



Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association

Computer and Video Games: important facts at your fingertips

In 2004 the UK computer and video games industry recorded sales in excess of £2 billion (€2.9 billion) for the third year running. Sales of entertainment and leisure software across all formats totalled £1.34 billion (€1.97 billion) - an increase of 6.6 per cent over 2003's record figures - consolidating the industry's position as one of the fastest growers in the entertainments sector.

(Source: Chart-Track)

The games industry is one of the UK's industrial success stories with latest figures (2003) showing a positive balance of trade close to £200m - up from £186m in 2000. This compares to the UK film and TV industries which recorded negative balances of £282m and £553m respectively. (Source: Screen Digest)

The UK continues to be the largest market in Europe and is the third largest individual market in the world, after the US and Japan. The world market has more than tripled in value over the last ten years and in 2004 was valued at over \$21 billion.

(Source: Screen Digest)

There are 24.23 million households in the UK of which 52 per cent have internet access (Q4, 2004), while the UK population sits at just under 60 million. According to latest figures, there are 20.8 million consoles and games handhelds in UK homes. In the last 10 years, more than 335 million units of leisure software have been sold in the UK, which equates to over five titles per head of population. (Source: Office of National Statistics/Screen Digest/Chart-Track)

The UK distribution of games has been strictly regulated by a voluntary system since 1994. Every game carries an age rating on the box, providing guidance to ensure consumers can make informed choices, especially when buying for children. The success of the UK voluntary system created by ELSPA led to the introduction of the Europe-wide PEGI system in 2003. In the UK under the Video Recordings Act of 1984, BBFC ratings also apply.

In the 12 months from January 2004 to end December 2004, 827 computer and video games were published. Of these, 27 were referred to the British Board of Film Classification under the Video Recordings Act (1984) and 17 were rated as BBFC 18+. Over 96% of all games released are exempt from mandatory classification and receive age ratings from the industry's voluntary PEGI system.

(Source: Video Standards Council)

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In the last 10 years the Entertainment Software Charity, the industry's official charity, has raised over £10 million; has funded the building of an Academy in central London; and has helped 15 schools around the UK to achieve Specialist School status.

In 2004 it was estimated that counterfeiting and piracy cost the UK video games industry in excess of £2 billion at retail value. ELSPA's anti-piracy unit carried out over 10 raids every week in its efforts to stem the tide of piracy in the UK. (Source: ELSPA)

A Home Office five year research study published in 2001 found that those who play computer and video games regularly are more likely to be academically successful, are more likely to go to University and subsequently have better employment prospects.

Latest figures for 2004 show that the video games industry employs over 22,000 people - in development, distribution, retail, printing and other support areas - making it by far the largest software employment field in Europe. (Source: Screen Digest)

GTA: San Andreas notched up one million units in just nine days in October 2004, making it the fastest selling video game of all time. Grand Theft Auto is the biggest selling game series in the world. GTA is developed and produced in the UK by Rockstar North and published by American company Take 2 Interactive, whose European HQ is in Windsor, Berkshire. (Source: Chart-Track)

The UK's top 10 selling games in 2004 were:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS | TAKE 2 |
| 2. FIFA 2005 | ELECTRONIC ARTS |
| 3. NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 2 | ELECTRONIC ARTS |
| 4. THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN | VIVENDI |
| 5. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4 | KONAMI |
| 6. SONIC HEROES | SEGA UK |
| 7. SPIDER-MAN 2 | ACTIVISION |
| 8. NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND | ELECTRONIC ARTS |
| 9. HALO 2 | MICROSOFT |
| 10. DRIV3R | ATARI |

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