



What people think,
feel and do

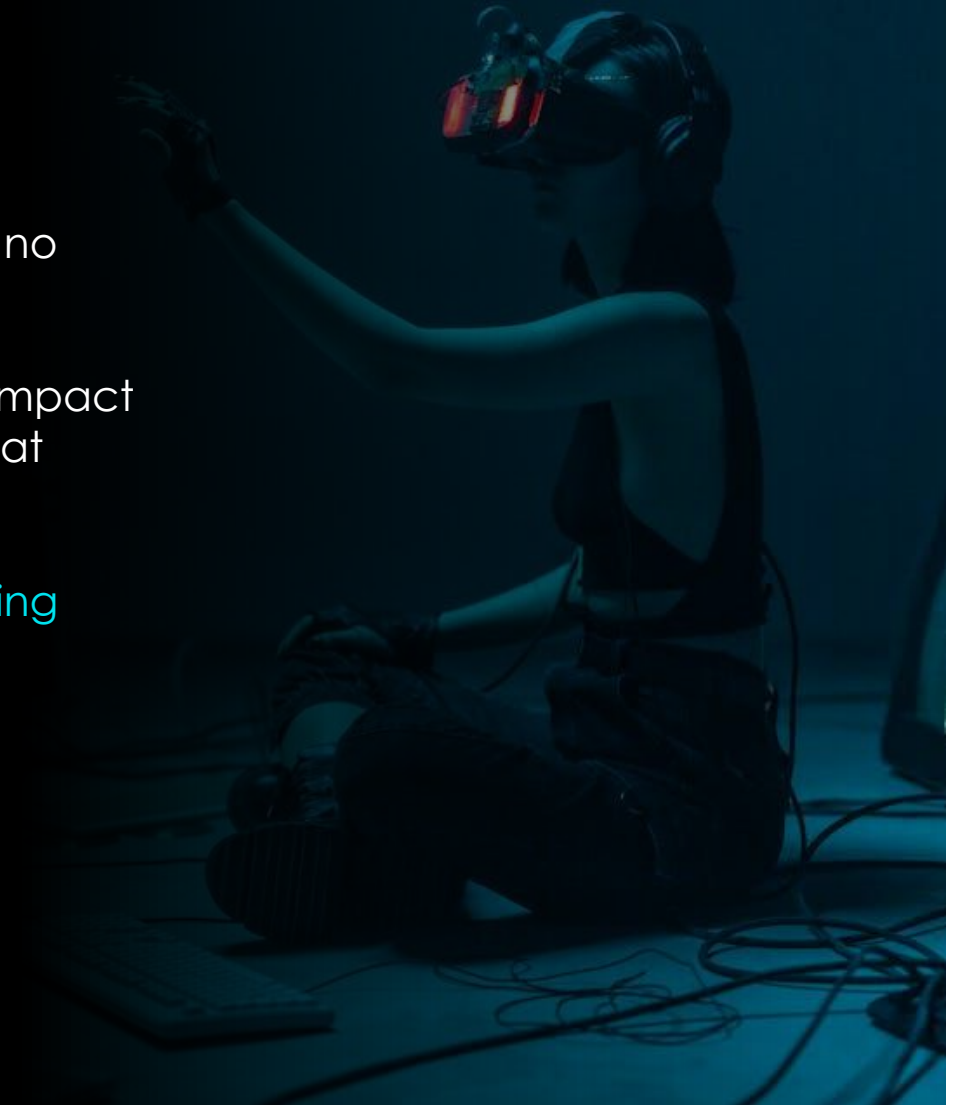
Using AI to understand AI in Gaming – Very Meta!



The use of AI is a divisive topic, and within the gaming industry this is no different.

The Opinium Research in Gaming team wanted to understand the impact AI is having on gamers and their experiences. Will AI be the next great innovation in gaming, or a disruptive force that alienates players?

To do this we thought – [Why not use AI to understand AI in the Gaming Industry?](#)



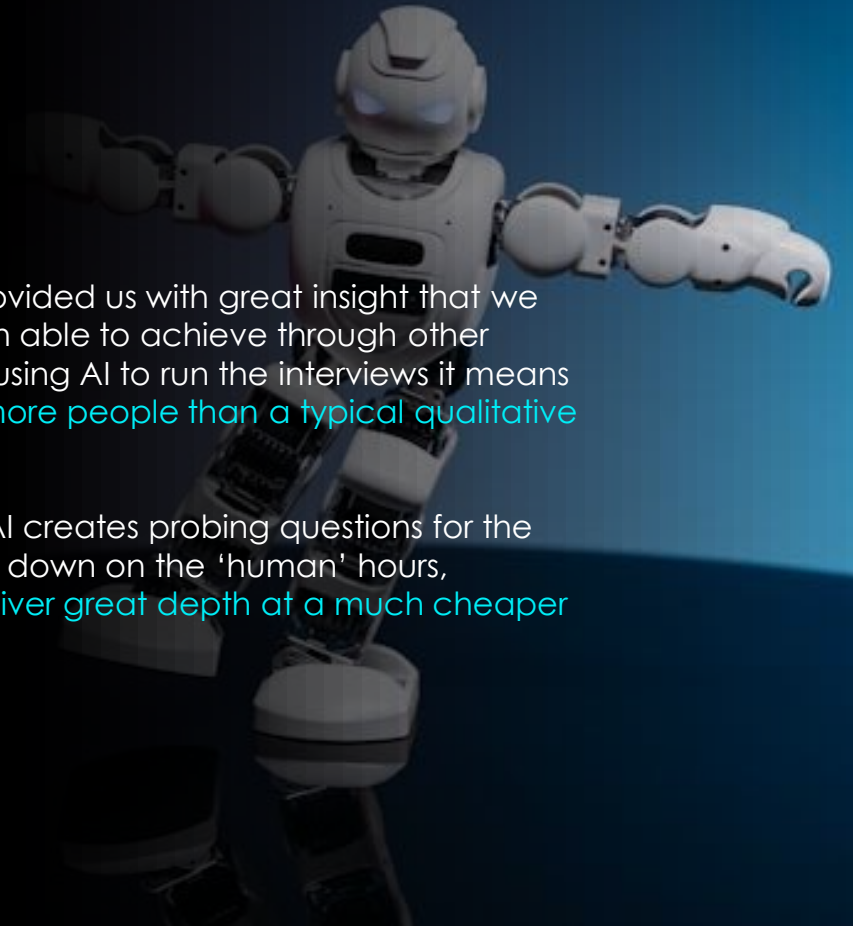
We used AI interviewing to combine the robustness of quantitative research with the depth of qualitative insight

Participants took part in an [AI-assisted interview](#) about the use of gaming in AI, responding to set questions and tailored follow-up probes.

AI interviewing fills the gap between [quantitative and qualitative research](#), providing robust yet detailed insights.

This methodology provided us with great insight that we would not have been able to achieve through other methods. As we are using AI to run the interviews it means we can [include far more people than a typical qualitative study](#).

Furthermore, as the AI creates probing questions for the participants, this cuts down on the 'human' hours, meaning we can [deliver great depth at a much cheaper price](#).



Will AI be the next great innovation in gaming, or a disruptive force that alienates players?

AI is reshaping the gaming landscape. As this technology evolves, so too does the way we play.

AI is continually integrated into game development and gameplay, but how do players feel about this technological shift?

To truly understand the future of gaming, we must first understand how players perceive the AI that powers their experiences.

And so, we spoke to **hardcore gamers** to investigate:



Their awareness of AI's role in gaming



How they believe AI is currently shaping the gaming experience



Their expectations and concerns regarding AI's future in gaming

An overview of what we did...



50

hardcore gamers completed an AI-assisted interview

The interview consisted of 7 core questions. The AI agent asked 2 follow up questions to each of the core questions set.

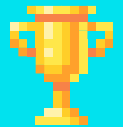
A 'hardcore gamer' was defined as those playing online games for a **minimum of 10 hours a week**

All were between 19 and 48 years old.



45 interviews were completed within **24 hours** of launching the project.

The **average length** of the interview was **50 minutes**.



Nuanced conversation



Voice notes provide emotional depth

Quick qualitative insights



Cost-effective to scale



What we learnt:

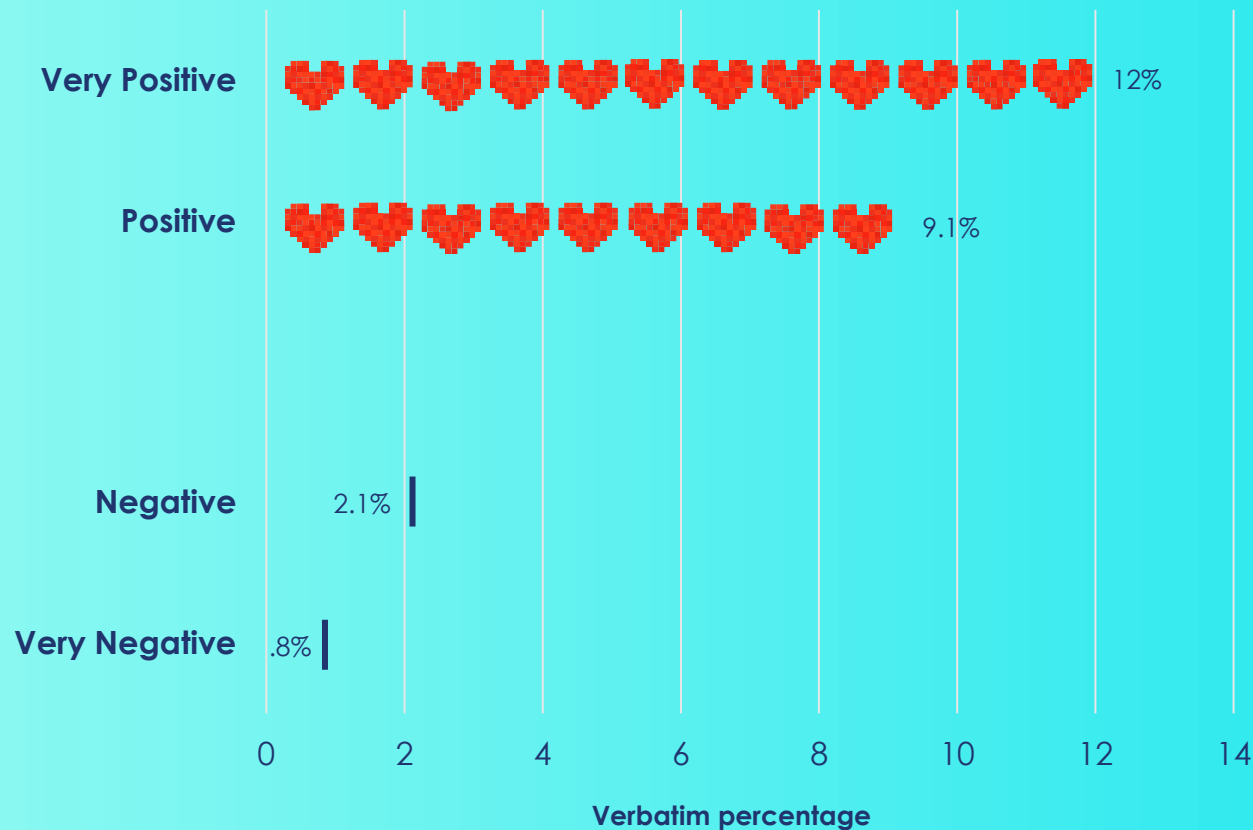
Overall sentiment is positive, gamers are excited about the future of AI in gaming...

- 1. Gamers celebrate more immersive and dynamic in-gaming experiences**
- 2. AI has a role in 'scaling up' games**
- 3. And in making gameplay fairer**

But...

- 4. AI implementation is inconsistent and could also bias in game experiences**
- 5. AI could erode authenticity, if not managed correctly**
- 6. Job loss across the industry is a concern**
- 7. There are concerns about the data utilised by AI models**

Overall sentiment towards AI in gaming is positive



Using a comparative analysis tool, we compared the sentiment across the verbatim collected to identify how gamers felt when discussing AI in gaming

21% of the sentiment behind verbatim was positive compared to **3%** negative

KEY TAKEOUT 1

Gamers are excited about richer in-game experiences

AI is causing a buzz amongst hardcore gamers. It's already here – and they appreciate (and are looking forward to even more) complex characters, immersive story-telling and tailored gaming experiences.

AI can be used to:

Develop NPC characters
to have live unscripted
conversations

Provide more emotional
context in conversations
so they feel realistic

Learn & respond to
gameplay to provide
consequences

In turn, this could boost peoples' mental health: Gaming provides a significant social role for many. A few hardcore gamers said that more realistic conversation could help people feel "less lonely", as they'd be able to develop more realistic companionship.

"A lot of the time, **games can feel quite wooden** because the world is ever-evolving. You'll have an NPC and he's got a relationship to let's say another character, that maybe in the game you have to kill that character, but they haven't programmed any voice lines in for that. So it feels a bit odd because you've got this guy and **you've done something which you'd think would have an effect but actually doesn't.** With **AI, you can have so many different variations of dialogue**, and you can generate that on the fly. So it would make the game feel a lot more alive, it would **make NPCs feel a lot more alive. It's actually a huge, huge aspect.**"

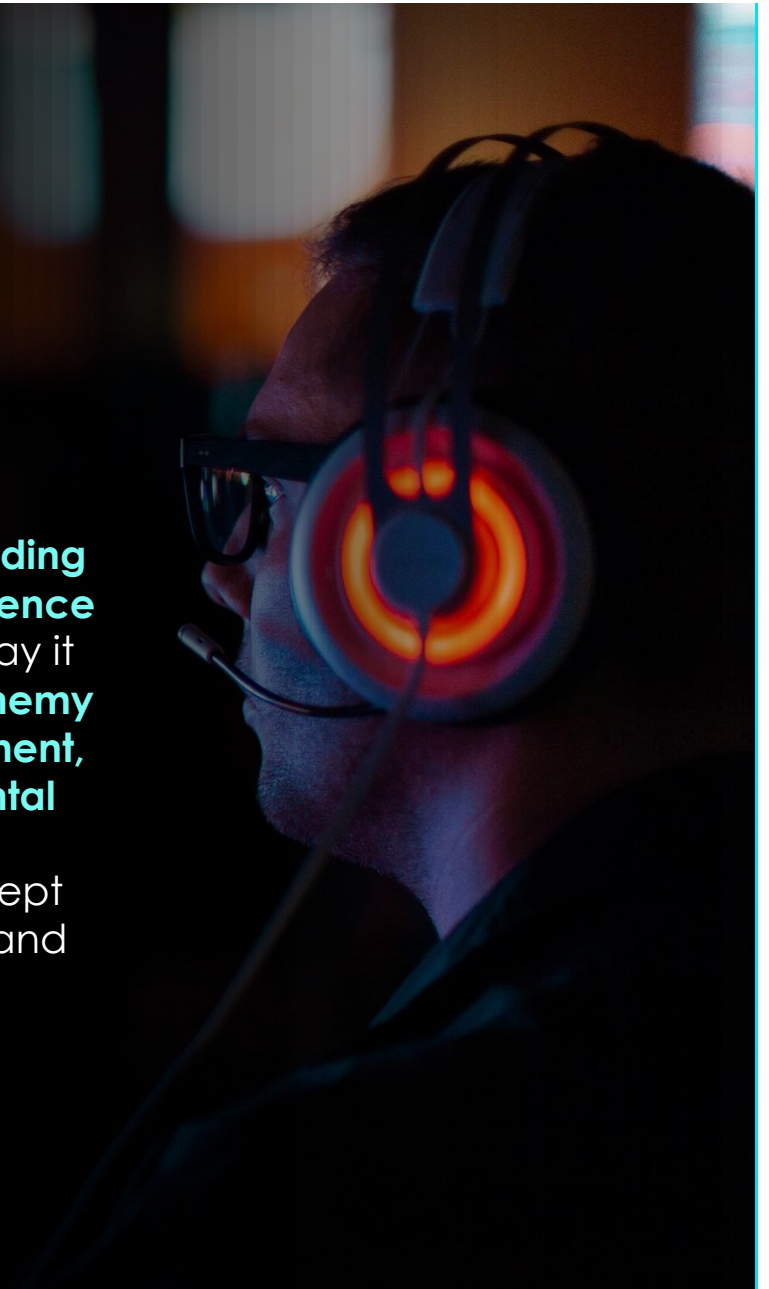


CASE STUDY

AI making gameplay more immersive

"In The Last Of Us, I recalled a moment where AI-driven interaction with enemies impacted my gameplay experience. As I navigated through a tense, abandoned building, **the enemy AI dynamically responded to my movement and tactics**. It communicated, coordinated search patterns, and **reacted realistically to distractions and threats**. This abductive behaviour also **heightened the tension and required strategic thinking, making each encounter feel intense and emotionally engaging**. The AI's **realism and unpredictability contributed to the immersive and challenging gameplay** of The Last Of Us for me."

"In Left 4 Dead, the AI director's **adaptive recording made a significant difference** in my experience. The way it **dynamically adjusted enemy spawns, the item placement, and also the environmental conditions** based on our team's performance, it kept each playthrough fresh and challenging."



KEY TAKEOUT 2

AI can be used to 'scale up' games

AI can also help gamers get more out of their gameplay, potentially offering people **more bang for their buck**.

AI has the potential to offer better value for money through:

More variety in map & level design offering a wider range of experiences

Limitless creation & randomisation offering different routes to players

These features would enhance the re-playability of games.

"I think the positives of using AI in gaming would be the fact that **it's almost limitless creation**. Any idea, providing the instruction is accurate and specific, **any idea can be turned into an actuality.**"



KEY TAKEOUT 3

AI can support fairer game play

Hardcore gamers see AI having a role in making game play fairer, on both a single-player and multi-player level, **facilitating better engagement** with games that they already play.

AI can be used to:

Adjust level difficulty to
player skill

Identify instances of
cheating

Improving accessibility
through the creation of
additional features

"You can have balanced AI that responds in a single-player game to the characters, well the player's ability or inability to actually play the game, and I think that would make the game feel more fair."

"AI-powered tools can make game playing more fair by identifying skilful players and matching them with opponents that are also as skilful as them to make it more fair. So AI-powered tools can also identify cheating in games and take appropriate action."

"AI has a positive impact on the tenets of gaming, because **proper implementation of AI, can lead to balance difficult levels**, so the different levels can be adjusted based on different player skills. If one is a beginner or if one is a pro player also, it can lead to better **skill-based matchmaking**, so the algorithms of the AI can help players of similar skill sets, especially on multiplayer games, to be in a similar match."



AI is seen to be key in improving inclusivity in gaming

"I'm a big advocate of equity, fairness, and equality, and I see AI helping in that aspect. **AI can make the gaming experience equal for everybody** involved, and it's doing it in its only two ways. We've seen recent examples of how the use of AI and the integration of AI is helping diversity, it's helping fairness, it's helping inclusion and equity"

"I think of how AI can improve the gaming experience of most consumers in areas like NPC, streamlining the whole game development process and also improving disability – **adding more disability features and improving the whole gaming experience**"

However, gamers acknowledge that AI is inherently biased and so agree that robust testing is needed to refine experiences & ensure they are age and ability-appropriate (esp. by gamers aged 25+)



KEY TAKEOUT 4

Conversely AI could make gaming harder

A few raised concerns over the poor implementation of AI.

If the algorithms don't work effectively, AI could **bias play** and lead to **repetitive, "lazy" games** and/or more difficult gaming.

Risks of AI:

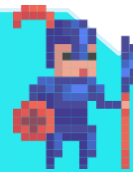
Uneven matchups

Predictable play

AI algorithm leading to de-personalised experiences

"If **AI-controlled opponents are too predictable**, this could cause an unfair advantage for some players."

"...you're starting to **see people as numbers**. It won't be as personalised, probably. I'm guessing the law of averages would apply, so people that are looking for more individual experiences eventually will get a **generic experience**."



KEY TAKEOUT 5

AI can simultaneously enhance and erode authenticity

Hardcore gamers have **high expectations for quality graphics, artwork and scripts.**

On one hand...

- AI can enhance graphics, making the gaming worlds feel more life-like.
- AI can create better scripts that reflect real-world scenarios and have more realistic consequences
- Male gamers were especially focused on how AI improves visual aesthetics and performances of games.



... on the other hand

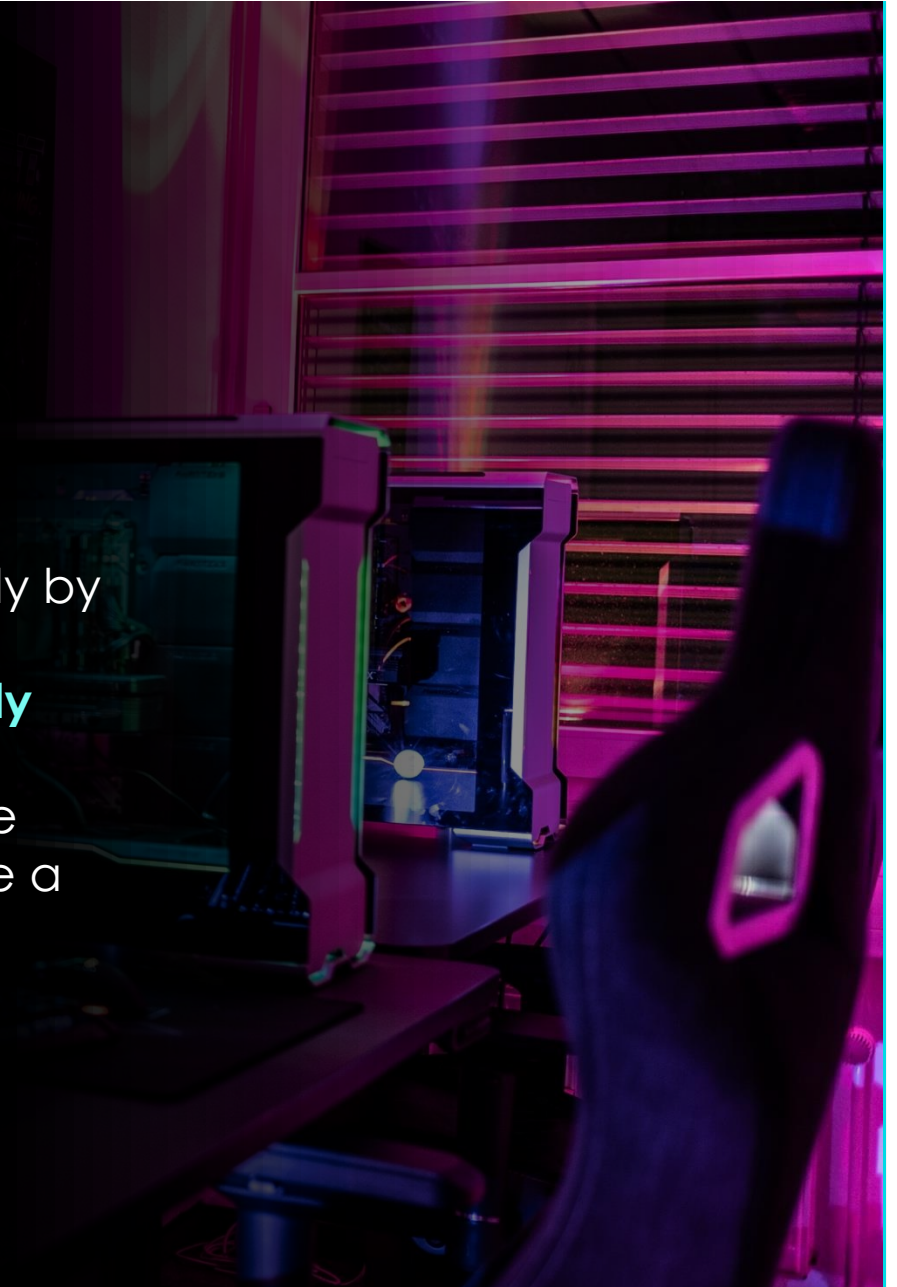
- It's felt that a human touch is needed to maintain outputs. Some are disappointed with what AI has created.
- "I mean, you could use **AI to generate some images**, you know, to get an idea, but not of a human artist. I mean, **maybe in the future it'll be good enough**, but I mean, **there's a big uproar about that, it didn't look good.**"



CASE STUDY

FIFA is delivering more authenticity through AI

“[AI], **it's fantastic**, it makes the **experience realistic and enjoyable** because you are being challenged and not only by a computer system but you're also seeing that the way it's being created with certain players, **not only looking exactly like the real humans but also playing like the real humans might**, following their either tricks or skills ability has become extremely realistic and the engaging part of it has become a lot more enjoyable.”



KEY TAKEOUT 6

There is wide-spread concern about industry job loss

AI is seen as an appropriate resource replacement for **repetitive tasks, such as fixing bugs.**

But hardcore gamers worry about the longer-term consequences of **replacing creatives** on the quality of the games they play.

They are also **concerned with the fair treatment of artists** for their contribution.

↘ *These concerns were especially prevalent in hardcore gamers aged 25+*

"Human writers and designers bring a level of creativity, emotional depth, and **unique perspective that AI cannot replicate.**"



"The obvious thing is if you're using AI to do the art and stuff, **you're not paying artists** and you're not using their work. There's a huge revolt – artists hate AI because AI will scour the Internet to get inspiration, and **it uses artists' work, but it doesn't credit them or give them any income.** It steals their work, reproduces it as AI, and then you never hired them, they never got any credit for it, even though their work was some way or another involved in the process of creating that product."



KEY TAKEOUT 7

There are some concerns about data used by AI models

A few hardcore gamers consider the ethical and privacy concerns and call for an **increased focus on data security and transparency**.

AI by its very nature relies on the collection of data to aid personalisation. They were **wary of AI models collecting personal data without explicit consent**.

"We could talk about data privacy, issues about how data are being used, **how player data is being used or are being kept** could arise, because AI needs a lot of data for training, so it could be an issue. The data privacy of the players could be an issue when it comes to applying AI in gaming."



"There are a **lot of concerns with privacy**, that's for sure. I mean, AI needs to **learn from the users**, even if it's – if they say it's anonymized, sometimes that **can't be trusted**."



In conclusion

- **Sentiment towards the use of AI in gaming is largely positive, and hardcore gamers have high hope for the continued innovation it will bring**
- **However, robust process (with human intervention) are needed to train the AI – without it, AI could lead to disappointing and generic experiences**
- **Hardcore gamers put a lot of value on the creative process and see a continued for artists and script writers.**

We used an innovative platform called Tellet

Tellet is an AI interview platform that conducts and analyses consumer research interviews.

Tellet uses AI to understand participant's answers and then creates probing questions asking participants to expand on the information they provided.

This is great new way to run research as it uses AI to fill the gap between traditional quantitative and qualitative research.



tellet



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feel and do

Thank you

For any queries or to access
a full interactive version of
the report, please contact:

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