

**DA20**  
DIGITAL AUSTRALIA 2020

**THE POWER OF  
GAMES**



© Interactive Games & Entertainment Association 2019

Suite 145 National Innovation Centre  
Australian Technology Park  
Garden Street, Eveleigh, NSW 2015

<https://igea.net>

#### AUTHORS

Jeffrey E. Brand  
Jan Jervis  
Patrice M. Huggins  
Tyler Wilson

Faculty of Society & Design  
Bond University  
Gold Coast, QLD 4229  
<https://bond.edu.au>

#### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Raelene Knowles  
IGEA  
<https://igea.net>

#### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Mike C. Morphett, Design Director  
M:29creative  
[M29creative.com.au](https://m29creative.com.au)

Graph designs & Infographic design: Jan Jervis

#### Suggested citation:

Brand, J. E., Jervis, J., Huggins, P., & Wilson, T. (2019). *Digital Australia 2020*. Eveleigh, NSW: IGEA.





### THE POWER OF CONNECTION

**3** TOP REASONS  
PARENTS PLAY WITH CHILDREN

- + FAMILY FUN
- + CHILDREN ASK
- + A WAY TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER

**59%**  
PLAY WITH CHILDREN IN THE SAME ROOM

**25%**  
PLAY WITH PARTNERS ONLINE

**89%**  
FAMILIAR WITH PARENTAL CONTROLS

### THE POWER OF LIVING WELL

VIDEO GAMES MAY...

- 73%** IMPROVE LIFE SATISFACTION
- 58%** MANAGE PAIN
- 84%** PROMOTE GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

+++

### THE POWER OF ECONOMICS

**\$74%** SAY MAKING VIDEO GAMES BENEFITS AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

**15%** CAGR DIGITAL GAME SALES IN AUSTRALIA 2013-2018  
+++

### THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

**66%**  
READ OR WATCH  
WALKTHROUGHS  
SHARED BY OTHERS

**41%**  
WATCH ESPORTS

**31%**  
ATTEND GAME EVENTS

**38%** ENJOY THE CULTURE OF ESPORTS



# THE POWER OF GAMES

### THE POWER OF PLAY

**5** TOP REASONS TO PLAY

- + HAVE FUN
- + DE-STRESS
- + PASS TIME
- + KEEP MIND ACTIVE
- + BE CHALLENGED



YOUNGER  
PLAY  
TO HAVE  
FUN

+++

OLDER  
PLAY

TO KEEP THE MIND ACTIVE

**89** MINUTES  
AVERAGE DAILY  
TOTAL  
PLAY FOR  
MALES



**71** MINUTES  
AVERAGE DAILY  
TOTAL  
PLAY FOR  
FEMALES

### THE POWER OF CREATIVITY

**27%** POST GAMEPLAY VIDEOS

**28%** PARTICIPATE IN COSPLAY



### THE POWER OF GAMES

**2/3** PLAY VIDEO GAMES



**9/10**



HOMES HAVE A DEVICE ON WHICH GAMES HAVE BEEN PLAYED

**78%** OF PLAYERS  
ARE AGED **18** YEARS  
AND OVER

**34** YEARS  
AVERAGE AGE OF  
VIDEO GAME PLAYERS



**47%**  
OF ALL PLAYERS ARE  
+ FEMALE +

**42%**  
OF THOSE AGED **65** YEARS  
AND OVER PLAY VIDEO GAMES



# FOREWORD+



Imagine not having video games. What would be lost?

On the surface, video games entertain us when we play. However, games have proven themselves to be a powerful medium through which people connect from all over the world; even people in the same home connect through video games.

## THE POWER OF VIDEO GAMES+

Today, games are used to educate in schools and train at work. Video games are used to help us live well through mental and physical stimulation in a range of contexts, including hospital care, aged care, and psychological care. Video games have produced one of the most vibrant and active communities of fans who gather together at major international popular culture festivals, and who play together online in competitive esports. Video games are designed and produced in a digital economy that promotes creativity and, in turn, enhances the economic gift of nations.

Video games are a surprisingly old medium. The first patent for a “cathode-ray tube amusement device” was filed in the United States Patent Office on 25 January 1947.

“

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT NEXT TO HOMO FABER, AND PERHAPS ON THE SAME LEVEL AS HOMO SAPIENS, HOMO LUDENS, *MAN THE PLAYER*, DESERVES A PLACE IN OUR NOMENCLATURE.

Johan Huizinga, 1938

”

The first experimental video game was displayed in the late 1950s and the first commercial video game, Computer Space, was launched in 1971. The first home console video game system to begin widespread consumer access to games was sold in 1975.

Since then, video games have sold billions of copies to billions of players who enjoy them on billions of electronic computing devices. There are thousands of titles and hundreds of platforms on which to play them. There are many genres of video games and multiple objectives and motivations for playing them.

## THE POWER OF PLAY+

There are many ways to play; we play sport, we play-act, we play music, we play with toys, we play with language, we play with ideas and so on.

Austrian scholar Johan Huizinga claimed in the 1930s that play is older than culture. Academics have demonstrated over time that play is a powerful tool not only for human culture, but for human productivity, creativity, and knowledge. They have shown that by engaging in amusement and sport we explore who we are and what we can be.

Games are a powerful vehicle for play and we play many types of games. We play card games, games of chance, board games, driving games, games of strategy, simulation games, tactical games, timed games, learning games, memory games, puzzle games, adventure games, silly games and on the list goes. One researcher divided games into four major types that promote play including competitive, chance, simulation and movement.

## THE POWER OF KNOWING GAMES AND PLAY+

Digital Australia 2020 (DA20) is the culmination of over 15 years of research on how, why, and by whom video games are played in Australia.

In this edition of the research, we explore the *Power of Games*. In doing so, we observe the power of *connection, community, creativity, living well, education, and economics* through this remarkable medium.

+++

# THE POWER OF GAMES

# 5

## POWER OF **GAMES**

**2/3** of Australians play video games

Most **homes** have a device for playing video games

**21%** of households have a virtual reality headset

**70%** use mobile phones for playing games

**65%** use consoles for playing games

The average age of video game players is **34 years**

Almost **1/2** of video game players are **female**

**78%** of Australian video game players are aged 18 years or older  
**42%** aged 65 and over play video games

The average Australian adult has been playing video games for **12 years**

## POWER OF **PLAY**

The **top 5** reasons Australians play video games

fun, pass time, de-stress,  
take a break from daily life  
keep the mind active

**Younger** and working age adults play to have **fun, pass time, and de-stress**  
**Older adults** play to keep the mind active

Average daily **total of play** for Australians of all ages who play video games is **81 minutes**

**Male** video game players play on average for **89 minutes**  
**Female** video game players play on average for **71 minutes**

The typical daily casual game play is **10 minutes, twice a day**

The typical daily in-depth game play is **1 hour**. Children play on average **100 minutes a day**

Working age adults play on average **83 minutes a day**

Retirement age adults play on average **59 minutes a day**

## POWER OF **CONNECTION**

**Top 3** reasons parents play with children

1. **Family fun**
2. **Children ask**
3. **A way to spend time together**

**59%** of parents **play with their children** in the same room

**43%** of parents play online games with their children

**54%** are mostly or completely familiar with family controls on game systems

**83%** of parents say they have talked with a child about playing **games online**

Parents mainly play video games with children to connect with them

**25%** play with **partners online**

## POWER OF **COMMUNITY**

**2/3** have used walkthroughs, wikis or forums to help their gameplay

**Over 1/2** of players watch YouTube videos of game play

**Over 1/3** have watched esports

Of these, over **1/3** watch to improve their own game play

Nearly a **1/4** watch to follow an esports team

**38%** enjoy the **culture of esports**

## METHODS

*Digital Australia 2020 (DA20)* is a study of **1,210** Australian households and **3,228** individuals of all ages in those households.



# KEY FINDINGS+



## POWER OF CREATIVITY

More than a **1/4** of players have shared videos of their own game play online

Almost a **1/4** have competed in **esports**

Of these, **1/2** compete because of social connections

A **1/3** compete because they enjoy the challenge

**28%** participate in **cosplay**

## POWER OF LIVING WELL

**85%** say video games can help **thinking skills**

**74%** say video games can help **emotional wellbeing**

**66%** say video games can help **social wellbeing**

**87%** say video games may increase mental stimulation

**81%** say video games may help **fight dementia**

**67%** say video games may help maintain **social connections**

**73%** say video games may improve life satisfaction

**58%** say video games may help **manage pain**

**84%** say video games may promote **general knowledge**

**83%** of players say video games can be effective in **stress reduction**

## POWER OF EDUCATION

**1/2** of parents say their children's **schools use video games** for education

**61%** of parents believe video games can be effective **for learning STEM**

**53%** of parents believe video games can give students **greater confidence** at school

**31%** of adults have used games **at work** for **health and safety** training

**29%** have used video games at work for **new skills** training

**61%** of players say video games can be effective in **motivating people** to get fit

**60%** say games promote student **creativity**

## POWER OF ECONOMICS

**3/4** of adults believe making video games in Australia **benefits the economy**

Video games sales (**CAGR**) in Australia grew at a rate of **15%** between **2013 and 2018**

Australian video games **retail industry sales** in **2013** were **\$2.04 Billion**

In **2018**, total **retail industry sales** for video games were **\$4.03 Billion**

In **2018**, **Digital sales** reached **\$2.85 Billion**

**Physical sales** in the Australian retail industry were **\$1.18 Billion**

**65%** have made in-game **purchases** for **themselves**

**40%** have made in-game **purchases** for **others**

## METHODS

Participants were drawn randomly from the Nielsen Your Voice Panel in **March 2019**; research was designed and conducted at Bond University. The margin of error ranges from  $\pm 2.3\%$  to  $\pm 3.3\%$ .