

Future Trends in Gaming

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A summary of future trends in gaming established the context for the Summit discussions. The predominant factor in setting the context is the hyperbolic speed of change in nearly every aspect of video game operations. The exceedingly fast pace of new technology developments poses the most significant challenge in the Summit's 10-year action plan.

South Korea, a global leader in information technology, offers a prototype of future trends. The country is the world's leader in developing universal wireless broadband access and media convergence. The results are both exciting and alarming. For example, the South Korean government has already established 40 government-sponsored clinics for Internet and video-game addiction.

Five trends were highlighted for review and discussion at the Summit: convergence of technology, changing game developer—player relationships, technology attractiveness, opportunities for commercial expansion and biomedical research on video game effects.

Convergence of technology

Video gaming is transitioning from static to dynamic content on multiple fronts:

- The “YouTube” effect in video gaming will transition video game players into game producers, capable of using technology to develop their own noncommercial games.
- The gaming format will transition from game station-based to Internet-based, and from one- or two-player games, into multiplayer Internet games, with online subscriber formats. One existing model of this is World of War Craft, which has already attracted over 7 million subscribers.
- Greater technological sophistication, such as games that use artificial intelligence for real-time changes in games, or operation of games through voice recognition.

Internet-based gaming may decrease the ability of adults to monitor or intervene with their children's video gaming.

Changing game developer-player relationships

As games move to Internet-based and increased interactivity, game developers will have more frequent contact with players. Effects of the greater dependence in the developer-player relationships includes:

- Increasing options for video game developers to build loyalty with players, particularly by constant adaptation of games for users
- New financial incentives for game developers to build regular revenue streams through subscriber services and frequent game updates, for example, by developing new episodes of video games each month for consumers to purchase

The concern in these developer-player relationships is the degree to which players are being unfairly manipulated in such decisions as spending more money or more time on video gaming, or being enticed to use video games that at the onset are age-inappropriate or evolve into age-inappropriate games.

Technological attractiveness

As the technology grows more sophisticated, video game users, particularly youth, may be at increasing risk of losing the ability to limit their game-playing, with resulting problems:

- Increasing individual social and psychological problems with overuse of video games, such as youth who do not develop personal relationships, whose academics decline as a result of video game-playing, whose psychological health is affected by addiction-like game-playing, and whose physical health suffers because of lack of sleep and extreme amounts of game-playing.

- Increasing social negatives as the population of extreme game-players grows, and problems among individuals become problems among sub-populations. One example would be declining college enrollment among young males.

Opportunities for commercial expansion

The new game products and online services will attract investments from commercial marketers, such as:

- Expanded roles for advertisers, through product placements and adver-games, such as video games developed exclusively by advertisers to market a product or service
- Greater genre diversity, as advertisers seek out video games to reach a broader audience. One expansion area would be more female-oriented video games, such as SIMS, which attract female youth. The genre diversity holds potential to have positive or negative effects on individuals or cultures.

As advertising in video games takes on new forms, the concern is the degree consumers of video games, particularly youth, have the ability to be discerning consumers who recognize advertisements as attempts to manipulate their consumer decision-making.

Trends in biomedical research on video game effects

As video gaming grows in popularity and becomes a more common form of entertainment for increasingly larger and more diverse populations, research on the effects of video gaming grows more important. Biomedical research may offer compelling findings on effects. For example, neurological studies are examining brains for signs of video-gaming effects.

Research Citations

[South Korea international conference on gaming](#)

[Atlantic Monthly article on video gaming trends](#)