

Fortnite Knowledge Organiser

COMPONENT 1: SECTION B: VIDEO GAMES : AUDIENCE – INDUSTRY - CONTEXTS

What you need to know:

Product Context – historical, social/cultural, political

Media Industries:

- The impact of technologies and convergence
- The importance of different funding models
- The regulation of video games
- The video game industry and Epic games
- Advertising, marketing/promotion, synergy

Audiences:

- The way in which Epic games targets their audience
- Uses and gratifications theory – Bulmer and Katz
- Preferred/negotiated/oppositional reading
- Passive vs. active audiences
- Primary and secondary audiences

Social and Cultural Contexts

- The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s.
- In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.
- Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 Ultima Online became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters. 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

Supporting Theories

Bartle's Taxonomy – Killer, achiever, socialiser, explorer

Blumer and Katz's Uses and Gratification Theory – information/education, entertainment, personal identity, integration and social interaction, escapism

Terminology:

Industry
Institution
Exclusivity
Regulation
Ratings
Active/passive audience
Technological convergence
Cross media convergence
Synergy
Intertextuality



Regulation

- In 2012 the PEGI system was incorporated into UK law and The Video Standards Council was appointed as the statutory body responsible for the age rating of video games in the UK using the PEGI system.
- Fortnite has the PEGI rating of 12 for “frequent scenes of mild violence”. It seems that parents are more concerned with issues surrounding addiction than the levels of violence.

Targeting Audiences

Fortnite has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.

Context:

- Produced by Epic games, launched in 2017
- The Fortnite franchise had revenue of £2.4 billion in 2018 and the franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
- In terms of genre, Fortnite could be considered as fusion of battle games (like Battlegrounds) and construction games (like Minecraft).

Technological Convergence

One of the things that have made Fortnite so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of technological convergence.

Synergy

Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

Cross Media Convergence

- Fortnite is also a good example of cross-media convergence, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. Fortnite is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
- It has also incorporated other media brands and franchises. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special Avengers: Infinity War segment and recently a tie-in with Godzilla.