



**Bringing Canadians Together
through Gaming:
Essential Facts 2022**



**ENTERTAINMENT
SOFTWARE**
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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The Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESAC) released *Bringing Canadians Together through Gaming: Essential Facts 2022* in November 2022. The NPD Group conducted the annual research for ESAC in May of 2022 using an online methodology. 15-minute surveys fielded to a representative sample of both Canadian adults and children who played any video games on the required device in the past 4 weeks.

- 1. Canadians adults 18 to 64 years of age
- 2. Kids and teens 6 to 17 years of age through representative surrogate samples (mothers of the children)

Qualified ending sample:

- Adults n = 2,575
- Kids (6 to 12) n = 296
- Teens (13 to 17) n = 220

Data are weighted to Canada census targets on gender, age, income, region, and household size.



Letter from the President & CEO

Over the past two and a half years, Canadians have gone through more change than any of us could have imagined. During this time, video games have provided joy, stress relief and a chance to engage with others. In fact, our 2022 Essential Facts survey found that one of the largest changes in video game use is that it has continued to become more social.

Community is an increasingly important part of video games - and Canadians are forming new friendships, building online community, and spending quality time with family and friends through gaming.

Overall, 49 per cent of adult video game players and 70 per cent of kids play video games regularly with other people. That includes a growing number of parents and children playing together and using gameplay to spend valuable time as a family.

As millennials who grew up with a passion for gaming become parents, they're sharing the love with their kids: 74 per cent of video game playing parents say that they play video games with their children, an increase of nine per cent over the past two years. What's more, 69 per cent of video game playing parents felt that video games helped them to spend more time with their children.

With many of us returning to the physical office and classroom, Canadians are seeking their valuable downtime and through video games, with 85 per cent of gamers saying that video games provided stress relief and 84 per cent saying they bring joy.

eSports are also increasingly being viewed by younger generations as a viable career path. Over a third (36 per cent) of adult gamers and 28 per cent of teen gamers have engaged with eSports over the past year; of those, 70 per cent would consider eSports as a potential career option.

The future of gaming in Canada is incredibly bright – and hopefully we'll get a chance to play together online soon,

Jayson Hilchie
President and CEO, Entertainment Software Association of Canada



Key findings: Online gaming grows in popularity

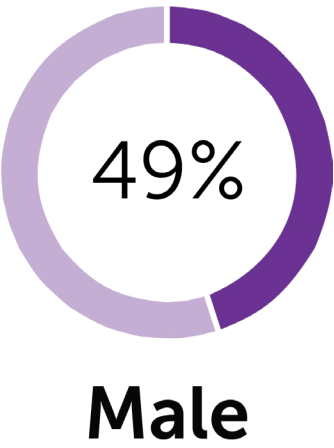
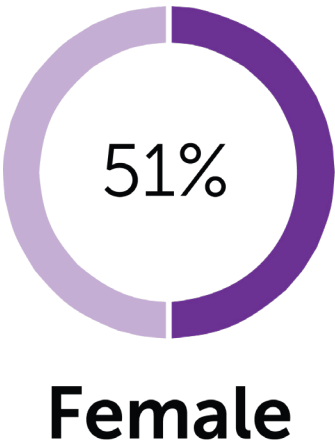
A lot has changed over the past few years, including the habits and preferences of Canada’s gamers.

Our 2022 survey of Canadian gamers shows online gaming continuing to increase in popularity, with more people using gaming to form community and relationships through connection with fellow players.

Millennials that grew up in the gaming revolution are using video games to bond with their children, and teenagers are using gaming to enrich their social life through forming friendships in the digital world.

One thing that hasn’t changed – is that video games continue to remain an important part of the lives of Canadians across the country.

Canadian Gamers



Game Engagement

Canadians across the country enjoy the power of play, with 53% of Canadians playing video games regularly, averaging 7.9 hours of play per week.

Although the number of people playing video games decreased slightly this year, 35% of gamers report spending more time playing this year than last. In addition, the overall number of gamers remains evenly split at 51% women and 49% men.

Most Recent Video Gaming Occasion

Adult Device Owners
(n=4,949)

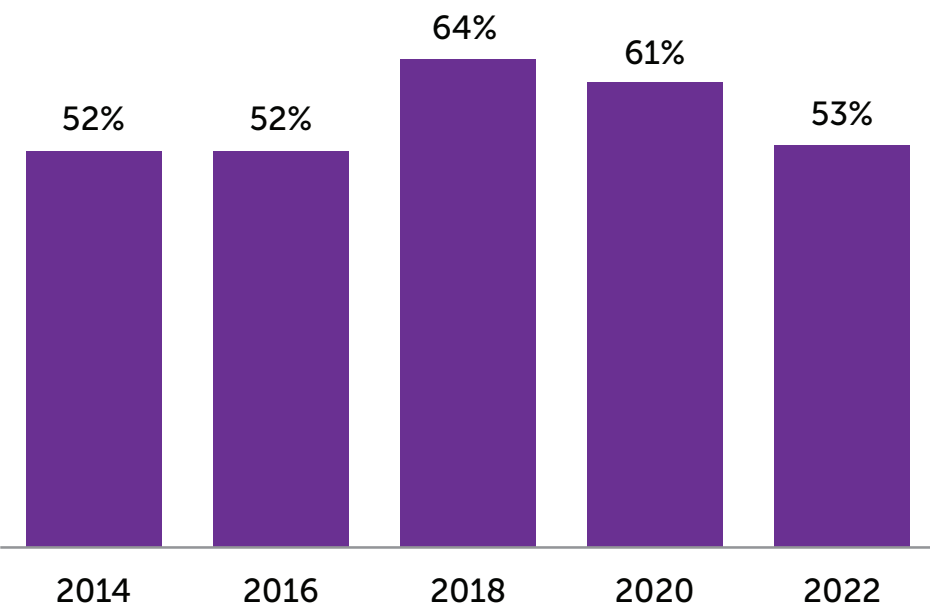


Q3. When was the most recent occasion that you played any video games?
Base: Total adult device owners (n=4,949)

Past 4 Weeks Video Gaming Occasion

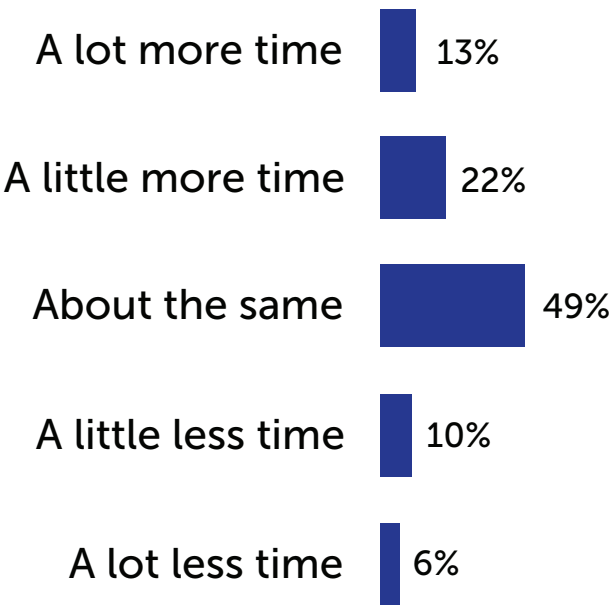
Base: Adult Own any Devices (4,949)

Past 4-week Video Game usage decreased across all age and gender groups in 2022 vs. 2020



Time Spent vs. Last Year

Base: Adult played Video Games in Past 4 Weeks (2,575)



Q3. When was the most recent occasion that you played any video games?
Base: Total adult device owners (n=4,949)
Q.10 Are you spending more or less time playing video games online than you were a year ago??
Base: Total adult VG players in P4W AND own the device (n=2,575)



Video games are popular for all ages. While teenage boys play the most hours per week overall (11.5), for women the most active gamers are aged 55-64 years, who play 8.4 hours per week.

Average Hours/Week on Video Games

Canadian Adult Video Games players spend an average of **7.8 hours a week** (9.0 hrs in 2020) playing video games

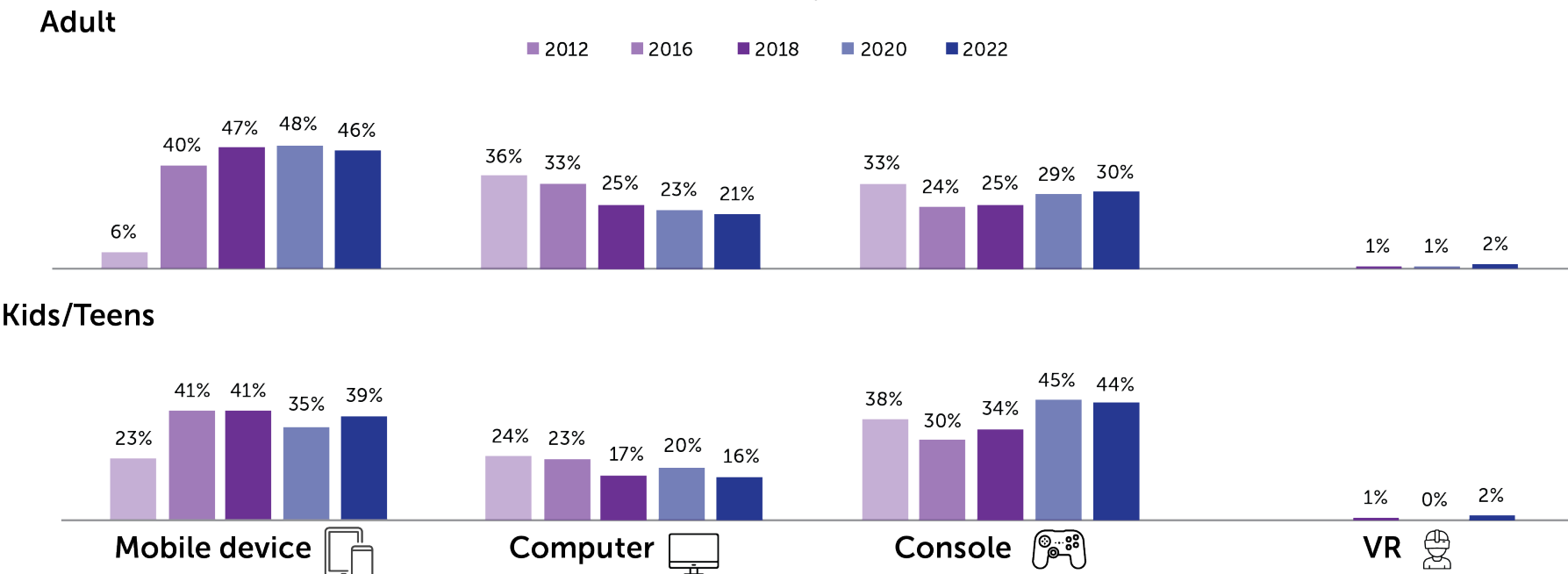
Canadian Video Games players 6 to 17 y/o spend an average of **7.9 hours a week** (13 hrs in 2020) playing video games

	Male	Female
6-12	8.0	5.0
13-17	11.5	7.3
18-34	10.2	6.5
35-54	7.7	6.7
55-64	6.4	8.4

Q7/ Q8. On average, how many hours per week do you spend playing video games?
Base: Video Game users in Past 4 weeks, Adults n=2633, kids/teens n=561

Overall, Kids and Teens mostly use consoles for gameplay while adults use their phones – something that has remained table over the past two years.

Device Used To Play Most Often

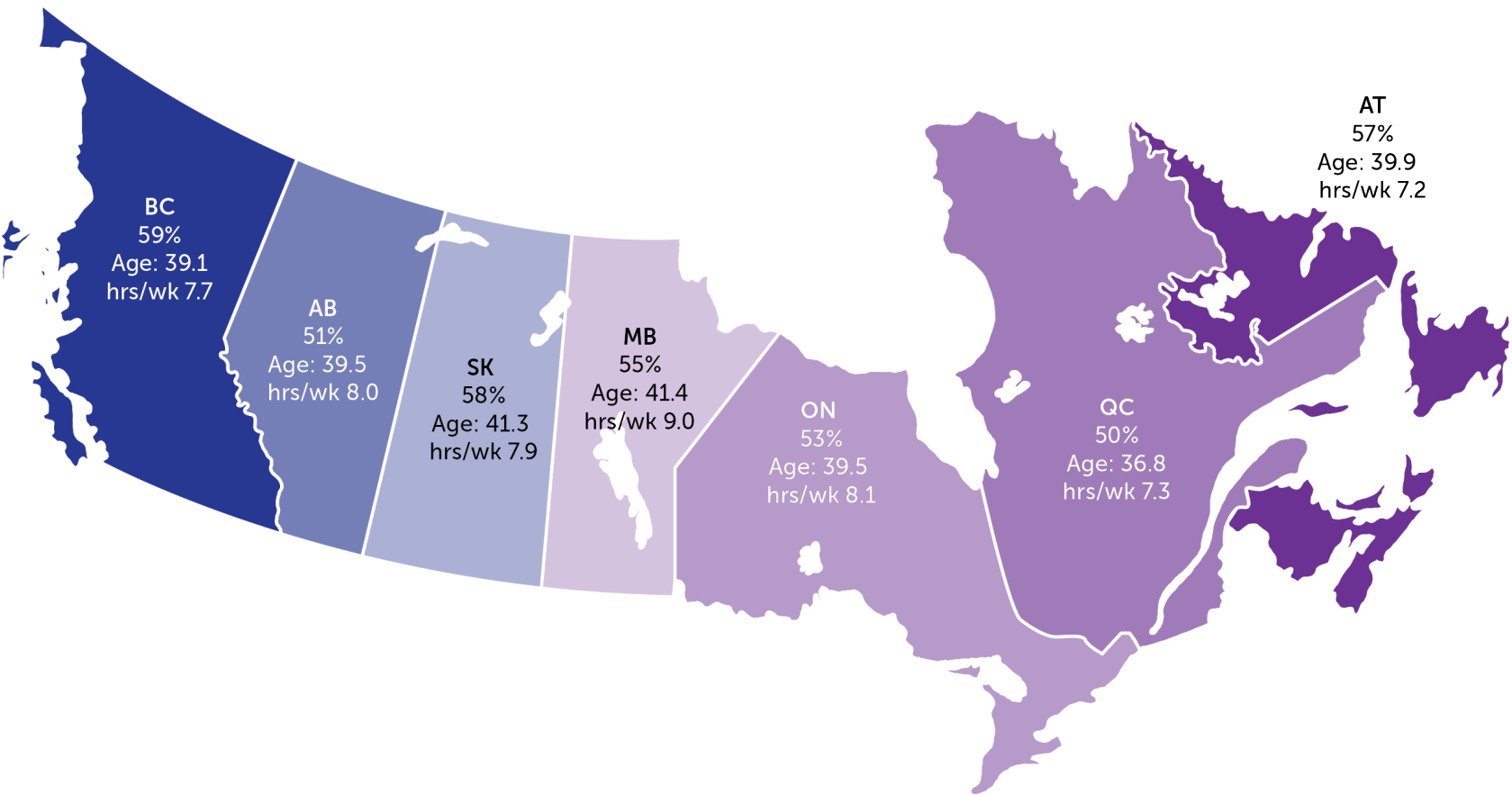


Note: This question was not asked in 2014

Q6. On which of these types of systems did you play video games in the past 4 weeks?
Q7. On which type of system did you play video games the most often in the past 4 weeks?
Base: Total adult video game users (n=2,575 in 2022), Kids/teen video game users (n=516 in 2022)

Video games are popular across the country – with the highest percentage of video game players is in BC, with 59% of the population playing. The most time spent playing is in Manitoba, where video game players average 9 hours per week.

Video Games Played in Past 4 Weeks and Hours Spent Playing Per Week

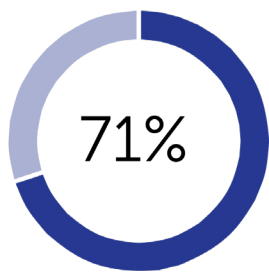


Q3. When was the most recent occasion that you played any video games? Base: VG Device Owners: BC n=714, AB n=567, SK n=170, MB n= 218, ON n=1,794, QC n=1,097, Atlantic n=389
Q8. On average, how many hours per week do you spend playing video games? Base: Past 4-week Adult VG Users: BC n=412, AB n=284, SK=93*, MB n=117, ON n=918, QC n=531, Atlantic n=220

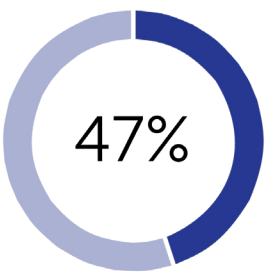
Gaming is increasingly moving online. More than 70% of people now play online, and an increasing amount of that game play is social - with 49% of adults and 70% of teens playing online with other people.

How do you Typically Play Video Games (Adults) ?

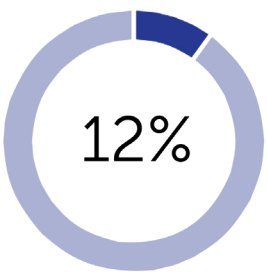
Adult Video Games Users
(n=2,575)



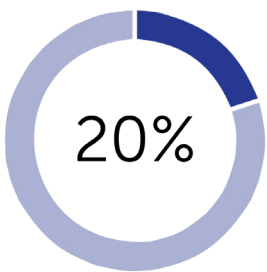
Play Online (NET)



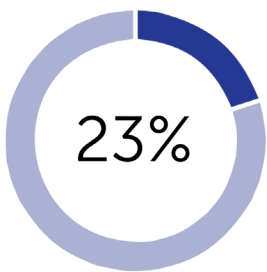
Online by myself



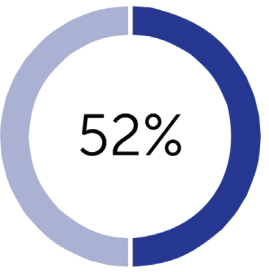
Online with other players in the room



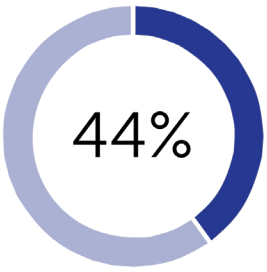
Online with other players that I know



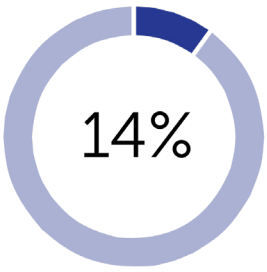
Online with other online players who I have never met



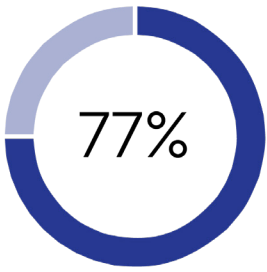
Play Offline (NET)



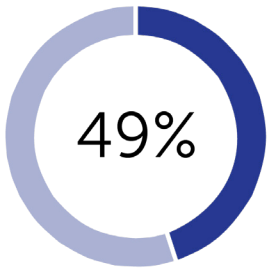
Offline by myself



Offline with other players in the room



Play by myself (NET)

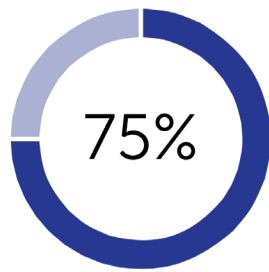


Play with others (NET)

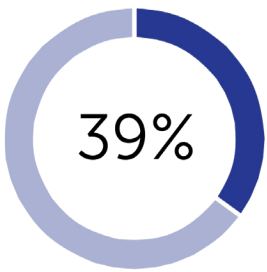
Q.46 And how do you typically play video games?

How do you Typically Play Video Games (Kids) ?

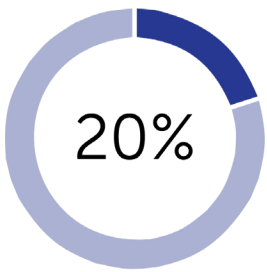
Kids/Teen Video Games Users
(n=516)



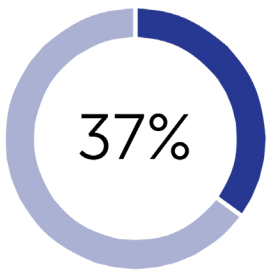
Play Online (NET)



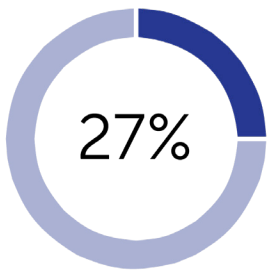
Online by myself



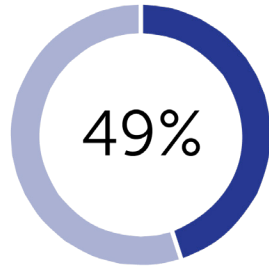
Online with other players in the room



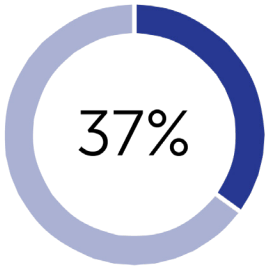
Online with other players that I know



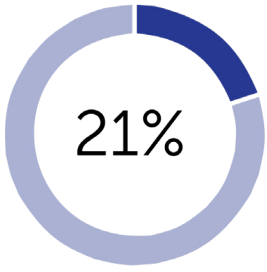
Online with other online players who I have never met



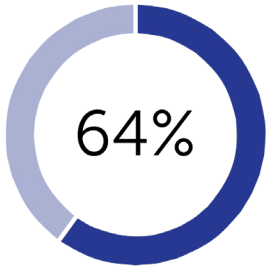
Play Offline (NET)



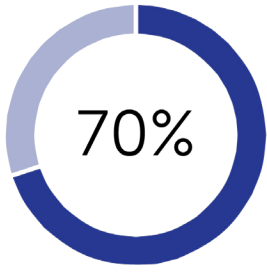
Offline by myself



Offline with other players in the room



Play by myself (NET)



Play with others (NET)

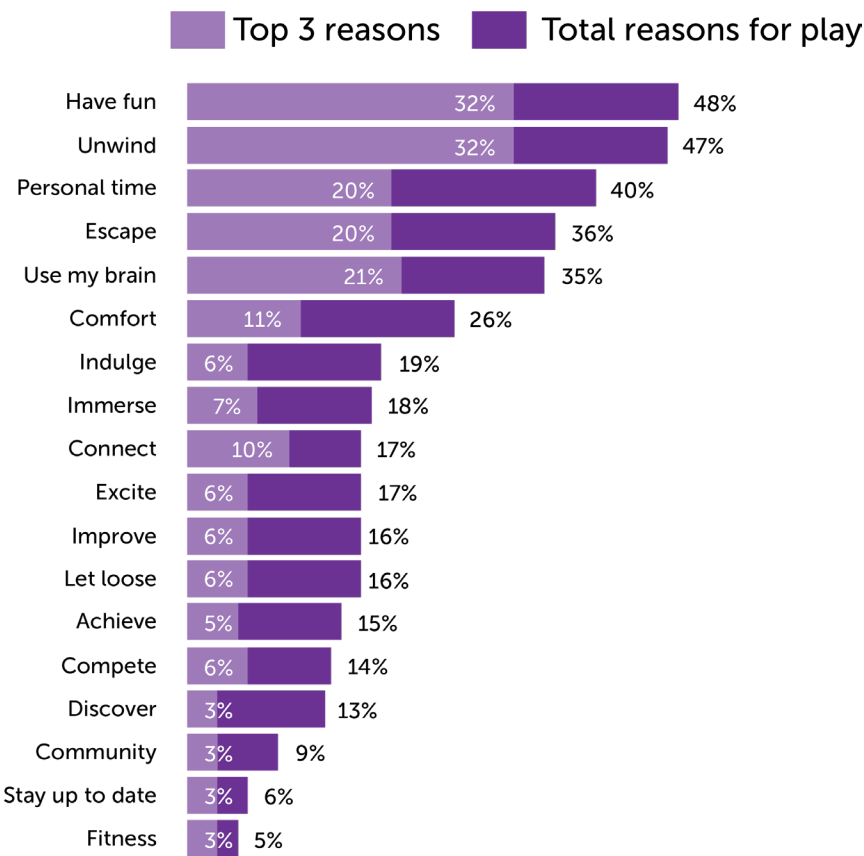
Q.22 And how do you typically play video games?

Why We Play Video Games

As Canadians return to the physical office and campus, games provide opportunities to have fun, unwind and learn new skills.

Reasons for Playing Video Games

Base: Total Qualified Adults (n=2,575)



Reasons for Playing Video Games by age group

- 18 to 34 y/o, total reasons
- 1. Have fun - to generally have an enjoyable experience (49%)
 - 2. Unwind - to relax, decompress or de-stress (44%)
 - 3. Pass time - to fill time while taking a waiting, on a break or when bored (43%)
 - 4. Personal Time - to spend time enjoying something by myself (39%)
- 55 to 64 y/o, total reasons
- 1. Pass time - to fill time while taking a waiting, on a break or when bored (57%)
 - 2. Unwind - to relax, decompress or de-stress (55%)
 - 3. Have fun - to generally have an enjoyable experience (54%)
 - 4. Use my brain - to problem solve, think logically or strategically (50%)
- 55+ y/o males (38%), 55+ y/o females (57%)

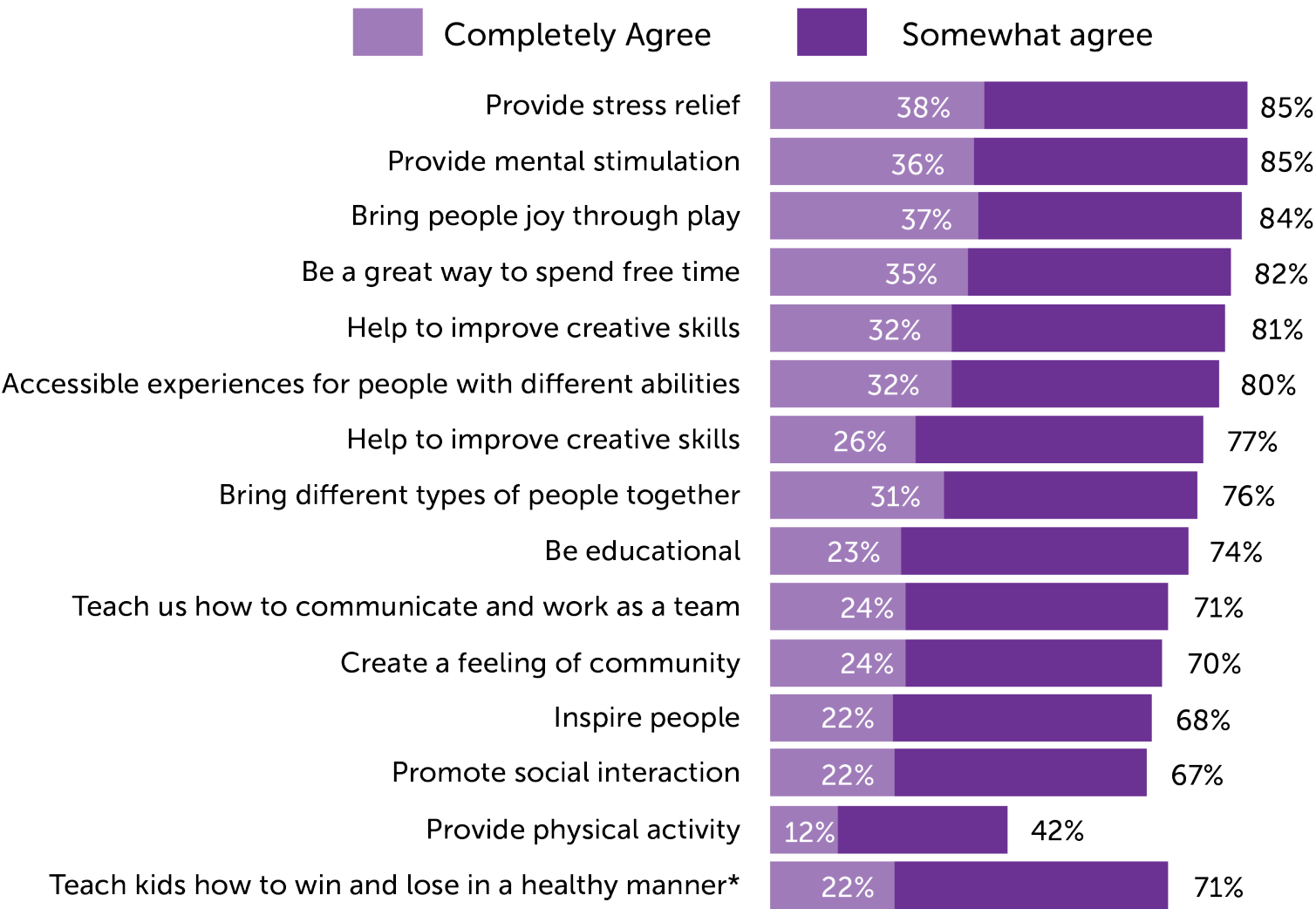
P3a. Why do you play video games? (Select all that apply)
P3b. Which of the following are the top reasons that you play video games? (Select up to 3)
Base: Total qualified adult respondents (n=2,575)



Video games provide stress relief, bring people joy and help to improve cognitive skills. They are also seen as an important tool for developing problem-solving skills and fostering collaboration and teamwork across age groups.

Benefits of Playing Video Games
(Completely Agree/Somewhat Agree)

Total Adults Players (n=2,575)

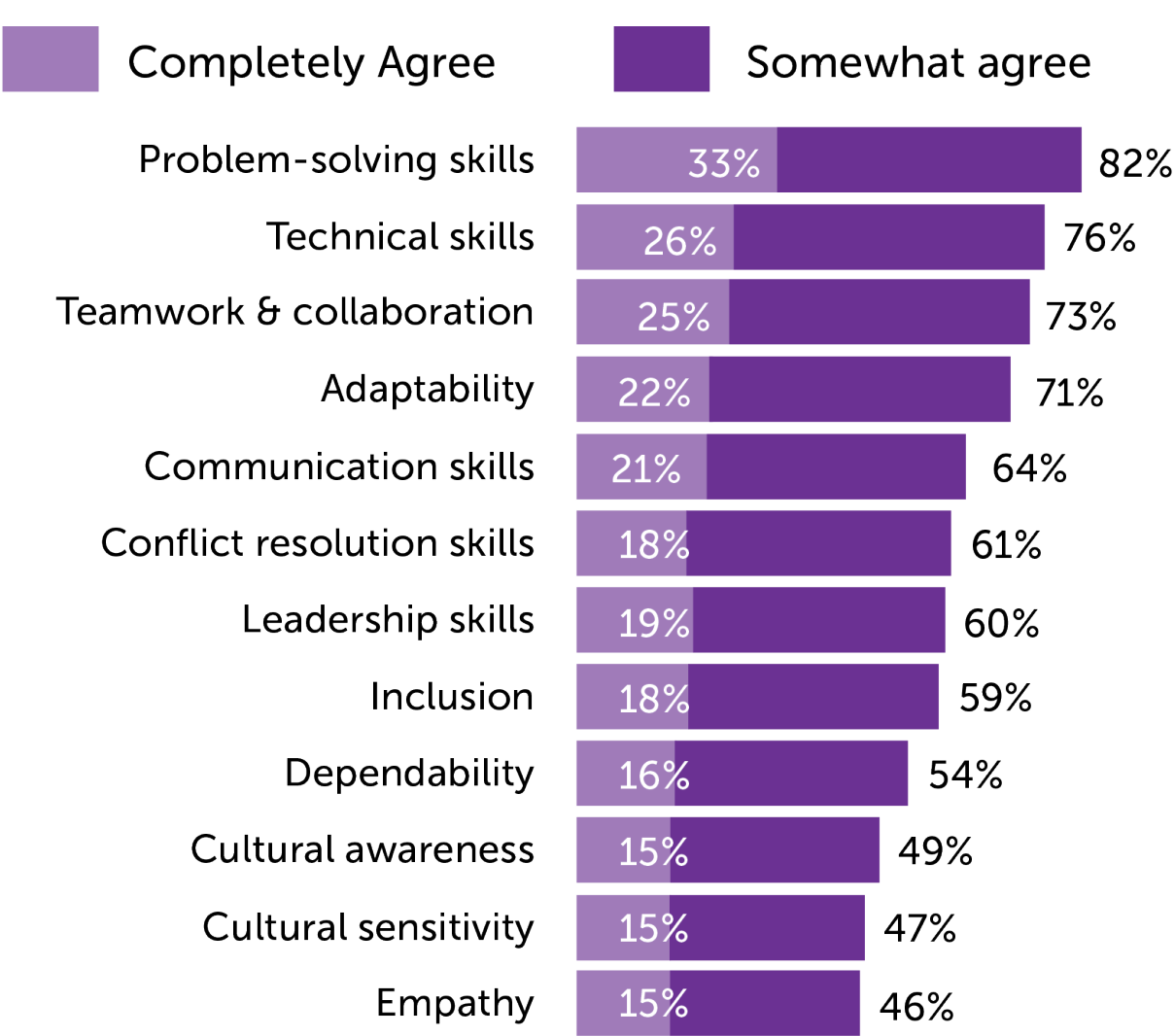


*Ask parents only (n=459)

P4. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about video games.
Generally speaking, video games can...

In General, Video Games are Helpful in Developing
(Completely Agree/Somewhat Agree)

Total Adults Players (n=2,575)



P6. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about video games.

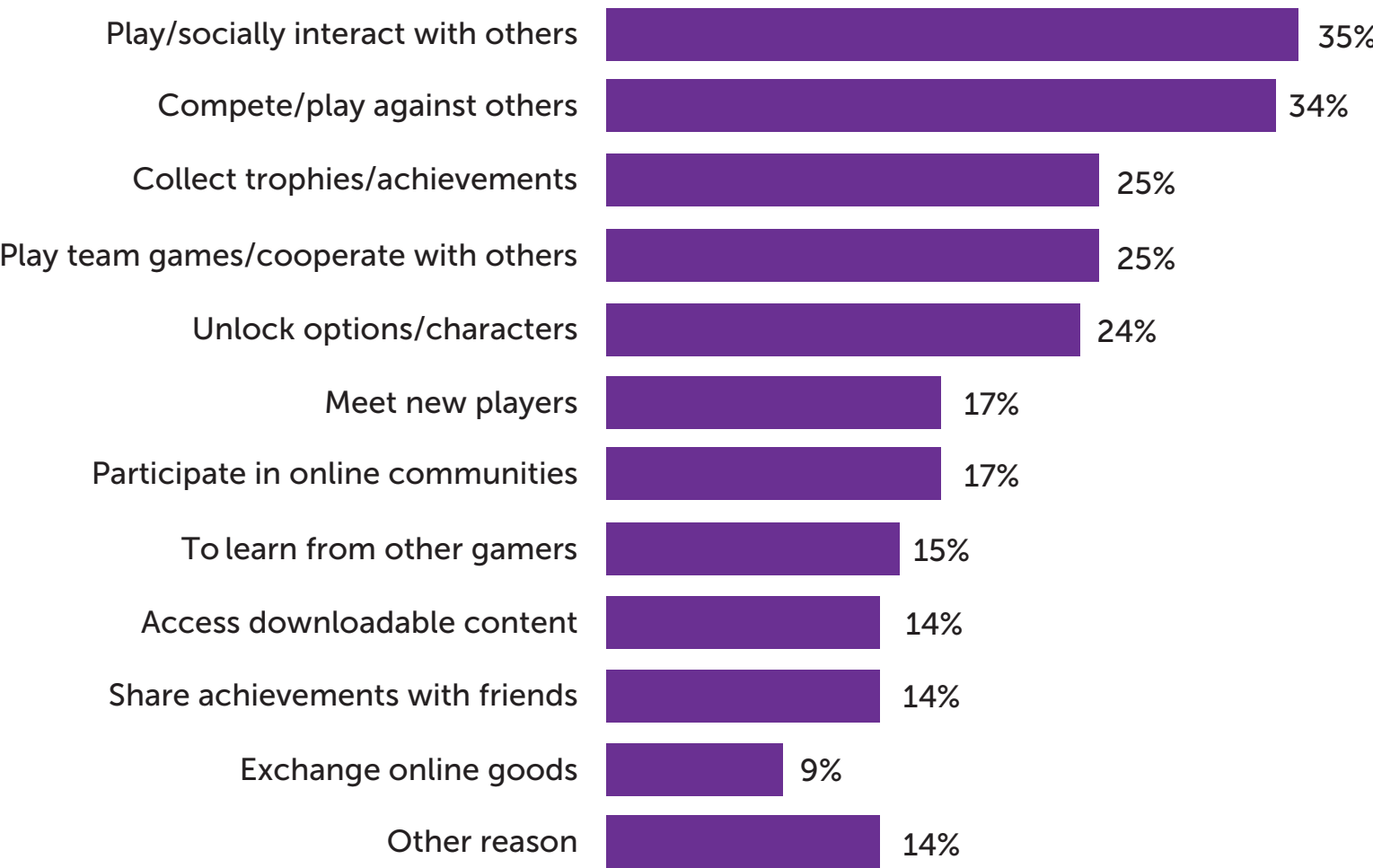
The Social Gaming Landscape

Gaming is increasingly being used by Canadians to craft community, meet new people and find genuine connection both online and in the physical world.

The main reasons for playing video games online were to play, social interact and compete against others.

Why Play Video Games Online - Adult

Adult Video Games Online Players
(n=1,804)



Q47. Why do you like playing video games online?

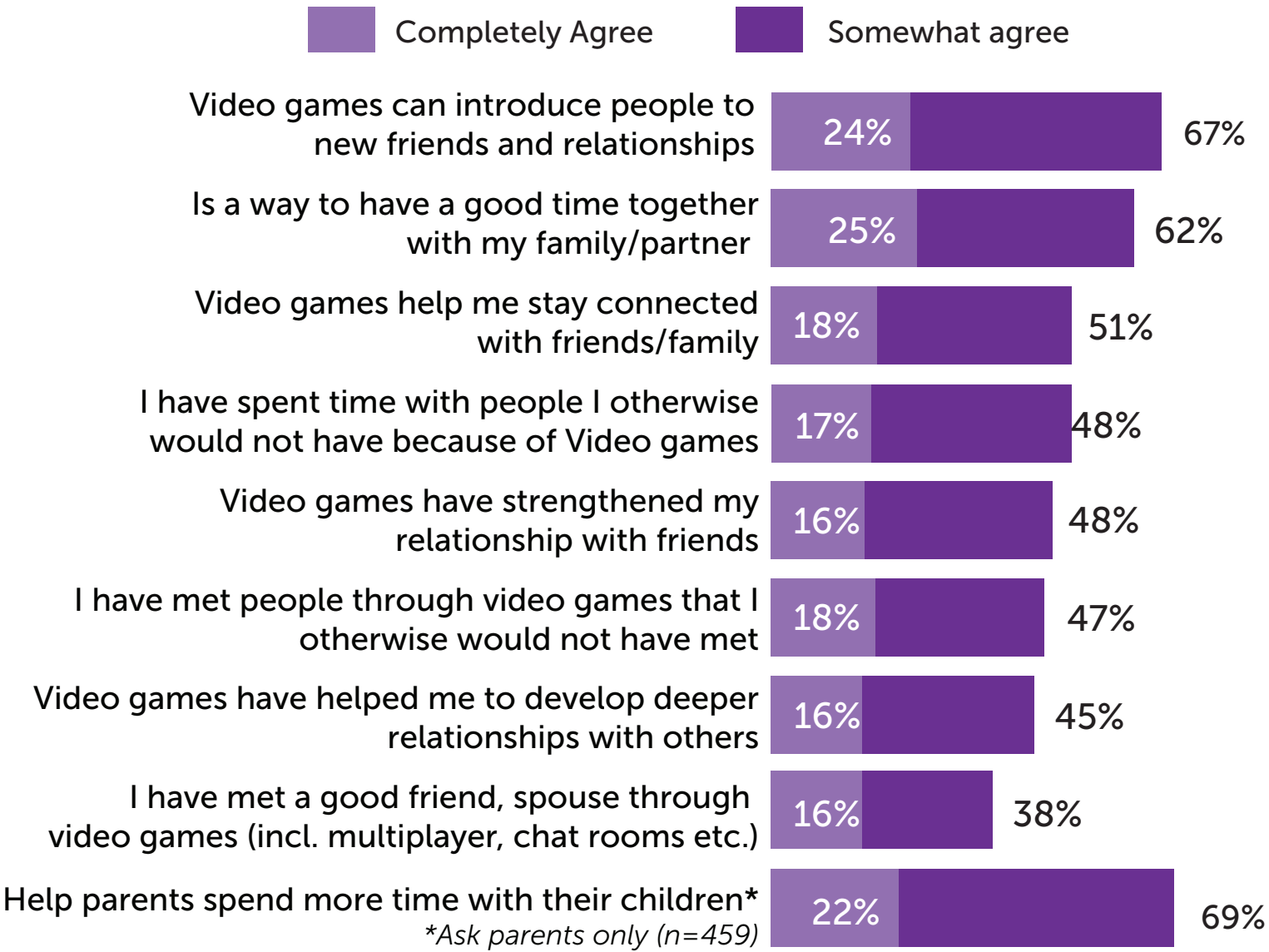


Two thirds of respondents also felt that video games can introduce them to new friends and relationships, with almost half reporting that they had met people through video games that they otherwise would not have met.

In addition, most gamers felt that video games were also a good way to spend quality time with their family and partner.

Statements about Video Games (Completely/somewhat agree)

Total Adult Players
(n=2,575)



*Ask parents only (n=459)

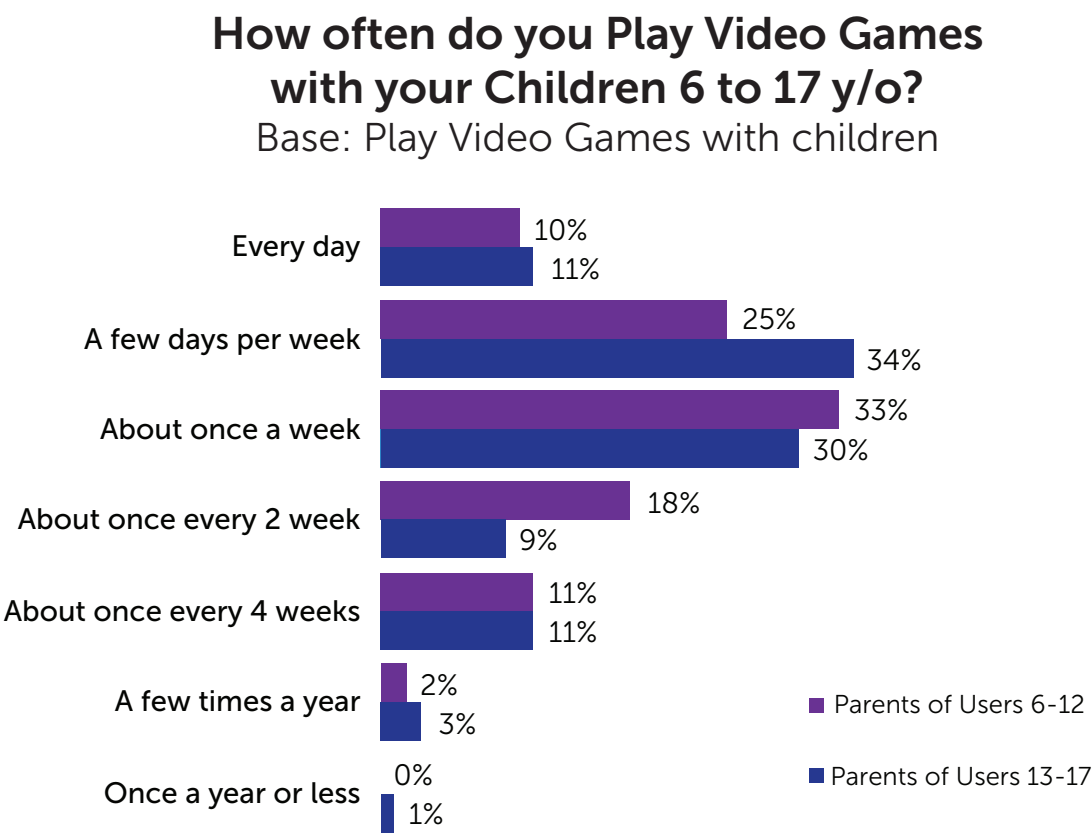
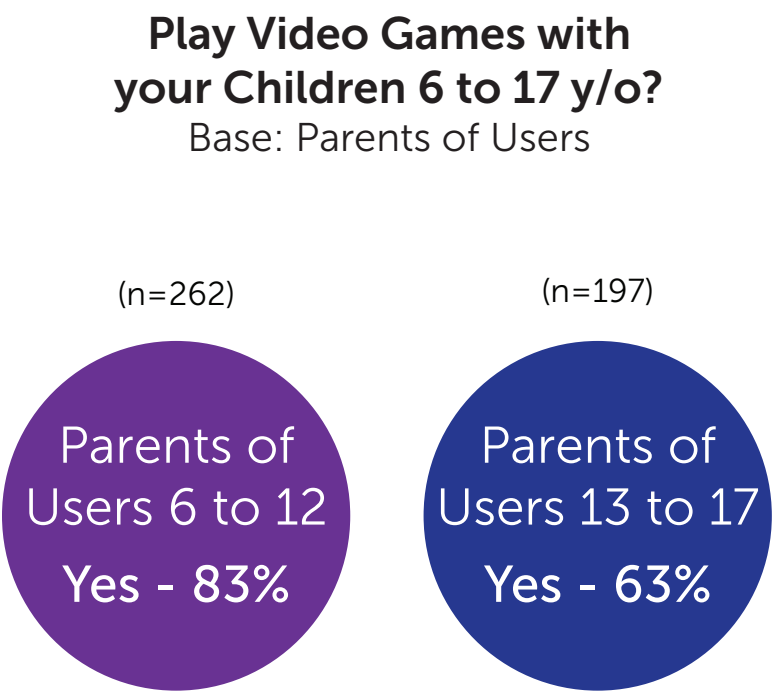
P5. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about video games.



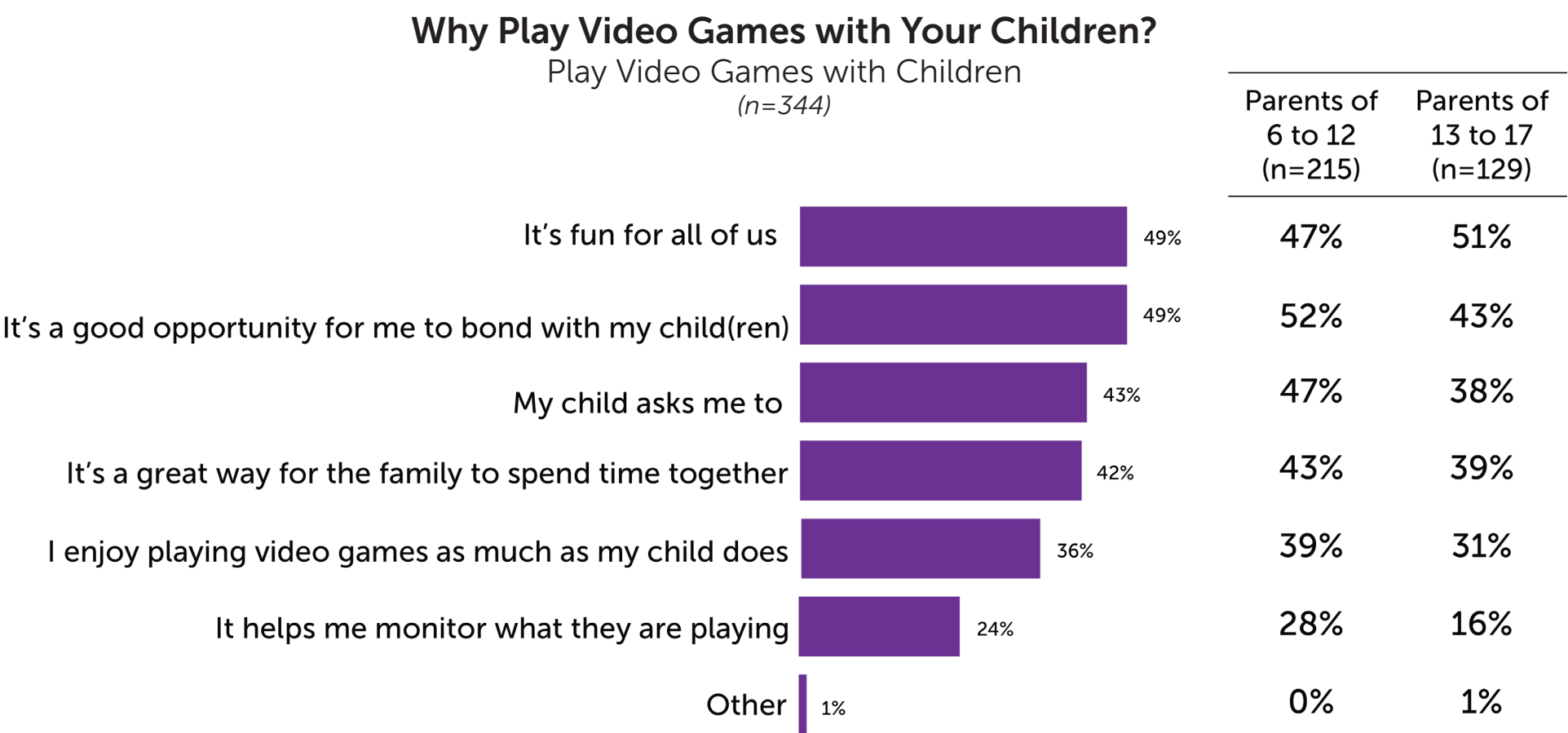
Gaming as a Family

In fact, families are increasingly spending time playing video games together, as generations who grew up playing video games are now sharing their passion with their children. 74% of video game playing parents say that they play video games with their children, an increase of 9% over the past two years.

This includes eighty-three per cent of parents with six-to-12-year-olds, and 63 per cent of parents with kids aged 13 to 17 – who list having fun, and an opportunity to bond as the top reasons to play video games with their children.



Q21. Do you ever play video games together with your son/daughter age 6 to 17?
Q22. How often do you play video games with your Word Cloud son/daughter age 6 to 17?

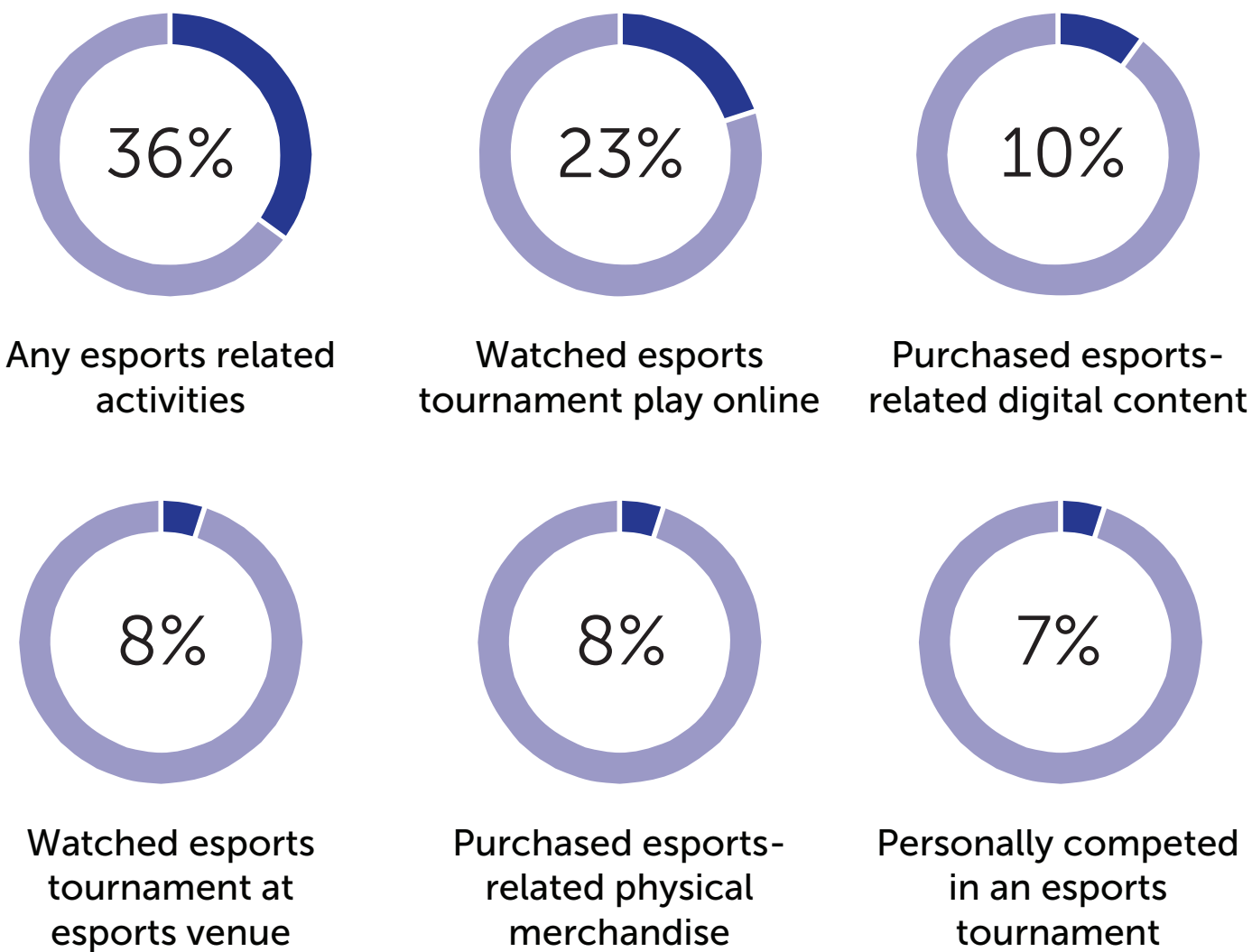


Q.54a Why do you play video games with your child(ren)?

Esports and Streaming

The popularity of eSports continues to grow, with one third of all adult gamers having engaged with eSport-related activities, and three quarters of teens saying that they now view eSports as a viable career choice.

eSports Related Activities in the Past Year - Adult
Total Adult Video Games Users
(n=2,575)

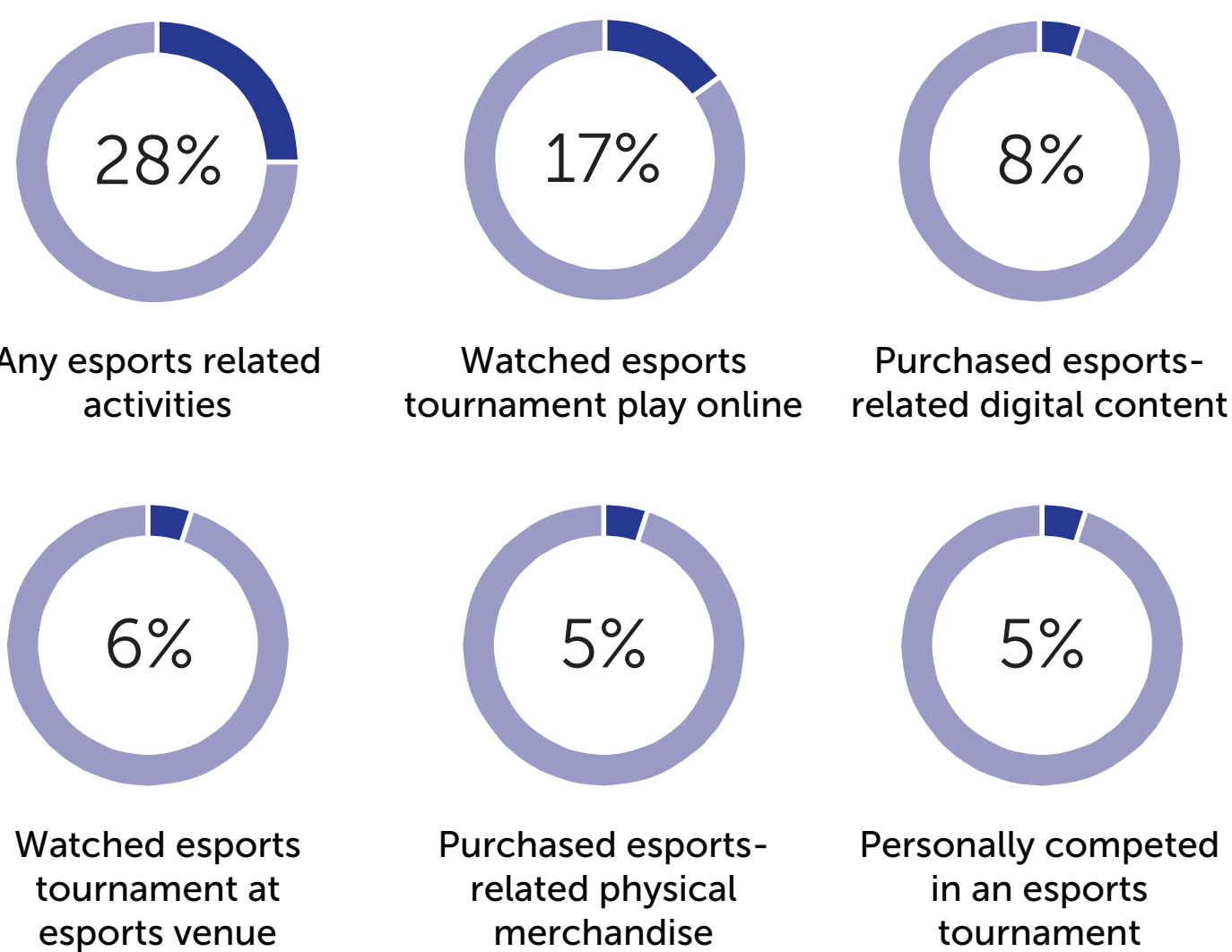


E1. Which of the following esports related activities did you participate in the past year?



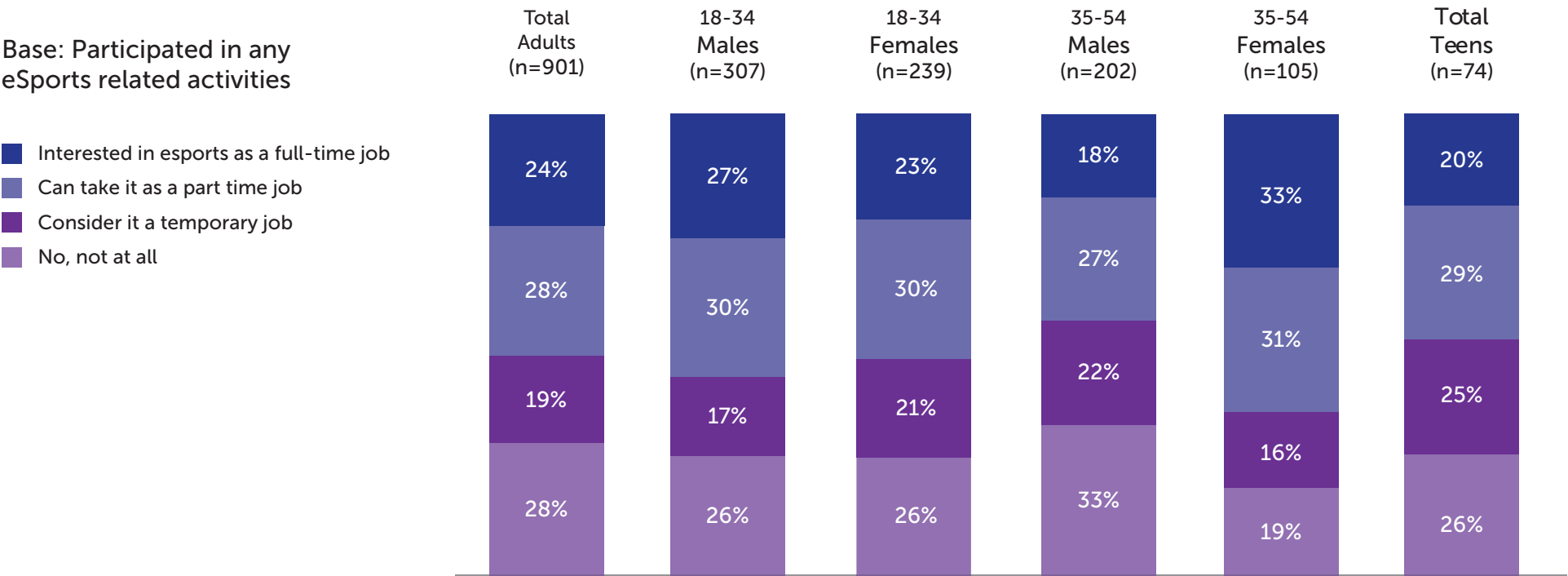
eSports Related Activities in the Past Year - Kids/Teens

Total Kids/Teens Video Games Users
(n=516)



E1. Which of the following esports related activities did you participate in the past year?

Consider eSports as Career Choice?



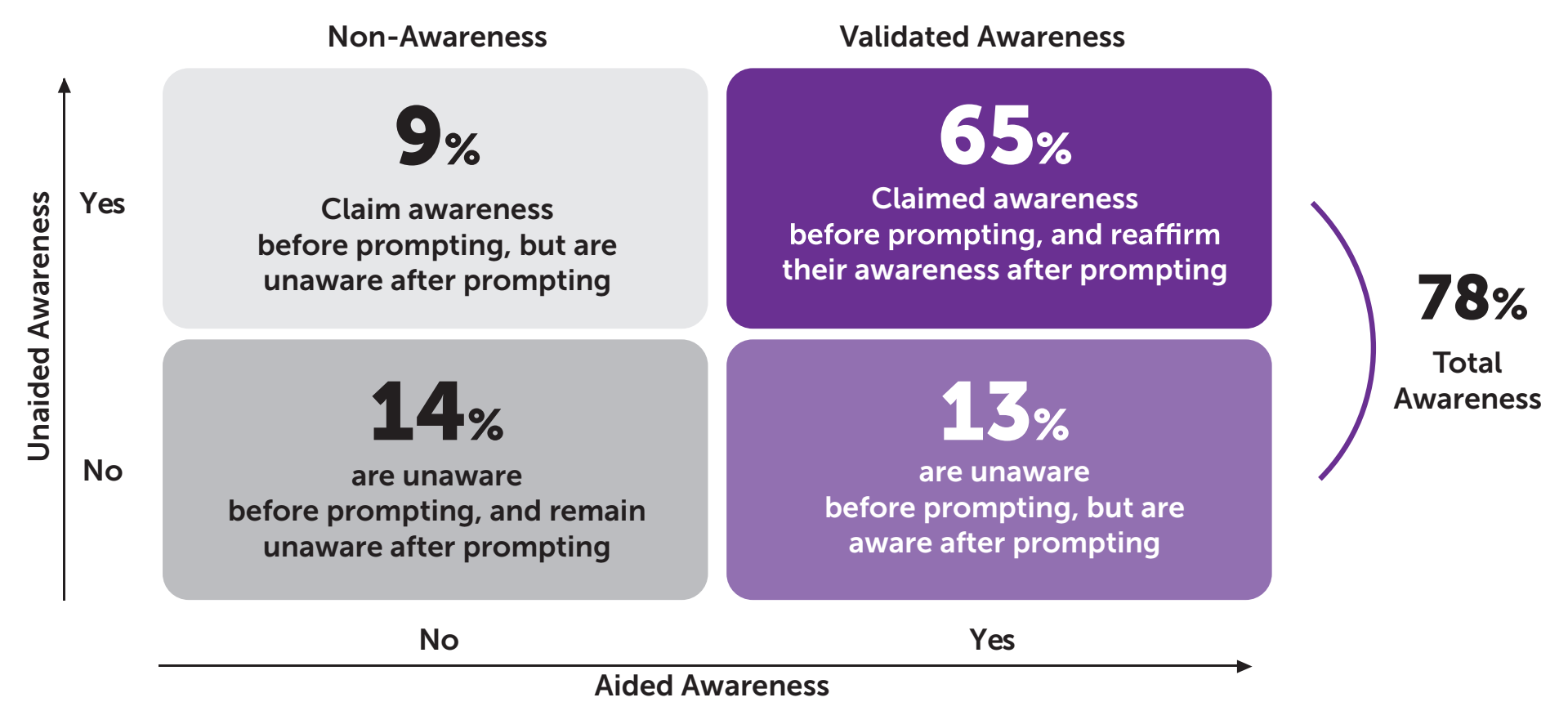
E3. Do you consider esports a career choice for yourself? /Do you consider working in esports area in future? (Select one)
Base: Participated in any eSports related activities in past year



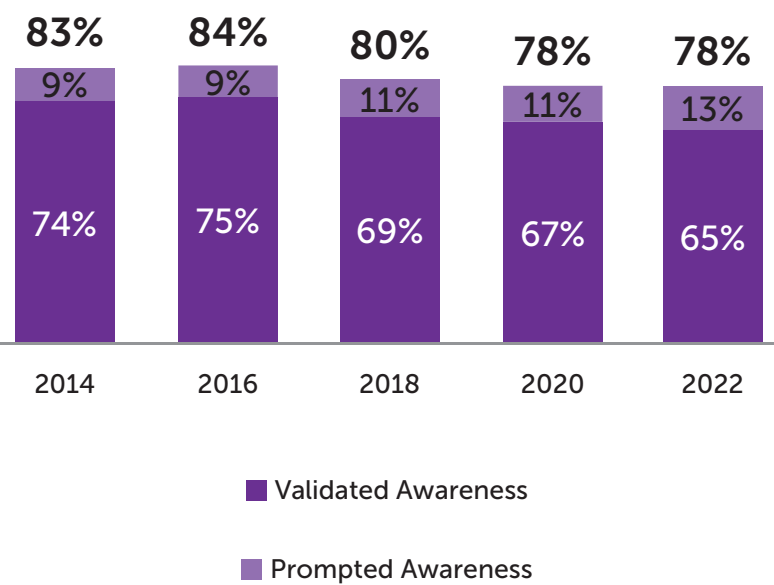
ESRB Ratings and Game Content

Awareness of ESRB ratings remains stable compared to 2020, providing parents with a powerful tool for staying engaged and aware of the type of content their children are consuming in video games.

There are six video game rating categories that are represented on the front of each game box by the following symbols--EC for Early Childhood, E for Everyone, E10+ for everyone 10 and older, T for Teen, M for Mature, and AO for Adults Only. The ratings suggest a particular age group for whom the game is most appropriate.



ESRB Rating Awareness Trend



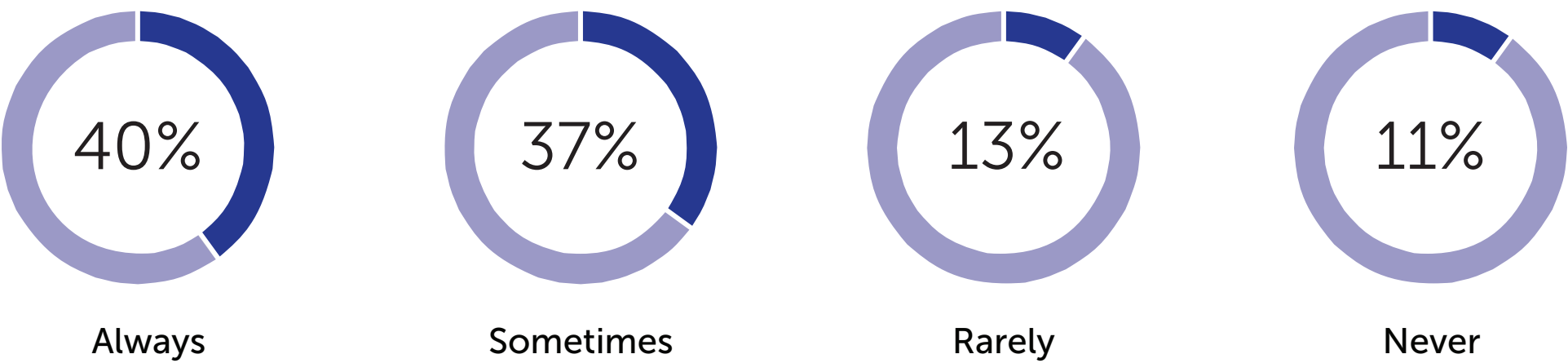
Q24. As far as you know, is there a rating system for video games?
Q25. Now that you have heard this description, would you say that you were aware of this rating system before this survey?
Base: Video game users in past 4 weeks(n=2633).



Parents have found the rating system helpful especially when parents were looking for appropriate games to choose for their children to play, with 77 per cent checking game rating symbols.

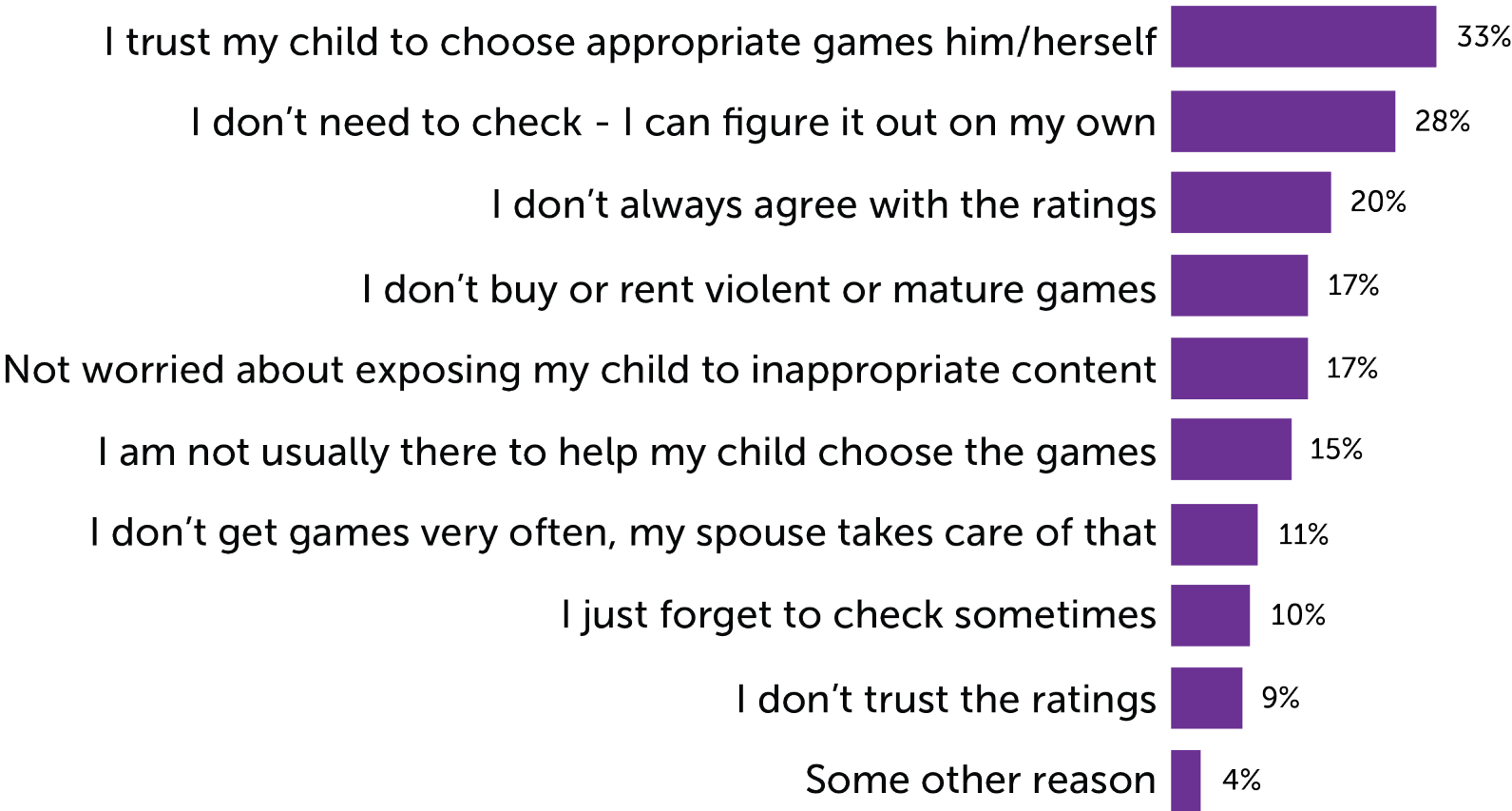
Frequency of Checking Rating

Base: Parents of users (n=411)



Reasons for Not Checking More Often

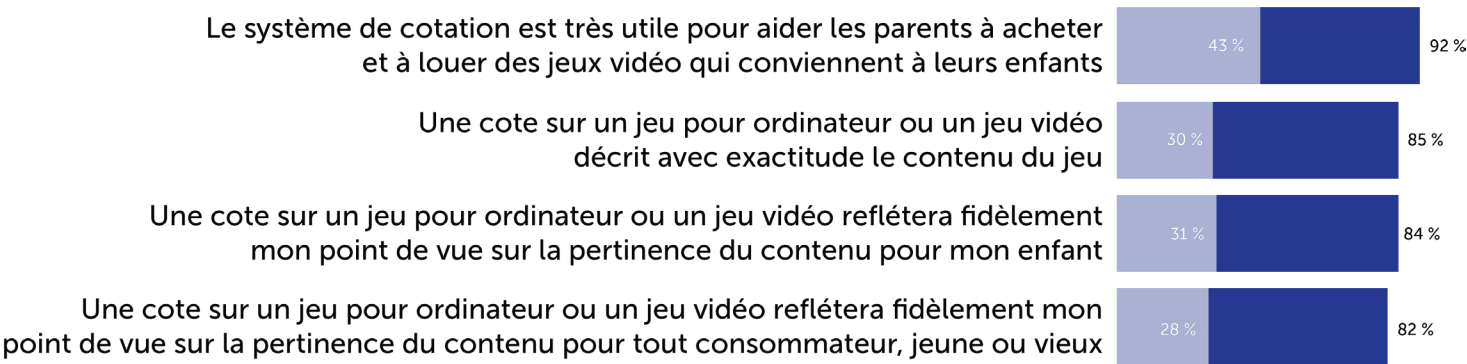
Base: Parents do not always check (n=252)



Q26. When you get video games for your son/daughter, how often do you check the rating symbol on the front of the game box?
Q27. Which one of the following reasons best describes why you do not check the rating symbol more often?

Video Games Rating System Attitudinal Statements
(Strongly / Somewhat Agree)

Total Adults (n=2,575)



Q32. Please review the following information about the video game rating system. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the rating system.
Base: Video game users in past 4 weeks.

Conclusion

Overall, the 2022 ESAC Essential Facts Study found that Canadians are increasingly using video games as a means of connection through forming friendships and relationships on the gaming platforms. Millennials who grew up gaming are sharing their passion for it with their children, as they see gaming with their kids as an opportunity for quality time spent together.

The future of gaming in Canada is bright, as technological advances in VR, eSports and gaming platforms create new and more engaging ways for gamers to connect with communities near and far.



Most Recent Video Gaming Occasion

Adult Device Owners
(n=4,949)

	18-34 Males (n=729)	18-34 Females (n=1,166)	35-54 Males (n=942)	35-54 Females (n=1,077)	55-64 Males (n=497)	55-64 Females (n=538)
In the past 4 weeks	76%	53%	60%	47%	35%	40%
More than 4 weeks ago but within the past 6 months	12%	17%	10%	10%	6%	7%
More than 6 months ago but within the past 12 months	5%	8%	6%	6%	3%	3%
More than 12 months ago	5%	17%	16%	19%	30%	21%
Never	2%	5%	8%	18%	26%2	8%

Q3. When was the most recent occasion that you played any video games?
Base: Total adult device owners (n=4,949)

How do you Typically Play Video Games (Adults) ?

Adult Video Games Users
(n=2,575)

	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Play Online (NET)	76%	67%	69%	70%	64%	77%
Online by myself	42%	41%	44%	52%	50%	67%
Online with other players in the room	18%	14%	11%	11%	6%	5%
Online with other players I know	32%	25%	19%	14%	7%	9%
Online with other players who I have never met	34%	22%	24%	17%	16%	14%
Play Offline (NET)	56%	57%	53%	50%	53%	37%
Offline by myself	47%	45%	46%	42%	50%	34%
Offline with other players in the room	15%	19%	14%	15%	7%	4%
Play by myself (NET)	71%	72%	74%	81%	87%	90%
Play with others (NET)	65%	56%	50%	40%	31%	25%

Q.46 And how do you typically play video games?

How do you Typically Play Video Games (Kids) ?

Kids/Teen Video Games Users
(n=516)

	Child Boy (n=164)	Child Girl (n=132)	Teen Boy (n=116)	Teen Girl (n=104)
Play Online (NET)	72%	68%	87%	74%
Online by myself	34%	40%	42%	44%
Online with other players in the room	22%	16%	22%	19%
Online with other players I know	37%	32%	52%	26%
Online with other players who I have never met	27%	23%	32%	28%
Play Offline (NET)	56%	58%	35%	45%
Offline by myself	40%	42%	28%	38%
Offline with other players in the room	28%	25%	13%	13%
Play by myself (NET)	62%	69%	57%	69%
Play with others (NET)	77%	61%	81%	57%

Q.22 And how do you typically play video games?

Reasons for Playing Video Games

Base: Total Qualified Adults (n=2,575)

Total Reasons	Total Adults (n=2,575)	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Have fun	48%	46%	52%	49%	41%	57%	53%
Unwind	47%	43%	46%	49%	46%	50%	58%
Pass Time	46%	42%	45%	40%	46%	60%	56%
Personal time	40%	39%	38%	41%	38%	40%	47%
Escape	36%	32%	35%	41%	37%	37%	38%
Use my brain	35%	26%	28%	34%	39%	38%	57%
Comfort	26%	31%	28%	23%	22%	19%	31%
Indulge	19%	26%	20%	16%	15%	12%	21%
Immerse	18%	24%	22%	20%	13%	14%	9%
Connect	17%	23%	24%	17%	12%	9%	9%
Excite	17%	24%	16%	19%	10%	14%	11%
Improve	16%	20%	16%	16%	12%	15%	19%
Let loose	16%	27%	19%	15%	9%	5%	5%

P3a. Why do you play video games? (Select all that apply)

Benefits of Playing Video Games
(Completely Agree/Somewhat Agree)
Total Adults Players (n=2,575)

	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Provide stress relief	81%	84%	85%	88%	88%	88%
Provide mental stimulation	84%	82%	86%	83%	91%	89%
Bring people joy through play	84%	87%	88%	81%	84%	79%
Be a great way to spend free time	79%	81%	84%	80%	84%	84%
Help to improve creative skills	78%	77%	84%	82%	83%	89%
Accessible experiences for people with different abilities	82%	83%	78%	81%	72%	80%
Help to improve creative skills	81%	78%	78%	74%	71%	78%
Bring different types of people together	80%	80%	76%	75%	62%	71%
Be educational	74%	72%	73%	76%	71%	77%
Teach us how to communicate and work as a team	78%	76%	76%	67%	53%	55%
Create a feeling of community	81%	75%	68%	65%	49%	61%
Inspire people	79%	73%	68%	66%	49%	51%
Promote social interaction	75%	69%	67%	64%	54%	62%
Provide physical activity	49%	46%	41%	44%	25%	30%
Teach kids how to win and lose in a healthy manner*	70%	62%	79%	67%	-	-

P4. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about video games.
Generally speaking, video games can...

In General, Video Games are Helpful in Developing
(Completely Agree/Somewhat Agree)
Total Adults Players (n=2,575)

	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Problem-solving skills	81%	81%	83%	81%	79%	84%
Technical skills	76%	75%	78%	78%	66%	77%
Teamwork & collaboration	79%	77%	77%	70%	48%	65%
Adaptability	77%	70%	76%	68%	60%	63%
Communication skills	75%	68%	71%	59%	42%	48%
Conflict resolution skills	70%	65%	62%	56%	40%	54%
Leadership skills	71%	66%	64%	55%	38%	41%
Inclusion	69%	62%	63%	53%	41%	43%
Dependability	65%	56%	56%	50%	37%	41%
Cultural awareness	62%	49%	53%	43%	28%	36%
Cultural sensitivity	61%	48%	68%	42%	26%	35%
Empathy	61%	45%	47%	43%	27%	31%

P6. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about video games.

Why Play Video Games Online - Adult

Adult Video Games Online Players

(n=1,804)

	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Play/socially interact with others	46%	42%	36%	25%	22%	25%
Compete/play against others	48%	31%	39%	22%	36%	20%
Collect trophies/achievements	22%	28%	25%	25%	26%	28%
Play team games/cooperate with others	39%	24%	26%	23%	8%	8%
Unlock options/characters	28%	23%	25%	23%	18%	17%
Meet new players	24%	18%	16%	14%	6%	11%
Participate in online communities	23%	18%	18%	11%	4%	14%
To learn from other gamers	18%	16%	17%	12%	12%	10%
Access downloadable content	16%	11%	18%	13%	10%	11%
Share achievements with friends	16%	16%	15%	12%	7%	8%
Exchange online goods	13%	12%	10%	9%	1%	2%
Other reason	4%	9%	11%	20%	22%	35%

Q47. Why do you like playing video games online?

Statements about Video Games (Completely/somewhat agree)

Total Adult Players

(n=2,575)

	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Video games can introduce people to new friends and relationships	76%	72%	69%	59%	53%	59%
Is a way to have a good time together with my family/partner	72%	71%	62%	57%	41%	46%
Video games help me stay connected with friends/family	67%	55%	56%	40%	27%	36%
I have spent time with people I otherwise would not have because of video games	67%	51%	54%	36%	27%	29%
Video games have strengthened my relationship with friends	69%	52%	52%	34%	26%	23%
I have met people through video games that I otherwise would not have met	63%	47%	53%	35%	28%	32%
Video games have helped me to develop deeper relationships with others	64%	48%	49%	33%	19%	26%
I have met a good friend, spouse through video games (incl. multiplayer, chat rooms etc.)	56%	42%	40%	31%	17%	17%
Help parents spend more time with their children* <small>*Ask parents only (n=459)</small>	68%	69%	74%	64%	-	-

P5. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about video games.

eSports Related Activities in the Past Year - Adult

Total Adult Video Games Users
(n=2,575)

	18-34 Males (n=538)	18-34 Females (n=604)	35-54 Males (n=559)	35-54 Females (n=492)	55-64 Males (n=173)	55-64 Females (n=209)
Any esports related activities	57%	42%	38%	23%	14%	14%
Watched esports tournament play online	36%	26%	26%	13%	10%	11%
Purchased esports-related digital content	16%	11%	11%	7%	1%	4%
Watched esports tournament at esports venue	12%	10%	7%	6%	2%	3%
Purchased esports-related physical merchandise	12%	10%	8%	4%	1%	3%
Personally competed in an esports tournament	11%	8%	6%	6%	3%	3%

E1. Which of the following esports related activities did you participate in the past year?

eSports Related Activities in the Past Year - Kids/Teens

Total Kids/Teens Video Games Users
(n=516)

	Child Boy (n=164)	Child Girl (n=132)	Teen Boy (n=116)	Teen Girl (n=104)
Any esports related activities	30%	20%	37%	27%
Watched esports tournament play online	18%	12%	26%	14%
Purchased esports-related digital content	9%	5%	11%	9%
Watched esports tournament at esports venue	7%	4%	7%	8%
Purchased esports-related physical merchandise	6%	5%	4%	3%
Personally competed in an esports tournament	8%	5%	4%	2%

E1. Which of the following esports related activities did you participate in the past year?

Video Game Rating System Attitudinal Statements
(Strongly / Somewhat Agree)

Total Adults (n=2,575)

	Non- Parents (n=2,077)	Parents of Users 6-12 (n=262)	Parents of Users 13-17 (n=197)
The ratings system is very useful in helping parents buy and rent video games that are appropriate for their children	42%/91%	47%/94%	45%/94%
A rating on a computer or video game will accurately describe the game's content	30%/84%	30%/90%	36%/85%
A rating on a computer or video game will accurately reflect my view about the appropriateness of the content for my child	-	29%/85%	35%/82%
A rating on a computer or video game will accurately reflect my views about the appropriateness of the content for any consumer, whether young or old	27%/82%	26%/83%	34%/84%

Q32. Please review the following information about the video game rating system. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the rating system.
Base: Video game users in past 4 weeks.