

Advertising drives online gambling among young Australians

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Gambling features such as loot boxes in video games and sports betting are the most popular forms of online gambling among young adults in the ACT, with many introduced to it before the age of 18, according to a [new report](#) from The Australian National University (ANU).

The study asked 38 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 about their online [gambling](#) habits.

Lead author, ANU Associate Professor Aino Suomi, said the vast majority of participants who engaged with gambling features such as [loot boxes](#) or skins in video games first did so in their early teens.

"These young people are typically playing video games on their home computers and interacting with friends on [social platforms](#) while they play," Associate Professor Suomi said.

"For them, gaming is an inherently social activity—one with a distinct sub-culture.

"Games such as Counterstrike and League of Legends are readily available to users of all ages, so most of our participants first engaged with the gambling features seen in these games before turning 18.

"Most young people find the gambling features annoying. But many games won't let the player progress without engaging with these randomized features that essentially behave like pokie machines and that require real currency.

"Young gamers also found it easy to link a parent or caregiver's credit card, or use a gift voucher, if real money was required."

While video games are a social outlet for many [young adults](#), for some, [peer pressure](#) or improving their [social status](#) within the game is a key motivator for engaging with the gambling features to obtain in-game items.

According to Associate Professor Suomi, advertising also plays a big role in encouraging young people to gamble while playing.

"Young people are being exposed to advertising on social media platforms and through influencers who live stream themselves gambling while playing. This group of influencers includes professional gamers with huge online followings," she said.

The study also looked at more traditional forms of online gambling.

Most participants who took up more traditional online gambling did so via sports betting, particularly on NRL and AFL matches, horse races, and the FIFA World Cup and English Premier League soccer.

"This betting is most commonly done on [mobile devices](#), generally around big games," Associate Professor Suomi said.

"But those experiencing more harm from gambling reported always being able to find something to gamble on, given the accessibility of international sports across time zones.

"Similar to video games, sports betting is seen as a social activity you might engage in during a night out with mates."

Associate Professor Suomi said the results show a need for better education around gambling and video games for parents and young people, as well as more self-help tools, early warning systems and harm prevention programs for young people.

More information: Report: [Young adults gambling online in the ACT](#)

Provided by Australian National University

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