CRIME STOPPERS CYBER SAFETY RESOURCE GUIDES:

Gaming

*We remain committed to our mission to **solve** and **prevent** serious crime in the Greater Houston Area.*

CRIME STOPPERS
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DRM: "Digital Rights Management." When a game has some form of DRM, that means there is software built in that is intended to protect against internet pirates.

EZ: "Easy" is a term that is often used in a derogatory manner to say a player had an easy time this match because their opposition was barely any competition. This can be used as cyberbullying

Griefer: A person who harasses or provokes other players on purpose to ruin their fun. This can be used as cyberbullying

HACKS/HACKZ/HAX: Cheating. If someone is consistently and skillfully killing other players, they are either very good or hacking. This can also refer to a cheating software itself

DID YOU KNOW?

Mobile phones are the most popular gaming devices.

IGN: "In-Game-Name." The name displayed as your username. It is common for this name to be stolen so using numbers within your name can deter name theft. Make sure IDN does not reveal personal information.

LAN: "Local Area Network." Your home network. Some games have options for LAN play so you can play with whoever is connected to your home network system. This is a safer way to play games with only people in your home.

LFG/LFM/LFP: "Looking for Group/More/Party." Commonly found in online multiplayer games when players are trying to accomplish a larger goal. Predators can use this to target a victim.

Rekt/Owned/Pwned: "Wrecked." Players often say this after a one-sided match or when you outplay another player. This can be used as cyberbullying

Smurf: An experienced player who makes a new character or account to play against lower-level players. Can be a form of cyberbullying or used by predators to play with younger or less experienced players.

Toxic: This is used to describe a person's attitude and behavior. When a player starts complaining and cursing at other players, he is identified as "toxic." This often leads to cyberbullying or threats.

VOIP: "Voice Over IP." A program that lets you chat with others online. Some games have VOIP built in. Players may also choose to use alternative chat rooms like Discord or TeamSpeak.

WTB/WTT/WTS: "Want to Buy/ Trade/ Sell." In trade chats, users will use these abbreviations to denote their intentions followed by an item or service. Predators can use this to lure students to an in-person meeting or to strike an unsafe deal.

Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) was established in 1994 with the primary responsibility to help consumers – especially parents – make informed choices about the games their families play. We invite you to learn more about the three-part rating system on their website **here** and their informative video **here.**

EC: Early childhood, intended for young children– preschool aged

E: Everyone, for all ages– Kids typically K-4th grade

E10+: Everyone 10+, for all ages 10 and up– These games are played by a wide range of people. The main thing to note here is that in many E10+ games, players can interact which could lead to online victimization

T: Teen, for ages 13 and up- These games have in-game interactions amongst other players and the ability to make purchases within games. Often the level of violence seen in T games is drastically increased from E10+ and is more realistic.

M: Mature, for ages 17 and up– Most teen and even tween gamers play M rated games. These have a significant amount of strong language, player interaction and in-game purchases. These games possess very intense violence and suggestive themes throughout the game.

AO: Adults Only, for ages 18 and up– often these games are highly pornographic and violent with consistent inappropriate themes throughout

RP: Rating Pending, not yet assigned a final rating.

DID YOU KNOW?

The majority of tweens and teens play "M" rated games.

POPULAR GAME GENRES

Video games are now an integral part of mainstream culture and with the rise of gaming also comes the rise of potential online victimization. It is important to have open and honest conversations about safe video game play with your student.
- Set boundaries
- Encourage gaming in moderation
- Create behavioral expectations
- Monitor game play
- Engage with your student about gaming

CCG

Collectible Card Game. In these games, you create a deck of virtual cards and then your character attempts to win battles based on the cards you have in your hand and the cards you play during each turn.

Hearthstone **Shadowverse** **Elder Scrolls**

RPG

Role-Playing Game. There are a lot of subgenres and therefore a lot of variation in this kind of game. These adventure games typically have in-depth stories that are followed throughout the entire game. There is also character evolution and leveling where your character gains skills and abilities based on completed quests, and inventory management/crafting which is essential to progress in the game.
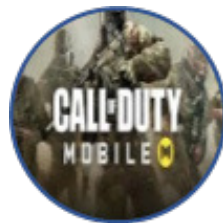
The Witcher **Skyrim** **Fallout**

FPS

First Person Shooter. These games are fast-paced, real time action games seen through the eyes of the character and tend to include a lot of shooting.

Call of Duty **Halo** **Rainbox Six Seige**

RTS

Real-Time Strategy. In these games you build a base, manage an army, and then battle an opponent who is trying to do the same. These typically have levels of opponents you can play including: Casual, Normal, Hard, or Korean (REALLY hard). These are very competitive games similar to RPG games but on a much larger scale.

John Wick Hex **Starcraft** **Age of Empires**

MMO

Massively Multiplayer Online. These games can be populated by thousands and sometimes millions of players in real time. These games can combine other genres and a common combination is MMO and RPG to create—MMORPG.

World of Warcraft **Roblox** **Skyforge**

MOBA

Multiplayer Online Battle Arena. This is a recent genre that has gained serious momentum and involves controlling a single hero/champion in a team-based game that looks a bit like an RTS. Player characters have a wide range of specific abilities that must work collectively to win the game.

League of Legends **DOTA** **Heroes of the Storm**

SIM

Simulation. Includes everything from Farming Simulator and Flight Simulator to Job Simulator in virtual reality formats. In these games you build worlds or societies OR you pretend to be a character in a real-life situation— like a farmer or a truck driver.

Animal Crossing **Minecraft** **Roller Coaster Tycoon**

POPULAR GAME GENRES [CONTINUED]

3PS & OTS

Third-Person Shooter / Over the Shoulder. There are a lot of subgenres to this group the most popular subgenera is called battle royal which is where Fortnite falls. Battle royal games are defined by your character being dropped into a battle arena with lots of other players and then players fight to be the last player alive as the arena decreases in size. These are very popular because they are free games, but gaming companies make a lot of money via in-game purchases. Generally, in 3PS games, you can see your entire character from afar rather than through the eyes of the character.

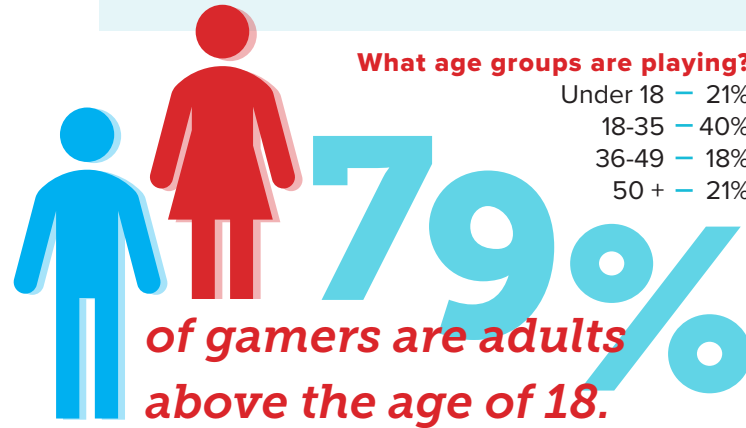**Gears of War**　　**Grand Theft Auto**　　**Fortnite**

NOW MORE THAN EVER

The amount of time people spend online has been growing rapidly over the past 10 years. The US video game sales revenue in the first quarter of 2020 was $10.86 billion which is up 9% compared to last year. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, people are spending 35% more time gaming. Now more than ever, we need to engage with our students and discuss the risks of gaming.

WHO IS PLAYING?

There are 2.5 billion video game users worldwide.

What age groups are playing?
Under 18 – 21%
18-35 – 40%
36-49 – 18%
50 + – 21%

79%

of gamers are adults above the age of 18.

With a majority of adults gaming, it is likely that your student is interfacing with someone over the age of 18 everytime they play online. It is also important to note that **48% of gamers are female** and **52% are male.** Since **females** are at an increased risk of **cyberbullying**, gamers often use male sounding gamertags/characters to mitigate gender based bullying.

Monitoring Tools:

Xbox Family: Settings built into your Xbox created to help manage screen time, social interactions, online spending and access to mature content.**Learn more here.**
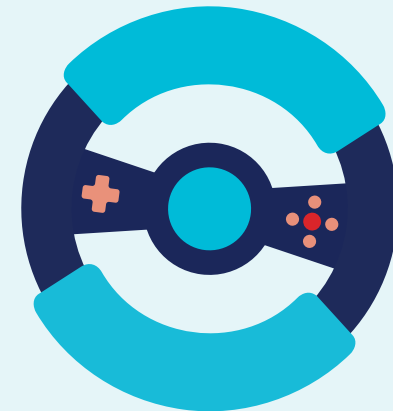
Family Management for PlayStation: Allows you to manage play time, purchases from the Wallet(s), restrict content displayed in the PlayStation Store, and manage access to games, videos, and applications. **Learn more here.**

Parental Controls for Nintendo: Allows you to restrict the download and use of certain content, set play time limits, and restrict the use of certain features on Nintendo Switch. Parental controls are set for the system - not the user. Once set, the same restrictions will be in place for everyone that uses the system. **Learn more here.**

Bark (best for social media monitoring: Analyzes text, emails, social media and then sends you concerning content along with suggestions on how to address the situation and talking points. You must have device to install OR the user must accept all push notifications to connect with all social media, text, and email platforms. Stays up to date on language and signs of bullying, suicide, violence, adult content, depression etc so more passive content of concern can be monitored. Options for $5/month ($49 annually) or $14/month ($99 annually). **Learn more here.**

Qustodio (best for teens): See what websites are visited, block dangerous content, see communications, protect privacy, manage how and when to be online. Automatically reports activity back to you and has a dashboard where you can view and manager online activity. Free option. **Learn more here.**

Net Nanny (best for young kids): Limits the type of content and websites your kid can access and allows you to schedule when your child can access the internet and social media. You must have the physical device to install software. Various plans, but the most common option is for a 5-device plan for $79.99. **Learn more here.**

Contact Us

We hope that this resource guide is beneficial to you, your family and your community. Please reach out if you have any questions, would like more information or would like to request a presentation.

For a student related presentation requests and questions, contact: ssi@crime-stoppers.org

For parent & community requests and questions, contact: scp@crime-stoppers.org

How to Report

Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)

Use our Mobile App
Download app name: Crime Stoppers Houston

Go to crime-stoppers.org

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CALL 713.222.TIPS

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