

Bryter.

WOMEN GAMERS






2024

7th Annual Edition



Introduction

Contents

	What we know about women gamers	4
	Value of the women gamer audience	11
	Toxicity experiences amongst women	14
	Toxicity as a wider issue across gaming	18
	Tackling toxicity	24

The gaming industry is booming, with global revenues projected to reach \$522.5 billion by 2025 [1]. Women gamers represent nearly half of this revenue opportunity but continue to be an overlooked audience. Women significantly influence market dynamics, growth and demand through their purchasing power. Their active participation in the gaming community continues to shape gaming trends.

Over the past seven years, Bryter has been dedicated to exploring the evolving experiences of women gamers and providing valuable insights into their behaviours and challenges. In this latest edition, we review changing behaviours over time, as well as widening the lens to look at the broader gamer audience.

By acknowledging and catering to all types of gamers, the industry stands to improve representation, and create richer, more engaging gaming experiences for everyone.



Jenny McBean

Head of Gaming Insights



Emelia Smith

Insight Consultant

Note on significance testing: Small triangles throughout this report indicate significantly higher or lower differences in data subgroups. ▲ ▼

Evolution of the gaming audience

Bryter.



Driven by greater accessibility, more genres, and transmedia blurring lines between gaming and other media, gaming now attracts a diverse audience of different backgrounds. With this, the number of women gamers has grown and now represents almost half of all gamers.



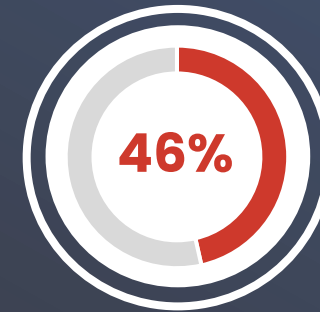
As audiences evolve, the development and positioning of games needs to evolve too. We need more varied and inclusive storytelling, character representation, and community spaces that cater to a broader audience.



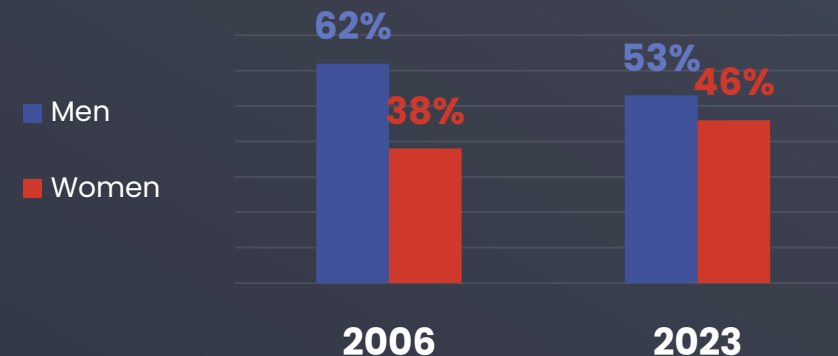
From a gender perspective, this change is slow and the industry continues to disproportionately cater to the male gamer — 68% of video game characters are male, and only 18% of game covers feature female protagonists [3].

Women are not a 'minority' group

Almost half of gamers worldwide are women



This split of men and women gamers has become more even over time [2]





Bryter.

**What we
know about
women gamers**



48%

Feel gaming is a big part of their identity

20hrs

Spent gaming per week
(any platform)

28%

Wouldn't call themselves a gamer

Disconnect in identifying as a gamer



Women gamers are dedicating many hours to gaming and view it as an important part of their lives, and yet over 1 in 4 are reluctant to identify as a 'gamer'.



The term 'gamer' has historically been male leaning and conjured somewhat negative stereotypes. Being a gamer was linked to competition and judgement - who can get the highest ranking or finish fastest, who has the most games, or latest console. Today, many women are even told directly by male counterparts that they are not 'true gamers' because they don't appear to fit some of these 'requirements'. It's no surprise then that women tend to shy away from the label of 'gamer'.

Gaming motivations

Bryter.



Women gamers are often stereotyped as only playing 'cosy' games or simulations. In reality, their preferences are as diverse as male gamers.



Like their male counterparts, they are most motivated to play games that offer immersive worlds and stories that enable exploration.



However, the competitive nature of player versus player is a weaker pull for women, who tend to prefer solo exploration. Women gamers have a greater desire to learn about game characters, as they reveal deeper layers of the game world and storyline.



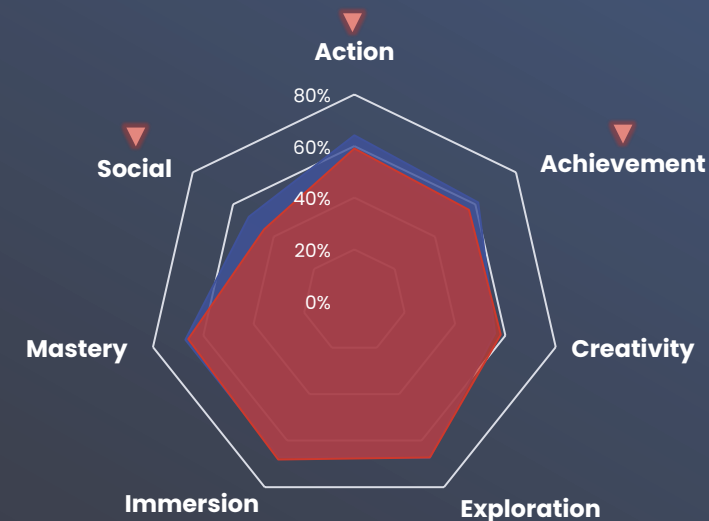
Interesting then, that research has shown in-game male characters speak twice as much as female characters in 94% of games [4], even if the protagonist is female. Something that should be considered in character design – being relatable and engaging for diverse audiences.

Women are motivated by rich worlds with immersion and exploration

PC/console gaming motivations

% selecting as important

- Men
- Women



Top 3 motivations for women



Immersion
Deep, engaging storyline



Action
Exciting, thrilling gameplay



Exploration
Variety of characters to get to know

Lower motivations vs. men



Social
Competition against others



Achievement
Becoming more powerful



Action
Destruction, causing chaos

Platform usage



Platform preferences are somewhat similar across men and women, with PlayStation 5 being the number one choice.



The Xbox Series - a platform typically associated with more 'hardcore' games - is used less by women. Instead, women play more on PlayStation consoles, likely due to the greater variety of narrative-driven games.



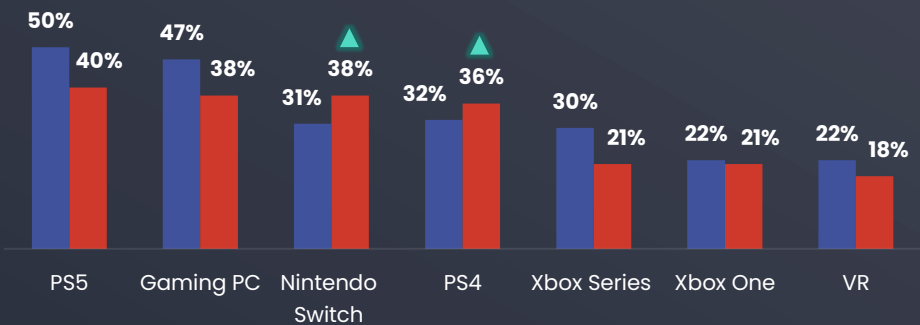
Women are more likely to play on Nintendo Switch - a platform associated with more casual gaming, but also with family gaming - something we see later as being popular with women gamers.



Women are also at the forefront of the fastest-growing platform: mobile - spending an average of 7.9 hours per week mobile gaming. Not to be overlooked, the mobile market accounted for \$119 billion revenue across all gaming revenue streams in 2024 [5].

Flexible gaming appeals

Platforms played on
% using monthly+



Main platform used

Men	Women
PS5	PS5
Gaming PC	PS4
Xbox Series	Gaming PC

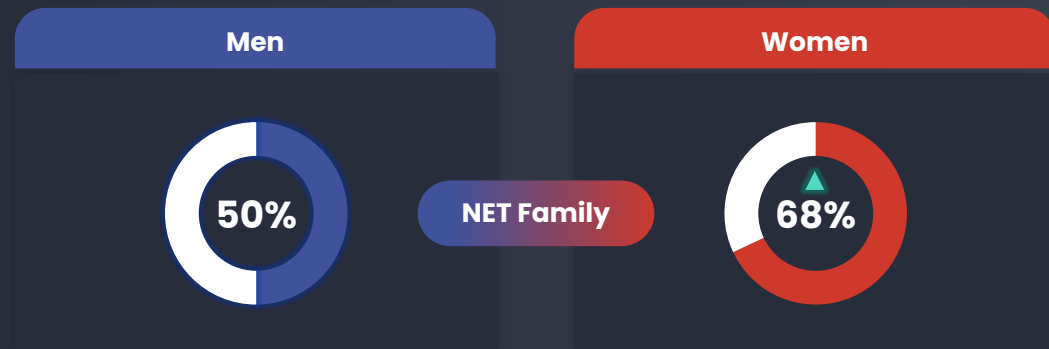
Weekly hours played
Mean hours per week

	Mobile	Console	PC
Men	6.5	13.7	11.1
Women	7.9 ▲	12.4 ▼	9.9

Women champion family gaming

Who are gamers playing with online?

Those who ever play online multiplayer



Family gaming



A 2024 Bryter study showed that 52% of UK parents played video games with their kids, with many parents seeing the educational and social benefits. The family gaming market is expected to grow as accessibility increases.



Women gamers are a large part of this growth. They are more likely than men to use gaming to spend quality time with their children or partner.



Growth is also being driven partially by the success of the Nintendo Switch, which has opened up the gaming audience by offering easy-to-pick-up games that various ages can enjoy.



The demand for shared gaming experiences is also a factor in the popularity of family gaming. Co-operative games (especially couch co-op) such as *It Takes Two*, *Overcooked* and *Split Fiction* have thrived due to this trend.

Versatile gamers

Bryter.



A common misconception is that women only play games in casual genres, such as life sims and platformers. In fact, their top genres are Action-Adventure, Shooters and Battle Royale: all traditionally more challenging, action-packed.



Bryter data reveals that since 2000, these typically male-favoured genres have increasingly attracted women gamers. The audience is here, and it is growing.



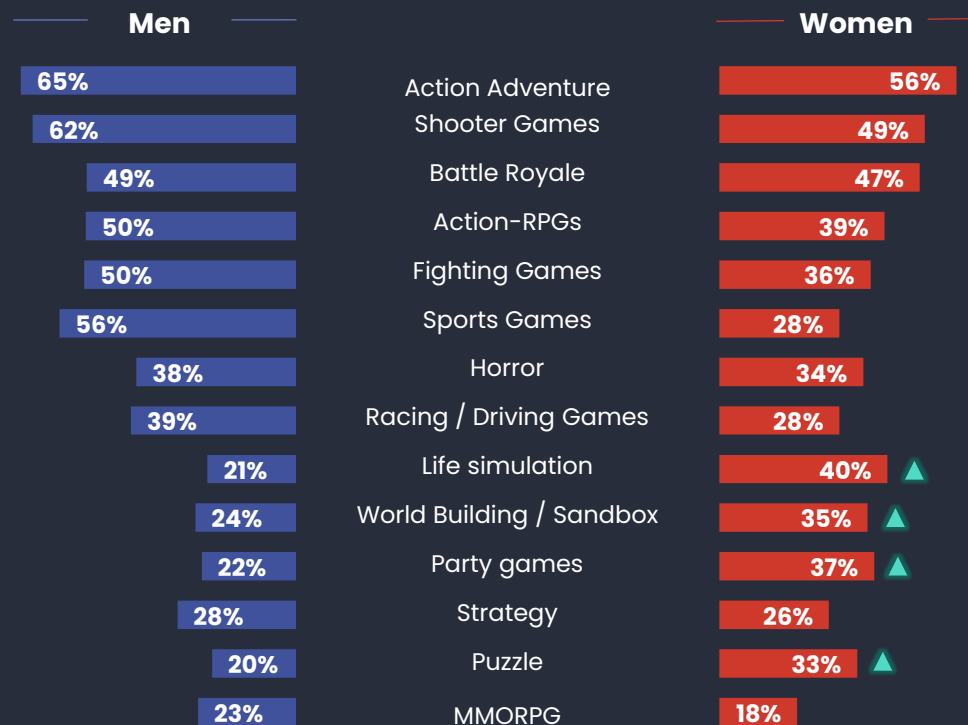
That said, the gaming repertoires of women are still very diverse; they are also more likely to play less intense genres regularly, such as life sims, world building and puzzle games.



These genres provide the immersion and exploration aspects women are motivated by and are less likely to put women in negative situations where they might face abuse. They are also genres they can play with their families and are available on more flexible platforms.

Comparison of PC/ console genre preferences

% playing regularly (ranking by total population)



Some genres have
seen real growth in
popularity
amongst women
since 2020...



Battle Royale
+22%



Shooters
+14%



Sports
+12%



ARPG
+11%

Online multiplayer gaming

Bryter.



Online multiplayer games have evolved into social hubs, allowing players to build friendships, collaborate, and engage in shared experiences.



The majority of women gamers are now playing online at least weekly, with an even balance of co-op and PvP. Women are increasingly using gaming to connect with others, so much so that almost two-thirds consider gaming to be an important aspect of their social life.



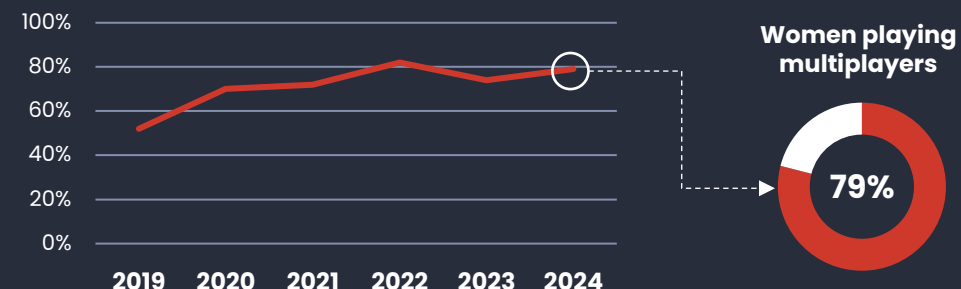
That said, women are still more likely to prefer single-player games compared to men. This gap suggests that while women value the social aspects of gaming, their negative experiences in multiplayer spaces continue to influence their preferences.



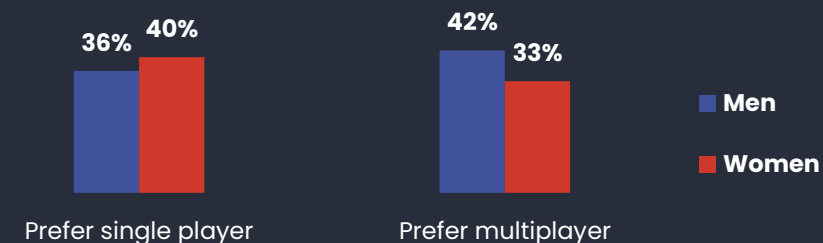
While certain communities are considered 'safer' than others, this highlights the ongoing need for change, especially as cross-platform play becomes more common. It will be up to the gaming community to ensure that as multiplayer becomes ever more accessible, that it is done with safety and inclusivity in mind.

Online multiplay frequency

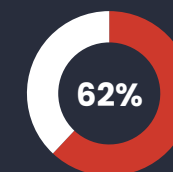
% playing weekly+



Multiplayer preference



Majority of women see gaming as an important part of their **social life**



Bryter.



**Value of
the women
gamer audience**

Game adoption

Bryter.



Women gamers take a more cautious approach to purchasing new games versus men. They are less likely to be early adopters and are significantly more likely to lean on peer experiences or IP familiarity before committing.



Their hesitancy is understandable when many games and their marketing campaigns are not designed with them in mind. Women are far less likely than men to be influenced by ads on video platforms, suggesting that current marketing content is not hitting the mark.



As a result, women tend to buy slightly fewer games per year — an average of 4.6 vs. 5.2 for men.



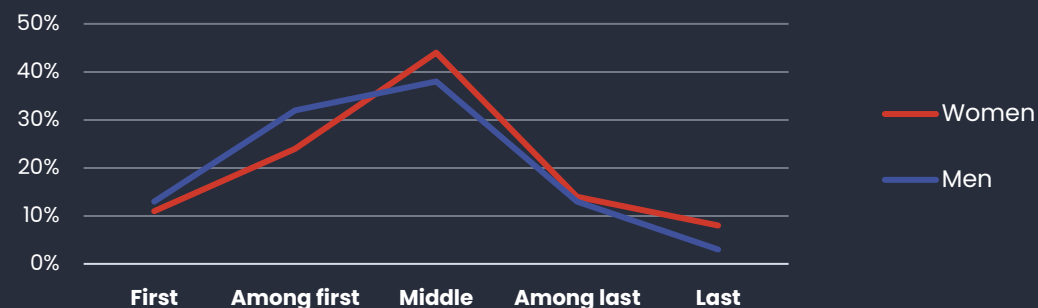
To capture the growing women gamer audience, titles need to tailor marketing content and strategy.

Women are more influenced by peer recommendations and reviews

Influences on game choice



New game adoption



Spending Power



Women gamers contribute significantly to gaming revenue. Once drawn into a game or franchise, they are just as likely to invest as men.



While they currently spend less than men overall, their spending behaviours and the continued growth of the women audience suggests that this gap will continue to decrease and titles that don't cater to women will miss out on revenue.



Subscription usage is high for men and women alike, with 77% of women having at least one gaming subscription (vs. 81% of men). PlayStation Plus is the top service, and also there's strong Nintendo Switch Online usership amongst women (22%).

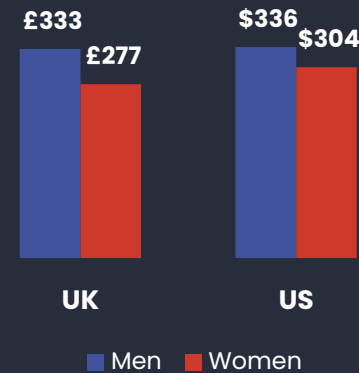


Frequency of DLC/ in-game purchases is equal among men and women. Women are just as likely to buy expansion packs, new characters and new weapons. There is also an opportunity in cosmetic DLC, where women over-index on purchasing.

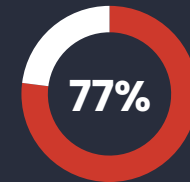
Bryter.

Women gamers have significant spending power

Yearly spend on gaming (incl. games, DLC, hardware)



Gaming subscriptions



77% of women have at least 1 gaming subscription...

- Most popular is PlayStation Plus (46%)
- Nintendo Switch Online also popular (22%) ▲
- Women are less likely than men to use developer specific subs (e.g. EA play)

In-game/ DLC purchases

% sometimes/ often
Purchase DLC

66% ➡

66% ➡

Expansion packs	New weapons	New characters	Season passes	Cosmetics
38%	37%	35%	30% ▼	34% ▲
38%	40%	35%	35%	26%

Bryter.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a headset with a microphone, is seated in a black office chair. She is looking at a computer monitor that displays a game or application with a blue and white interface. The room has a brick wall in the background, a hanging lamp with a white shade, and a framed picture on the wall. A large, curved, semi-transparent red shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, partially obscuring the woman and the monitor.

Toxicity experiences among **Women**

Levels of toxicity over time

Bryter.



After years of increasing toxicity, the tide may be turning. Since the start of our study in 2019, we saw a growing number of women experiencing toxicity year on year, hitting a peak of 72% in 2022. In 2023, we finally saw a decrease, which has continued in 2024, indicating a genuine downward trend.



The 2022 peak of toxicity is likely from multiple factors, but notably, that year saw a rise in the popularity of far-right sexist online personalities. The spreading of sexist rhetoric, combined with more people flocking to gaming during and after lockdowns, made 2022 the most toxic year recorded so far.



Unfortunately, recent declines have not strongly impacted the average women gamer experience. 59% of women gamers are still experiencing toxicity from male gamers, and half feel that toxicity has increased.

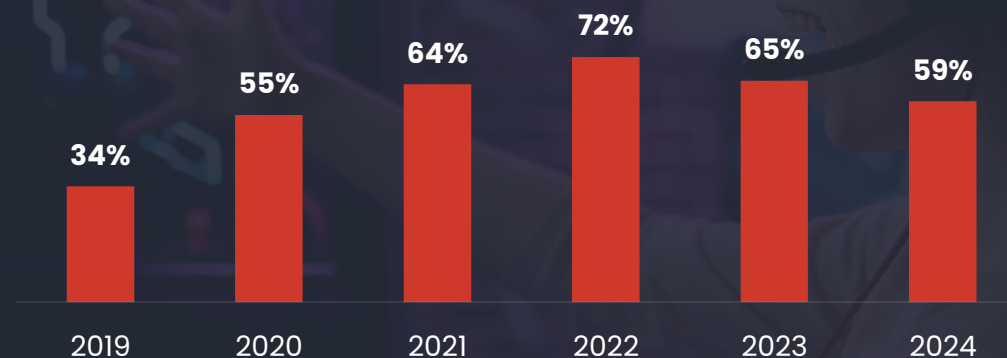


It will take time to shift behaviour, but the slow improvements are serving as a hopeful reminder that change can happen.

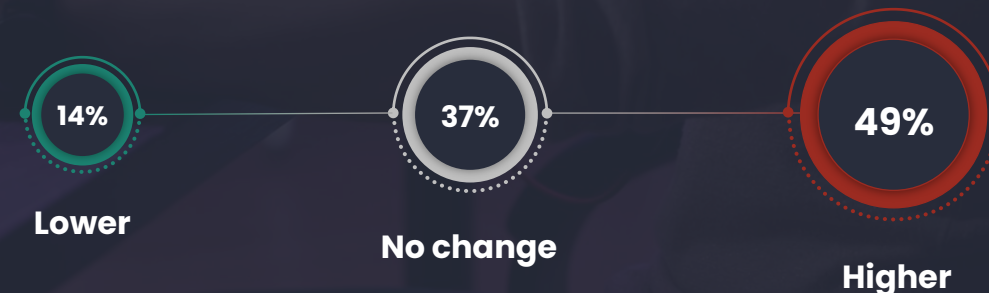
Gradual improvements

Yearly tracking of toxicity experienced amongst women gamers

% ever experienced toxicity from male gamers



Do gamers feel the amount of toxicity in gaming is higher or lower than previously?



Women's experiences of toxicity

Bryter.

Types of toxicity experienced

Those who have ever experienced abuse

41%

Verbal abuse
while playing

31%

Negative
actions or
gameplay
during a game

28%

Being sent
inappropriate
content or
messages

26%

Sexual
harassment

21%

Excluded from
participation
for because of
their gender

15%

Abuse, stalking
on social
media / digital
channels

12%

Threats
of rape

From verbal abuse, to stalking



Women gamers experience an array of abuse and discrimination that escalates in severity and malice. What begins as sexist abuse – such as 'get in the kitchen and make me a sandwich' – often escalates into more threatening behaviour.

A staggering 1 in 4 are sexually harassed, and more than 1 in 10 receive rape threats.



The dark nature of this abuse highlights how significant the problem is, especially when it can follow women offline – with abusers going as far as threatening to find out where they live.



Toxicity is also costing the industry financially. 1 in 5 women are being excluded from game participation because of their gender, making it harder for them to enter online games and buy into certain franchises.

Women gamers share their experiences

Bryter.

Many women gamers recall **sexist comments**, but also much more **sinister threats** of stalking and violence.

"I had one guy who wouldn't stop following me around in WoW, and when I requested he stop, he turned around and **threatened to rape** the frigidness out of me. I reported his account, and his account got banned. But normally it's the smaller, **group sexism** which gets to me, when a bunch of young guys gang up on me because I'm the only woman in the lobby."

Age 31 | UK

"I've Been Asked By Male Gamers, Can I **Send Nudes** And I've Also Had Male Gamers Send Very **Inappropriate** Photos Without My Consent."

Age 33 | US

"That I wasn't good enough to play with men because I was a female and that **he would do some nasty things to me** to show me that I will always just be a female."

Age 23 | US

"I was told 'I will **end your life** and your family', and end my girlfriend's life and her family and told me to end my life because I'm a **black woman**."

Age 23 | US

"I've had a male gamer tell me that **he knew where I lived** and he started telling me places that are around me and what stores I go to and which restaurants and coffee shops I frequent."

Age 33 | US

"I had won in Apex and a male gamer threatened to **hack my Xbox to find out my address** and beat, **rape** and kill me because of how I won the game."

Age 25 | US

"'I can make **you disappear**' was one comment that got me and they sent me **my IP address**."

Age 38 | US

"They said they were going to **force themselves on my child** while I watched."

Age 30 | UK



Bryter.

Toxicity as a wider issue in gaming

Abuse by demographic

Bryter.



Our new data shows that women gamers from ethnic minorities or the LGBTQ+ community experience even more abuse, and those most likely to experience abuse are women who are part of both communities.



These audiences represent a significant proportion of the gaming community but are often underserved or undervalued.



While the industry has made progress, many titles still focus on the alpha male lead. Women are rarely represented; LGBTQ+ and women from ethnic minorities even less so.

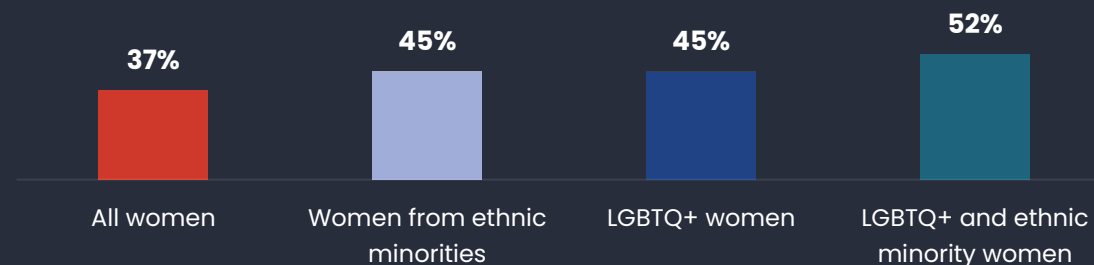


More can be done to provide a safe environment where players of all backgrounds feel represented and respected.

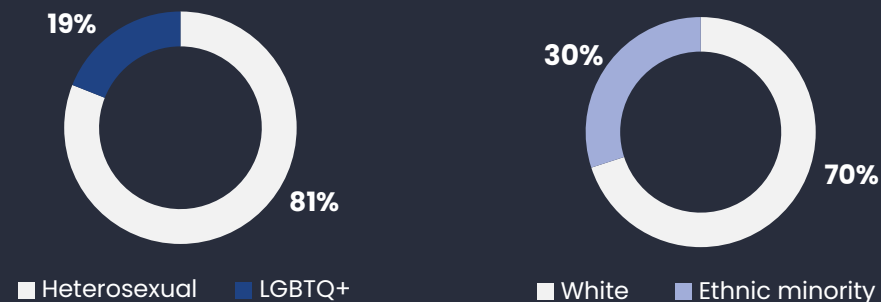
Women of colour and LGBTQ+ women face even more discrimination

Toxicity experienced amongst women gamers

% regularly experience toxicity from male gamers



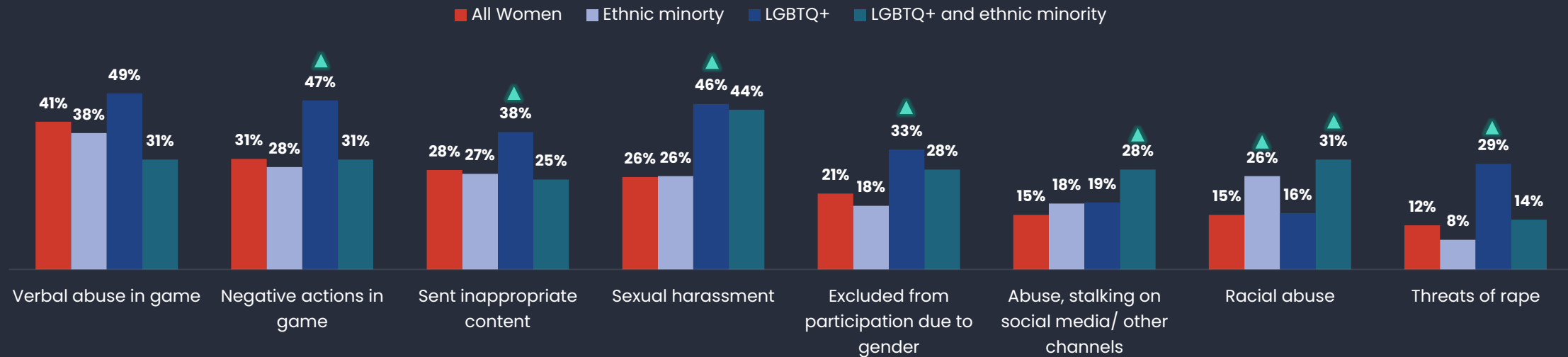
Women gamer demographics – sexuality and ethnicity



Marginalised women experience a greater range of abuse

Bryter.

Types of toxicity experienced by race / sexuality (women only)



When looking at women who experience abuse regularly from male gamers, the effects of intersectionality are clear: gamers who are from ethnic minorities and/or are LGBTQ+ experience even more abuse than who don't identify as from these communities. One of the most prominent forms of abuse amongst women from ethnic minorities is racial abuse. Those in the LGBTQ+ community are more than twice as likely to experience rape threats.



These are not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of discrimination that reinforces exclusionary and unsafe environments. Not only do they discourage ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ women from fully engaging in gaming, they can also have long-term effects on mental health and well-being. This persistent harassment underscores the urgent need for stronger moderation, accountability, and cultural shifts toward inclusivity and respect within the gaming industry and its online spaces.

The impact of toxic behaviour on women gamers

Fear of toxicity is **limiting** the gameplay experience...



Those at the most risk of abuse when online gaming change their behaviours to protect themselves. 14% of all women avoid multiplayer games altogether because of toxicity.



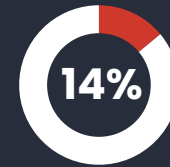
Those that do play, take steps to not reveal their gender, sexuality or race. Methods such as avoiding speaking in-game limits them from fully immersing into a game, so they are unlikely to become invested enough to spend on DLCs or develop franchise loyalty.



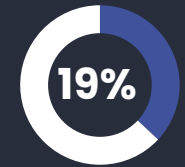
Games are not just losing players to toxicity but are also limiting those that do play from spending both time and money.

Bryter.

Behaviours around online games amongst women



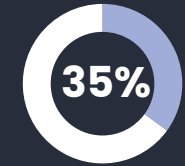
avoid online
multiplayers
altogether



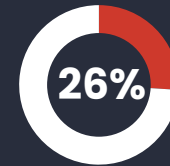
**LGBTQ+
women**



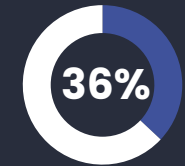
only play with people
they know/ in closed
communities



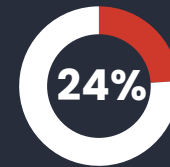
**Women
from ethnic
minorities**



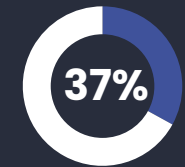
don't reveal their
gender when
playing online



**LGBTQ+
women**



avoid speaking in
online multiplayer
due to fear of
negative reactions



**LGBTQ+
women**

Men experiencing toxicity

Bryter.



Abuse in the gaming community is most often perpetrated by men, but it affects everyone. Men are just as likely as women to experience toxicity from other men, although the types of toxicity experienced are rather different.



Men are less likely to suffer from sex-driven abuse. Many examples of abuse aimed at men collected in our study were around general trolling and abusive language due to playing ability, they are significantly more likely than women to experience racist abuse.



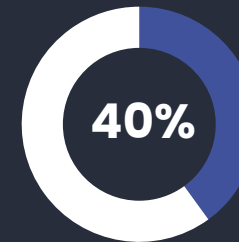
Toxicity is also impacting the way men play too. While they are less likely to hide their gender, 1 in 5 avoid speaking in online multiplayer to avoid negative comments. Men are also as likely to stick to closed online communities (29%) to avoid toxicity.



If toxicity is not resolved, it is not only women who will be discouraged from engaging more with gaming.

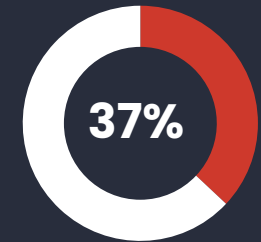
Toxicity spreads across the whole gamer population

Men



Those who
experience
toxicity regularly
(from men)

Women



Types of toxicity experienced



Men gamers share their experiences

Bryter.

Men gamers tend to experience trolling and abusive language around game performance, but also more likely to receive racist comments.

"The worst thing I've experienced was being told to quit the game because I **wasn't good enough**. It was discouraging, and it made me feel unwelcome in the community."

Age 40 | UK

As a male, I don't get the worst of it. But mostly being told I'm awful. I'm trash, **to kill my self**. To stop playing the game because I'm awful. Various insults and profanity."

Age 36 | US

"I have been **made fun of for my feminine voice**. I get called all types of slurs for being gay."

Age 40 | US

"I've been berated and yelled at for underperforming more times than I can count. On other occasions, individuals **made racial slurs** once they saw my character."

Age 42 | US

"**A kid called me a n****** for a 2 hour period nonstop because I took the weapons box in call of duty!"

Age 29 | UK

"I mentioned in the game chat **that my wife had passed away** that morning and they told me they were glad she's passed and that **she died to get away from me**. Or They will talk about my hygiene when they have never even met me in real life."

Age 62 | US

The worst thing I've been told is **to kill myself** because I was winning at the game and the toxic player said I don't have a life because I'm so good at the game that I should kill myself because I'm a loser that only plays video games at 40 years old."

Age 42 | US

Bryter.



Tackling toxicity

Dealing with toxicity

Bryter.



Many gamers encounter harassment, hate speech, and unfair behaviour, yet they often feel that reporting systems are ineffective or that consequences are too lenient. In fact, only 1 in 3 women gamers feel that adequate processes are in place to handle toxicity.



While Bryter data shows an improvement in players reporting toxicity aimed at them, it remains that a large proportion are not reporting. Even less report instances where they witness other players receiving abuse or harassment.



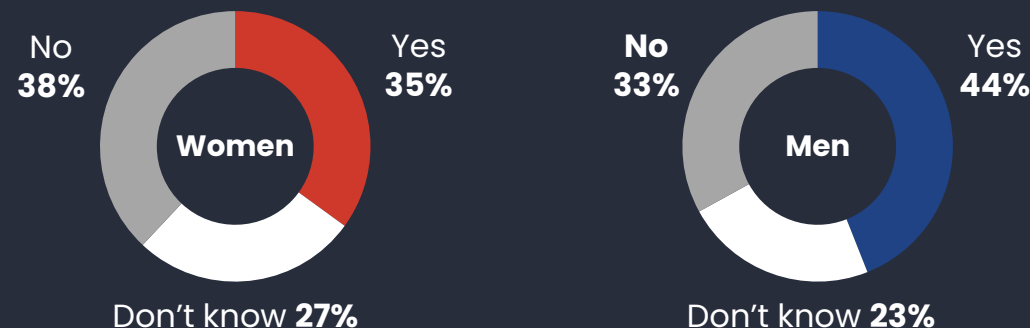
Until the significant gap in moderation and player protection is closed via real consequences for toxic behaviour, it will be difficult to see a culture shift.



The responsibility lies with the gaming industry, to set clear guidelines and codes of conduct, and to encourage everyone to play a part in creating a positive, inclusive space.

Encouraging communities to drive positive change

Are there adequate processes in place to deal with toxicity?



Reporting negative/ toxic behaviours (amongst women)
% of who regularly report or flag toxic behaviours



Thinking to the future

Bryter.



37%

Of all players feel there needs to be stricter consequences for toxicity

31%

Of all players feel the industry needs to do more to minimise toxicity

Working towards a long-term cultural shift

Tackling toxicity requires a long-term cultural shift — it won't change overnight.

However, over the last seven years, Bryter's annual Women Gamers Study has seen some slight improvements in the levels of toxicity and it's evident that parts of the gaming industry are taking steps towards change.

Developers, communities, and players must continue working together to foster more positive environments. By improving moderation, promoting respectful behaviour, and rewarding positivity, we can gradually build a safer and more inclusive gaming space for everyone.

Bryter.

Bryter is an international market research and insights consultancy specialising in gaming research.

We work with leading developers and publishers to help better understand player behaviours and motivations, to help refine game development and marketing.

You can read more about our experience in the games industry and access a variety of other reports and resources at our website, or get in touch directly.



bryter-global.com



jenny.mcbean@bryter-global.com



Market Understanding

Identify strengths and opportunities for your brand or IP



Market opportunity

Market sizing & audience profiling



Concept testing

Test new game concepts to identify product USPs for positioning



Asset development

Evaluate and develop assets such as characters, environments, key art and trailers



Playtesting

Test alpha or beta builds, including detailed exploration of UX



Pre-launch assessment

Test and refine marketing assets, and launch campaign messaging



Player understanding

Segment and profile audiences, understand behaviours, needs, motivations



Notes on methodology

Bryter surveyed n=1,865 gamers aged 16-65 in the US and UK.

In this instance, a gamer is defined as playing on PC or 8th/9th gen console at least monthly.

The sample was split evenly between market and men vs. women.

Broad quotas were set on age to be representative of the gaming market.

Fieldwork was conducted in November 2024.



References

[1] Statista: <https://www.statista.com/outlook/amo/media/games/worldwide>

[2] Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/232383/gender-split-of-us-computer-and-video-gamers/>

[3] De la Torre-Sierra, A.M., Guichot-Reina, V. Women in Video Games: An Analysis of the Biased Representation of Female Characters in Current Video Games. *Sexuality & Culture* 29, 532–560 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-024-10286-0>

[4] Rennick S, Clinton M, Ioannidou E, Oh L, Clooney C, T. E, Healy E, Roberts SG. 2023 Gender bias in video game dialogue. *R. Soc. Open Sci.* 10: 221095. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.221095>

[5] Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1344673/revenue-video-game-worldwide-segment/>