

Women Choose "Casual" Videogames Over TV; 100 Million+ Women Now Play Regularly, For Different Reasons Than Men

The Largest-Ever Survey of Casual Game Players Yields Surprising Data: 76% of Players are Female, 89% Are 30 or Older, and Nearly All Women Derive Stress Relief From Play; Psychologist Dr. Carl Arinoldo Explains

Seattle, Washington - October 2, 2006 - Of the tens of millions of women who play family-friendly, non-violent puzzle, word and simple action games on the computer regularly, more of them consider playing such games "an important leisure time activity" than alternatives such as watching television - and just about anything else - according to a recent survey of nearly 2,200 consumers. PopCap Games®, the leading developer and publisher of casual games, today unveiled the "male/female" segmentation results of the largest survey of players of "casual" computer/videogames ever conducted. The survey found that 76% of casual game players are female, with an average age of 48, and fully 90% of female players say they derive stress relief from playing the games, while 73% identified "cognitive exercise (mental workouts)" as a benefit. With an estimated 150 million consumers now enjoying casual games on a regular basis, the survey places the number of female casual gamers at 100 - 110 million.

Comparing the responses of the 1,663 women who answered the survey to those of the 528 men who participated yields some surprising contrasts in terms of how, why and when consumers of each gender play casual games. Following are segmentations of the survey specific to the differences between male and female casual game players, as well as the key differences between older and younger women who play these games.

Motives For Playing: 89% of players overall indicated they experienced stress relief from playing casual games and 74% of all respondents cited mental exercise as a benefit. But women in particular said the games provided distraction (30%) as well as actual relief (9%) from chronic pain and/or fatigue - compared to 20% and 6% of men, respectively, who named those as benefits. When asked to name the single most important reason for playing, the top three choices by women were stress relief (44%), entertainment (17%) and mental workouts (16%). Men also named stress relief most frequently in their responses, but only 33% of them selected that choice.

Dr. Carl Arinoldo, a Stony Brook NY-based psychologist of 25 years and an author and expert on stress management who has played casual games and advocates them as a source of both stress relief and cognitive exercise, was not surprised by the overall survey results, or the disparity between the responses of men and women. "Casual word and puzzle computer games, such as 'Bookworm' and 'Bejeweled' can actually develop new cellular brain connections thereby helping to keep the healthy brain active and vital," he stated. "And by seriously attending to the word and puzzle games, people can control stress by cognitively 'blocking out' the negative stresses of the day and ultimately train themselves to do this more reflexively. Furthermore, women tend to be more in touch with their feelings and more introspective than men, generally speaking, so it's logical that when they're feeling stressed women would more readily seek out some sort of remedy such as playing casual computer games."

Other Male/Female Differences: While the overall audience for casual games is predominantly female, the percentage of women under 40 who play casual games (25%) is significantly smaller than men under 40 (37%). Further, of those men who do play casual games, their history of playing such games is generally much longer than their female counterparts' - 61% of men said they have been playing casual games for 5 years or more, while only 46% of women said they'd been playing that long. However, female casual gamers are making up for lost time by playing more frequently and for longer periods of time: 60% of all female casual gamers say they play on a daily basis, compared to 44% of men, and 29% of women casual gamers say they play for 10 or more hours per week compared to 22% of men.

Game Genre Preferences: Finally, the types of casual games enjoyed by each gender were significantly different: while men chose more game genres and identified simple sports, war, role-playing and other simulations between 14% and 18% of the time, women cited those genres only 1% to 9% of the time (including 1% of women choosing "war/combat" games, compared to 18% of men). Women named

"puzzle" (87%), "word games" (66%) "arcade" (60%) and "card games" (53%) as their top genres, compared to 79%, 47%, 62% and 45% of men choosing those respective genres.

Older Women vs. Younger Women: There were a number of sizable differences in the responses from women aged 50 and over and their younger counterparts. 67% of women aged 50 or older said they play casual games on a daily basis, compared to 54% of women under 50 (and 46% of women under 40). By the same token, 34% of women aged 50 or older stated they spend 10 or more hours a week playing casual games, as compared to 27% of women under 50 (and just 17% of women under 30).

Leisure Time Priorities: When asked to identify "important" leisure time activities from among more than a dozen common such activities listed, overall survey respondents picked "playing casual computer games" (75%) more than any other choice, including "reading a book, newspaper or magazine" (73%), "spending time with friends or family" (70%), "watching television or movies" (69%) or "listening to music or the radio" (57%). While those top two responses tied for the most important leisure time activity among female survey subjects with 76% each (with 73% of women choosing "spending time with friends and family"), men chose "spending time with friends or family" only 58% of the time, less than the amount who named "watching television or movies" (68%). "Women tend to be both more socially oriented and interactive than men, and also somewhat more family-oriented, so the difference in the value placed on spending time with friends and family is understandable," noted Dr. Arinoldo.

There were also very sizable discrepancies in the types of casual games that older and younger women said they enjoy playing: only 18% of women aged 50 or older selected simple action games as one of their genre preferences, compared to 47% of women under 50. And while 58% of women aged 50 or older named card games as a genre they enjoyed, only 48% of women under 50 (and 37% of women under 30) did so. When asked about the single most important sensation they hoped to experience while playing casual games, the top two choices among women aged 50 or older were stress relief (41%) and cognitive exercise (22%), while women under 50 named stress relief (47%) and entertainment (19%). For all female age groups, stress relief was the single-most important reason for playing.

Survey Methodology: This international research was conducted by Information Solutions Group, www.infosolutionsgroup.com on behalf of PopCap Games. The overall results are based upon online surveys completed by 2,191 randomly selected respondents, including 1,663 women. The survey occurred between the dates of August 11th and August 21st 2006. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20, the results will differ by no more than 1.9 percentage points, and +/- 2.2 for a sample of 1,663 women from what would have been obtained by seeking out and polling all PopCap.com visitors age 18 and over. Smaller subgroups reflect larger margins of sampling error. In addition to sampling error, there may exist other sources of error. For example, variations in the order of questions or wording within the questionnaire may contribute to different results.

About PopCap: PopCap Games, www.popcap.com is the leading multi-platform provider of "casual games" — fun, easy-to-learn, captivating computer games that appeal to everyone from age 6 to 106. Based in Seattle, Washington, PopCap was founded in 2000 and has a worldwide staff of over 120 people in Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, Vancouver, B.C. and Dublin. Its games have been downloaded more than 350 million times by consumers worldwide, and its flagship title, Bejeweled®, has sold more than 10 million units across all platforms. Constantly acclaimed by consumers and critics, PopCap® games are played on the Web, desktop computers, myriad mobile devices (cell phones, smartphones, PDAs, Pocket PCs, iPod and more), popular game consoles (such as Xbox), and in-flight entertainment systems. PopCap is the only casual games developer with leading market share across all major sales channels, including Web portals, retail stores, mobile operators and developers, and game device manufacturers.