

DE-CIX Gaming Survey: How the Germans play

Germans frequently play video games – regardless of age and gender // The majority of gamers struggle with connectivity issues // Technical difficulties and delays are the biggest aggravation

Frankfurt am Main, July 14, 2021 – Around a third (31.7 percent) of Germans frequently spend time playing video games, and 15.4 percent even do so on an (almost) daily basis. This is one of the results of a recent online survey* conducted by CIVEY on behalf of [DE-CIX](#), the operator of the world's leading Internet Exchange in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The gaming industry has been booming – not just since the global pandemic. Both die-hard gamers and video game amateurs are exploring digital gaming worlds, which has been allowing them to keep in touch with friends and family despite Covid-19.

The demographic distribution of respondents who regularly devote time to their hobby shows one thing above all: Balance. It turns out that **men (36.2 percent)** and **women (27.4 percent)** are almost **equally enthusiastic about video games**. The gaming community also shows broad representation in terms of age: Although the proportion of regular gamers is highest among 18 to 29-year-olds (54.5 percent), **more than a quarter of those over 65 (25.9 percent) also regularly enjoy video games**. Moreover, although it could be assumed that households with children, in particular, have little time to play, here, too, the difference is only marginal: **31.4 percent of respondents without children** regularly play video games, compared to **30.5 percent of households with children**.

PC, console, or smartphone? What technology gamers prefer to play on

When it comes to the choice of preferred gaming platform, the PC comes out on top, with 49 percent of all respondents regularly indulging their passion in this way. Men, in particular, prefer playing games on their PCs (60.3 percent). For women, on the other hand, cell phones and tablets (42.3 percent) are the most popular gaming platforms. Consoles scored comparatively low, with a total of 11.8 percent. The console seems to become a less interesting alternative with the increasing age of the player: Among 18 to 29-year-olds, it is the most popular platform after the PC (34.9 percent) – among gamers between 50 and 64 years of age, this shifts to the

mobile gaming devices, the cell phone and tablet (42.7 percent). However, it is striking that consoles find a place significantly more often in households with children than in households without children (25.3 percent to 7.8 percent). The ease of use of the controllers, the family and child-friendly game selection, and the ability to play together as a family on the sofa seem to make consoles particularly attractive to households with children.

Problems gamers have to deal with

For many video game enthusiasts, online games are of particular interest. But they face a range of problems before and while they are playing online. Especially those of a technical nature significantly affect the gaming experience. The top 3 technical causes of aggravation for gamers are slow downloads of patches and updates (26.7 percent), slow downloads of games (26.2 percent), and losing matches due to lags or disconnects (24.9 percent). In addition to technical problems, annoying or abusive online teammates (20.6 percent) and the use of cheats (15.5 percent) can lead to negative gaming experiences.

Gamers' perceptions of the causes of the technical problems described above are clear: They find fault primarily outside their own sphere of influence, usually with their Internet providers. 31.5 percent of respondents predominantly place the blame on a poor Internet connection. According to gamers, poor infrastructure, the limited bandwidth offered by providers, and the resulting network congestion are further causes of technical difficulties. Weaknesses on their side of the connection, such as outdated devices (6.3 percent) or a poor-quality router (1.2 percent), on the other hand, appear to be secondary in the eyes of gamers.

“The boundaries between digital newbies and natives are becoming increasingly blurred, and (online) gaming is now part of everyday life for many people of different ages and genders. But for online gaming to function without causing frustration, it is important that there are no lags or delays due to high latency or insufficient bandwidth,” said Dr. Thomas King, CTO at DE-CIX. “For an optimal gaming experience, content and applications need to be hosted as close to the end-user as possible – for live streaming in HD or even 4K, for example, a distance of less than 1,200 kilometers would be ideal. The same applies for the anticipated boom in cloud gaming. A joint effort is needed by all stakeholders – from game providers through to Internet providers – to roll out digital infrastructures and deploy decentralized data centers increasingly close to users. This will prevent connectivity issues and allow gamers to pursue their passion without lags and frustration.”

To illustrate the importance of good connectivity between server hosts, Internet Exchanges, and Internet Service Providers (ISPs), DE-CIX conducted a simple measurement of gaming data paths on the peering route between Madrid and Frankfurt am Main. In the scenario, a two-player team in Spain competes against an equivalent team based in Germany. The gaming provider's server is hosted in Frankfurt and connected to DE-CIX. Only one gamer respectively from each of the teams is connected to an ISP that is also connected to DE-CIX. The players connected to DE-CIX via their ISPs have latencies – the amount of time it takes for data to travel between its original source and its destination – of around 30 milliseconds. The other two players without interconnection through DE-CIX – one in Spain and one in Germany – struggle with a delay of 50 milliseconds or more. This difference of 20 milliseconds alone can, under certain circumstances, decide between victory and defeat in an online game.

***Methodology**

Online survey conducted by CIVEY on behalf of DE-CIX

Survey periods: 06.08.2020-05.07.21 (Question 1) / 22.06-05.07.2021 (Question 2) / 22.06-04.07.2021 (Question 3) / 01.07-05.07.2021 (Question 4)

Question 1: How often do you usually play games on the computer or console?

- Participants (total): 10,077
- Statistical error: 2.5%

Question 2: On which devices do you most often play video games?

- Participants (total): 2,000
- Statistical error: 3.8%

Question 3: Which of these problems have you ever been annoyed by while playing video games?

- Participants (total): 1,006
- Statistical error: 5.3%

Question 4: What do you think causes the most problems in online gaming?

- Participants (total): 1,006
- Statistical error: 5.5%

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About DE-CIX

DE-CIX (German Commercial Internet Exchange) is the world's leading operator of Internet Exchanges. In total, at its 28 locations in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia, DE-CIX interconnects over 2300 network operators (carriers), Internet service providers (ISPs), content providers, and enterprise networks from more than 100 countries, offering peering, cloud, and interconnection services. The combined connected customer capacity of all DE-CIX locations worldwide exceeds 80 Terabits, making it the largest neutral interconnection ecosystem in the world. DE-CIX in Frankfurt, Germany, with a data throughput of more than 10 Terabits per second (Tbps) and over 1000 connected networks, is one of the largest Internet Exchanges in the world.

Further information at www.de-cix.net

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