

Essay on demographic factors

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Introduction

Video games are some of the most important forms of entertainment of entertainment and relaxation in modern world. It's actually argued that video games are the life's greatest forms of comfort . Video games have gained a lot of popularity in the recent past as a result of affordability of computers due to improvements in technology.

The history of video games dates back to the mid 20th century. In 1949, Ralph Baer, a young engineer tasked with the responsibility of building a television set decided to go beyond the original assignment and build a video game but due to disagreements with his manager, his idea was not to be. It later became a reality almost 18 years later but at this time, computer games had already been designed by other people including Willy Higginbotham who pioneered an interactive tennis ball game that played on an oscilloscope. Other important historical contributors to the development of video games were Nolan Bushnell and Steve Russell who designed the rudimentary space game.

Today, we have all sorts of video games, even on our mobile phones.

Microsoft, Sony and other software manufacturing companies such as Oracle have been at the forefront in the development of video games that have advanced features such as the Sony Play Station Move and the Microsoft Kinect.

The evolution of computer games has witnessed a number of market dynamics that have far reaching effects on both the utility and demand for the video games. This has resulted from several factors that accelerated the video game revolution. The major focus of this article is the analysis of the

major factors that have been instrumental in the development of video games with a bias on demographic and technological factors in Europe and the United States.

Demographic factors that have greatly influenced the development of video games are age, gender, income and occupation characteristics of consumers. These factors have been central to the development of video games since just like any other commodity; they are developed for a particular market segment. The most important demographic factor in this case is the age characteristics of a population. Although video games had primarily been meant for children, complex games have been developed that suit adults too.

According to the findings by Entertainment Software Association, the average game player is 34 years old with experience of over 12 years. Forty percent of the gamers are women while over a quarter of the players are over 50 years in age. Another research by the Pew Internet and American Life Project indicated that over 53% of all gamers in the United States were aged over 18 years while a whopping 97% of the American teens play video games frequently. This means that demographically, the average gamer is a mother, a father, a student or even a military officer. The developers of video games must put these factors into consideration in deciding the types of computer games to be produced. This analysis means that any changes in the demographic composition of a particular population of consumers will have profound effects on development, structure and content of video games.

Game developers must put the population composition of consumers into

consideration when deciding on the games to be developed. Global statistics indicate that the total world population of children is not proportional in every other state. In some parts of America for instance, the birth rate is relatively higher compared to other parts in Europe where the population is mostly composed of adults, with a very minimal birth rate. This is important because the children and teenagers form the bulk of the gaming audience. Game developers must thus adjust the number of video games developed in the wake of a generally reduced child population in various parts of the world. Inability to predict the game content for the children and young adults, game developers have come up with universal games that can suit both the young and adult population. This has gone along way in reviving demand for games in both the European and American households (<http://www.todaysgamers.com>)

Technology

The video game industry has in the recent past witnessed a revolution in technology. From the original cathode ray tube generated games, today's games are more digital and interactive. Technological advancements have had a number of impacts on video game development, some negative while others are positive.

Developments in technology have great impacts on the types, content and utility of games in the market today. Unlike the original video games, today's games are more portable, interactive and user friendly. They have better graphics and are easy to play. Another feature of today's games is that they can be played by a number of players simultaneously. This has only been made possible by the use of advanced technology.

Technology has increased competition in the gaming industry. The increased competition has resulted to the development of better games and at a more affordable price. Microsoft's Xbox 360, which had been the market leader until mid 2007 when other game platforms were developed such as the Wii and the Nintendo's console, has had to be recreated with additional features that have made it retain its original market share. The new invention by Microsoft is the Xbox 360 Slim. This is as a result of developments in technology that has led to the increased competition in the market leading to additional features at very little or extra cost.

A significant feature of the impacts of technology on the game market is the mobile phone video game technology. The Apple iPhones has brought a new technology in the gaming industry. Reports by the Communications Market Researcher TMNG indicate that mobile games will grow at an annual compound interest of almost 25% by the end of 2012. The increased use of mobile phones from 1 billion in 2002 to almost 4.6 billion as of 2010 has recorded a significant recognition. A report published by the Entertainment Software Association indicates that about 42% of the united states heads of households reported playing wireless games up from a mere 20% in the year 2002. The increased demand for games has led to a number of companies joining the industry players such as Sony, Namco and Nintendo.

(Entertainment Software Association, 2010)

Advancements in technology have also led to a drastic reduction in the prices of computers. The availability of computers to all has led to the increased demand for video games. This has led to improvements in the quality of games as the manufacture's try to capture the expanded markets

in these two continents. It must be remembered that video games were originally played on mainframe computers in universities in both Europe and the United States. This was a major limitation to the demand for these games.

Besides the above advantages, technology has had a host of disadvantages to the video game industry. Rapid advancements in technology have led to quick obsolescence of previous versions of computer games. This means that the manufacturers of these games are not able to even recoup their original investments as these games are being phased out of the market by more advanced and better games([http://www.newzoo.com/ENG/1504-Detail.html&id= 29](http://www.newzoo.com/ENG/1504-Detail.html&id=29))

Technological advancements are also reflected in the complexity of the video games. Simple older versions are being recreated with more additional features that make them more complex and enjoyable as a result of the new capabilities. Developers of video games therefore, have to create new video games to keep abreast with the advancements in technology. With the advent of hand held and online video games, it will almost be impossible for a manufacturer to get a market for a manual computer game.

Conclusion

The above analysis indicates that both demographic factors and technological factors will have far reaching impacts on the game industry in the future. It's highly recommended that game developers take into consideration the demographic statistics above, in designing games since these population characteristics affect the demand for video games. The

future of video games is equally influenced by technology. The trend today is that people are more inclined towards more portable and advanced games as indicated by the great interest in the Apples iPhone because of its advanced gaming features. The mobile video game market is really looking up with an expected growth rate of over 25% by the year 2012. The next project should incorporate the above factors if it is to meet consumer demands of the future generations.

References

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