

Move over PC gaming 'geeks': Social games herald the era of 'geek chic'

Global social media research shows women, divorcees and families are amongst the most addicted to social games

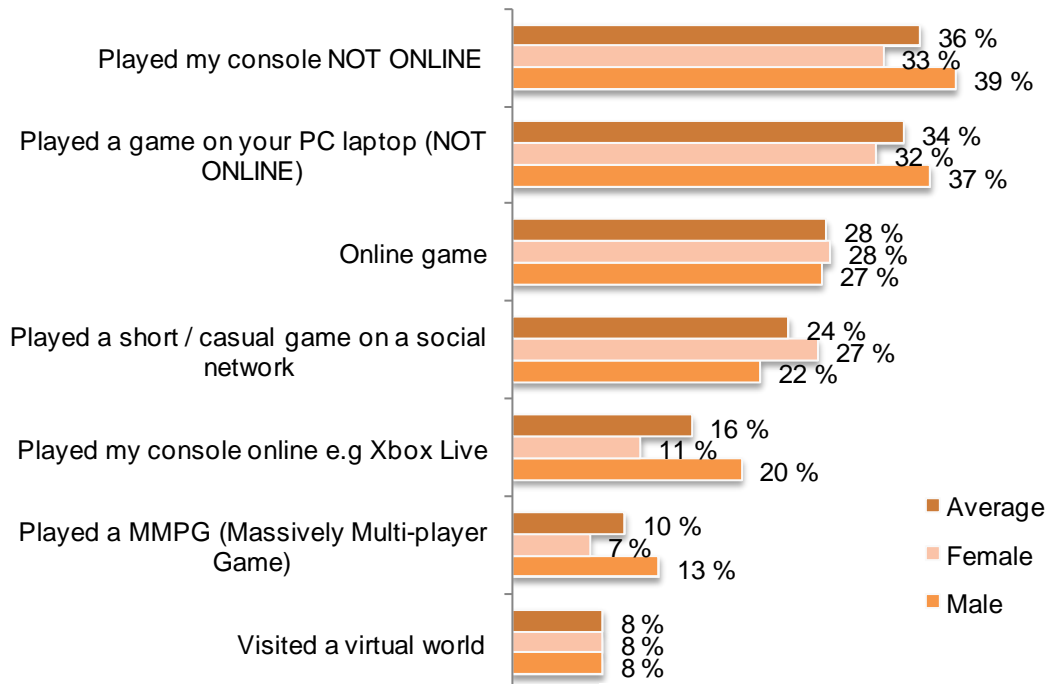
LONDON, 19 March 2010: The rising popularity of games played on social networking sites is well documented, but findings from the Global Web Index (www.globalwebindex.net), a collaboration between online market research provider Lightspeed Research and Trendstream, have identified the most addicted players. The stereotype of 'geeky' teenage boys obsessed with computer games certainly doesn't fit social gaming which appeals to people with large families, women and divorcees- all embracing the new 'geek chic'. By engaging with a more diverse and larger audience, social gaming is revolutionising the gaming market and having a big impact on the types of games produced. This new way of playing games promises to deliver mass market appeal, as well as fresh opportunities for brands to engage with consumers.

Women take the lead

The large majority of UK respondents (54%) claim that playing games is one of the main reasons they use the internet. Online games are competing head-on with PC games: 28% of users play online games and 24% of respondents play short/casual games on a social network.

The survey shows that at 27%, women are more likely to play online games and social games than their male counterparts (22%). Tom Smith, Managing Director of Trendstream who led the research says "Women are particularly attracted to short, casual games involving an active community like Farmville, Cafe Wars or Pet Society. Women also spend more time on social networks in general. Social games are accessible, free and they don't take up much time. Plus they are distributed through the network, which is a key factor driving their take up."

Types of games played in the past month*



Source: Global Web Index, February 2010

*multiple choice questions

Brits amongst most active social gamers in Europe

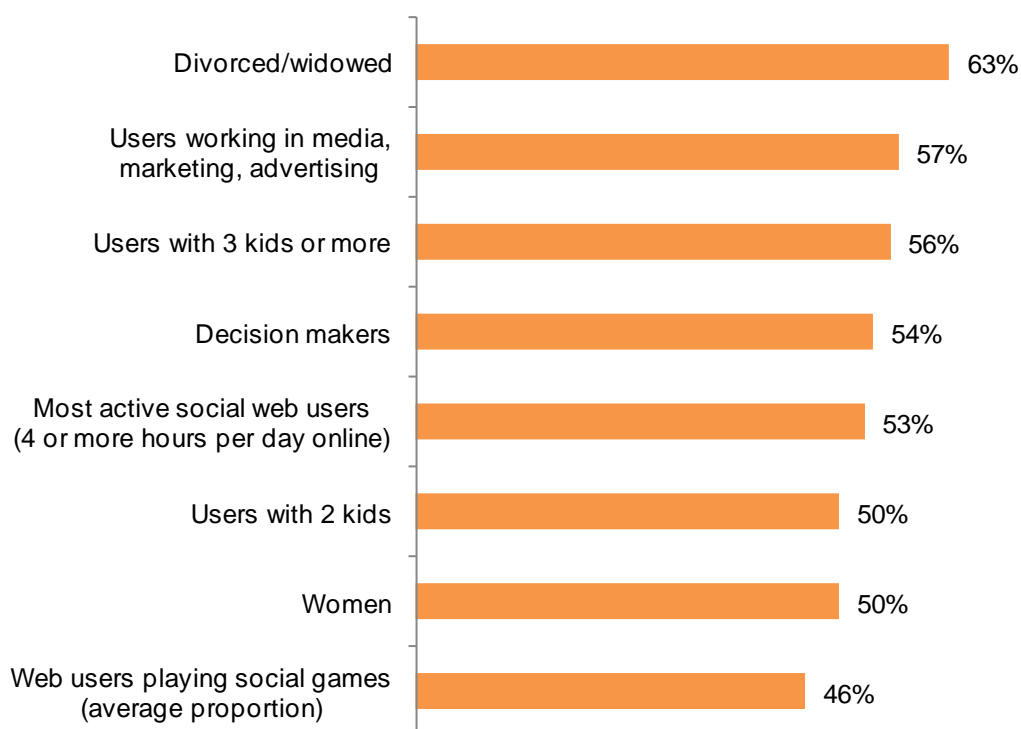
If emailing and sending messages to friends remains the main activity conducted on social networks for two thirds of users, playing games is now the sixth most popular activity (46%), ranked higher than watching videos (43%). The UK has the second most active social gamers in Europe at 46% after France (56%).

The new 'geek' chic

The research also reveals interesting facts about the most active social games players:

- Women play more than men (50% vs 41%)
- Divorcees play more than single users (63% vs 41%)
- Large families are much more likely to play, 56% of users with three or more children and 50% of users with two children play social games while only 43% of respondents with no children are players
- Half of the most active users, those who spend more than four hours per day online, play social games
- People working in media, marketing and advertising play more than respondents working in IT, internet and software and computer services (57% vs 43%).

Social Games: who are the most active players?



Source: Global Web Index, February 2010

Tom Smith concludes “The transformation of the gaming market towards casual social concepts has already changed the way that games are created and distributed. The market is now much more open to anyone who wants to create games. This gives brands a huge opportunity to engage with consumers through casual games much more cost efficiently than through advertising.”

Ends

For press enquiries please contact:

Geraldine Gitel, PR Consultant - Greenfields Communications

ggitel@greenfieldscommunications.com Tel: + 44 (0) 07917 855380

Ralph Risk, Marketing Director Europe – Lightspeed Research

Tel office +44 (0)20 7896 1950 mobile +44 (0)787 650 7689 rrisk@lightspeedresearch.com

About Global Web Index

Trendstream created the Global Web Index to derive insights on the global impact of web usage and social web involvement. It is a collaboration between Trendstream and panel provider Lightspeed Research. The research programme interviews 16,000 web users twice a year in 16 markets to provide a unique perspective on web behaviour and its impact on consumer behaviour, technology involvement, purchasing, content consumption, the

effectiveness of marketing communications and the role for brands. It provides detailed insight into how web behaviour and the value of consumer driven communications differs by country, category and different consumer segments. www.globalwebindex.net

About Lightspeed Research

Lightspeed Research delivers valuable data to help clients make informed business decisions. With proprietary online panels throughout the world, our verified, engaged, and deeply profiled survey respondents can support research studies that vary in scope and complexity. Lightspeed Research's expert Client Operations Team offers data collection services including survey design, sample management, programming and reporting.

The company has offices throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia Pacific.

Lightspeed Research is part of Kantar, the information insight and consultancy division of WPP. For more information, please visit www.lightspeedresearch.com

About Trendstream

Trendstream is a research consultancy dedicated to understanding the global impact of technology change. The company produces primary and secondary research to help clients understand the impact of the web, social technologies, mobile and consumer electronics and the resulting implications for consumer behaviour, marketing communications, content and business models. The company also advises clients on social web strategy, business models and monetising content online.