

2022 WEBBY AWARDS

TREND REPORT WAY TOO

NEW!



Presented by



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WELCOME FROM THE WEBBY AWARDS

The Webby Awards has been around since the Internet became mainstream. We've examined the evolution of the Internet since 1996 and have had a front row seat to this technological revolution, from web 1.0 to the dawn of web 3.0. This year, our Academy evaluated 13,500 pieces of work from more than 80 countries, and each year we're careful to consider the full impact of this work on our personal and collective experiences.

While it was common to say before the pandemic that our online lives were very separate from our real-world lives, the barricade between the two broke down once the pandemic hit, as millions of us were at home more than we ever thought we'd be. And things are changing fast. So fast, in fact, that phrases like Web3, the metaverse and NFTs are now common phrases, when they were barely uttered earlier this year. That's why we chose to zero in on innovation this year, focusing on

two areas that have innovated particularly fast: online gaming and live streamed commerce. Both these worlds have grown immensely in the past two years, in part because the pandemic prompted the accelerated innovation.

I hope you enjoy the **2022 Webby Trend Report, Way Too New**, an overview of the unprecedented explosion of online innovation, loaded with examples and insights from the leading brands building our digital future. The research presented here is included in this year's **Webby Talk**. This series of virtual thought leadership talks, with thanks to our sponsors WP Engine, Brandlive and YouGov, bring us to visit 200 companies and share our perspective and the Internet trends that will impact the work they are making.

Having now met with hundreds of the smartest people, making the Internet around the world, one thing continues to ring true;

whether you're part of a Fortune 500 brand, a media publisher, an ad agency, a tech startup, an artist, or a video creator: We will hopefully never again see the challenges and hardships that came to light because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the ingenuity and creativity of the people we meet and the industries we serve promises that what we have learned and experienced will not go to waste and the future can be brighter because of what we create.



CLAIRE GRAVES
PRESIDENT,
THE WEBBY AWARDS

THE NEW NORMAL KEEPS CHANGING

Welcome to Way Too New

The global pandemic created an indispensable internet and now creative teams are deciding what's next. Over the past two years online innovation has accelerated at a staggering pace, spurred by the realities of the pandemic. As the saying goes: necessity is the mother of invention.

Trends that have accelerated in the last years show no signs of stopping, including a stark increase in user adoption of online gaming and livestreamed commerce.

Innovations in these areas have been aided by the following factors:

- Massive global investments technology
- Intentional adoption of technology to stay connected
- Increased audiences have enabled brands to experiment creatively

Online gaming saw newfound interest as millions of people spent more time at home and desired new experiences. Retailers were forced to quickly adapt to the pandemic by bolstering their online commerce presence.

It's safe to say that accelerated innovation is part of our new normal. So let's dive into the research and findings.

ABOUT THE TREND REPORT

The Webby Trend Report is part of The Webby Awards' annual thought leadership series which includes our [Webby Talks](#) presentations and events. This year's trend is **Way Too New** - an overview of the unprecedented explosion of online innovation, loaded with examples and insights from the leading brands building our digital future.

This Trend Report is informed by insights from surveys conducted by YouGov - our research partner, of more than 3,000 consumers ages 18-65 from across the US, and more than three months of research by The Webby Awards team including a review of the rising trends from the 13,500 submissions entered into the 25th Annual Webby.

RESEARCH + METHODOLOGY

This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov's Plc panel of 17 million+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Emails are sent to panelists selected at random from the base sample. The email invites them to take part in a survey and provides a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicks on the link they are sent to the survey that they are most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas. (The sample definition could be "US adult population" or a subset such as "US adult females"). Invitations to surveys don't expire and respondents can be sent to any available survey.

The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data. YouGov Plc makes every effort to provide representative information. All results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to statistical errors normally associated with sample-based information.

CHAPTER 1

ONLINE GAMING

NOT JUST FOR NERDS ANYMORE

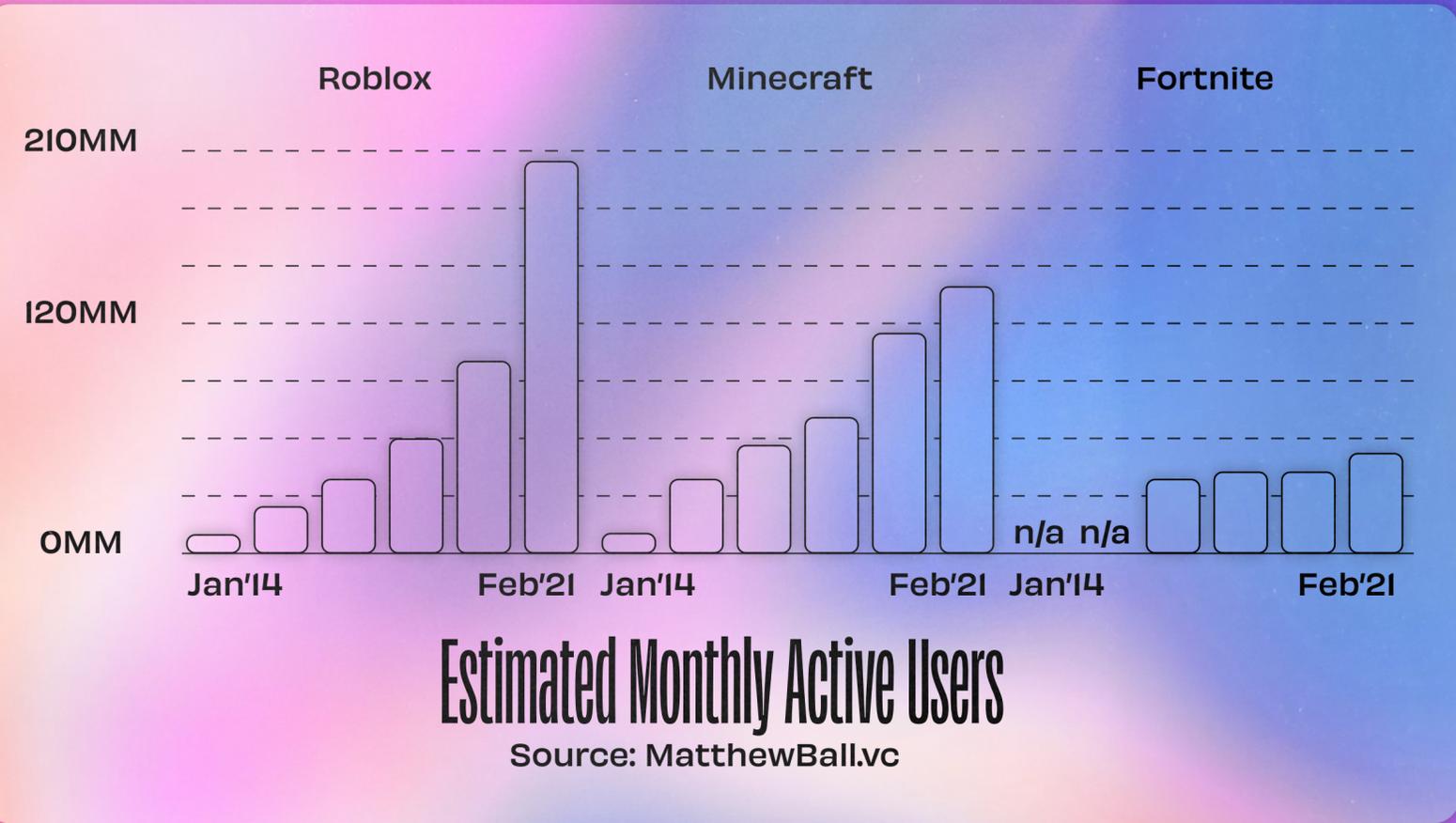
A DIVERSE AND GROWING AUDIENCE

It's time to speak to this demographic holistically. The stereotype of the gamer being young and male is fast disappearing. Today - nearly every type of person now counts themselves among gamers. There are more gamers than ever before, too. Roughly 181 million U.S. adults play video games, according to the Entertainment Software Association. What was once considered a niche hobby has grown into a near-universal pastime and a multibillion dollar industry.

60%

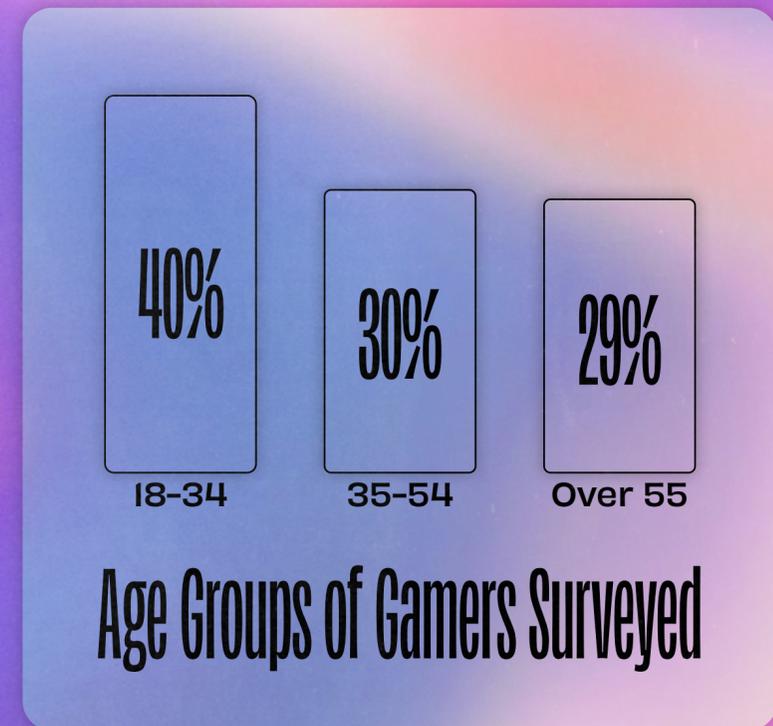
Of survey respondents said that they game at least once a week across PC, console and mobile devices

Women and girls are firing up their consoles. And they're gaming nearly as much as men and boys. Older generations are also gaming more than before; 31% of the gamers we surveyed were 35 to 54 years old. This shift in demographic shouldn't be ignored, but don't just take our word for it.



45%

Of gamers who game at least once a week for more than 30 minutes identify as female



INTO THE METAVERSE WE GO

WHAT IS THE METAVERSE?

Currently there isn't an universally agreed-upon definition of the metaverse. Venture Capitalist Matthew Ball offers up this definition in his frequently referenced [Metaverse Primer](#) that best summarizes what the metaverse could be:

"The Metaverse is an expansive network of persistent, real-time rendered 3D worlds and simulations that support continuity of identity, objects, history, payments, and entitlements, and can be experienced synchronously by an effectively unlimited number of users, each with an individual sense of presence."

There is however, agreement on the defining features of the metaverse:

- It has persistent virtual worlds, as well as augmented reality that combines aspects of the physical and digital worlds
- It has a digital economy where users can create, own and sell virtual goods, services and property
- It is interoperable i.e. you can take what you own between virtual worlds

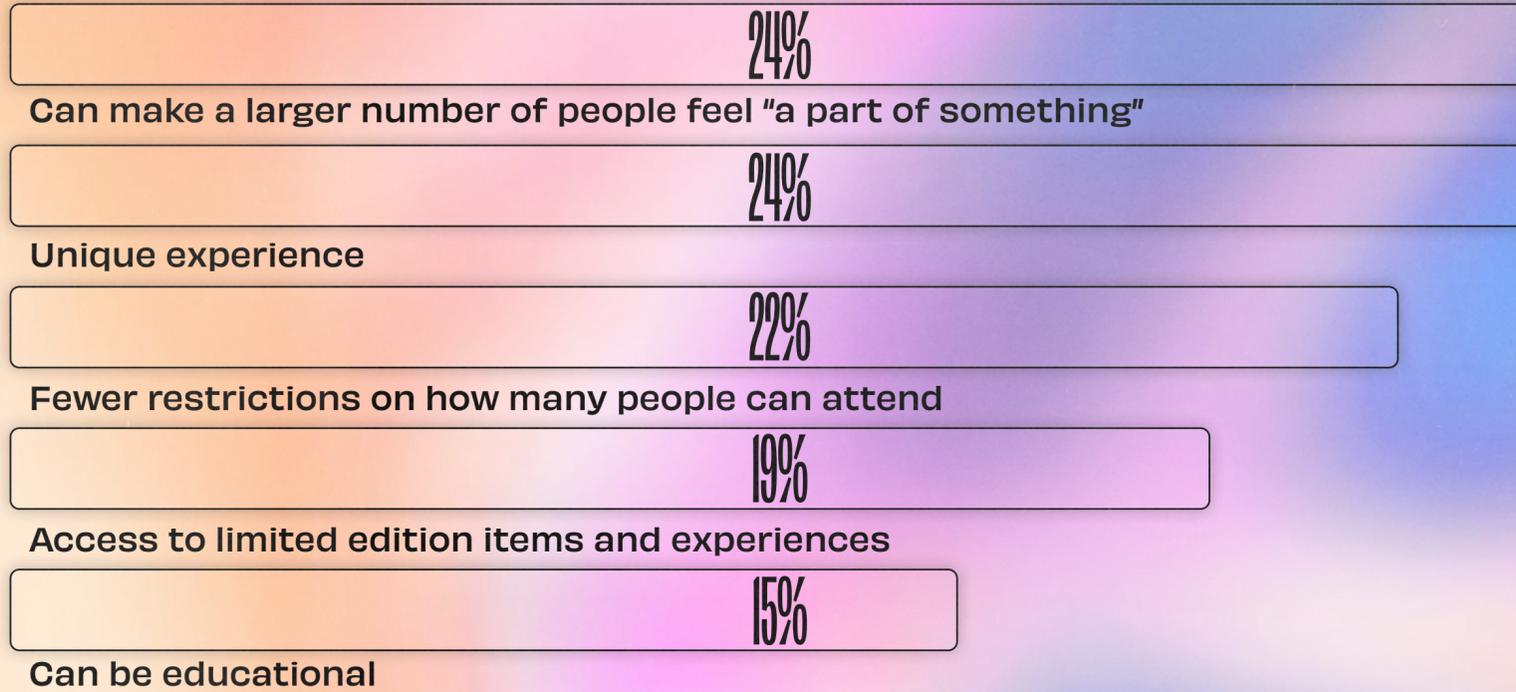
Right now, the metaverse is limited to virtual worlds that exist on popular platforms like Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite, etc.

The Metaverse is on everyone's mind, and it's only going to grow. From Facebook renaming its holding company to Meta, to Epic Games announcing a \$1 billion round of funding to support its long-term vision for the metaverse, brands and advertisers are focusing their efforts on virtual worlds. And they're starting with wildly popular games like Minecraft, Roblox and Fortnite.

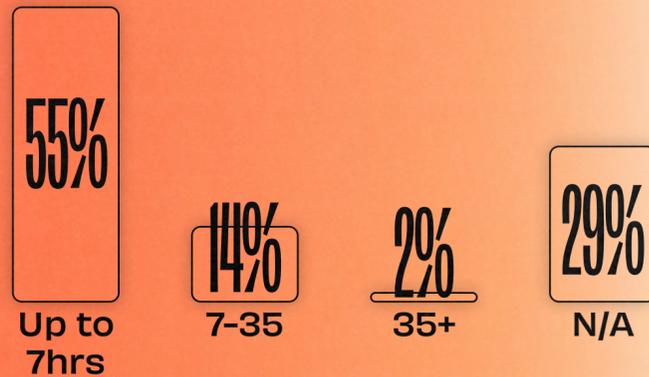
These virtual worlds have an audience that is willing to spend time, and money. In-game purchases and currencies are defining features of the metaverse. Roblox, for example, has an in-game currency called Robux - tied to real-world money that's powering a virtual-world economy on the platform.

PARTICIPATION IN VIRTUAL WORLDS

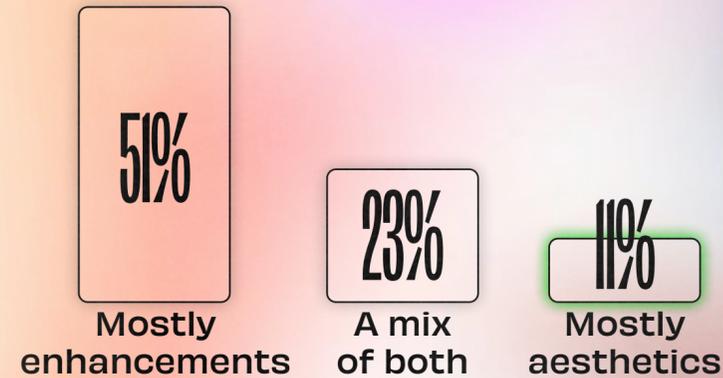
Which of the following do you think are advantages of in-game events or activations?



Age of Survey Participants



In a typical week, how many hours do you spend playing video games online?



What kind/type of purchases do you make when playing online video games?



How often do you make in-game purchases when playing online games?

BRAND ACTIVATIONS IN THE METAVERSE

GUCCI GARDEN GUCCI IN ROBLOX



As part of Gucci's ongoing efforts to reach and engage younger audiences they created a virtual version of Gucci Garden Archetypes, a multimedia exhibit for its 100th anniversary. Players tried on and purchased limited-edition Gucci collectible and limited-edition Gucci accessories ranging from **\$1.20 to \$9**. Many items were also offered for free, with exclusivity underlined by limited time releases during the activation.

A HUGE IMPACT

The community was extremely excited about the collaboration:

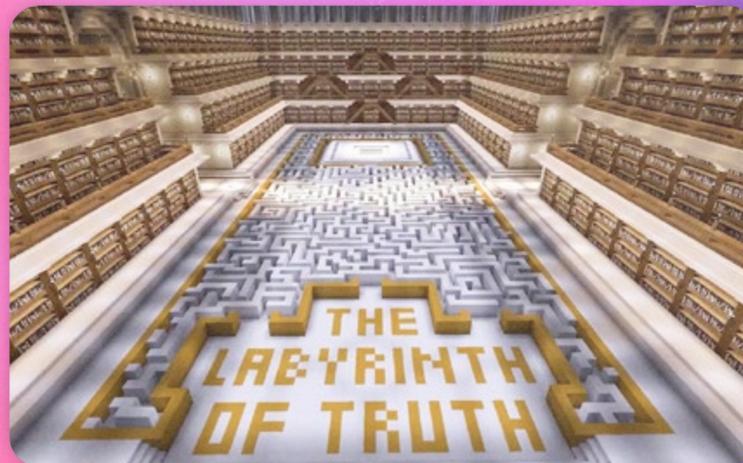
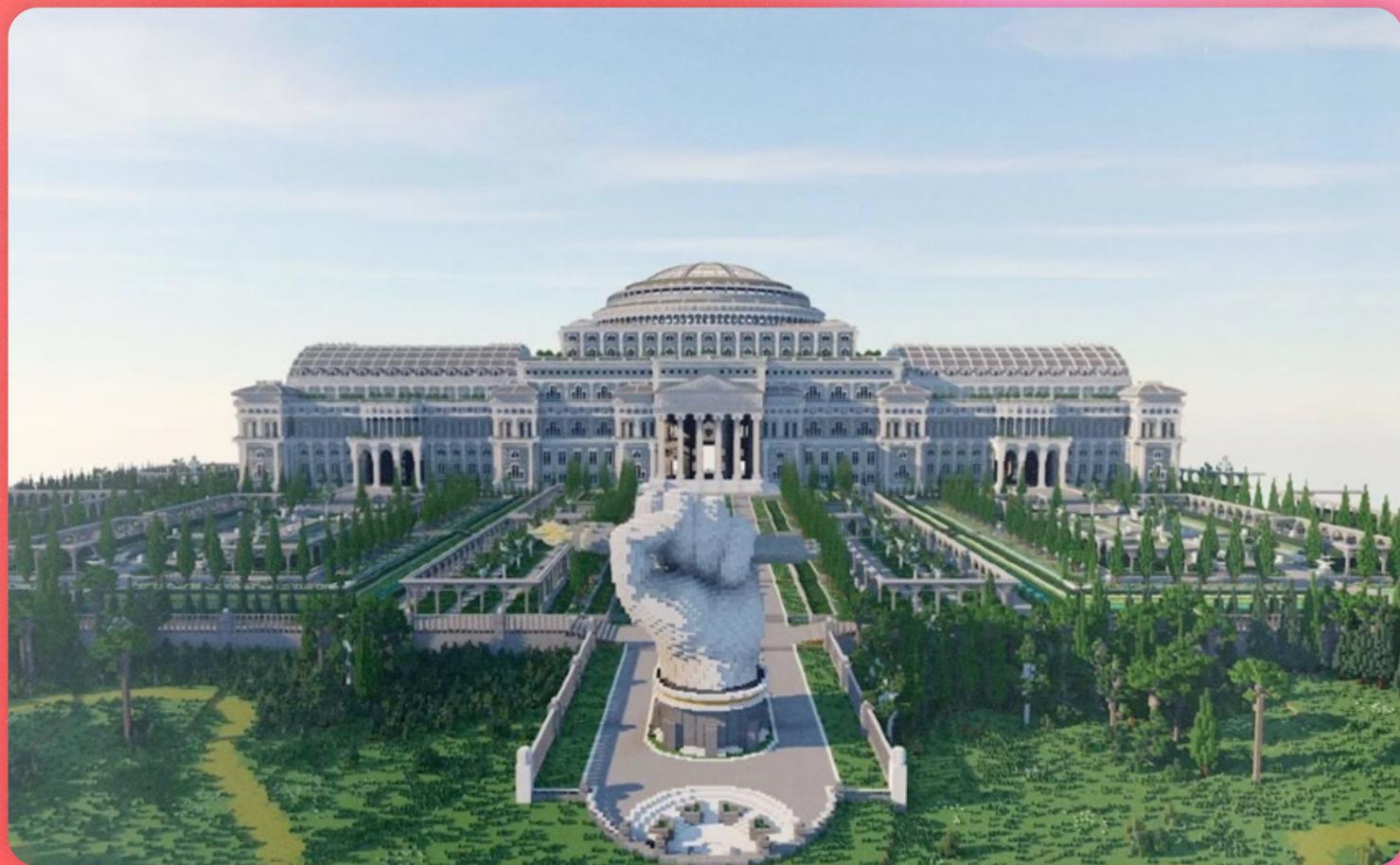
- During the two week activation, more than 4.5 million items were won on the platform
- A virtual-only product - "Gucci Dionysus Bag with a Bee" was traded for \$4,115 or a premium of 21% compared to the IRL version of the bag which retails for \$3,400 the cost of its IRL counterpart.

Many brands are using virtual world-based games to execute in-game activations, due to their low barrier to entry and a rapidly growing audience. This has presented great opportunities for brands and creatives. Dive into some of them below.



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BRAND ACTIVATIONS IN THE METAVERSE



THE UNCENSORED LIBRARY

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS, DDB BERLIN, MEDIA MONKS, BLOCKWORKS

To commemorate "World Day Against Cyber Censorship," **The Uncensored Library** opened its doors on Minecraft. The Webby Award-winning project uses blockchain technology to fill a virtual library with censored articles written by journalists in countries where the freedom of the press is suppressed. The activation targeted gamers between 15 and 30 years old to engage with independent journalism.

A HUGE IMPACT

- More than 200,000 copies of the Library have been downloaded
- The project has reached more than 20M gamers from 165 countries

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BRAND ACTIVATIONS IN THE METAVERSE

FORTNITE X BALENCIAGA

At its core, Fortnite lets players tap into fashion, self-expression, agency and fantasy. Players **now spend nearly 50% of their time in the game's creative mode**, where they design their own universes and engage in role-playing games.

Balenciaga's presence on Fortnite is a great example of these characteristics. The fashion house released its 2021 collection online, through a virtual lookbook built with Unreal Engine, making Balenciaga the first luxury brand to outfit Fortnite characters. Four of the game's most popular characters were made over with Balenciaga outfits.

BRIDGING VIRTUAL AND IRL

The activation seamlessly straddled the metaverse and the real world. In addition to branded in-game products for purchase, the Balenciaga and Fortnite collaborated to create co-branded apparel that could be purchased online and in retail stores, and also launched 3D billboards in Times Square New York and Piccadilly Circus in London. It's a signal of where we see the future going: the bridging of virtual and IRL worlds.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR ONLINE GAMING

- The metaverse offers brands a way to reach large, engaged audiences that are spending more time and money across the major gaming platforms
- Leveraging the metaverse is a great opportunity for brands to design immersive experiences that can generate both player and brand value
- It is a great chance for brands to bridge the virtual and the real world via unique experiences, activations, and products

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

"To many gamers, playing virtual world games may not actually feel or seem like gaming. It's just an entertaining extension of how their social lives have evolved."

Mobile gaming not only broadened the reach of video games among the general population. It also served as an entry point to the plethora of gaming experiences players can have, across game types and devices. And I use the word "experiences" very intentionally – to many gamers, playing virtual world games may not actually feel or seem like gaming. It's just an entertaining extension of how their social lives have evolved, which is as much applicable to a 54 year old these days as it is to a 24 year old.

Engagement with gaming is no longer just about playing a video game yourself. In fact, for many Gen Zers, they are actually spending more time watching gaming-related content than playing games themselves...And the impact of gaming culture has expanded well beyond video games proper – gaming influencers are the most followed influencer type among Gen Z, and are in turn having an effect on what younger consumers wear, watch, listen to, and more.



NICOLE PIKE
GLOBAL SECTOR HEAD OF ESPORTS &
GAMING, YOUNGOV

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INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

“A lot of organizations are still saying “How can we replicate what we used to do in person?” Instead, they should be asking “how can we take advantage of new mediums to scale reach, augment what we did in person, and introduce new possibilities?”

Audiences expect more and more from their live, virtual experiences and the introduction of the metaverse won't change that. Video content has to be TV-quality and make jaws hit the floor, and virtual social experiences need to catch up with the consumer world at large. A lot of organizations are still saying “how can we replicate what we used to

do in person?” Instead, they should be asking “how can we take advantage of new mediums to scale reach, augment what we did in person, and introduce new possibilities? What new tools should we try over the next 12-24 months to make sure we're pushing the bar and finding what works for our brand and audience?”



THOMAS IWASAKI
CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER,
BRANDLIVE

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CHAPTER 2

LIVESTREAM
COMMERCE

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

WATCHING MORE. SHOPPING MORE.

Since The Webby Awards first started honoring "Webcast" over 15 years ago, livestreaming has dramatically evolved. The technology today is readily available, it's (mostly) buffer free and now we are seeing an increase of new e-commerce capabilities. Smart brands are leveraging livestream and the power of influencers to reach new audiences for their products.

Livestream commerce is truly a fast-growing market, with sales projected to hit \$26 billion by 2023. Markets like China are writing the playbook for where livestream commerce is headed. No day captures the scope of livestream commerce better than China's Single's Day, or 11.11.

This annual event pioneered by Alibaba has grown into a behemoth of a shopping festival where consumers can shop within livestream videos and play games to get coupons. Alibaba's impressive logistics and fulfillment technology means that many shoppers will receive their purchases in less than an hour. In November 2021, Alibaba generated \$84.5 billion in revenue during their Single's Day shopping festival.

Brands should start recognizing livestream commerce as a viable strategy, or miss out on an active audience. Viewers watch livestream content for 27% longer than on-demand content, as per Conviva's State of Streaming Report. Our survey results show that consumers tune into a variety of content, and might stay to open their wallets.

THE LIVESTREAM SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Successful demonstrations and pitches are often honed to perfection for engagement and for promoting viewers to buy. The following elements are the recipe for success:

1. HYPNOTIC WATCHING

Livestream commerce that is lively and sometimes chaotic demonstrations, along with sets full of product are often hypnotic to watch and are hard to turn away from.

2. RELEASING DOPAMINE

Shopping in general sparks dopamine receptors. Through livestreams, viewers experience a release immediately when watching the demonstrations.

3. STATUS ENHANCEMENTS

Audiences respond to aspirational and status-enhancing qualities of products like clothing, jewelry, technology and make-up and beauty.

4. BUILDING A CONNECTION

Hosts foster a **parasocial relationship with their audience**. **Parasocial relationship** is a term that was coined by researchers Horton and Wohl in 1956, referring to psychological relationships experienced by members of an audience in their mediated encounters with performers in the mass media.

BY THE NUMBERS

37%

Watch Influencer or Creator livestreams

56%

Of respondents watch livestream content at least once a month

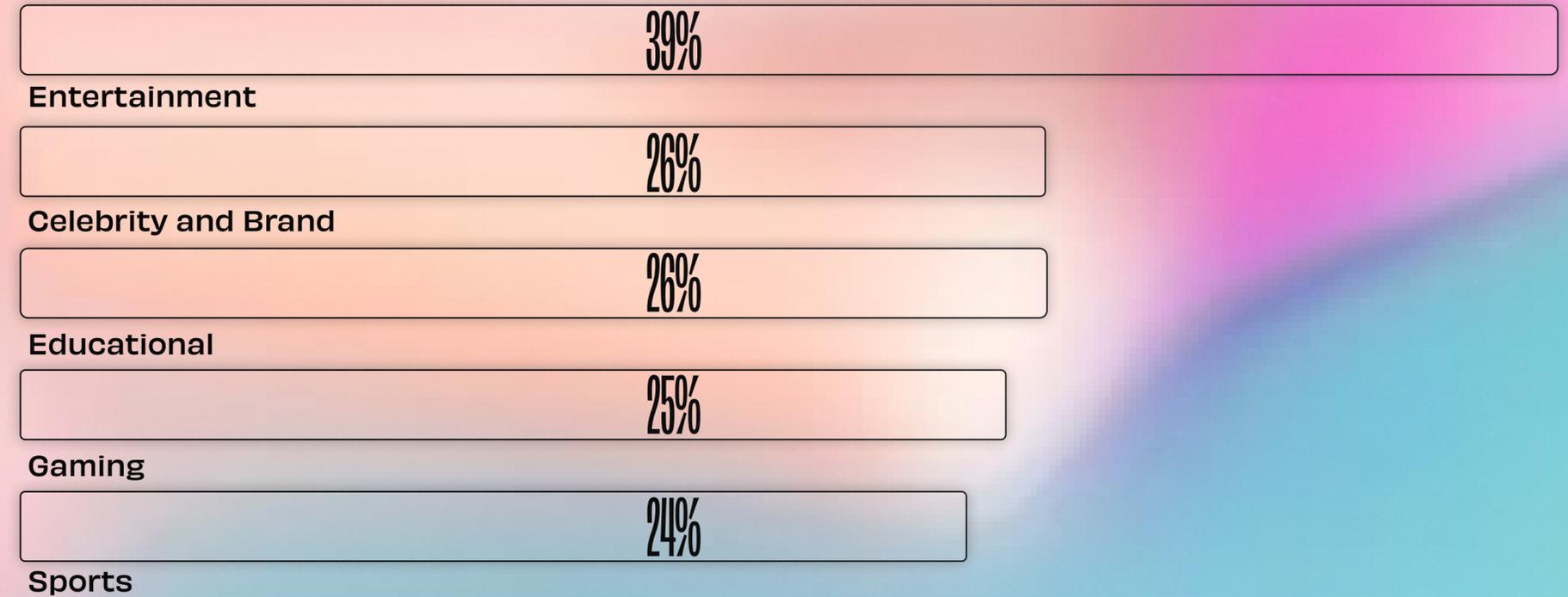
46%

Have purchased a product they saw in a livestream or would consider it

70%

Watch entertainment-based content, not including sports

Which, if any, of the following types of livestream video do you usually watch?



32%

Within the past week

18%

Within the past month

15%

Within the past 3 months

When was the last time you watched livestream videos?

33%

Once a week or more

23%

Once a month or more

11%

Once every 3 months or more

How often do you usually watch livestream videos?

THE NEXT FRONTIER OF E-COMMERCE

PETCO FACEBOOK LIVE

Petco hosted a dog fashion show on Facebook Live called "The Perfect Fit" to showcase new looks from Petco-owned brands and also to promote dog adoption. The event was hosted by actress and television host Arielle Vandenberg, and the dogs that modeled the latest in pet fashion were from LA Animal Services. **Over a million** viewers tuned in for the 22-minute livestream.



A HUGE IMPACT

In addition to attracting a huge number of viewers and focusing their attention on a worthy cause, the livestream fashion show also drove sales. 62% of the purchases were done online and Petco generated double in sales what it had spent on the fashion show.

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THE NEXT FRONTIER OF E-COMMERCE

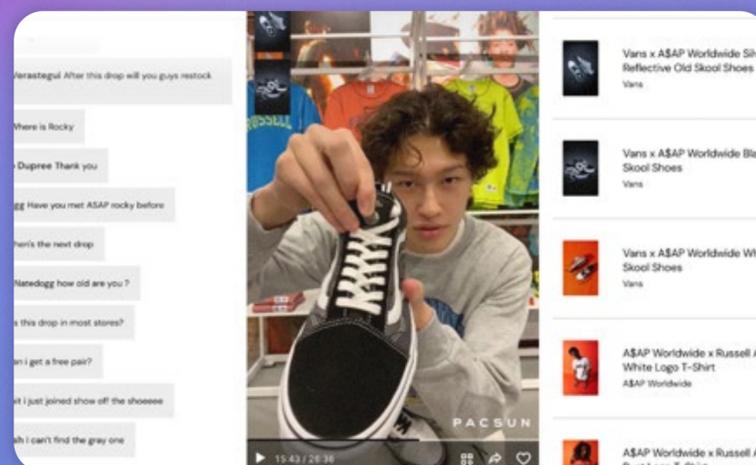
A\$AP WORLDWIDE x VANS x PACSUN LIVESTREAM SHOPPING EVENT

PacSun's livestream event for the worldwide launch of its collaboration with A\$AP Worldwide was a huge success. Hosted by PacSun model and TikTok influencer Mathieu Simoneau, the event gave thousands of shoppers worldwide

first-hand access to the new collection, and to engage with the brand creating a unique experience. One that made them feel special and part of something bigger than simply just making a purchase.

A NEW WAY TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Leveraging livestreams to connect and engage with consumers during fashion drops is an organic extension for the Pacsun brand whose "focus has always been its community of youth and speaking the language of its consumers". The first A\$AP Worldwide live shopping event was a success, inspiring PacSun to host a second livestream for the collaboration.



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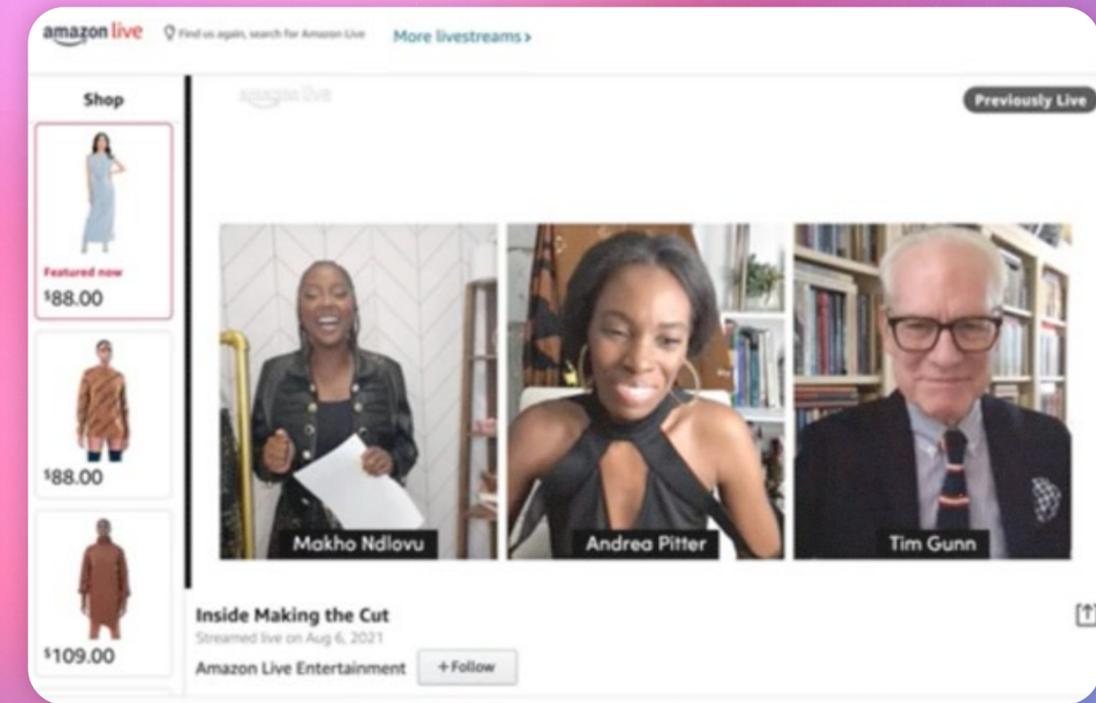
THE NEXT FRONTIER OF E-COMMERCE

MAKING THE CUT AMAZON PRIME

Amazon is leading the charge in its use of livestream commerce with an end-to-end integration for its Prime show - Making the Cut. Each episode of the show had a livestream event hosted on Amazon.com. The event gave fans of the show a look behind the scenes and an opportunity to get to know all of the designers from the show. Also, viewers could purchase items from designers' collections from that latest episode while watching the livestream.

CHANGING CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS

All the collections released after each episode of the show during the season sold out almost immediately on Amazon Prime - driving sales and reinforcing Amazon's as a purveyor of high end fashion to millions of viewers and shoppers online.



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KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR LIVESTREAM COMMERCE

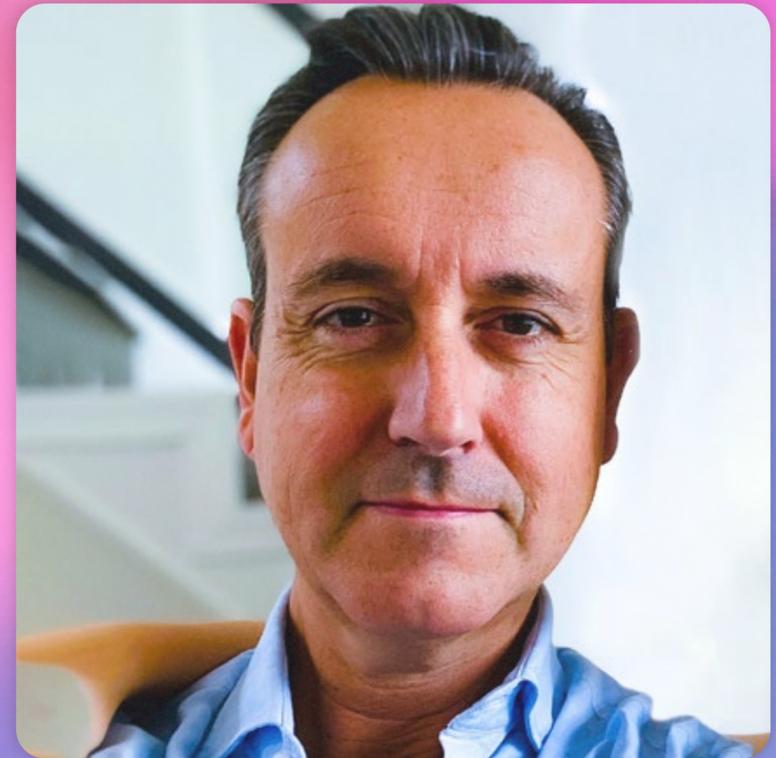
- More viewers are consuming more livestream content than on-demand content - especially influencer, creator and brand content
- Livestreaming is a great way for a brand to interact with audience to demonstrate and discuss product features, and a great way to deepen relationships with these audiences via unique experience and/or influencers
- The barrier to entry for livestreaming is now lower than ever - with almost all of the major social platforms offering livestreaming functionalities and many are rapidly releasing integrated e-commerce capabilities

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

“Done right, livestreaming creates space for dialogue, humanizes a brand, and creates valuable content that can be shared across other platforms - creating the best type of advocacy for a brand.”

The shifting landscape of commerce caused by the pandemic accelerated the need to bring a human element to virtual shopping experiences. The big value-add with livestreaming is that it provides a way to interact with customers in real-time, at the same time producing content that can be repurposed for blog posts, podcasts, explainer videos, social campaigns, and other marketing efforts. Done right, livestreaming creates space for dialogue, humanizes a brand, and creates valuable content that can be shared across other platforms - creating the best type of advocacy for a brand.

We've seen...that Gen Z (and Millennial) buyers want a seamless online and in-store shopping experience. Brands have had mixed results on that promise to date and yet eCommerce could work very differently in this new interactive metaverse and deliver on the promise of blending the best parts of an in-store and online shopping experience. Further, web3 may deliver on other elements critical to how Gen Z evaluates products and services like direct access to creators without a middleman and the ability to control how and to whom they share their personal information, thereby improving trust between brand and buyer.



ERIC JONES
VP OF CORPORATE MARKETING,
WP ENGINE

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CONCLUSION: ADJUSTING TO THE NEW

ONLINE GAMING HAS A LOT TO OFFER YOUR BRAND

The metaverse provides brands with access to large, engaged audiences that are spending both time and money on the major gaming platforms. And their interest translates beyond gaming, into game content, livestreams, activations and more. This presents an opportunity to create immersive experiences and bridge the virtual and real worlds via experiences, activations, and products.

LIVESTREAM COMMERCE IS JUST GETTING STARTED, AND THERE'S AN AUDIENCE FOR IT

More viewers are watching more livestream content for entertainment - not just sports - and this includes creator, influencer, and brand content. Livestreaming offers valuable interactions with an audience to demonstrate and discuss product features, and an opportunity to foster and reinforce brand relationships through experiences and/or influencers. Almost all social platforms offer live-streaming functionalities and are building out integrated e-commerce capabilities.

It's clear that both online gaming and livestream commerce are going to be major trends in the coming years. The pandemic may have accelerated both these trends, but they're here to stay and the opportunities for brands, shoppers and gamers are endless.

INNOVATE THE FUTURE

Over the last two years, the lines between our online and real-world lives have blurred. Our shared experiences are a reminder that that change is the only constant, and that together we can overcome hardships and challenges through creativity and ingenuity. The rapid advancements in how we experience the metaverse and leverage livestream commerce are just two examples. So, whether you are a global brand, an agency, a start-up, or an independent creator, now is the time to push the limits of our creativity and design best-in-class activation, develop unique experiences, and build deeper connections with a global community because your work will innovate the future we need.

ABOUT THE WEBBYS

THE WEBBY AWARDS IS THE LEADING INTERNATIONAL AWARD HONORING EXCELLENCE ON THE INTERNET.

Established in 1996 during the Web's infancy, The Webbys is presented by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences (IADAS)—a 3000+ member judging body. The Academy is comprised of Executive Members—leading Internet experts, business figures, luminaries, visionaries, and creative celebrities—and Associate Members who are former Webby Winners, Nominees, and other Internet professionals.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REPORT?

Email Rithesh Menon, Managing Director, The Webby Awards at rithesh.menon@webbyawards.com

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