

EXAMINING THE GAME PLAYING AND SOCIAL TRENDS OF AMERICANS

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35% of 18-34 year old Americans have never bought a Powerball ticket. That's even with a \$2bn Powerball jackpot less than 16 months ago. Yet more than 50% of the same age group has placed at least one bet on sports in their lifetime.

In fact, past year sports betting among the youngest age group is now at 37%, just 3% points behind their annual play of Mega Millions. This is just one of the major trends happening within the 47 Lottery jurisdictions in the United States of America right now of which the data is based.

TikTokToe. The future players have very strong App-etites.

If you think these 18-34 year-olds are too busy watching YouTube videos and Instagram Reels...then you would be correct. Instagram is now this youngest group's second most popular social media app, with more than 72% using it frequently, closely behind the 76% using YouTube. According to my teenage boys Ethan and Ashton, Insta "Reels" is where it's at. TikTok comes in a strong 4th place at just short of three out of five

youngsters in the Millennial/Gen Z crossover age group, a little behind Facebook still at 67% (which is still where a majority of 35-54 year-olds spend their time).

However, the endless time spent staring at their devices doesn't preclude the 18-34 year-olds from actively gaming on their iPhones and Androids. Au contraire, 32% claim to have played some type of Lottery game online since early 2023, whilst 31% has gambled online (with Casino style game) in the past year, significantly higher than the 35-54 year old age group (who are still at impressive 29%).

Fantasy sports still remain prominent in the portfolios of the younger gamer, with almost a third having played in at least one league annually, whether it be Fantasy Football, Baseball or even Basketball (and a note to you dear reader, I play them all!).

Not everyone has Very Little Tolerance for those 'games of skill'

This is not to say that other forms of gaming and gambling that entail the player actually leaving their house, bedroom or even basement, aren't thriving. 13% of Americans have played standalone Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) in the past year, while 18% claim to have played a Video terminal/Skill

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machine, which are one of the many banes of existence for the Lottery industry. Both these skew slightly younger, but 24% of that all important 35-54 year-old age group has also chanced their arm at the "skill" machines.

Casino visits are also getting back close to pre-COVID levels, which saw past year visits as low as in the early 20% range in 2021, and are now above 38%, driven primarily by both 35-54 year olds (44%) and the Hispanic population (46%).

Eyes down for a full house in the Bingo renaissance.

The biggest discrepancy in terms of the gender breakouts is the 37% of women who have played Bingo in the past year, significantly higher (some 9% points) than their male counterparts. Contrary to the Bingo in what my mother would classify as "the good old days", Bingo has become a young person's game, with almost half of all 18-34 Americans to have played some form of it in the past year.

Bingo is also a fond past time of African Americans (41%) and





Hispanics (46%). Cheektowaga, New York, with one bingo hall for every 6,800 residents, is believed to have the highest concentration of bingo halls in the United States, but with a proliferation of online Bingo derivatives, plus the likes of Keno and Quick Draw (Bingo in disguise), the popularity of the fast paced numbers draw game seems only likely to increase.

And if you aren't aware of the British bingo phenomenon of calling out catchy phrases with the Bingo numbers, we'll leave "Two fat ladies, 88", "Kelly's eye, number 1" and "Two little ducks, 22" for a conversation over a nice pot of tea, or a pint of Boddingtons, at the next PGRI conference in Fort Lauderdale.

Instants, scratching that itch every week.

Weekly scratch play still leads the gaming industry with 18% of Americans having bought in the past week, driven by 35-54 year-olds (21%), and even split between male and female players (both just over 18%), and even those 55+ are still heavily involved at a 16% purchase clip.

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Monthly spend on scratch is around

\$35 a month, although the youngest group (18-34 year-olds) spend the highest average amount among the demographic breaks at \$63, almost double the average level.

Hey big spenders...

Casino play has the highest average spend of all the regular gambling types in the USA, and it is driven by the oldest age group (averaging \$200 a month), and the Asian/Pacific Islanders at \$246 per month. It also skews higher income with those earning more than \$100k per year spending just over \$204 on their trips to play craps and roulette.

Mega Millions and Powerball spend averages around \$33-\$34 dollars per month, definitely on the lower end,

but this accounts for a lot of the older crowd who are spending around \$22 per game (so basically with 8 Mega draws a month, and 12 Powerball draws, somewhere around the minimum \$2 per play per draw).

Meanwhile, at the higher end, both Online Gambling and Sports Betting average more than \$90 per month per player, driven by younger players and also Asians.

Stream a little stream of you

57% of Americans now stream their televisual entertainment in 2024, with Cable usage now down to 39% and declining. Netflix is still the market leader in terms of streaming services at 64% (79% among 18-34 year olds), with Amazon Prime at 59% and Hulu at 46% (Hulu again skews younger with 64% of 18-34 year olds subscribing).

So what does this all mean?

Americans are spending more time on their smart phones (4 ½ hours every single day on average) than ever, screen time is paramount and it is only going to increase, so the fight for their time and money is well and truly on.

Incidentally, the Florida Lottery has 110,000 Instagram followers... #lotteryleader

Trust me, I'm a researcher. ■

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