

Gaming habits revealed

The rise of the silver gamester and the impact of wedding vows

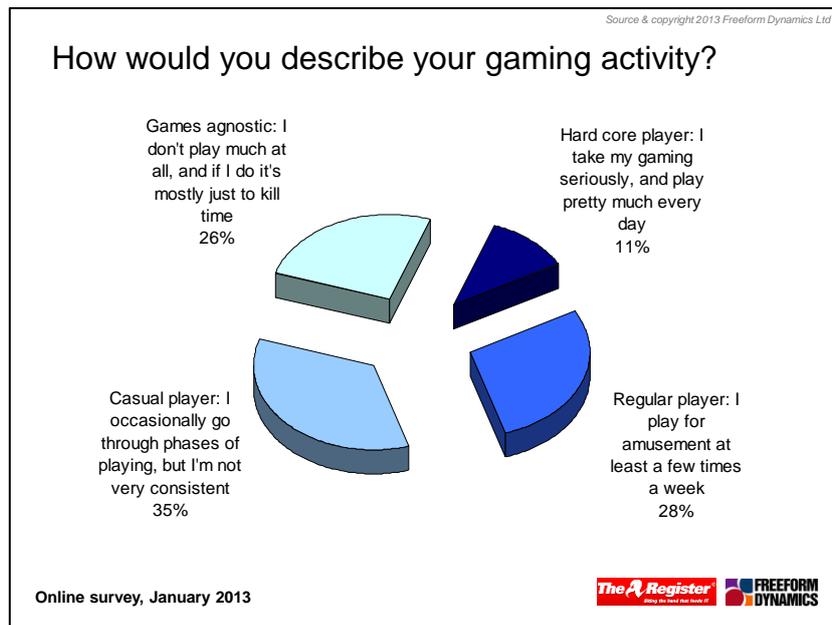
By Team Freeform, April 2013

Originally published on

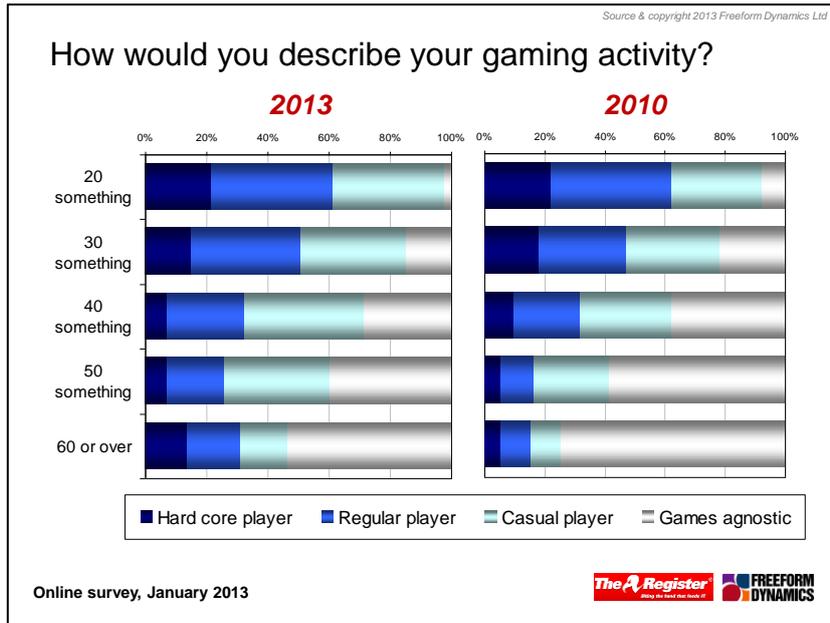


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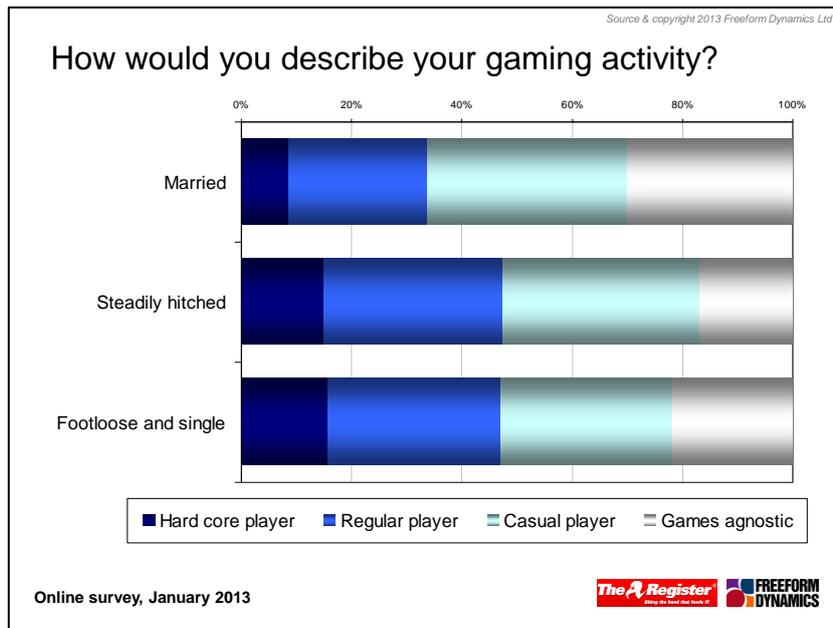
In a recent research study we looked at the activities of respondents with respect to smartphones, tablets, gaming and TV viewing. For this article we are going to focus on what they told us about gaming habits (that's gaming in the sense of playing electronic games rather than gambling). In total 891 respondents answered the gaming section of the survey and there was a spread of activity from hard core gamers at one end to those who don't play much at all (and if they do it's mostly just to kill time) at the other.



Most of the hard core players tended to come from the younger age groups, but interestingly when we compared the results of this study to the results of an earlier one run in 2010 (which asked many of the same questions), there was a significant increase in the number of gamers (both in the hard core and the regular player categories) in both the 50 something and 60 or over categories. So beware the silver gamester next time you're on World of Warcraft; what they lack in reaction times, they are likely to make up for in terms of experience, deviousness and gamesmanship.

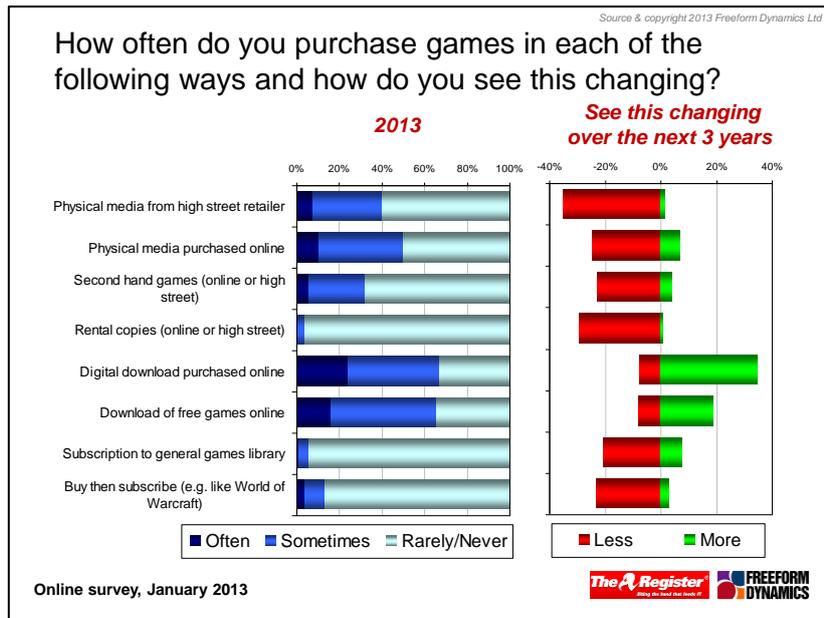


Beyond age related habits, it also appears that marriage curtails gaming activity (even compared to those that are steadily hitched).



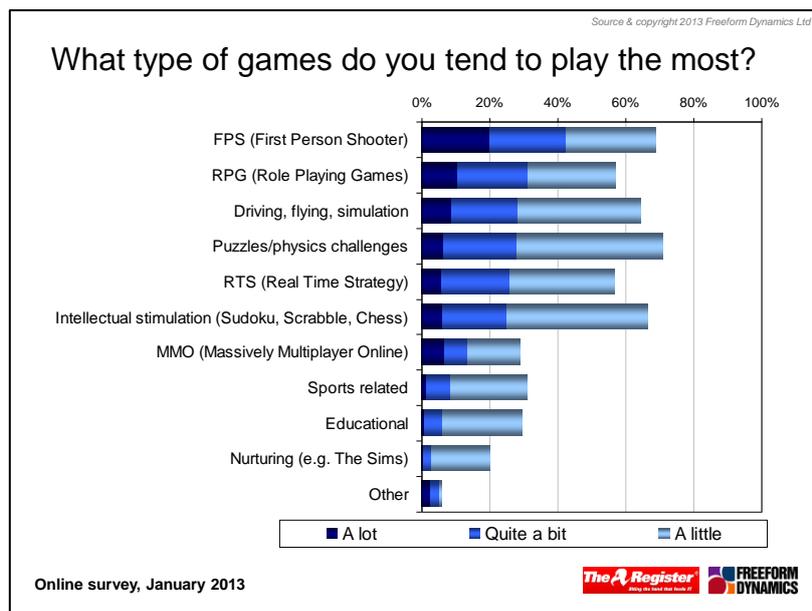
While those getting married to people with serious gaming tendencies are unlikely to get special clauses added to their wedding vows, we suspect side agreements are being negotiated in some instances.

When we looked at how games are purchased, digital downloads were up compared to 2010, and purchase of physical media was down. This is a trend that our respondents think is set to continue over the next 3 years, though for the time being, we are still quite a way from a complete abandonment of shiny round pieces of plastic.



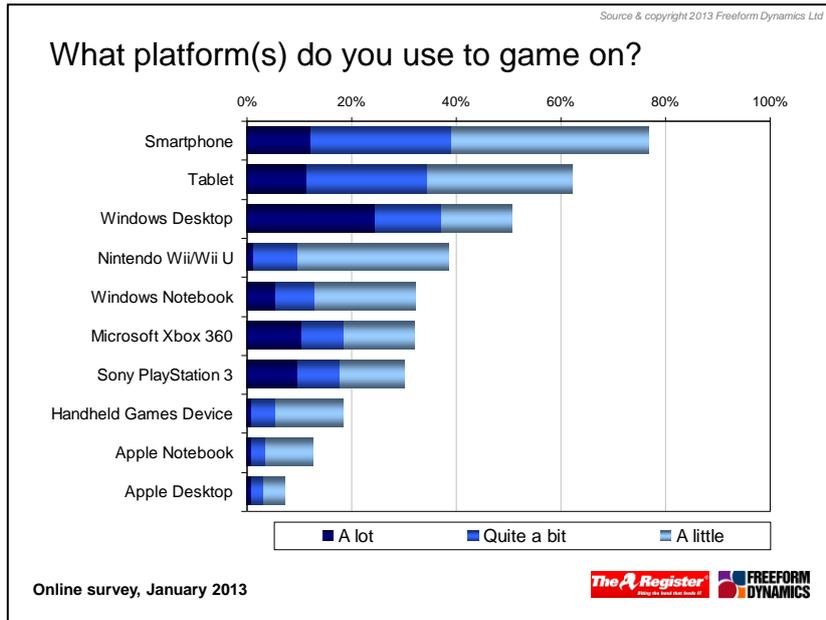
The persistence of physical media may be accounted for by the size of modern titles (that often come laden with rich HD multi-media), together with limited broadband speeds.

In terms of the types of game occupying the most of our readers' time, FPS (First Person Shooter) is the most intensely played overall, but other genres also have a good hit rate.



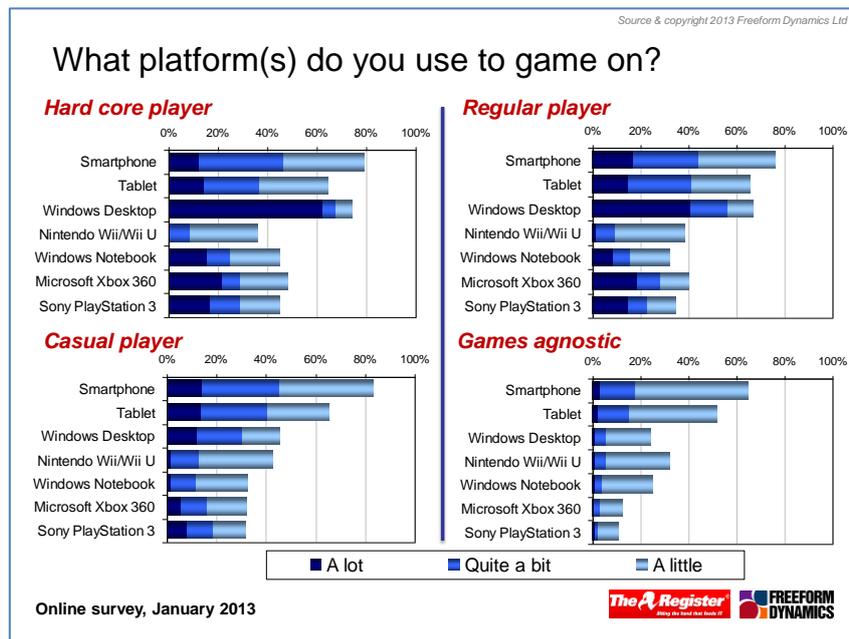
This breadth of activity is undoubtedly due in part to the rise in use of the smartphone as a gaming platform. Puzzles, physics challenges (think Angry Birds) and intellectual stimulation type games such as Sudoku, Scrabble and chess are all easily played on a smartphone.

Turning to platforms themselves, smartphones and tablets are the most commonly used, having totally eclipsed the use of handheld gaming devices.



The most intense gaming still takes place on Windows machines, however, although the Xbox and PlayStation account for a reasonable amount of activity here too. Macs are still not generally seen as a serious gaming platform.

But behind this picture who's doing what? While the Windows Desktop is the most frequently used platform for hard core gamers and regular players, for casual players and games agnostics, smartphones and tablets predominate.



The other thing we can see from this chart is that the more into games you are, the more likely you are to play on whatever device you have with you at the time, i.e. you'll feed your habit whatever way you can.

N.B. This survey was carried out on [The Register](http://www.theregister.com) IT information and news site, so is a self-selecting sample and may not be representative of the general population.

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