

# Level Up – Gaming’s Importance During COVID-19

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Increasingly, gaming has been capturing audiences attention and defining its own culture. Due to lockdown restrictions, even more consumers are turning to gaming to combat boredom and loneliness. Here we outline why its important to get involved.

## Areas Analyzed

[It's An Escape](#) • [It's Breaking Records](#) • [It's Infiltrating Fashion](#) • [It's Influencing Sports](#) • [Retailers Are Talking About It](#) • [Influencers Hold Mass Appeal](#) • [Whats Next?](#)

### It's An Escape

The current pandemic brings with it a reality which is often unsettling and anxiety-producing. Gaming provides consumers with some light hearted relief and a way of tuning out.

It also provides a solution to loneliness while in lockdown, as multi-player games can be played with family and friends. It is therefore no surprise that gaming platforms are seeing an increase in traffic.

According to Futuresource, game sales have risen between 40% and 60%. Gaming as a spectator sport has also grown, with the online streaming platform Twitch seeing an estimated 31% increase in viewership in March alone.

Retailers should look to get involved as the conversation around augmented and virtual reality deepens, opening possibilities for content, partnerships and creative ideas for the future.



### It's Breaking Records

With consumers living a new reality indoors due to the global pandemic, many are turning to gaming as a way to pass the time.\*

#### Nintendo Switch is selling out worldwide

The game console is proving particularly popular with sales increasing by 150% in March due to the lockdown. The retailer is struggling to restock due to this increase in demand, leading to a worldwide shortage and pausing

#### Animal Crossing: New Horizons is the most successful Switch game in Japan

Launched on 20th March, the game sold over 1.8 million physical copies in Japan in its first week - beating previous hits, Pokemon Sword & Shield and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate. In the UK, the game sold more copies in its first week

#### Twitch surpassed three billion hours watched in Q1 2020

According to Streamlabs, the streaming service has seen a surge in usage since the lockdown, with total hours watched on the platform increasing by 17% compared to the previous quarter. This represents 65% of the market

shipments to Japan. The retailer has assured gamers that more consoles are on their way.

than the launch sales of all its previous games in the series combined.

share compared to competitors, including YouTube Gaming and Facebook Gaming.



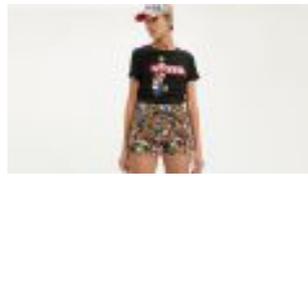
\* stats via hypebae.com, forbes.com, videogamer.com, gamesindustry.biz, streamlabs.com

## It's Infiltrating Fashion

### 1. Licensed ranges & collaborations

A host of brands continue to collaborate with both old and new gaming licenses. Of recent note, Uniqlo and Levi's both teamed up with Super Mario on capsule collections to celebrate the iconic game's 35th anniversary. In February, Puma updated several of its sneaker models through brightly-hued uppers in a partnership with Sonic The Hedgehog. Mass brands are predominantly buying into the gaming trend through licensed graphic T-shirts across genders.

#### Super Mario



**Kids Super Mario 35th Anniversary UT Graphic T-Shirt**  
Retailer: Uniqlo (UK)  
Brand: Uniqlo  
GBP 7.90  
New in: 06 Apr 2020

**Levi's® x Super Mario The Perfect Tee**  
Retailer: Levi's (UK)  
Brand: Levi's®  
GBP 25.00  
New in: 01 Apr 2020

#### Playstation



**Playstation™ Cap**  
Retailer: Next (UK)  
Brand: Next  
GBP 11.00  
New in: 02 Apr 2020

**PlayStation Black & Grey Pyjamas (4-13 Years)**  
Retailer: Tu at Sainsbury's (UK)  
Brand: Tu Clothing  
GBP 5.50  
New in: 01 Apr 2020

#### Fortnite

#### Sonic The Hedgehog



**Black t-shirt with Fortnite print**  
 Retailer: Lindex (UK)  
 Brand: Lindex  
 GBP 12.99  
 New in: 04 Apr 2020



**Fortnite cotton pyjamas**  
 Retailer: Reserved (UK)  
 Brand: Reserved  
 GBP 12.99  
 New in: 08 Apr 2020



**RS-X<sup>3</sup> Color Men's Sneakers**  
 Retailer: Puma (US)  
 Brand: PUMA X SONIC  
 USD 120.00  
 New in: 08 Feb 2020



**Sonic the Hedgehog Sonic Tie-Dye Backpack**  
 Retailer: Target (US)  
 Brand: Bioworld  
 USD 45.99  
 New in: 12 Mar 2020

**2. All eyes are on Animal Crossing**

Animal Crossing: New Horizons has taken the gaming world by storm by not only breaking sales records but also being the most mentioned game on social media worldwide. Users can design outfits and choose luxury pieces using the 'Pro Designs' feature. This inspired the Instagram account [Animal Crossing Fashion Archive](#) where users can submit designer-inspired looks for a chance to be featured. Net-a-Porter worked with the game to showcase Chinese designers' SS20 collections and created avatar skins that are available to purchase virtually and in real life on Tmall. So far, few other brands have participated in this way, presenting an untapped opportunity for brands to engage and gain exposure from a new audience.



**3. The rise of digital fashion games**

There has been a rise in popularity of digital fashion games as consumers look to them as a creative way to play with apparel during quarantine - [Drest](#), in particular, is seeing more engagement. The shoppable interactive luxury styling game, which enables players to style digital avatars, has seen a 50% month-over-month uplift in downloads. In Italy, it saw a 400% uplift during the first week in April, compared to the previous week\*. Users get a score for their digital curations and can receive a payment to buy virtual clothes. Purchasing power in real life is also accessible, with customers able to shop from more than 160 brands that are on the platform. Puma launched its collaboration with Tabitha Simmons on the game earlier this year. *\*Stat from Vogue.com*



**It's Influencing Sports**

**World Boxing Super Series**

**F1 Esports Virtual Grand Prix series**

**The Grand National**

In March, the World Boxing Super Series streamed a selection of virtual fights featuring iconic boxers from over the years. The fights were brought to life through Electronic Arts game Fight Night Champion and were streamed online. The fixtures saw heavy weight icons such as Muhammad Ali and Lennox Lewis return to the ring.

The Virtual Grand Prix series began in Bahrain on 22nd March, with all other scheduled dates up until May set to follow suit. A host of celebrities, including Liam Payne and Sir Chris Hoy, will be joining the usual driver line up, each participating remotely. The virtual event is available to stream via the official F1 Youtube, Twitch and Facebook channels.

Following on from the cancellation of the Grand National, the annual horse race was turned into a virtual event. 4.8m people tuned in to watch Potters Corner win the title on ITV - a 30% share of the television audience. Bets from the race amounting to £2.6 million were donated to NHS Together COVID-19 appeal.

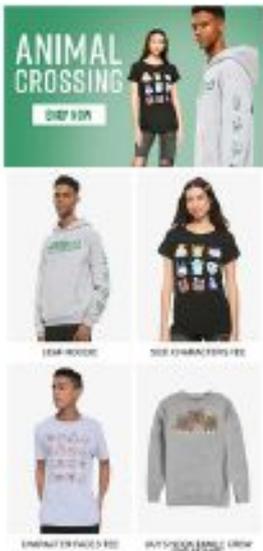


### Retailers Are Talking About It

Aside from pushing licensed product, retailers are pushing gaming tech. Adidas developed a Smart Tag for sneakers, in partnership with Fifa Mobile and Google. The Smart Tag allows gamers to earn ratings in-game for sports played in real life. Lazy Oaf has also created a competition, encouraging

Animal Crossing players to share their 'looks' on social media for a chance to win a store gift card. Take notes and utilize gaming as a conversation starter for social media posts. Themes of 'Game Ready' and 'Dressed to Game' can encourage consumers to share their at-home gaming style.

### Apparel



Hot Topic Email US - 29 Mar 2020



Puma Email UK - 18 Feb 2020



Levi's Email US - 09 Apr 2020



Uniqlo Email UK - 07 Apr 2020

### Tech



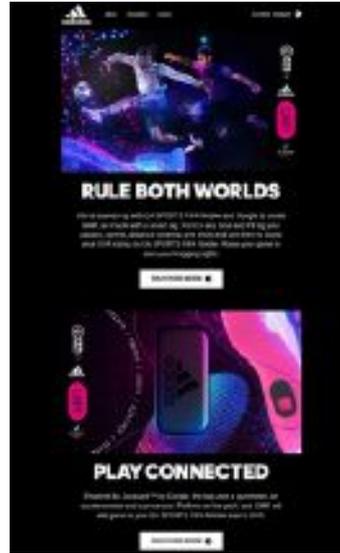
Hollister Email UK - 11 Feb 2020



PASS THE TIME WITH...



Jacamo Email UK - 22 Mar 2020



Adidas Email UK - 10 Mar 2020



Fashion World Email US - 27 Mar 2020

### Influencers Hold Mass Appeal

KSI  
@ksi



Following:  
Instagram - 8m  
YouTube - 21.2m

The British influencer originally made content for his YouTube channel. However, he has since expanded into acting, rapping and boxing.

Alia Marie Shelesh  
@sssniiperwolf



Following:  
Instagram - 4.7m  
YouTube - 19.2m

British-born American creator is known for her gaming videos and cosplay. She has her own range of merch and was awarded the Kid's Choice Award for Favorite Gamer in 2019.

Seán McLoughlin  
@jacksepticeye



Following:  
Instagram - 6.9m  
YouTube - 23.7m

The Irish creator is the most-subscribed YouTuber in Ireland and is famed for his vlogs and Let's Play series.

### Whats Next?

Game and console releases offer the perfect opportunity for gaming-themed social media content. Competitions and giveaways also create engagement with consumers.

### Upcoming Game Releases

- 23 Apr - Moto GP 2020
- 24 Apr - Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm 4 - Road to Boruto
- 28 Apr - Gears Tactics
- 26 May - Minecraft Dungeons



### Upcoming Console Releases

- PlayStation 5:** The latest in the series from PlayStation is set to release at the end of this year.
- Xbox Series X:** The new generation console is also set to release during the holiday period.



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