

# GAMING SECTOR OUTLOOK

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The average gamer spends **14.7% OF THEIR WAKING HOURS** playing video games.<sup>1</sup>

There are **2.96 BILLION** gamers globally.<sup>2</sup>



# GAMING IS ENTERING A GOLDEN AGE AS IT BECOMES THE NEXUS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR MILLENNIALS & GEN Z

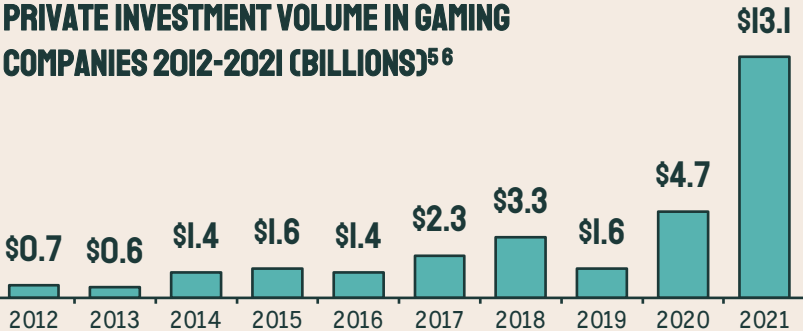
1

The rise of interactive entertainment is part of a decade-plus long generational shift, not just a pandemic fluke.



2

Investment volume in gaming companies reached an all-time high in 2021 with over \$13B deployed into the space.



# GAMING HAS EVOLVED OVER 50 YEARS FROM A NICHE HOBBY TO...



1975<sup>8</sup>

Atari releases a console version of *Pong* matching the success of the arcade version



1983<sup>8</sup>

The gaming market crashes after a string of **high-budget low-quality projects** highlighted by the infamous *E.T.* game



1989<sup>7</sup>

Nintendo releases its iconic **Game Boy handheld device** bundled with *Tetris*



1993<sup>7</sup>

*Doom* popularizes the **FPS (first-person shooter)** genre



1995<sup>8</sup>

Sega's Saturn and Sony's PlayStation consoles usher in the **era of 3D gaming** with CDs replacing cartridges

1972<sup>7</sup>

*Pong* becomes the **first commercially successful arcade title**



1980<sup>7</sup>

*Pac-Man* generates **\$1B of revenue** in the United States in a single year



1985-86<sup>8</sup>

Nintendo releases NES console and a series of classic franchises including *Super Mario Bros.* and *The Legend of Zelda*



1991<sup>8</sup>

Nintendo releases its Super NES, launching the **first "console-war"** against Sega's Genesis system and *Sonic* franchise



1994<sup>8</sup>

Franchises like *Mortal Kombat* give rise to the ESRB which **rates games based on suitability for children**



# ... A CENTERPIECE OF GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL CULTURE WITH NEARLY 3 BILLION PLAYERS GLOBALLY



2000<sup>8</sup>

Sony's PS2, with its unrivaled third-party game support, becomes the best-selling console ever



2004<sup>7</sup>

*World of Warcraft*, a subscription-based MMO RPG launches and grows to 14M subscribers



2010<sup>7</sup>

Minecraft is released in public beta – it remains the best-selling video game of all time



2013<sup>7</sup>

*Grand Theft Auto V* shatters records earning \$800M on its release day



2017-19<sup>9</sup>

*Fortnite*, a free-to-play battle royale game, launches to massive commercial success generating \$9B in its first 2 years

1997<sup>7</sup>

Nokia starts shipping cell phones with *Snake*, the first popular mobile game



2002<sup>7</sup>

Microsoft launches **Xbox Live**, a subscription online multiplayer service for its flagship consoles



2007<sup>7</sup>

Apple releases its first iPhone smartphone opening the door to 3D mobile gaming



2011<sup>7</sup>

Twitch launches as the first streaming platform primarily for video games



2016<sup>7</sup>

*Pokémon Go*, an AR-based mobile game, reaches 500M downloads in one year



# GAMES ARE THE SOCIAL HUB FOR MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z

- Gaming has evolved into the go-to hangout spot for younger generations – **multiplayer games are replacing small in-person gatherings.**
- **40% fewer 17-year-olds met with friends in-person daily in 2017 than in 2001<sup>10</sup>**, the year before the launch of online multiplayer platforms like Xbox Live on gaming consoles.

## SOCIAL GAMING PLATFORMS ARE ON THE RISE

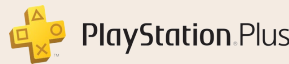
### ABOUT

Discord is a server-based group voice (VoIP) and messaging platform originally built for gamers

PlayStation Plus is Sony's subscription online multiplayer and in-game social platform for its flagship consoles

Xbox Live is Microsoft's subscription online multiplayer and in-game social platform for its flagship consoles

### PLATFORM



### MONTHLY ACTIVE USER (MAU) GROWTH<sup>3||28</sup>



# GAMES HAVE DISPLACED TV SHOWS AND MOVIES AS THE DE FACTO ENTERTAINMENT OPTION FOR GEN Z

- Not only does **87% of Gen Z** game at least **once a week**<sup>15</sup>, they spend **billions of hours per month watching others play**<sup>16</sup> on platforms like Twitch, YouTube, and Facebook.
- More people have played the game **PUBG: Battlegrounds**<sup>17</sup> than **subscribe to the top 20 streaming services (including Netflix, HBO, Prime Video, Disney+, etc.) combined**.<sup>18</sup>



Twitch boasts **140M monthly active users** – **73% of which are under age 35**<sup>13</sup>

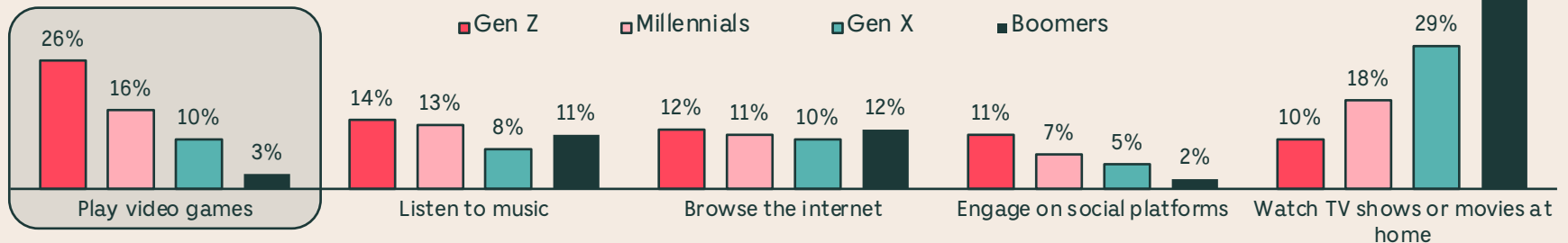


**2 of the top 5** most subscribed-to YouTube channels in the world are gaming-related<sup>14</sup>



Games are the **most-downloaded category** of apps on the Apple App Store

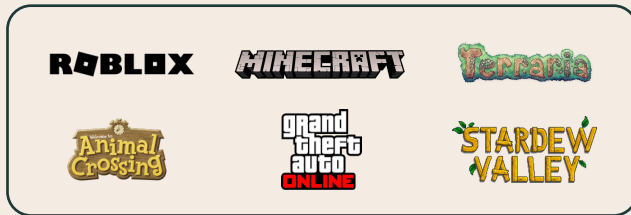
**FAVORITE ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITY BY GENERATION<sup>15</sup>**



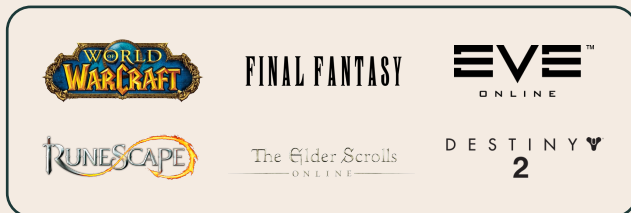
# LOOKING BEYOND THE NOISE – WHAT REALLY IS THE METAVERSE?

- The metaverse sits at the intersection of **interactive virtual worlds** – which exist today within individual games – and the **shift of human social interaction to the internet**.
- We define a metaverse as **any virtual setting where users can interact with one another socially around a common activity**.
- Social sandbox, MMO (massively multiplayer online), and team-based games are the **primary destinations for gamers to play and socialize with friends**.

## SOCIAL SANDBOXES



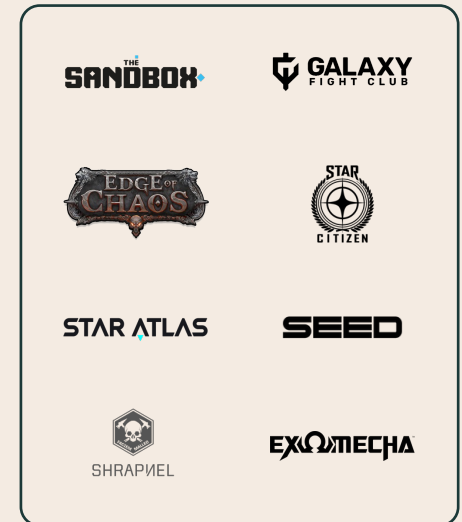
## MMO (MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE)



## TEAM-BASED



## PRE-LAUNCH





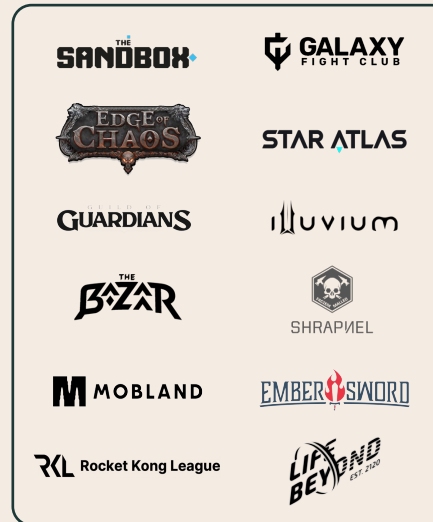
# HOW DOES BLOCKCHAIN FIT INTO THE PICTURE?

- Blockchain gaming has been one of the most talked about gaming sub-verticals over the past two years with **\$3.6B of capital deployed into the space in 2021**.<sup>19</sup>
- **Blockchain gaming projects typically raise funds via a combination of traditional equity and token/NFT offerings** without much beyond a product roadmap in place.
- **Most projects released to date follow a “play-to-earn” model** where users are rewarded in cryptocurrency for in-game progress.

## WHAT CAN BLOCKCHAIN BRING TO GAMING?

- 1 Build more robust in-game economies using novel tokenomics
- 2 Allow players to monetize in-game progress or take it from one game to another
- 3 Enable independent developers to better monetize custom in-game experiences
- 4 Enable independent game developers to fund projects without institutional backing
- 5 Build secondary markets for in-game items - existing “gray markets” violate game T&Cs

### PRE-LAUNCH



### LAUNCHED



# BLOCKCHAIN GAMING IS STILL PRIMITIVE DESPITE RECENT HYPE

- Announced projects tend to focus overly on blockchain-related features – and as a result attract crypto-natives rather than the much larger gaming user base.
- Projects that feature rich and engaging gameplay and use blockchain as a user-experience enhancement rather than a core focus will win out in the long-term.

## PLAY-TO-EARN

- Play-to-earn is the preeminent model used by blockchain games today.
- This model has a critical flaw – it attracts crypto-natives looking to speculate and earn cryptocurrency rather than gamers.
- This has led to fundamentally inferior games commanding hefty private market valuations fueled by “farming” strategies.
- This model does not scale – earnings drop off as more users “join the party”.
- Without an engaging game in the absence of earnings, users leave.

## MAX AUDIENCE

295M

Crypto Users<sup>20</sup>

## PLAY-AND-OWN

- People don't play games for money. They play games to have fun.
- A model that prioritizes the development of rich and engaging gameplay – like traditional game development has (mostly) for years – and thoughtfully employs blockchain to enhance player experience will win in the long-term.
- In-game economies are not new – they have existed for decades.
- Blockchain, if implemented natively and seamlessly into games, can enable players to own in-game assets and sell them on secondary markets.

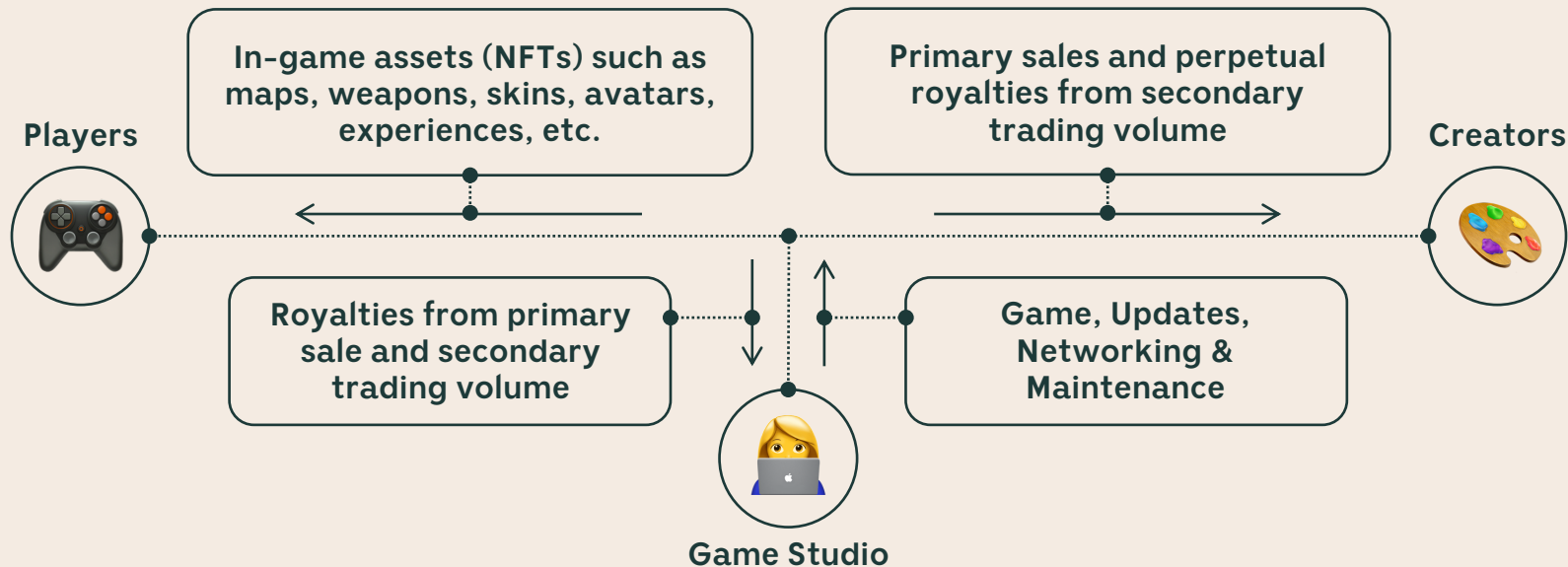
2.96B

Gamers<sup>2</sup>



# FUTURE IN-GAME ECONOMIES WILL LIVE ON THE BLOCKCHAIN

- The blockchain enables new models that incentivize user-generation of in-game assets like maps, skins, avatars, and other items.
- Roblox is an example of why the current model is ripe for disruption – creators of Roblox’s in-game experiences keep only 28% of revenue they generate.<sup>21</sup>
- Enabling ownership and secondary trading of in-game assets opens an entirely new revenue stream for game developers and in-game content creators: perpetual royalties.



# GAMING IS SEEING A SHIFT TOWARD FREE-TO-PLAY EXPERIENCES

- Over the past decade, free-to-play games like *Fortnite*, *League of Legends*, *Clash of Clans*, and *PUBG: Battlegrounds* have surpassed their pay-to-play peers in revenue<sup>22</sup> resulting in a broader industry shift toward removing the initial cost barrier for players.
- Free-to-play games more than make up for the lost upfront revenue – *Fortnite* generated \$10.9B in revenue between 2020-21 alone from in-game microtransactions.<sup>23</sup> *GTA V* (2<sup>nd</sup> best-selling game title ever) has generated \$6.4B over the 9 years since its 2013 release.<sup>24</sup>

## TOP 8 MOST-WATCHED GAMES ON TWITCH (JUNE 19 - JULY 18, 2022)<sup>25</sup>



# GAME DISTRIBUTION IS RIPE FOR MASSIVE DISRUPTION WITH THE RISE OF SOCIAL GAMING

- Gaming distribution today is largely controlled by the platforms that games are played on (ie, Microsoft's Xbox Store, Sony's PlayStation Store, Apple's App Store, Alphabet's Play Store). Valve's Steam meanwhile controls 75% of global PC game distribution.<sup>26</sup>
- With Gen Z and younger gamers moving more of their social interaction into games, there is an increasing need for gaming platforms to decouple from gaming distribution.

## PROBLEM

- Platform-tied distribution is problematic for social gamers as **friend groups are usually not all on the same platform** making multiplayer challenging or impossible.
- New entrants have used content exclusivity to differentiate **rather than innovating on features for gamers (ie, social, discovery, cloud gaming)**.

## SOLUTION

- Opportunity for a **cross-platform social tool** to enter distribution with social features increasingly central to the gamer experience.
- Core features like **matchmaking or differentiated content (ie, interactive clippings)** are all possible centerpieces for a social + distribution hybrid platform.

- **Cloud gaming** (subscription services that enable on-demand gameplay streamed to any device) has the potential to disrupt distribution by **removing the hardware performance barrier for most people**.
- Potential to enable **consistent gameplay experience across TVs, PCs, mobile, etc.**



# THE NEXT EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL GAMING PLATFORMS IS IMMINENT

- Games are a natural common interest that can spur social connection – this is why platforms like Twitch (140M MAUs)<sup>13</sup> and Discord (183M MAUs)<sup>3</sup> have been so successful.
- Despite being the only major cross-platform social tool for gamers, **Discord has struggled to monetize effectively** (Twitch generated \$2.68B in 2021 revenue<sup>27</sup> vs. Discord’s \$309M<sup>28</sup>).

## 3 POTENTIAL MOLDS FOR THE NEXT SOCIAL GAMING PLATFORM

Social sandbox platforms (like what *Roblox* has built for U13 gamers) centered around user-generated content that foster creative + social collaboration

Seamless, cross-platform social experiences that integrate directly into games for a richer experience than Discord

Platforms that offer differentiated content and/or functionality for gamers (ie, matchmaking, wagering, interactive game clippings)

## NEW ENTRANTS

 **BUNCH**

**Stadium** **LIVE**

**goss.**

 **TV1ME**

 **THE SANDBOX**

 **Edge**

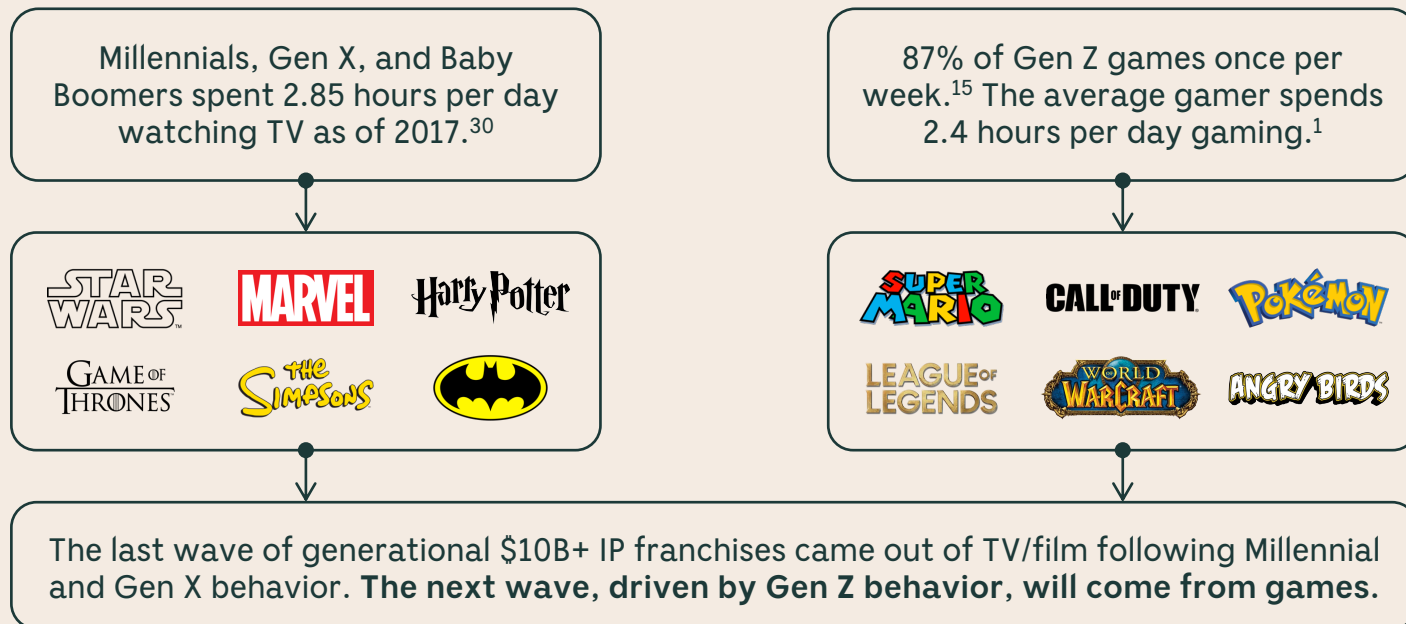
 **REC ROOM**

 **CRAYTA**



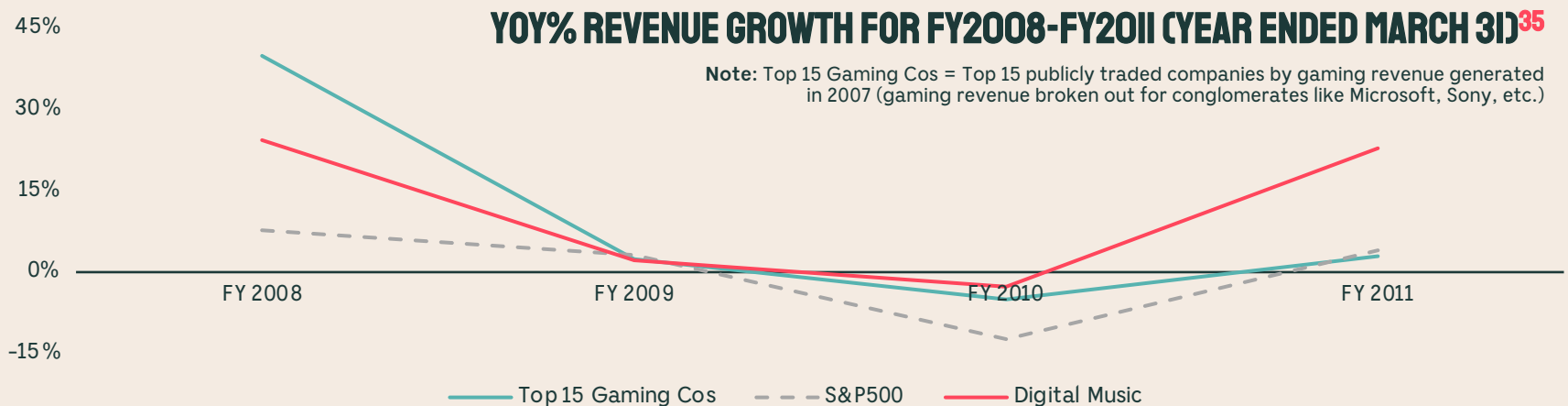
# THE RISE OF GAMING-NATIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY – THE NEXT DISNEY WILL RISE OUT OF THE GAMING INDUSTRY

- As gaming quickly becomes a centerpiece of Gen Z culture (25% of Gen Z leisure time is spent gaming<sup>29</sup>), gaming-native IP is becoming increasingly valuable.
- In 2021, Wizards of the Coast (publisher of *Magic: The Gathering* and *Dungeons & Dragons* franchises) generated 75% of Hasbro's (\$11.3B market cap) operating profit.



# GAMING REVENUES HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY RESILIENT TO MACROECONOMIC DOWNTURNS – BUT SOME THINGS HAVE CHANGED

- The top 15 companies by gaming revenue between 2006 and 2011 experienced **peak gaming revenue contraction of -5% YoY in 2010 (FY ended 3/31/10) vs. -12.4% across the S&P 500.**
- However, as gaming has shifted toward microtransactions over the upfront purchases relied upon in the late 2000s, it remains to be seen how gamers adapt spending in a downturn.
- Digital music (\$0.99-\$9.99 microtransaction-driven entertainment) performance during the GFC could serve as a model for how today's gaming market might perform in a downturn.

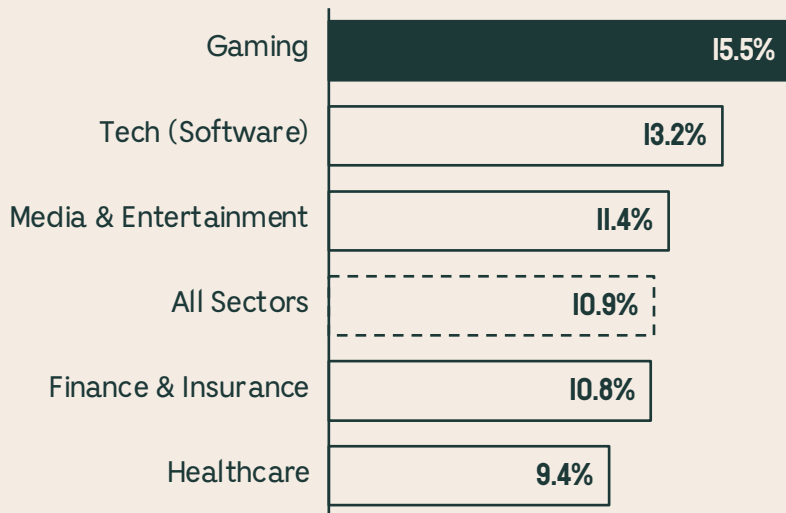




# CONSOLIDATION IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY OVER THE PAST DECADE HAS CREATED A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY FOR EARLY-STAGE INVESTORS

- Driven by Microsoft, Tencent, Take Two, Zynga, EA, and others, **the gaming industry is undergoing a period of massive consolidation** with \$85B in M&A activity in 2021<sup>31</sup> followed by over \$102B in activity in H1 2022 alone.<sup>32</sup>
- Talented AAA game developers are increasingly opting to leave these **slow-to-innovate conglomerates** to start independent game studios in need of Pre-Seed and Seed financing.

## EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATES BY SECTOR (2018)<sup>33</sup>



## THE ORIGIN STORIES OF 4 OF THE 8 LARGEST GAMING ACQUISITIONS EVER



**\$68.7B** - Started by 4 fed up Atari engineers after Atari was acquired by Warner Communications in 1976



**\$8.6B** - Started by 2 Finnish developers seeking creative freedom after their previous company Sumea was acquired by an American studio



**\$4B** - Started by 2 former Tencent developers

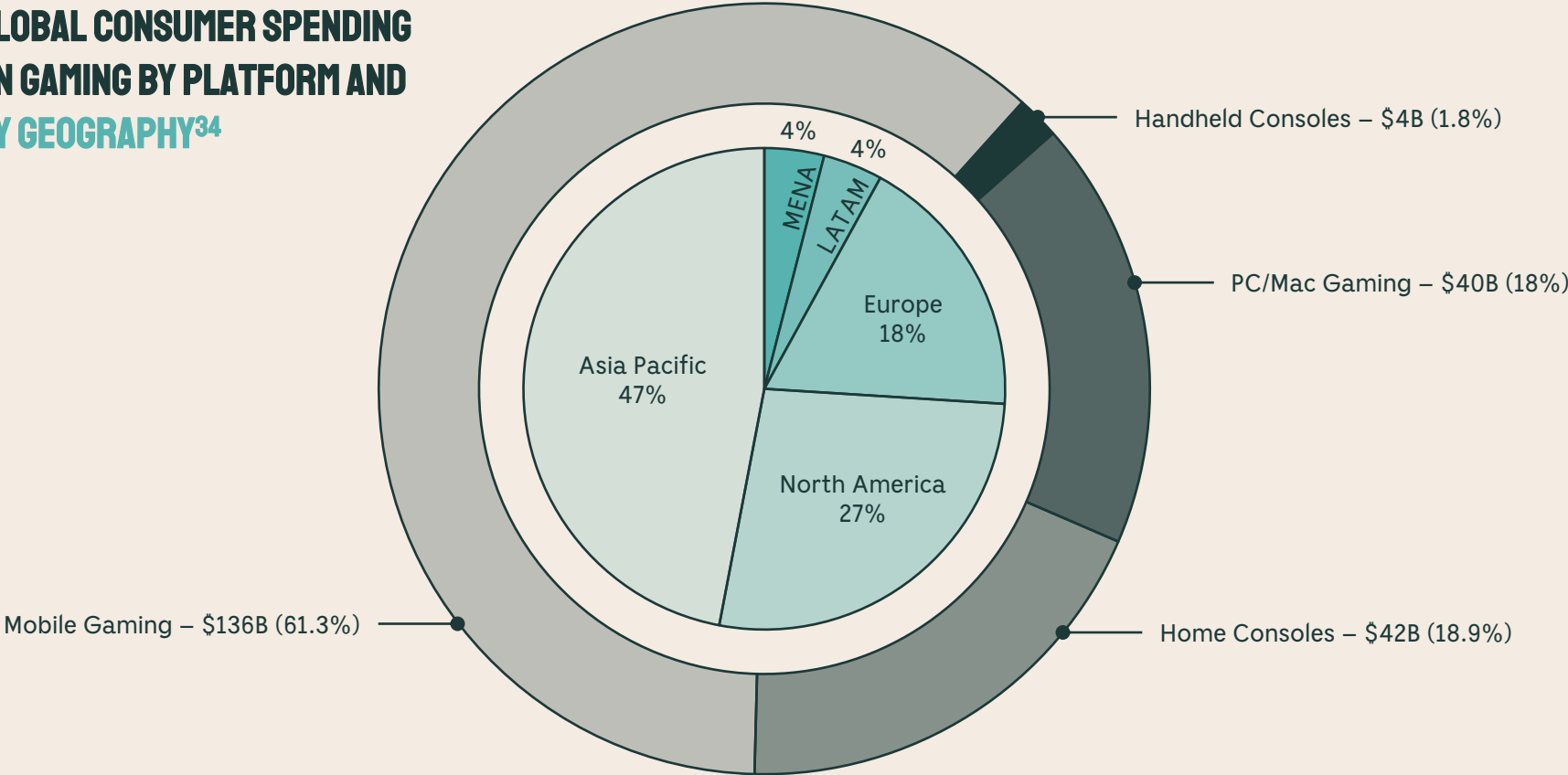


**\$2.5B** - Started by a former game developer for King.com



# CONSUMER SPENDING ON GAMES PROJECTED TO REACH \$222B IN 2022 WITH MOBILE GAMERS OUT-SPENDING PC GAMERS BY 3.4X

## GLOBAL CONSUMER SPENDING ON GAMING BY PLATFORM AND BY GEOGRAPHY<sup>34</sup>

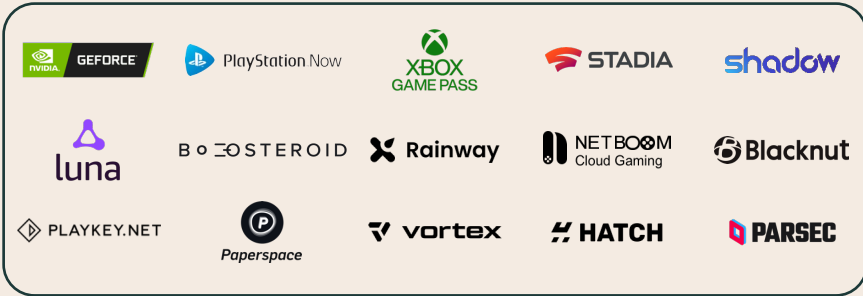


# GAMING MARKET LANDSCAPE – CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION

## DISTRIBUTION



## CLOUD GAMING



## HARDWARE



## CONTENT/PUBLISHING



# GAMING MARKET LANDSCAPE – INFRASTRUCTURE & SOCIAL

## SOCIAL



## ENGINES

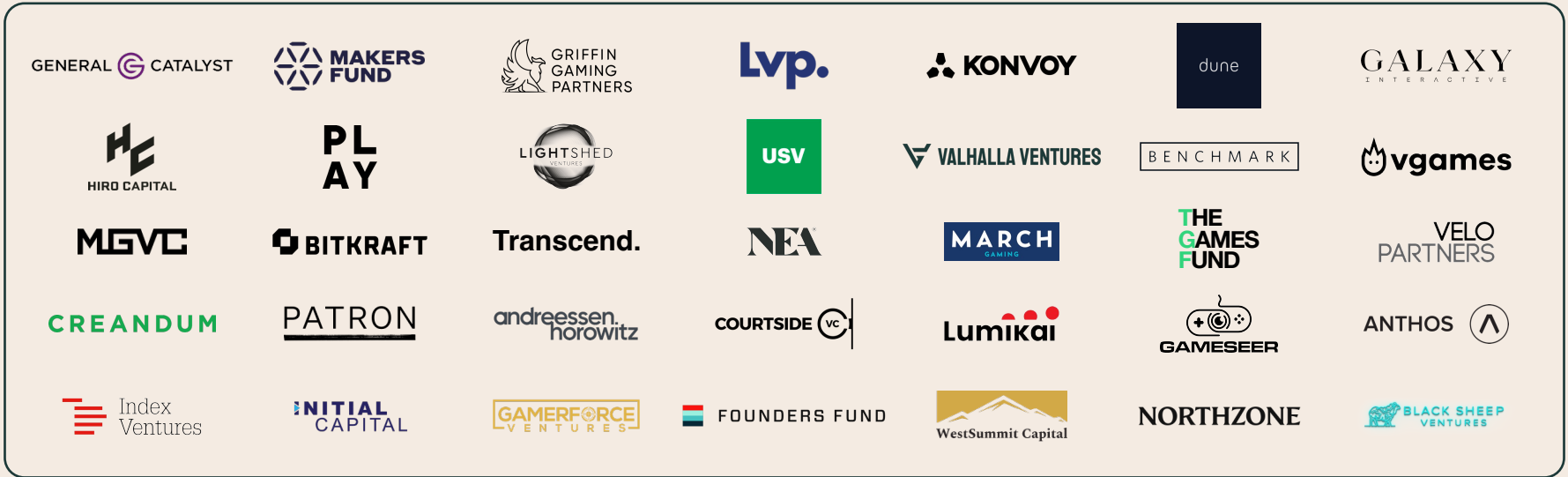


## BACKEND TOOLS & SERVICES



# LANDSCAPE OF PRIVATE INVESTORS IN THE GAMING SPACE

## VENTURE + GROWTH INVESTORS



## CORPORATE



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The greatest opportunities in gaming today lie at the intersection of **robust social experiences** and **in-game economies powered by blockchain technology**.

3

The metaverse is an expression of a decades-long **transition of human interaction and entertainment to interactive virtual worlds** found in multiplayer games.

2

Game distribution is undergoing a massive shift toward **cross-platform, free-to-play or subscription-based, and on-demand content** driven by rapid innovation in cloud infrastructure.

4

Investors should be wary of blockchain games with poor underlying gameplay. **Highly engaging games with thoughtful features will always win in the long-term and at scale.**



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# THANK YOU.

For inquiries, please reach out [rohan@valhalla.ventures](mailto:rohan@valhalla.ventures).

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