

Researchers undertake a large-scale study of sports video game players

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From Gran Turismo to WWE Smackdown, sports-based video games represent a wide variety of pursuits. When it comes to the people who actually play those games, however, little is known. How do sports video game players fit their games into a larger sports-related context? How does their video game play inform their media usage and general sports fandom?

That's what Concordia University communications professor Mia Consalvo sought to discover when she embarked on a large-scale study of [video game](#) players, the results of which were recently published in *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*.

Along with Abe Stein and Konstantin Mitgutsch from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Consalvo, who also holds a Canada Research Chair in Game Studies and Design, conducted an [online survey](#) of 1,718 participants to pin down demographics, habits, attitudes and activities of sports video game players.

They found that the majority of those who play sports video games are male (98.4 per cent), white (80 per cent) and in their mid-20s (average of 26 years). In comparison with other representative [video game player](#) demographics, the field is less diverse and the average player is younger. Based on the data about the larger game-playing population, it seems that the sports gamers are drawn from a more traditional demographic of game players, at least when it comes to console and certain personal

computer-based video games.

"Perhaps one of the biggest findings to emerge from this study is unsurprising, but finally documented," notes Consalvo. "The overwhelming majority of sports gamers' – 93.3 per cent – self-identify as [sports fans](#). That identity pushes beyond the playing of sports-themed video games. Attending [sporting events](#), watching them on television, participating in those activities themselves as well as following certain teams or sports were regular parts of their daily lives."

Consalvo says that she still hopes to discover more insights into why there is little diversity in the player demographics, and why female players are in a minority. Says Consalvo, "while this study provides new insights into who sports video [game players](#) are and what they play and why, we still lack knowledge on how these players relate their passion for video games to their sports fandom in general." She hopes to address these questions in her forthcoming book, co-authored with Stein and Mitsgutsch, titled Sports Videogames.

More information: Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies con.sagepub.com/

Provided by Concordia University

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