

# User Analysis

## on *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* and *Gran Turismo Sport*

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### Introduction

*Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*, made by Nintendo EAD, released in 2017, is the latest released title in *Mario Kart* series<sup>1</sup>.

*Gran Turismo Sport*, published by Sony Interactive Entertainment, released in 2017, is the latest released title in *Gran Turismo* series<sup>2</sup>.

Both is the latest title of the world-famous racing game series. Both is first-party game and console exclusive. But the users they are targeting at are so different that it's hard to find a gamer that have played both for a long time.

In this whitepaper, I'm going to talk about the similarities and differences in gameplay, art style, platform of these two games, and the users they are targeting at.

### Mario Kart 8 Deluxe (MK8D)

MK8D is a kart racing game, which is a subgenre of racing game. In MK8D, players compete in karts and use items to attack each other. The control is rather easy, with only one stick for steering and other four buttons for accelerating, braking, drift and using item.

The art style of MK8D is very cartoonish, featuring the characters from the well-known Super Mario series. The cover art of MK8D is very colorful, depicting fantasy tracks and characters in Mushroom Kingdom.

MK8D is a Nintendo Switch exclusive game. The platform can be portable, which is suitable for playing for a small time and put it away. It can also be connected to a TV with a big screen<sup>3</sup>.

Based on these characteristics, the profile of the players (or potential players) of MK8D is very clear. It will be very possible for a player who is looking for a game that is easy to start with to have a try on MK8D because of it is very easy to control. And the art style can not only attract kids and teenagers, but also big fans of Super Mario series or other Nintendo games. The platform, Nintendo Switch, makes MK8D a perfect game for parties. Players who need a game at parties can either connect to a big screen and play together indoor, or they can just sit together and play

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario\\_Kart\\_8#Mario\\_Kart\\_8\\_Deluxe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Kart_8#Mario_Kart_8_Deluxe)

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gran\\_Turismo\\_Sport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gran_Turismo_Sport)

<sup>3</sup> <https://mariokart8.nintendo.com/?info=switch&>

the game together in portable mode of the console outside<sup>4</sup>. That's why many parents will buy the game with the console since their children love this kind of game and they can play together. Nintendo clearly knows this too, and in their commercials of MK8D there are always parents and kids playing this game together<sup>5</sup>.

There is also a mechanism in the game that makes the game very suitable for parties. When a player is leading the race, he won't get an item that is very useful, most times it will be a coin or a banana peel. However, the player in a relative rear position can always get an item that will make him invincible or slow other players down. This particular mechanism can usually even the difference in skills of experienced and inexperienced players. Thus, it's very easy to ask a friend that have never tried this game to try playing it and have fun.

## **Gran Turismo Sport (GTS)**

GTS is a kind of driving simulator, which is another subgenre of racing game. In GTS, players drive real cars on real tracks to compete each other. If a player has a qualified gaming steering wheel, he can use it to simulate the real driving experience; or he can use the controller, but the button configuration is very complex since the game requires the same way of controlling a real car like braking, clutching and changing gears.

As its gameplay indicates, the art style of GTS is also very realistic. The development team did everything to make sure that the cars and the tracks look real. The game features over 200 cars and 40 real-life brands<sup>6</sup>.

GTS launched exclusively on PlayStation 4. The platform is famous for its exclusive games with very great and realistic graphics.

So, it won't be strange that automobile enthusiasts are the major players of this game. In the game, they can experience (almost) real driving experience in their favorite cars. The graphics looks so realistic and the engine sound can make them thrilled. Since one race in real-life will take 10 minutes to several hours, it's a good choice to sit in front of a TV and play the game for an afternoon.

There even is a mode in the game that introduces every brand and car that featured in the game<sup>7</sup>. In this game, players can learn and feel the long history and interesting facts in the automobile culture. I think this is exactly why this game has a solid group of fans.

## **Summary**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjXGjAiAAjE>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFCjZsYKXnI>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gran-turismo.com/gb/products/gtsport/carlist/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuNYcc6peLs>

These two games are so different that they almost have nothing in common except that they both require players to drive. But they are useful sources to study how a racing game can target at a particular group of players.

The gameplay of MK8D is relatively easy and casual, while the gameplay of GTS is complex. The art style of MK8D is cartoonish and colorful, and GTS is realistic. Players always play MK8D with their friends in parties and family members, while players tend to spend hours to enjoy real driving experience on GTS.

There are not many players that enjoy both games like me, and I believe that a player enjoying both games can be a fan of all kinds of games. Both games did a good job in finding their target audience, and they both made good profits. MK8D sold 10.35 million copies<sup>8</sup>, and GTS had over 5 million players<sup>9</sup>.

For designers who want to design a racing game, I recommend having a clear view of the subgenres first. The gameplay can be casual or simulative; the art style can be cartoonish or realistic. Each type has a fixed group of target players. If a designer wants to design a casual kart racing game, the gameplay better be fun; if a designer wants to design a driving simulator, the key is to have more cars and more realistic graphics. There are constraints too, like no one will enjoy driving a toy-shaped kart with the requirement of clutching and changing gears – well there might be such kind of player, but there will definitely not be many.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nintendo.co.jp/ir/en/finance/software/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gtplanet.net/5-5-million-people-have-played-gran-turismo-sport/>