

## Demographics

The *demographics* of players include statistical information such as gender, age, income level, education level, marital status, ethnicity, and religion. Let us take a close look at a few of these demographics with regard to online game playing to see how they have changed over the years.

Image not available due to copyright restrictions

### Gender

As discussed in Chapter 1, public arcades reached a market of kids who played after school and on weekends. The atmosphere and marketing strategies did not attract the adult population—so this player demographic was ignored. Although these arcades could have easily reached young girls as much as boys, that did not happen. Even with games such as *Pac-Man*—which were specifically designed to reach a wider market—the arcades continued to be dominated by teenage boys.

### Gender Role Representation in Toy Commercials

Toy commercials aimed toward girls focus on toys that encourage nurturing play (e.g., domestic items such as baby dolls and toy ovens), while those targeted toward boys focus on toys that encourage aggressive play (e.g., military items such as guns and tanks). Author Jeannie Novak theorized that this is the result of childhood socialization by parents and the media—which has been perpetuated by many game developers.

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Domestic toys such as baby dolls are marketed toward girls (left), while aggressive toys such as guns are marketed toward boys (right).

This theory comes from a content analysis study conducted in 1992 at UCLA on gender role representation in toy commercials. Jeannie analyzed over 300 toy commercials for type of toy, gender of children depicted in the ad, cooperative vs. competitive behavior—and features such as camera movement, music tempo, cuts, and pans. Among other results, she found that girls in the ads cooperatively played with dolls and other domestic toys, while boys played competitively with vehicles or war-themed action figures (e.g., GI Joe). Very rarely did both genders appear together in the ads. Toys depicted in ads with both genders were board games—and all but one ad showed boys teaming up against girls and winning the games. Jeannie concluded that children are socialized at a young age by the media to play with certain toys (in certain ways) based on their gender. This socialization is most likely perpetuated by parents, who often begin their children’s lives decorating and clothing their children in pink or blue. If girls are taught to play nicely and cooperatively with baby dolls and Barbies, they will most likely feel “out of place” walking into a noisy, dark arcade—where most games involve shooting or destroying creatures and spaceships.

Jumping ahead to the dawn of the home console era, arcade gamers encouraged their parents to buy the games so they could play at home with their friends, using their television sets as monitors. Although there were plenty of female siblings around, their more experienced arcade-going brothers (and their friends) might have initially dominated these games.

In Chapter 1, you learned about the computer segment of the game industry—including home personal computers and mainframes. This industry was also male-dominated. It was not until the advent of the commercial Internet—fueled by its multimedia interface, the World Wide Web—that electronic games became more gender-balanced.

Since 2003, the ESA has found that adult women make up a larger percentage of players than boys ages 6–17—dispelling the age-old stereotype that games are for boys. Females of all ages now make up 40% of the game-playing population.



Early personal computer gaming was dominated by boys (left), but adult women gamers (including the Frag Dolls, right) now outnumber male gamers ages 6-17.

DL



### Games Aren't Just For Kids Anymore!

An Entertainment Software Association survey showed that men and women over 18 make up 75% of the gaming population—and that the average age of players is now 34 years old. A full 26% of players are over age 50.

## Generation

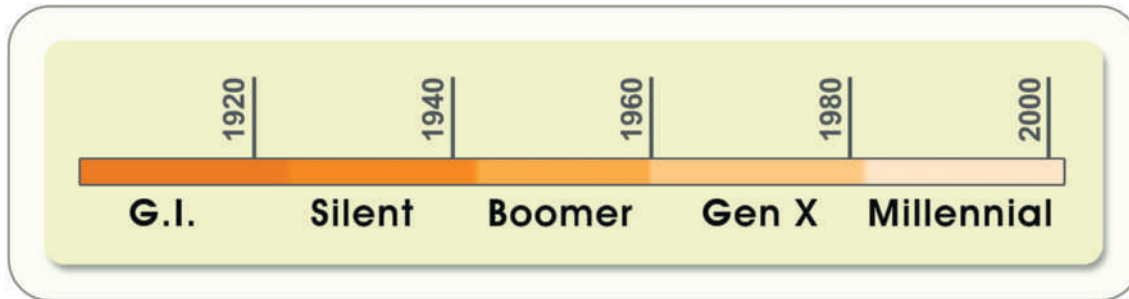
Another age-related demographic borders on a psychographic. Its importance cannot be overlooked in any industry. *Generations* are considered part of both demographics and psychographics. Although associated with a discrete age range, members of each generation as a group have experienced particular historical events and climates—including economic, cultural, social, and political shifts—during their lifetimes. Therefore, they likely have developed a particular set of beliefs, attitudes, and values. This assumption is based on what is known as *cohort analysis*—which suggests that people of a certain group do not necessarily change over time (e.g., if people were “liberal” when they were younger, they continue to be liberal as they grow older). Life stage analysis, on the other hand, assumes that people’s beliefs change over time (e.g., that people get more conservative as they get older). Generational analysis is based on the idea of cohort analysis. If you assume that people as a group retain generally the same values over time, those people might continue to like the same types of entertainment over time.

There are four *generations* of players currently in the United States:

1. Silent Generation (~70–90 years of age)
2. Boomer Generation (~50–70 years of age)
3. Generation X (~30–50 years of age)
4. Millennial Generation (~10–30 years of age)
5. Homelander Generation (~ 10 years of age and younger; this group has also been referred to as the “New Silents,” and its name is still tentative)

A *generation* is composed of people whose common location in history lends them a collective persona. The span of one generation is roughly the length of a phase of life. William Strauss and Neil Howe—authors of *Millennials Rising*, *The Fourth Turning*, and *Generations*—have provided an extensive analysis of generations throughout U.S. history. Their theories form the basis of the discussion on generational player demographics.

Diagram by Per Olin



Generation birth years in the United States since 1900 (based on information from William Strauss and Neil Howe).

### Silent Generation (Born 1924–1943)

The Silent Generation grew up staying at home under the secure wing of over-protective parents, while older siblings (GI generation) fought in World War II and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps. Upon entering the workforce, this generation donned nondescript “gray flannel suits” and opted for the job security offered by large, faceless corporations. Sandwiched between two active generations—the civic-minded group of GIs who fought in World War II and rebuilt America after the Great Depression, and the inner-focused group of Boomers who questioned authority and ushered in a major cultural shift in music and politics—the Silent Generation was like a “middle child,” taking cues from others. Preferring to reap the benefits of America’s unprecedented post-war prosperity, this passive generation consumed more than it created. As the first mass consumer audience, they used credit cards, cooked in space-age designer kitchens, and managed to escape the isolation of suburban life through the medium of television—which offered a superficial connection to the outside world. Not until adulthood did this generation finally break its silence—initiating a “midlife crisis” that resulted in the splintering of the very nuclear family system they had helped strengthen during the 1950s.

If you were to create a game that focuses on the Silent Generation, what type of content would you include? Perhaps a game that made order out of chaos would work for this generation. Other than games based on traditional Silent heroes—such as James Bond—no contemporary games come to mind that target this group. Games with heroes who are clean and cold—but who are not motivated by cynicism or revenge—might connect with this generation. An ideal example might be a combination of the slick sophistication of James Bond and the intricate, romantic, yet uptight nature of Thomas Crown. (According to exit interviews conducted by Cinema Score, even the 1999 remake of *The Thomas Crown Affair* appealed to an older demographic and did not prove sufficiently engaging to a younger audience.)

## Boom Generation (Born 1943–1961)

The Boom Generation (also known as the “Baby Boomers”) grew up sheltered in the suburbs during post–World War II economic prosperity—with their parents following the permissive child-rearing philosophies of Dr. Spock and working to keep the nuclear family intact. Death rates, drunk driving, suicide, illegitimate births, unemployment, and crime doubled or tripled as this generation came of age. The Boomers rebelled strongly against their parents, creating what is known as the “generation gap.” They also participated in an “awakening” that their families could not understand—establishing an unprecedented counter culture involving music, drugs, and sexual promiscuity. As this generation grew into adulthood, they became “yuppies” with mainstream careers, immersed themselves in New Age enlightenment, and took up yoga—realizing that their “sexual revolution” and once-dominant liberal lifestyle had come to an end because of the realities of AIDS and conservative Reaganomics.

If you were to create a game that focused on the Boom Generation, what type of content would you include? Perhaps a game with a social, spiritual, or political message would be ideal. Famed game designer Richard “Lord British” Garriott continues to tap into the worldview of this generation—most recently with *Tabula Rasa*, a sci-fi game of epic salvation that distinguishes itself from other games of its kind with its spiritual focus. Characters in *Tabula Rasa* are built around three attributes: mind, body, and spirit. This premise is similar to that of Garriott’s earlier *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar*. In that game, players must master eight moral virtues (honesty, honor, humility, spirituality, sacrifice, compassion, justice, and valor)—which, in turn, are composed of the three principles: truth, love, and courage.

MagiTam



With its spiritual focus, *The Journey to Wild Divine* is an appropriate game for the Boom generation.

### ::::: Millennial Trends Quiz

Before you read the Generation X and Millennial Generation sections, take this quiz and discover some surprising statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, Gallup Poll, and other national surveys. No cheating!

Do you think that the following trends have gone UP or DOWN since the early 1990s for teenagers aged 12–17?

	Up	Down
1. School shootings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Sexual activity among boys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Abortion rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Out of wedlock pregnancies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Non-alcohol drug use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Closeness to parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Time spent with fathers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Divorce rate of parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Time spent studying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Time spent watching TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Time spent playing organized sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Hours spent in community service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Suicide rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Importance of religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Trust of the police, government, and teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Respect for celebrities and athletes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Answers on next page :::::



## ::::: Millennial Trends Quiz (Answers)

Most people get almost every one of these answers wrong. How did you do? Are you surprised by the correct answers? If you are, there is a good chance that you are making the assumption that kids today are exactly the way kids were 20 years ago. You also might be influenced by the media, which currently focuses a lot more energy on reporting news related to teenagers. The media did not focus on teens 20 years ago. Why?

1. DOWN by 20%
2. DOWN—comparable to 1960s levels
3. DOWN by 30%
4. DOWN—now the lowest ever recorded
5. DOWN—now the lowest ever recorded
6. DOWN—all types of drugs
7. UP—particularly in math and science
8. UP by over 80%—highest ever recorded
9. UP—5 hours per week more than in the 1980s
10. DOWN 20%
11. UP—3 times more homework since the 1980s
12. DOWN—has been dropping steadily since 1997
13. UP—coincides with the “soccer mom” trend
14. UP since the 1980s
15. DOWN for the first time since World War II
16. UP—teen interest in religion has risen significantly
17. UP—even before September 11
18. DOWN—is this the end of the “cult of celebrity”?

## Sources:

U.S. Census (1990–2002); Gallup Polls (1990–2002); UCLA Annual poll of Incoming College Freshmen (1967–2002); University of Michigan, Institute of Social Research (1999); ZOOM and Applied Research & Consulting LLC; 2001 survey of nearly 10,000 kids ages 9–13 for PBS; Horatio Alger Association (1999); U.S. Department of Justice Statistics/Juvenile Statistics (2001); National School Safety Center (2001); ChildTrends DataBank (2002); Alan Guttmacher Institute (2001); CDC Youth Behavior Surveillance Survey (2002); U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (1999); SAMSHA—Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services); University of Michigan MTF (Monitoring the Future); SAT College Board; University of California Berkeley Survey Research Center, as part of the center’s Public Agendas and Citizen Engagement Survey (PACES) project, 2002.

Thanks to Pete Markiewicz, PhD for providing the statistics for this quiz.

## Generation X (Born 1962–1981)

Does the following description of Generation X correspond to the answers you provided on the Millennial Trends Quiz? If so, you most likely got most of the answers wrong; this is because you are assuming that Generation X and Millennials are one and the same.

Members of Generation X grew up in an era when America experienced its lowest birthrate ever, and when it was commonplace for families to be torn apart by divorce—only to be stitched back together, patchwork-style, by remarriage, step-siblings, and half-siblings. As teens, many Xers were independent “latchkey kids” who worked at odd jobs or fast food restaurants instead of receiving an allowance. These kids came home to *After School Specials*, *Sesame Street*, *Electric Company*, and *Mister Roger’s Neighborhood* on television, which became a de facto babysitter (instead of having after-school activities monitored by teachers or parents). During this era, suicide, murder, and incarceration rates skyrocketed. Growing into young adults, members of this generation have continued to assert their independence. They have expressed their cynicism and angst creatively through their art, while using their entrepreneurial tendencies to innovate do-it-yourself small businesses. Known as “Generation X,” they were not given a descriptive name—although “X” has now come to mean “Xtreme” (a term that captures this generation’s risk-taking, cutting-edge spirit).



*Tomb Raider’s* Lara Croft and *Half-Life’s* Gordon Freeman are both depicted as lone heroes.

If you were to create a game that focused on Generation X, what type of content would you include? Perhaps a game that focuses on an independent, nomadic character who is “on the edge” and takes risks would be ideal. Sound familiar? Since the Generation X age group makes up most of the game developers these days, games like this are pretty easy to find!



## Millennial Generation (Born 1982–2002)

Does the following description of the Millennial Generation correspond to the answers you provided on the Millennial Trends Quiz? If so, you probably got most of the answers right; this means that you are in touch with the newest generation known as the Millennials—and you have not confused this group with Generation X.

Millennials were born in an era when parents proudly displayed “baby on board” placards on their minivans. As these kids grew older, their soccer moms helped organize their team sports and other activities, while their dads spent more time with them than fathers of any other living generation. Movies popular during this generation’s childhood included *ET: The Extra Terrestrial*, *Parenthood*, and *Spy Kids*. From a combination of parenting patterns, interviews, and cultural depictions, the following are what appear to be the main characteristics of Millennials:

- **Networked peer-to-peer communication:** This phenomenon is not surprising, considering that the Millennial Generation is the first to grow up using Internet technology for communication in their daily lives. Millennials make heavy use of email and social networks (such as Facebook)—and 91% of them have cell phones that they use primarily to text friends and family, keeping tabs on them 24/7.
- **Collectivist team-players:** Think of how Millennials might make music, film, literature, and art more collaborative. Many such collaborations of these forms of popular culture are already happening, often through use of the Web as a communication medium. Could this mean that Millennials also like to be more active audience members—rather than engaging in more passive activities, such as watching television?
- **Special:** Millennials are considered “golden children” and are depicted in the media as “power kids” (e.g., the *Spy Kids* film series, in which children help out and save their spy parents).
- **Sheltered:** As opposed to the “latchkey” Gen Xers, Millennials grew up with overprotective parents. With the emphasis on national security, this theme will probably continue in their lifetime. Although teens feel “pressure” from their parents, they get along with them.
- **Confident:** This generation displays a confidence that exceeds that of the Boomers in the 1960s.
- **Open:** Millennial confidence seems to transcend into privacy issues. Millennials are so used to sharing everything with their parents that the notion of privacy does not seem to concern them. Since the first crisis faced by the Millennials was as children during the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, it has been speculated that Millennials have grown up in a national (as well as familial) atmosphere of concern over security at the expense of privacy. Millennials are not uncomfortable sharing their personal lives with the world—as shown in their use of MySpace and YouTube.

- **Female-dominated:** “Girls rule” in the Millennial generation. More girls than boys are enrolled in college, and girls are getting better grades in both elementary and secondary school.
- **Structured:** Millennials believe that rules have value. The results of the Millennial Trends Quiz informed you that Millennials generally trust the government but do not necessarily respect celebrities. This generation appears to follow the rules of society, rather than rebel against society. Will entertainment lose its “edge” when the Millennials begin contributing to the culture?

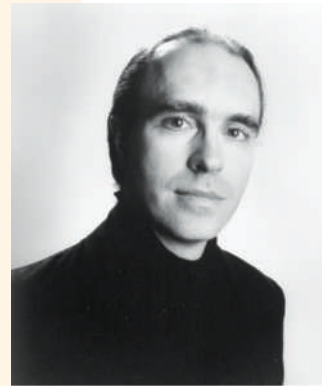
## Pete Markiewicz on the Personality Characteristics of Generations :::::

Pete Markiewicz received his doctorate in Theoretical Biology from the University of Chicago. After a decade of research in molecular biology (where he helped develop a powerful method for protein engineering), he entered the brave new world of the Internet in 1993. He is co-author of three nationally distributed books on the Internet revolution and co-founded Indospace in 1994. Recently, Pete has developed futurist theories based on an analysis of rising U.S. generations and their impact on technology—robotics in particular. He currently teaches interactive media design at the Art Institute of California-Los Angeles, and provides development services within the Internet virtual world of *Second Life*.

Understanding generational personality characteristics requires familiarity with the events, trends, and changes in culture during a generation’s childhood and young adult years. It is also necessary to remember that a generational personality is an averaged aggregate; it describes traits of large populations of similar ages and does not predict the behavior of individuals in the generation:

**Silents:** “90% of life is just showing up” (Woody Allen): Members of this generation experienced the Great Depression and World War II as small children—and came of age during the 1950s as the United States postwar economy boomed. As children, they were sheltered and protected—and as young adults they displayed a conformist, adaptive mentality. Their media entertainment featured subtle images of rebellion, “lonely crowd” attitudes (seen in movies like Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*), irony, and emotional sensitivity—as opposed to the stoic hero of 1940s G.I. culture. Silents tend to compromise rather than divide, and see more shades of gray than Boomers in terms of cultural behavior. Their media show two sides to every issue, and tend toward the personal rather than ideological. In the 1960s and 1970s, they experienced a “midlife crisis” and turned away from their earlier “gray flannel” conformity, leading feminism and the sexual revolution in particular. Gender differences are great within this generation (relative to younger ones). Their archetypal hero is seen in James Bond—the ultra-cool, behind-the-scenes agent who nevertheless

Daniel Hayes Uppendahl



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works “within the system” to maintain the balance of power. Relations with their children (mostly Generation X) are relatively distant. As they have aged, they have redefined the former image of senior citizens from quiet retirement to a “grandma drives a sports car” mentality. Throughout their lives, they have reaped society’s benefits; the economic boom of the 1950s appeared when they started work, and numerous senior entitlements support their lifestyle today.

**Boomers:** “The times, they are a-changing” (Bob Dylan): Members of this generation were small children during the postwar boom. While young, they experienced a relatively safe but confined social climate based on material well-being. In reaction to this, they started a society-wide, values-oriented “spiritual” revolution in their famous coming-of-age during the 1960s and 1970s. As young adults, they sought to recast the moral underpinnings of society and have done their greatest work in the “culture and values” arena. More divisive and confrontational than Silents, they tend toward a more black/white ideology (ignoring shades of gray) and are responsible for the “culture wars” of the 1990s and 2000s. Their politics focus on grand, sweeping solutions rather than adjustment and compromise. Their media heroes tend to be a lone voice rising up against a faceless system, denouncing it prophet-style, and leading the masses to a new “spiritual” utopia. Instead of compromise, their heroes convert the unbeliever. Boomers led the rise in “bad” behavior in teens and young adults—and teen crime, drug use, and other negative social indicators peaked in their generation during the 1970s. Boomers were responsible for the huge (positive) shift in attitudes toward children during the 1980s and 1990s. Increasingly successful outside the home, Boomer women have managed to “have it all”—while Boomer fathers play a greater role in the lives of their kids than in earlier generations. Rejecting their own parents during their youth, they have surprisingly close relationships with their mostly Millennial children. As their children leave home, they are entering a new stage in their lives—one in which some expect their old radicalism to intensify as they seize political and cultural power from earlier generations.

**Generation X:** “There can be only one” (*Highlander*): Members of this generation were children during the social turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s—and were the targets of an anti-child cultural bias difficult for younger generations to understand. In their youth, they experienced the divorce epidemic, hands-off parenting, “latchkey” self-reliance, falling fertility, and declining investment in children. Many Xer media workers today mock the crude, low-budget animation and slasher/devil child programming that they experienced as kids. As young adults during the 1980s, they were often seen as a “disappointing” generation and were characterized as the “New Lost”—alienated, poorly educated slackers. Despite this, Generation X reversed many negative social trends (e.g. drug use) associated with Boomers, has started more businesses than any generation in history, and was the first generation to be comfortable with personal

computing technology. Compared to older groups, gender relationships moved to equality within this generation. Their media “heroes” emphasize survival rather than rebellion; they are not out to change the world—just to keep their place within it. Politics and ideology hold far less interest for them than older generations, and they are more conservative on social issues than Boomers or Silents. Possibly due to their latchkey upbringing, they are drawn to media depicting edgy, “gladiator-style” death matches—everything from the lone girl left alive at the end of slasher movies to the ruthless voting of television’s *Survivor*. Where Boomers might endlessly discuss the meaning of a conflict, Xers just make sure they win. Xers push the boundaries; being “X-treme” is primary. As they enter middle age, older Xers are showing surprisingly strong parent/family orientation, continuing the pro-child trend started by Boomers.

**Millennials:** “Wizards in training” (*Harry Potter*): Members of this generation grew up during the 1982–2000 economic boom—the greatest in history and one fueled by high-technology. A “wanted” generation, they enjoyed parents who deliberately sought to conceive and raise them, resulting in an “echo boom” in the 1980s and 1990s. Compared to Xers, Millennials have benefited from increased spending by their parents and rising standards in education. However, these benefits include a close, controlled, ultra-organized, “soccer Mom” parenting style and ideologically driven teaching. Compared to the “hands-off” childhoods GenX members experienced, Millennials have had a very “hands-on” life—ranging from standards-based tests and “zero-tolerance” classrooms to school uniforms. This has resulted in a generation that has successfully reversed many of the negative social trends long associated with youth; compared to Boomers and Xers, Millennials commit fewer crimes, use fewer drugs, get pregnant less often, and score higher on their SATs. Less concerned about “identity politics” of race and gender, they may be more class-conscious. Girls lead the way in leadership and education, while boys are doing worse in school, often rejecting college or dropping out. Despite this, gender relations are good. With ideologically driven parents, Millennials may ultimately become a “hero” generation—achieving great things in the exterior world and thereby supporting the expectations of their parents.

**Homelanders:** No movie yet. The first birth year for the post-Millennial generation falls sometime between 2001 and 2004. This generation has never known a world without a “war on terror”, the Internet, 3D consoles, virtual worlds, and smartphones such as the iPhone and Android systems. Their parents are more “Slacker Mom” than “Soccer Mom,” and they are already changing the emphasis of their education away from objective, standardized testing to “social skills.” Games will be an integral part of their education, as well as entertainment. With the rise of augmented reality and lifelogging, the real world will seem ever-more like a game as they mature. The Strauss and Howe theory predicts this generation will be most like the Silent generation.



Activision



Blizzard



Players cooperate in teams in both *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* (playing as either Axis or Allies) and *World of Warcraft*.

If you were to create a game that focused on the Millennial generation, what type of content would you include? Perhaps an online game involving a lot of communication and cooperation between players would be ideal. You learned in Chapter 1 that MMOs involve a lot of collective, teamwork behavior. This sounds like a great form of entertainment for the Millennial Generation, does it not?

If Millennials are so focused on collective, team-based behavior, then why is the United States dominated by consoles and not online multiplayer games? As you learned earlier in this chapter, the player market no longer consists of one (youngest) generation, but at least three generations. That is a market spanning a 60-year age range. Generation Xers and Baby Boomers gravitate toward a certain type of entertainment—and they also have a great influence on their Millennial children, many of whom still live at home and have a close relationship with their parents. Since Millennials are too young to have an impact on the creation of popular culture, they are consuming the culture of the generation just before them. Could the fact that Generation X makes up the bulk of current game developers have something to do with the lone hero, single-player console focus of the U.S. game industry?

Playfish



Three Rings Design, Inc.



Games that incorporate cooperation—such as *Restaurant City* and *Puzzle Pirates*—might be ideal for the Millennial Generation.

You might wonder why the Millennial Generation is significant when over half of the game-playing population is over 18. At 85 million people, the Millennial Generation is even larger than the Boomer Generation (60 million)—and it dwarfs Generation X (35 million). Now that the Millennials have come of age, they're creating more of our entertainment. From what you know of Millennials, the enormous rise of social and mobile games should not come as a surprise!

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Newsweek, Inc



Generation X and Millennials have been depicted very differently by the media. A 1990 *Time* cover referred to Generation X as: "Laid back, late blooming or just lost? Overshadowed by the baby boomers, America's next generation has a hard act to follow." A 2000 *Newsweek* cover referred to Millennials very differently: "God, sex, race and the future: What teens believe."

From our discussion of the Millennial Generation, you might have a particular idea of what games this age group might be interested in playing. If you wanted to create a game that provided the opportunity for this group to engage in teamwork behavior, you would most likely choose a multiplayer mode. Age might also correspond to the genre. Gen Xers might prefer horror-themed games or single-player games that concentrate on a lone hero who overcomes incredible odds to vanquish a series of foes.



## Rating

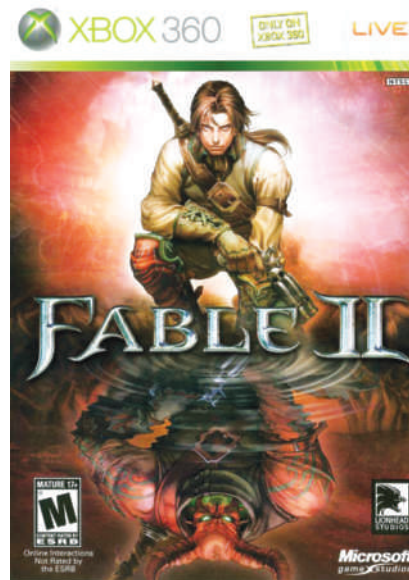
In Chapter 1, you learned about the establishment of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)—the industry’s reaction to the Senate hearings on game violence. Like the film ratings established by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the ESRB ratings are tied into the age group of the target market. Ratings include:

- EC (Early Childhood)
- E (Everyone)
- E10+ (Everyone 10+)
- T (Teen)
- M (Mature—17+)
- AO (Adults Only)
- RP (Rating Pending)

Content descriptors are found on the back of a game’s packaging. These descriptors indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.

What rating would you propose for a game you’d like to create? Many EC-rated games are educational because certain developmental skills (such as learning to read) are stressed at that age. It is interesting that many MMOGs are rated T. This rating is based on the game itself before it is played by multiple players. Online games that include user-generated content (e.g., chat, maps, skins) carry the notice “Game Experience May Change During Online Play” to warn consumers that content created by players of the game has not been rated by the ESRB.

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Every game released in the United States is given a rating by the Entertainment Software Rating Board. *Fable II* is rated M, for Mature.

## Applying Player Markets to Platforms, Genres & Goals

In this chapter, you learned that there are many different types of people who enjoy playing games. Who do you want to reach? This set of players is your target market. Are you interested in developing a game that attracts a wider market of teens (without being gender-specific) or an even wider market consisting of teens and young adults? Now tie the market into goals, genres, and platforms. How about focusing only on women who enjoy playing MMOs? Or perhaps creating an educational game for adult students attending a nationwide culinary school? In this case, you'd probably be marketing to the school itself instead of (or in addition to) the students. You could also concentrate on developing games for a particular platform—such as an iPad tablet or an online social game played on Facebook. (Now that over 55% of the player population regularly plays games on mobile devices, you might want to consider at least porting your game to a mobile platform.) How might you apply player characteristics—including motivation, generation, and other demographics and psychographics—to platforms, genres, and goals? Use the knowledge you have gained from this chapter to help you decide which game elements are right for your player market.

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All of the foundational elements described in Part I should help form the beginning of your game concept. It's important to understand how these elements work together to give your game a strong foundation. A complete concept also includes the areas covered in Part II, which focuses on creating compelling content—including storytelling, character, gameplay, levels, interface, and audio. As you read through the chapters in Part II, try to apply the basic historical, player, and game elements to content development. Later, in Chapter 11, you will also learn to incorporate some of the basic elements in this chapter into game documentation such as the concept document (which will include your target market, genre, and platform).

## :::CHAPTER REVIEW EXERCISES:::

1. What motivates people to play games? Discuss three different motivational factors and provide examples of games that address these factors. Motivations such as exercise took game developers by surprise, and they might lead to a new series of games that address this player motivation. Come up with a new motivation that game developers might have overlooked, and discuss which types of new games might address this player motivation.
2. Why do *you* play games? What elements in your favorite games make you want to continue playing? If you were to test one of your favorite games for the “fun factor,” why would it pass the test?
3. How does the market for games in the United States differ from other countries such as South Korea, China, Japan, and Germany? What are the most popular genres, platforms, and trends in these respective countries—and what are the associated driving factors?
4. What is the importance of psychographics such as values, attitudes, and lifestyles in player markets? Discuss three games that incorporate a distinct belief system. If you were to create a game based on your own psychographics, on what features would you focus?
5. How have age and gender demographics in the player market changed over time? How might these changes affect the way games continue to be developed? Can you envision any particular trends in game content or structure that would help continue to broaden the player market?
6. Discuss the difference between Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials. If you were creating a game specifically targeted toward one of these groups, what features would be present in the game? (How did you do on the Millennial Trends Quiz?)
7. Violence in our society continues to be blamed on the influence of entertainment content such as explicit films and song lyrics. Some games have been blamed for violent outbreaks. Provide a real-world example of a violent incident for which an electronic game was held responsible. Do you agree with this view, or do you believe that there is not a distinct correlation between real-world violence and the “fantasy” violence in games?
8. Which of Richard Bartle’s player suits best describes you as a player? What types of games naturally cater to your player suit? Take the questionnaires associated with VALS (<http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/presurvey.shtml>) or MBTI (<http://similar minds.com/jung.html>). Do your results correspond to your player suit self-evaluation?