



February 2024

The ultimate game hype tracking guide

Get more from your game's purchase funnel



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Is your game getting the hype it deserves?

PC and console gaming evolves at sonic speeds, with 2023 witnessing a surge of hit releases and more coming in 2024. With an ever-expanding array of games vying for players' time, attention, and money, standing out has become increasingly challenging.

Amidst this dynamic landscape, is your game receiving the hype it deserves?

Understanding the hype surrounding your game and benchmarking it against competing titles is essential to gauge success and secure your unique space in the market.

This guide explores how to track gaming hype from pre- to post-release, answering:

- Does your game have sufficient visibility before launch?
- Who is most likely to pick up your game, and what's the best way to reach these players?
- How do you measure post-release performance and track your game alongside its closest competitors?
- Which variables are the most useful for targeting primary and secondary audiences and sustaining long-term success?

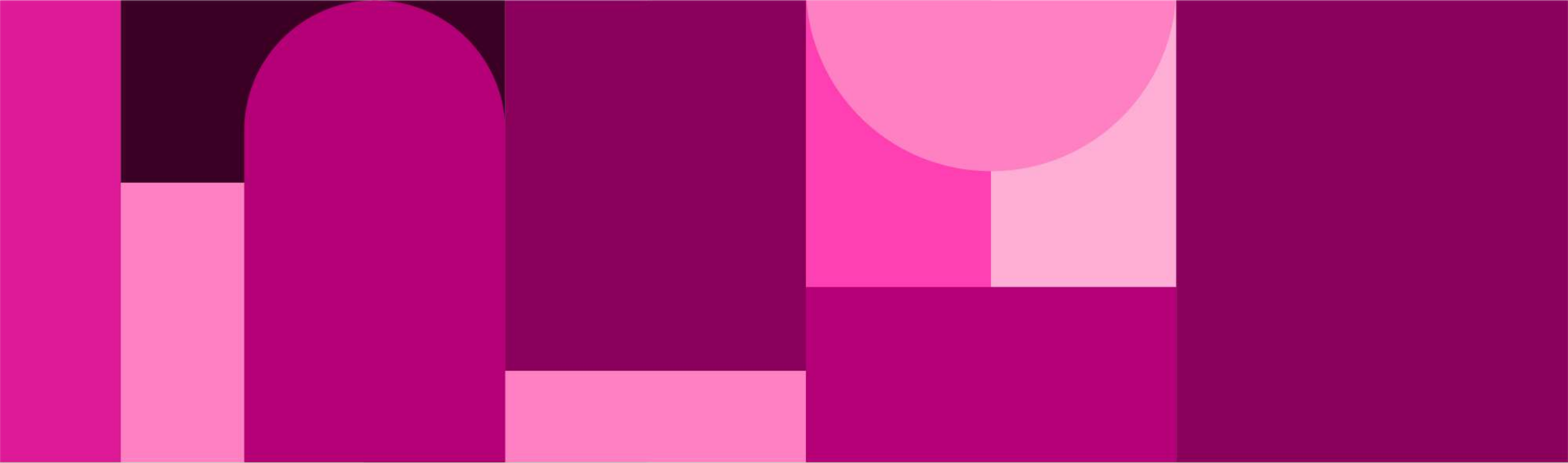
This free resource serves as a glimpse into the powerful insights provided by Newzoo's [Game Health Tracker](#), our Platform's tool for charting gaming buyer journeys.

We hope you find this guide as fun to read as it was for us to create. Happy hype tracking!



Nazrin Azis

Senior Product Manager



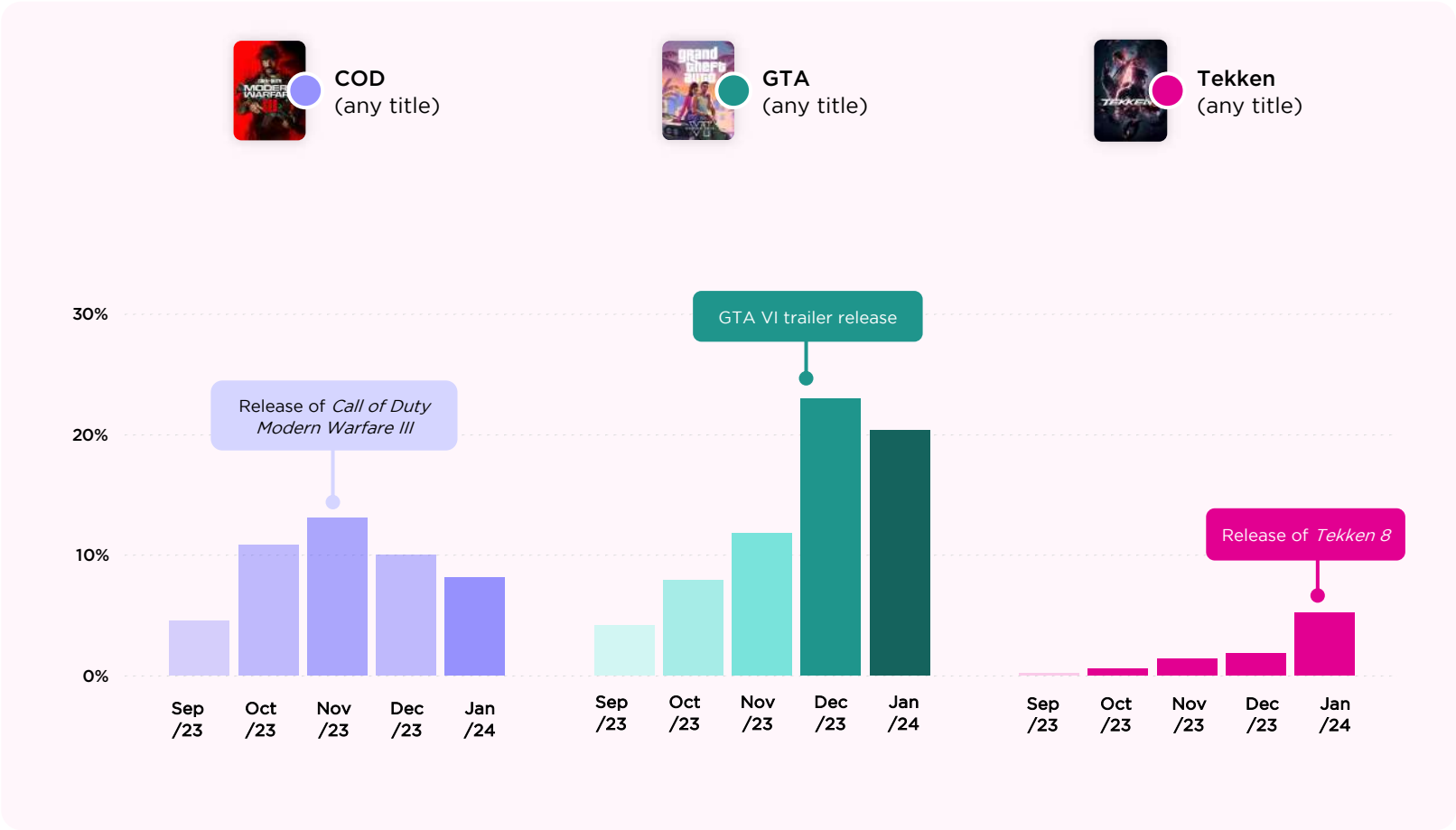
Pre-launch game hype tracking

What to track and how it will inform your pre-launch strategy

Unaided awareness: The “buzz” around your game

Upcoming games: Total unaided awareness | Combined Mentions of COD vs. GTA vs. Tekken | Sept/23 – Jan/24

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players | United States



Unaided awareness gives you an unbiased snapshot of a game’s buzz. Tracking this metric (our rule of thumb is from six months prior to release) helps you measure hype over time to boost visibility and pre-release interest.

In this guide, we’ll focus on several games to show how certain releases and events impact awareness and other hype metrics. Let’s start with *Tekken*.

The total unaided awareness for *Tekken* grew steadily from September 2023 in anticipation of *Tekken 8*. This shows that the game is generating more and more buzz, a positive development despite being overall less than franchises like *Call of Duty* and *Grand Theft Auto*. Notice, too, that buzz for these games fluctuates, corresponding to major events.

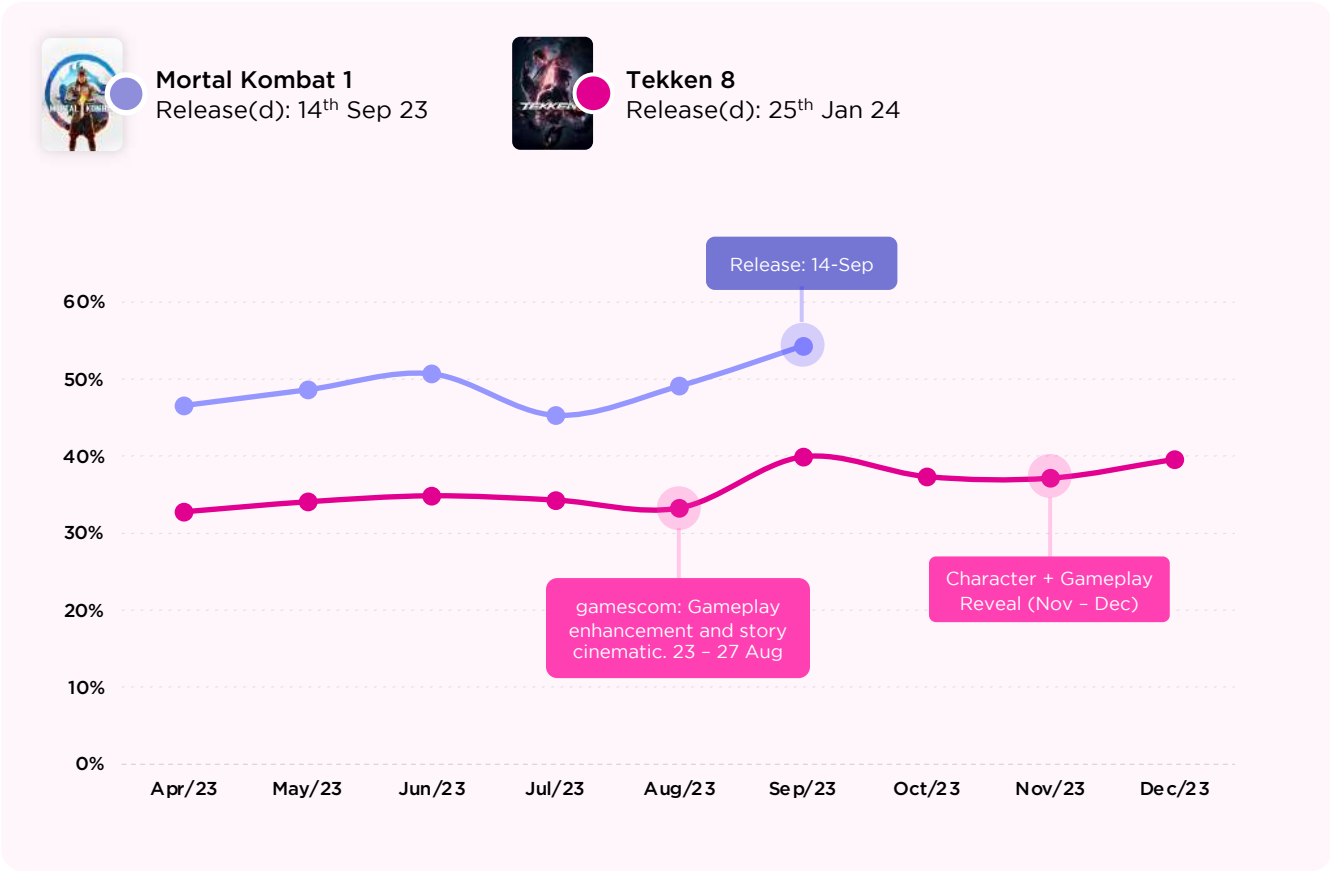
How we gather unaided awareness data:

To gather unaided awareness data, we tell players in the survey to think of announced titles that have yet to be released. Players then share the first upcoming games that come to mind—big announcements like Grand Theft Auto IV impact unaided awareness scores for other titles. Data can include released titles as well.

Aided awareness: A game's broader recognition and maximum reach

Pre-release aided awareness | Tekken 8 vs. Mortal Kombat 1

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players | United States



* Titles are updated based on release schedules each month

While **unaided awareness** measures spontaneous recall, **aided awareness** gives you a glimpse into a game's maximum reach to gauge how effective your marketing strategies are prior to release.

Many factors can influence a game's awareness, including competing releases, a franchise's scale, and genre popularity, to name a few. Comparing a game to similar titles can help you build a strategy for establishing your game in the market.

Let's look at *Tekken 8*: The game ranked seventh for aided awareness in its release month, significantly higher than its unaided awareness. It saw noticeable awareness bumps in August 2023, following its Gamescom trailer, and again in the months leading to its launch, after character and gameplay reveals.

Comparing this to the pre-launch of *Mortal Kombat 1*, the latter game held a higher profile overall, with a drop in awareness over the summer before a surge ahead of its release. The period between *Mortal Kombat 1*'s announcement and launch was unusually short, so drip-feeding information and releasing consistent trailers up to its release may explain why its awareness curve differs from *Tekken 8*'s.

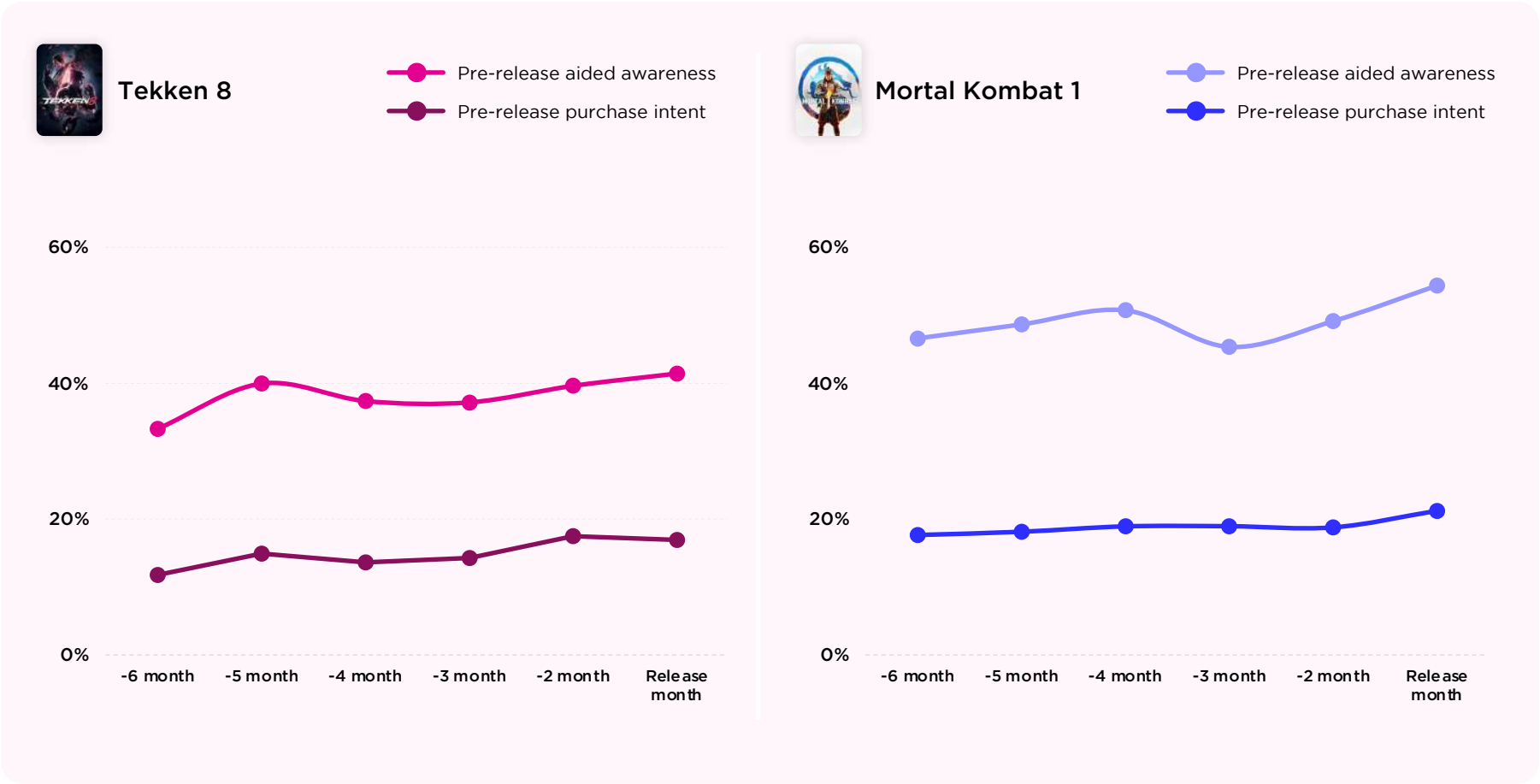
Comparing unaided and aided awareness:

Unlike unaided awareness, which measures general buzz by asking players to identify the first games that come to mind out of every possible upcoming title, aided awareness involves showing players a list of titles so they can pick the ones they know or have heard of.

Purchase intent: Insights into a game’s primary target audiences

Pre-Release Aided awareness and Intent to purchase | Tekken 8 vs. Mortal Kombat 1

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players | United States



Measuring purchase intent helps to gauge interest in a game before its release, though it’s important to recognize that it doesn’t guarantee actual sales.

Many other factors, like concurrent competitor releases, review scores, and fan reception, will impact whether a game sells.

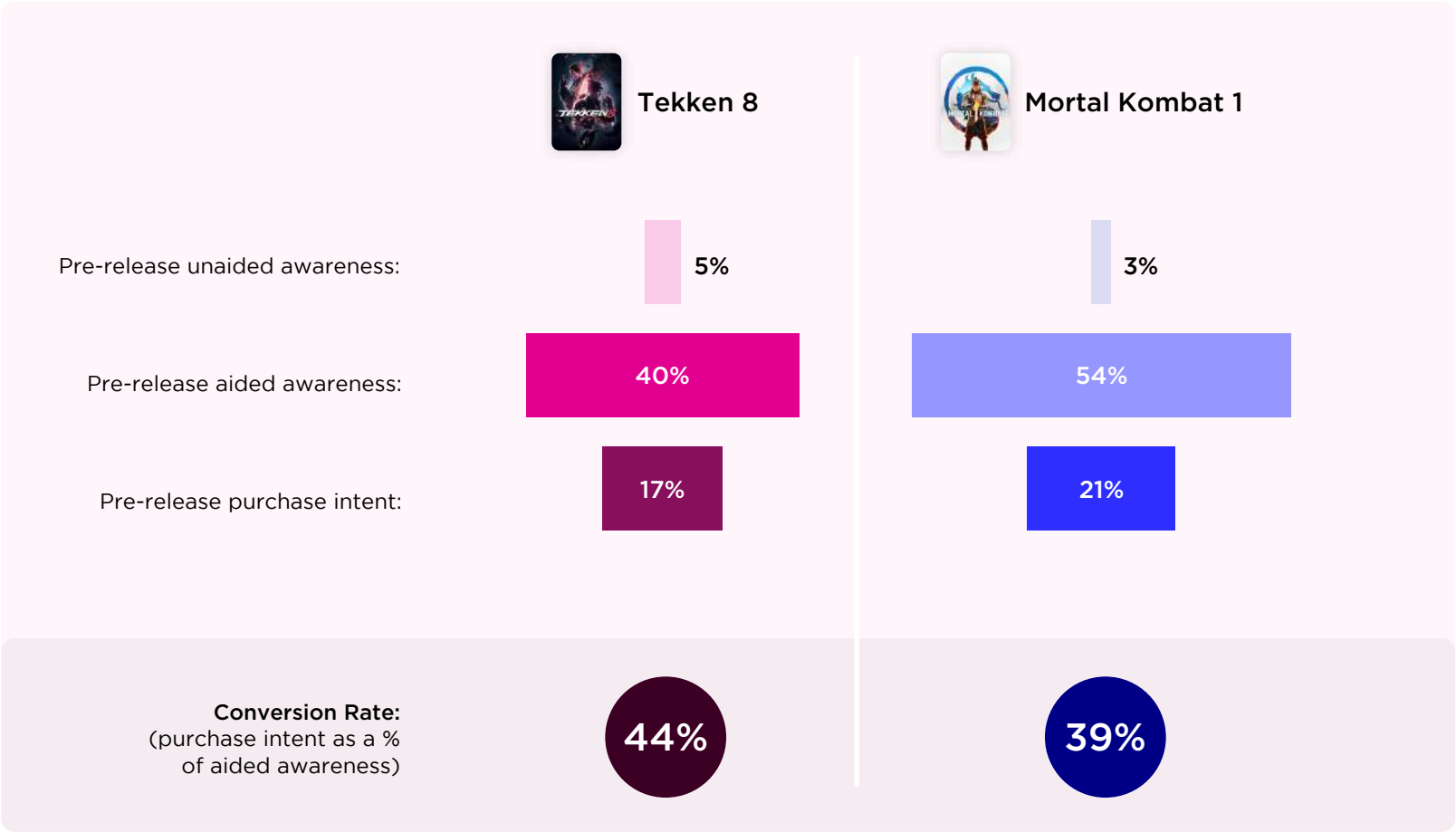
However, purchase intent is an excellent real-time indicator of the effectiveness of your pre-release campaign in generating genuine interest.

For instance, assuming awareness is driven by media spend, NetherRealm Studios might have expected a more substantial increase in its intent curve for *Mortal Kombat 1*. Purchase intent rose in the final month prior to release, though not as steeply as awareness. Of course, an uptick is still an uptick.

Conversion rate: Benchmark your success against competing games

Upcoming games: Purchase intent funnel | Mortal Kombat 1 vs. Tekken 8 | Last month pre-release

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players | United States



Benchmarking a game’s pre-release conversion rate from awareness to purchase intent can gauge the effectiveness of your pre-launch efforts versus competing titles.

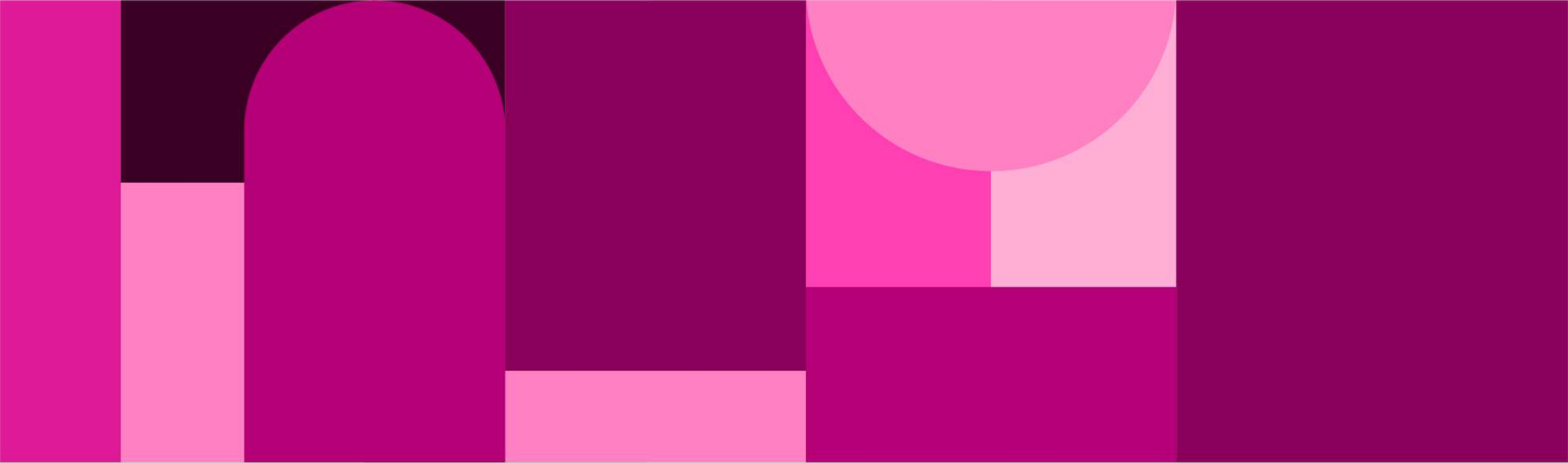
Conversion rate reflects the extent to which a company has raised awareness of a game and how much that investment has influenced your potential players’ desire to purchase your game.

Generating hype is only one step toward a game’s commercial success.

You need to ask questions like, “Where will my expenditure yield the greatest impact?” and “Who should be my primary target players, and where can I reach them?” We’ll focus on these questions in the next sections.

How we measure purchase intent:

Prior to a game’s release, we ask players how likely they are to pick up the title. Players can answer that they intend to purchase the game, are considering it, or don’t think they’ll buy the title.



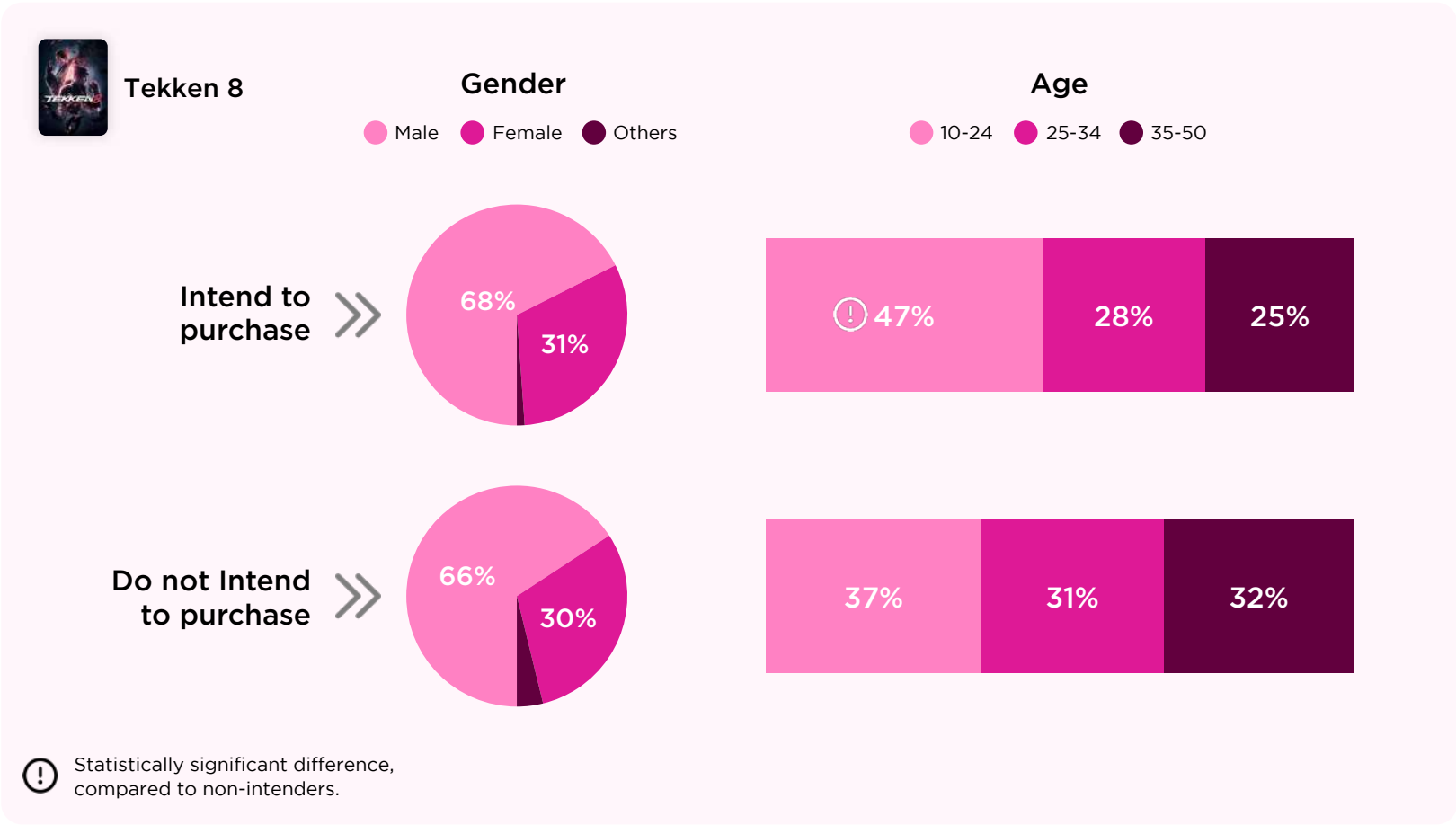
Identifying audience opportunities

What kinds of players to target and where to find them

Uncovering what kinds of players want to purchase your game

Tekken 8 | The Demographics of pre-release purchase intenders | December 2023

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players | United States



Understanding the types of people who comprise your target audience is essential to marketing your game in a way that resonates (and matches the audience expectations you had during development).

Marketing spend is often limited, and obtaining a better data-driven understanding of your primary target audience can help focus your marketing resources on the right players and channels.

This insight may align with your initial expectations of your primary audience but could also reveal overlooked demographic segments.

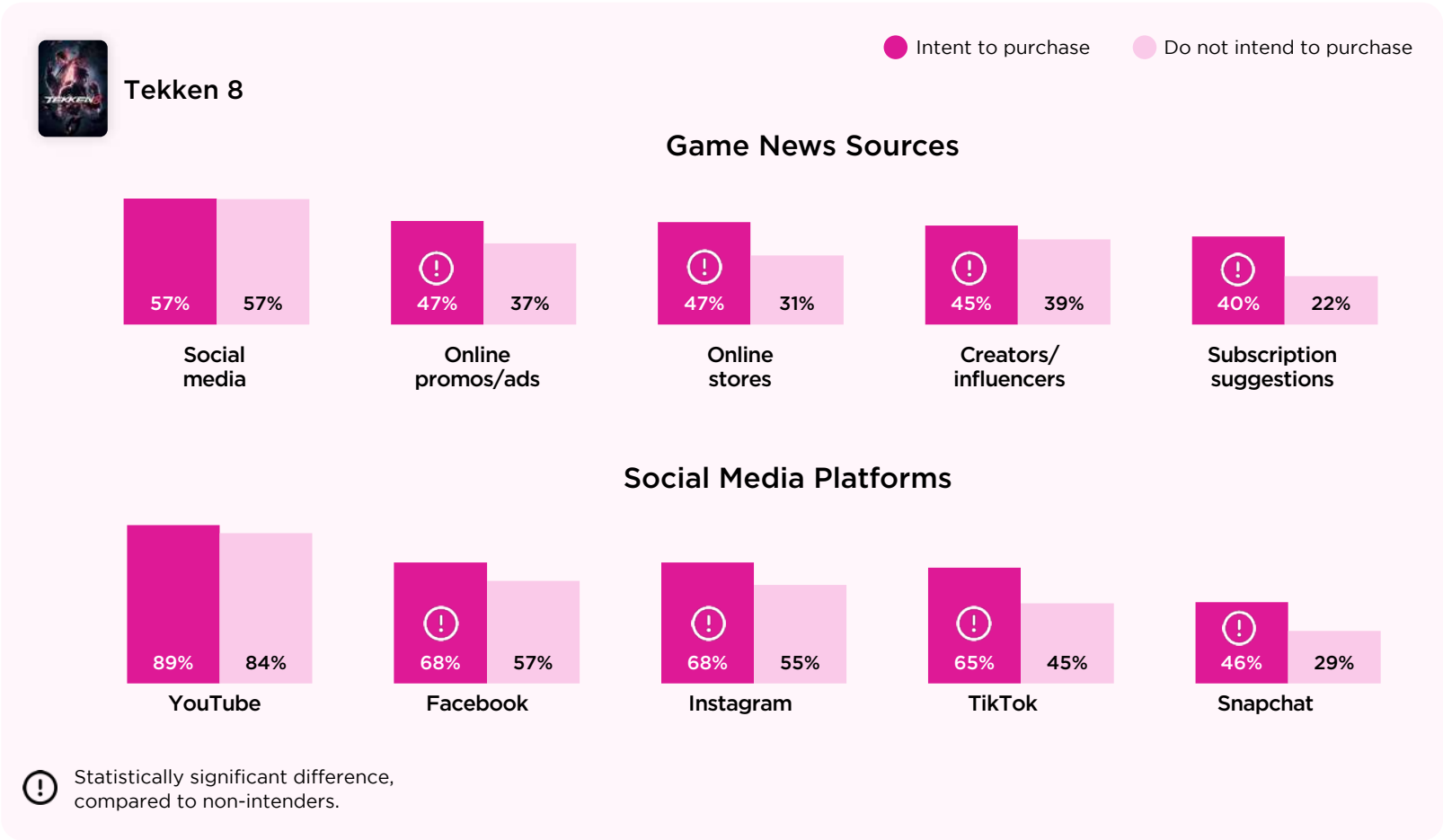
Here, we're focusing solely on age and gender, but the Game Health Tracker enables you to analyze various dimensions to pinpoint our most promising audiences.

For instance, in the case of *Tekken 8*, the gender balance between purchase intenders and those who do not intend to purchase the game is quite even. However, the proportion of 10-24-year-olds is quite a lot higher among intenders (47%, compared to just 37% among non-intenders). In other words, these players are more typical of *Tekken 8*'s target audience.

Identifying the channels for effective game release promos

Tekken 8 | Game news sources | December 2023

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players, aware of Tekken 8 | United States



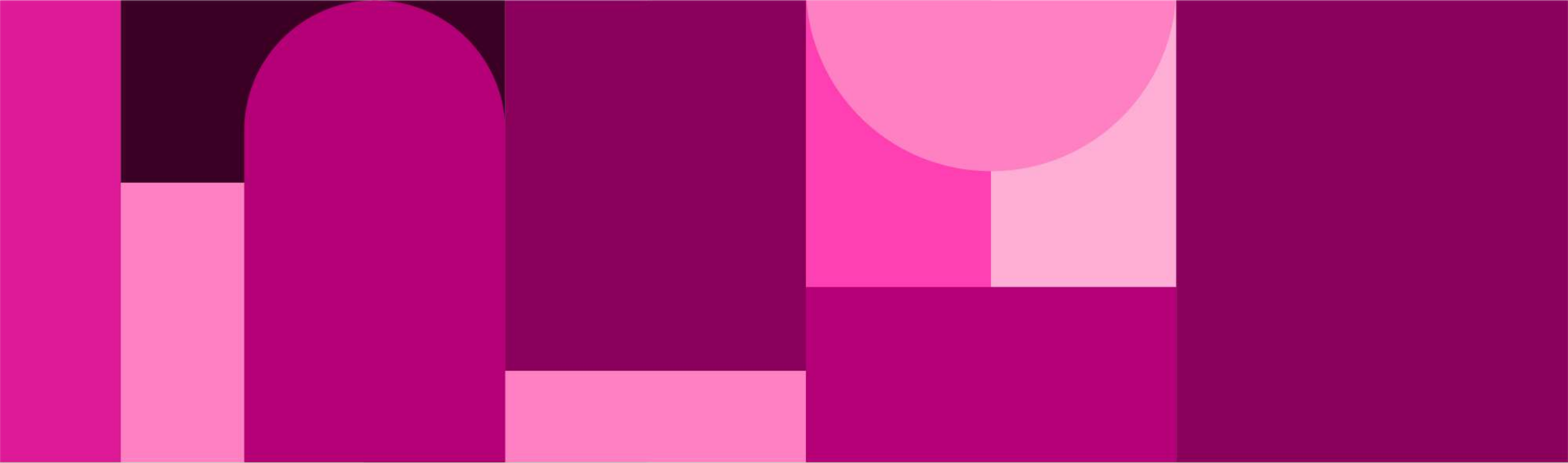
Identifying your primary audience’s game news sources is essential for meeting your players where they are (and maximizing marketing spend).

There are so many channels out there, from specialized game news sources to social media platforms with limitless gaming channels. So, which channels are the most effective for reaching your primary target audience?

Let’s look at the players intending to purchase *Tekken 8* versus those who don’t. Clear differences emerge.

Players intending to purchase *Tekken 8* gather information from a wider range of sources, with a higher likelihood of obtaining it from online promotions, ads, and creators. Compared to non-intenders, purchase intenders are especially likely to gather insight from online stores and gaming subscriptions.

When they engage with social media, purchase intenders are more likely to use all platforms, but the difference is most significant for TikTok and Snapchat. *Tekken 8* has the most to gain from targeting younger players who prefer short videos and similar media.



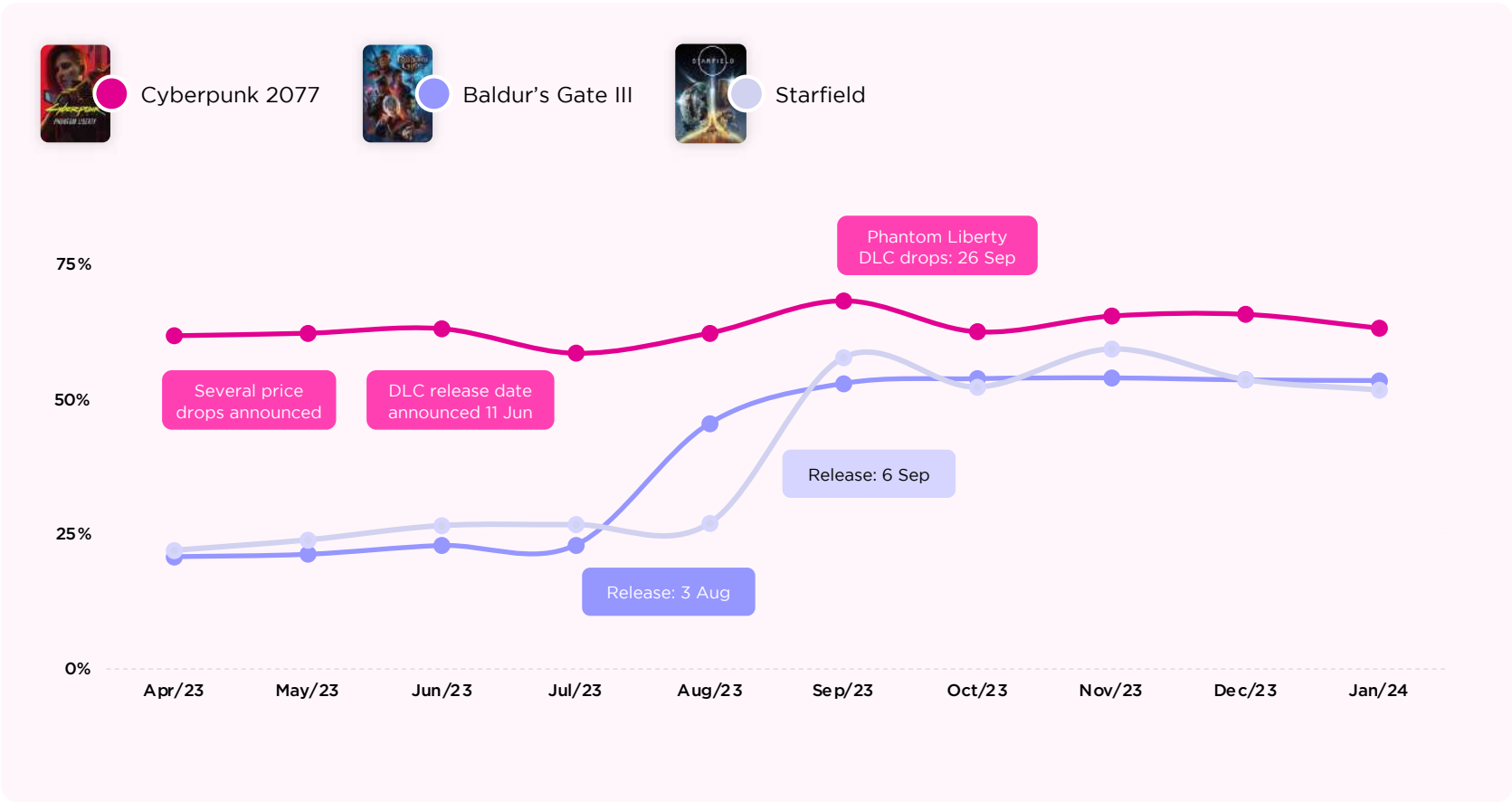
Maintaining a game's hype

Strategies to sustain and scale success after a game's release

Aided awareness: Staying on top of key metrics post-release

Pre- and post-launch aided awareness | Cyberpunk 2077 vs. Starfield vs. Baldur's Gate III

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players | United States



* Titles are updated based on release schedules each month

Games plateau in awareness over time as they grow and mature. Games aren't always fresh in the collective consumer imagination.

So, it's essential to use pre- and post-launch data to guide how you acquire new players and maximize revenue per player.

When comparing *Baldur's Gate 3* and *Starfield*, two recent releases, we see that *Starfield's* awareness fluctuates more.

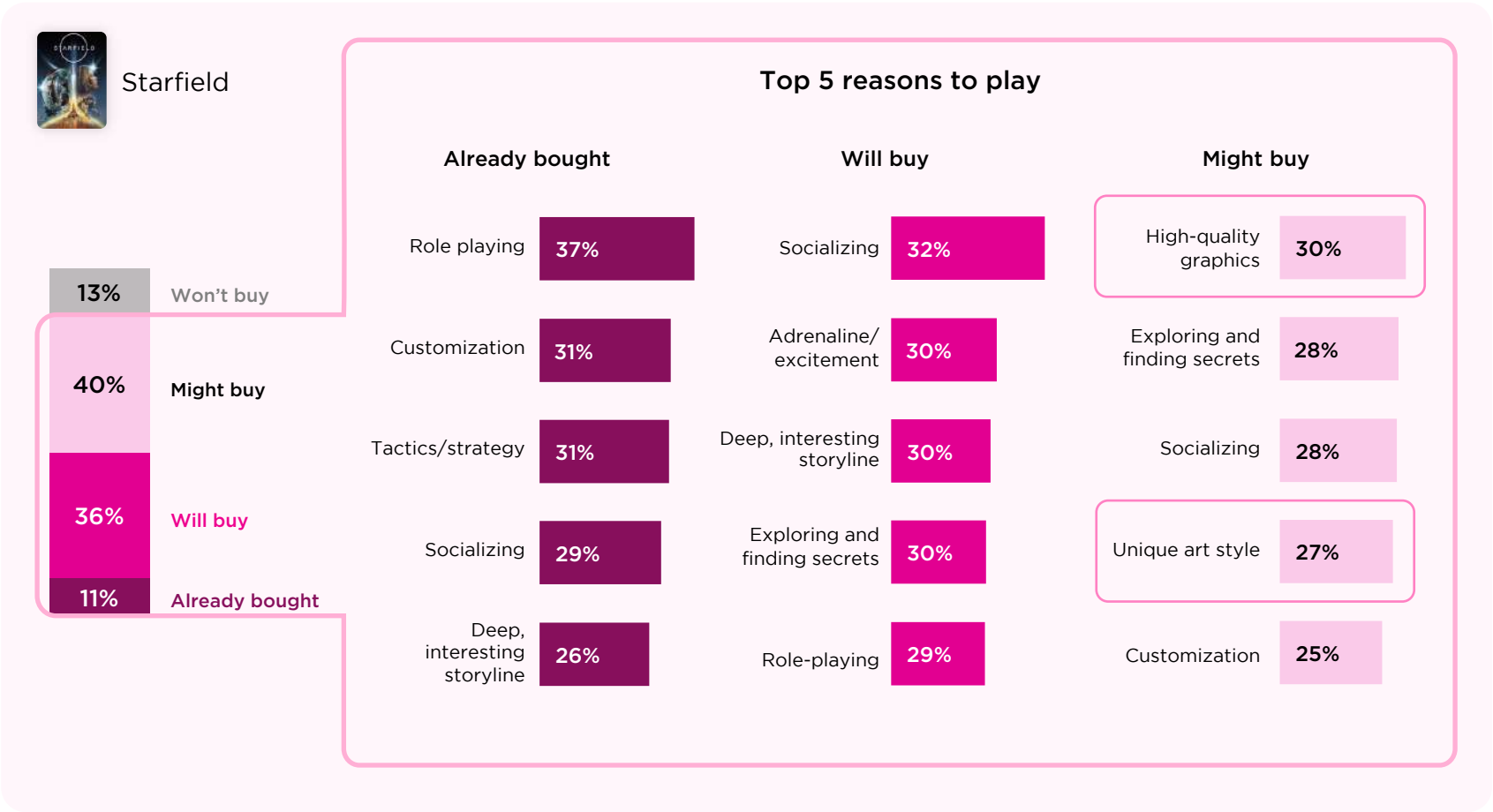
Most likely, we can attribute this inconsistent awareness to the fact that *Baldur's Gate* is a more established franchise with a dedicated fan base. Also, the game was in beta for three years. *Starfield* is a new IP that's still establishing its industry presence and ideal audiences.

Cyberpunk 2077, released in December 2020, plateaued in awareness last year but still experiences little ups and downs. DLC releases, anticipated updates, and other game launches may have contributed to these changes.

Reasons to play: Fine-tuning your marketing to convert more players

Starfield | Profiling Players Considering Purchasing Post-Launch

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players, considering purchasing Starfield | United States



There are many ways to profile your primary and secondary player audiences, and digging into motivations to play helps to understand how to reach players who are still on the fence about buying the game.

Every game attracts its unique audience of players with varying preferences and motivations. Understanding the variations among your audiences is essential for marketing optimizations, especially when targeting the "Might buy" consumers.

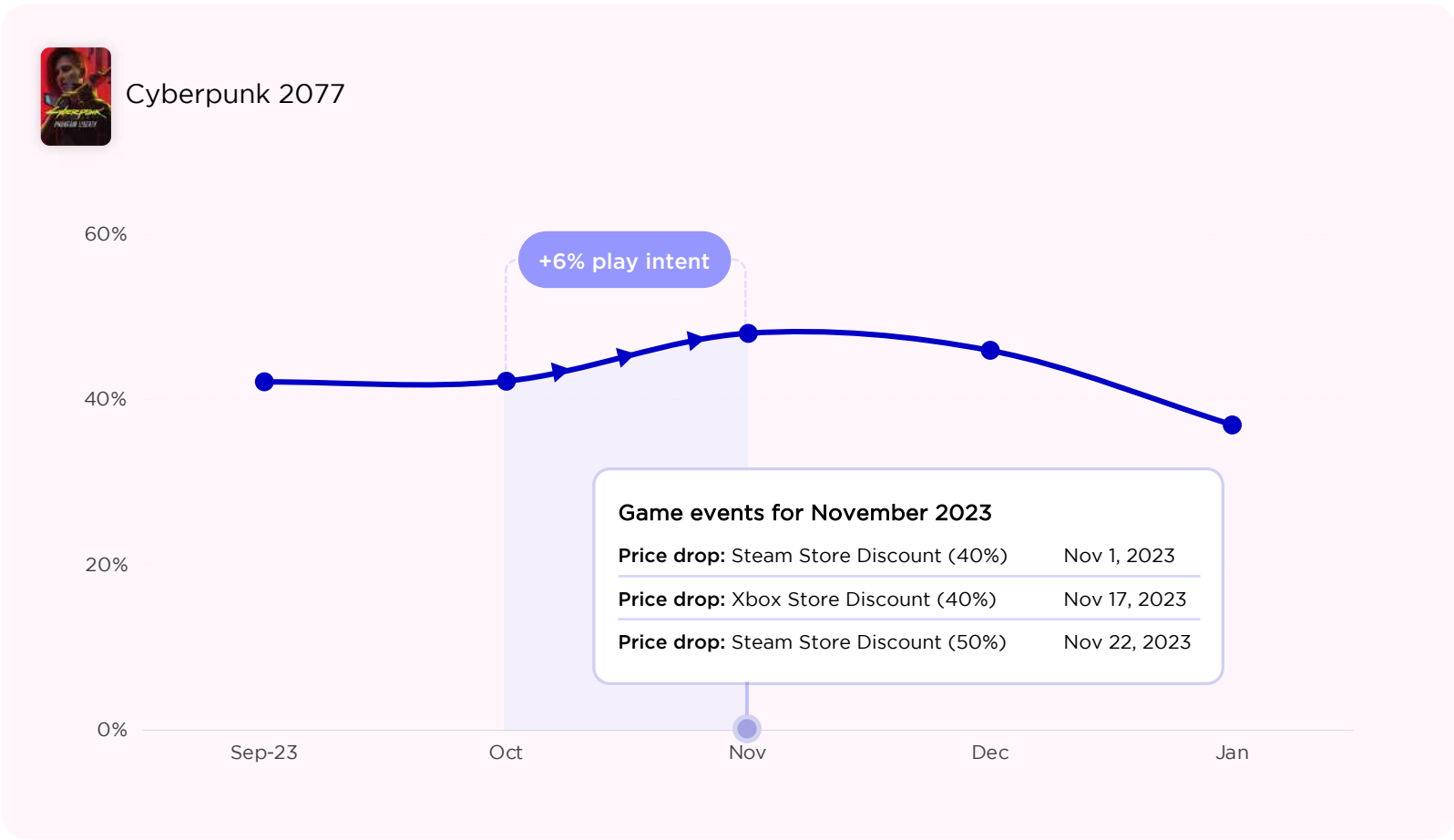
Let's launch back into *Starfield*. You can see nuances among players who've either purchased or may or may never buy the game. Role-playing themes and mechanics motivate (or, in this case, motivated) players who already bought the game, while prospective buyers focus a bit more on socializing.

Interestingly, high-quality graphics and unique art styles are influential for players who might buy *Starfield*. This provides an angle to consider for secondary player acquisition.

What kinds of tactical marketing measures have the most impact?

Cyberpunk 2077: Intent to play (non-players) [September – August 2023]

Base: Past 6 months PC and/or console players who haven't played Cyberpunk 2077 in the past 3 months



Plays like discounts and DLC drops can boost the intent to play for gamers who haven't yet purchased a given title. Some tactical measures can also strengthen retention for players who've bought the game and may stop playing.

When a game launches, core enthusiasts and early adopters will likely flock to purchase it, riding the initial wave of excitement fueled by pre-launch hype. However, a broader audience, comprising secondary and tertiary segments, will always wait to buy the game until after the hype dies down.

Tactical measures like price drops, additional content drops, or a whole host of other plays can effectively attract those players (and primary audience members who didn't buy the game). Strategic pricing adjustments have proven to be a powerful tool in drawing in a wider group of players.

If we look at *Cyberpunk 2077*, we see that strategy come to life. Significant price cuts on major platforms boosted engagement for players who hadn't yet converted to customers.

Key takeaways

Now that you're equipped with purchase funnel insights, what comes next?

1

A game doesn't have to be top of everyone's mind to be a success.

PC and console gaming has its heavy hitters, but these are not the only titles on gamers' minds. If you focus too much on your game or franchise's daily buzz, you likely won't get the whole picture and may miss ways to achieve success on your own terms.

It's vital to understand your game's purchase funnel from awareness driven by campaigns to how effectively that impacts intent to purchase and beyond. Understanding how to broaden and sustain consumer interest post-release is equally pivotal.

You must be on the minds of the customers you care about most. And you should know how to (and be ready to) modify your approach if that isn't happening.

2

You're not serving every player. Your most valuable audiences matter most.

Tracking awareness and purchase intent becomes actionable when you can dig into the demographics, psychographics, and other profiling and targeting data about the players most likely to convert.

While many studios out there have the vision to make games for everyone, only a few games actually draw in a critical mass of players. The better you know your current and potential player base's backgrounds, attitudes, and behaviors, the better you can communicate with them to help them discover and fall in love with your game (or IP/franchise).

It's easier to be precise and compelling when talking to well-defined player segments than it is to appeal to a varied mass of global gamers.

3

You can always build awareness and grow your audiences after launch.

While it's vital to focus on the effectiveness of marketing campaigns pre-launch, it's equally important to continue tracking awareness and purchase intent well into a released game's lifecycle.

There are always purchase intenders that haven't converted yet and new audiences waiting to jump in outside your primary and secondary segments. Also, games often evolve. Updates, fixes, new content, franchise entries, and more are always on the horizon, each a reason for players to finally convert.

Tracking your game's hype metrics and those of competing titles helps you to keep a finger on the pulse of the market and the kind of impact your game is having on it. Our Game Health Tracker is the prime toolkit for this.

Game Health Tracker

Continuously fielded game-level consumer insights for upcoming and in-service titles across PC and console gaming



225+

Released PC and console titles



40+

Upcoming PC and console titles



60+

Publishers & developers



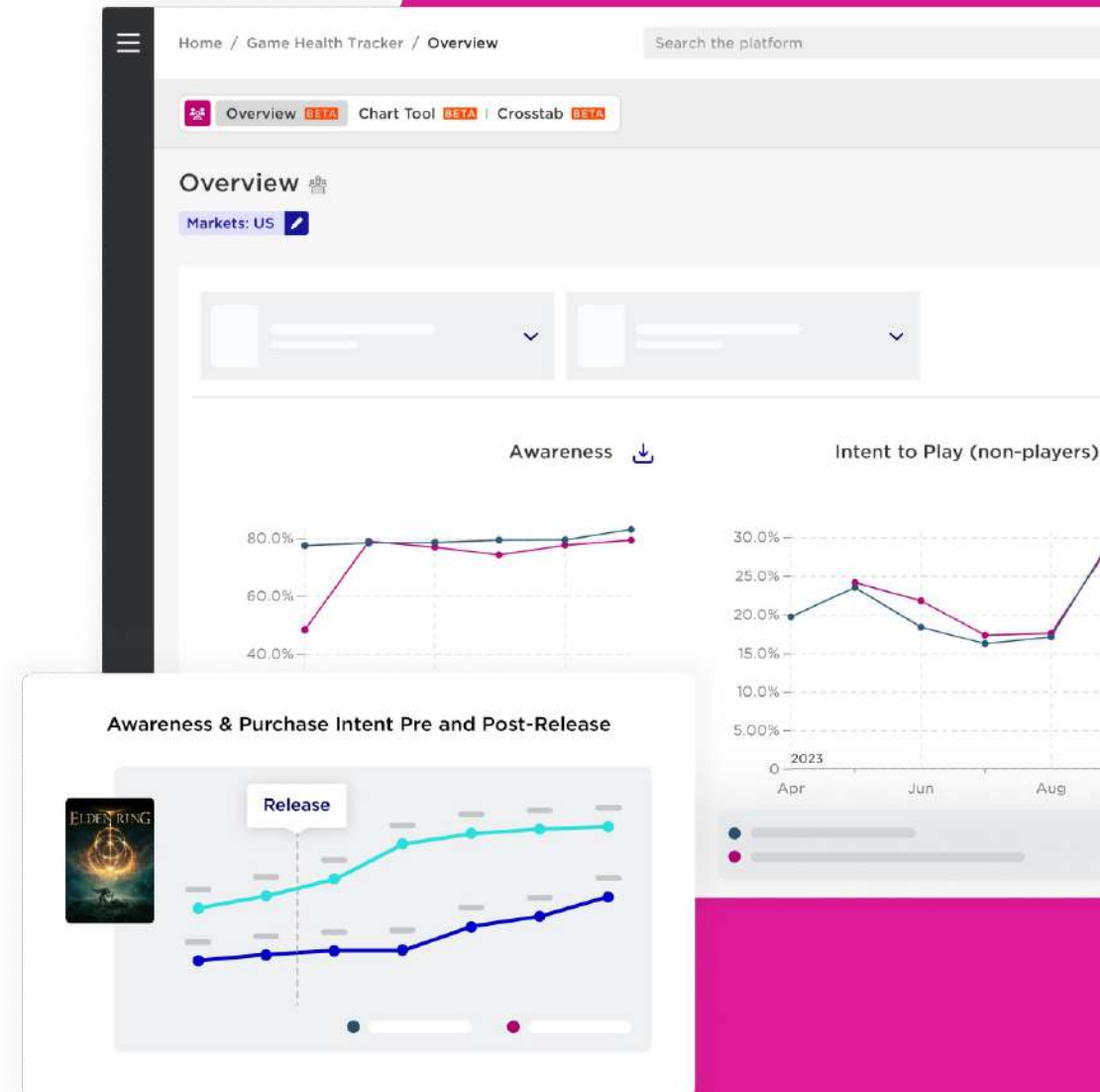
200+

Variables tracked

Includes:

- ✓ 3,000+ PC/console players in the US surveyed monthly (covering 6 months of activity)
- ✓ (Un)aided awareness, play/purchase intent, player demographics, and attitudes
- ✓ Measure pre-launch hype, awareness, and purchase intent
- ✓ Keep a pulse on post-release funnel metrics and audiences
- ✓ Monitor the effectiveness of ongoing marketing efforts
- ✓ Easy-to-use platform & data viewing tools

[Find out more](#)



What's covered in the Game Health Tracker

Key metrics

➔ Upcoming titles

- Unaided awareness
- Aided awareness
- Purchase intent (P2P)
- Play intent (F2P)

➔ Released titles

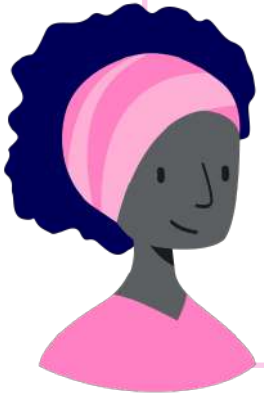
- Unaided awareness
- Aided awareness
- Play behavior (current / past)
- Play intent (non-players)

Among [title] players:

- Platform played on
- Likelihood to recommend (NPS)
- Amount of money spent on
- Monthly time spent playing
- General rating

➔ Profiling, behavior, attitudes

- Demographics
- Leisure activities
- Social media usage
- Favorite gaming platform
- Reasons for playing games / player motivations / personas
- Sources of video game releases / news
- Video game content viewing
- Gaming subscriptions



Your leading data platform and partner in gaming



Know the games



Know the gamers



Know the games market

Newzoo Platform

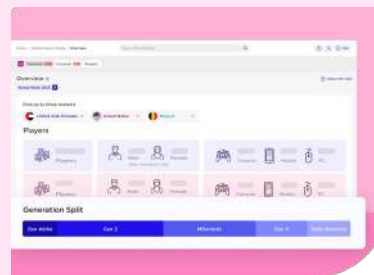
GAMES DATA



Game Performance Monitor

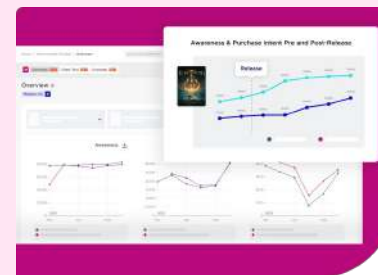
Unlock title-level engagement and revenue data for thousands of PC and console games.

GAMER RESEARCH



Global Gamer Study

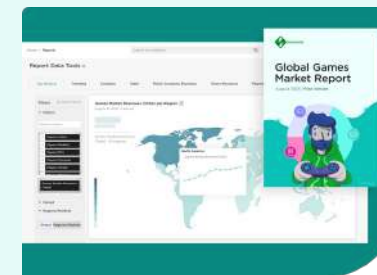
Explore the global gamer audiences across all dimensions with the largest gamer research study.



Game Health Tracker

Track brand health and purchase funnel data over time for hundreds of games.

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