CUSTOMER TO CUSTOMER CO-CREATION IN GAMING: UNDERSTANDING GENERATION Z PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

By studying the connection between play and co-creation in the service sector, this research seeks to understand how online gaming behaviours might influence business tactics. Portugal was the site of the study, which employed a qualitative methodology. Seven separate companies were interviewed for it. Based on the findings, businesses can use playful co-creation tactics to their advantage and boost their market competitiveness. The research shows that there are pros and cons to this approach. Ultimately, it increases competitiveness and helps fill in knowledge gaps by illuminating how enterprises in peripheral places, like Portugal, can utilise play and co-creation to strengthen their commercial processes.

Keywords: Gamification, Co-creation, Companies, Marketing, Peripheral Region

INTRODUCTION

Gaming in today's dynamic digital entertainment industry is more than simply a hobby; it's a hub for collaboration, social interaction, and innovation. Members of Generation Z, the first to have grown up with the internet at their fingertips, exemplify this shift by being a population who find meaning in nothing more than engaging in digital expression and technology. Gaming is more than simply a pastime for members of Generation Z; it's a medium for self-expression, social connection, and deep thought-provoking discourse. At its core, this change is based on customer-to-customer (C2C) co-creation, a collaborative process where consumers actively participate in crafting their own gaming experiences. In contrast to traditional techniques, when developers and publishers were the only entities involved in game production, consumer-to-consumer co-creation empowers players to take an active role in the gaming ecosystem as creators, influencers, and participants. Those working in the gaming industry

would do well to familiarise themselves with Generation Z's preferences and habits in this space, particularly as it pertains to C2C co-creation. The members of Generation Z have the potential to completely transform the gaming business due to their exceptional technological skills, creative thinking, and strong sense of collaboration.

This in-depth study intends to explore the intricacies of C2C co-creation in gaming, with a focus on Gen Z activities. Investigating collaborative dynamics, technological options, cultural effects, and ethical issues can help us understand this phenomenon and create a gaming community where co-creation is both welcome and long-lasting. This initiative aims to inspire stakeholders to collaborate, brainstorm, and engage in discourse by highlighting the potential for C2C co-creation in the game business. Recognising and embracing the creative potential of Gen Z players can help us bridge gaps and create the future of gaming.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A major trend in the gaming industry in recent years has been community-based collaboration (C2C), in which gamers work together to create games. This shift is especially apparent among members of Generation Z, who are well-known for their affinity for digital communication and technological prowess. This literature review will gather and examine prior research on player-versus-player (PvP) co-creation in video games to have a better grasp of Gen Z gamers' behaviours and routines.

Understanding in-game client-side co-creation
Researchers have grown to value C2C. in co-creation games more and more as an evolving process that goes beyond traditional consumer-producer relationships. Huizingh (2011) defines co-creation in games as the group effort of players to create value in a digital environment, highlighting the participatory and collaborative nature of the process. This perspective is consistent with the broader co-creation literature that stresses the significance of consumers' active engagement in the value creation and exchange process (Prachad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

Gen Z and video game culture
Game play, group projects, and daily habits were all shaped by the unique digital components of Generation Z's education. Having sprung from a very technologically developed society

Gen Zers are well-known for their originality, social intelligence, and tech savvy, particularly when it comes to navigating online networks (Seemiller and Grace, 2016). They enjoy gaming for the many ways it facilitates self-expression, social interaction, and narrative immersion (Lenhart et al., 2018). The beliefs, preferences, and behaviours of Generation Z are crucial in gaming contexts where co-creation is taking place.

Motivating and Educating Future Gamers
The study found that many features prompted Generation Z players to work together. For example, Yee (2006) claims that gamers are more inclined to cooperate due to their interest in reaching objectives, connecting with other players, and being totally

absorbed in the game. Members of Generation Z engage in many forms of co-creation inside gaming communities, as stated by Kücklich (2005). Among these actions are the creation, playback, and editing of user-generated content. Participation in these events not only enhances the gaming experience, but also helps players develop a sense of self, gain confidence, and feel satisfaction in their accomplishments.

Impacts on the console gaming industry

The growth of consumer-to-consumer co-creation among millennials has far-reaching consequences for the gaming business. Game publishers and developers must adapt their strategies to meet the increasing need for personalisation, personalisation, and community involvement, argue Hamari and Lehdonvirta (2010). By embracing co creation as a strategy to foster innovation, creativity, and consumer loyalty, businesses can harness the knowledge and enthusiasm of Gen Z gamers to power product creation and marketing initiatives.

Research Objective

Using Gen Z players as a case study, this research delves into the rising tide of C2C co-creation in the gaming industry. The millennial generation is revolutionising the gaming business by transforming it from a spectator sport to an interactive one through collaboration and collective imagination. This shift is driven by their internet-savvy upbringing.

Many forms of co-creation in games are practiced by gamers of Generation Z

Professional Modders Creating and Sharing Custom Content Reimagining WorldsLevel architects are experts at making one-of-a-kind video game levels that push the boundaries and give players something new.

Story Weavers and Art Alchemists Enhancing the gaming universe through fan-created art, strategy, and narratives.Symphony in Streaming Cooperative gaming experiences where spectators influence in-game choices through the use of streaming platforms.

Gen Z's co-creation activities are driven by a desire to have an impact in the gaming playground by designing experiences they like, by the thrill of self-expression, and by the power of collaboration.

Tools within games, virtual communities, social media, and live-streaming platforms like Twitch and YouTube Gaming allow members of Generation Z to collaborate on projects.

In addition to the impact of individual players, co-creation is altering the gaming business by boosting player engagement and loyalty, allowing user-generated material to transform game worlds, and creating dynamic, ever-changing gaming experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study explores the ways in which Generation Z (Gen Z) is influencing the gaming scene through customer-to-customer (C2C) co-creation. It employs a mixed-methodologies strategy, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, to fully comprehend Gen Z's co-creation endeavours.

Exploring the aspirations, challenges, and collaborative spirit of Gen Z creators is done through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and ethnography. Going to gaming events and doing
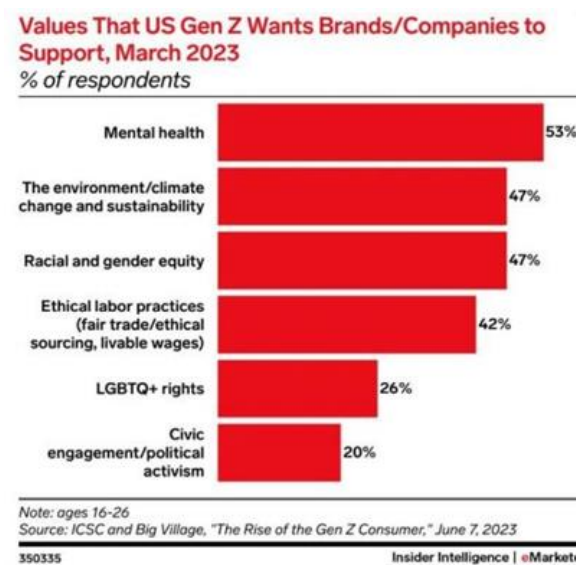
online ethnography can teach them more about their home environment. By analysing social media data and conducting online polls, we can objectively map out the co-creation landscape among gamers from Generation Z. The article identifies trends, popular platforms, and their impacts on gaming experiences.

Aiming to provide a thorough understanding of Gen Z's co-creation processes and their influence on the game business, this study integrates qualitative and quantitative data. Ethical concerns guarantee the privacy and secrecy of participants. Some caveats are acknowledged in the study, such as the fact that it only looked at Generation Z and the fact that online data gathering could have been biassed. Nevertheless, it does suggest a few directions for future research, such as studies that compare and contrast co-creation methods across age groups and game types, and studies that track the evolution of Gen Z's co-creation techniques.

Information Retrieval • Statistical Procedures • Qualitative Data Analysis • Quantitative Data Analysis • Data Transformation into Knowledge

DATA ANALYSIS

Values that US Gen Z wants Brands/Companies to port, March 2023

Select daily media activities conducted by US Genz Vs Total Adults, March 2023

Gen Z consumers discover and buy products.

Traditional channels such as retail and e-commerce also play a big influence in Generation Z's purchasing patterns, according to EMARKETTER's research The Purchase Journey.., however social media and influencer marketing have a higher impact.

• A recent survey by EMARKETTER found that people are more likely to learn about new products through social media, particularly in the beauty,

health, and personal care industries. Store perusal and personal recommendations also play a role in people's product discovery processes.

Instagram and TikTok are the places where members of Generation Z look for new things to buy. Members of Generation Z frequently search for new brands and products through influencer-created content, such as videos.
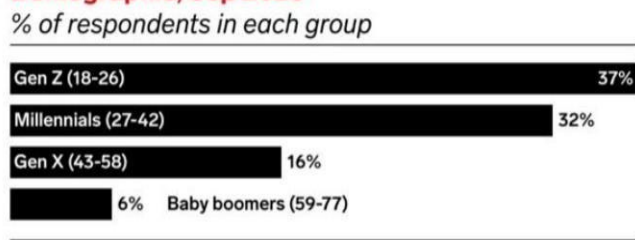
• Members of Generation Z and Millennials are less inclined to utilise aggregator shopping apps and websites, but they are more likely to discover new products on official brand websites.

Generation Z is known for being pickier consumers that give careful consideration to their purchases, in contrast to other generations.

Generation Z has shown remarkable resilience in the face of digital disruption by continuing to favour in-store shopping, even in product categories where social media plays a major role in discovery.

Based on EMARKETTER's US Gen Z Social Media poll from July 2023, TikTok and Instagram are the top two social commerce platforms. This is due to the fact that customer reviews and opinions can be easily gathered through social networks. When contacting Feger.

US Adults Who Used Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) to Make at Least One Purchase Recently*, by Demographic, Sep 2023

% of respondents in each group

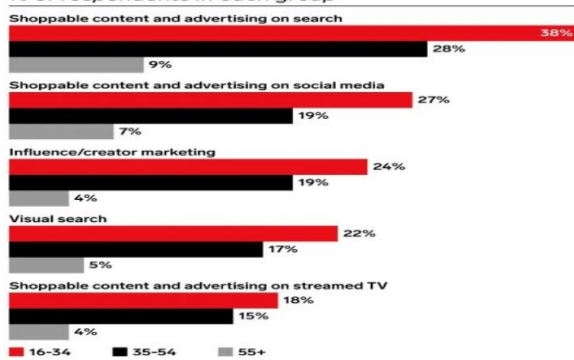| Group	%
Gen Z (18-26)	37%
Millennials (27-42)	32%
Gen X (43-58)	16%
Baby boomers (59-77)	6%

Note: *August 2023
Source: Morning Consult as cited in company blog, Sep 26, 2023
283316 Insider Intelligence | eMarketer

A chart showing US adults who used BNPL to make at least one purchase, by demographic, September 2023.

FINDINGS

1. Understanding the full scope of this issue requires insight into what Gen Z behaviours teach us about the boundaries of C2C co-creation in video games. The following limitations are worth considering

2. Technical Difficulties Gen Z gamers may face difficulties fully engaging in co-creation activities because of technical difficulties, such as differences in hardware capabilities or a lack of software or tools.

3. Gen Zers may have a hard time fitting regular participation in co-creation activities into their schedules owing to their many social, scholastic, and employment commitments.

4. Communication Challenges Gen Z gamers could have trouble collaborating because of language barriers, difficulties explaining complex ideas, and misconceptions.

5. Fourth, Diversity in Skill Levels Members of Generation Z may bring vastly diverse skill sets to group initiatives, which could hinder cooperation and lead to misunderstandings.

6. It can be challenging for members to collaborate constructively and bring in new members

UK/US Consumers Who Have Seen/Purchased an Item Through Select Types of Shoppable Ads, by Age, Aug 2023

% of respondents in each group

Shoppable content and advertising on search
38% / 28% / 9%

Shoppable content and advertising on social media
27% / 19% / 7%

Influence/creator marketing
24% / 19% / 4%

Visual search
22% / 17% / 5%

Shoppable content and advertising on streamed TV
18% / 15% / 4%

16-34 | 35-54 | 55+

spent in retail, per EMARKETER's forecast. (Gen1)

when gaming communities are poisonous or excessively exclusive.

7.   Sixth, Platform Restrictions By placing limits on user-generated content, mod support, and compatibility, platforms can restrict the creative freedom in co-creation.

8.   Be cautious with matters of permission, intellectual property rights, and plagiarism if you wish to maintain the integrity and trustworthiness of gaming communities. This brings us to our seventh point consider the ethics.

9.   Eighth, the digital divide low-income Gen Zers may have less access to resources like gaming computers and fast internet, making it harder for them to join online communities.

10.   Security and Privacy Concerns Gen Z gamers run the danger of cyber threats, abuse, and privacy breaches when they collaborate online.

11.   Gen Z co-creators may feel undervalued or unloved in the gaming community, despite the fact that they have made several contributions.

12.   When it comes to building inclusive co-creation experiences, it's truly essential to understand Gen Z gamers' distinct interests, habits, and expectations. This is particularly true when compared to other groups.

13.   Data collected from certain gaming communities may not be representative of the gaming population overall, thus researchers should be careful.

14.   The cultural norms, legislative frameworks, and regional preferences of Gen Z gamers, as well as their locations, can have a significant impact on the ways in which they participate in game co-creation.

15.   That is why it is crucial to carefully consider C2C co-creation in gaming and to adapt theory and practice accordingly in view of these limitations.

Conclusion

Get a handle on customer-to-customer (C2C) collaboration if you want to tap into Gen Z gamers' full creative potential. Despite their enthusiasm and technical prowess, they are unable to collaborate efficiently in the gaming industry due to issues with time management, communication, and technical issues. To solve these issues, stakeholders should prioritise accessibility, innovation, and community participation. The gaming industry should provide Gen Z with resources, help, and incentives for recognition if it wants to encourage inclusivity and creativity in gaming. They will be able to shape the gaming industry's future in this way.

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