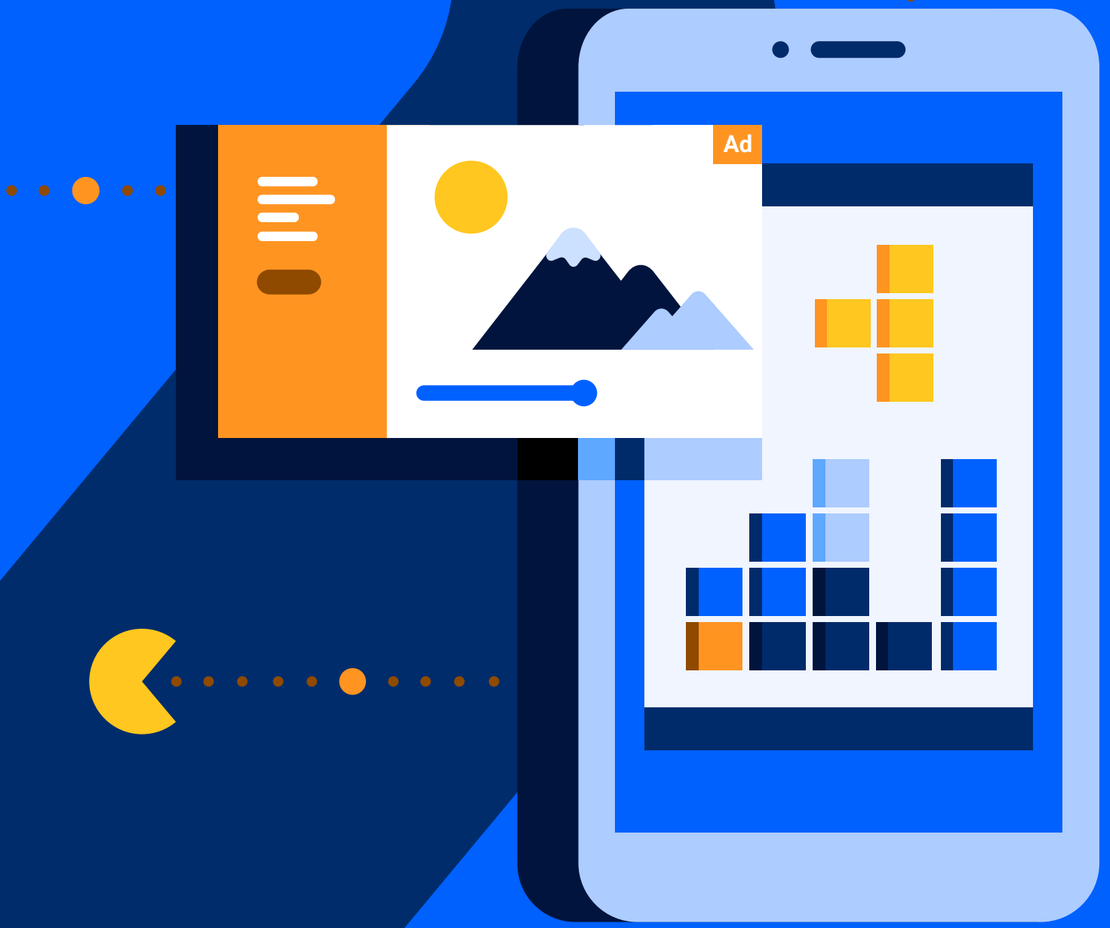


StackAdapt

The Programmatic In-Game Advertising Playbook

Contents

1 What is Programmatic In-Game Advertising

2 The In-Game Opportunity

3 The In-Game Advertising Audience

4 Benefits of In-Game Advertising

5 Intro to Blended In-Game Advertising

6 Blended In-Game Inventory

7 Blended In-Game Ad Units

8 Blended In-Game Advertising Tips

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

What is Programmatic In-Game Advertising

“Gamers” are now nearly synonymous with everyday consumers, and it’s time for advertisers to pay attention. There will be 179.6 million monthly gamers in the US this year—meaning more than half of the US population will identify as a digital gamer by the end of 2022.

This upward trend points to the growing opportunity to reach engaged audiences through in-game ads. In-game advertising enables ads to appear in mobile, computer, and video games. With blended in-game, ads are seamlessly integrated so they don’t interrupt gameplay.

The In-Game Opportunity

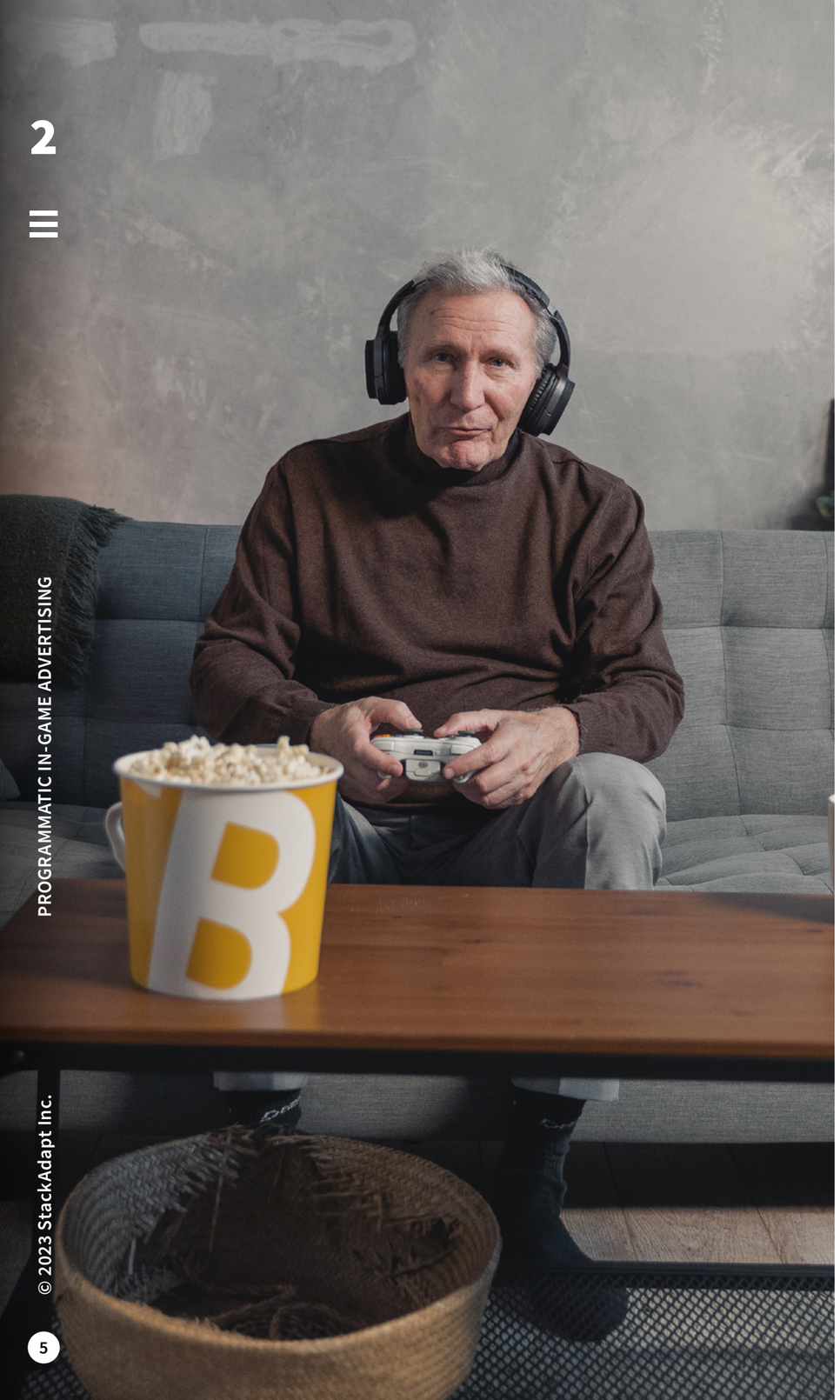
Gaming is a mainstream, social pastime that has become a global phenomenon. With over 3.1 billion gamers worldwide, the industry is now estimated to exceed $300 billion. In the US, more than half of homes have a gaming console, and 3 in 10 are planning to buy one in the next year. The increasing scale of the industry is exactly why advertisers should be taking note of gaming as a marketing channel.

With in-game advertising, marketers have an opportunity to tap into this expansive, and growing audience. Because gaming is an emerging programmatic channel, advertisers have the unique opportunity to experiment with new strategies to reach engaged audiences.

The gaming audience is larger than that of Netflix, Disney Plus, HBO, Hulu, and ESPN combined.

The nature of gaming makes it a particularly effective channel. In 2021, gamers spent about 8 hours and 27 minutes each week playing games, with an average session time of 1 hour and 20 minutes. During gameplay, users are so highly engaged and hyper-focused, they are rarely multi-tasking.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.



© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

The In-Game Advertising Audience

It’s a common stereotype that gaming is a niche activity. The reality? With gaming consoles and mobile phones so widely adopted, gaming is hugely popular and it’s widespread across all demographics and ages.

There’s no such thing as a ‘typical gamer.’

Because gaming is widespread, a one-size fits all targeting strategy doesn’t work when leveraging blended in-game advertising. To effectively reach and engage gamers, it’s important to use data and audience insights to understand who gamers are and how they are consuming digital media. Understanding your target users will provide you with the insights needed to build better audience targeting strategies.

THE IN-GAME ADVERTISING AUDIENCE

In 2021, gamers spent about 8 hours and 27 minutes each week playing games.

52% of gamers in the US have a college education.

In 2021, 55% of gamers identified as male, and 45% identified as female.

Gamers have spending power; those who play 10+ hours a week have 2x more disposable income than non-gamers.

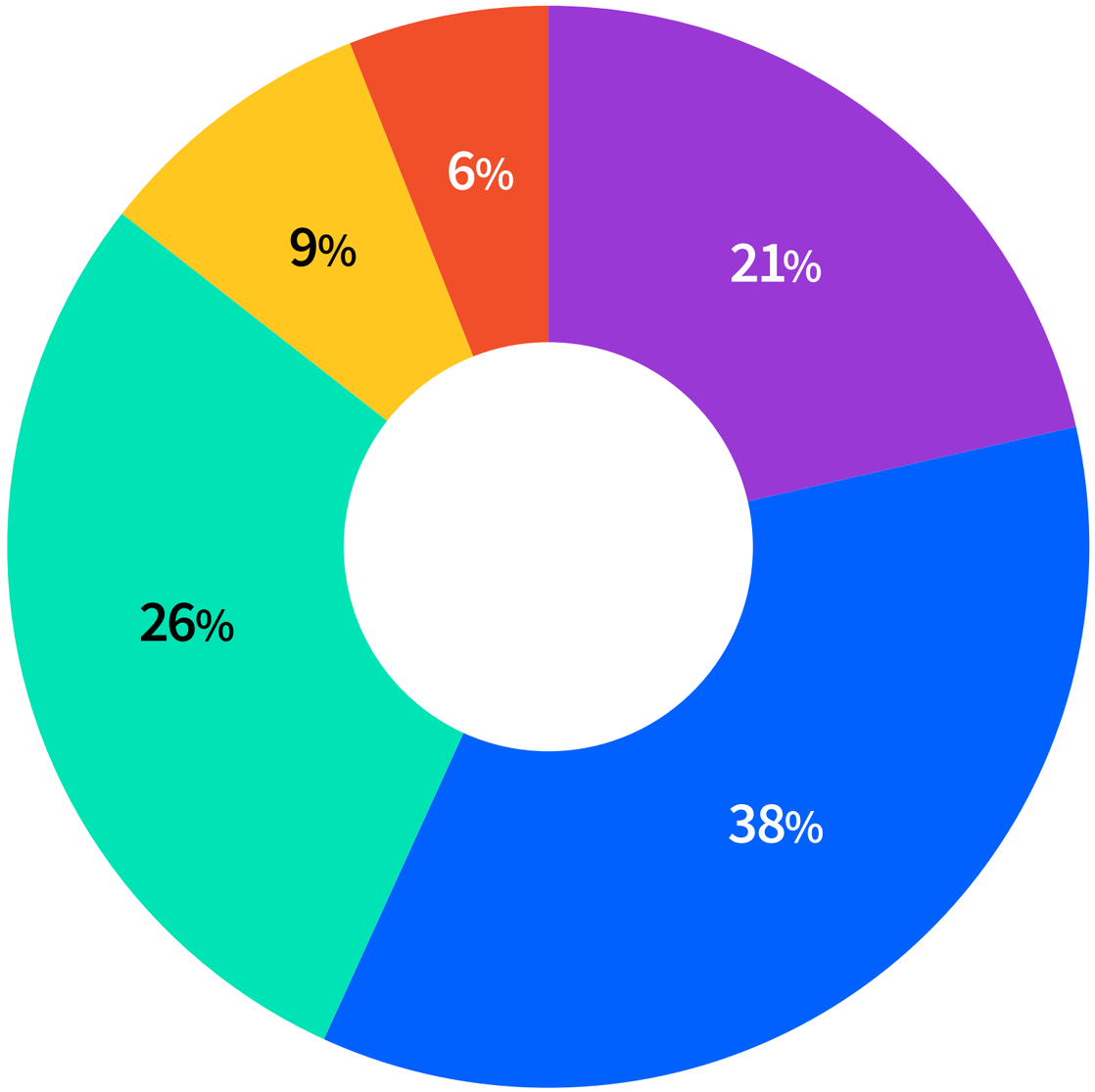
64% of US adults and 70% of those under 18 regularly play video games.

Gamers are savvy and influential. According to Anzu research, 51% of gamers advise others and 47% influence others.

92% of US parents pay attention to the games that their kids play.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

THE IN-GAME ADVERTISING AUDIENCE



Age Breakdown of Video Game Players

- Under 18
- 18–34
- 35–54
- 55–64
- 65+

Source: Entertainment Software Association

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

Benefits of In-Game Advertising

In-game advertising offers an opportunity to reach a growing and diverse audience. But this isn't the only benefit of leveraging this channel.

Reach Incremental Users

In-game advertising enables you to reach influential gaming audiences in an emerging industry. Gaming inventory is available across various genres and market-leading games including Nacon, Miniclip, Amanotes, Voodoo, Lion Castle, Ubisoft.

Engage a Captive Audience

In-game advertising helps you reach your target user in a non-disruptive, highly-viewable environment. You're able to connect your brand with a captive audience who is unlikely to be multitasking, which increases the likelihood of brand recall and awareness.

Explore New Strategies

Blended in-game advertising provides the opportunity to test unique ad formats that are exclusive to in-game environments. Plus, you can reach new audiences through emerging technologies.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

Intro to Blended In-Game Advertising

Modern gaming leverages different formats that use various types of technology. Gamers might use a PC, a gaming console, and even an augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) headset. Or, they might simply use their mobile phone or tablet to play. It's now possible to game using technology that is broadly accessible, which has helped grow the reach of gaming toward more generalized, less niche audiences. The variance of gaming applications also means that there are different ways to advertise in games. The phrase "in-game advertising" tends to refer to the broad spectrum of game ads.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

There are various types of in-game ads, but this ebook focuses on blended in-game advertising.

Blended In-Game

Blended in-game ads appear on in-game objects such as billboards, walls, jerseys, and more during gameplay. The goal of blended in-game advertising is to insert ads that get noticed without interrupting the player's enjoyment of the game. They are non-intrusive, highly viewable and drive high brand recall. Blended in-game ads can be delivered on gaming consoles, mobile devices, or on PCs.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

Blended In-Game Inventory

Programmatic advertising platforms that offer blended in-game inventory offer a number of opportunities. StackAdapt aims to provide the most exclusive and market-leading blended in-game inventory which can be run at scale, across impactful suppliers around the world.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

Blended In-Game Ad Units

The most common formats that are leveraged in a blended in-game ad campaign are display and video.

Display

Display ads are typically a designed image or a photo combined with copy. They should be eye-catching enough to attract the attention of a gamer, and they should deliver a quick message. Since display ads are often small, it’s important to clearly communicate a single message with a strong call to action (CTA). Note that CTAs cannot be clickable, so be sure to communicate concisely to the user how they can engage with you further.

Video

Video advertising is a great way to create an emotional connection to your brand. Since it’s a visual medium, it’s important to focus on a narrative that demonstrates your larger brand story. Rather than telling the audience why you’re the best product or service for them, show them how your values align with theirs.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

Blended In-Game Advertising Tips

There are a couple considerations to keep in mind when running a blended in-game advertising campaign. On this channel, it's important to optimize your ads for the gaming environment in order to maximize exposure and capture the attention of users. Creatives should be tailored to an in-game environment so that the messaging fits within an in-game context.

BLENDED IN-GAME ADVERTISING TIPS

1. **Use high contrast colours and avoid small details in your in-game ad creative. This way, ads are visible even from far away, which will help to increase ad exposure. Be sure to include your brand name or logo to help improve brand recognition and encourage brand affinity.**

2. **Don’t just include your brand’s logo, highlight it! Position the logo in a prominent spot within your creative design to make sure your brand is recognised by the gamer audience. According to Anzu, it’s good practice to ensure your logo takes up at least 30% of the space in the ad.**

3. **If your creative includes text, use a large font that is easy to read, and don’t include text effects. Keep the copy short and to the point. In the gaming environment, this will make it possible for users to quickly read the ad as they play.**

4. **Include a clear and actionable CTA that ensures the user doesn’t have to click, but informs them of what they should do next. For example, instead of saying “click here for more,” ad copy should say, “visit our site for more.”**

5. **Never interrupt an engaged gamer in their flow, and always make your advertising as relevant as possible to the environment.**

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

Ready to Play?

In-game advertising is offering brands an opportunity to develop relationships with a growing, influential, and diverse audience. By leveraging this emerging channel, brands can reach engaged, focused users to build brand awareness and loyalty. Adding this channel to your media mix now will help you get ahead of the game as this channel gains prominence.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.

StackAdapt

StackAdapt is a self-serve programmatic advertising platform used by the most exceptional digital marketers. This state-of-the-art platform is where some of the most progressive work in machine learning meets cutting-edge user experience. Ad buyers plan, execute, and manage data-driven digital advertising campaigns across all devices, inventory and publisher partners.

For more information, visit stackadapt.com.

© 2023 StackAdapt Inc.