Online video games can allow players to **talk to others** and **make friends at their current ability level** even when they are not emotionally or physically able to leave their homes.

This can help **build the skills** and **confidence** necessary to try it in-person. [5]





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How Games Work as a Social Tool



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

What social games are able to do is to replace the anxiety of **unstructured and unbounded social interactions** with a **highly structured scenario** in which we have **something to do** and **rules for how we do it**.

The game **sets the stage** for our interactions with others. [6]





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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

When you play a social game there's typically **no uncertainty** about what you're doing in that shared space and there are rules to **how** you should interact.

In a way, the game helps facilitate the act of being friends. [6]





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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

► **Proximity**



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

▶ **Proximity**

▶ **Frequency**



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

- ▶ **Proximity**
- ▶ **Frequency**
- ▶ **Duration**



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

- ▶ **Proximity**
- ▶ **Frequency**
- ▶ **Duration**
- ▶ **Intensity**



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

Proximity makes it easier to see your friends and spend time with them. In real life friends tend to live close to each other, go to the same school, or work at the same place.

Social games reproduce that proximity online, creating a space for people to engage with each other. [6]

▶ **Proximity**

▶ **Frequency**

▶ **Duration**

▶ **Intensity**



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

Friendship also needs both **frequency** and **duration** of interaction. It's tough to make a new friend or stay close with an old one if you only see or speak with them once or twice a year.

Social gaming can make it easier to increase both the **frequency** with which you interact with your friends (by offering an excuse to get together on a regular basis) and the **duration** of those interactions (because the games are fun to play it's easy to pass time quickly).

[6]

▶ Proximity

▶ Frequency

▶ Duration

▶ Intensity



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Social games work because they provide a space for what are often considered to be the **four key elements** needed for friendships to develop:

Gaming also can offer a key element of **intensity** to those relationships. Playing games together creates shared emotional moments, whether that's a Victory Royale with your Squad in **Fortnite** or figuring out who the imposter is in **Among Us**. [6]

▶ Proximity

▶ Frequency

▶ Duration

▶ Intensity



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University students graduate in official Minecraft ceremony

As game passed 200m copies sold.



News by [Tom Phillips](#) | Editor-in-Chief
Updated on May 18, 2020
1 comment

+ Follow Minecraft

University students unable to attend their graduation ceremony have turned to Minecraft to host an official replacement.

Students at UC Berkeley in California built a virtual version of their university campus - UC Blockley - and invited faculty and guests to host a ceremony for the class of 2020.

Lydia Winters, brand director at Minecraft developer Mojang, was one of several names from the world of gaming to give an address, alongside [Twitch](#) co-founder Justin Kan.

HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

What gaming provides is a **safe framework** for inducing emotional intimacy that mirrors the emotional intensity of the games that are being played. Without games we often don't have a structure for safely experiencing those kinds of emotions with others in our daily life.

It's also why "playing" often isn't the only thing happening in these games now. We're holding **graduations** in *Minecraft*, **birthday parties** in *Animal Crossing*, **getting married** in *Rec Room*, and **watching movies** together in *Fortnite*. [6]



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HOW GAMES WORK AS A SOCIAL TOOL

Despite stereotypes of video games as isolating technologies, video gaming can be a **highly social** activity that contributes to well-being. [7]

Social games can help **foster and strengthen our relationships** so that we can have these kinds of experiences within the space of the game.

None of this would be happening if the underlying games themselves weren't fun to play. We need the magnet of compelling gameplay to draw us in but it turns out that the **interactions** that social games catalyze **with our friends** are often what we truly value. [6]



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Examples



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EXAMPLES

Multiplayer:

Unreal Tournament 2004

(Epic, 2004)

(Local Install)

Fall Guys

(Innersloth, 2018)

(Steam Accounts)

Social:

Fortnite

(Festival & Jam Stage)

(Epic, 2017)

(Epic Launcher)



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