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**Gaming**



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# **Introduction**

Gaming has come a long way, from old school arcades to the high tech we use today. It is not just about pushing buttons and staring at a screen anymore, now it is a whole experience. Everywhere you look there is gaming, whether it be virtual reality, esportes, or even your mobile phone, gaming is worldwide. Gaming is not just a hobby; it plays a significant role in entertainment for all ages and genders.

**How Gaming originated**

To understand the concept of gaming we must first know how gaming came to originate. The history of gaming dates back to the 1950s to 1960s when computer scientists used minicomputers to create simple games such as Spacewar. 1962 was the birth and start of a new era, Spacewar was considered the first game to ever display on a screen. This led to the start of the first home video game console in 1970 allowing consumers to experience gaming at home.

### *Home video gaming*

Spacewar was created by Steve Russell and with the help of others at MIT. Spacewar was a two-player game that allowed players to control the movement of the spaceships. The goal was to avoid collisions and use limited weaponry and fuel. The game was controlled using switches but eventually upgraded to a gamepad which was easier to control. Spacewar was important in the 1960s programming community and was seen as the blueprint and reason for the success and growth of gaming. It was considered so important that it was inducted into the World Video Game Hall of Fame in 2018.

### *Arcade gaming*

During the 80s gaming had grown from at home to arcades and malls. The first arcade game was Computer Space and pong. These arcade games played a vital role in shaping the gaming culture, shifting people from playing home to gaming in public. Arcade gaming became the new hot trend in the 20s, it was a new social way to experience interactive entertainment outside of their homes.

### *Computer Space*

“Computer Space” was designed by Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney in 1971. It was inspired by the first at home video game “space war” but was altered for an arcade setting. The concept of computer space was that the players had to control the rocket ship to combat flying saucers. The goal was to score points by shooting down the saucers while avoiding collisions and enemy fire. The game's controls consisted of a range of buttons such as rotating left and right and for the rocket to thrust.

As much as how impactful Computer space was on the gaming arcade era, it was unfortunately not as successful as the creators of the game anticipated. Computer space will forever hold a special place in gaming history as the first arcade game to pave the way for the video game industry we know today.

### *Pong*

Even though Computer space was not the “runway success" that Nutting had hoped for, it led to the most successful and legendary game of all time. 1972 was the launch of their next arcade game, “Pong". Pong was a simple game like tennis, with two paddles and a ball. The idea was to make your opponent miss the ball and whoever reached 10 points first won (each time you miss a ball it is 1 point). The game has a feature that allows players to play one on one against another player or against a computer-controlled player. During 1975, Pong's popularity skyrocketed causing the creator, Atari corporation to release a home edition of Pong. Pong was the first popular successful game that proved the video games market can produce significant revenues.

## **Virtual Reality**

Virtual reality gaming is the future, it allows players to have a more immersive and realistic gaming experience. With advanced headsets and controllers, players get to step into a whole new world, seeing everything inside the game in 3D. Virtual reality changes the concept of playing on screen; it gives the player an opportunity to feel like they are there.

### *Maze War*

The intention behind VR gaming is to enhance the possibilities for exploration, adventure, and interaction within the virtual world. It offers the players an opportunity for a more thrilling and lifelike experience. The first virtual reality game in the world was “Maze War” which was developed by Steve Russel in the early 1970s. Maze War was a multiplayer game that challenges players to navigate through a maze and allows players to see each other in 3D space. Maze War laid the foundation for future developments in VR gaming, demonstrating the potential VR gaming offered for interactive play.

*Lawnmower Man film*

During the 1990s the interest in virtual reality increased drastically, this surge in curiosity was influenced by the portrayal of VR in popular movies and commercials, such as “Lawnmower Man.” The film portrayed VR as a tool to create incredible and fantastical virtual worlds where people can experience things that are beyond what is possible in the real world. The movie showed Virtual reality as a fantastic way of escaping reality and enhancing human abilities, like gaining superpowers.

Fast Forward today, Virtual reality has become more accessible and has been transforming how we experience digital content. VR does not just play a role in gaming but is also used for various fields such as healthcare, education, and training simulations. Virtual reality is continuously evolving, advancing in graphics, motion tracking, and interactive capabilities. Virtual Reality has and will continue to open new ways for educational and entertainment purposes.

## **Esports**

Esports or electronic sports are competitive competitions where professional gamers compete. Esports did not become popular until the late 2000s due to the rise in popularity of YouTube and Twitch. Esports helps network and support the video game industry; it is an opportunity for entertainment and for developers to design games specifically for those tournaments.

Esports originally started in East Asia, specifically China and South Korea and eventually gained popularity worldwide. In the early 2010s majority of viewers were male but by the late 2010s the range of audience grew more diverse. By 2020, it was estimated the total audience of esports would increase to 454 million viewers. It was also projected to gain revenue of more than $1billion. The most popular or most watched Esports tournaments are Overwatch, league of legends, and Dota.

*Olympic Games*

The popularity and influence esports have on the gaming community is so immense that the Olympic Games has discussed the possibility of including esports in upcoming Olympic events. The Olympics are considering whether competitive video gaming should be officially recognized as part of the Olympic program. There have been many arguments and unfortunately a final decision on whether esports will be included in future Olympic Games has still not been decided yet.

## **Cons of gaming**

As entertaining and thrilling gaming might be, gaming also has some cons. Such as physical health concerns, social isolation, impact on academic performance, and exposure to inappropriate content. Thats why it is important to approach gaming cautiously, it is crucial to balance between virtual and the real world.

### *Health issues*

Since the introduction of gaming, doctors have argued the downside effects addiction gaming has on health. Spending long hours can lead to a lazy lifestyle and unhealthy habits, contributing to issues like obesity, eyestrain, and posture. Gaming addiction can increase neglect in physical activity which may result in health problems overtime.

“Consequences of video game addiction can showcase in a number of ways, including wrist, neck and elbow pain, skin blisters, calluses and [sleep disorders](https://www.unitypoint.org/find-a-service/sleep-medicine). Long-term addiction could lead to obesity, [weakness or numbness in the hands](https://www.unitypoint.org/find-a-service/neurology-and-neurosurgical-care) (peripheral neuropathy) and even blood clots,” Dr. Moberg says.

### *Sleep disturbances*

The most common habit for gamers is sleep disturbances. It is a bad habit that gamers stay up late participating in gaming sessions which disrupts their sleeping patterns which leads to insufficient sleep. Poor sleep quality overall affects the body's concentration and ability to function.

### *Social skills issues*

Excessive gaming can lead to social withdrawal, decreasing interactions with friends and family. This will result in poor social skills and poor relationships, especially if all interactions are strictly only online through gaming and not over real-world connections. Another con of gaming addiction is the neglect of time management, spending too much on gaming could interfere with academic or work performance. It is important to know how to balance and manage your time correctly for certain activities.

Amy Shriver, MD, UnityPoint Health pediatrician, says. “Ninety percent of children and teens are gaming in our society, but only one to nine percent will go on to develop gaming disorder. Like any addiction, there are some who are more at risk. Children and teens who play more video games and have lower social competence (below normal social, emotional, cognitive or behavioral skills) and greater impulsiveness (ability to act on a whim) were at higher risk of becoming pathological gamers, according to a 2011 pediatrics study.”

### *Exposure of violent or inappropriate content*

The last con is the impact of the exposure of violent or inappropriate content in gaming. Certain games may contain explicit, violent, or age-inappropriate content. Exposure to such content, especially for underage players, can leave a negative impact and impression. Without supervision children who are underage that play inappropriate games may get the wrong idea and normalize the idea of violence.

“As a parent, it is worth monitoring the effect of video games on your children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [recognizes exposure to violence in media](https://publications.aap.org/pediatricsinreview/article-abstract/44/1/23/190316/The-Health-Effects-of-Video-Games-in-Children-and?redirectedFrom=fulltext?autologincheck=redirected), including video games, puts children at a significant risk for aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares and fear of being harmed. Parents should carefully monitor the content of their child’s games and monitor for age appropriateness. It’s a good idea to check ratings on games, which you can do on sites like Common Sense Media.” Dr. Shriver says.

“Beyond monitoring the effects of violent video games on children and teenagers, it's important to create an appropriate balance for your family. When discussing gaming with school-age kids, parents should be good ‘media mentors’ and pay attention to the three C’s: the content, the context and the child. As recommended by the AAP, parents can create a family media plan and monitor quality and age appropriateness of gaming. Video games shouldn’t displace activities critical for children’s health, such as mealtimes, appropriate sleep, play time with friends, exercise and school work,” Dr. Shriver says.

Most parents and adults today argue and question if violent or explicit games should be allowed. They believe that it encourages chaos and indents violent thoughts into young minds. Others disagree and say gaming is only meant for the virtual world and that it is only for entertainment purposes. Overall, it is a contradictory topic, with multiple different opinions and perspectives.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the journey of gaming has been a remarkable evolution from the beginnings in the 1950s to 1960s to the advanced, Virtual reality gaming we know today. The advancement and growth of gaming would have never happened without Spacewar and Pong, which helped pave the way for the gaming industry and gaming entertainment we love today. With the introduction to virtual reality gaming has elevated to new heights we as society would have ever thought we could reach or even experience. Virtual reality has opened new doors beyond gaming, playing a part in helping with education and health facilities.

Gaming has transformed from simple pixelated screens to virtual worlds that captivate players of all ages. The history of gaming, marked by iconic moments such as the creation of Spacewar and arcade classics like Pong, laid the foundation for an industry that now stands as a global cultural phenomenon.

As we navigate through the realms of virtual reality and esports, gaming has become more than just a pastime; it is an immersive experience that transcends traditional boundaries. The rise of competitive gaming and the integration of virtual reality technologies have pushed the boundaries of what we thought possible in the realm or interactive environment.

In the ever-evolving landscape of technology, gaming continues to be a powerful force, shaping the way we connect, compete, and experience joy. As we move forward, it is essential to approach gaming with mindfulness and understanding of its power of impacts on individuals mental and physical health. Gaming remains a dynamic and influential aspect, offering both challenges and opportunities for those who enjoy digital adventure.

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