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Is the past the future of gaming?

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LEVEL ONE

PRESS START



From Hollywood to culture to gaming, nostalgia is taking over

Why retro, nostalgic and traditional foods are trending in the UK

15 APRIL 2025, 07:00 AM
DELICATESSEN

Avocado bathrooms are back. Return to the salad days!

Suites are going retro with playful design choices

REVIEW Why is Ricky Gervais's 20-year-old show still at the top of the charts again?

Why am I filled with nostalgia for a pre-internet age I never knew?

Isabel Brooks



Almost half of young people would prefer a world without the internet. We are haunted by the feeling that it has robbed us of something vital

Noughties nostalgia trends on TikTok as fans revisit music and TV favourites

Older series from Vampire Diaries to Skins are among the most popular on the platform as decade enjoys a revival

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FIRST NIGHT

Sex Pistols review — nostalgia trip that still rings with febrile power

'Reinvention is the secret ingredient': food brands harness 90s nostalgia with retro revamps

John Lydon but Frank Carter was a ned to the 100 Club

Millennial childhood staples such as Walkers and Nik introduce new flavours amid pressure for brands to stay relevant

No more airbrushed images — why we love vintage cameras

Simon de Burton reports on the growing vogue for analogue cameras, the best ones to buy and where to get your old-school snaps developed

rs of Talking Pictures: 'I try toitch modern TV but they mumble'

Opinion
Superman

The father and daughter behind the hit channel that resurrects classic TV shows from their suburban home say they could teach us a thing or two

The hot hatch is back — and it's electric

A nippy, zippy hatchback was once the car of choice for accelerator-happy dads. Those pining for the past will love the Alpine 290, Renault's revved-up EV

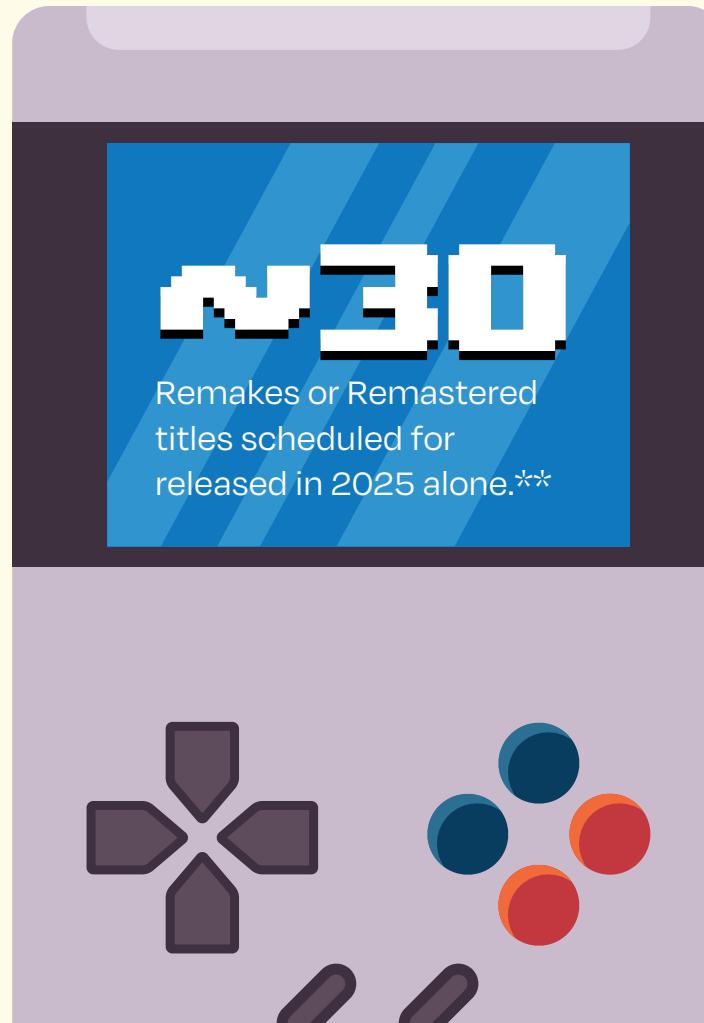
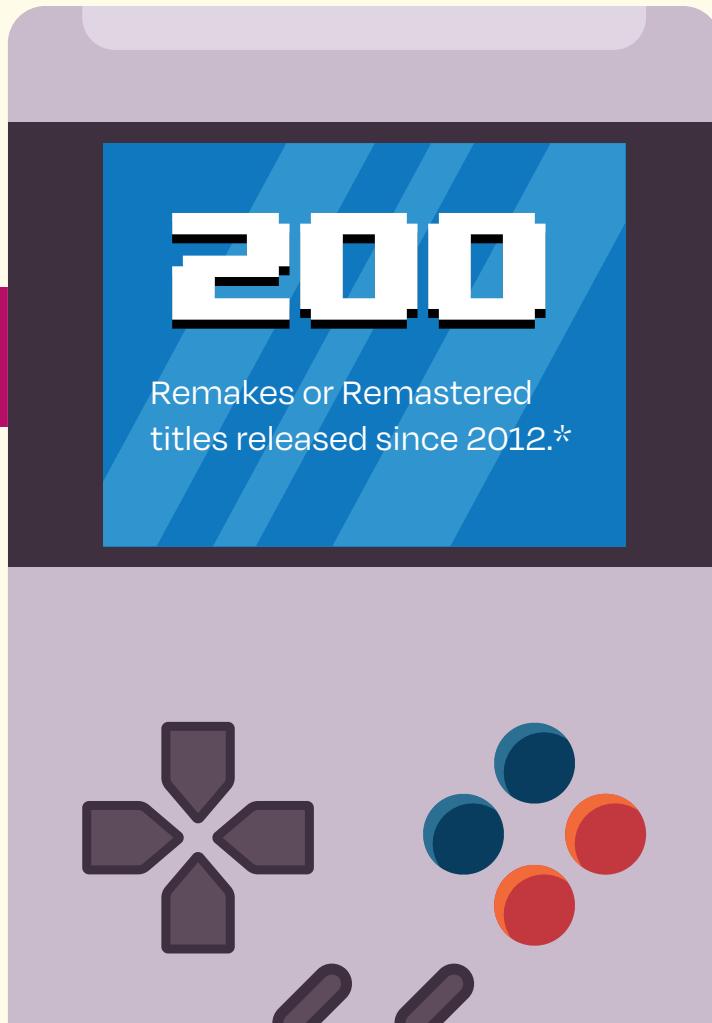
Why perfumes are having a 1970s makeover

Interiors, fashion, food — everything seems to have gone retro, and now it's the turn of fragrance

Nostalgia is eating us alive. Instead of building a new world, we're regurgitating a past that never existed

Martin Ingle

Remakes & Remasters are an ever-increasing and important part of the gaming industry's release schedule



A drop in the ocean compared to the thousands of games released annually on console or PC, but their commercial success is all but guaranteed.

Source: *Kotaku **Gamespot

Remakes and Remasters are far out-selling their original release



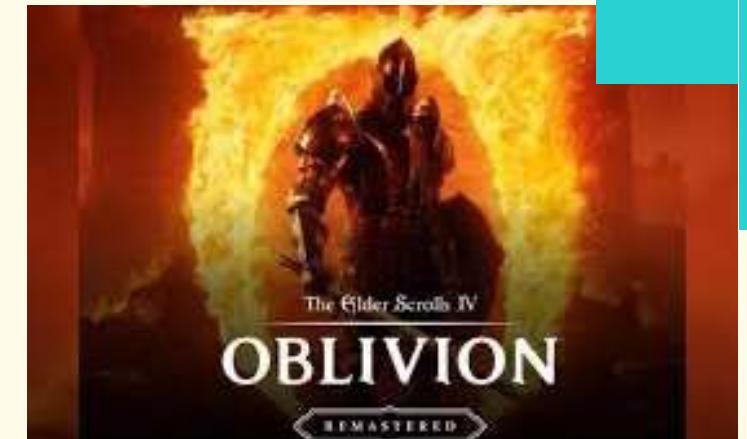
Sold +10m units within 2 years of release

Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023) sold about 4 million copies within two weeks of release and within 2 years became the fastest selling title in the series.*



Sold 20m units worldwide by 2024

Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy (2017) rebooted a dormant franchise, with sales far surpassing the original games.



Sold more units in 1 month than the original did in 15 months

The Elder Scrolls 4: Oblivion Remastered (2025). Topped Circana's US games chart and outsold original game.**

From the developer and publisher side, the benefits of Remakes & Remasters are clear

PROS

- Remakes & Remasters offer financial stability and reduced risk by leveraging established IP with a proven/known fan base.
- In some cases, studios can expect stronger sales compared to launching new IP, which carries higher financial risk and uncertainty.



CONS

- Games are more expensive than ever to make, and the release cycle can take years.
- New IP, especially, comes with huge risks. Hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake.

Beyond pure commercials, Remakes & Remasters offer a combination of creative and strategic advantages



Nostalgia and cross-generational appeal

Attract older gamers who played the original, while introducing classics to younger audiences.



Franchise revitalisation and expanded universe

Successful Remakes & Remasters can revitalise dormant franchises, sometimes leading to new sequels, spin-offs, or expanded universes—keeping IP relevant.



Technological upgrades and accessibility

Allow studios to bring classics to modern platforms, improving graphics, performance and controls, whilst also modernising mechanics and gameplay or fixing flaws in the original.



Cultural and industry preservation

Help preserve gaming history and make classics relevant for both legacy and new players, as technologies change.

Other entertainment media, including Hollywood, is also relying on nostalgia to keep audiences locked in

Hollywood has been nostalgia-obsessed for years, but 2025 is only accelerating the trend. The industry is turning to tried and tested IP across genres to aim to recapture a golden age of film.

SAME PRESSURES, DIFFERENT MEDIA

- TV and movies experience the same financial pressures as gaming—the need for commercial success is intense.
- Pixar original, Elio, gave the studio its worst ever box office opening despite positive reviews, whereas the Lilo & Stitch remake was the first billion-dollar box office earner of 2025, and Happy Gilmore 2 broke Netflix records.

DISCOVERY AND RE-DISCOVERY

- TV and movie fans share the same nostalgic desires as gamers.
- Remakes or sequels to childhood classics allow grown-ups to rediscover their youthful favourites, while new audiences get to discover beloved franchises that they weren't old enough to experience the first time around.



Game over for the '30-year rule': culture cycles moving faster than ever before

RAPID RETRO

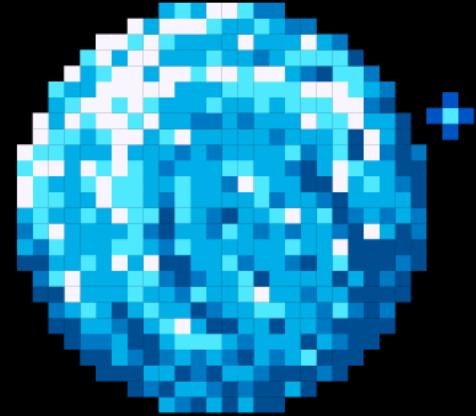
Social media allows instant re-discovery of cultural trends and content from the past. Trends and eras are becoming rapidly retro due to the rate of content creation.

SIMPLER TIMES

Divisive politics, war, cost of living crises and a pandemic has led people to crave for simpler times...even yearning for early COVID lockdowns.



MOSTALGIA IS KING



Developers and publishers love Remakes & Remasters.

But what do gamers think?

MTM ran research to find out. Here's our survey methodology



QUANTITATIVE SURVEY*

- 1,500 online interviews
- Monthly console/PC gamers
- US & UK (750 in each)

PLAYER INTERVIEWS

- 16 x 30-minutes follow-up AI assisted qualitative interviews
- US & UK (8 in each market)

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the survey, MTM used the following definitions:

Remakes: Reimagining of an original game, built from scratch with updated graphics, gameplay mechanics and sometimes story elements.

Remasters: An enhanced version of the original game improving visuals, sound, and performance without altering the core gameplay.

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LEVEL TWO
GAME ON



Almost all gamers have played a Remake or a Remaster and most find them appealing



90%

Of gamers have played a Remake or a Remaster



76%

Find them appealing

Strength of appeal of Remakes & Remasters

Extremely appealing

Very appealing

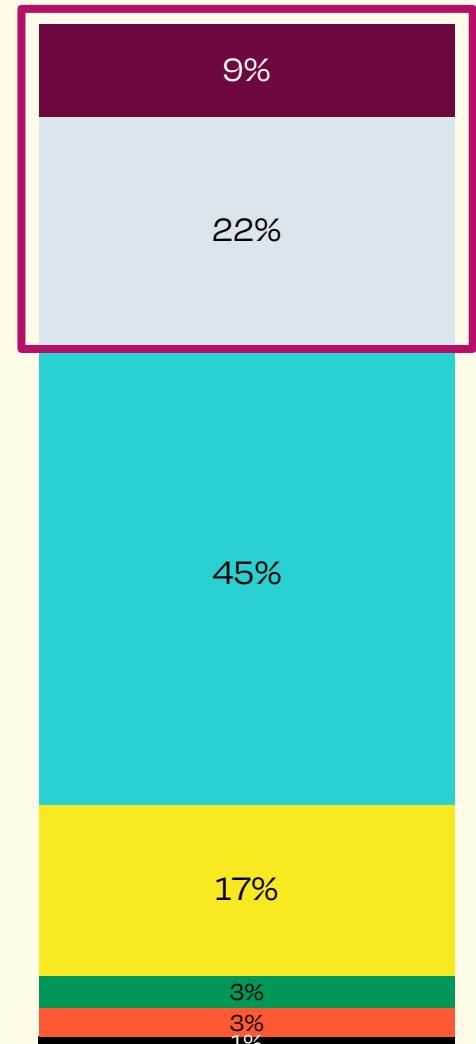
Appealing

Neither appealing nor unappealing

Unappealing

Very unappealing

Extremely unappealing



DEVELOPER BEWARE!

- Do retro games simply do a job rather than fully excite gamers?
- Does the lack of creativity impact appeal?
- Will gamers get bored and crave new experiences?

"I think relaunched games can be **pretty appealing**. Games like the Resident Evil 2 Remake took that thrilling experience from the original and made it feel fresh while keeping the story intact. But on the flip side, **I do worry that it sometimes comes at the cost of creativity**. It also makes me wonder if we're **missing out on new stories and experiences** that could redefine gaming."

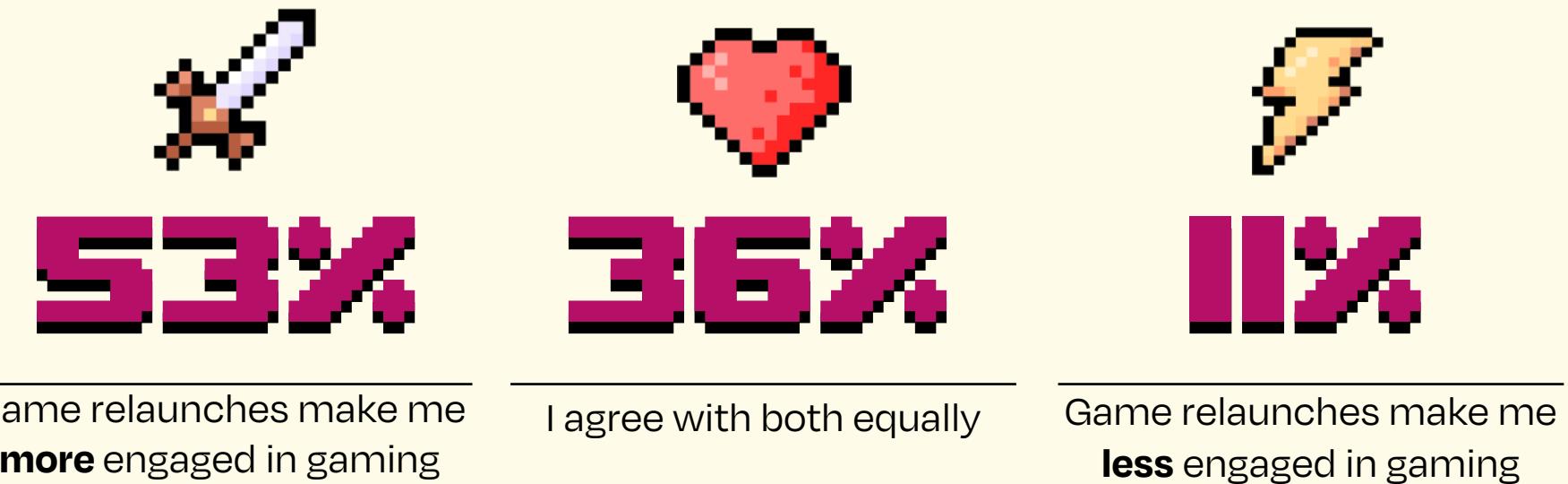
"Me personally, I wouldn't go out of my way to buy the relaunch because it feels too similar to the original, and **if you're gonna spend money on a game, I'd rather just spend it on a new game** that I haven't played yet."

"Yeah, I don't mind relaunched games, but **they don't have a ton of appeal to me**."

"Sometimes it **feels like a safe choice for studios** instead of making something new, which I guess can get repetitive."

Despite some reservations, overall, gamers see Remakes & Remasters as increasing their engagement in gaming

Attitudes towards Remakes & Remasters



MTM Remakes & Remasters 2025.

Base: All gamers (n=1,500). C11. Which of these statements do you agree with most about game relaunches?

"Whilst it can come across as lazy, on the whole I'm positive towards them. **They offer a different experience than new games** and I use them for moments when I want familiarity in my gaming life."

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LEVEL THREE

BEHIND THE

CONTROLLER



THE THREE GOLDEN AGES OF NOSTALGIA



Connection to the past



Sharing the love



Discovering classics

Connection to the past: Nostalgia is core, promoting an emotional connection to, or comfort in, the past



80%

Agree that "Remakes & Remasters are comforting and nostalgic"



78%

Agree that "I like to use Remakes & Remasters to re-play and enjoy my old favourite games"

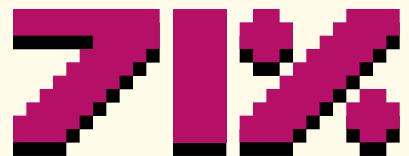


A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a red hoodie, is smiling and holding a video game controller. He is sitting in front of a television screen showing a video game. The background is dark with some colorful lights. A yellow square is in the top right corner.
"Nostalgia for me in the context of Remakes & Remasters is really about that **emotional connection to the past.**"

"Nostalgia means **reconnecting with the feelings that I had when I first played the game.**"

"Just thinking about the classics I grew up with **brings back all those memories**, and it **feels comforting** to revisit those worlds."

Sharing the love: A valuable way to introduce beloved games to a new generation of gamers



Agree that "Remakes & Remasters are a good way for me to share old favourites with others who have not played them"



MTM Remakes & Remasters 2025.

Base: All gamers (n=1,500). C8. How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below about game relaunches?



"It's great to share experiences from my childhood with my children. **I get to play a classic game that is now modern, they get to play it from the first time,** and then we all get to experience it together—**that is cool.**"

Discovering classics: Gamers discover classic titles for the first time



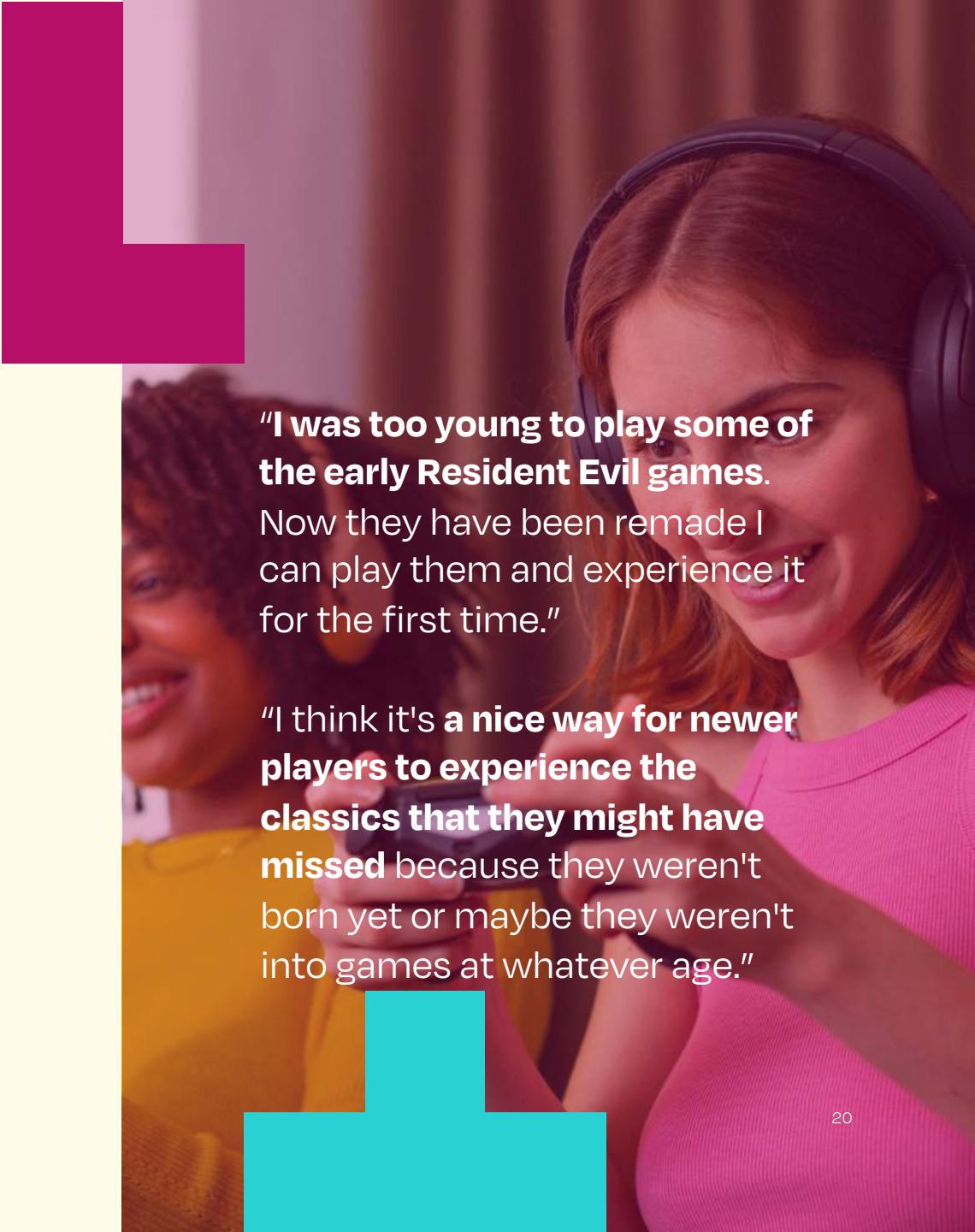
67%

Agree that "I like to use Remakes & Remasters to discover old games for the first time"



85%

Have played a Remake or Remaster game when they didn't play the original



"I was too young to play some of the early Resident Evil games. Now they have been remade I can play them and experience it for the first time."

"I think it's a nice way for newer players to experience the classics that they might have missed because they weren't born yet or maybe they weren't into games at whatever age."

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LEVEL FOUR

MINIMUM

SPECS



Improvements in tech—visuals, controls, mechanics—are central to enjoyment of Remakes & Remasters

RANKED NUMBER ONE BY 30% POINTS

#1

They are a great way to experience classic games in a modern way

"With advancements in technology, it's really **cool to see how developers can leverage modern graphics and gameplay capabilities** to enhance those experiences."

"It's really nice to see classic titles get updated with modern graphics and gameplay mechanics. Games like the Resident Evil 2 Remake really **took that thrilling experience from the original and made it feel fresh** while keeping the story intact, which I totally appreciate."

GAMERS EXPECT

"What I like most is that when a Remake or

Remaster adds modern controls or visuals, so it

make

but it doesn't lose what made it feel great in the

past."

Major graphical overhauls, updated controls and improvements to mechanics

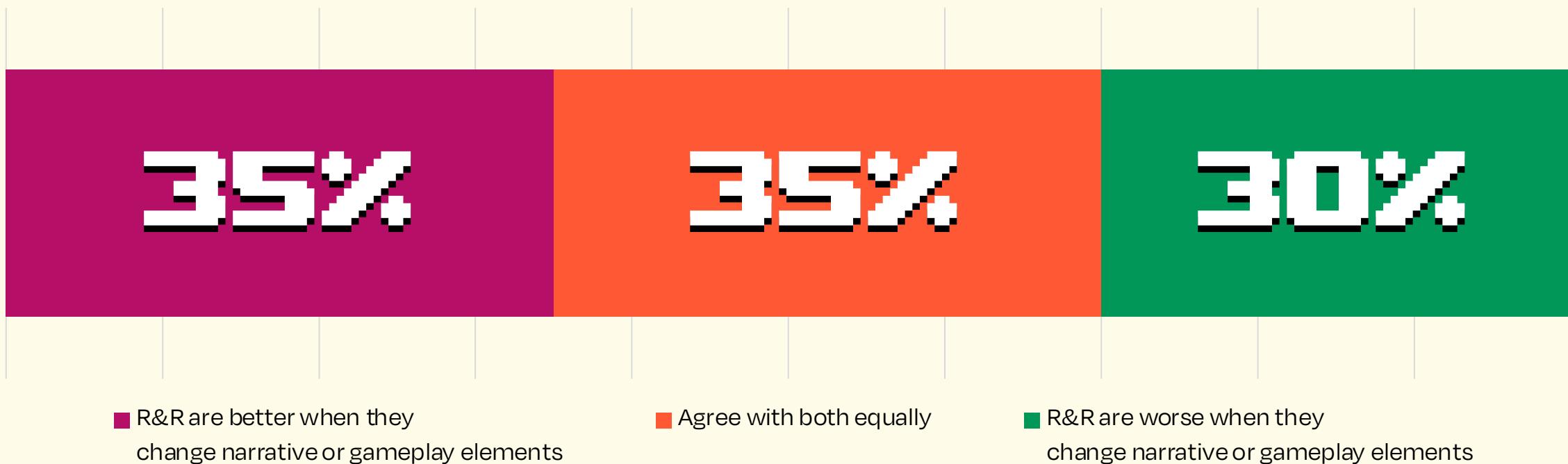
"The most important part would be **utilising the technology we have and the controllers we have now making it easier to control.** Those Resident Evil original games had tank controls. So I imagine a lot of gamers of a younger age would probably struggle with that sort of thing. But the new ones have controls that a lot of people are used to in other modern games."

"Better graphics are the most important thing. If the story was already in depth, but they've updated graphics and controls and how the game flows—this is the best thing for relaunching games."

"What I like most is that when a Remake or Remaster adds modern controls or visuals, so it **makes the game feel fresh in terms of design, but it doesn't lose what made it feel great in the past."**

But there is a tension between changes to narrative or gameplay, versus staying completely true to the original

Attitudes towards changes to narrative or gameplay elements in Remakes & Remasters



THE SPECTRUM OF CHANGE

Where do you stand?

NEW CONTENT

- New levels, stories or characters
- Breathe fresh life into old IP
- More than a simple rehash

"If they **add new content, it feels like a real improvement**; just updating graphics often feels lazy."

BALANCE

- Best of both worlds
- New content for devotees
- Faithful to the original for first timers

"The best Remakes & Remasters **balance retaining the original spirit with relevant improvements and creative additions.**"

TRUE TO THE ORIGINAL

- No new stories
- No new characters
- No compromises

"What I like most is that when the game keeps the heart of the original, but it adds modern controls/visuals. So it **makes the game feel fresh in terms of design, but it doesn't lose what made it great in the past.**"

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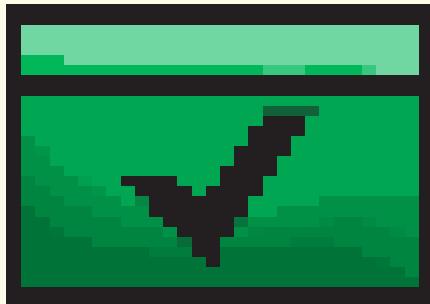


LEVEL FIVE POWER-UP

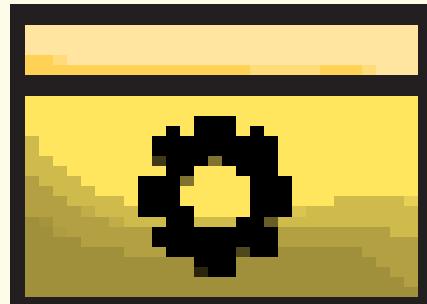


FACTORS THAT MAKE A PERFECT REMAKE OR REMASTER

What should developers and studios do?



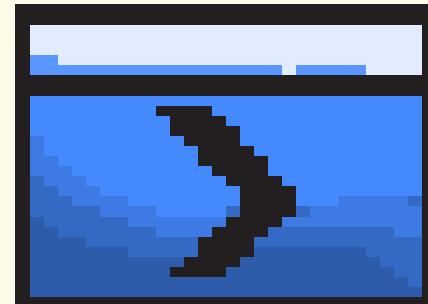
Improve graphics
and visuals



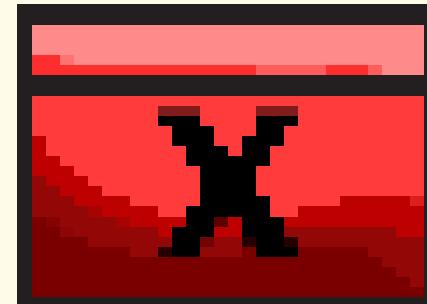
Make general
improvements i.e.
better accessibility
options



Be faithful to the
original game



Improve controls/
gameplay



Ensure no glitches/
bugs or fix
glitches/bugs

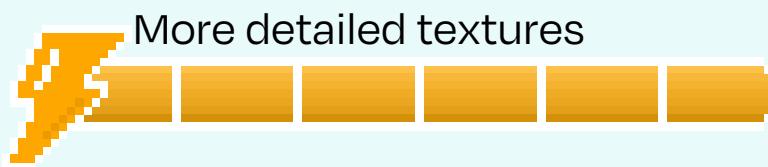
POWER-UP !

Glow up the graphics and visuals

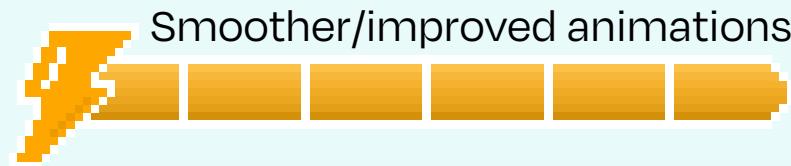
Gameplay guidelines:



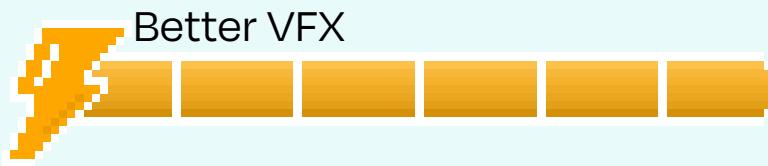
Higher resolution



More detailed textures



Smoother/improved animations



Better VFX



Improved lighting



Consistency across improvements



Better graphics are the most important thing.

Better graphics and visuals is the absolute minimum.



POWER-UP 2

Use modern tech to improve accessibility and fix bugs and poor controls from the original

Gameplay guidelines:



Improve accessibility

Visual adjustments, customisable subtitles, audio options, cognitive assistance are often overlooked in Remakes & Remasters



Allow for personalisation/customisation

Use features such as remappable controls to promote inclusivity and allow for personal preferences



Fix bugs

Use modern tech to remove persistent bugs or glitches



Fix poor controls

Redesign or streamline unintuitive controls for modern player expectations



Modern games have **so many options to personalise your play or adapt it** based on your needs—this is essential in a Remake or Remaster.



POWER-UP 3

Modernise gameplay mechanics that enhance the original

Gameplay guidelines:



Upgrade camera systems

Fix frustrating fixed or awkward camera angles



Enhance NPC intelligence

So allies, enemies, and neutrals behave more realistically/dynamically



Streamline progression/save systems

Modernise levelling or progression mechanics to reduce grind/repetition



Adjust challenge curves

Ensure gameplay is accessible to new players and those with experience



It's amazing to see it with updated controls, because **going back to those old mechanics can feel a bit clunky.**

Take an old game where mechanics haven't aged the best, then just **give a more modern polish or introduce new mechanics** from later games in the series.



POWER-UP 4

Stay true to the essence of the original

Gameplay guidelines:



Core story: "Keeping the storyline the same because usually that's the most nostalgic part of it."



Characters: "Don't change which character did what or which character dies."



Core mechanics: "You need to stay faithful to the original gameplay In terms of its core mechanics."



Artistic style and original soundtracks: "Keeping the original art style and original soundtracks, as they are core to memories."



It's all about **finding that sweet spot where improvements are made**, but the heart of the game remains intact.

I want it to **be faithful to the original**—not changing the full theme and concept of the game, but just making a few changes to run with the trends.

Keep the combat system the same, keep the story the same. The preservationist in me wants the game to be identical to an extent of the original, but updating the visuals.



POWER-UP 5

Introduce new content as long as it doesn't overwrite the original story or characters

Gameplay guidelines:



Authenticity is king

New content must feel authentic and not undermine nostalgia



Expansion, not replacement

New content should feel like "bonus material"



Stay true to tone

Additions should match the style, humour, and atmosphere of the original



Don't contradict the story

No retcons or fundamental changes to beloved characters/narrative



Keep faithful in terms of story and structure, but make like **side quests** or **new missions**, which don't impact core gameplay.

One thing I really like is when they **expand on the original source material** or give us more backstory. For example, in the Resident Evil 2 Remake, they added new areas and, like, **fleshed out character arcs that really made the game feel more complete**, which was awesome.



POWER-UP 6

Balance your content strategy between new IP and Remakes & Remasters



Original IP is essential for industry growth and creative innovation, introducing new narratives, mechanics, and player experiences that keep gaming at the forefront of entertainment



While nostalgia sells, gamers increasingly seek originality and innovation as well. Industry success hinges on listening to gamers and balancing familiar franchises with bold new titles



Remakes & Remasters can elevate the industry standard, bringing experiences to old and new gamers alike, whilst simultaneously funding new projects that push boundaries



While I totally enjoy relaunched games, **there should be a balance between giving old favorites a new life and creating original content.**

If all the focus is on Remakes & Remasters, it can stifle innovation and **we might miss out on some amazing, unique experiences.**

While it's awesome to see these classics return, **I hope it doesn't overshadow the need for new and fresh ideas in gaming.**

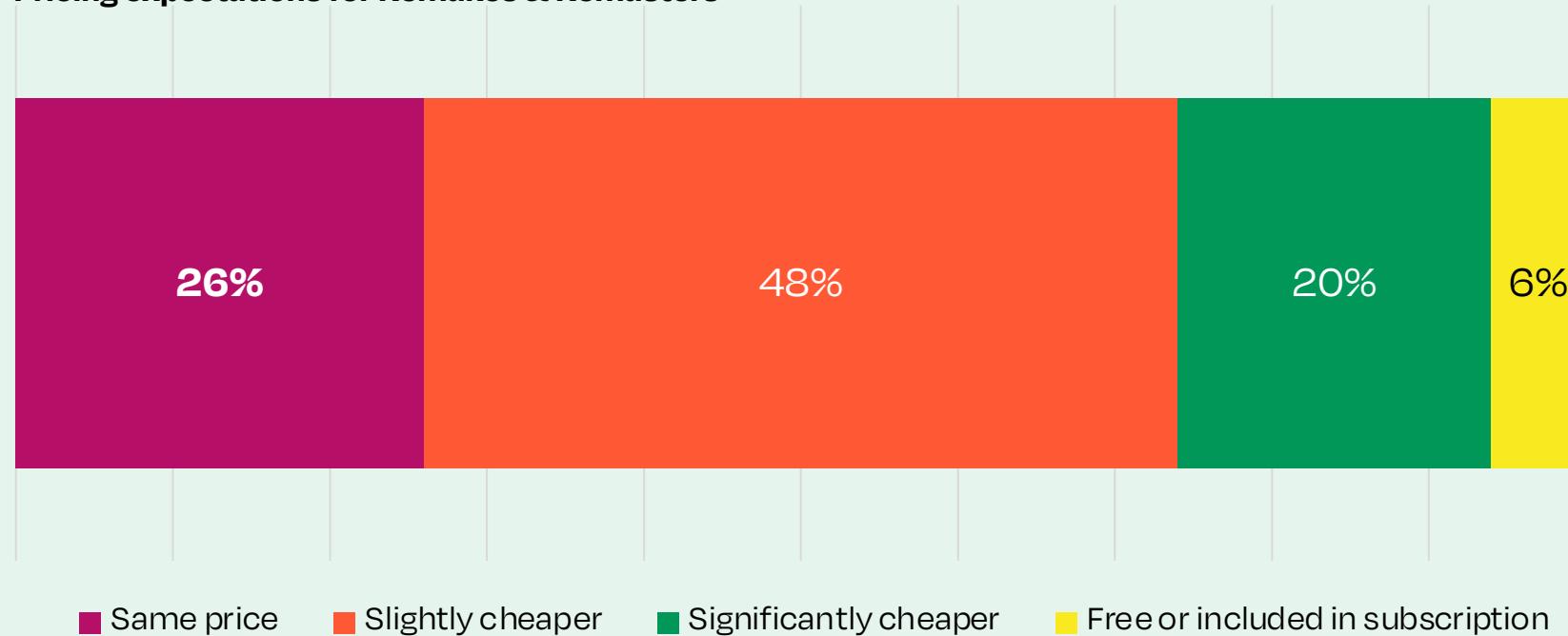
Ultimately, I just hope the industry keeps pushing forward with both relaunches and original concepts so gamers can have **the best of both worlds.**



POWER-UP 7

Carefully consider your pricing strategy—Remakes & Remasters command lower prices

Pricing expectations for Remakes & Remasters



LL

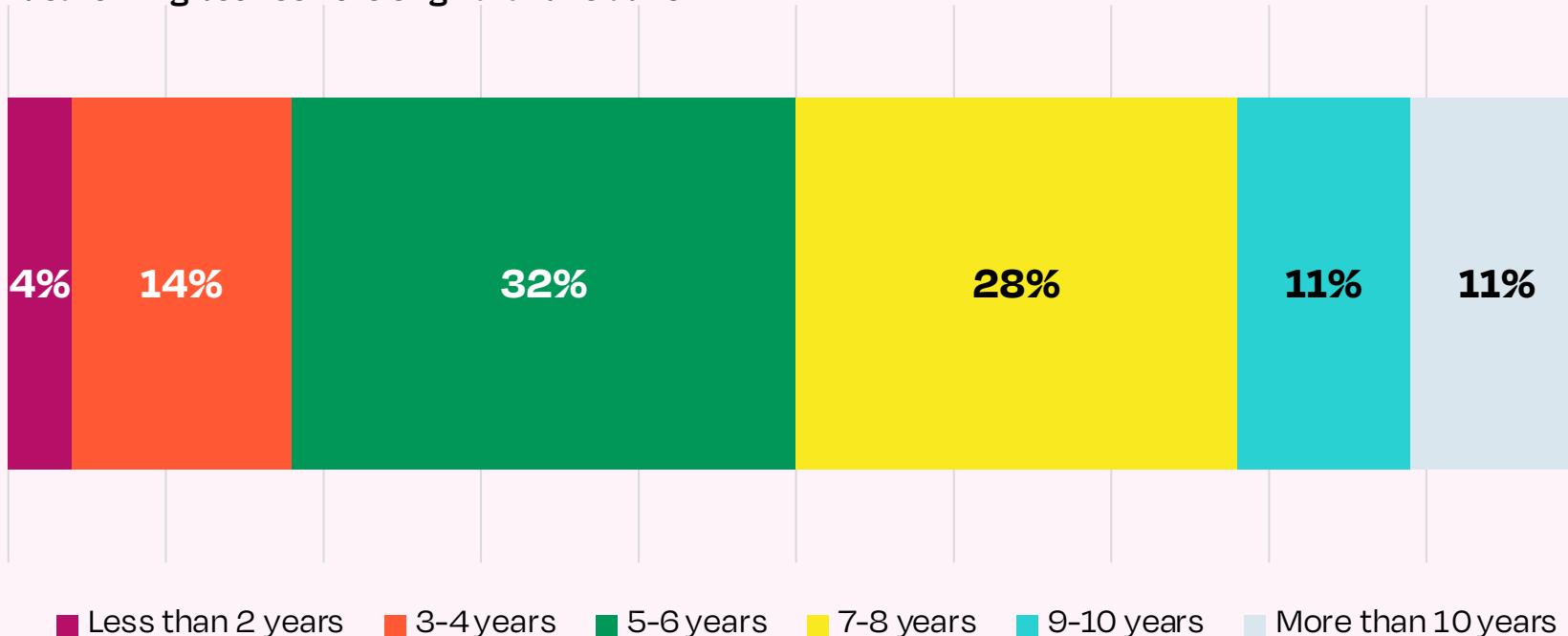
I'm just not willing to pay that amount of money to buy a game that I've basically already played before.

TT

POWER-UP 8

Space out the original and relaunch—re-releasing too soon will turn off your core base

Ideal timing between the original and relaunch



LL

I don't like when Remakes & Remasters are released very soon after the original game. If the original game still looks good then the remake doesn't look that much different to me, so I feel like it is a bit pointless.

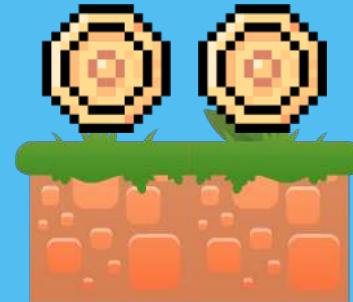
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ONE MORE TURN...



Level up your game development strategy with our recommended power-ups:

-  Improve graphics to modern standards
-  Promote accessibility and fix poor controls/bugs
-  Use modern mechanics to enhance gameplay experiences
-  Stay true to the game's roots
-  Introduce new content, but not to the detriment of the original story/characters
-  Balance content strategy between new IP and Remakes & Remasters
-  Consider lower pricing than new IP
-  Know the time to Remake and Remaster



THE FINAL BOSS



Remakes & Remasters can take your game development strategy to the next level, but nuance is key:

- Nostalgia is a powerful driver; those reliving their past, sharing their experiences or those completely new to the game
- But approach with caution: gamers are concerned about the stifling of creativity and may tire of the 'safe choice'
- Ultimately, they want the best of both worlds: the authentic remake AND the inspired remake
- Think carefully about how, when and why you remake, to climb to the top of the leaderboard

ABOUT MTM



MTM is a specialist strategy and insights consultancy trusted by world-leading brands in gaming, media, entertainment, tech and telco. For nearly 20 years, MTM has been powering courageous decision making, by answering our clients' toughest questions with a blend of services across consumer, cultural and commercial insight lenses.

Our games industry team live and breathe gaming culture, and help gaming clients across the world to develop products, services and marketing that shapes the industry. We work throughout the gaming lifecycle, including new IP/franchise impact, player/genre exploration, best-in-class app design, and optimisation of mechanics to drive player engagement.



Get in touch if you'd like to know more about the report or other gaming insights

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