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## **Current Trends in the Development of Gaming Market**

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**Abstract:**

*The article is devoted to the study of the demand for computer games and game content. In modern conditions of digitalization, the role and volume of sales of digital goods and services is rapidly increasing.*

*A growing number of gaming enthusiasts is meeting the demand for gaming content.*

*When using the survey, the author identified the motivators and incentives for the consumption of game content, general preferences of computer games, the costs that gamers are willing to incur for purchasing computer games and game content.*

**Keywords:** *Computer games, game content, internet, multiplayer online-games, e-commerce.*

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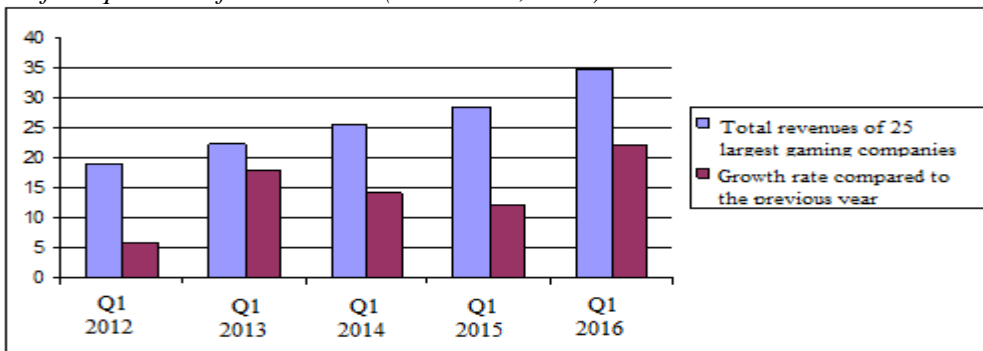
## 1. Introduction

At the present stage of the development of the society, information technologies come into all spheres of human life. Because of this, there is a tendency to digitalization of society. Digitization of society is accompanied not only by the breaking of digital and internet technologies into the production sphere, but also into other spheres of people's activities such as entertainment, culture and life. Digitalization also changes the behavior of consumers in terms of increasing their spending on various products in the Internet environment, including computer games.

The development of global telecommunications, internet technologies and software leads to the formation of such a sector of the economy as the production and consumption of computer games. A steady demand for computer games of various genres and content has been observed in the computer games industry. Also according to analytical reports in the field of computer games market research of the Newzoo company, there are 1,775,489,000 gamers in the world (Gray, 2014). In turn, the computer games market is showing steady growth. Also, according to the forecasts of Newzoo, the market of computer games from 2017 to 2021 will grow steadily and will amount to 180 billion dollars (Karst, 2018). In turn, a market for related goods and services in the form of game content has been formed during the development of computer games.

Gaming content can be represented by a wide range of virtual items, which may include: weapons, ammunition, decorations, real estate vehicles, maps, and game levels (Nasonov, 2008). The implementation of game content generates great revenues to manufacturing companies (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Revenues of the 25 largest manufacturers of computer games compared to the first quarters of 2012 - 2016 (McDonald, 2016)



As a result, the issue of research of the market of computer games and the market of game content is actualized. The purpose of this study is to identify current trends in the consumption of computer games and game content, as well as to specify the

factors and conditions for the formation of consumer preferences and identify new channels of communication and promotion of games.

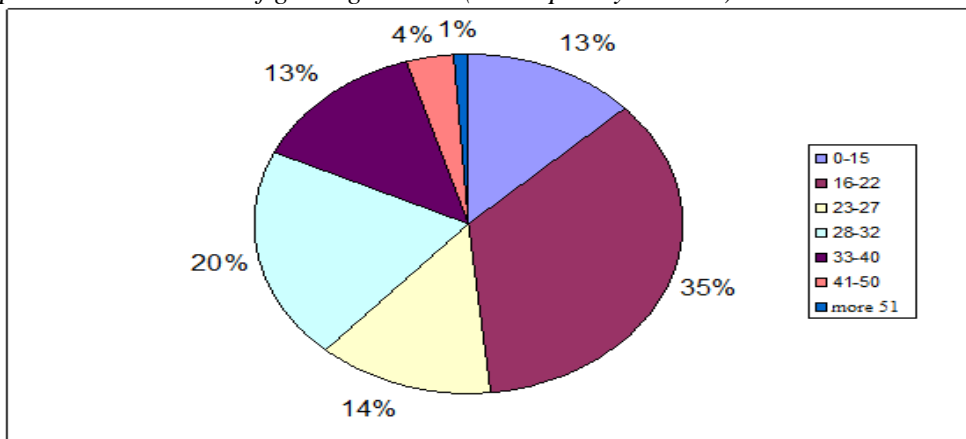
## 2. Methodology

In the course of survey, 355 respondents were interviewed via Google-forms. Survey included responds from interviewers of different gender, age and professional affiliation in terms of experience in the consumption of game content, genre preferences of computer games, and the respondents' opinion was examined in order to identify popular channels for the promotion of computer games. As part of the survey, respondents formed their own answers to determine the methods of choosing computer games and game content. Also, multiple-choice questions were used regarding platforms for computer games or relatives/friends playing computer games. The questions in the form were designed to identify not only consumer preferences in the field of computer and gaming content, but also to diagnose the respondent's environment for the presence and number of playing relatives or friends. The form also included questions on the respondent's attitude to spending money on entertainment or computer games. Moreover, the survey clarified and identified personal incentives and motivators of choice when purchasing computer games and game content.

## 3. Research of the game content

The research of the computer games market was conducted among 355 respondents of different sex, age and profession. A further trend of digitalization involves the expansion of the use of both digital content and game content in general (Kastronova, 2010). The study included a wide age range of respondents (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** The age structure of the respondents surveyed in the course of the study of potential consumers of gaming content (developed by authors)

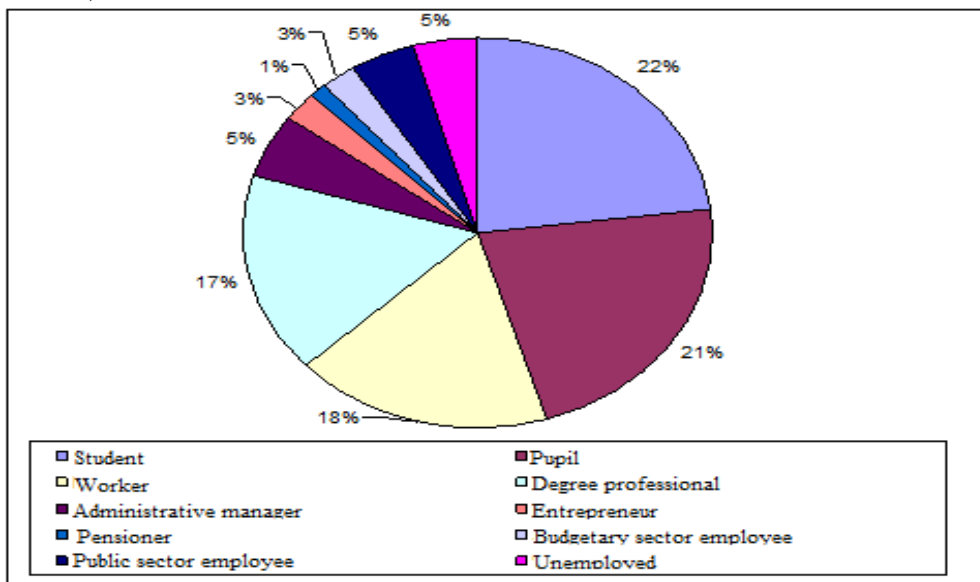


The questionnaire, compiled for potential consumers of game content, is intended to obtain the following information:

- the respondent has a profession, and therefore a source of income;
- respondents' opinion on the consumption of game content;
- the experience of acquiring and the frequency of acquiring game content and computer games;
- preferences of the consumer of computer games;
- preference of communication channels when choosing games and game content;
- the choice of gaming platforms of computer games (depending on the platforms – personal computer, mobile phone or console).

Also, in the course of the survey, we have found out their age, attitude to entertainment expenses, as well as the presence / absence of respondents' players among friends and relatives. Processing of the received questionnaires allowed us to present the following results. Among the 355 respondents surveyed, 20% are women and 80% are men. Therefore, the development, creation and promotion of game content should be focused not only on the male audience, but also on the female one. Now, there are game projects created mainly for the female audience, for example, Sims 4 or various games in social networks (Bondarenko, 2014). In order to clarify the potential demand for game content, and subsequently, the effectiveness of using marketing technologies in the field of promoting game content, respondents were asked about their professional affiliation (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Structure of respondents according to their affiliation (developed by authors)

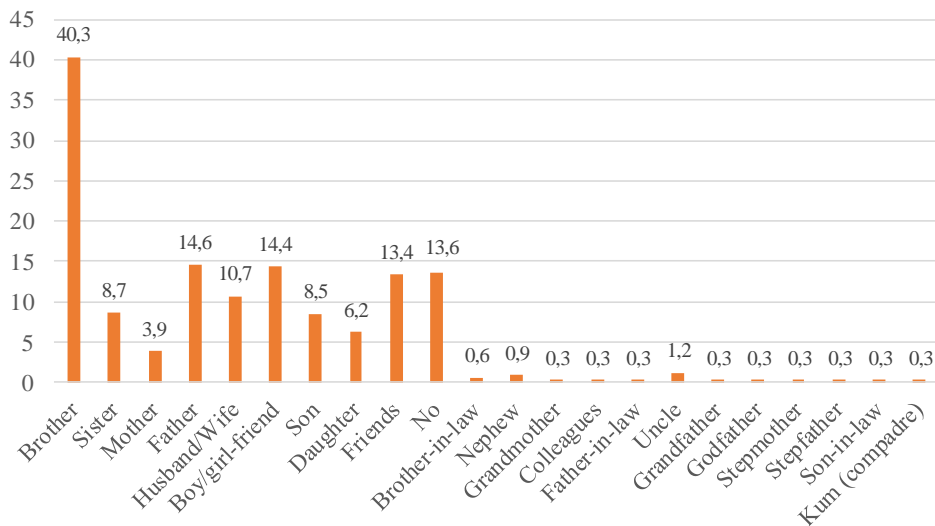


Based on the results of the study, it should be noted that as a rule, the non-working population, for example, schoolchildren or students add up to 43%, while the rest of the population 57% are respondents who have regular incomes and can form a stable demand for game content.

Due to the fact that the majority of respondents have a steady income, they were asked to answer the question what share of income they are willing to spend on entertainment. Answers of respondents were spread out as follows (percentage of income - percentage of respondents answered): up to 5% - 32%; up to 15% - 30%; 18% - 25%; from 25% to 50% - 16%; more than 50% - 4%.

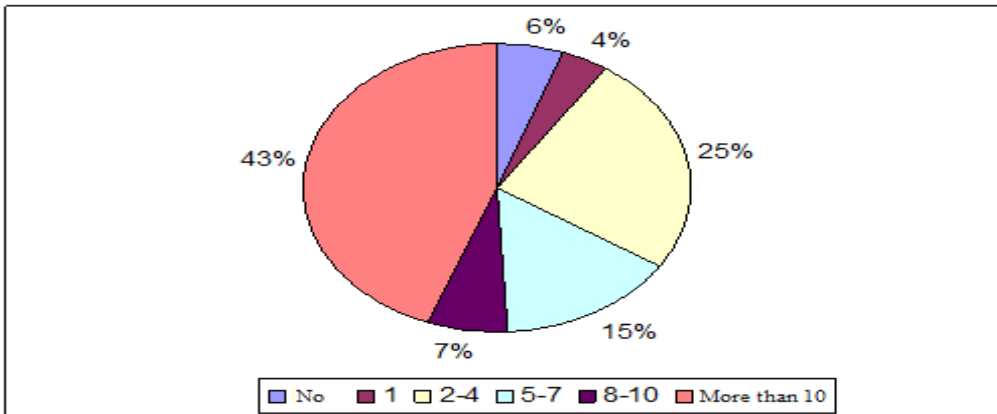
The overwhelming majority attributed themselves to those categories that are willing to spend a small sum of money on entertainment. This trend can be characterized as peculiar to all markets for goods and services, since at the present stage in Russia there is a steady decline in real incomes of the population. To study the potential of the game content market, respondents were interviewed about friends/relatives who play computer games (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: Are there any people playing computer games among your relatives or friends?



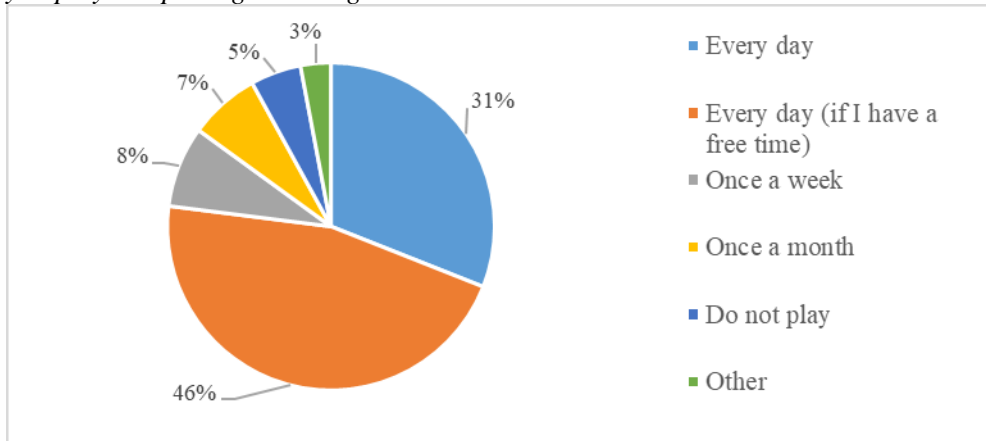
Next, to clarify the influence of reference groups, the respondents were examined on the question of the number of relatives who play computer games (Figure 5). Moreover, we note that at the present stage, online multiplayer games are gaining more and more popularity. In these games, as a rule, game content is bought for collaborative playthrough, for example, access to new levels or maps. In this case, the most popular answer (43%) was the answer “more than 10 people.” This result also suggests that the fascination with computer games is very rampant.

**Figure 5.** Distribution of respondents' answers: How many of your acquaintances or friends play computer games?



Next were clarified the audience of computer games. According to the answers of the respondents to the question “Do you play computer games or games on various electronic devices?” The overwhelming majority answered positively - 78%. Considering the results of the survey, we could state that in the future, the gaming audience may form a favorable environment for the consumption of game content. Also, respondents were interviewed about the amount of time they could devote to games (Figure 6).

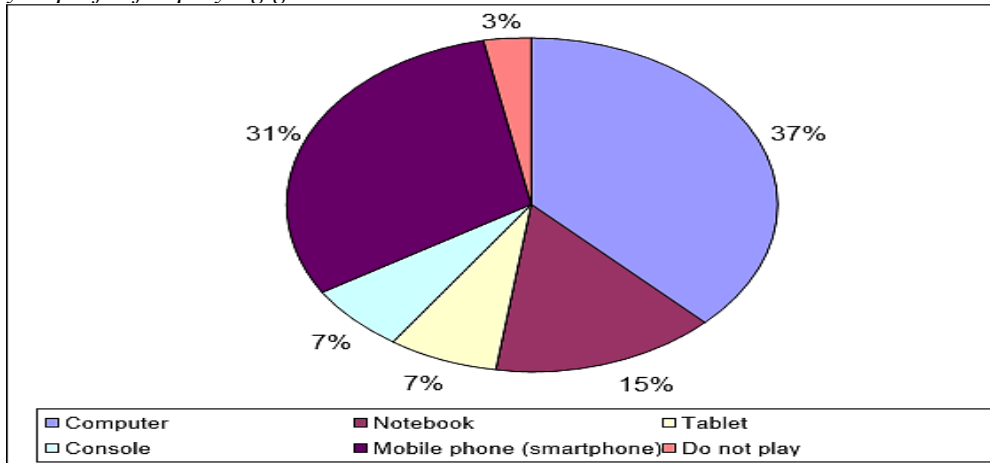
**Figure 6.** The distribution of respondents' answers to the question: How often do you play computer games or games on various electronic devices?



Notable that the majority of respondents (47%) noted that they play every day if there is free time. According to the above, it is possible to assert that there is already a stable and formed demand for computer games, which in consequence can be one of the main factors of demand for game content.

Thus, modern computer games are made for various electronic devices. Manufacturers are developing games for different devices to expand the distribution channels (Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** The distribution of respondents' answers to the question: What devices do you prefer for playing games?



This distribution of respondents' answers helps to get important results. First, the distribution of answers confirms the global trend in the development of the gaming industry. This trend is manifested in the leading mobile platforms (mobile phones, PDAs, smartphones).

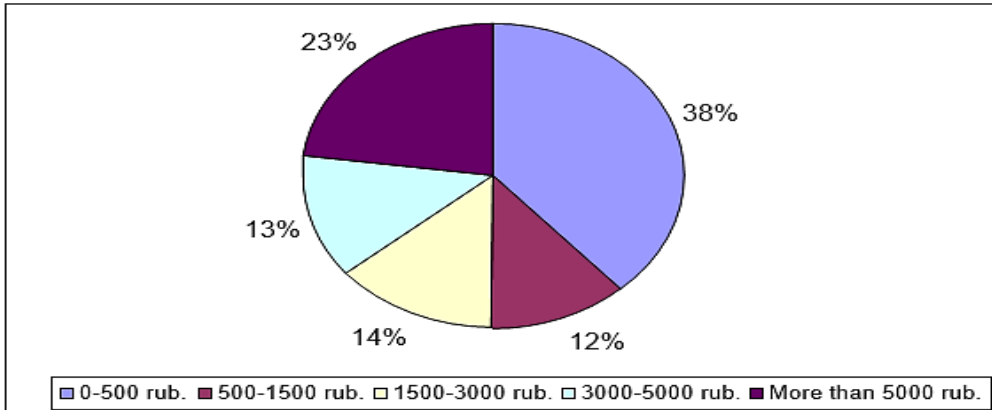
Secondly, during the interviews with the playing respondents, it was established that they play computer games for the following reasons:

- 1) using the game as a “timekiller”, i.e. this means playing while waiting for the end of the queue or using free time in the absence of other alternatives;
- 2) distraction from the problems of real life or psychological relaxation - a process similar to the primitive use of a computer game as entertainment;
- 3) the use of the game in sports and competitive purposes, the motives may be the desire to get a certain psycho-emotional effect (for example, domination, lust for trials);
- 4) sublimation of the social role in real life (the player gives himself the role of a brave hero, a knight, an insidious seductress, a spy, despite his own status in real life).

Also, respondents were interviewed for their participation in multiplayer games. Analyzing the survey on multiplayer games, it can be argued that the vast majority of people play multiplayer games, that is, the majority of respondents consume computer games is socialized. Separately, it should be noted that at the present stage, the consumption of multiplayer computer games is happening in a socialized way,

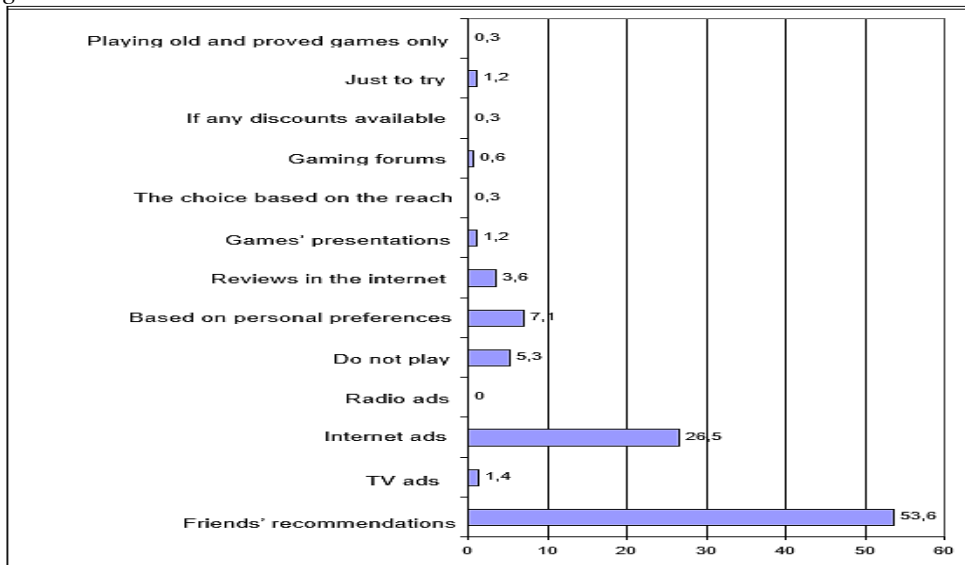
together with other individuals (Popov, 2017). Moreover, respondents were interviewed in the context of their spending on computer games (Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Distribution of answers to the question: How much money do you spend on computer games per year?



The results obtained are of great interest, since the most popular answers were the polar correlation variants “0-500 rubles” (38%) against “more than 5000 rubles” (23%). Considering the research problematics, the respondents were asked a question about the communication channel affecting the choice of the game by the consumer (Figure 9).

**Figure 9.** Distribution of answers to the question: How do you choose computer games?





The most popular response was the recommendation of friends, which may indicate the influence of reference groups on the respondent. Separately, it should be noted that the second most popular answer was "Internet advertising". The results of this survey confirm the growing advertising potential of the Internet in the field of promotion and implementation of computer games. It should also be noted that the development of information technologies can contribute not only to the implementation of games, but also the development of communications with the consumer (Popov and Popova, 2016).

Next, the respondents were interviewed to determine the context of the purchase of game content. Answers of respondents were distributed as follows: 29% did not buy game content versus 71% bought game content. The data obtained allow us to establish a certain specificity of the target audience and its motives for participating in the consumption of game content.

#### **4. Conclusion**

When interviewing respondents, we found that respondents buying game content are divided mainly into two groups. The first group buys the game content in order to save time, as the purchased game content allows spending less time to achieve the desired results in the game. The second group buys game content to play with friends, relatives or other players, as a rule, in this case, game content is presented in the form of new levels, maps or additions to the game. The survey results illustrate that about 1/3 of the players tend to buy game content, in turn, it is people who can generate companies' revenue, especially in the service models of games.

In turn, the trend of digitalization is not well understood at the present stage. So digitalization contributes to the formation of the market of Internet things, new standards of consumption of digital goods and systems for their promotion and implementation. The trend of digitalization forms not only potential demand for new or promising products, but also contributes to the development of methods for promoting both traditional content (music, movies, books), and game content - objects of the virtual world of computer games. The development of the Russian computer games market will contribute to the import substitution of foreign gaming products; development of related sectors and industries (software, information technology and computer equipment); the formation of an additional taxable base; propaganda of cultural and historical values of Russia.

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