Xsolla

2025 Q3

The Xsolla Report

State of Play

Foreword

Chris Hewish

President
Xsolla

I'm pleased to present Volume 8 of *The Xsolla Report: State of Play* Q3 2025 edition, our latest look at the global forces, regional developments, and innovations shaping the video game industry in 2025.

This year has been one of steady momentum across every major gaming market. Global player numbers continue to climb, with **over 3.6 billion gamers projected by year's end representing more than 60% of the world's online population**. At the same time, total revenue is expected to reach nearly $189 billion, driven by hardware refreshes, live-service experiences, and evolving monetization models across mobile, PC, and console.

In this edition, we take a closer look at how regional markets are adapting to

shifting dynamics. In China, developers are finding new opportunities in niche genres and domestic platforms amid ongoing policy evolution. Across Europe, regulatory frameworks like the Digital Markets Act are redefining competition, while localized payment preferences and digital-first consumption continue to shape player engagement. Meanwhile, the MENA region is emerging as a major growth hub, led by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, with rising investment, expanding player bases, and government-backed infrastructure supporting rapid development.

We also highlight the stories behind the data from key takeaways at ChinaJoy and gamescom (Europe), as well as thought leadership and interviews that spotlight how global leaders are driving innovation, representation, and sustainable growth across the industry.

At Xsolla, our mission continues to be: to equip developers, publishers, and partners with everything they need to create a successful video game business. As we head into the final stretch of 2025, we're focused on helping the gaming community thrive through accessible commerce solutions, localized payment ecosystems, and deep market intelligence that informs more thoughtful decisions.

I invite you to explore this edition of The Xsolla Report, filled with forward-looking analysis, regional insights, and expert perspectives from around the world.

Let's continue to build the future of gaming.... together.

Executive summary

The Q3 2025 edition of *The Xsolla Report* highlights a year of steady growth in the global gaming market. With the total player base projected to reach 3.6 billion at the end of the year - representing 61.5% of the world's online population - global revenue is expected to climb to $188.8 billion by the end of 2025, a **3.4% year-over-year increase. To take it one step further, across all of our partners, we are already seeing positive YOY growth in the double digits.**

This quarter, we've seen continued growth across all platforms. Console is leading in growth, fueled by hardware refreshes and major IP launches. PC is gaining ground in Asia, while mobile shows signs of saturation in mature markets, prompting a shift in developer focus toward engagement, retention, and diversified monetization with direct-to-consumer strategies.

In this report, we'll examine regional developments in China, Europe, and MENA. In China, developers are navigating ongoing policy shifts while exploring new opportunities in niche genres and domestic platforms. In Europe, localized preferences, strong IAP performance in top markets like Germany and the UK, and a growing emphasis on player protections are shaping mobile strategy. Meanwhile, the MENA region, led by the UAE and Saudi Arabia, continues to emerge as a mobile-first powerhouse with growing investments, player bases, and infrastructure support.

We'll also spotlight key industry leaders and rising models of success. The role of women leaders in the gaming space is driving innovation, and focusing on targeting underrepresented audiences can reshape how developers monetize and earn revenue.

So take a closer look at these topics, explore fresh data, and uncover insights from global experts to help shape your strategies and decisions for the rest of the year.

Let The Xsolla Report be your guide.

In the news

Recent industry news

Reuters

Google likely to be hit with first EU antitrust fine under new EU law

Pocketgamer.biz

It's official: EA agrees $55bn buyout deal

Reuters

EU court backs latest data transfer deal agreed by US and EU

Gamesindustry.biz

Game developer conference rebrands as GDS festival of gaming

Forbes

The next frontier in child safety: rethinking online gaming for kids

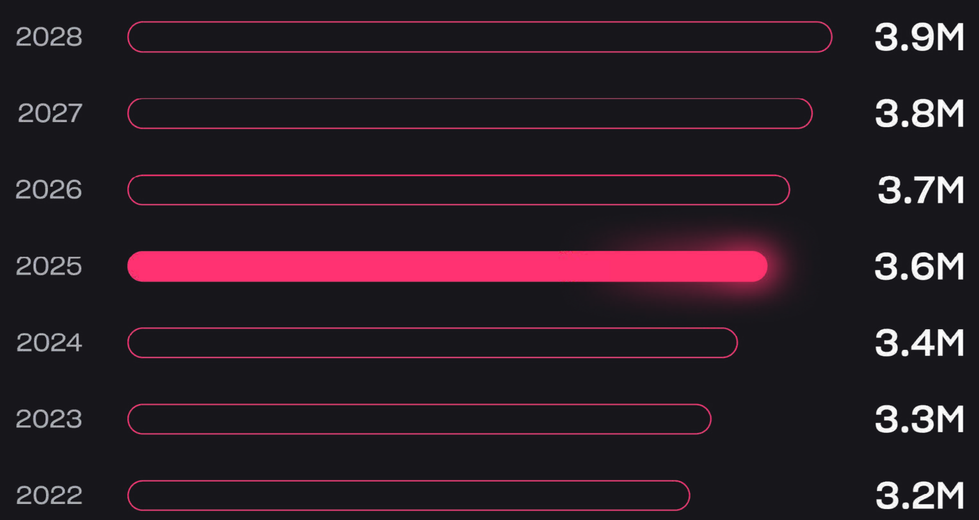
Industry updates

What's new across game industry sectors

Global overview

Global player forecast, 2022 to 2028

The global player base is expected to hit **3.6 billion gamers by the end of 2025**, making up more than 60% of the world's online population.

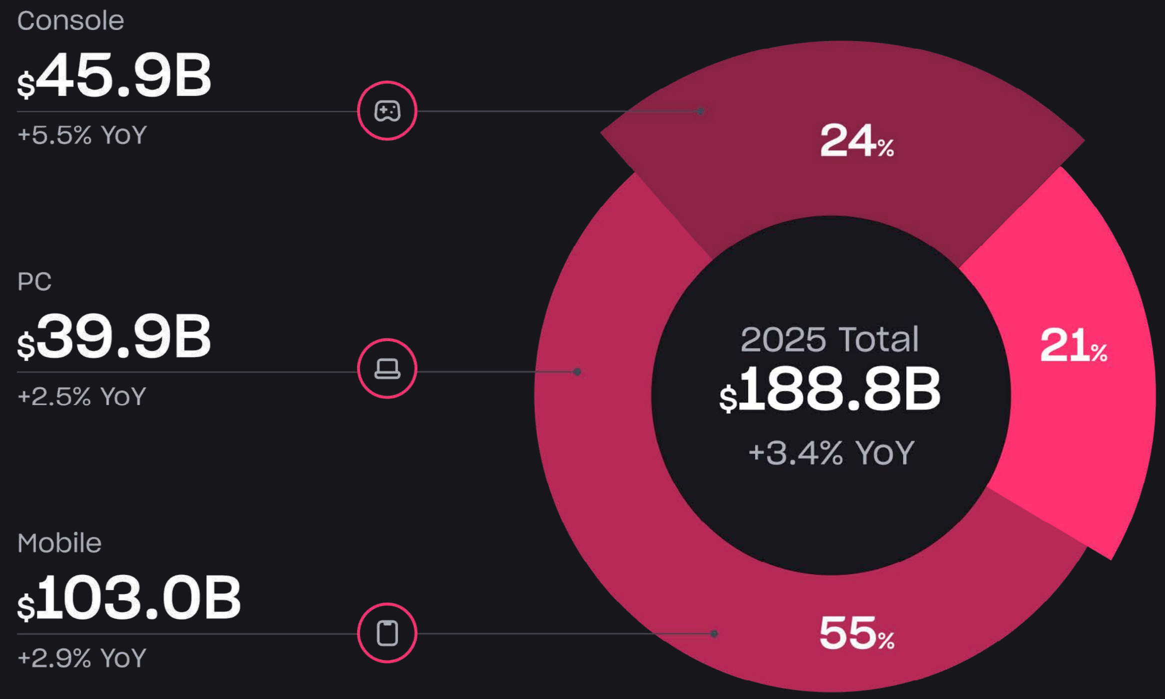


Source: Newzoo - Market Report September 2025

Global revenue by platform and region in 2025

Global gaming revenue is on track to reach nearly **$189 billion** this year. **Console** is driving the strongest growth at **$45.9 billion**, boosted by new hardware and major game launches. **PC** growth remains steady at **$39.9 billion**, especially in Asian markets, while mobile continues to dominate overall revenue at $103 billion, despite slower gains in mature regions.

Source: Newzoo - Market Report September 2025



Mobile gaming

Global player forecast, 2022 to 2028

Platform growth remains positive across the board, with **mobile reaching 3.0 billion players (an increase of 4.5% year over year)**, PC at 936 million, and console at 645 million.

Source: Newzoo - Market Report September 2025

936M PC players — 26% of all players

645M Console players — 18% of all players

2.9M Mobile players — 83% of all players

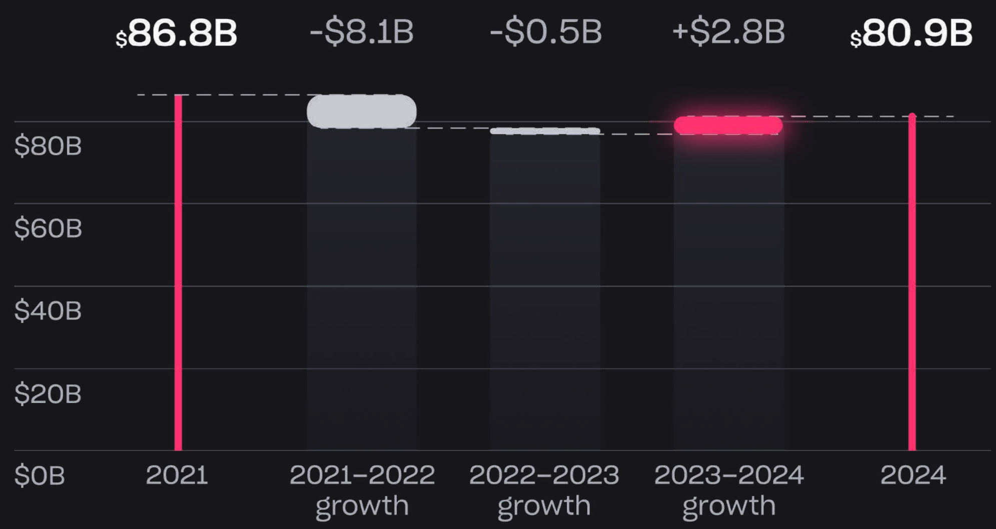
Mobile game IAP by revenue and downloads, 2024

Mobile in-app purchase (IAP) revenue grew to **$80.9 billion in 2024**, marking a **4% year over year increase**, despite a **6% decline in downloads to 49.6 billion**. This shift points to industry stabilization amid broader tech sector headwinds, with consumers spending more per title as monetization models improve and gameplay experiences deepen.

2024 IAP revenue

$80.9B

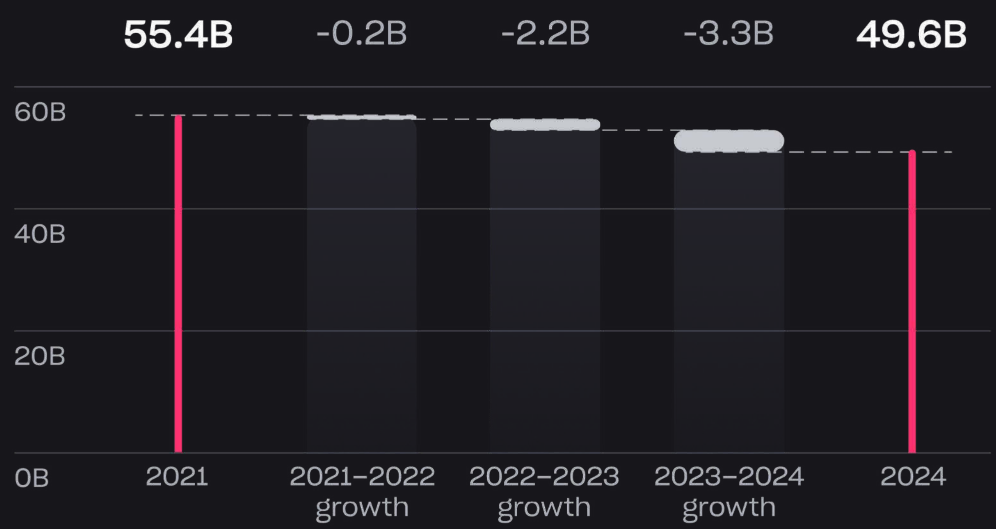
+4% YoY



2024 downloads

49.6B

-6% YoY



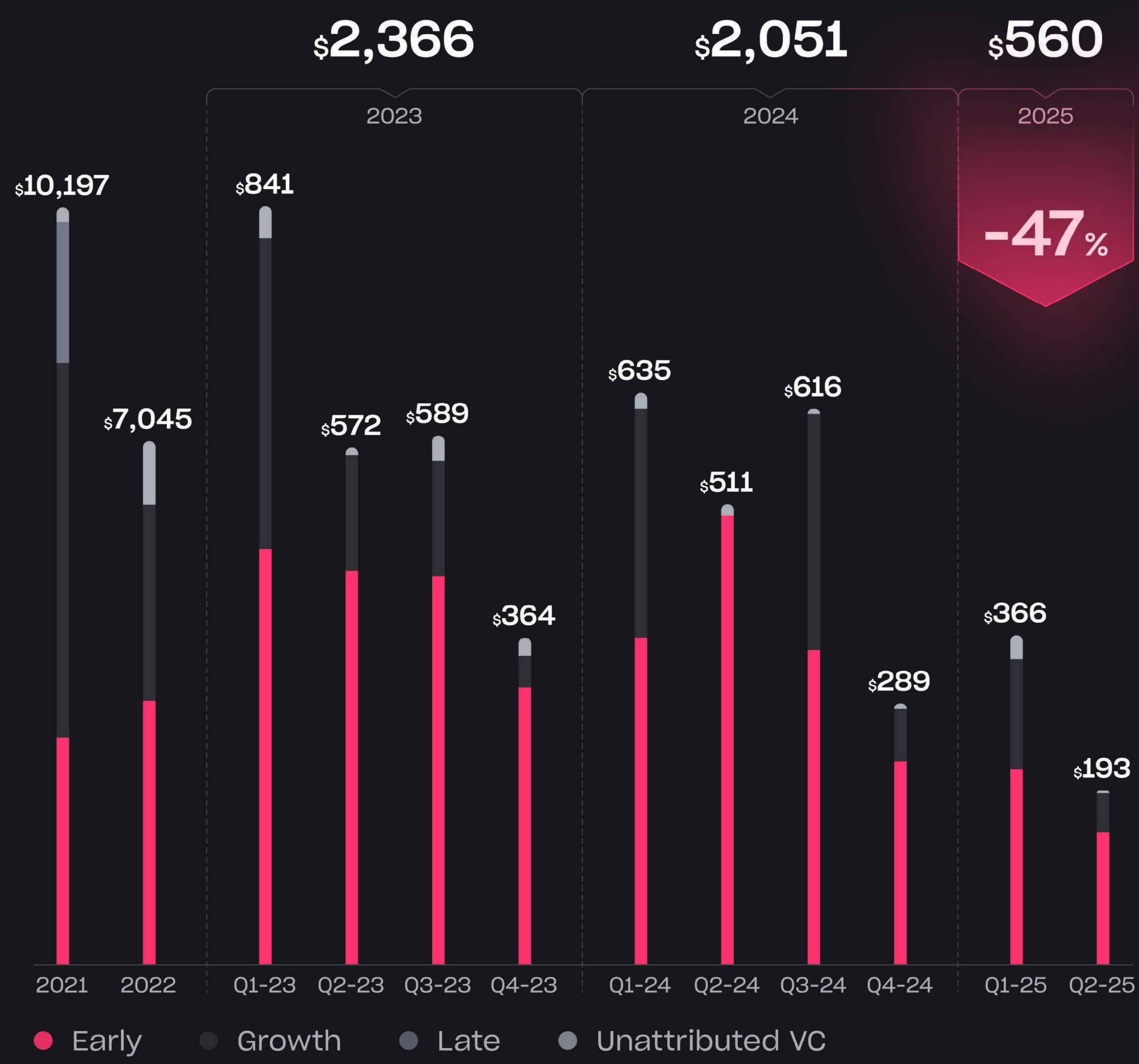
Source: Sensor Tower – State of Mobile 2025

Investment

VC funding in gaming, 2023 to 2025

Venture capital funding in gaming dropped sharply in Q2 2025, totaling **$193 million**, a **47% decrease quarter-over-quarter** and a **62% decline year-over-year**.

Only **60 deals closed** during the quarter, representing a **31% drop** from Q1–signaling a continued cooldown in gaming investment activity.



Source: Konvoy – Q2 2025 Gaming Industry Report

Game content investments, Q2 2025

The **top 10 game content funding deals in Q2 2025** brought in a combined **$97.7 million**, down **14% quarter-over-quarter**, reflecting a cautious investment climate even among leading titles.

	Company name	Stage	increase	Region
	Bigger Games	Series A	**$25.0M**	Asia
	HIBE IM	Series B	**$20.4M**	Asia
	Amplitude Studios	Series A	**$13.6M**	Europe
	Fuse Games	Series A	**$7.0M**	Asia
	Digital Entertainment Asset	Series A	**$6.9M**	Asia
	Empty Vessel	Series A	**$6.3M**	North America
	VOYA Games	Seed	**$5.0M**	Europe
	Polyarc	Series B	**$5.0M**	North America
	Hotdog Gaming	Seed	**$5.0M**	Europe
	Studio42	Seed	**$3.6M**	Europe

Source: Konvoy – Q2 2025 Gaming Industry Report

Takeaways:

- The top 10 Content deals totaled $97.7m (-14% QoQ)
- 4 of top 5 Content investments were in companies based in Asia (totaling $59.3m in funding)
- Only 2 of the top 10 Content investments this quarter were into studios based in North America
- 4 of the top 10 Content investments were into companies explicitly focused on mobile game development (totaling $40.6m in funding)

Global gaming deals, by region in Q2 2025

Asia and North America led global venture activity in Q2. **Asia topped total funding with $76 million**, while **North America led in deal count with 25 completed transactions**, showing that while capital is contracting overall, regional hubs of activity remain strong.

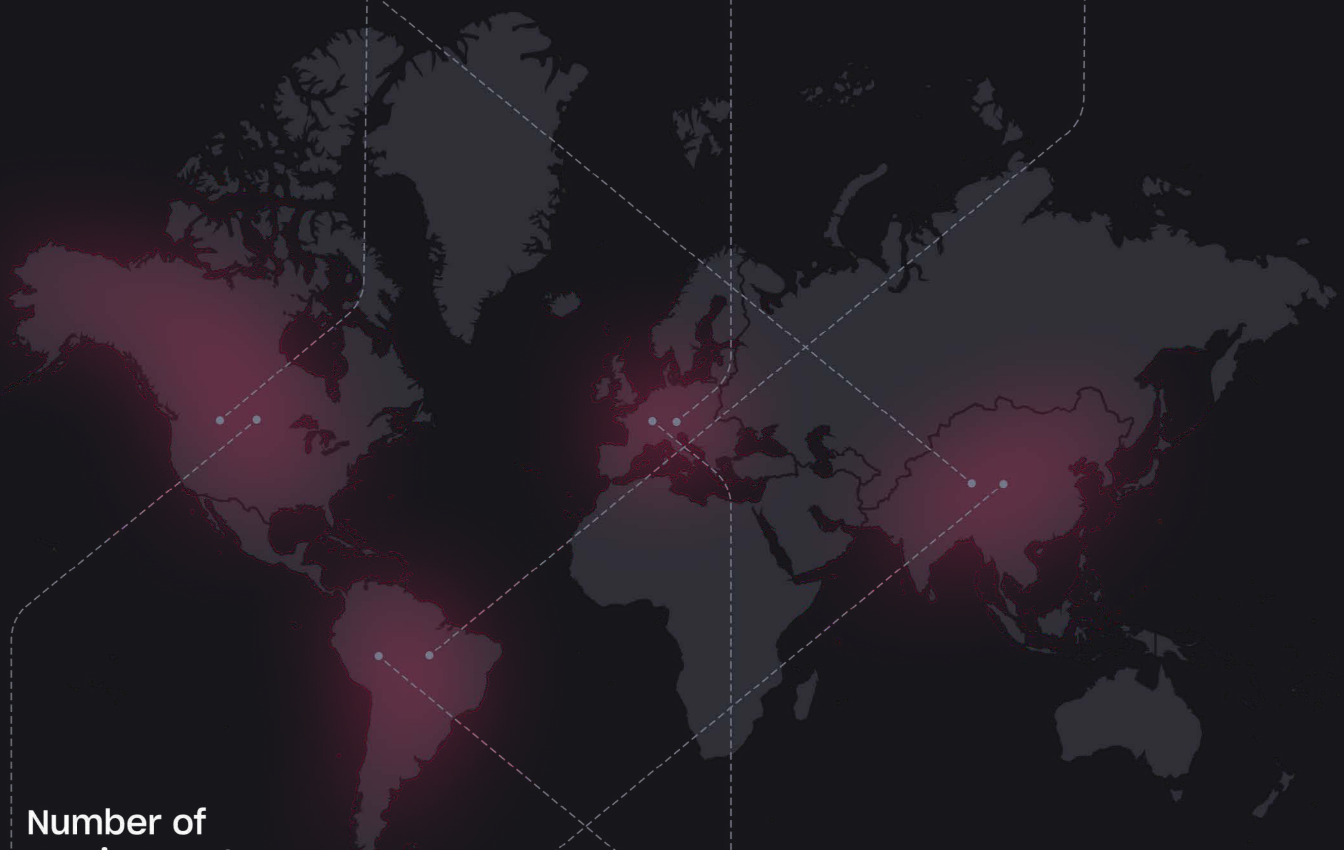
Gaming venture funding in Q2 2025

$76M Asia
Early - $54M
Growth - $23M

$61M North America
Early - $52M
Growth - $8M

$53M Europe
Early - $43M
Growth - $10M

$2M South America
Early - $2M



Number of gaming venture deals in Q2 2025

25 North America
Early - 19
Growth - 2
Unattributed VC - 4

18 Asia
Early - 13
Growth - 3
Unattributed VC - 2

16 Europe
Early - 12
Growth - 1
Unattributed VC - 3

1 South America
Early - 1

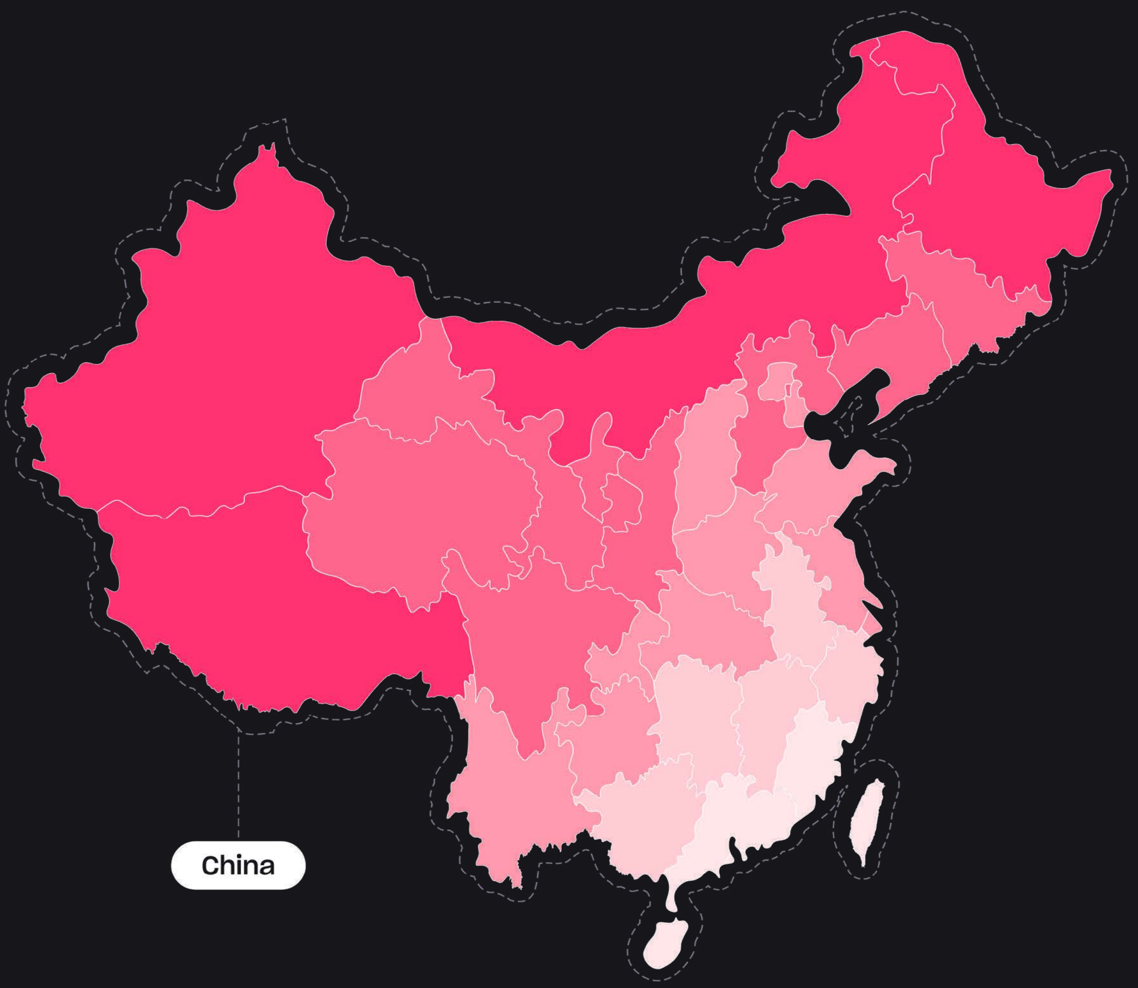
Source: Konvoy – Q2 2025 Gaming Industry Report

Section

01

Gaming market insights: China

A dive into the world's largest market



Exponential market growth

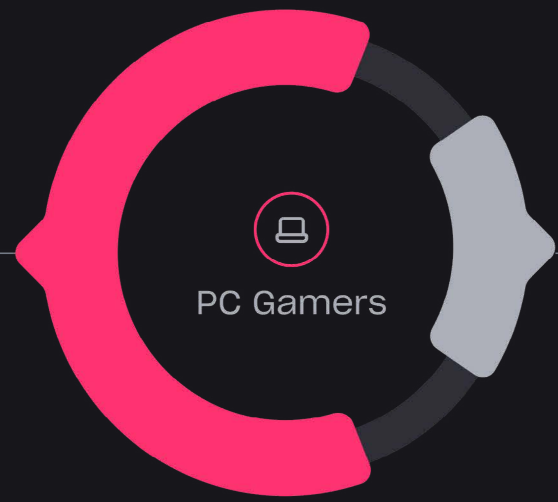
Projected to reach **$50.7 billion in 2025**, with steady growth expected through 2029 at a **5-year CAGR of 2.2%**, China had **722 million gamers** at the end of 2024 (more than double the U.S. population) and is expected to grow to 753.7 million by 2029.

Revenue per Player

Average revenue per user **(ARPU) in China reached $68 USD in 2024**, with projections showing an increase to **$73 USD by 2029**. Key growth drivers include long-running mobile and PC titles, the launch of next-gen consoles, direct-to-fan monetization models, and engagement with UGC tools like generative AI.

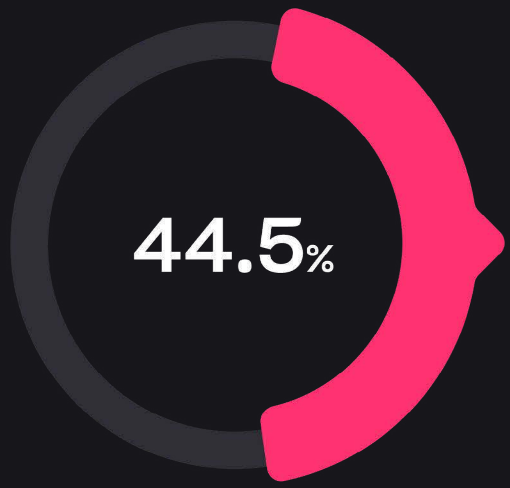
Gamer behavior and market insights in China

Source: NIKO reports



62% spent more on games this year

19% spent at least 30% more that last year



of gamers learn about new games from short video platforms, making it the most popular method overall. It ranks as the #1 source for PC and mobile gamers and as #4 for console gamers

#1 among PC gamers

#1 among mobile gamers

#4 among console gamers

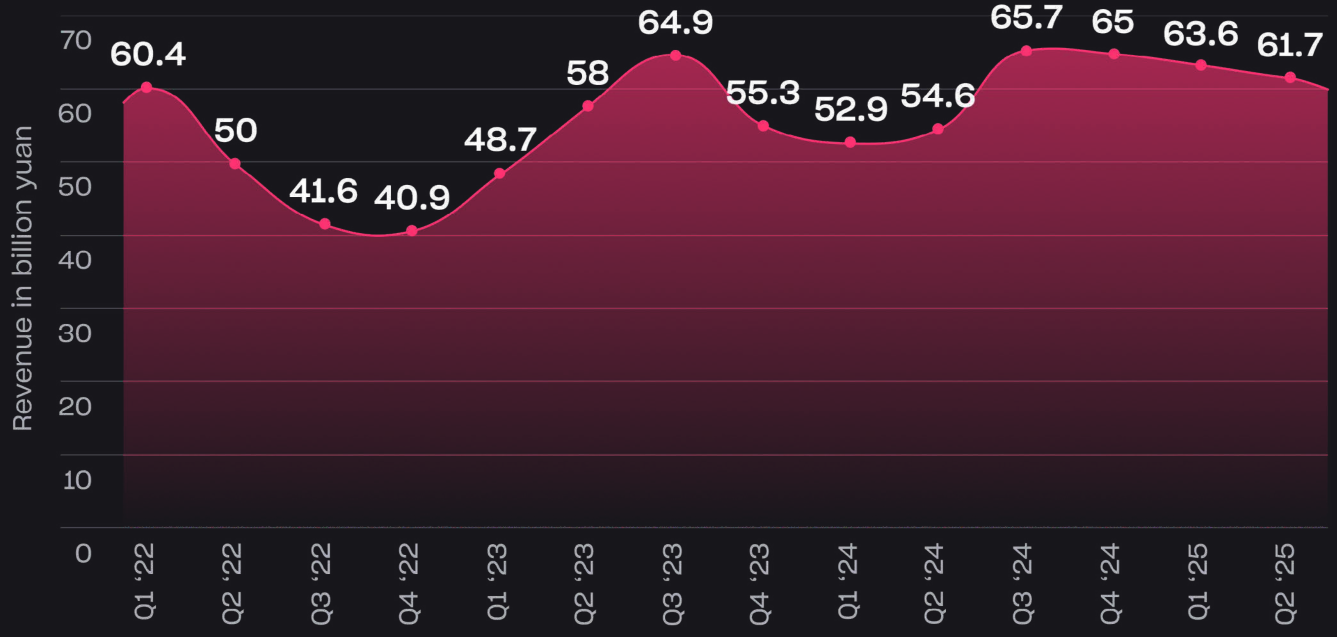
2 out of 3 mobile gamers play **mini games** daily or several times a week

Over **4 in 10** gamers watch **video games / esports livestreams**

Mobile gaming market share

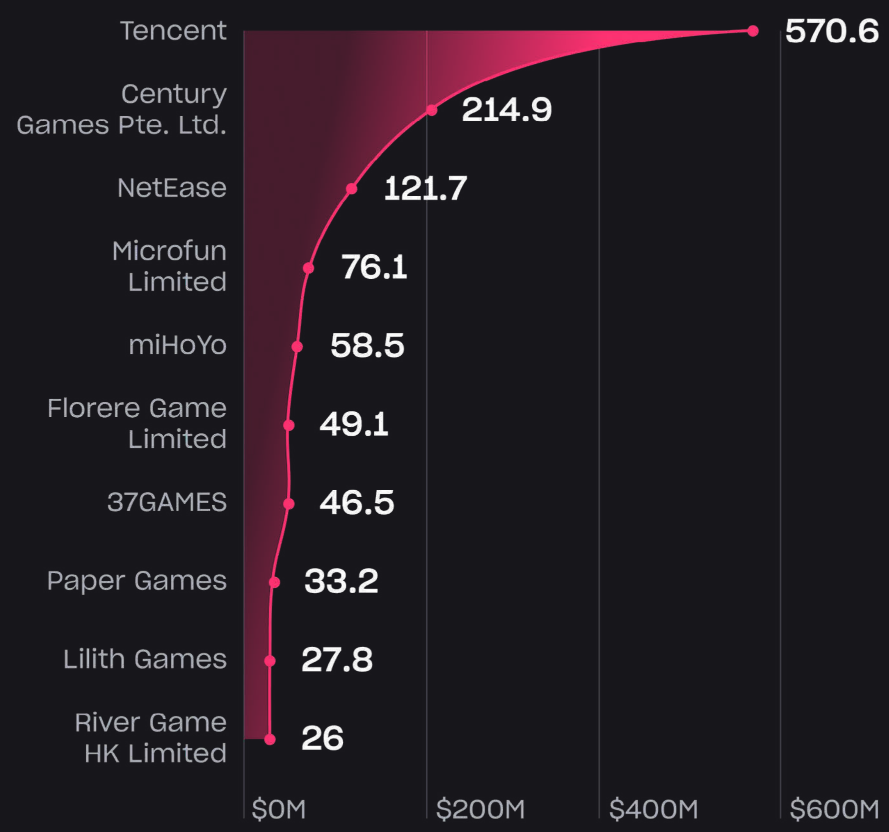
Source: Statista.com

The mobile gaming sector in China reported 62 billion yuan in revenue ($8.7 billion) in Q2 2025, maintaining its rebound from the market plateau in late 2022. **Mobile games now make up over 70% of China's total video game market.**



In-app purchases

Revenue from Tencent reached **$570.6 million globally in August 2025**, reinforcing the company's dominant position in mobile gaming both domestically and internationally.



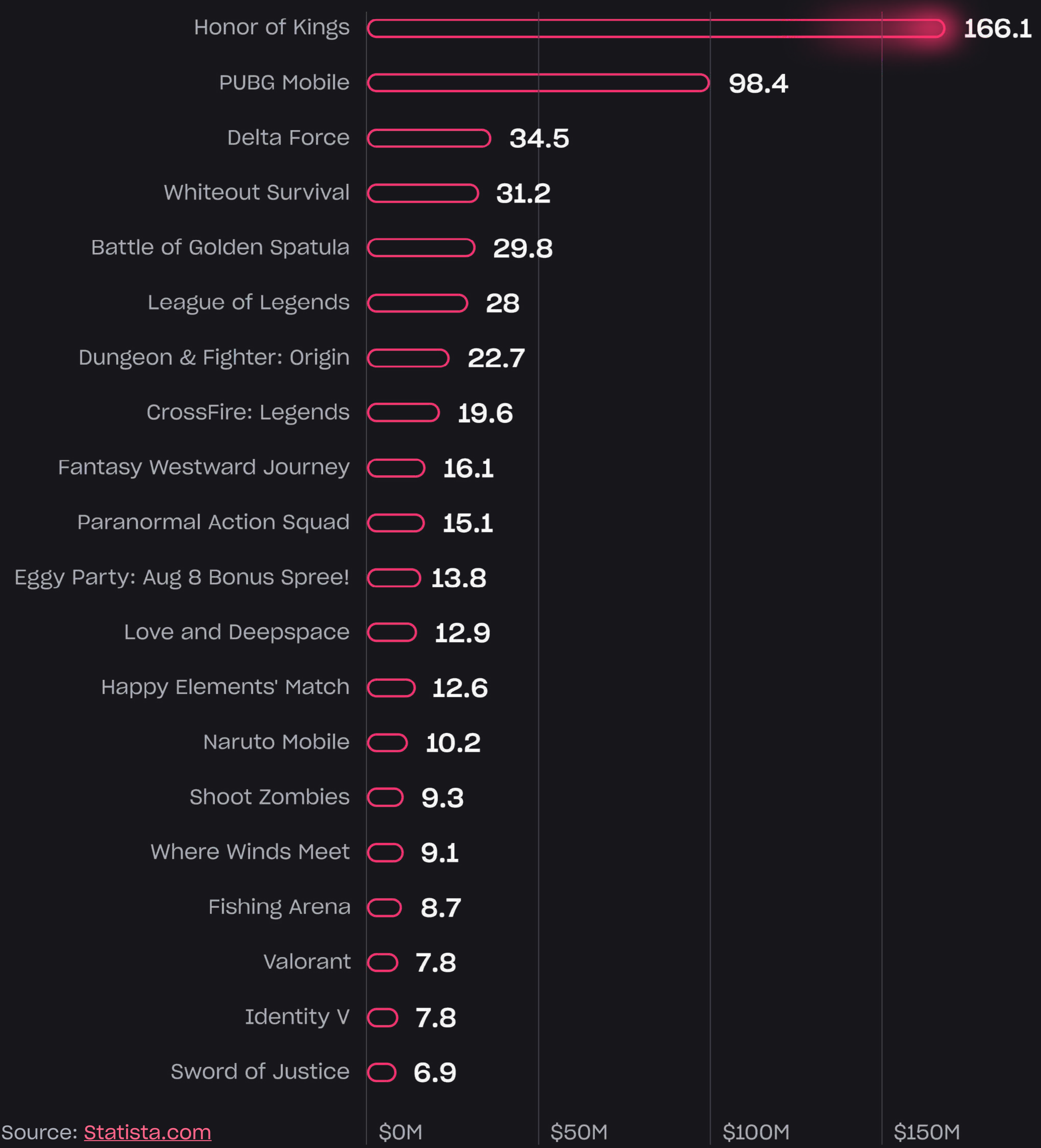
Source: Statista.com

Regulatory activity

A total of **946 video games were approved in mainland China during the first seven months of 2025**, up **19.3% year over year**. Projections suggest **over 1,600 games will be approved by year-end**, including **more than 100 import titles**, indicating a more open regulatory environment.

Top-grossing titles

Tencent's **Honor of Kings** was the highest-grossing mobile title in China in August 2025, generating **$166 million** in revenue. **PUBG Mobile** followed closely behind at **$98 million**, continuing its strong performance.



Source: Statista.com

Top 5 takeaways from ChinaJoy

Jingbo Chen

SVP, Head of the
Greater China region
Xsolla

As one of Asia's largest and most influential gaming conferences, ChinaJoy 2025 brought together developers, publishers, and technology providers across a region undergoing rapid transformation.

From discussions on global market recovery to the evolution of player ecosystems in China and beyond, the focus was on finding new ways to grow and compete in a changing landscape.

Here are **five key takeaways** from the show, shared by Jingbo Chen, Xsolla's SVP and Head of the Greater China Region:

01. Competition is intensifying and differentiation is key

With more companies entering the payments and platform solutions space, standing out has never been more critical. Finding new ways to grow depends on developing clear strategies that highlight what sets developers apart from emerging competition.

Success will come from clarity of positioning, localized expertise, and the ability to deliver integrated solutions that directly address developers' evolving needs.

02. China's overseas gaming market is rebounding

After three consecutive years of decline (from $18B to $17B, then $16B), China's overseas gaming market is finally recovering. **In just the first half of 2025, revenues have already reached $9B**, signaling renewed momentum and confidence. This rebound represents a significant opportunity for developers and partners like Xsolla to support studios looking to expand globally, as investment and appetite for international publishing rise again.

03. Established giants are stabilizing and new players are emerging

Revenue growth from China's largest studios is stabilizing, creating more room for smaller and mid-size teams to capture attention and funding. Investment is shifting toward independent developers and PC-focused titles, particularly those finding success on platforms like Steam.

This shift reflects a broader evolution in China's gaming ecosystem, one that rewards creativity, innovation, and audience understanding over scale alone.

04.

Developers are seeking growth tools

While robust payment infrastructure remains foundational, developers are now seeking tools that help them attract and retain players.

Beyond processing transactions, the next wave of growth will come from solutions that drive user acquisition and engagement. Products that combine monetization, marketing, and player community-building will define the next stage of competition in Asia's fast-paced market.

05.

Asia's growth is setting the pace for global gaming

ChinaJoy underscored that Asia continues to lead the world in shaping the future of gaming. From mobile-first economies to hybrid distribution models and AI-powered personalization, the region's influence is growing stronger each year.

The trends emerging here are not only defining local success, they're setting the standard for how developers and publishers operate worldwide.

What does this mean for the games industry?

ChinaJoy 2025 demonstrated that Asia's gaming industry is shifting from recovery to expansion. From competition and investment to monetization and player engagement, studios and publishers are adapting to a faster, more interconnected marketplace.

Drawing from these experiences, Jingbo Chen, Xsolla's SVP and Head of the Greater China Region, identified the trends that will shape how developers and publishers operate in the coming year. These insights reveal where the greatest opportunities are emerging:

- **Differentiation will define success.** As competition intensifies, studios and service providers must establish clear strategies that set them apart. Those who combine strong local expertise with global reach will lead.
- **China's overseas market is rebounding.** After several years of contraction, growth is returning, creating new opportunities for Chinese developers to expand internationally with the right partners and infrastructure.
- **Investment is shifting toward new creators.** As revenue from major publishers stabilizes, funding is flowing to mid-size and indie studios, especially those developing for PC and Steam.
- **Growth depends on integration.** Developers are looking for tools that connect payments, marketing, and player engagement into unified systems that drive both revenue and traffic.
- **Asia will set the global pace.** From mobile innovation to hybrid business models, the region's creativity and speed are shaping the future of how games are built, monetized, and played worldwide.

Section

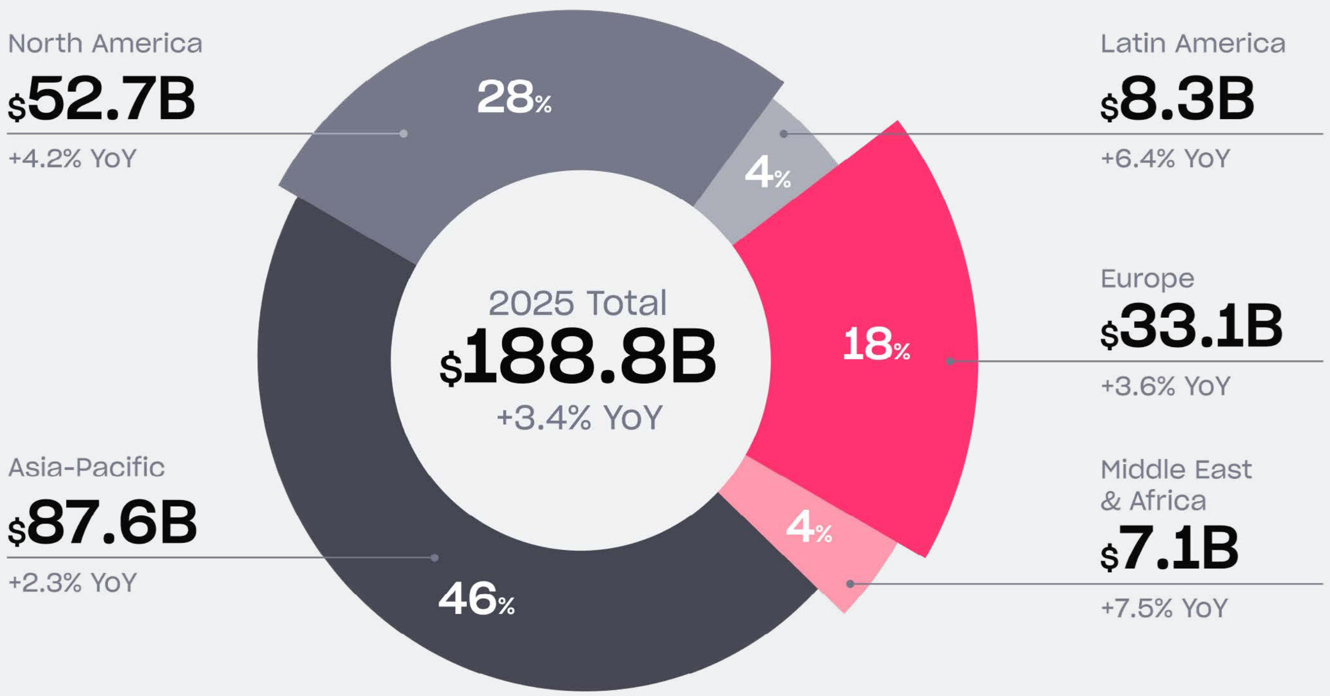
02

Gaming market insights: Europe

An overview of gaming in Europe

Steady market growth

Europe's games market is forecast to generate **$33.1 billion in 2025**, accounting for **18% of global gaming revenue** with a +3.6% year-over-year growth.

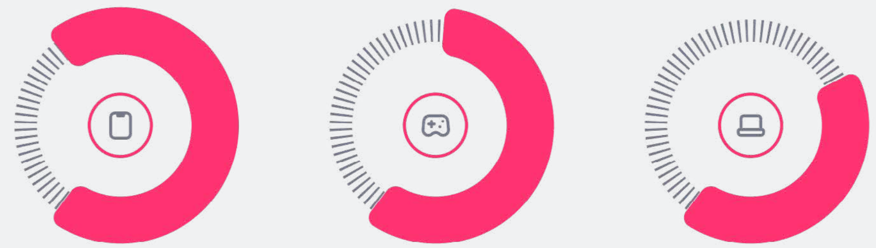


Source: Newzoo.com

Mobile leads revenue

Mobile leads Europe's gaming market with a **44% revenue share**, followed by consoles at 38% and PC at 15%. In 2024, **71% of players used smartphones or tablets**, outpacing console and PC adoption.

Player's device



71% play on smartphones or tablets (vs 68% in 2023)

59% play on console (vs 56% in 2023)

43% play on PC (vs 46% in 2023)

Adult-dominated audience

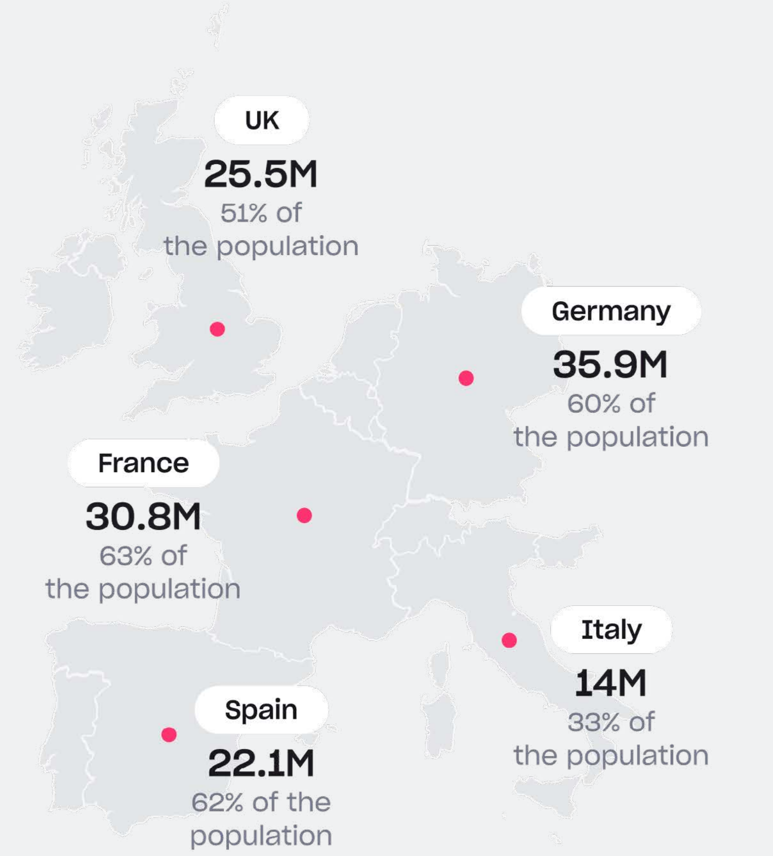
54% of Europeans aged 6-64 play video games, with an **average age of 31**. Notably, **75% of players are adults**, confirming that gaming is well-established as a mainstream form of entertainment across generations.

Total number of players in each market

54% of the popular aged 6-64 plays video games

31 y/o is the average age of a video game player in Europe

75% of video game players are adults (18 years old and/or older)



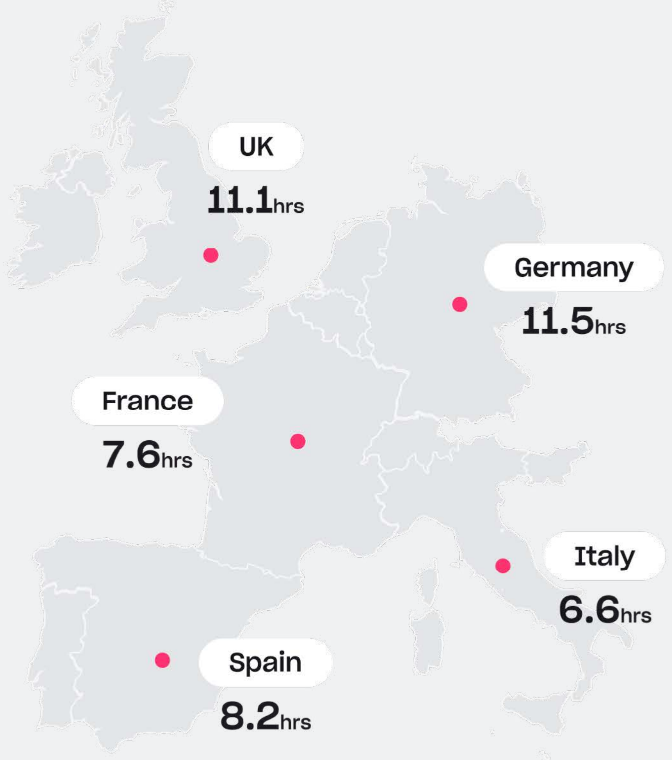
Source: Videogameseurope.eu

Gaming as routine

In 2024, **3 out of 4 people played video games at least 1 hour per week**, highlighting gaming as a regular and routine part of daily life across the region.

Source: [Videogameseurope.eu]

Average play time by country in 2024



75% play at least one hour per week

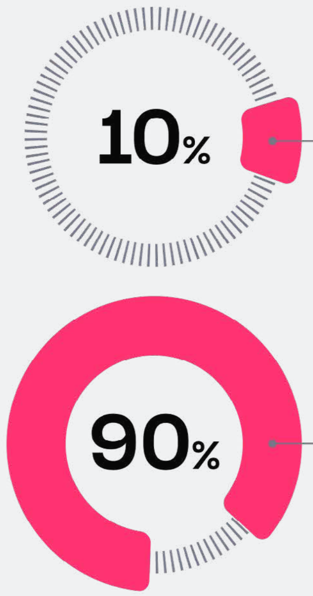
15% play at least one hour per month

10% play at least once a year

Digital drives spending

Digital sales accounted for **90% of gaming revenue** in Europe in 2024. **Online purchases led with 47%**, up from 44% in 2023, while **app-based revenue grew to 43%**, driven by in-app purchases and premium mobile titles.

Source: [Videogameseurope.eu]



10% Physical revenue vs 15% in 2023

90% Digital revenue vs 85% in 2023

47% Online revenue (vs 44% in 2023)

- Full game downloads
- In-game extras (DLC and microtransactions)
- Multiplayer
- On-Demand / Streaming
- Social
- Browser

43% Online revenue (vs 41% in 2023)

- In-app purchases and paid for apps

DMA rollout progresses

The [Digital Markets Act (DMA)] has been fully active since March 2024, with further evaluation and consultation underway in 2025. The policy continues to shape platform regulation in Europe, aiming to **promote fairness, support SMEs, and address the rise of AI-powered services** in digital marketplaces.

Investment Snapshot

Gaming VC funding in Europe reached **$113 million in the first half of 2025**, with Q1 slightly ahead of Q2. Most of the deals were early-stage, though Series B rounds showed signs of growth. Content studios led by a wide margin, attracting **79% of total investment**, while 21% belong to gaming tech and platforms.

SLINGSHOT DAO — **$16M** Series A

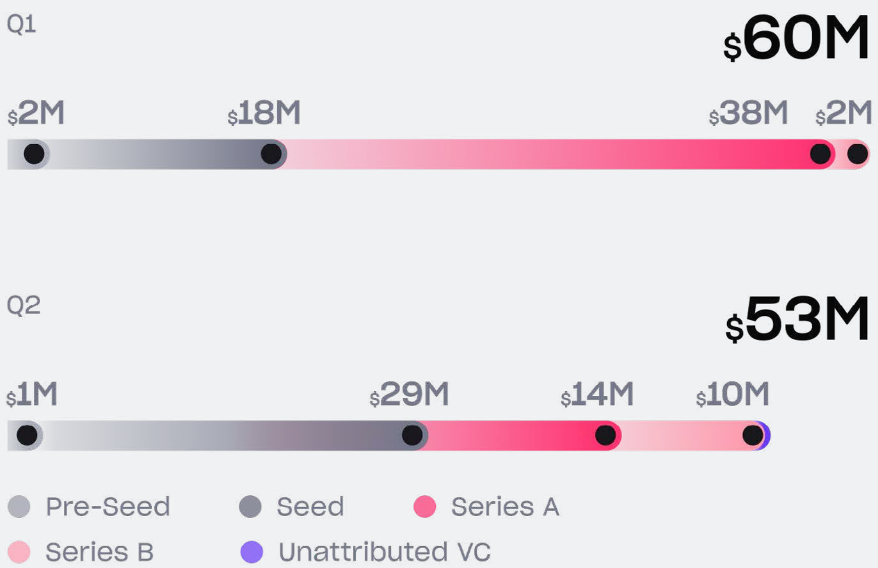
AMPLITUDE — **$13.6M** Series A

PIXION — **$12.4M** Series A

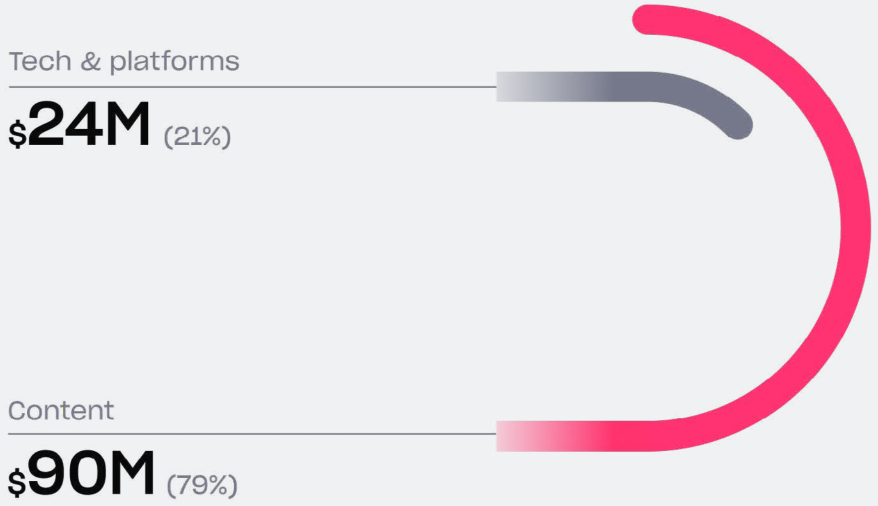
OPUS MAJOR — **$10M** Series A

MIDNITE — **$10M** Series B

Source: [Konvoy.vc]



Investments into companies developing content has made up **79% of VC funding** into gaming companies in Europe this year



Top 5 takeaways from gamescom

Berkley Egenes

Chief Marketing &
Growth Officer
Xsolla

As one of the most important global events for game developers, publishers, and tech providers, gamescom 2025 brought together the industry at a turning point. From speaking sessions to panels with developers, publishers, and technology leaders, the focus was on building what comes next. Here are our five **key takeaways** from gamescom from the perspective of Berkley Egenes, Xsolla's Chief Marketing & Growth Officer:

01.

Fragmentation in payments is accelerating

gamescom reinforced just how important it's become for developers to support alternative and local payment methods. As players increasingly turn to real-time payments, digital wallets, and super apps, expectations are evolving rapidly, particularly across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA). Developers who want to expand globally can't rely on a one-size-fits-all approach.

Supporting regional preferences isn't just about offering convenience; it's a competitive advantage. Payment flexibility now determines whether players complete a transaction or drop off entirely.

02.

Value beyond payments is becoming the differentiator

Simply processing transactions is no longer enough. The companies gaining traction are those that embed payments into broader ecosystems, connecting commerce, analytics, and player engagement tools to help developers grow beyond the point of sale. Developers want partners who think beyond infrastructure, offering integrated solutions that enhance live operations, simplify monetization, and strengthen long-term relationships with players.

03.

Cloud gaming and new business models are maturing

The era of experimentation in cloud-based distribution is coming to an end. Demos and sessions showcased studios using the cloud to reach new audiences, reduce friction, and offer seamless access across devices.

Developers are also exploring subscriptions, hybrid launches, and flexible access tiers, with cloud infrastructure at the core. Xsolla's work supporting these evolving business models resonated strongly throughout the event.

04.

Developers want faster, automated onboarding

A recurring theme across sessions was the demand for speed and simplicity.

Developers want integrations that are intuitive, automated, and ready to deploy in hours, rather than weeks. Complex technical processes and manual workflows are seen as blockers to creativity and growth. This feedback aligns with Xsolla's ongoing push to automate onboarding and reduce friction, allowing teams to focus on what they do best: building great games. The future of developer partnerships will depend on how quickly solutions can deliver value without requiring deep technical intervention.

05.

Emerging markets are driving creativity

What was once considered "emerging" regions is now defining global innovation trends. From mobile-first economies in Africa to super app ecosystems in the Middle East, developers are finding new ways to reach players and monetize engagement. EMEA's diversity is becoming its strength, fostering unique business models, payment innovations, and culturally attuned game designs.

gamescom 2025 made it clear that the global gaming landscape is no longer shaped solely by traditional markets. The next big ideas are coming from everywhere.

What does this mean for the games industry?

gamescom 2025 highlighted that the gaming industry is focused on long-term growth that lasts. From payments and regulation to AI and operations, studios and publishers are adapting to a more connected, data-driven, and globally competitive landscape.

Drawing from these experiences, Xsolla's Chief Marketing & Growth Officer, Berkley Egenes, has also identified the key trends and predictions that will shape how developers and publishers operate in the coming year. These insights highlight where opportunity is growing fastest:

Alternative payments will overtake credit cards

In Europe, we're seeing strong momentum toward wallets, BNPL, and local bank-linked rails. Players increasingly expect frictionless, integrated experiences, and credit cards will no longer be the default.

Operational efficiency will decide winners

European studios are under pressure from fluctuating revenues and rising costs. Those who streamline processes through automation, pre-publishing models, or improved cross-team alignment will be the ones to scale sustainably.

Regulation will shape competitive advantage

Laws like the EU's Digital Markets Act and the UK's DMCCA are leveling the playing field for smaller studios by curbing gatekeepers. Over the next year, I anticipate that more developers will leverage this regulatory environment to compete more directly with major platforms.

Emerging territories will drive growth

Expect continued expansion into markets such as Africa and the Middle East, with localized payments and publishing support leading the way. These re-emerging markets are starting to pay real dividends and will be central to growth strategies.

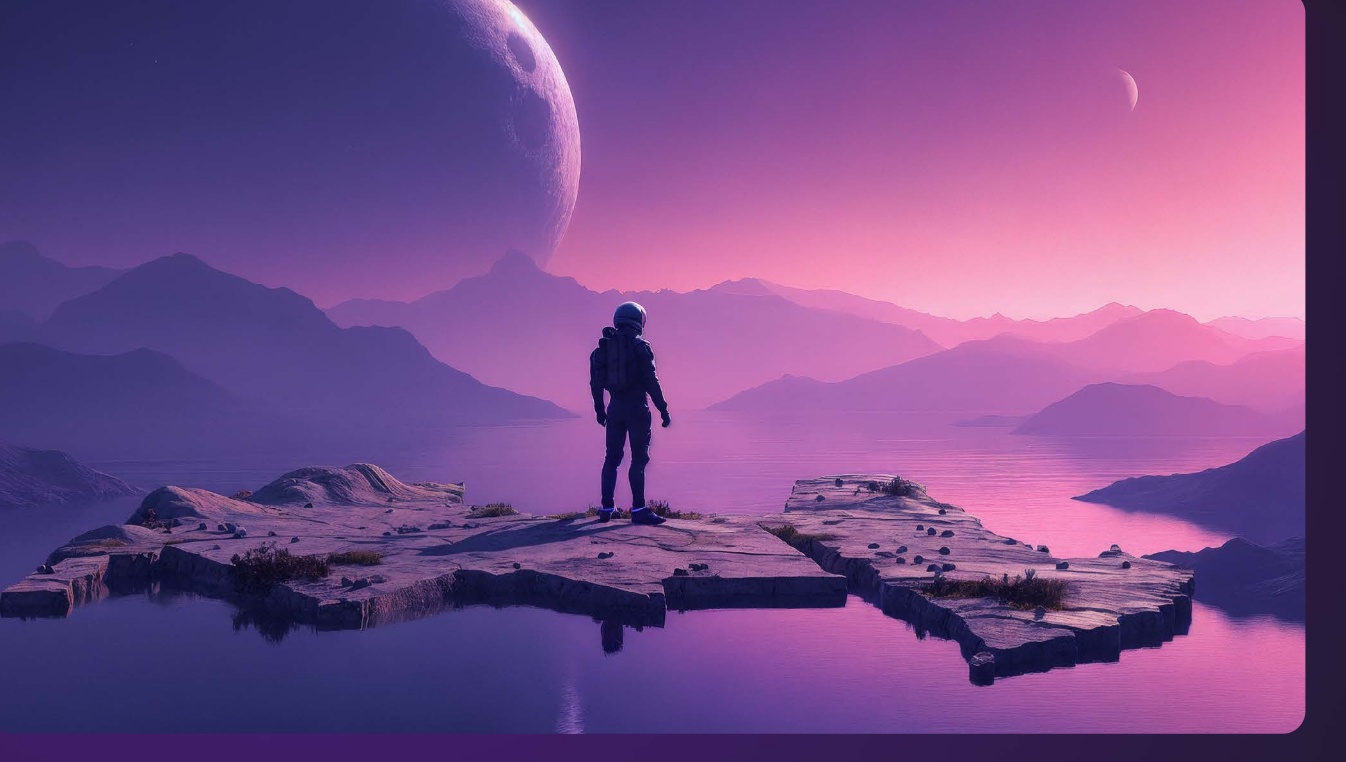
AI-driven targeting will enhance monetization

Developers are beginning to use AI to identify which integrations and customer segments are most evenue-bearing. This "smarter targeting" will become essential to bridge the gap between integrations and revenue.

Section

03

Gaming market insights: MENA



A new gaming industry hotspot

Regional market outlook.

The Middle East gaming market was valued at **$7.45 billion in 2023** and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9.4% through 2030.

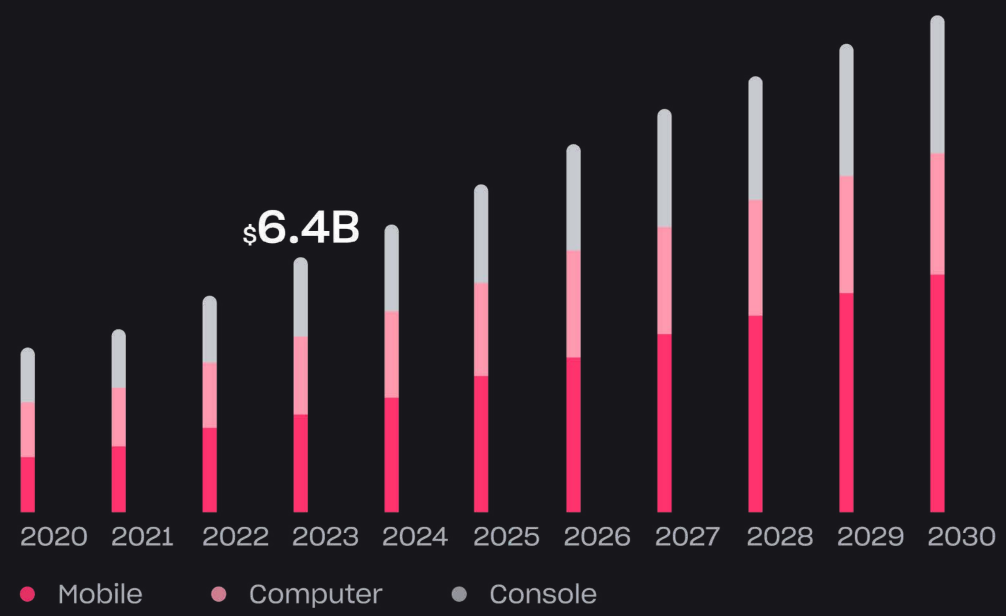
MENA-3 revenue

The combined gaming market in Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt (MENA-3) is expected to **grow from $2.0 billion in 2024 to $2.8 billion by 2029.**

Middle east gaming market Size, by Device, 2020–2030

9.4%

Middle East Market CAGR, 2024–2030



Player growth and ARPU

MENA-3 had 72 million gamers at the end of 2024, **projected to reach 84.3 million by 2029.** The **UAE leads the region in ARPU at $84.60**, followed by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, showing strong monetization potential at the high end of the market.

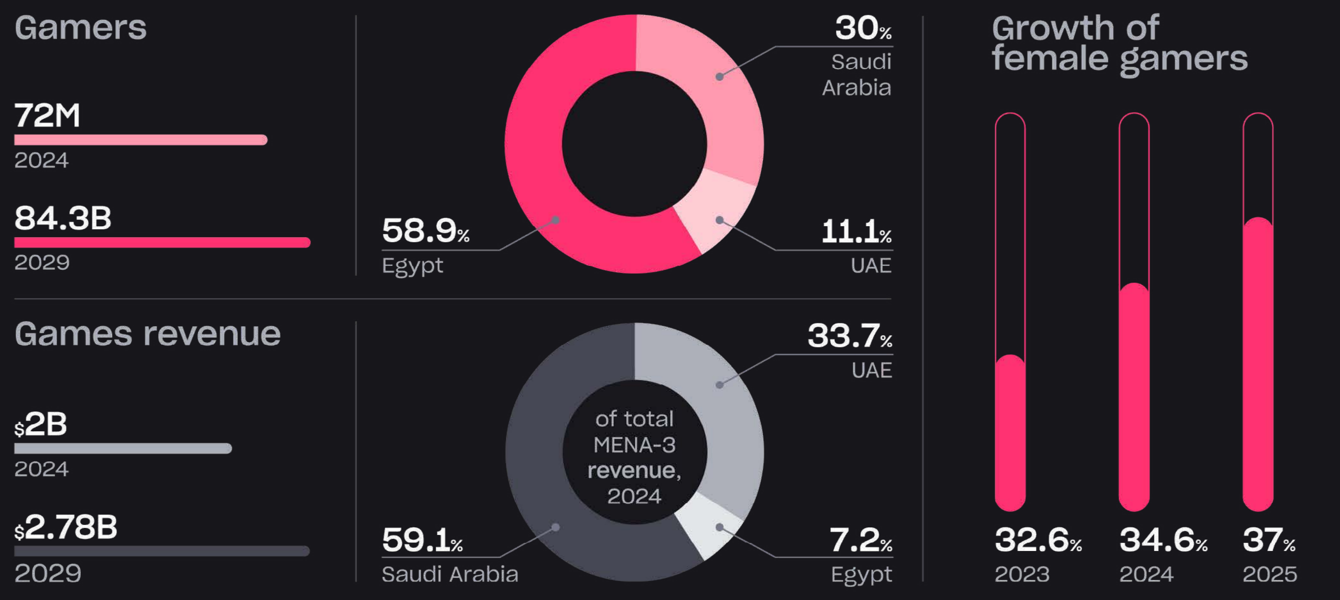
Genres and esports

Sports is the leading genre among PC and console gamers in the MENA region, favored by **33.4% of PC players and 44.1% of console players.** Overall, esports engagement is strong, with **54.6% of people** participating by playing, watching, or competing.

MENA-3 gamer behavior and market insights

Payments and access

With **67% of the region's population unbanked or underbanked**, credit cards remain limited for in-game purchases. Digital wallets, such as Vodafone Cash in Egypt, are becoming essential tools for monetization and player accessibility.



Asia and MENA games market

Source: Nikopartners.com

Industry insights: partnership to explore the future of gaming in MENA

As part of our commitment to empowering developers and staying ahead of global market trends, Xsolla partnered with Niko Partners, a leading research and analysis firm, to deliver deep insights into the forces shaping the future of the games industry, with a focus on the fast-growing MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region.

Each report highlights unique regional dynamics, player behavior, monetization challenges, and opportunities for developers looking to grow in key territories.

What does the monetization landscape look like for video games in MENA?

Produced in partnership with Niko Partners

In another key collaboration, Xsolla worked with Niko Partners to explore monetization in the fast-growing MENA region. The report ***What Does the Monetization Landscape Look Like for Video Games in MENA?*** examines MENA-3 (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt) and reveals why this region is becoming central to gaming's future:

Demographics and growth drivers

- **Over 60% of gamers in MENA-3 are aged 18-35**, making it one of the most youth-driven markets in the world.
- Countries like **Saudi Arabia and the UAE boast nearly 100% internet penetration and widespread 5G coverage**, creating strong infrastructure for multiplayer and live-service games.
- Disposable income is rising: Employed gamers earn an average of **$2,166/month, rising to $3,137/month**, excluding Egypt.
- Governments are heavily backing the industry, including Saudi Arabia's National Gaming and Esports Strategy, which aims for a **$13.3B economic contribution by 2030.**

Monetization readiness and payment access

Egypt leads in web shop adoption, with **60% of gamers making purchases through official websites.**

With **67% of the region unbanked or underbanked**, traditional card-based payments are limited.

Xsolla Payments has expanded its payment ecosystem to meet local demand, integrating **11 new localized methods**, including Fawry Cash, Aman, Masary, Vodafone Wallet (Egypt), Sadad (Saudi Arabia), and others across Jordan, Bahrain, and Iraq.

What does this mean for developers?

The findings from the report underscore that MENA is an essential growth territory for developers wanting to expand globally:

Tailored strategies win

Localization, regional payment infrastructure, and understanding local culture are critical to building lasting player engagement.

Monetization goes beyond in-game items

Success depends on creating seamless payment experiences, owning web shops, and forming meaningful connections with local audiences.

Insight plus action

Developers equipped with both data-driven insights and adaptable monetization tools can unlock MENA's full potential.

At Xsolla, we're committed to being more than just a platform; we're a partner in helping developers grow sustainably. By combining industry-leading infrastructure with region-specific insights, we empower partners to make informed decisions and achieve long-term success.

Through collaborations with research leaders like Niko Partners, Xsolla will continue to surface emerging opportunities, spotlight regional potential, and help shape the next generation of game growth across MENA and beyond.

As the gaming landscape continues to evolve, we'll continue to work with leading analysts and media voices to uncover the next big opportunities.

Section

04

Industry movers & shakers

Representation in the games industry

Women gamers around the world

The majority of American gamers are actually female at 52%. Meanwhile, gamers in countries like Brazil and South Africa skew heavily female, with women making up 57% and 58% of their gamer populations, respectively.

Women gamers overall

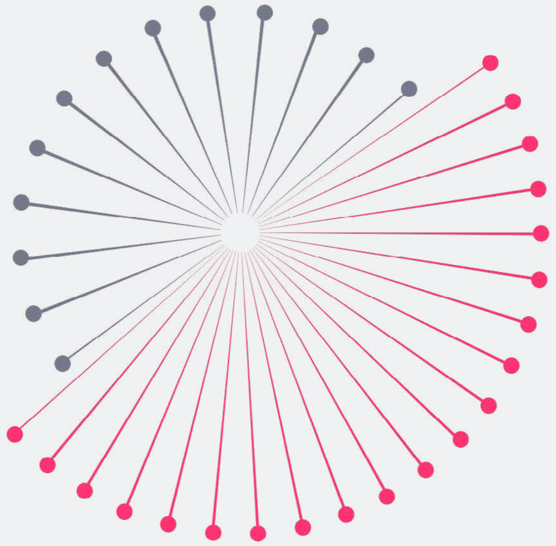
The split between men and women who play is about equal, with **47% women and 52% men**. However, for older generations, women play more than men: 52% of boomer women play video games, compared to 46% of boomer men. This means the gender divide amongst gamers is far less skewed towards men than one might expect, and in some countries, the average gamer is more likely to be female.

Global video game player profile, 2025

41 Average age (of players 16+)

Nearly equal gender split

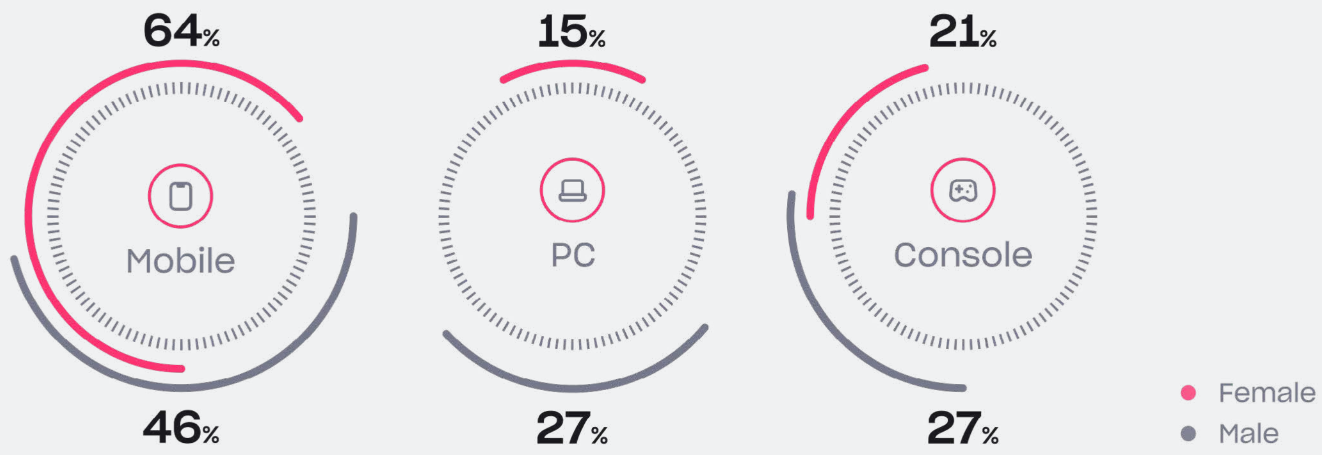
- 47% Women
- 52% Men

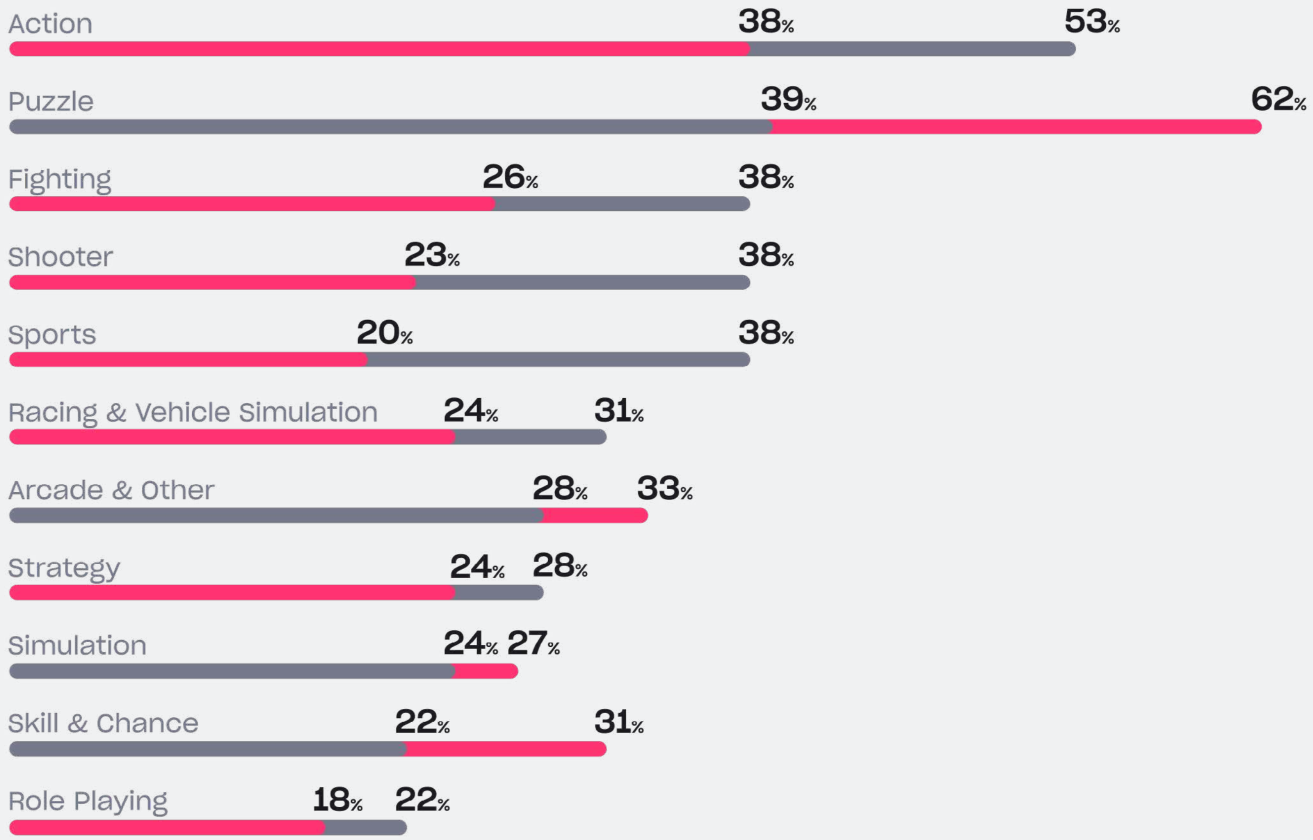


Source: Entertainment Software Association (ESA)

Genre preferences by gender

Women gamers show a stronger preference for **puzzle games**, with 61% compared to 39% of men, and for **skill and chance games**, with 31% compared to 22% of men. Meanwhile, men gamers favor action games, with **53% compared to 38% of women**. Additionally, **fighting, shooter, and sports games** each have 38%, which is more than 15% higher than the percentage of women for each genre.





Source: Entertainment Software Association (ESA)

A conversation with Magali Huot

dentsu

Magali Huot

VP of Global Gaming Strategy, dentsu

Bio

Magali Huot is a global gaming marketing leader who helps brands turn fandom into measurable growth across platforms, creators, and communities. She currently leads dentsu's Global Gaming Strategy practice and previously drove launches and partnerships at YouTube Gaming and WB Games, spanning titles like *Mortal Kombat 11*, *Hitman 2*, *Cyberpunk 2077*, and programs with Riot, EA, King, Epic, and Supercell. Her sweet spot is translating culture into go-to-market plans that blend data discipline with bold creativity, then scaling them across markets. She's known for building clear playbooks CMOs can use to enter gaming authentically and stay.

01.

The pace of innovation in gaming marketing is rapid. What trends do you believe are reshaping how brands and developers connect with players?

I think UGC is the headline, and co-creation is the foundation. When you look at how players interact with content, they're not just consuming it anymore. They're the ones building the worlds, the cosmetics, the memes, and all the moments that really sell your game for you.

The brands and studios that are winning right now don't just sponsor culture, they hand players the keys. That means giving them toolkits, asset packs, remix rights, revenue share, and a big public thank you. When you celebrate those creators, you send a signal that you're not just using them. Your marketing becomes a living system, where you get more content daily, iterate faster, and build a community that feels seen.

02.

With your background in both YouTube Gaming and esports, how do you think media platforms can evolve to better support and highlight gaming content?

I'm going to say something that sounds a little obvious, but it's true: meet the players where they are, and where they play. Make sharing feel native, not like homework. To me, it's about letting machine learning suggest those clutch moments but keeping the creator in the driver's seat to approve, trim, and publish in minutes. Add rich metadata so videos are actually searchable. Bake in co-streaming, VOD remix rights so devs and creators can riff without all the legal gymnastics.

We also need to keep chat safer with smarter mod tools, shared block lists, and clearer benefits for creators. Think about transparent graph shares across VODs and Shorts, affiliate links to in-game items, and sponsored moments that don't break immersion.

The real unlock is removing friction, from playing to sharing to playing again. Or better yet, play, clip, share, and play again. This allows discovery to unfold by highlighting the players who are truly making the magic happen.

03.

At dentsu, you're leading global gaming strategy. How do you define success when it comes to integrating brands authentically into gaming spaces?

For me, success equals participation. If players choose to spend time with your brand, engage with what you're putting out, build on it, remix it, talk about it, and come back the next week, you're winning. I look for signals like: Did we earn repeat participation? Did a creator pick it up without being asked? Is sentiment moving in the right direction as the conversation evolves?

We measure both the "heat" and the "heartbeat," real-time signals like session times, repeat visits, UGC created, and in-game conversions. But also long-term signals like brand health, sentiment, share of voice, creator adoption, and community retention. When those lines trend up together, that's when you're building fandom, not just traffic.

Because I sit across gaming, sports, and entertainment at dentsu, we borrow from what we call “live fandoms.” You give fans a great first touch, a reason to come back, and something worth showing off. If you design that loop right and the community welcomes your brand into their world, that's when everything feels authentic.

04.

Having worked with iconic titles like *Mortal Kombat 11*, *Cyberpunk 2077*, and *Injustice 2*, what lessons did you learn about connecting pop culture with gaming communities?

I would say your community is your strategy deck. They'll tell you what to make, when to drop it, how to frame it... you just have to listen! And with franchises that live in pop culture, the job is to tune into all the signals: the memes they repeat, the creators they rally around, the lore they won't let you touch. It's an open-loop process: tease, listen, iterate.

When players remix your moments, through cosplay, fan art, or however they express themselves, that's your green light to scale it. I think of it in four buckets:

Speak the dialect, not just the language

Use your community's rituals so it feels native, not borrowed.

Timing is everything

Drop content where the conversation already is (on stream, on Shorts, on Discord), not where you wish it were.

Honor the lore

Let fans personalize the story so it becomes *their version*, not just *a generic one*. “Letting go” is key here.

Credit belongs to creators

Put them on stage and let them set the tone. That's how culture moments become movements!

At the end of the day, if you keep the conversation open and celebrate the community loudly, they'll help you celebrate your brand too.

05.

You've spoken about going beyond product placement and into immersive environments. Can you share a campaign or a project you were a part of that you think achieved this?

Two projects come to mind this year. One was the *Borderlands 4* x Butterfinger Salty Caramel launch. Instead of just putting a logo on a billboard, we made the brand playable. We added custom cosmetics tied to Butterfinger and turned the whole promo into something fun. It wasn't just "buy a snack," it was "join the fun." And when you played *Borderlands 4*, you could see those skins in-game. It didn't disrupt the experience; rather, it gave creators bragging rights and players something cool to show off.

The second was Love Your Mind, a world we created in *Roblox*. We partnered with brands like Headspace, Walmart, Earth Beauty, and more to build a space centered on mental health. Headspace's mindfulness content was actually part of the gameplay, woven into the progression and tied to rewards like avatar items. It felt good, meaningful, and integrated into the gaming experience.

In both cases, the brand became a useful and rewarding part of the gaming experience and was worth showing off. That's the difference between placement and presence!

06.

As someone who's helped bring esports to mainstream platforms, where do you see the intersection of competitive gaming, entertainment, and brand storytelling heading next?

Everything for me goes back to the people! Fans don't only want to see the perfect POV, they want to know the person behind the crosshair. They care about the routine, the setbacks, the team dynamics, the strategy, and the cost of chasing a title.

I think the next wave blends match days with docu-style arcs, creator watch-alongs, and "play what you just watched" moments, where discovery, story, and participation all live in one loop. Brands fit into that when they support the human arc, like funding performance labs instead of running banner ads, giving fans tools to train alongside pros, and unlocking behind-the-scenes access.

If we build the ecosystem to turn tournaments into character-driven seasons, we get fewer interruptions and more meaningful, human touchpoints.

07.

What inspired you to pursue a career in gaming, and what has kept you passionate over the years?

I grew up on a tiny island called Réunion, a French colony in the Indian Ocean between Madagascar and Mauritius. Games felt like my passport; these story-driven worlds let me travel beyond the island walls and connect with people in real life around shared passions.

That curiosity pulled me in, and the community kept me around. I love how games blend art, tech, and human behavior. What keeps me here today? Three things:

✦ **Stories with stakes**, the kind that make you feel seen and pull you in completely.

✦ **Relentless innovation** with new tools, platforms, UGC, everything pushing what's possible.

✦ **The realness.** There's no space like gaming where people will tell you exactly what they think, for better or worse. And if you listen and build with them, that's where magic happens.

Today, I feel privileged to help brands and studios build that same bridge to community, the one that brought me into this space and helped me grow up with it.

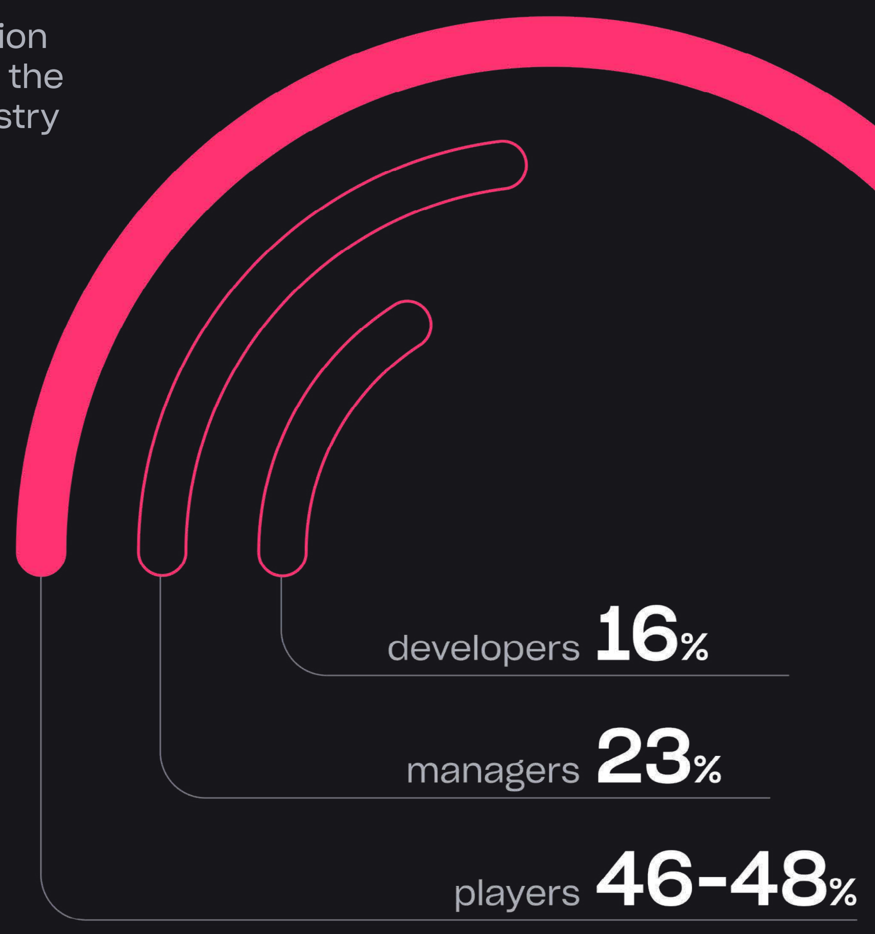
08.

Have you seen meaningful progress in women's representation and inclusion within the gaming sector over the years?

This is a big topic and something I care deeply about. I think we've made progress in terms of visibility, but leadership still lags. Women make up about 46 to 48% of the U.S. player base, yet only 16% of executive roles in major game companies are held by women. On the dev side, it's around 23%. So yes, there's movement, but we're not at parity.

What moves the needle now is giving women real visibility and leadership, ensuring transparent hiring and pay practices with clear paths to advancement, and creating safer systems through stronger moderation, reporting, and partner policies.

Representation of women in the gaming industry



09.

What advice would you give to young women or candidates trying to break into gaming strategy and marketing?

For women entering gaming, my advice is to find your people, mentors, sponsors, and peers who can support and guide you; I've found that through The Marketing Academy, which has been a constant source of mentorship and inspiration. Be loudly ambitious and ask for more scope, not scraps, pitch big ideas, and own your vision. Show your receipts by building a visible portfolio that demonstrates your performance and range. And most importantly, protect your energy by choosing teams that back you both publicly and privately, because that support makes all the difference in male-dominated spaces.

One of the things I'm most proud of is promoting a woman on my team during her maternity leave so that she wouldn't experience a pause in her career growth. We all need to find those moments, especially those that directly impact women, and fight to make a difference. Until leadership reflects the players, we have work to do. But we keep showing up, taking the mic, and holding the door open for the next wave.

10.

What games are you watching/playing currently?

I consistently have a different answer because I change based on my mood. On weeknights, I like to wind down with something chaotic like Borderlands 4, or cozy, narrative-driven games—I'm a huge fan of the Annapurna portfolio. Games like *Florence* or *If Found...* on my Steam Deck are short, emotional, and perfect before bed. It's my guilty pleasure, like reading a favorite book.

I use games to relax, to feel, or to wonder. It all depends on how much time I have and what I need from a game that day. On weekends, I go deep into story-driven games. Right now, I'm hooked on *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33.* Maybe it's the art direction, or maybe it's my French side, but that world completely pulled me in!

Conclusion

The third quarter of 2025 offered a clearer picture of where the games industry is heading and how fast it's evolving.

Europe continues to show steady growth, with **gaming revenue projected to reach $33.1 billion in 2025**, representing 18% of the global market share. Mobile leads the region in both player preference and revenue, and 90% of all spending now comes from digital purchases. Regulatory frameworks like the Digital Markets Act are also shaping how platforms operate and how developers monetize.

In China, the world's largest gaming economy continues its transition with signs of stabilization and renewed momentum. Mobile revenue topped $8.7 billion in Q2. It's expected to reach **753.7 million gamers by 2029**, underscoring its long-term relevance.

Meanwhile, MENA is quickly becoming a gaming hotspot. The region's market was valued at $7.45 billion in 2023, and the UAE has the highest ARPU at $84.60, highlighting the region's growing monetization potential.

Across all markets, players are spending more on fewer, higher-quality games, and developers are responding with new formats, better infrastructure, and smarter monetization models - whether it's scaling through web shops, increasing efficiency with backend tools, or driving engagement through LiveOps and content.

As we look toward the final quarter of the year, staying aligned with regional trends, adapting to changing player behaviors, and investing in scalable infrastructure will be critical. At Xsolla, we're committed to helping developers and partners seize these opportunities through the right tools, platforms, and partnerships to make the rest of 2025 even more impactful.

About Xsolla

Xsolla is a global commerce company with robust tools and services to help developers solve the inherent challenges of the video game industry. From indie to AAA, companies partner with Xsolla to help them fund, distribute, market, and monetize their games. Grounded in the belief in the future of video games, Xsolla is resolute in the mission to bring opportunities together and continually make new resources available to creators. Headquartered and incorporated in Los Angeles, California, Xsolla operates as the merchant of record and has helped over 1,500+ game developers to reach more players and grow their businesses around the world. With more paths to profits and ways to win, developers have all the things needed to enjoy the game.

For additional information and to learn more, please visit xsolla.com

Enjoy the game

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