GLOBAL GAMING ALLIANCE

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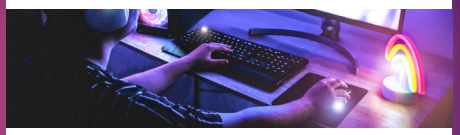
RESPONSIBLE GAMING IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Guidance for Gaming Companies, Game Players and Advertisers

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
4

TODAY'S LANDSCAPE


The evolution of gaming and how we're making the gaming environment a safer place to be.

5

PLAYERS
COMMUNITY, DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSIVITY

The core principles of responsible gaming, from building a safe community to the importance of improved representation.

CASE STUDY
***89Trillion* – Your wish is our command**

CASE STUDY
***Meta* launches the Black Gaming Creator Program**

6

EMPLOYEES
DIVERSITY AND SAFETY

From hiring policy to worker wellbeing, how employee education goes beyond training tools.

CASE STUDY
***DraftKings* + Happy employees = happy business**

11

INDUSTRY
CONTROLS AND TRANSPARENCY

How to give gamers ownership of their experience and the whys and why-nots of data collection.

CASE STUDY
***Entain's* ARC™ sets sail**

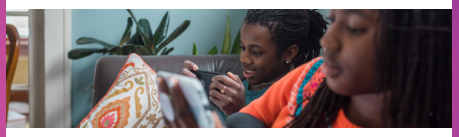
CASE STUDY
***Habby's* energy system limits time, not fun**

14

TOMORROW'S WORLD

What innovations lie ahead, and what opportunities do they present to the gaming ecosystem?

19

TAKEAWAYS


The Global Gaming Alliance's key recommendations for gaming companies, players and advertisers.

21

CONCLUSION

22

INTRODUCTION

The global games market is forecast to surpass

$200 BILLION

in revenue in 2023.[2]

With an estimated 2.9 billion[1] players at the end of 2021, the global gaming industry already outpaces the movie and music industries combined. Inspired by greater connectivity and product choice, this number is expanding. And so, too, are the demographics. It seems everybody, young and old, is engaged in play, from educational to social gaming and beyond. So far, the industry has created an effective suite of responsible gaming solutions, from parental controls to self-regulation tools, improved transparency to employee welfare. Now we just need to explore what the next steps are, and how we can work together to achieve even more in this ever-changing landscape.

And so, we've formed the Global Gaming Alliance; a forum that brings together select clients and partners across the gaming industry to exchange ideas, solve problems, and seek to unlock value for the wider ecosystem. The resulting whitepaper explores what we, as an alliance, are investing in to ensure the welfare of players, employees, and the gaming industry at large.

This thought leadership piece will show players what safety tools are available to the community, and how greater representation speaks to everybody. Employees will understand what their employers are doing to aid their health and wellbeing, and their commitment to a diverse workforce. The industry will see how investments in data, personalization, and accessibility establish fairness and more engaged audiences.

This culminates in a series of best practice recommendations, aimed at gaming companies, game players, and advertisers. So, each audience segment that we're talking to sees that as the gaming ecosystem continues to develop, so do the opportunities to make gaming safe, fun, and entertaining for all.

1 Newzoo Global Games Market Report
2 Facebook Gaming Marketing Insights 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pandemic-induced growth continues

- The working practices and behavioral changes of the pandemic resulted in new players, re-engaged existing players, and players from a wider demographic
- Market growth hasn't stalled, despite the gradual return to a pre-pandemic way of life
- Gaming is no longer seen as niche, which presents more advertising opportunities

There's genuine appetite for change in the industry

- Gaming companies increasingly present responsible gaming as a core brand value
- Developers and gamers are working together to create safer communities
- Player protection technology can minimize risk of harmful play
- Players will set their ideal experience if safety tools are clearly communicated
- Optimum protection of the gaming community requires safety parity across the industry

Responsible gaming speaks to players and employees

- Greater diversity in game characters, training opportunities, and hiring practices make a meaningful difference for women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and disabled people
- Removing accessibility barriers results in more players
- Companies are actively invested in employee training and wellbeing support

Transparency balances privacy and experience

- Gamers want choice, and rationale behind data collection
- Consumers are more trusting of and loyal to brands with transparent policies
- Data can be the difference between a personalized experience and a more generic one

Technological advancements present wide-ranging opportunities

- 5G enables companies to reach lucrative markets beyond Tier 1
- Cloud gaming ensures safeguarding protocols remain in place by managing the end-to-end user experience
- Advanced technology means more sophisticated avatars, and opportunities for wider representation

TODAY'S LANDSCAPE

The backdrop of the pandemic set the scene for change across many entertainment industries; from working practices to consumer habits. In gaming, the unexpected effect of COVID-19 impacted player numbers and behaviors. Not only were more people online, they were gaming in different ways and for different reasons.

> *I thank the games industry for stepping up to help bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope this campaign to #playaparttogether encourages even more people to stay safe and healthy while they help flatten the curve and save lives.*

Ray Chambers, United States Ambassador to the WHO

In their Gaming Marketing Insights 2021, Meta identified that as well as encouraging new game players, lockdowns nudged relapsed players to re-connect. And across all markets, new and existing gamers cited similar reasons for playing. The top three being relieving stress, passing time, and generating a sense of accomplishment. Remote working meant people could try games for the first time, and existing players could expand their genre range and try new things.

We're in this together

To protect this influx of new and re-engaged players, gaming companies had to act in unison. When lockdown was in full force, more than 3 billion[1] people around the world stayed at home to protect their health and that of their families, communities, and healthcare systems. Teaming up with the World Health Organization (WHO) on initiatives like #healthyathome and #playapartogether gaming companies, including Glu Mobile, Playtika, and Zynga found compelling ways to urge players to follow important health guidelines.

By bringing special events, exclusives, activities, rewards, and inspiration to some of the most popular games on the planet, these initiatives reached millions of users and demonstrated a genuine appetite for companies to work together to create change.

The Global Gaming Alliance believes it's time to build upon this appetite, standing together to effect positive change in several key areas from players to employees to the industry as a whole.

1 Euronews – April 2020

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

In contrast to the stereotypes of old, gamers often forge genuine, enduring friendships online. Many game features today are designed to enhance interactions and are increasingly integrated with communication tools – making the link between virtual and everyday life seamless.

As well as emotional connections, games can also supplement learning. Educational elements can develop creativity and teach key life skills. Immersive games that require problem solving can enhance memory, improve strategic thinking, and build perseverance to achieve goals. Multiplayer games can improve adaptability, negotiation, and communication skills. In short, games have the capacity to incite real change and complement many aspects of people's lives.

The gaming environment can be an extremely positive one. During the pandemic, online gaming was a social and emotional lifeline for many, providing liberation from the confines of home.

> *We've had a lot of messages from players saying our games have helped them through tough times because they've made friends through the game. This is one of the healing effects that games can have.*
>
> Srikant Varadaraj, Business Development Director, Habby

Playing it safe

The level of anonymity afforded by some games, however, can pose challenges. But with the right features and safety tools in place, toxic behavior can be combated, and communities can thrive. Andrew Mo, Product Manager at Meta told us, *"We really pioneered free-to-play social games in our early era, and part of that has always been driven around gaming with real identities. When people game with their real identities, there's a level of decorum and respect that's maintained, versus other platforms, where there's a sense of anonymity. That's where toxicity and some of the other challenges that gaming communities have faced, tend to crop up."*

Gaming companies have taken many steps to protect players from all forms of behavior that violate safe play principles. Exploiting glitches or bugs to enable faster progress or bypass game regulations is a big no-no. It's blatant rule-breaking and today, technology can automatically detect suspected game manipulation and penalize accounts. And if other players suspect it, they're encouraged to report it.

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

CASE STUDY

89Trillion – Your wish is our command

When 89Trillion found they were getting consistent queries about certain subjects, they set up their Wish List function, which sees every user vote about a proposed feature. This could range from a content element to a safety suggestion. Votes are totted up, and the winning item is developed and launched.

One of these was a time check feature, which they developed after parents expressed specific concerns about play duration. Since they rolled it out across their gaming network, users – and parents – can access detailed information about the hours played and, more importantly, can control it.

> *You must listen to your users, get feedback from them and communicate with them, openly and frequently and try your best to solve their problems. We've built communication channels and technical solutions for lots of scenarios because we have learned from each other what we must do to develop interesting games and safe features.*

Han Qiu, Partner, 89Trillion

DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Tackling rule breaking and toxic behavior starts from the ground up, and it's the industry's responsibility to ensure that everybody feels safe, which is why the Global Gaming Alliance has created this series of diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity best practices.

Women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and disabled people need to know that we're deeply invested in their safety. And this means amplifying their voices through greater representation – both on and off screen.

According to Newzoo's Gamer Sentiment Study on Diversity & Inclusion, 47% of UK players believe diversity is important and 41% avoid games that aren't inclusive for them[1]. This is why we're more focused on creating opportunities and enabling the success of under-represented gaming professionals than ever before.

1/3 OF U.S. GAMERS

are Black, Hispanic, or Asian, while 13% of gamers in the U.K. belong to an ethnic-minority group.[2]

CASE STUDY

Meta launches the Black Gaming Creator Program

Established in 2020, the Black Gaming Creator Program is designed to offer Black creatives the opportunity to turn their passion for gaming into their profession. Participants get official partnership status, early access to products, internal support, personal and professional development opportunities, community building resources, mentorship and, crucially, guaranteed monthly pay – one of the key differentiators from similar programs. Here are some of the success stories:

The Fierce Diva left a career in banking and joined the Black Gaming Creator Program to build a positive, safe, and inclusive community that's now over 33k followers strong.

"It makes me feel very fulfilled and proud of myself that I'm able to do something that can reshape this community in a very meaningful and tangible way. The Black Gaming Creator Program means I could start conceptualizing streaming as a career."

Marine1169x was in the Marines for 21 years before he realized his other dream of becoming a gaming professional after joining the program in 2020.

"The Black Gaming Creator Program pushes you in the right direction. It gives you the opportunity to get a foot in the door and it helps you make a difference, because it puts more Black gaming creators on the platform. There's diversity, and that's something the world needs to see."

1 WARC – Women in Gaming – Newzoo Gaming Sentiment Study on Diversity & Inclusion summary
2 Newzoo – Gaming Sentiment Study on Diversity & Inclusion summary

DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

In 2021 Meta announced an investment of **$10 million** to help support the next generation of Black gaming content creators over the next two years.

Responsible gaming is accessible gaming

Better accessibility is another way we can get responsible gaming right. Where players might require adapted controls for mobility and coordination, adjusted color schemes for the visually impaired or upgraded descriptors for the hard of hearing, we're building solutions. Working directly with disabled gamers and accessibility advocates to address concerns at the earliest stages of creative development means games are created for all from the get-go.

30% of players in the U.S. and 20% in the U.K. identify as being disabled.[2]

Removing accessibility barriers means more people can play our games. And that can only be a good thing! This includes a growing number of players over the age of 60, who've been gaming since they were teenagers, and might have less motor dexterity or visual and hearing ability. Improved accessibility means we'll keep these passionate gamers engaged.

> *All content needs to be built with accessibility in mind... We tend to provide builds for colorblind people. We don't use any flashing lights, but we know that visual impairments are a key consideration. In terms of controls themselves, all our games are casual controlled; designed in portrait with one-hand controls. They require less hand-eye coordination, and we can reach more users.*

Srikant Varadaraj, Business Development Director, Habby

13% of players in the U.S. and 14% in the U.K. fall into the LGBTQ+ category.[1]

Now you see us... Why visibility matters

Games have the power to shape how we understand and interact with the world. If players don't see a diverse range of characters, or the way they see them is constantly negative, it can have wide ranging implications.

Not seeing LGBTQ+ characters, for example, can make players who identify in that bracket feel insignificant and disregarded. There have been positive steps, but the fact that LGBTQ+ characters often need to be selected as an option rather than the standard setting, requires player activation and limits exposure to society in general. Greater LGBTQ+ representation in games not only normalizes it, but it can help people realize their own identity. And they need to know that the gaming environment is a safe space to express that.

While the LBGTQ+ community continues to grow, according to Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE)'s Key Facts 2020[3], almost half (45%) of European gamers are female. Yet, a Buzz Bingo study revealed only 12%[4] of next-generation video games exclusively feature a female protagonist. There are so many more opportunities to make meaningful connections with women in gaming – be it championing female characters or hiring more female talent.

1 WARC – Women in Gaming – Newzoo Gaming Sentiment Study on Diversity & Inclusion summary
2 Newzoo – Gaming Sentiment Study on Diversity & Inclusion summary
3 ISFE Key Facts 2020
4 EuropeanGaming – Buzz Bingo summary

DIVERSITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Why brands should be joining the discussion

Not only does greater representation empower people, but it also generates more advertising opportunities. Gaming is no longer seen as a niche market. It's home to highly engaged audiences, largely overlooked by traditional marketing strategies.

Advertisers have a responsibility to ensure that ads bring value to the user experience. A branded re-skin just doesn't cut it anymore. When Gillette Venus enabled Animal Crossing gamers to customize their female avatars with features such as freckles, body hair and stretchmarks, it took their body positivity message directly into the gaming experience.

It's clear that brands have the power to be agents of change when it comes to connecting with the diverse gaming community. This in turn reflects well on the brand, improves reputation, and encourages loyalty from gamers and employees.

By making genuine changes to games – from more safeguarding tools to greater diversity, better accessibility to improved visibility – we can have a very real and positive impact on the gaming community. And having two-way dialogue with players creates room for constant enhancements. They're simple steps, and they're hugely worthwhile. Responsible gaming really *can* make a difference.

DIVERSITY

A diverse workforce is an educated workforce, and effective responsible gaming strategies rely on their employees' broad experience and perspective. By having a wide range of employees, we can speak to the broadening demographic we identified earlier. Han Qiu, partner at 89Trillion, gave his viewpoint, *"In our company, we always encourage women to join the leadership team. Our female leaders tend to have more transformational ideas, which is good for business. They also provide better mentorship, especially when it comes to coaching our young, fresh graduates."*

Entain's **EnTrain initiative** is working to improve diversity and gives under-represented groups increased access to academic and vocational courses, and technological expertise, with a goal to reach over 1 million people by 2030.[2]

Placing emphasis on greater representation is not only about providing a safe environment for players, but also promoting hiring practices that match the audiences we serve.

> *The teams that build for [gamers], whether it's gaming companies, developers, or publishers should be diverse as well... That's really key in terms of thinking about responsible gaming more broadly than just people that play the games, but also those that work within gaming companies.*

Leslie Petry, Global Partnership and Gaming Council Lead, Meta

According to the UK Games Industry Census 2020, 70% of people working in the UK games industry are male, compared to 28% female and 2% non-binary workers. Female representation in the workforce is significantly under the national average of those in work. The Global Gaming Alliance seeks to address that imbalance. Likewise for Black gaming employees.

Black in Gaming, a community dedicated to cultivating, supporting, and promoting Black professionals in the game industry, found that in the U.S. just 2% of professionals in the video game industry are Black, compared with 13% of the population.[1]

Undoubtedly these insights present a need for change. And the Global Gaming Alliance believes we're in the privileged position to be able to inform that change and make a genuine difference.

1 Black in Gaming survey
2 Entain Group – November 2021

TRAINING & SAFETY

An educated workforce is a dedicated workforce

In addition to investing in the right employees, gaming companies need to invest in the right training once those hires are on board. Training employees confirms that responsible gaming is a core value of their new organization. Employees should feel, 'Hey, this is going to be a fun place to work, and these guys are clearly invested in my development.'

CASE STUDY

DraftKings + Happy employees = Happy business

DraftKings are fierce believers that a strong workforce forms the backbone of success. Meaning happy players and a fruitful business.

Having mandatory responsible gaming training upon onboarding ensures their workforce are immediately up to speed on the company's policies, and the wider conversation. They provide quarterly targeted training to customer-facing employees and annual refresher courses thereafter. Also, they provide regular updates on research, topics and trends and how they might impact the company.

DraftKings' approach also includes on-site tools, like posting responsible gaming awareness information and resources throughout the company's platforms. This includes a toll-free helpline number.

By making training key to their hiring process, DraftKings has elevated the responsible gaming message to be a core part of their business, and they've shown how employee and player satisfaction are inextricably intertwined.

> *I firmly believe that having the best trained workforce will translate into having the most informed player base and best responsible gaming program.*

Christine Thurmond, Director of Responsible Gaming, DraftKings

TRAINING & SAFETY

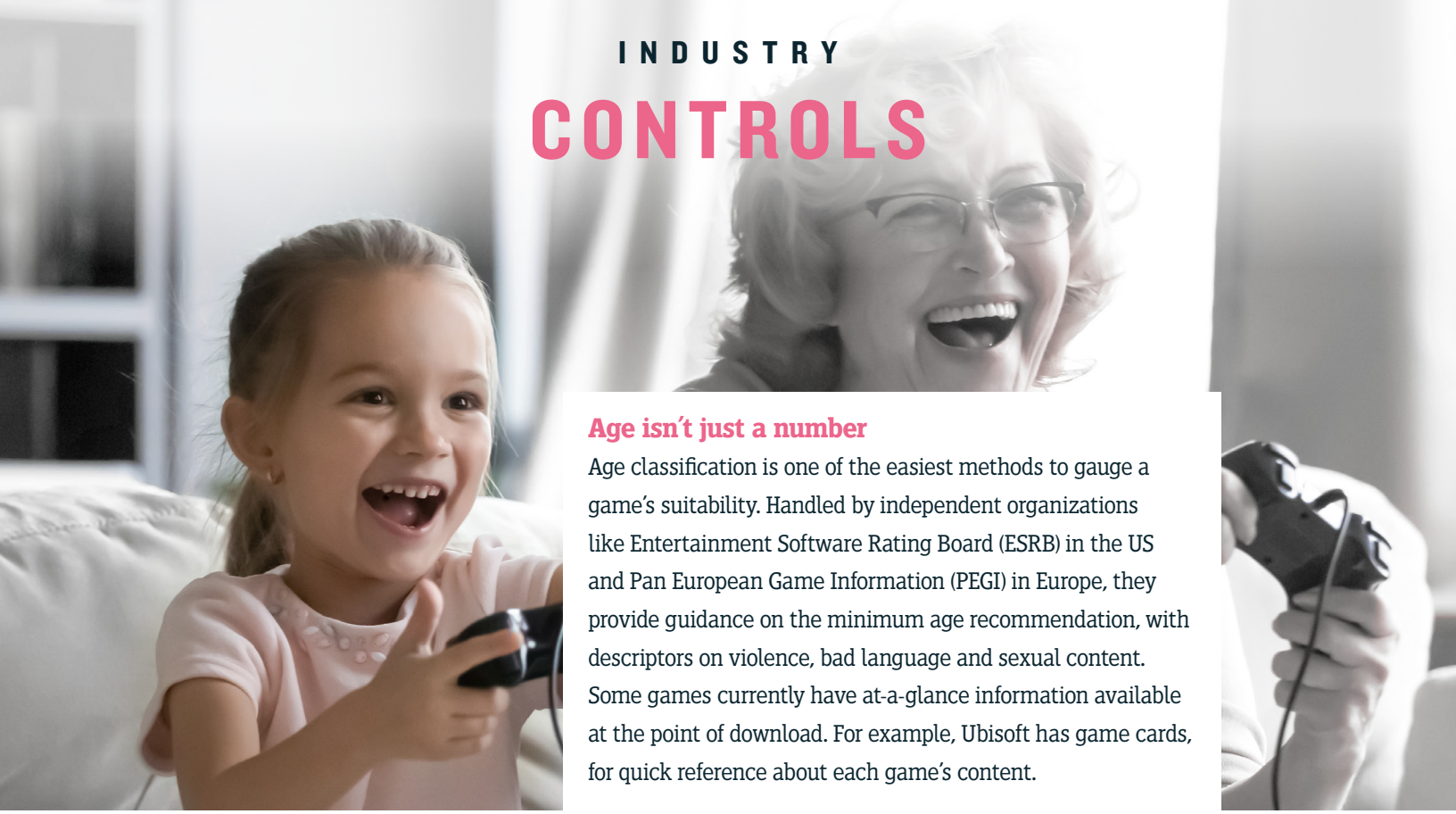
Health is wealth

As well as training facilities, it's important to have welfare services for employees too. Health hubs and wellbeing facilities reassure employees that their employers are invested in emotional support as well as education.

Employees form the foundation of a business's success. If we're to nurture the best talent, companies must put the tools in place to hire diversly, train rigorously and support mentally. A happy workforce can result in more engaged players and can ultimately boost the industry's reputation to one that a wider range of people want to work in. Everybody wins.

1 Entain Sustainability Report 2021

CONTROLS



We've all got a big part to play in keeping players safe. From monitoring behavior and controlling accounts, to setting screen time limits and spend caps, we've crafted this set of recommendations to empower the industry in their response to the unique needs of players and parents.

Age isn't just a number

Age classification is one of the easiest methods to gauge a game's suitability. Handled by independent organizations like Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) in the US and Pan European Game Information (PEGI) in Europe, they provide guidance on the minimum age recommendation, with descriptors on violence, bad language and sexual content. Some games currently have at-a-glance information available at the point of download. For example, Ubisoft has game cards, for quick reference about each game's content.

Where confirmation of a player's age is expressly required, self-certification must be captured through an automated or manual process, and where appropriate and available, electronic ID checks combined with a real-time verification process, undertaken by third parties, should be required for additional security.

Clarity is key

Some games are designed to be played solo and others have a multiplayer element, where players can share content between themselves. Parental controls on mobile devices and consoles can limit access within certain games. These should be clearly labelled, with clear instructions on how to activate.

As vibrant, growing communities continue to emerge, the need to establish a safe environment with clear and transparent policies becomes more crucial.

It should also be clear how a player can report any illegal behavior, bullying, hate speech or anything else that they're worried about to the game's help team.

Controls and common sense combined

The variety of parental controls available, combined with some common-sense actions can significantly improve the safety of young players.

It's worth parents reading reviews from others in their position to assess whether a game is appropriate. And many games provide free demos so parents can have a go before giving any downloads the thumbs up.

Encouraging gameplay in communal areas not only makes it easier to monitor how long a child's been playing, it welcomes their hobby into the family space.

Working together to set realistic boundaries is a great way to openly discuss the reasons behind any rules. And learning the structure of a game can avoid potential sore spots. For example, stopping a game mid-battle could result in penalties and, in multiplayer setups, can make a child feel they're letting their team down. Knowing this in advance can help with tailoring session limits rather than time limits.

But often, the best way to tell whether a game is suitable for a child is to play it. Han from 89Trillion believes: *"If you're a parent who's concerned about the kind of games your child is playing, I suggest you play it with them so you can really experience first-hand the sort of game they're playing and what kind of environment they're interacting in. It's a very straightforward way to get to know our games. And it's fun!"*

> *"I'm a proponent of letting players know there are tools and resources available to them so they can set a play experience that makes the most sense for them. I believe the best educated player is the most sustainable player."*
>
> Christine Thurmond, Director of Responsible Gaming, DraftKings

CASE STUDY

Entain's ARC™ sets sail

When Entain, launched their Advanced Responsibility & Care Programme – or ARC for short – earlier in the year, they introduced player protection technology unlike anything seen in the gaming industry to date.

AI modeling using behavioral indicators, analytics and data science backed up by world-leading academics can identify players potentially at risk. By performing additional checks on set markers like fluctuating spend and erratic play, they can nip any problems in the bud. They're using three times as many markers as previous systems and can now not only identify potential signs of harm, but also understand more about the original causes. Clever, isn't it?

Eventually, they'll offer every customer a personalized playing experience and protection tailored to their individual risk profile. And this safeguarding technology is a valuable tool that can be applied across the whole gaming industry.

In testing, player use of gaming controls increased by over

120%

within a 7-day period for customers showing signs of risk. **91%** of those players who set limits decreased their risk level whilst continuing to play.[1]

1 Entain Group – November 2021

Device control – self regulation

The many tools created by the gaming industry work best when players take full advantage of them. It takes a level of self-awareness for a player to acknowledge they might need help, and we make sure highly effective tools are ready and waiting to support them. Not only that, they're also easy to use.

Registering for self-exclusion is a powerful means to engage in responsible gaming. Self-exclusion programs can run in wide time span ranges – from one year to five years. While a less permanent alternative is a cool-off period if a player identifies the need for a break. This could range from 24 hours to four weeks.

Game control – content regulation

While time limits on *devices* are important, designers can also create games with time-limited *content* – perfect for the internet 'snacking' of today.

> *We encourage [customers] to use the variety of tools we have available, to give them the opportunity to take charge of their experience and enjoy our products within their limits. Whether it be through setting time or spending controls, we have made it a more streamlined process for customers to feel empowered in the choices they make.*

Sophie Platts, Head of Safer Gambling & External Affairs, Entain

CASE STUDY

Habby's energy systems limits time, not fun

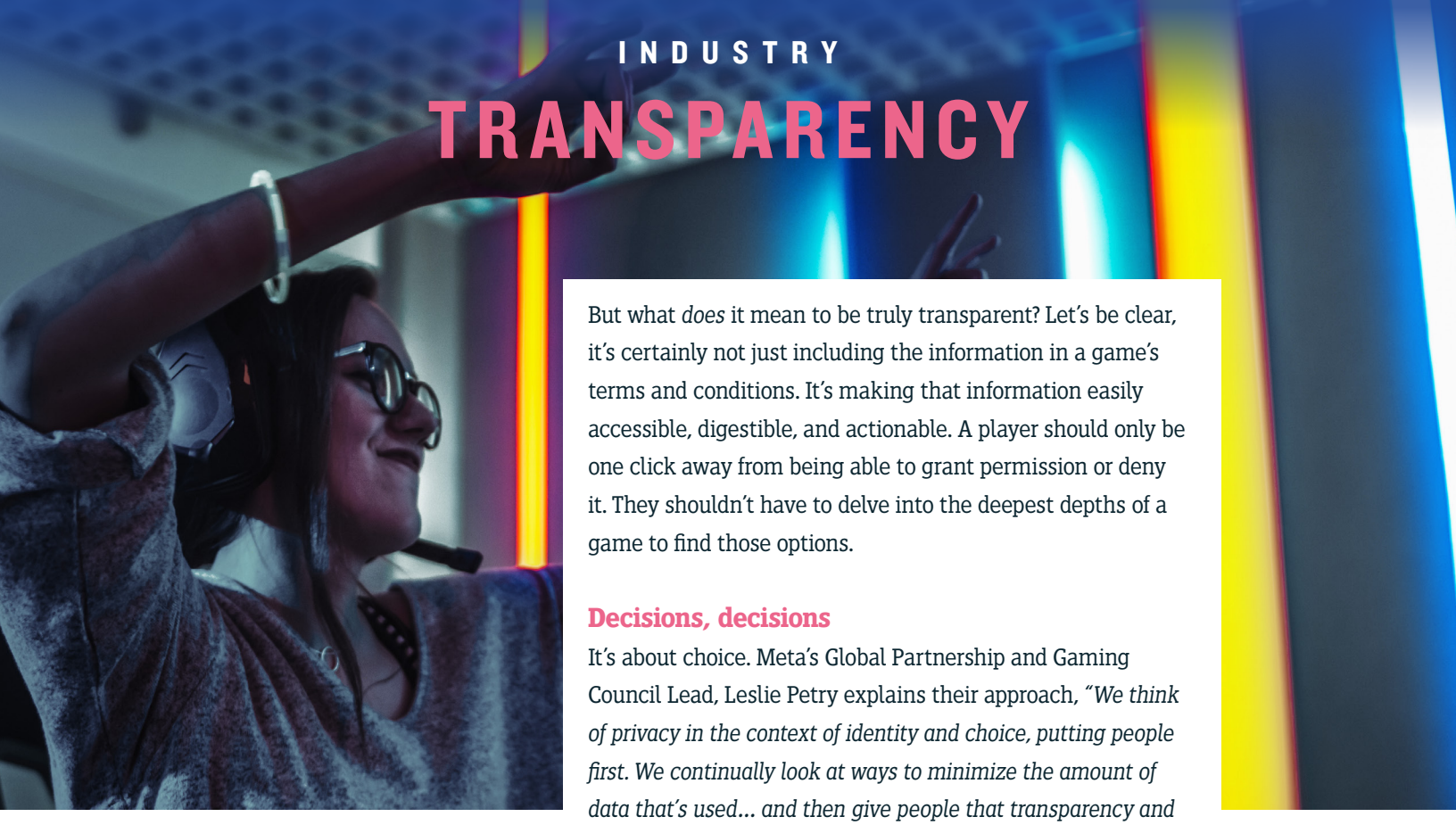
Habby pride themselves on designing games with originality, and this includes a content-led approach to imposing time limits. Based on the fragmented nature of mobile game usage, and a commitment to healthy game play, they've embedded time limits into the player experience. This ensures play is restricted, but enjoyment isn't.

Using an in-game energy system, Habby can control how long a player is active. So, every time a player enters a level, they consume one energy count. By setting energy levels to, say, five (typically 30 minutes of play), a player can only play five times before they've got to wait it out until their energy has regenerated. This gameplay mechanic shows consideration of player wellbeing, as much as it does to regulating a game's pace.

> *As a developer, we've got in mind a cadence for the consumption of content. We hope players can progress according to the pace we've set. In essence, the energy system controls that, while ensuring they don't spend all their time glued to the screen. Because, yes, we're making a game for entertainment, but we have to look after our audience too.*

Srikant Varadaraj, Business Development Director, Habby

TRANSPARENCY



In a virtual world, data is currency, and it's the responsibility of every gaming company to be transparent about that, and every player to understand what that means for them.

But what *does* it mean to be truly transparent? Let's be clear, it's certainly not just including the information in a game's terms and conditions. It's making that information easily accessible, digestible, and actionable. A player should only be one click away from being able to grant permission or deny it. They shouldn't have to delve into the deepest depths of a game to find those options.

Decisions, decisions

It's about choice. Meta's Global Partnership and Gaming Council Lead, Leslie Petry explains their approach, *"We think of privacy in the context of identity and choice, putting people first. We continually look at ways to minimize the amount of data that's used... and then give people that transparency and control over their data."*

Games that take this open approach earn greater consumer trust and loyalty. Investing in privacy has financial value, as well as brand value. As Entain's Sophie Platts puts it, *"Transparency for customers promotes trust in their relationship with businesses, boosts interaction and creates brand loyalty."*

> *Companies shouldn't be afraid of revealing what data will be used and why. For example, we know what language you're using on your device, but the reason is so that we can create a more localized version for you.*

Srikant Varadaraj, Business Development Director, Habby

TRANSPARENCY

Knowledge is power

Transparency gives players confidence that their data will be used responsibly, and their accounts will be secure. *"We need to be clear about what kind of data we're collecting from our users, and how we manage and delete that data,"* Han Qiu of 89Trillion told us. *"It's very important to us that our users feel safe when they play with us."*

As well as reassuring players about their safety, it's also about balancing privacy and experience. After all, the data that games collect can be the difference between a personalized experience and a more generic one. To optimize a player's game and serve the right experience, at the right time, in the right way, it needs to know who you are. If players understand what the primary reason for collecting their data is, they're more likely to consent to it.

This set of recommendations means players get a more personalized, enjoyable gaming experience. Through account or content settings, tailored player protections or increased transparency, responsible gaming means trusted gaming. And that trust is a precious thing!

> *Transparency is an extremely important component of a responsible gaming program. It's good corporate citizenship, and makes for a smarter, happier and better player experience.*

Christine Thurmond, Director of Responsible Gaming, DraftKings

TOMORROW'S WORLD

Technology is changing, internet activity is changing, internet connectivity is changing. And these changes will better serve the gaming community around the world.

Democratized gaming

5G will provide a far richer gaming environment by removing reliance on expensive handsets. Players currently on lower-end handsets with limited storage are unable to play certain games destined for Tier 1 markets, like North America and Western Europe.

Responsible gameplay is a key priority across the industry, protecting players while facilitating innovation. But what innovations are on the horizon? How can we reach them? And what opportunities do they bring?

By investing in 5G, cloud-based technology and improved network speed, companies have the power to democratize gaming; opening it up to other markets, like Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. So, no matter what devices people can afford, they can access the best gaming content available.

5G and cloud technology will tap into lucrative markets where console games have never really penetrated.

Head in the clouds

Cloud gaming also empowers companies to ensure safeguarding protocols remain in place. As Andrew Mo from Meta explains, *"A lot of games in this environment are 100% controlled within the Meta ecosystem, so there are safeguards that we can put in place because we are managing the end-to-end user experience... As we build out the public infrastructure to deliver games for the next generation, we want to ensure the safeguards and controls for the players remain in place."*

> *5G is going to be critical to our cloud gaming plans, especially in the parts of the world right now where high-end handsets are not prevalent. We're really excited to serve these communities with 5G as the big enabler.*

Andrew Mo, Product Manager, Meta

TOMORROW'S WORLD

Tech evolution informs creative evolution

Developments in technology present greater opportunities for creativity. As we move away from the current constraints of devices and apps, immersive play will become more sophisticated, with the capability to create wildly more imaginative or, alternatively, photorealistic avatars. Not only will this provide a more engaging user experience, it will also empower players to attain the visibility and diversity still lacking today. Considering a third of gamers say they prefer to play as characters who resemble themselves, these creative and technical advancements are invaluable.[1]

Technical innovation is the lifeblood of the gaming industry, and developments like Blockchain gaming is revolutionizing the way we consume games. While these are exciting changes, they naturally bring new challenges, meaning it's more important than ever that our safety practices can flex to market innovation.

With all these developments, it looks like tomorrow's world is an exciting one. And in an industry that looks set to surpass $200 billion in revenue in 2023[2], look at the potential we have to achieve a wider reaching, more entertaining, safer gaming experience. Watch this space!

> *'Always create original and creative content' is one of our mission statements. Yes, original content is difficult, but there's a lot of people around the world with cool, crazy ideas and if we can come together on those original ideas and innovate on them, great things are possible.*

Srikant Varadaraj, Business Development Director, Habby

1 Newzoo - Gamer Sentiment Study on Diversity & Inclusion summary
2 Newzoo - Global Games Market Report

TAKEAWAYS

We're committed to building sustainable relationships with the gaming community and creating trust through a clear set of best practices. These are things that every gaming company, gamer and advertiser should consider as the wave of responsible gaming investments continues. We've split them into audience segments, with clear takeaways for all.

1 GAMING COMPANIES YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PLAYERS

a. Set Community Standards
Clearly define community standards for your games, including ways that you prevent harassment, hate speech and areas where players can engage to provide timely feedback.

b. Develop Player Safety & Reporting
Develop safe gameplay principles and provide areas within the gaming environment for players to access them. Develop direct player communication channels (via AI or customer support teams) while providing reporting options, player surveys and requesting feedback.

c. Provide Player Controls
Give players the controls they need to remain in charge of their gaming experience across your environment. This includes enabling screen time limits and, where in-game purchasing is possible, spend caps, self-exclusion, and time-out options.

d. Take a Transparent Approach
Players should be provided with clearly visible options on data collection and privacy settings and advertising opt-outs.

2 GAMING COMPANIES YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO EMPLOYEES

a. Prioritize Health
Invest in a core set of principles by which your employees operate. Offer mandatory employee training on safe gameplay and customer support and perform regular welfare checks.

b. Commit to Diversity
Establish training in the areas of diversity in game design, including consideration for character creation, along with diversity hiring policies.

3 GAME PLAYERS & STREAMERS TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR GAMING EXPERIENCE

a. Know Your Environment
Familiarize yourself with game options for data collection, privacy settings, advertising opt-outs, time limits, time-out options, and self-exclusion because you are in control of your gaming experience.

b. Check Gaming Policies
Ensure any company you engage with has stated Community Standards, and has established rules for creators and moderators to help avoid disruptive comments.

4 ADVERTISERS SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT GAMING PRESENTS

a. Imbed Your Brand in the Gaming Experience
Gaming companies have a vested interest in building community, encouraging safe game play and providing tools to put the player in charge. This provides vast opportunities to tap into a diverse, authentic community by tying your brand tenets to game play, gaming characters, and core gaming concepts and themes.

CONCLUSION

These guidelines can help us move towards achieving safety parity across the industry and ensure that gaming environments are safe and entertaining for everybody, everywhere. But they're just the start. Gaming companies, players and advertisers all have their part to play. It's time to ask yourself, how can you help take responsible gaming to the next level?

"If every company committed to following best practices, users would feel safer when playing games. When users feel safe, they interact more and share gaming experiences with their friends. It benefits the whole industry. This is how we can all learn from each other and provide a positive, safe environment for our users."

Han Qiu, Partner, 89Trillion

"We should be aligned with a set of principles to benefit players, and the whole industry and this requires careful thought. It's a fine balance between restrictions and creativity, where players get enjoyment from our games in a safe, and healthy way."

Srikant Varadaraj, Business Development Director, Habby

"The responsible gaming community continues to come together in a significant and meaningful way. Having a good relationship with peers is an excellent source of knowledge sharing, so we can continue to learn how to make the consumer experience even better."

Christine Thurmond,
Director of Responsible Gaming, DraftKings

"As an industry we should all make sure that safer gaming is an integral part of our business. The safety of customers is core to sustainability, and by sharing best practice, we can raise standards to see this cultural change throughout the wider industry."

Sophie Platts,
Head of Safer Gambling & External Affairs, Entain

"We know responsible gaming is an industry imperative and keeping people safe online and giving them tools to take action or get help is key. Our policies are based on feedback from communities and the advice of experts in the field, to make sure that we have a robust set of community guidelines."

Andrew Mo, Product Manager, Meta

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