



HOW GAMERS ARE USING YOUTUBE IN 2025



BIG GAMES MACHINE

INTRODUCTION

Social media has radically reshaped both the media and the marketing landscapes in the games industry. Gamers are now spending more time watching content around the games that they love than actually playing them. Gaming culture has crossed boundaries into fashion, movies, art and more. YouTube is the social media platform that has best captured what it is to be a gamer in 2025.

Our previous survey [“How gamers discover what to play in 2024”](#) examined how gamers use news and content to help choose the games they play - and it found that YouTube has become the biggest discovery channel for gamers, with 64% of the 1000 gamers we surveyed using it.

So it made sense for us to dig deeper to understand exactly *how* gamers are using YouTube and why.

This new survey gives us a fascinating insight into the key content types gamers watch the most, which gamer demographics watch what, and what makes gamers choose one content creator over another (SPOILER: subscriber count came lowest!)

Happy Reading!

The Big Games Machine Team

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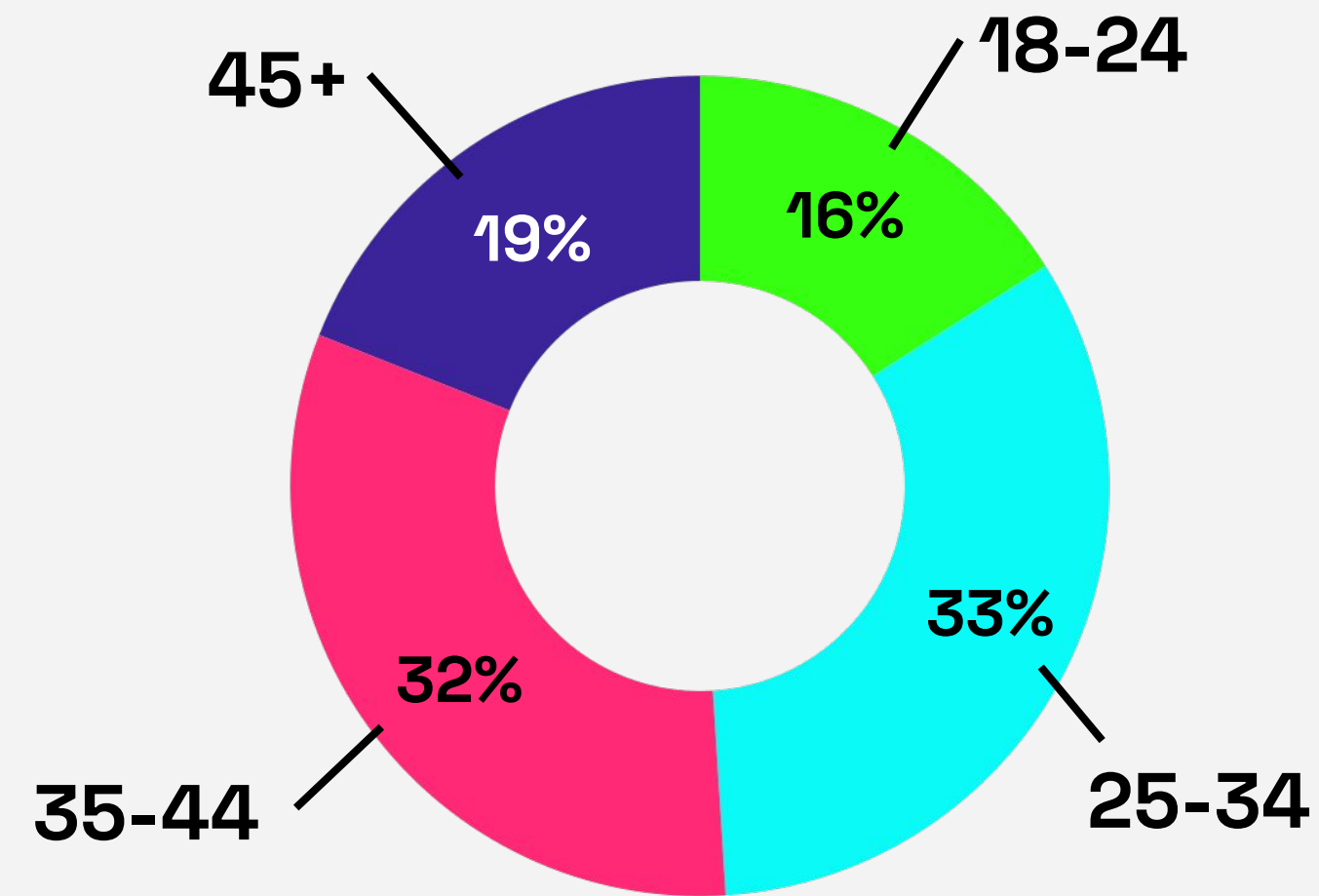
ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The data was collected across the US between the 13th - 14th January 2025.

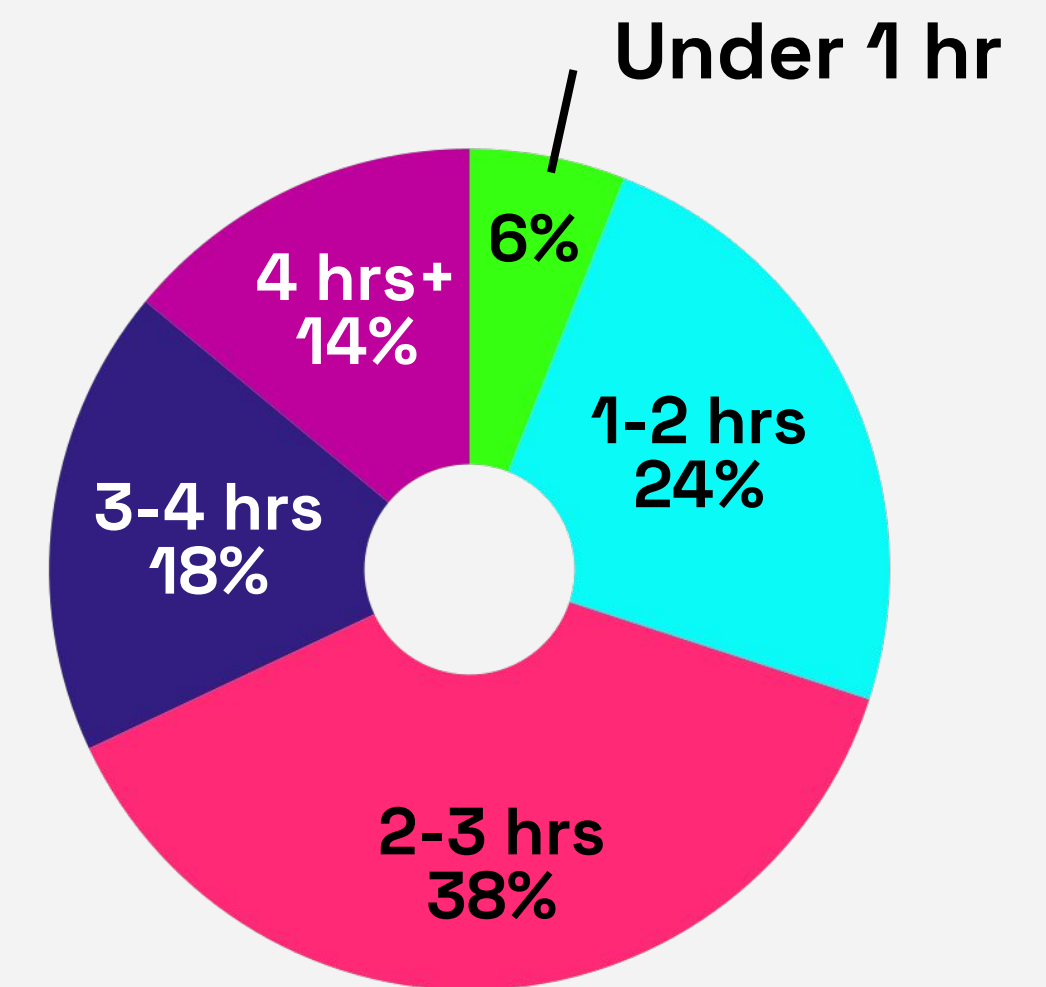
A total of **1,050 gamers based in the US** completed the survey, with a **50/50 split between men and women** that watch gaming content on **YouTube for at least 30 minutes per week**.

All the respondents play video games on either a PC (Steam Decks were also permitted) or/and a console (Switch, PlayStation and Xbox) or/and Mobile.

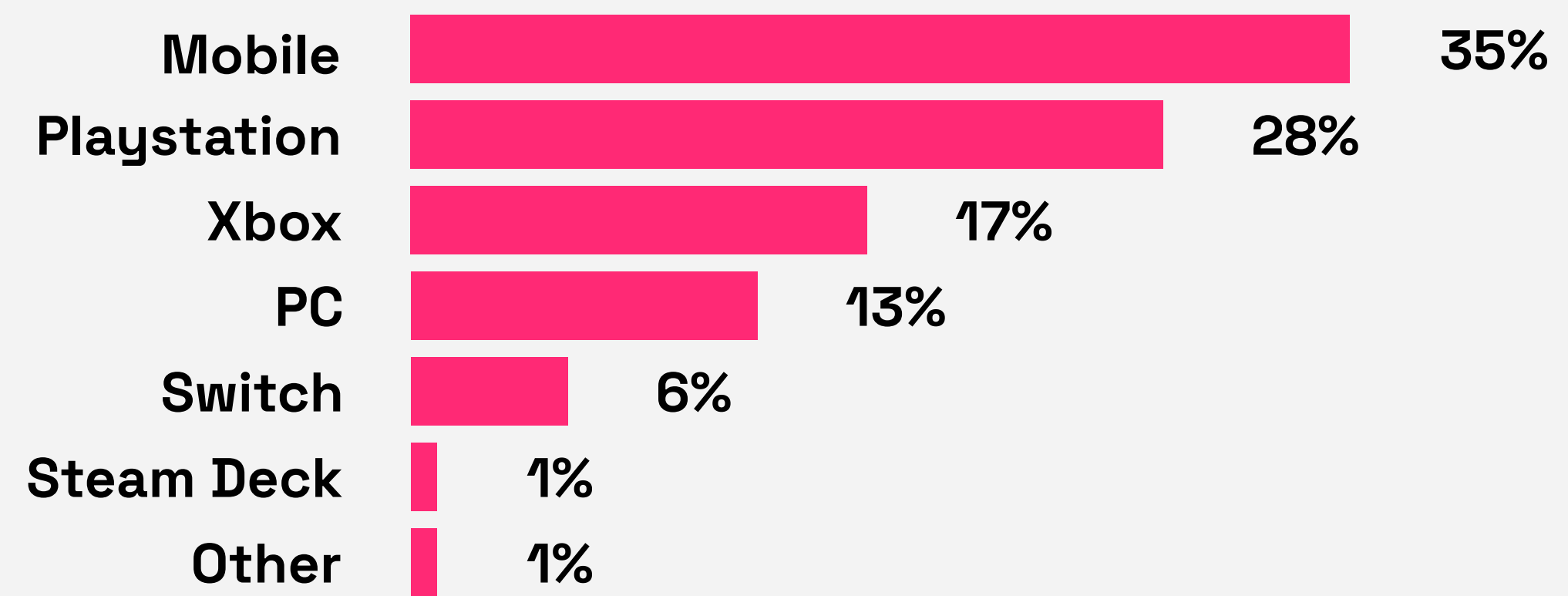
We asked a series of questions about their gaming content consumption on YouTube, their favourite content creators, and their motivations behind their choices.



Respondents' Age



Time spent watching YouTube gaming content per week



What is your primary gaming device?

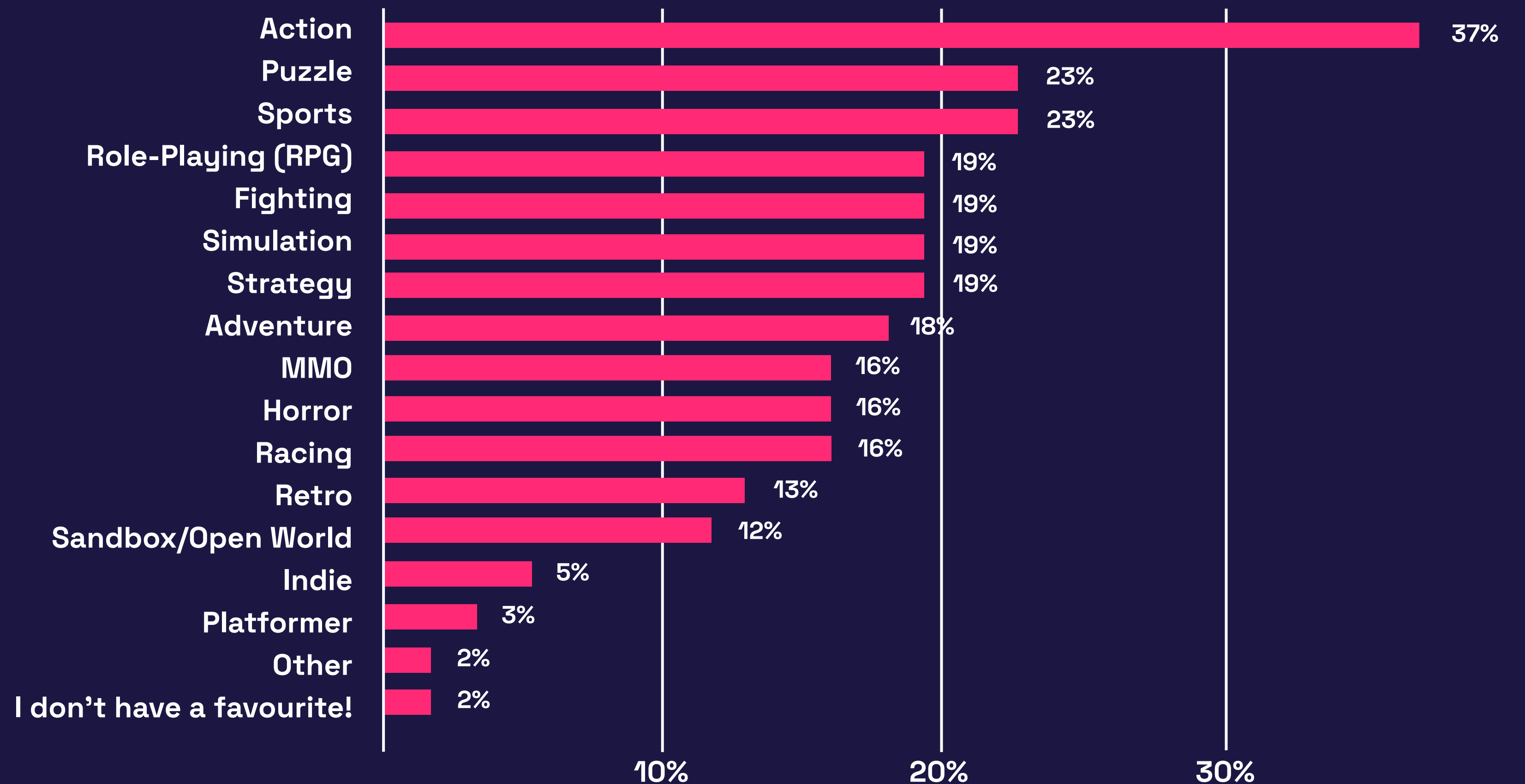
THE GAMERS WE SURVEYED PLAY A VARIETY OF GENRES

As well as questions about their YouTube usage, we also asked our respondents the top 3 genres of game they like to play.

Action games were the most popular, capturing the interest of nearly 37% of respondents - probably because, as a genre, it's a broad category that includes a lot of popular games. In terms of gender-split, action is favourite for 47% of men versus 26% of women.

Puzzle games were the second most popular genre. When we dig down into the data a bit more, we see that the puzzle genre is a lot more popular with women gamers than men, with 37% saying it was their favourite, versus 10% of men,

What are your favourite genres of games to play?

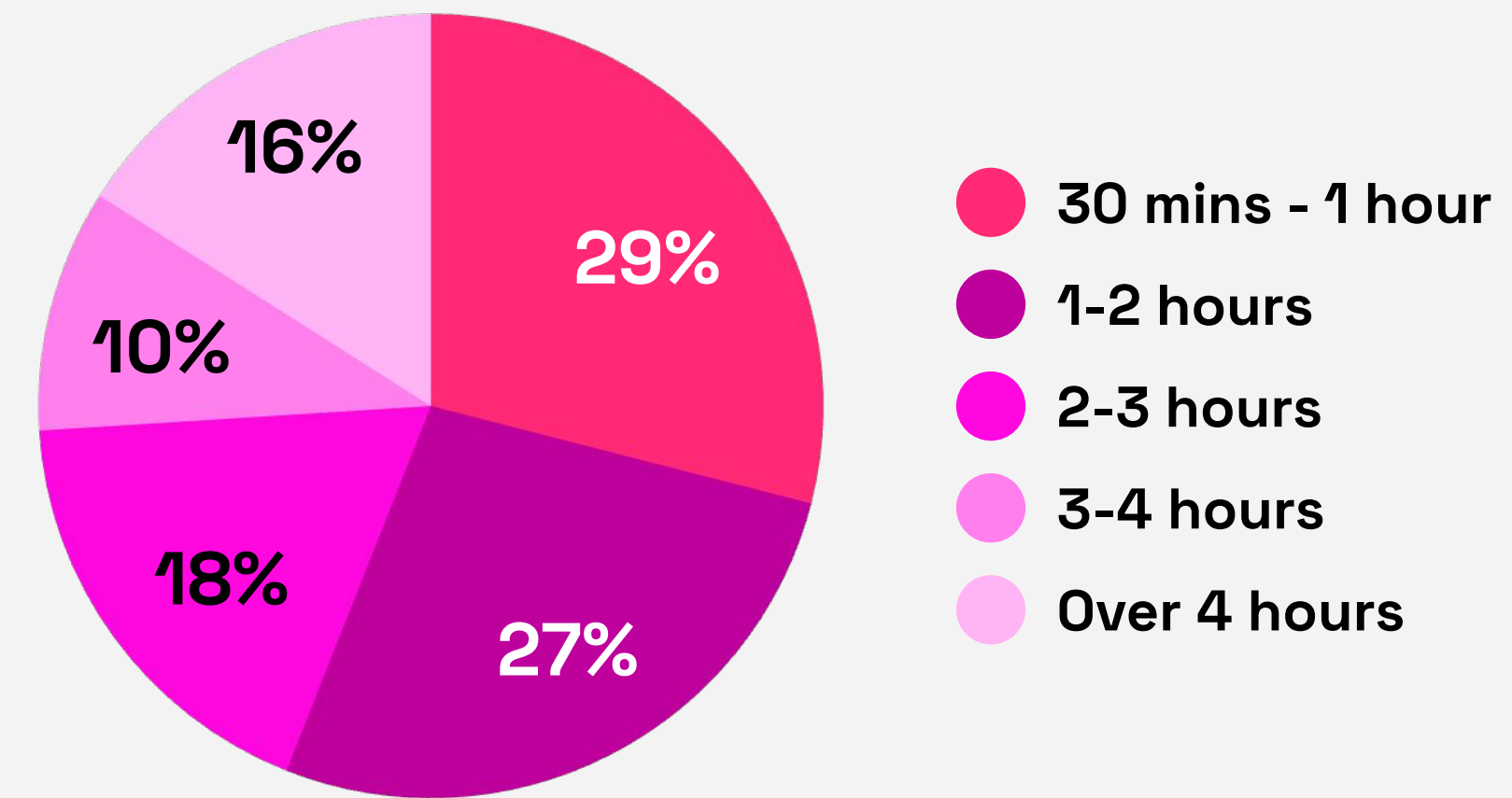


YOUNGER GAMERS WATCH THE MOST YOUTUBE

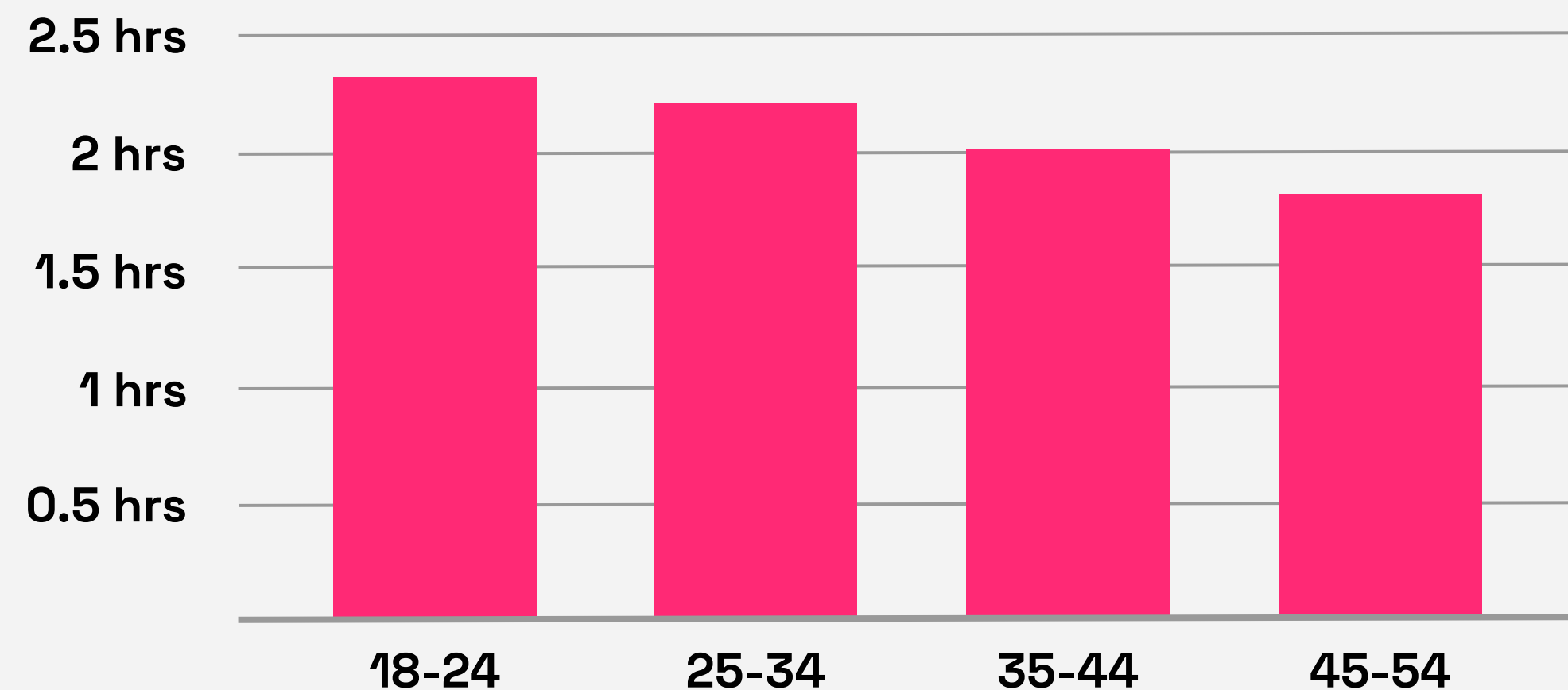
It should shock nobody to find that YouTube gaming viewership is heavily influenced by age, with younger audiences displaying significantly higher engagement levels.

26% of those who watch gaming content on YouTube watch at least 3 hours per week, with 45% watching for 1-3 hours. To put that into context, 18-34 year olds in the US are now watching less than 5 hours of live and timeshifted TV per week, according to [Nielsen](#).

Based on these findings we segmented the our gamers into two categories - 'Casual' viewers (meaning they spent fewer than 2 hours per week watching gaming content on YouTube) and 'Core' viewers (spending more than 2 hours watching gaming content on YouTube per week).



How much time each week do you spend watching gaming content?



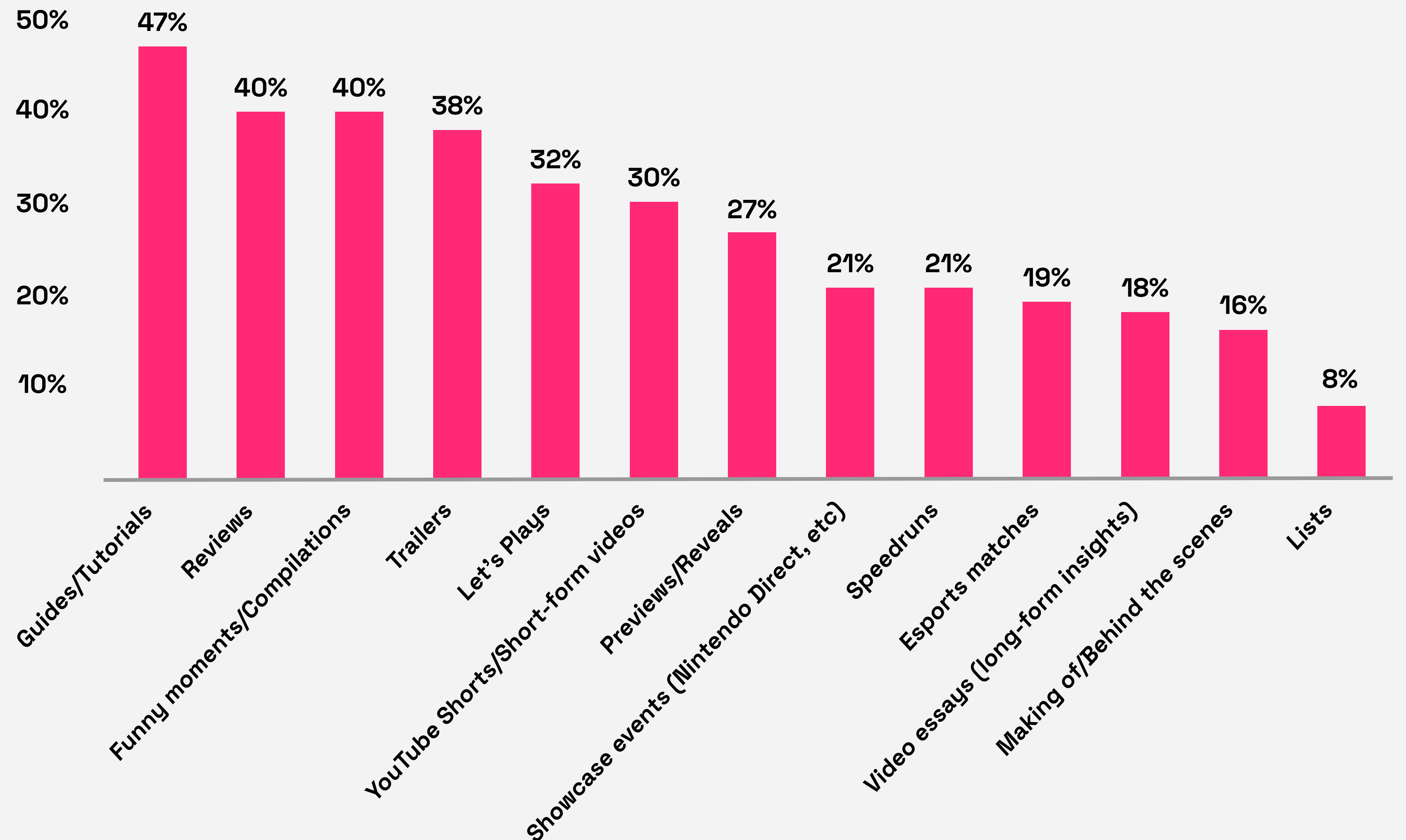
CONTENT AND CREATORS FOR EVERY NICHE

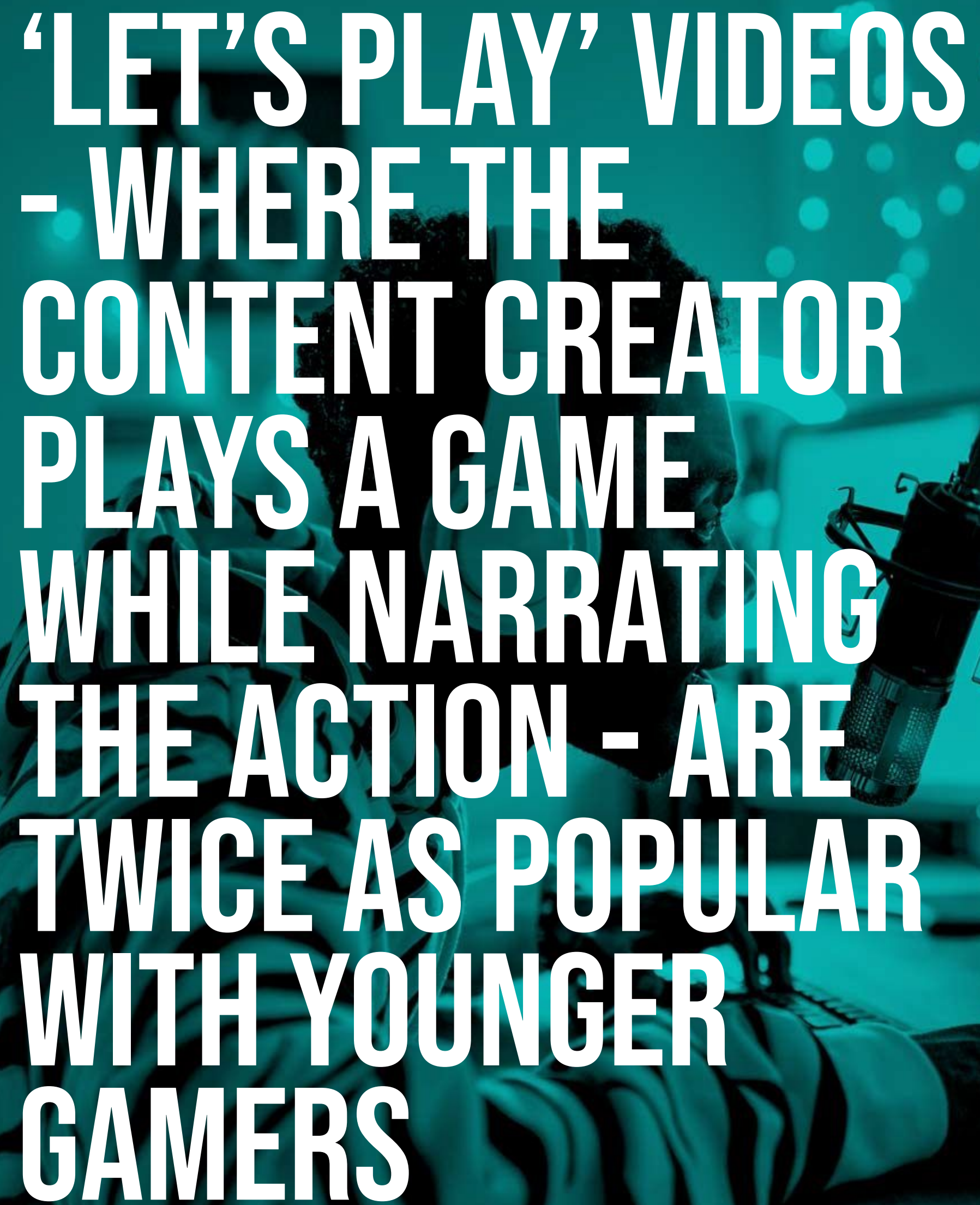
Content that's a natural part of the game marketing process - previews, reviews, trailers and guides - is consistently popular, but gamers also love content that more widely celebrates gaming culture.

Guides and walkthroughs are the most popular videos, and there are many content creators that focus solely on making this kind of content for live service games, which have weekly (and even daily) content updates.

Many of the most popular creators on YouTube create a mix of funny, irreverent and informative content for Minecraft, Roblox and Fortnite. Because these games are constantly updated and allow for user-generated content, they are perfect for creating an almost endless supply of new videos, and have a global community of millions of existing fans.

What types of gaming content on YouTube do you watch?





'LET'S PLAY' VIDEOS - WHERE THE CONTENT CREATOR PLAYS A GAME WHILE NARRATING THE ACTION - ARE TWICE AS POPULAR WITH YOUNGER GAMERS

Younger age groups are more likely to watch "Let's Play" content

Notably more 18-24-year-olds watch "Let's Play" content vs 45-55-year-olds (45% vs 20%)

Amongst 18-24-year-olds, "Let's Play" content is the most preferred type of gaming content to watch (32%) with Funny Moments/Compilations a close second (31%)

'Core' gamers are twice as likely to watch Video Essays

Compared with casual viewers (13%), hardcore viewers are twice as likely to watch Video Essays (long-form insights) on YouTube (26%)

Women most prefer watching Funny Moments and Compilation content

Funny Moments/Compilation videos were the most popular content type for more women (24%) than men (17%)

Men are more than twice as likely to watch Esports matches compared to women (14% vs 6%)

GAMERS PREFER CONTENT CREATORS THAT OFFER A MIX OF STYLES AND GAMES

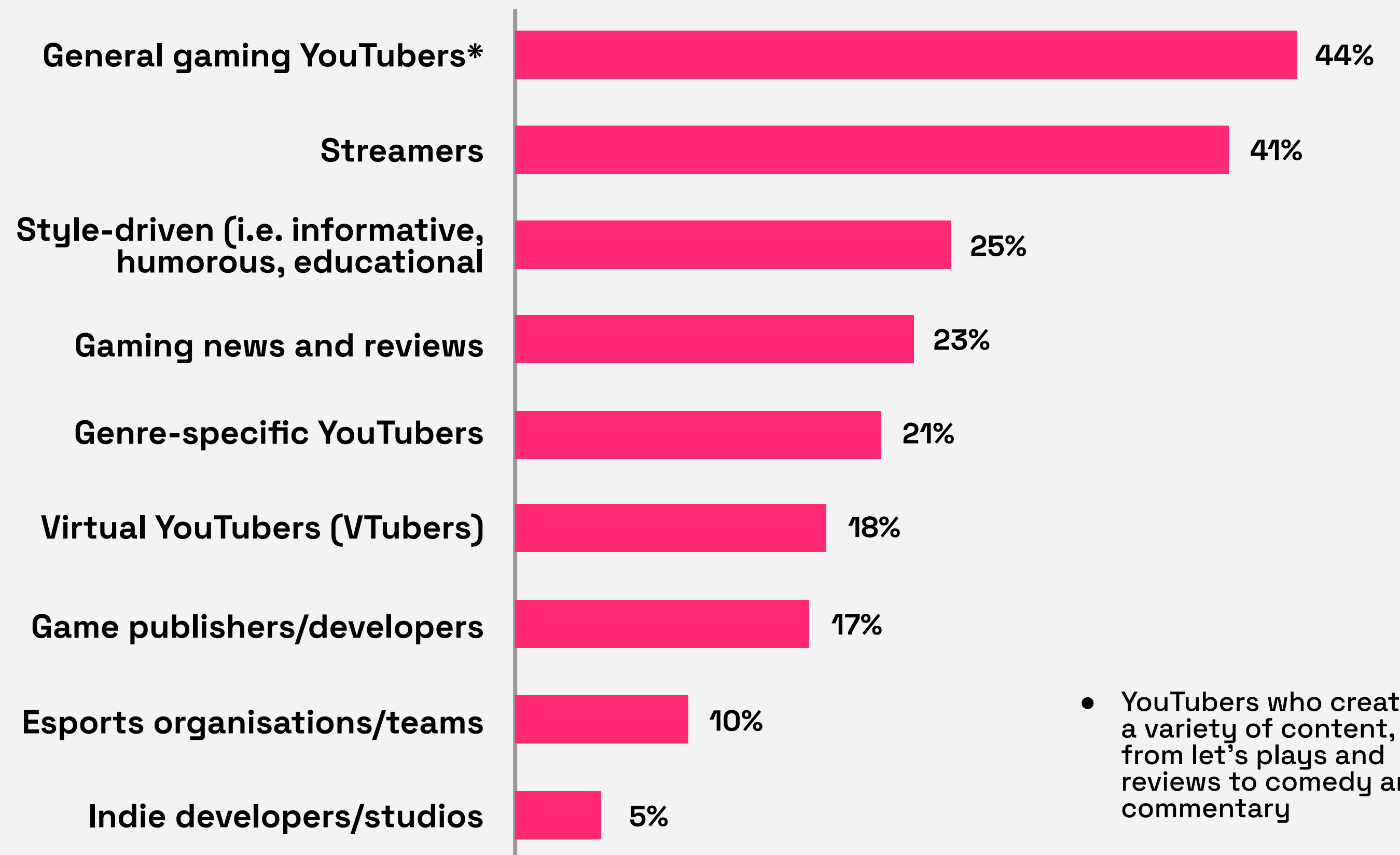
The most popular creators across all age groups are those posting a mix of content, from Let's Plays to reviews and commentaries.

That's not to say that gamers aren't looking for content creators that are focused on the games they themselves are passionate about, with 21% of respondents mostly watching genre and game-specific YouTubers.

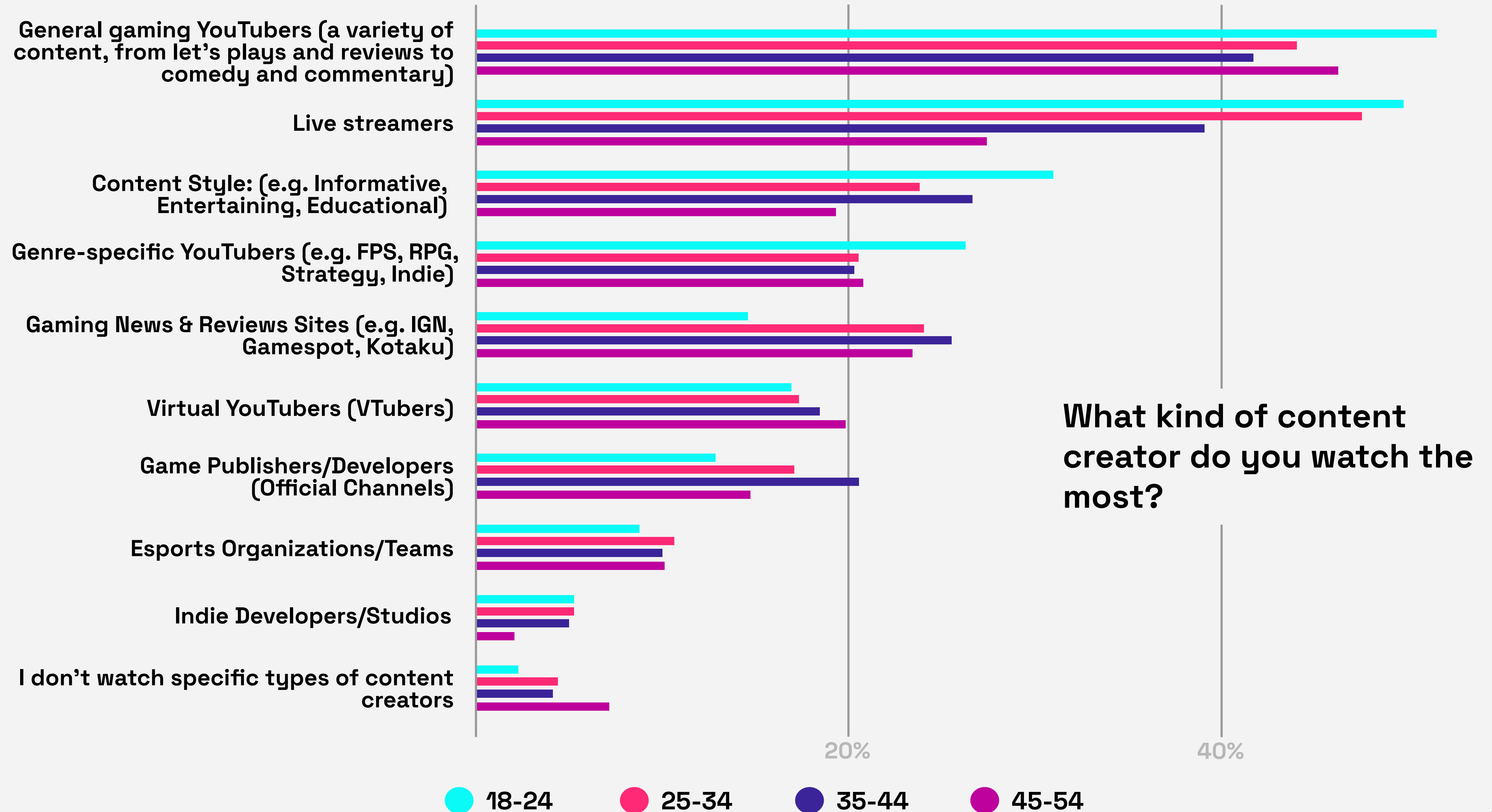
Creators focused on live streaming games are also very popular, but more so with 18-24 year olds, with 50% mostly watching streamers versus only 27% of 44-55 year olds.

Channels run by studios themselves were towards the bottom popularity-wise, but still with enough attention to justify investing in YouTube to reach an audience.

What kind of content creator do you watch the most?



GAMERS ENJOY WATCHING A RANGE OF CREATORS



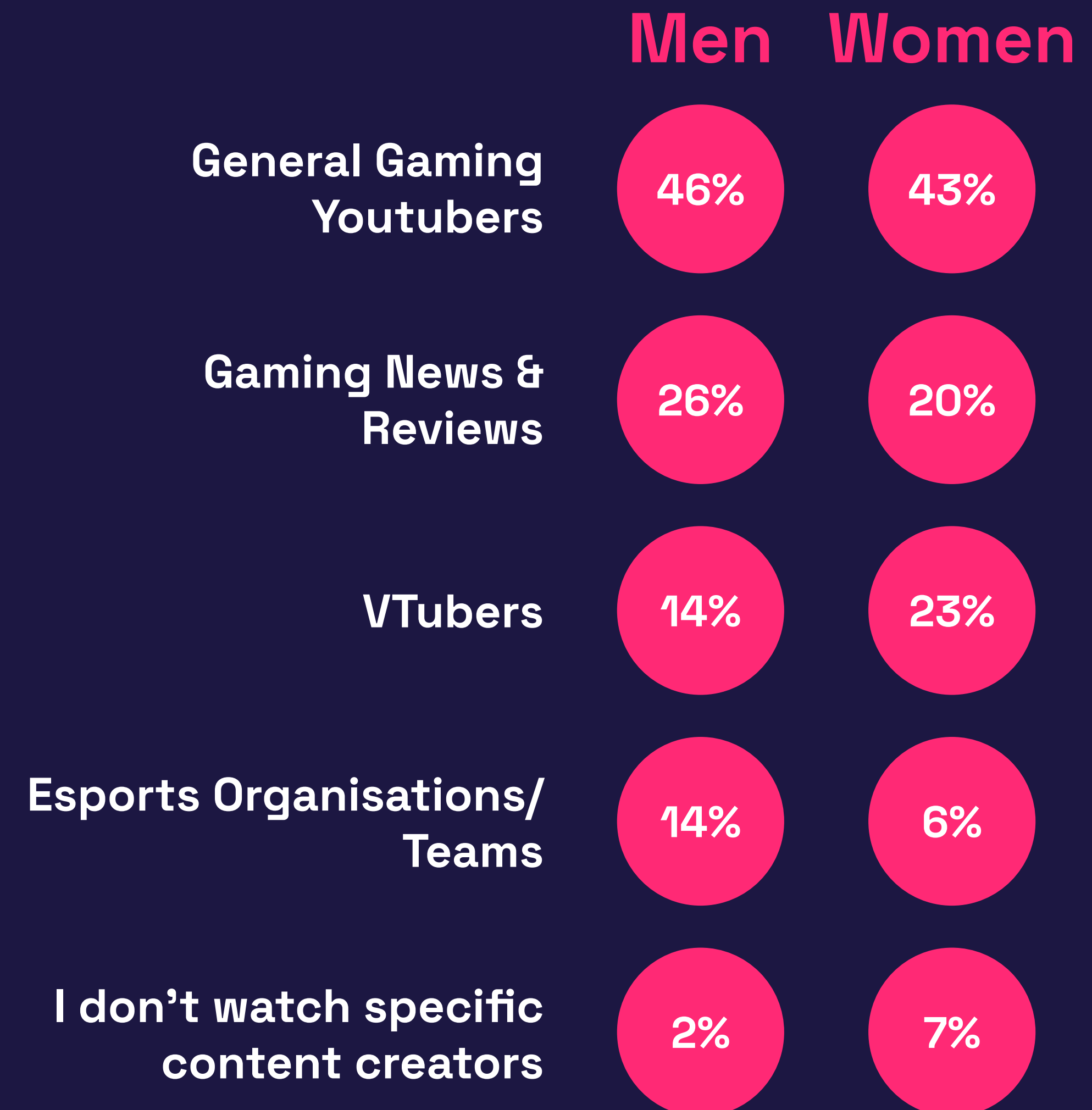
WOMEN GAMERS ARE THE LEAST INTERESTED IN ESPORTS

When we asked our respondents what type of content creator they watched the most, both men and women preferred creators that cover all kinds of games (as we said previously, it's more about the personality than the game per se).

Other types of content creators saw mixed popularity, with men slightly more interested in news-driven content.

One difference between men and women is with VTubers (virtual YouTubers - very often, these are anime-inspired), which 23% of women gamers like to watch versus 14% of men.

The single biggest gender difference was with Esports-related content, with more than twice as many men preferring it than women (14% vs 6%). In fact, Esports content was the least popular content category with women overall.



THE PERSONALITY AND STYLE OF YOUTUBE CREATORS IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE GAMES

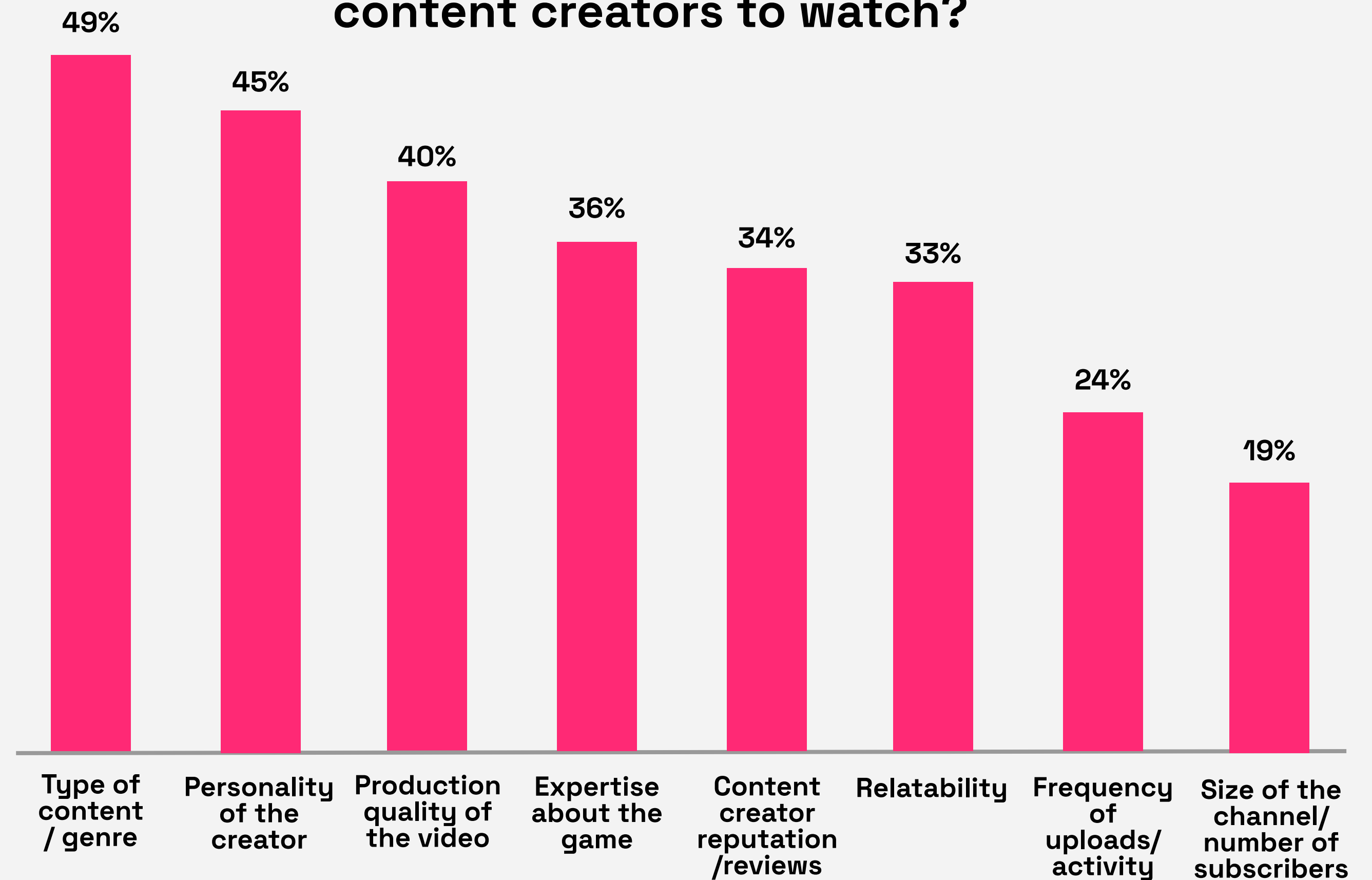
When it comes to the kinds of content gamers watch the most, it's the creators and the game genres rather than the games themselves that are the biggest draw.

Quality is also a major factor that drives engagement. Undoubtedly, technology has made broadcast-quality content creation accessible, but many content creators now have a whole team behind their videos in order to keep the quality high and subscribers happy.

The subscriber count and size of the channel is the least important factor, at 19%. But let's remember that the biggest channels tend to also be the ones which invest the most in production quality and the variety of output.

For more insight into the most popular gaming content creators, check out [VidIQ's list of the top 100](#)

What influences you in your choice of content creators to watch?



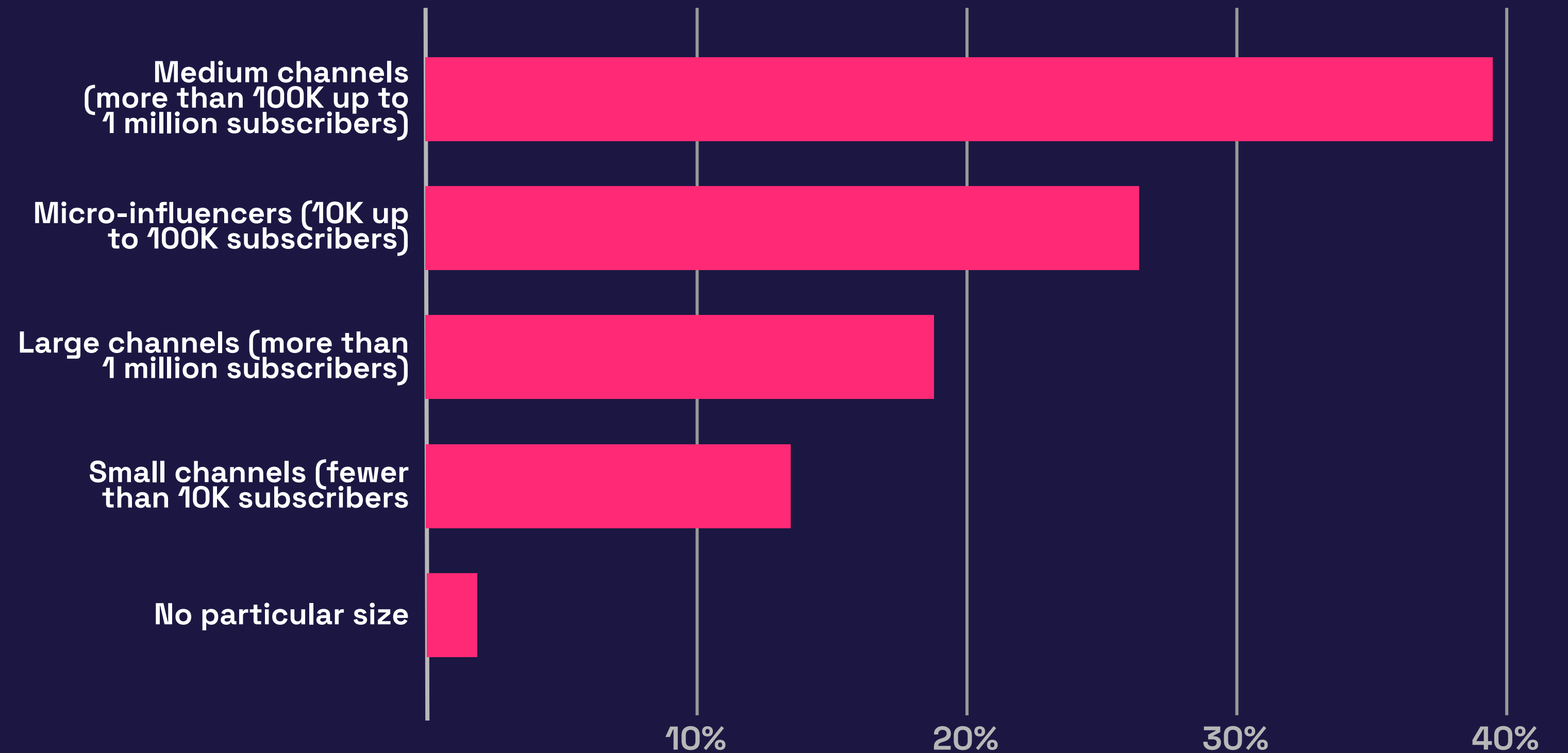
SIZE ISN'T AS IMPORTANT AS YOU THINK...

While established giants of YouTube like PewDiePie, MrBeast and Markiplier continue to dominate and find popularity beyond games, our research shows that many gamers actually prefer to regularly watch smaller channels.

Mid-sized channels (those with between 100K and 1 million subscribers) are the most popular, followed closely by micro-influencers, who typically have 10-100K subscribers.

This is great news for companies with tight budgets! Spreading your budget across multiple micro-influencers can be more effective (and affordable) than relying solely on larger, more expensive channels, which have fantastic reach but come with an equally enormous cost.

What size of content creator do you prefer to watch?



MEDIUM-SIZED YOUTUBE CHANNELS ARE THE MOST POPULAR WITH GAMERS ACROSS THE BOARD

Casual YouTube viewers are more likely to prefer micro-influencers than Core YouTube viewers – though medium sized channels are most watched by both segments.

| | Total | Casual YT Viewers | Core YT Viewers |
|--|-------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Small channels (under 10k subscribers) | 14% | 15% | 12% |
| Micro-influencers (10k up to 100k) | 26% | 30% | 21% |
| Medium channels (100k up to 1 million) | 39% | 36% | 43% |
| Large channels (over 1 million) | 19% | 17% | 21% |
| No particular size | 2% | 2% | 3% |

Large channels are more popular among those that say Action is among their favourite genres in comparison to RPG, Sports & Puzzle. Though medium channels lead across genre groupings.

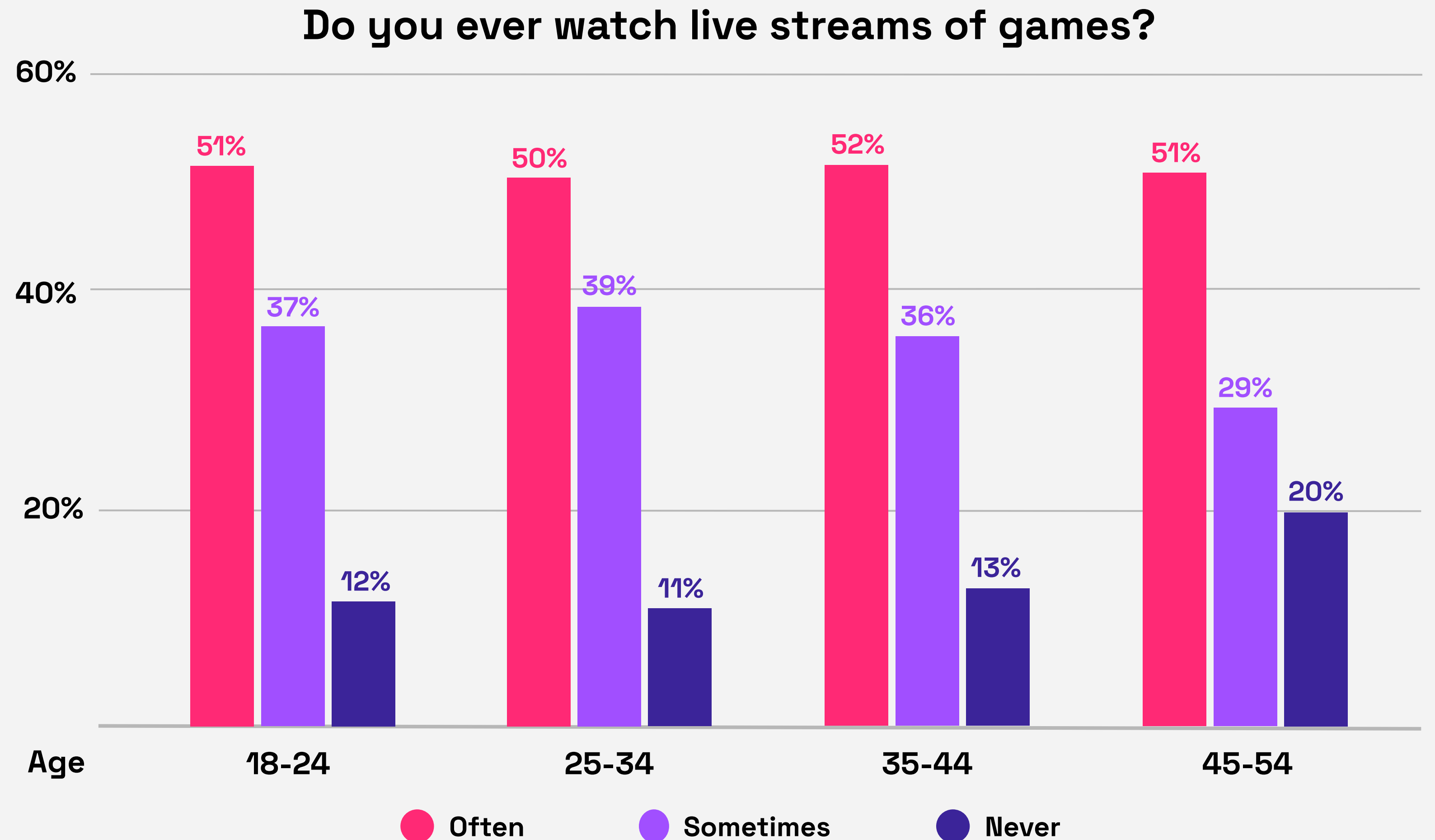
| | Action | RPG | Sports | Puzzle |
|--|--------|-----|--------|--------|
| Small channels (under 10k subscribers) | 9% | 13% | 11% | 16% |
| Micro-influencers (10k up to 100k) | 27% | 26% | 23% | 32% |
| Medium channels (100k up to 1 million) | 39% | 42% | 42% | 34% |
| Large channels (over 1 million) | 23% | 18% | 22% | 16% |
| No particular size | 2% | 1% | 2% | 2% |

8 OUT OF 10 GAMERS WATCH LIVE STREAMS

Although Amazon-owned Twitch remains the largest dedicated streaming platform, YouTube remains an important and popular platform for creators to live stream.

Across all of the age groups we surveyed, 8 out of 10 gamers said that they watch live streams in some capacity, rising to 9 out of 10 for the 18-24 age group.

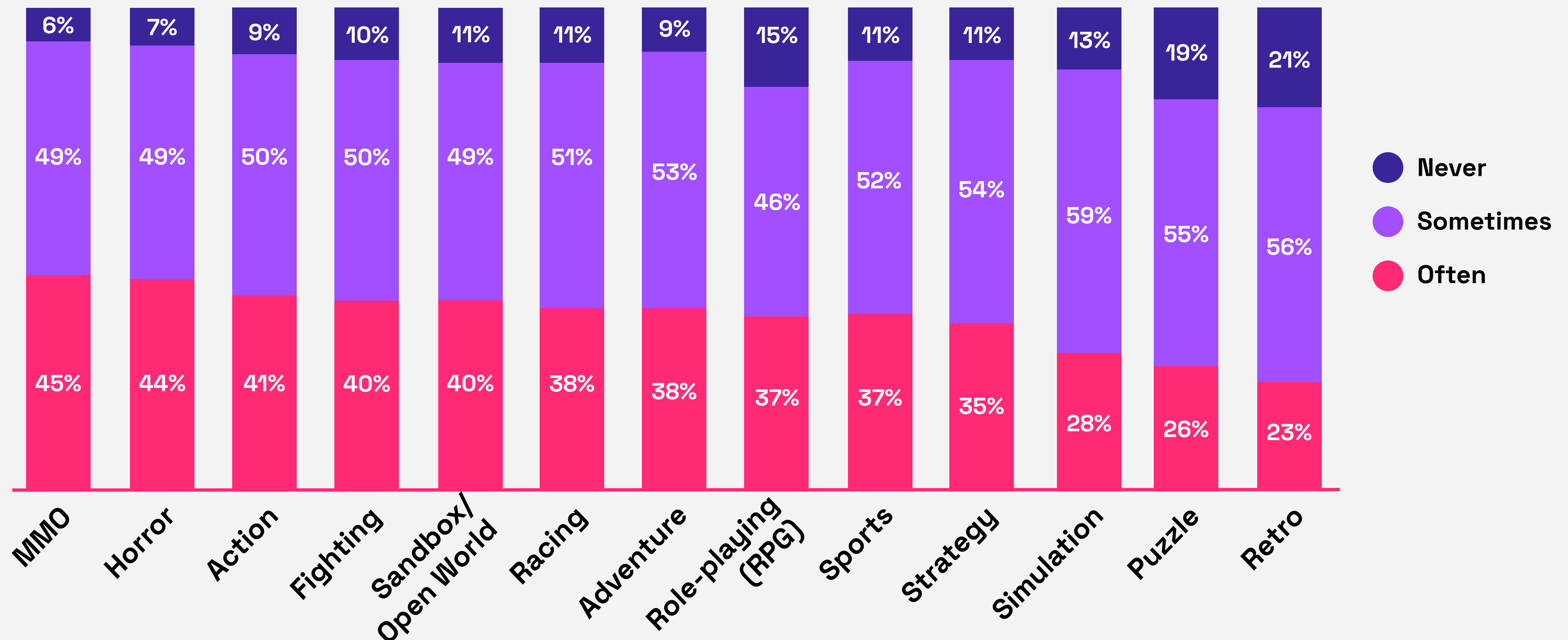
Unsurprisingly, the non-hardcore YouTube viewers are more likely to watch live streams of games often than the hardcore viewers.



THE AUDIENCE FOR LIVE STREAMING IS DRAWN FROM ACROSS THE GAMING SPECTRUM

When we asked fans of different genres of games if they watch live streams, there was very little difference. Fans of puzzle, retro, simulation and RPG were the least likely to watch live streams - and even these were watched by 8 out of 10 gamers. It seems that gamers care less about the games they watch than the channels and creators that stream the games.

What game genres do you watch as live streams?



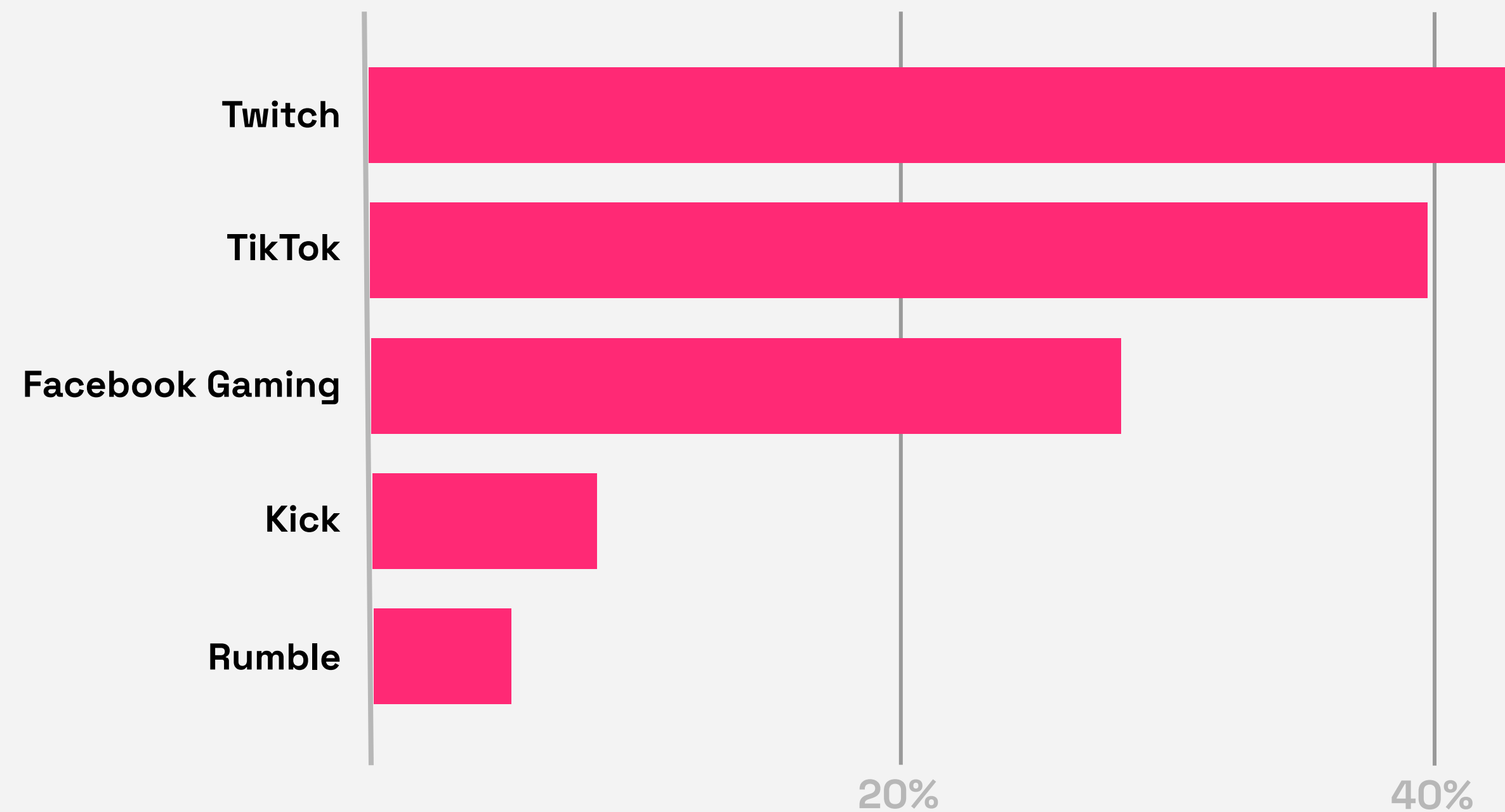
TIKTOK'S INFLUENCE AS A PLATFORM FOR GAMING CREATORS CONTINUES TO GROW

When we asked what platforms our respondents use in addition to YouTube, it's interesting to see that TikTok is almost as popular as Twitch.

With TikTok's number of monthly active users almost 4x that of Twitch, gaming content creators have a large audience they can tap into (Twitch is estimated to have 240 million monthly users, versus 1.6 billion for TikTok).

This suggests that Kick faces stiff competition to grow its user base in the face of established social platforms encouraging more live streaming of games.

What live streaming platforms (as well as YouTube) do you watch?



**GAMERS TOLD US
THEY ARE HAPPY
USING SEVERAL
DIFFERENT LIVE
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PLATFORMS. FOR
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FIRST.**

41%...

...of female respondents who watch gaming live streams do so on TikTok, the most popular answer outside of YouTube amongst this group.

10%...

...of male respondents watch live streams on Kick, twice that of female respondents (5%).

47%...

...of hardcore YouTube content viewers also watch live streams on Twitch.

25%...

...of gamers that play primarily on mobile use Twitch to watch live streams, which is lower than primarily console or PC gamers.

46%...

...of primarily PlayStation gamers watch livestream on TikTok, the most likely of all console types to do so.

27%...

...of hardcore YouTube content viewers who watch gaming live streams do so exclusively on other live streaming platforms.

ABOUT BIG GAMES MACHINE

Big Games Machine is a full-service PR and marketing agency specialising in strategic communications and consultancy for the global video games industry, covering both B2B and B2C audiences.

Founded by games industry veterans with decades of experience in PR and marketing, we support our clients with everything from media relations and outreach for new video games and product launches to global events management and content creation.

No two clients are the same. We'll work hard to understand what's unique about you and your business, to understand what needs to be done to get you noticed and the best channels to reach your audiences.

Whether it's a multi-platform game launch targeting consumer media and influencers or a B2B campaign that needs to build trust and drive inbound leads, our team of PR experts, comms professionals, creatives and ex-journalists have the skills and knowledge to deliver.

**BIG GAMES MACHINE IS A
LEADING FULL-SERVICE
GAMES PR AND
MARKETING AGENCY**

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