

# Video games and history: An Introduction



What are folks playing?

# Why does this course exist, bud?

- ▶ Because games are old enough to justify studying! Fifty plus years!
- ▶ Because games have “cultural purchase,” meaning that they’re widespread, culturally significant and represent a significant investment both financially and emotionally for many people.
- ▶ Because historians have to stop pretending games are not one of the primary ways everyday folks are exposed to historical narratives, events and arguments.



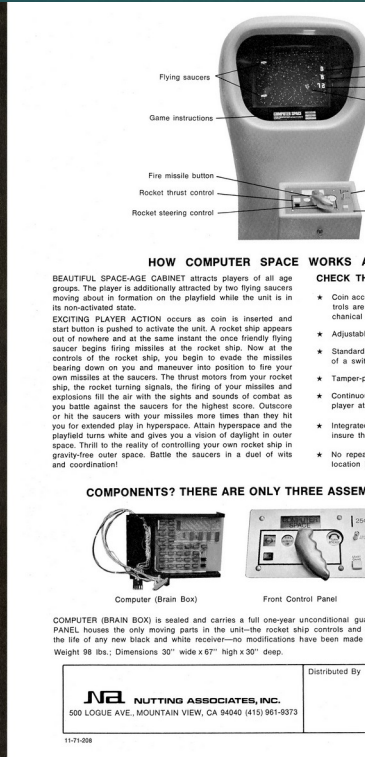
# Video games: a new phenomenon?

- ▶ Not at all. Let's look at arcades: they're ancient at this point, especially when we consider how they were just an adaptation of an earlier idea.
- ▶ Arcades became a real cultural icon, and folks discussed them and their supposed benefits/risks for years.
- ▶ Arcades became socially meaningful spaces. More on this in another lecture!



Source: en.Wikipedia.org





# Arcades: Old Idea, New Technology

Images: gamehistory.org and shorpy.com



Eventually, games made their way into homes. Images like this are packed with meaning: they are advertisements, sure, but they represent an early attempt at carving out a “niche” for games as something “for kids.”



Source: [goblinkomegamall.com](http://goblinkomegamall.com)





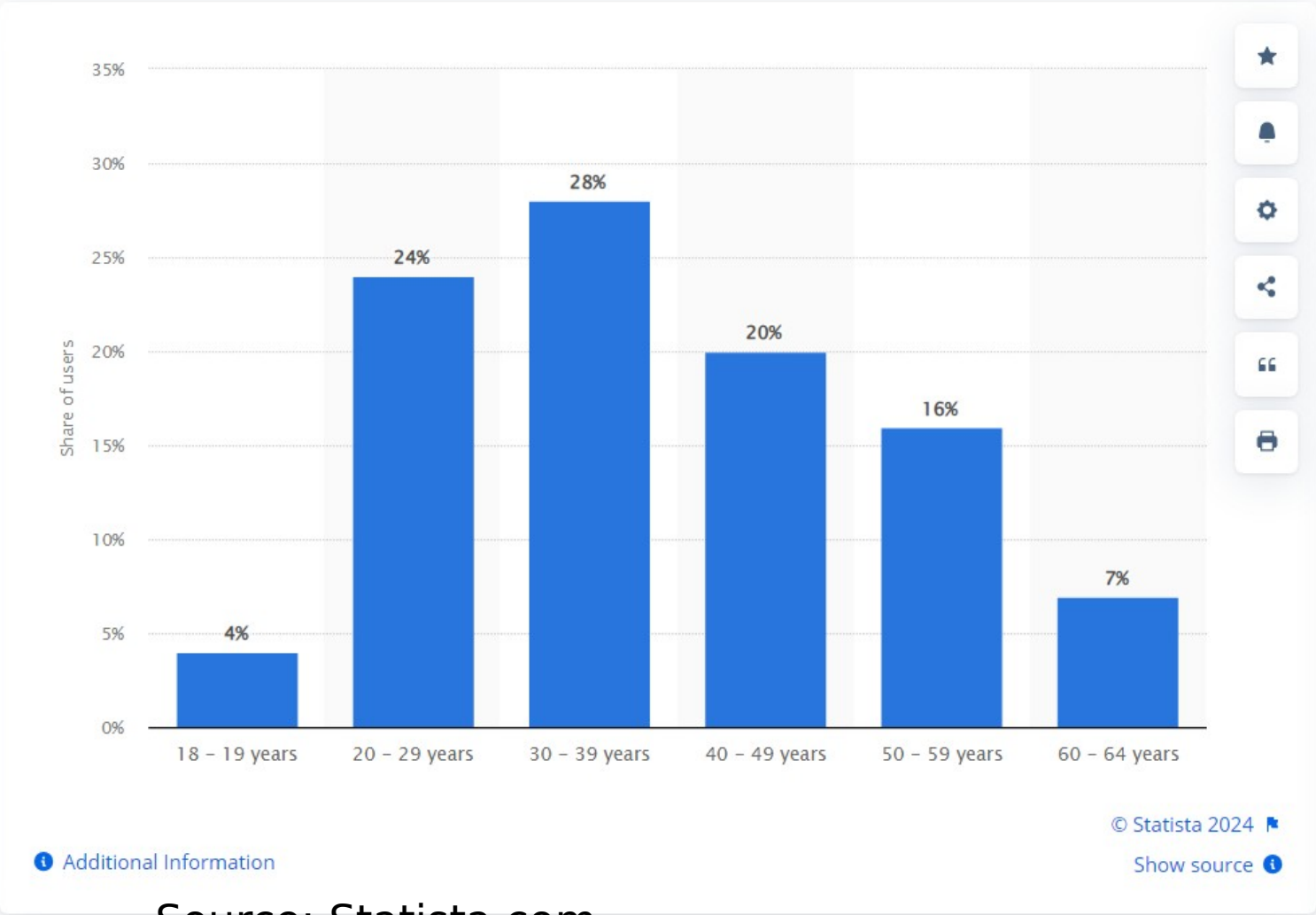
To be fair,  
this wasn't  
the only  
angle  
advertisers  
went for.  
Games were  
once  
marketed as  
“family fun!”

# Who plays video games?

- ▶ Young white adolescents?
- ▶ Mostly men?
- ▶ Mostly young men?
- ▶ Mostly young men and women?
- ▶ Mostly people in North America?
- ▶ Do older people play?



# Distribution of video game users in the United States as of June 2024, by age group



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Release date

July 2024

Region

United States

Survey time period

July 2023 to June 2024

Age group

18-64 years

Special properties

including smartphone gamers

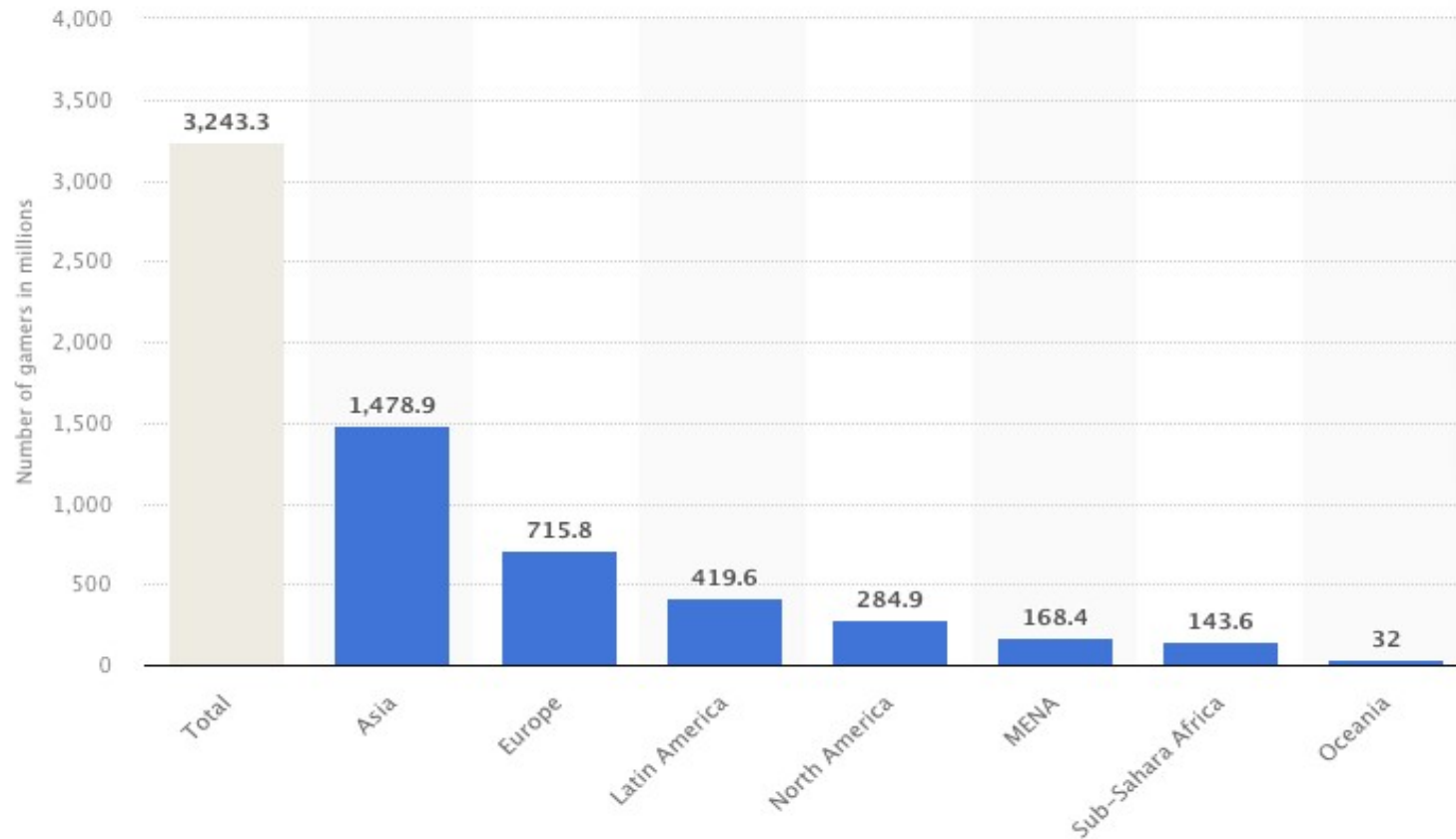
Citation formats

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Source: Statista.com

# Number of video gamers worldwide in 2021, by region

(in millions)



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## IN COOPERATION WITH



## Release date

August 2021

## Region

Worldwide

## Survey time period

2021

[Additional Information](#)

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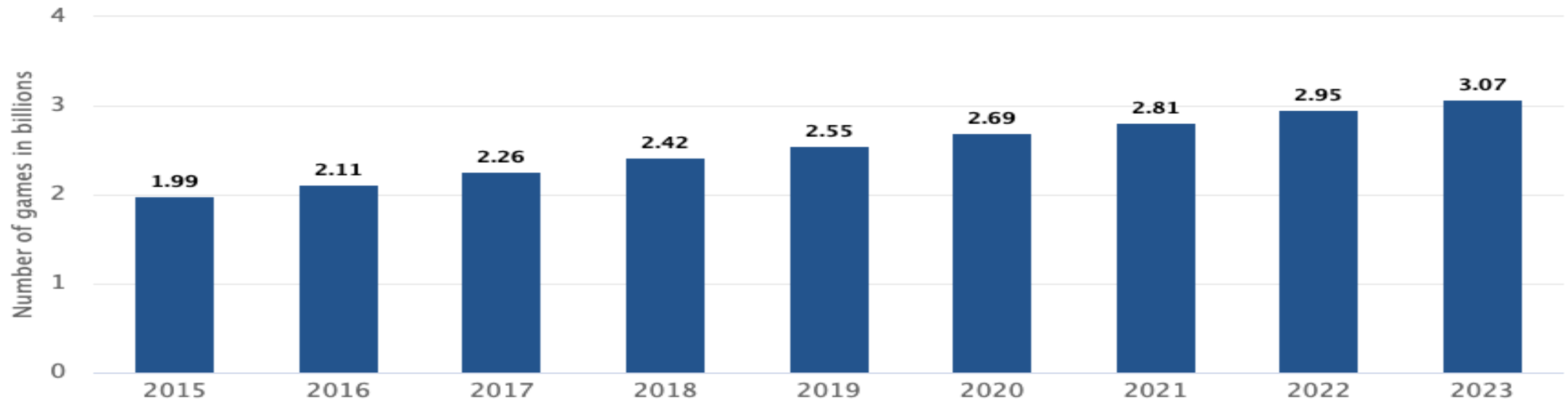




## How many active video gamers were there in 2020?

There were 2.69 billion video game players worldwide in 2020. The figure will rise to 3.07 billion in 2023 based on a 5.6% year-on-year growth forecast. The global games market had \$159.3 billion in revenues for 2020, almost half of which came from the Asia Pacific market.

### Number of active video gamers worldwide - 2015 to 2023 in billions



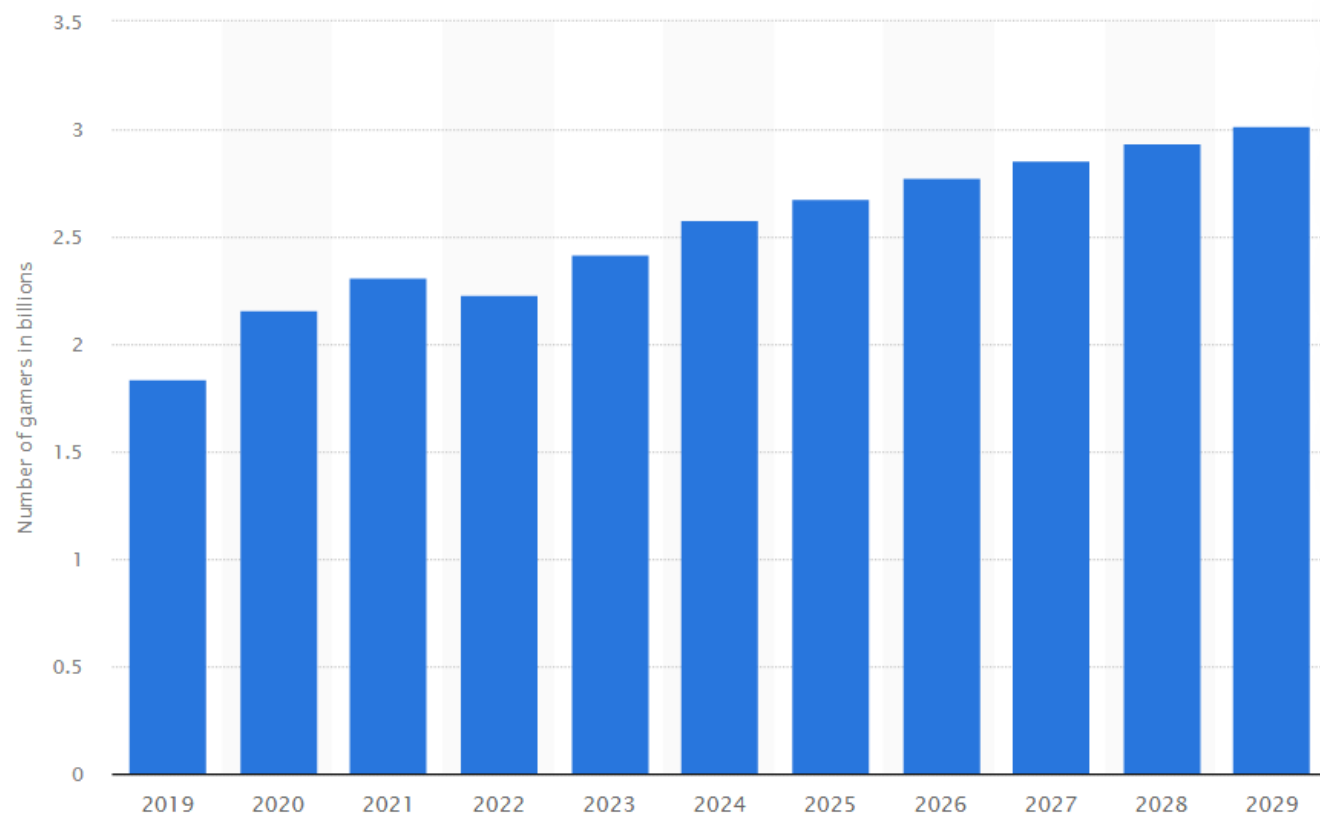
Source: Newzoo (2020)

Designed by  FinancesOnline

<https://financesonline.com/number-of-gamers-worldwide/>

# Number of video game users worldwide from 2019 to 2029

(in billions)



[Additional Information](#)

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rates. Revenues are generated through in-game purchases, consumer spending on games, and subscription fees. Additional definitions for each market can be found within the respective market pages. Market numbers for download games, mobile games, online games and gaming networks can also be found in the digital market insights in the video games market. Key players in the market are companies like Activision (Call of Duty), PUBG Mobile or GeForce Now. For more information on the data displayed, use the info button right next to the boxes.

## Citation formats

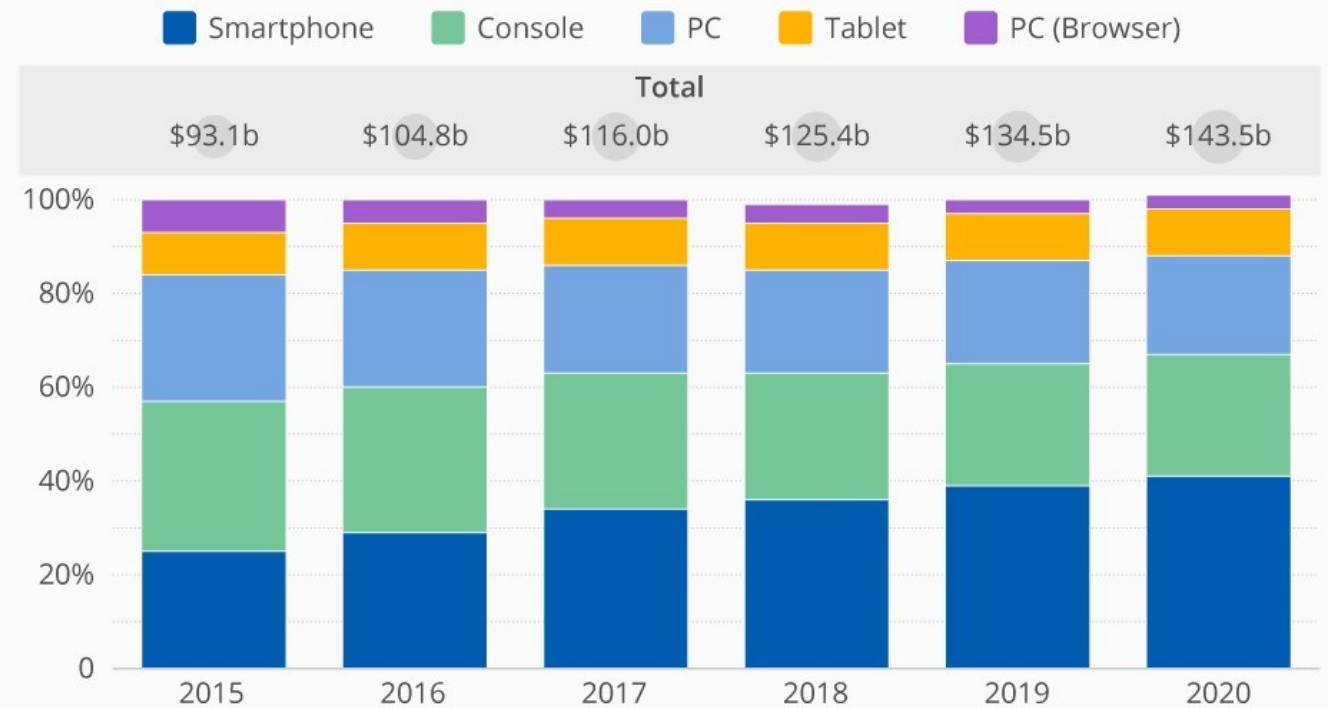
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►Source:  
<https://www.statista.com/chart/12955/smartphones-are-taking-over-the-global-games-market/>

## Smartphones are Taking Over the Global Games Market

Breakdown of estimated revenue of global games market, by segment



## TRENDING

## 16-year-old wins \$3-million grand prize at Fortnite World Cup



By [Meaghan Wray](#) • Global News

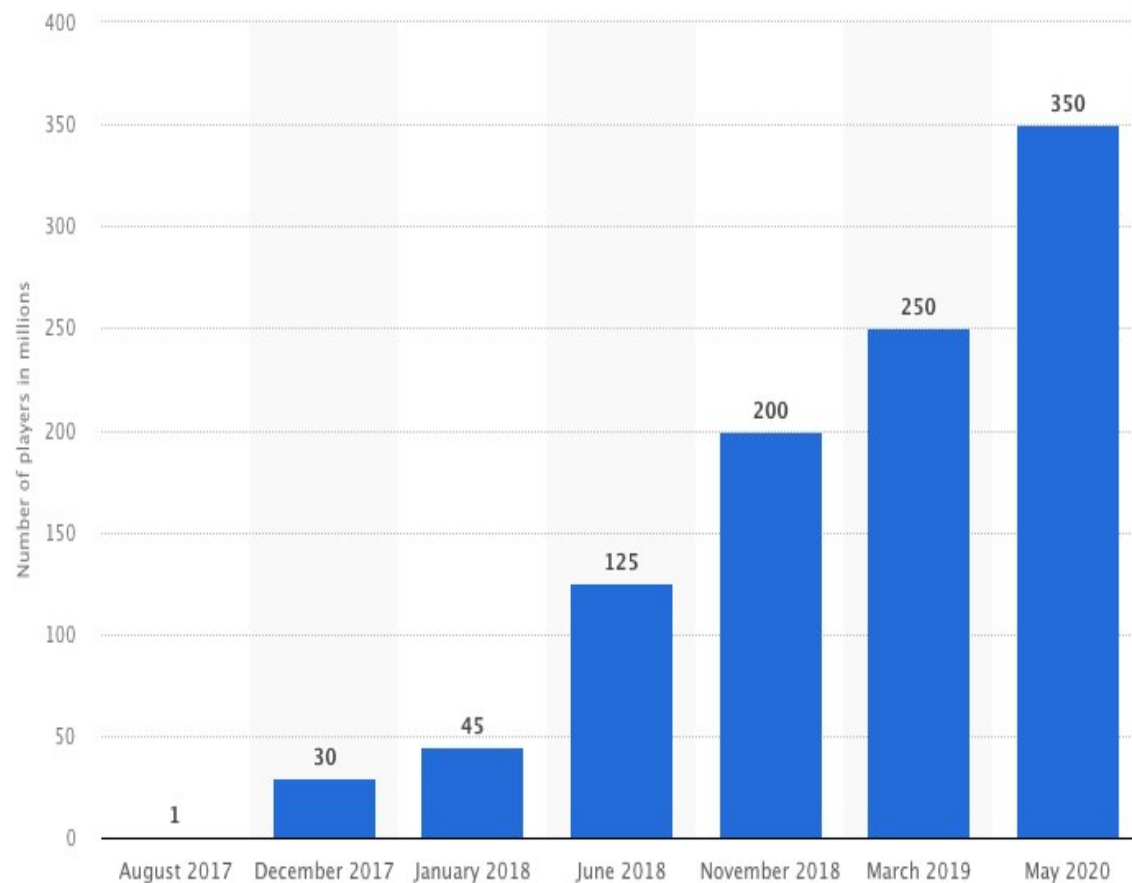
Posted July 29, 2019 10:21 am • Updated August 13, 2019 11:41 am





# Registered users of Fortnite worldwide from August 2017 to May 2020

(in millions)



[Additional Information](#)

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## Sources

[→ Show sources information](#)

[→ Show publisher information](#)

## Release date

May 2020

## Region

Worldwide

## Survey time period

August 2017 to May 2020

## Supplementary notes

Figures for periods prior to May 2020 come from previous reports.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/746230/fortnite-players/>



# CRA auditors keeping an eye on video-game streamers, influencers in hunt for tax revenue

BILL CURRY >

OTTAWA

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 3, 2020

TRENDING

1 OPINION

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-cra-auditors-keeping-an-eye-on-video-game-streamers-influencers-in/>



# Macron believes Paris 2024 "historic opportunity" for esports in France

By Patrick Burke

Monday, 2 May 2022

Add comment



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**French President Emmanuel Macron believes that the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics can serve as "a historic opportunity" for the country to host major esports events.**

Macron was elected for a second term as President last month, defeating far-right candidate Marine Le Pen in a run-off.

He has expressed a desire to use Paris 2024 "to put sport at the heart of the nation," and believes the Games could help to catalyse the further development of esports in France.

"Video games are an important component of French cultural soft cultural power and of our country's image around the world," Macron told *The Big Whale*.

"But also from our ability to understand the projections and representations of our society too.

"That is why I also want us to have a strategic approach to continue creating the right conditions to promote France as the country for video games.

"We have adapted the video game tax credit: we want to make it permanent and continue to work on financing and trainings to locate and attract productions in our country.

"Finally, I'm not forgetting the esports, another field of French excellence with teams like Team Vitality or Karmin Corp.

"In this respect, we have a historic opportunity: the 2024 Olympic Games.

# IOC enters a new era with the creation of Olympic Esports Games – first Games in 2025 in Saudi Arabia

History was made today when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to create Olympic Esports Games. The first edition will be held in 2025 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The [142<sup>nd</sup> IOC Session](#) in Paris endorsed the proposal by the IOC Executive Board (EB) unanimously. For the organisation of the Games, the IOC has partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Saudi Arabia for 12 years.

5 min read | Published on 23 July 2024

[IOC Session](#)

[Press Release](#)

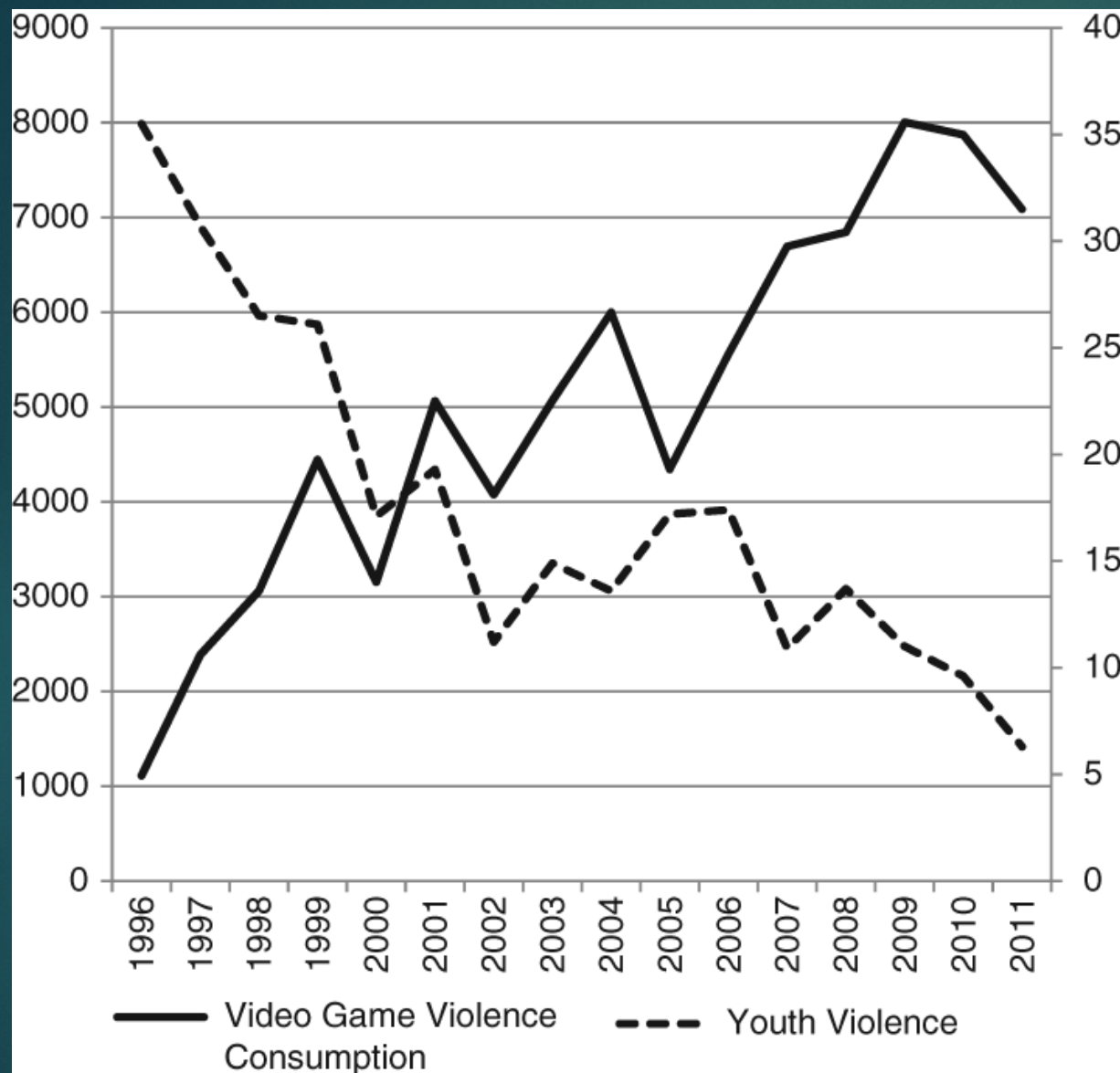
[IOC News](#)

[Esports](#)





Not just  
sports,  
diplomacy  
too!



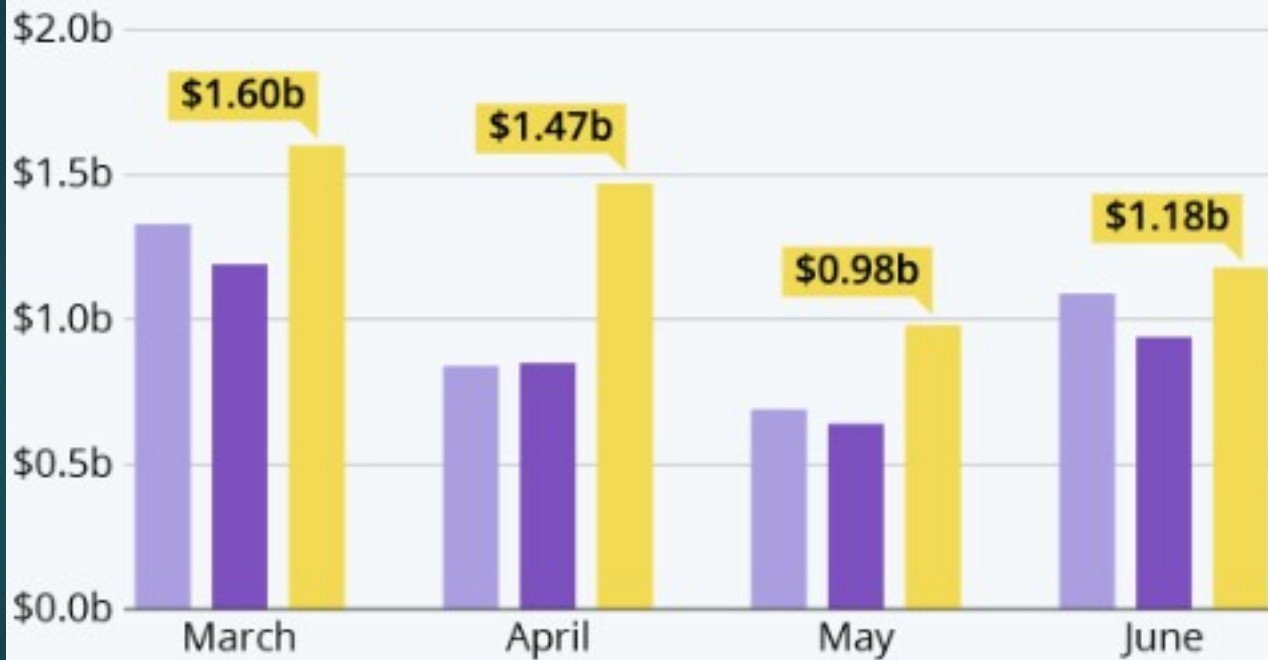
Kyle Hill, The Most Objective Study Yet Finds no Link between video games and violence (8 November 2014)



# U.S. Video Game Sales Shine Amid Pandemic

Video game industry sales in the United States\*

2018 2019 2020



\* incl. hardware, software, accessories and game cards

Source: NPD Group



statista

## Impact of the pandemic

- reassessment of health benefits;
- new users;
- virtual community in response to loneliness

# Description of the course

- ▶ Topics
  - ▶ The business landscape
  - ▶ Video games and race
  - ▶ Video games and gender
  - ▶ Video games and sexuality
  - ▶ Video games, violence, and moral panic
  - ▶ Video games, health, and addiction
  - ▶ Historical accuracy and the use of the past



# Description of the course





- ▶ Assignment one: Interviewing people who play with video games
  - ▶ Please go to your first tutorial
- ▶ Assignment two: A research paper (we will discuss at a later date!)

# Description of the course



- ▶ Tutorial participation is important! Please show up and chat: they're free marks!
- ▶ The final exam is a long way off, open book, take-home and really not something to worry about. Do your readings, come to class, and you'll do fine!





That's all for today:  
Please head to your  
tutorials, and have a  
great week!