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Analysis

India Gaming

Gaming has seen an 89% rise in the last three years, thanks to the growing Internet and mobile phone users

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Internet and mobile phones are driving the gaming market in India. Gamers constitute 41.2% of the total active Internet users in India, a whopping 89% increase from the 2007, says a recent published report of Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMI) and IMRB International. The study was based on a survey conducted in thirty cities in the country.

Gaming is the fifth largest application accessed by Internet users. Email is the top most application, followed by general information search, education information search, and text chat. Racing, sports games, and shooting games make up the top three genres for gaming in India on both online and console platforms. Games such as 'road rash' and 'NFS' are the most popular racing games. All sports games involving cricket are extremely popular in India. The main difference in these genres of games played online and console is the preference for flash and arcade games online, whereas the average gamer prefers fighting

games on the console.

The total gamers' population is also on the rise and this is attributed to the rapidly rising mobile subscriptions in India and high profile launches of Microsoft Xbox 360 and Sony's PS3 in India.

The study indicated that there has been a significant shift in demographics of gamers. The proportion of gaming by college going students on any platform has increased from 20-32%. And it now accounts for almost 50% of the gaming users along with school going kids. The report further highlights that an average gamer is extremely keen on role playing games and loves to explore games thoroughly, which suggests the need for a strong storyline along with the game play. Additionally, a significant 80% of active gamers like gaming for its socializing aspect. The report analyzes the entire gaming ecosystem, such as the stakeholders in this industry, types of models being used, in-depth analysis of gaming platforms, types of games being played, attitudes and behavior of gamers and also highlights issues plaguing this industry.

However, the existence of a thriving gray market in the country, with almost 70-80% of games sold being through this channel, severely impacts the growth of gaming in India. High customs duty on the gaming consoles (around 25%), makes the consoles out of reach for the majority of consumers. The high duty has also encouraged the gray market, as it is able to sell consoles cheaper after

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avoiding the duties and taxes.

Very low PC, Internet and broadband penetration is hampering the growth of gaming in India. Only 7.8 mn households all across India own at least one PC, which accounts for less than 5% of all households in the country. It is already known that majority of gamers start off as casual offline PC gamers and then move on to online and console gaming. So to start with, not having a PC inhibits the growth of gaming in the country.

On the other hand, the total number of Internet subscribers comes to a mere 4.8 mn, out of which the number of broadband subscribers is a paltry 3.7 mn. This provides a very low base for capability to play online games of any type, let alone more complex MMOGs. Due to this lack of penetration of broadband, Internet speeds are very low which makes the gameplay experience quite non-enjoyable and causes frustration due to 'lag' in screen frames.

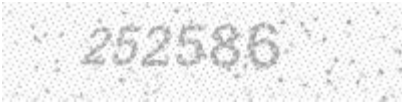
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