


# Chapter 7

## Understanding Player Churn in the Gaming Industry With Key Drivers and Prevention Strategies

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The gaming industry has witnessed tremendous growth over the last few years. This increased revenue has brought about significantly more sophisticated techniques for retaining players and struggle against churn. This chapter clarifies the study of game player behavior and how these studies can be applied to predict churn, and highlights the importance of churn in the gaming industry, examining high-grossing games offered on different platforms that dominate the industry in the context of churn. However, privacy and data sharing are perceived as critical barriers that hinder effective churn analysis. In summary, churn studies in online environments are not common due to the rarity of publicly available data, primarily because developers choose not to share details about players. Furthermore, the chapter presents some possible avenues to overcome these challenges and expands the view on how game developers can implement tactics such as personalized experiences, socialization, leveraging technology, and transparency around data usage to reduce churn.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The gaming industry has now become one of the fastest growing and most dynamic segments to come out of the entertainment industry today. According to some accounts, gaming has developed a vast worldwide consumer base with annual revenues in the hundreds of billions (Goh et al., 2023; Predescu and Mocanu, 2020). Gaming is booming... Companies continue to push the limits of technology and imagine new ways to play. This approach creates curriculums making various calibers of new people join the game industry and ease out new players to keep on long after. With this kind of game design, you end up having long runs in the history of the game. To this end, gaming sectors describe activities such as loyalty schemes and privileges which allow further enjoyment of the games, so as to own the clients opt for this game name at any time, they wish to play the game. Success has to be contained in a competitive pool. The video game industry even has its own term for it: “player churn.” This term is used to refer to all the players who stopped playing a game or used an application. This is a crucial metric for content creators, and it matters most because it directly affects the life and success of their game. Some observers say high churn rates could indicate that gamers are either growing bored or losing patience. Stuff like games that are hard to learn or bad onboarding can cheese players off. That could force gaming companies to reconsider how they keep players engaged in the game, for example.

Within the game industry, this percentage of users who stop playing a game or app is termed “player churn.” This metric is critical to developers as it has a direct influence on the company sustainability and general success of a game (Mustac et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2017; Drachen et al., 2013). Gold (2020) and Runge et al. (2014) indicate that high rates of churn may mean that players are being under-engaged or even frustrated by factors such as a steep learning curve or bad onboarding (O’Neil, 2014). To keep players, game companies should think creatively (WIRED, 2023; Hadiji et al., 2014; Hamari et al., 2014). Churn is responsible for losing gamers, but it's also a huge financial hit for gaming companies. With a player heading out of a game, they are viewed as revenue lost at first. But this drives up the cost of attracting new customers without incurring an even more monstrous financial cost to companies. It is a well-known fact, based on research, that the costs associated with advertisements and promotional activities are such that it takes five times more to acquire a new player than to retain the current players (Chaffey, 2023). Churn of players also, at least instantly, results in lost revenues, missing these firms the potential for a stable flow of their income streams with a business model of single in-game purchases (Drachen et al., 2013). Churn, therefore, is one of the most significant threats for all businesses operating in gaming in terms of financial health and profitability.

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