**The Demographic of Casual Gamers**

*Source:*

[*https://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/101813/Survey\_PopCap\_Releases\_Casual\_Game\_Findings.php*](https://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/101813/Survey_PopCap_Releases_Casual_Game_Findings.php)

So far, we have been looking at information on the casual gamer from Jesse Schell’s findings. I wanted to find another angle and discovered that casual game giant PopCap released all their findings concerning the casual game demographic in 2006. Of course, this data is over a decade old, and while the psychology of the casual game is the same, the prominence of smartphones today may mean the percentage are a little off. The findings are as follows:

* 71% of respondents were over 40. 47% were over 50
* 76% of respondents were female
* However, the percentage of women under 40 was smaller than the percentage of men under 40 (26% to 36%)
* 61% of men say have been playing casual games for 5 years or more, compared to 46% of women who have played that long
* 60% of female respondents play daily, compared to 44% of men
* 29% of female respondents play for 10 hours a week, compared to 22% of men
* 43% of female respondents say their sessions of play typically last an hour or more, compared to 31% of men
* 88% of players express a feeling of stress relief when playing casual games
* 74% of players felt that mental exercise is a benefit of casual games
* 41% of players play casual games for ‘stress relief/relaxation’, 19% play for entertainment, 27% play as a distraction from chronic pain/fatigue, whereas 8% play to feel relief from chronic pain/fatigue
* When it comes to preferred time of play, 51% of players play most during weekday evenings, 47% before going to bed, 35% during weekends and 11% during work hours
* 77% of players have played casual games for at least 3 years, 49% for 5 or more years, and 21% for 10 or more years
* 57% of respondents play daily
* 90% play twice or more per week
* 52% of players play for at least 5 hours per week, and 29% play for at least 10 hours per week

**Schadenfreude**

Schadenfreude is the pleasure derived from somebody else’s misfortune. If we use Nicole Lazzaro’s categorisation of the different kinds of fun in games, schadenfreude would be found in games that fall under the people fun category.

Take, for example, Mario Kart’s blue shell. It’s funny when the player in first place is hit by a blue shell and thrown up in the air by an explosion while his opponents zoom passed them. That negative feedback loop encourages schadenfreude.

*The use of schadenfreude in games is not well documented. Schell makes no mention of it, Lazzaro only uses it as a keyword, and Gamasutra delivers no useful results on the topic. I can’t even find anything useful if I Google ‘Schadenfreude in games’. As such, bear in mind what I’m about to say is my own free thinking:*

I think negative feedback loops that punish the winning player are a good source of schadenfreude. Helping the players that are falling behind at the winning player’s expense may be the best way to get this emotion out of our players. The harder the winning player falls, the better the schadenfreude will be, but of course we must keep balance in mind. Other examples of games that support my opinion include Mario Party, Animal Crossing: Amiibo Festival, and Super Smash Brothers. It seems Nintendo like schadenfreude a great deal!

We need to think about ways we can include negative feedback loops into our games. I think the power ups we discussed would be a step in the right direction. I also think there is some way we could use the gyroscope mechanic, maybe a prompt appears on screen during the winning players turn that lets the opposing player tilt the screen and cause some chaos.