2024 Resource List: Violent Extremism, Radicalization, and Gaming

GIFCT Year 4 Working Group

February 2025

**EG** EXTREMISM+GAMING RESEARCH NETWORK

GIFCT Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism

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Introducing GIFCT Year 4 Working Groups

In May 2024, GIFCT launched its Year 4 Working Groups to facilitate dialogue, foster understanding, and produce outputs to directly support our mission of preventing terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms across a range of sectors, geographies, and disciplines. Started in 2020, GIFCT Working Groups contribute to growing our organizational capacity to deliver guidance and solutions to technology companies and practitioners working to counter terrorism and violent extremism, and offer multi-stakeholder perspectives on critical challenges and opportunities.

Overall, this year's three thematic Working Groups convened **145** participants from **32** countries across **6** continents with **51%** drawn from civil society (**12%** advocacy, **21%** academia, and **18%** practitioners), **23%** representing governments, and **26%** in tech.

Sectoral Breakdown of Working Group Participants

Advocacy **11.9%**

Academia **21.2%**

Government **22.9%**

Technology **26.3%**

Practitioners **17.8%**
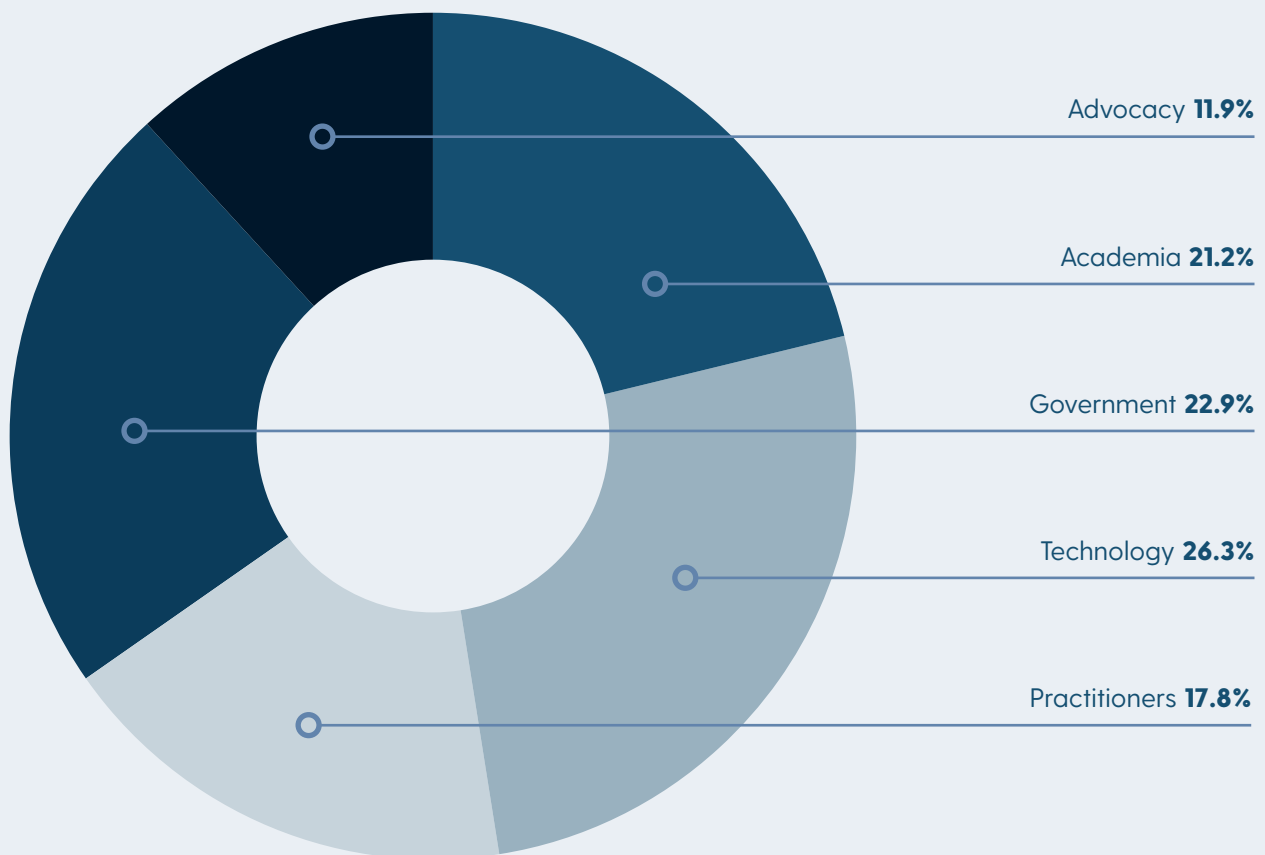
The 2024 GIFCT Working Groups focused on the following three topics:

Hash Sharing Working Group: Evolving Inclusion Parameters

GIFCT has managed and continually enhanced its [Hash-Sharing Database](#) (HSDB), which contains perceptual hashes of terrorist and violent extremist content, since 2017. The current inclusion parameters for the database have evolved through [close consultations with global experts](#). As technologies, content, and types of violent extremist and terrorist groups change, GIFCT aims to continuously review its definitions and parameters to evolve with the times.

In order to enhance the transparency and accuracy of GIFCT's HSDB, this Working Group reviewed the existing inclusion criteria, identified potential gaps, and put forward suggestions to enhance its use. Meetings included consultations with current GIFCT member companies and feedback sessions with global experts. The Working Group resulted in a final report mapping out recommendations and expectations on the future trajectory of GIFCT's HSDB taxonomy.

Incident Response Working Group: Future-proofing GIFCT's Incident Response Framework

GIFCT has continuously evolved its [Incident Response Framework](#) (IRF) since it launched in 2019 following the attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand. The IRF provides a centralized communications mechanism to share news of ongoing incidents that might result in the spread of violent content online, enabling widespread situational awareness and a more agile response among GIFCT member companies. Activations of the IRF allow GIFCT to heighten member awareness of ongoing incidents, circulate critical information regarding related online content, respond to member needs and requests regarding substantive or contextual information, and facilitate related uploads to the HSDB.

This Working Group reviewed and provided suggestions to future proof GIFCT's IRF. To do so, the Working Group evaluated the societal harms around terrorist and violent extremist attacks and mass violent events, examined case studies across different regions, and assessed different types of content, including AI-generated and synthetic materials, and their implications. Meetings included consultations with current GIFCT member companies and feedback sessions with global experts. The Working Group resulted in a set of recommendations regarding GIFCT's IRF. These inputs will inform GIFCT's ongoing efforts to assess lessons learned and good practices in strengthening the IRF and engagement with key stakeholders.

Gaming Community of Practice: Supporting Gaming Tech Safety

GIFCT established its Gaming Community of Practice (GCoP) to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation among practitioners in the gaming industry and to enhance the development of best

practices to prevent terrorists and violent extremists (TVE) from exploiting games, gaming-adjacent services, and the gaming community.

This Working Group invited researchers, policy makers, and subject matter experts to support the GCoP by sharing their insights and feedback on the ways in which game-play spaces should evolve their safety work, review safety policies, tools, and practices, and anticipate evolving safety risks. Participants joined GCoP meetings in 2024 to contribute to specific themed discussions to help inform the Community of Practice's themes and goals such as positive intervention potentials across game-play services and sessions with international law enforcement bodies to understand threat signals. Outputs from this year's GCoP include Safety-By-Design one-pagers on best practices on specific gaming surfaces; a review of interventions approaches and research; and early concept work for expanding how terrorist and violent extremist signals can be shared across GIFCT platforms.

About the Database

There are a variety of empirically-based publications and outputs on the subject of gaming and extremism, including reports, interview records, podcasts, etc. We have tried to capture a recent selection of these here, but it is important to note that this is not a comprehensive review of all related works. Instead, this list prioritizes accessible, open-source pieces from 2021 onward and especially from 2023-24, drawing on the most recent evidenced areas of exploitation of games and their user communities. It is a curated selection and up-to-date as of December 2024. Additional literature reviews on the subject covering earlier periods are accessible online[1]. A full database of over 150 pieces of relevant research can be accessed here:

Click Here to View ERGN Library

This annotated bibliography has been produced by the Extremism and Gaming Research Network (EGRN) for the Global Internet Forum to Counter-Terrorism (GIFCT) to ensure that GIFCT member companies can more easily access and understand the research landscape. It builds upon a 2023 edition written by Dr. Jessica White and Galen Lamphere-Englund, along with contributions by Dr. Rachel Kowert.

Quick Reads

If you read anything, have a look through this free book first:

- Gaming and Extremism: The Radicalization of Digital Playgrounds
  Author(s): Linda Schlegel and Rachel Kowert, eds.
  Publication Year: 2024
  Organization/Publication: Routledge

Or, if you need a short primer to read, see these:

- The Online Gaming Ecosystem: Assessing Digital Socialisation, Extremism Risks and Harms Mitigation Efforts
  Author(s): Galen Lamphere-Englund and Jessica White
  Publication Year: 2023
  Organization/Publication: EGRN and the Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET)

- Extremism in Games: A Primer
  Author(s): Rachel Kowert and Elizabeth Kilmer
  Publication Year: 2023
  Organization/Publication: Take This

- GNET & EGRN Resources
  Multiple short-form insights and relevant reports from GNET and EGRN

Click Here to View ERGN Library

Full Annotated Bibliography

Threat Overviews

Gaming the System: How Extremists Exploit Gaming Sites and What Can Be Done to Counter Them

Author(s): Mariana Olaizola Rosenblat

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights

Summary: "Gaming the System: How Extremists Exploit Gaming Sites" provides an analysis of the ways in which extremist groups exploit online gaming platforms and draws on primary data collection from surveys. The report sheds light on the tactics used by these groups to spread their ideologies and recruit followers within the gaming community. It emphasizes the urgent need for gaming platforms to enhance their monitoring and response mechanisms to counteract these extremist activities.

The Online Gaming Ecosystem: Assessing Digital Socialisation, Extremism Risks and Harms Mitigation Efforts

Author(s): Galen Lamphere-Englund and Jessica White

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: EGRN and the Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET)

Summary: This report provides an in-depth analysis of how extremist groups exploit gaming spaces, presenting a six-part typology of their tactics. It emphasizes the importance of proactive measures by gaming communities, trust and safety teams, and the broader industry to counter extremist influence. The authors offer key recommendations for harm mitigation, aiming to make gaming environments safer and less susceptible to exploitation by malicious actors.

Radicalisation through Gaming: The Role of Gendered Social Identity

Author(s): Dr Jessica White, Claudia Wallner, Galen Lamphere-Englund, Love Frankie, Dr Rachel Kowert, Linda Schlegel, Dr Ashton Kingdon, Dr Alexandra Phelan, Alex Newhouse, Gonzalo Saiz Erausquin and Petra Regeni

Publication Year: 2024

Organization/Publication: Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Summary: This research project aims to understand, through a gender and intersectional lens, how socialisation processes coupled with exposure to harassment, hate-based discrimination and extreme content can potentially lower resilience to radicalisation in gaming. It draws on a seven-country survey (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, the UK, and the US) of over 2,000 gamers, Steam data, social media analysis, and more to provide a nuanced gendered analysis of the issue. Practitioner and platform toolkits are forthcoming in 2025.

Foul Play Report I: An Introduction to the Gaming World and the Exploitation by Right-Wing Extremists

Author(s): Expo Foundation
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Expo Foundation
Summary: Part I introduces how right-wing extremist groups exploit gaming platforms to recruit and radicalize youth, with a focus on Sweden and European contexts. The report highlights the risks posed to individuals, the gaming industry, and broader society, serving as a foundational exploration of extremist activities in gaming. It also provides a general overview of the gaming sector.

Foul Play Report II: An Analysis of the Security Threat from Right-Wing Extremists in the Gaming Environment

Author(s): Expo Foundation
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Expo Foundation
Summary: Part II goes more in-depth to analyze the security threats posed by right-wing extremists within gaming spaces. The report examines the tactics used by extremists to infiltrate gaming communities, spread propaganda, and radicalize individuals, with an emphasis on societal risks.

Right-Wing Extremism in Mainstream Games: A Review of the Literature

Author(s): Garrison Wells, Agnes Romhanyi, Jason G. Reitman, Reginald Gardner, Kurt Squire, and Constance Steinkuehler
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: Games and Culture
Summary: This recent, comprehensive literature review looks at manifestations of right-wing extremism within mainstream gaming platforms. It explores in-game dynamics, player interactions, and the dissemination of extremist ideologies. The analysis highlights the risks associated with these activities and discusses potential approaches for mitigating their impact on gaming communities.

A View from the CT Foxhole: Jessica White and Galen Lamphere-Englund, Co-Conveners, Extremism and Gaming Research Network

Author(s): Kristina Hummel and Madeleine Biscaichipy
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: CTC Sentinel
Summary: During this interview, Jessica White and Galen Lamphere-Englund, co-conveners of the Extremism and Gaming Research Network, discuss the intersection of online gaming and extremism, highlighting how gaming platforms can be exploited for extremist agendas. The interview delves into the challenges and nuances of monitoring and countering extremist content

in gaming spaces, stressing the importance of multidisciplinary approaches and collaboration between various stakeholders from government, law enforcement, and the gaming industry to address this issue effectively.

Gaming and Online Extremism: Threats and Opportunities

Author(s): Jessica White, Galen Lamphere-Englund, Rachel Kowert, Charley Gleeson, Ashton Kingdon
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: The Third Annual GNET Conference
Summary: This video discussion covers a range of topics related to the nexus of extremism and gaming. The panelists start with an overview of the topic, giving useful examples of where exploitation has occurred in gaming spaces. They then introduce the socialization dynamics of gaming communities and gamer identity. Next, they address the mechanics of removing terrorist content from online spaces. Finally, the researchers provide examples of where game storylines have been exploited for radicalizing narratives.

Game and Platform Mechanics

30 Years of Trends in Terrorist and Extremist Games

Author(s): Emily Thompson and Galen Lamphere-Englund
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: EGRN and the Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET)
Summary: Based on a unique dataset of extremist and terrorist games, the ETGD, this report provides a comprehensive review of the evolution of terrorist and extremist-themed games over three decades. It details the progression of narratives, user engagement, and the exploitation of gaming platforms for extremist purposes. The report also offers insights and recommendations for mitigation and monitoring to counteract these trends effectively.

Streaming, Chatting, Modding: Eine Kurzexploration extremistischer Aktivitäten auf Gaming- und gaming-nahen Plattformen

Author(s): Constantin Winkler, Lars Wiegold, Linda Schlegel, Judith Jaskowski
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Leibniz-Institut für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (PRIF)
Summary: This report investigates the presence and activity of extremist groups on gaming and gaming-adjacent platforms, including Discord, Steam, and Twitch. It evaluates how these platforms are used for recruitment, propaganda dissemination, and content distribution, offering insights into radicalization processes and extremist strategies within digital spaces. While in German, English translations via Deepl are available and the below article provides an English overview of some of the modding content.

Exploring the Digital Extremist Ecosystem: A Preliminary Analysis of Hateful Posts on Mod DB

Author(s): Linda Schlegel, Lars Wiegold, Constantin Winkler, Julian Junk
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Frontiers in Psychology
Summary: This study investigates the presence and nature of hateful and extremist content on the Mod DB platform, an under-researched modding community. The research identifies various forms of online hate, including right-wing extremism, jihadism, antisemitism, and mixed-ideology posts, highlighting the potential of modding forums as spaces for extremist activity. The findings emphasize the need for further exploration of these platforms to better understand their role in radicalization and hate speech dissemination.

How Extremists and Terrorists Exploit Games

Author(s): George Osborn
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Video Games Industry Memo
Summary: A conversational interview with the former communications head of the UK Interactive Entertainment games industry group and an EGRN co-founder, Galen Lamphere-Englund. The interview is tailored for the tech and gaming industry and provides a quick introduction to how extremists and terrorists are misusing games. It focuses on specific strategies these groups use, such as embedding coded language in-game chats and exploiting in-game communication tools for radicalization and recruitment, while also providing useful analogies to approaches used to mitigate extremism and hooliganism in football in the UK.

Breaking the Building Blocks of Hate: A Case Study of Minecraft Servers

Author(s): Rachel Kowert, Autin Botelho, Alex Newhouse
Publication Year: 2022
Organization/Publication: Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Summary: This report, a joint collaboration between ADL, Take This, and the Middlebury Institute, delves into how Minecraft, a popular sandbox video game, can be used as a platform for spreading hate and extremist content. Through analysis of three server logs and ML approaches, it examines specific instances of hate speech and extremist ideologies being propagated through Minecraft servers, emphasizing the challenges of moderating user-generated content in online gaming environments.

The Gamification of Violent Extremism: An Exploration of Emerging Trends, Future Threat Scenarios, and Potential P/CVE Solutions

Author(s): Suraj Lakhani, Jessica White, Claudia Wallner
Publication Year: 2022
Organization/Publication: EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

Summary: The report focuses on the intersection of gaming – and gamification – mechanics and violent extremism. It provides an in-depth look at how extremist groups leverage gamification techniques to spread their ideologies, recruit members, and engage sympathizers. The report examines specific case studies, such as the Christchurch, New Zealand, attack, highlighting how gamification can make extremist content more engaging and addictive. It underscores the importance of understanding these tactics for trust and safety teams to develop effective countermeasures.

Malign Foreign Interference and Information Influence on Video Game Platforms: Understanding the Adversarial Playbook

Author(s): James Pamment, Jesper Falkheimer, & Elsa Isaksson
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: Lund University and Swedish Psychological Defense Agency
Summary: While not specifically covering extremism, this report from the Swedish Government focuses on the strategic use of video game platforms by foreign actors for disinformation and influence campaigns. Extremist and terrorist actors often use the tactics and detailed approaches in the work, and it provides a robust guide to potential exploits. It highlights growing concern and evidence over how these platforms can be exploited for spreading misleading narratives and influencing public opinion. It underscores the need for vigilance and proactive measures to safeguard gaming communities from these covert influence operations.

When Digital and Physical World Combine: The Metaverse and Gamification of Violent Extremism

Author(s): Suraj Lakhani
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: Perspectives on Terrorism
Summary: From early Bulletin Board Systems adopted by neo-Nazis to the Islamic State's more recent prolific use of social media platforms, an aspect of terrorism studies that is generally agreed upon is that violent extremists are often early adopters of emerging technologies. These groups, organizations, and networks have demonstrated innovative uses of these digital spaces, harnessed for recruitment, coordination, community building, attack planning, propaganda, dissemination, and other purposes. Alongside studying these phenomena, it is important to explore where future trends lie; particularly as findings and recommendations can ensure that relevant stakeholders are aware of and can begin to prepare for emerging threats.

Toxicity in Multiplayer Games Report

Author(s): Unity
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: Unity
Summary: The report from Unity, the game development platform, focuses on the increasing concerns regarding toxic behaviors in online gaming environments and draws on comparative

data with the 2021 edition of the same report. It presents an analysis of toxicity patterns in multiplayer games, emphasizing the impact on both players and gaming communities. The report identifies key forms of toxic behavior prevalent in these settings, such as harassment, hate speech, and disruptive gameplay, and discusses the consequences for player experience and retention. Additionally, it explores the strategies employed by gaming companies and player's perceptions of efficacy to detect and mitigate these negative behaviors, highlighting the importance of creating safer and more inclusive gaming spaces.

Trust and Safety Responses, Policies, Interventions

General Recommendations, Regulation, Policies

CTRL+ALT+COLLABORATE: Public-Private Partnerships to Prevent Extremism in Gaming
Author(s): Galen Lamphere-Englund and Menso Hartgers
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
Summary: Drawing on interviews with industry, regulators, and practitioners, this report explores the role of public-private partnerships in combating extremism within gaming. It highlights the potential of collaboration between governments, private companies, and other stakeholders to reduce extremist influence in gaming spaces. The authors provide examples of effective practices, identify guidelines for collaborative work, and assess the impact of cooperative efforts on fostering safer gaming environments.

Leveling Up to Stay Safe: Gaming Report
Author(s): eSafety Commissioner (Australia)
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: eSafety Commissioner
Summary: Examines safety and online harms challenges in gaming environments, focusing on issues such as harassment and exposure to harmful content. It offers practical recommendations to promote inclusivity and protect users from harm, highlighting the importance of proactive safety measures and robust moderation practices within gaming communities.

Online Safety and the Regulation of Gaming Platforms and Services
Author(s): Ellen Jacobs, Ella Meyer, Helena Schwertheim, Melanie Döring, Terra Rolfe
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)
Summary: Review of online safety risks in gaming environments, addressing issues such as online hate, misogyny, extremism, radicalization, and child safety threats like grooming and cyberbullying. It evaluates existing regulatory frameworks and provides actionable recommendations for policy

makers, platforms, and civil society to enhance safety and inclusivity within gaming spaces.

Foul Play Report III: Recommendations for a Gaming World Free from Right-Wing Extremism

Author(s): Expo Foundation
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Expo Foundation
Summary: The final part of theExpo Foundation series outlines actionable strategies to combat the influence of right-wing extremism in gaming environments. It provides practical recommendations for individuals, industry stakeholders, and policy makers to create safer and more inclusive gaming spaces.

Addressing Extremism in Online Games Through Platform Policies

Author(s): Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Anti-Defamation League
Summary: ADL reviews the policies of major game companies, including Call of Duty, Roblox, and Minecraft, regarding the prohibition of extremist and terrorist content. It highlights the gaming industry's slower response to addressing such issues compared to social media platforms. The ADL recommends that gaming companies adopt explicit policies to combat extremism, including measures against the glorification of violence and dissemination of extremist ideologies, to create safer online multiplayer environments.

Countering Violent Extremism: FBI and DHS Need Strategies and Goals for Sharing Threat Information with Social Media and Gaming Companies

Author(s): United States Government Accountability Office (GAO)
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: GAO
Summary: This report evaluates the FBI and DHS mechanisms for sharing threat-related information with social media and gaming companies, focusing on domestic violent extremists' use of these platforms. It highlights gaps in existing governmental strategies and goals for interagency and industry collaboration, recommending improvements to enhance information sharing and mitigate extremist threats in digital environments.

Countering the Misuse of Gaming-Related Content and Spaces for Radicalisation: Inspiring Practices and Opportunities for Cooperation with Tech Companies

Author(s): Linda Schlegel
Publication Year: 2022
Organization/Publication: EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
Summary: Schlegel's report delves into the misuse of gaming-related content and spaces for radicalization purposes. It offers an insightful analysis of how extremist ideologies permeate

gaming environments, exploiting their unique features for propaganda and recruitment. The report stands out for its focus on practical countermeasures and inspiring practices to mitigate this misuse.

At the Nexus of Gaming and Extremism

Author(s): Jessica White and Galen Lamphere-Englund
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: ACM Games: Research and Practice
Summary: This academic article examines the intersection of gaming culture and extremism, focusing on how extremist groups exploit gaming environments for recruitment and propaganda. In particular, the piece provides an overview of the extremism and gaming niche since 2021, and looks at the role of game mechanics and social interactions in facilitating extremist narratives. The article offers evidence-based strategies for prevention, emphasizing the importance of addressing these risks through collaborative interventions involving the gaming industry, policy makers, and researchers.

Moderation & Community Management Tools

Empowering the Gaming Industry: Strategies for Addressing Hate, Harassment, and Extremism in Online Communities

Author(s): Rachel Kowert and Elizabeth Kilmer
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Take This.
Summary: This report provides actionable strategies, drawing on interviews with industry, for gaming stakeholders to combat hate, harassment, and extremism within online gaming communities. It emphasizes fostering inclusivity through improved content moderation, robust community guidelines, and active user engagement. By addressing toxic behavior and supporting positive social interactions, the report offers a roadmap for creating safer and more welcoming gaming environments.

Preventing Extremist Violence Using Existing Content Moderation Tools

Author(s): Kris McGuffie
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET)
Summary: This Insight highlights the potential of automated content moderation technologies to detect and prevent extremist violence. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging current tools to identify user-generated content that could indicate offline threats. The article advocates for improved collaboration among industry, civil society, and government entities to enhance detection and mitigation efforts through data-sharing and resource pooling. Strategies for

deploying these tools are explored, underscoring the urgency of proactive measures to counter online extremism.

Caught in a Vicious Cycle: Obstacles and Opportunities for Trust and Safety Teams in the Games Industry

Author(s): ADL Center for Technology and Society

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

Summary: A look at the challenges faced by Trust and Safety (T&S) teams in the gaming industry, drawing on analysis of policy and community guidelines from 12 games and interviews with T&S experts. It identifies key obstacles, such as the complexity of gaming ecosystems, the evolving nature of harmful online behavior, and resource limitations. For T&S policy, the report suggests the importance of recognizing the unique aspects of gaming platforms, investing in specialized training for T&S staff, and developing innovative tools to monitor and mitigate harmful content. The report advocates for a proactive and dynamic approach to T&S in gaming, emphasizing collaboration within the industry and with external experts.

Modulate and Activision Case Study

Author(s): Modulate

Publication Year: 2024

Organization/Publication: Modulate

Summary: Review of the impact of ToxMod, an AI-driven voice moderation tool, on the Call of Duty player experience. Key findings include a 25% reduction in toxicity exposure in Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II and Warzone, and a 50% reduction in toxicity exposure in Modern Warfare III. ToxMod identified significantly higher rates of toxic behavior in voice chats than player-generated reports, which often lacked actionable evidence. Additionally, repeat offenders decreased by 8% month over month, and moderators were able to address up to 2 million accounts for disruptive behavior. The study demonstrates the effectiveness of AI moderation in enhancing player safety and fostering a more respectful gaming environment.

Deploying ML for Voice Safety

Author(s): Roblox Research

Publication Year: 2024

Organization/Publication: Roblox

Summary: A case study highlighting Roblox's implementation of machine learning (ML) technologies to improve voice safety on its platform. By addressing real-time moderation challenges, the initiative has reportedly significantly reduced harmful interactions in voice communication. The study underscores the role of ML in creating safer, more inclusive digital environments and details innovative solutions that empower moderation efforts to respond proactively to toxicity.

Reputation Management Systems

Author(s): Tanya Aggarwal, Jessica Araujo, Michael Bochkur Dratver, and Julia Gaburo
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: New_Public
Summary: A wider review of how reputation management systems, such as Reddit's karma and profile insignia, shape user behavior and community norms in digital spaces. It examines these systems' role in fostering community trust, encouraging positive social interactions, and managing governance challenges within online communities.

Reputation System Beta: Reputation Standing & Fair Play Program Beta

Author(s): Ubisoft
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Ubisoft
Summary: Ubisoft's Reputation System Beta in Rainbow Six Siege evaluates player behavior to promote fair play and reduce toxicity. The system assigns players a reputation standing based on their in-game actions, rewarding positive conduct and deterring negative behaviors. This initiative exemplifies how gaming companies can implement trust and safety measures to enhance player experiences and create healthier gaming environments.

Positive Interventions & Strategic Communications

Cater to the Audience: Add Cringe to Counter-Messaging Against White Supremacy in Gaming

Author(s): Leo Sereni and Zola Sayers-Fay
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: International Peace and Security (PIPS)
Summary: Proposes a novel counter-messaging strategy using "cringe" to combat white supremacy within online gaming spaces. The authors argue that traditional counter-messaging often fails to capture gamers' attention, whereas "cringey" content—material that provokes amusement, awkwardness, or judgment—is highly shareable and effective at drawing engagement. The report emphasizes leveraging cringe as a tool to disrupt extremist narratives and create viral anti-radicalization content that resonates with gaming communities.

Playbook on Positive Intervention Strategies Online

Author(s): GIFCT Blue Team Working Group (BTWG)
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: GIFCT
Summary: The positive interviews report from a 2023 GIFCT WG group provides practical guidance on intervention work in digital spaces. Practitioners working on preventing and countering violent

extremism (PVE/CVE) tend to use only three to four larger social media platforms for most intervention efforts. The BTWG developed this Playbook to highlight alternative platforms for potential positive interventions. The result is a tailored set of approaches and best practices to further PVE/CVE efforts spanning a wider diversity of platforms. It aims to help activists in their efforts to challenge hate and extremism online and foster broader CSO-Tech Company partnerships looking at intervention potential.

The Future Is Now: New Frontiers in Digital P/CVE

Author(s): Linda Schlegel (Ed). Contributors: Lauren Frank, Jared Shurin, Sophia Rothut, Galen Lamphere-Englund, Kurt Braddock, Ashton Kingdon, Esther Theisen, Dr. Friedhelm Hartwig, Christian Schwieter, Frauke Seeba, Jacob Ware

Publication Year: 2024

Organization/Publication: modus zad (Modus – Zentrum für angewandte Deradikalisierungsforschung)

Summary: This conference paper, edited by Modus-ZAD, explores future challenges and innovative approaches in digital P/CVE. The publication features contributions from international experts on diverse topics, including counter- and alternative narrative campaigns, online radicalization pathways, and emerging methods for combating extremism in digital spaces. The paper aims to provide fresh perspectives and actionable insights for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers working to prevent and counter violent extremism in online environments.

Gaming Culture

Taking it to the Extreme: Prevalence and Nature of Extremist Sentiment in Games

Author(s): Rachel Kowert, Elizabeth Kilmer, and Alex Newhouse

Publication Year: 2024

Organization/Publication: Frontiers in Psychology

Summary: Research on the prevalence, nature, and impact of extremist sentiment within gaming spaces. The authors conducted a survey of 423 players, revealing alarmingly high rates of exposure to and witnessing of extremist content, most of which occurred through in-game text communication. The study highlights the normalization of extremist ideologies within gaming cultures, as well as the challenges of moderation and reporting systems. While some players reported extremist behavior, many resorted to ignoring it, reflecting a potential lack of trust in existing moderation tools. The findings underscore the urgency for game developers, policy makers, and the gaming community to address these risks and foster safer environments.

Toxic Gamers are Alienating Your Core Demographic: The Business Case for Community Management

Author(s): Rachel Kowert and Elizabeth Kilmer

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: Take This.

Summary: The article investigates the negative behaviors and toxicity in gaming communities. The study highlights how these behaviors impact individual players, overall gaming culture, and the impact on gaming business profitability. It discusses the psychological underpinnings of such toxicity, its manifestations, and the broad consequences for gaming communities. This research is particularly relevant for gaming trust and safety teams as it provides insights into the psychosocial dynamics of online interactions in gaming environments and offers potential strategies for fostering healthier, more inclusive gaming communities.

Building Resilience to Extremism in Gaming: Identifying and Addressing Toxicity in Gaming Culture

Author(s): Claudia Wallner, Jessica White, Petra Regeni

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: RAN Policy Support

Summary: First, this paper examines where and how toxic cultures exist in gaming. Second, it explores the links between toxicity and socialization, radicalization, and extremism. Finally, it assesses the challenges, efforts, and opportunities for building resilience to toxicity in gaming spaces and cultures. In order to provide an encompassing overview of these topics, the paper considers the role of the gaming industry, governments and intergovernmental entities, individuals and communities, and civil society organizations in both the manifestation of toxicity in gaming spaces and culture as well as in the existing efforts and future opportunities to prevent and combat associated risks and threats.

Playing with Religion: The Gamification of Jihad

Author(s): Firas Mahmoud

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)

Summary: The DIIS report focuses specifically on how jihadist groups have adopted gamification strategies in their propaganda and recruitment efforts. It explores the intersection of gaming culture and extremist ideologies, highlighting how these groups such as ISIS and Hezbollah use game-like elements to appeal to younger audiences and foster engagement. The report underscores the importance of Trust and Safety teams in understanding these tactics to employ effective countermeasures, especially in non-English languages. The need to carry out threat, risk, and response assessments through better access to gaming-platform data is also noted by the author.

Gamers Who Hate: A Snapshot Analysis of the Role Gaming Plays in the Digital Strategies of The Extreme Right

Author(s): Jacob Davey

Publication Year: 2021

Organization/Publication: Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

Summary: The gaming and extremism series from ISD provides an in-depth analysis of how four gaming adjacent platforms (Steam, Discord, DLive, and Twitch) were used as venues for spreading hate and extremist ideologies by the far-right in the UK and globally. It highlights the risks associated with online gaming environments being co-opted for hate speech and extremist activities, underscoring the need for gaming companies and policy makers to take proactive measures to address these issues. The report's specific recommendations include enhancing monitoring and reporting mechanisms, promoting positive community engagement within gaming platforms, and developing educational initiatives to counter hate speech and extremism in gaming spaces. The more specific content and proscribed group use cases detailed across the four platforms in these reports are of particular interest, though the data used for analysis needs to be updated as it is from 2020-21.

You are What you Play: The Risks of Identity Fusion in Toxic Gamer Cultures

Author(s): Rachel Kowert, Alexi Martel, William Swann
Publication Year: 2023
Organization/Publication: ACM Journals, Games: Research and Practice
Summary: There has long been concern about the potential negative uses and effects of digital games. While these discussions have historically focused on the role of game content, it is the social environment of games that poses a more immediate concern. Specifically, the normalization of hateful behavior in gamer cultures. While "gamer cultures" originally developed as an identity to unite a group of so-called misfits who spent their time in shared physical gaming spaces, today, gamer cultures have come to be more associated with exclusion than inclusion. In this piece, the authors explore game cultures through the lens of identity fusion to explore the nature and influence of these identities.

Examining the Intersection between Gaming and Violent Extremism

Author(s): Linda Schlegel and Amarnath Amarasingam
Publication Year: 2022
Organization/Publication: United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)
Summary: This UNOCT report by Schlegel and Amarasingam provides an in-depth analysis based on focus groups and a transnational survey of gamers to look at the ways in which gaming platforms are utilized by extremist groups. It focuses on the dynamics of gaming environments and how they can be exploited for hateful, violent, and extremist content, as well as positive attributes of gaming flagged by respondents. Of particular interest to the sector may be reactions to negative aspects of gaming and encounters with extremist content, which included ignoring, blocking, reporting, leaving, reacting, and how abuse could be mitigated by gaming companies.

Gaming Communities

Perceptions of Harm in Online Gaming: Insights from Players and Industry Professional

Author(s): Rachel Kowert and Elizabeth D. Kilmer
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Take This
Summary: Analyzes alignment between players' and industry professionals' perceptions of harmful behaviors in online gaming spaces. Through survey data, it identifies disparities in the perceived prevalence and severity of harms, such as hate speech, incitement of violence, and swatting, with industry professionals often viewing them as more pervasive than players. These results suggest that trust and safety professionals may shield players from many offenses, influencing their differing perspectives. The study underscores the importance of a shared understanding to enhance moderation strategies and foster safer gaming communities.

Hate is No Game: Hate and Harassment in Online Games 2023

Author(s): Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Anti-Defamation League
Summary: US-based, survey-driven reporting on the persistence of hate and harassment in online gaming environments throughout 2023. Similar studies are available from 2019-, providing longitudinal data trend analysis. It provides a detailed statistical analysis of incidents of discrimination, abuse, and extremism, offering a clear picture of the challenges faced by gaming communities. Recommendations include implementing robust moderation tools and improving community guidelines to foster safer spaces.

Online Hate and Harassment: The American Experience 2024

Author(s): Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Publication Year: 2024
Organization/Publication: Anti-Defamation League
Summary: This report presents findings from ADL's annual survey on online hate and harassment in the United States. It complements the above 2021-23 surveys, though it is not gaming-exclusive in 2024. It highlights a notable increase in severe harassment, particularly in the wake of significant geopolitical events, such as the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel. Additionally, it explores emerging threats posed by generative AI tools and decreased enforcement by platforms. The report includes actionable recommendations for policy makers, tech companies, and civil society to address these pressing issues.

Media Framing of Far-Right Extremism and Online Radicalization in Esport and Gaming

Author(s): Collison-Randall, H., Spaaij, R., Hayday, E.J., et al.

Publication Year: 2024

Organization/Publication: Humanities and Social Sciences Communication

Summary: Examination of the intersection of far-right extremism and online radicalization within the expanding ecosystem of esports and gaming. Using framing theory and qualitative document analysis, the paper discusses how media articles depict the relationship between far-right extremism and esports. The findings provide critical insights into how such narratives influence public discourse, shape gamer identities, and frame online spaces as sites of victimization or criminalization. The research highlights the importance of understanding media representations to counter radicalization effectively in gaming and esports environments.

Gaming & Extremism: Threats and Opportunities

Author(s): Anne Craanen, Jessica White, Galen Lamphere-Englund

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: Tech Against Terrorism

Summary: This podcast episode explores the interaction between gaming and extremism. It discusses the growing misuse of gaming platforms by extremist actors and considers why gaming communities are at risk of fostering concerning attitudes towards misogyny, racism, and even violent extremism. Additionally, it addresses the threat to children and young people, the challenges and opportunities for policy makers, gaming companies, and other stakeholders, and finally, what the future of gaming could mean in the context of extremism.

Hate Is No Game: Hate and Harassment in Online Games 2022

Author(s): ADL Center for Technology & Society

Publication Year: 2023

Organization/Publication: Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

Summary: This annual ADL report – with year-on-year data from 2021, 2020, and 2019 – provides a detailed analysis of online gaming environments, focusing on issues of hate and harassment, as well as positive social experiences. It offers insights into the prevalence and nature of negative and targeted hate-related behaviors such as identity-based harassment in gaming spaces, along with the impact of such behaviors on players. For example, US-based polling in the report finds that 86% of players ages 18-45 experience harassment in online multiplayer games, while one in five adult gamers were exposed to white supremacist ideologies in games. That represented a doubling since 2021. Meanwhile, 15% of young people reported exposure to white supremacy in-game. The report also explores the positive aspects of online gaming, highlighting the potential for these platforms to foster social connections and inclusion. For trust and safety teams, the report serves as an essential resource on identity-based harassment, including types of harassment by game, surfaces, and reporting barriers.

About Us: Extremism and Gaming Research Network (EGRN)

The Extremism and Gaming Research Network works together to uncover how malign actors exploit gaming, to build resilience in gaming communities to online harms, and to discover new ways to use gaming for good.

At the EGRN we bring over 170 researchers, practitioners, and policy makers together with the private sector to develop an understanding of potential threats, as well as solutions for the exploitation of gaming by terrorists and violent extremists. Our work is structured around convening and connecting our global members across sectors, supporting research development and reporting, advising and training tech platforms and governments, and generating best intervention practices. Our overarching priorities fall across four pillars:

1. To Convene and connect our members across sectors, as well as other relevant organizations and individuals working on gaming and online harms such as extremism.

2. To Research why and how video games, gaming platforms, gaming content, and cultural aspects of gaming are used by extremist individuals or organizations. We also seek to understand the implications of these uses on radicalization and recruitment and how those trends vary across geographies, cultures, subcultures, ideologies, and genders.

3. To Train others beyond the Network, especially across regulators, tech platforms, law enforcement, and frontline violence/extremism prevention practitioners on the issue.

4. To Intervene and Advise by empowering gamers, companies, governments, and civil society to combat hate by building positive, inclusive, and resilient communities online through better programs and policies alike.

Learn more on our **website**

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you're interested in learning more about the network and our work, please see our webpage or contact us directly at: admin@extremismandgaming.org

EGRN CONTACT DETAILS

Website: https://extremismandgaming.org
Bluesky: https://bsky.app/profile/extremismgaming.bsky.social
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/egrn/

GIFCT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and tech-led initiative with over 30 member tech companies offering unique settings for diverse stakeholders to identify and solve the most complex global challenges at the intersection of terrorism and technology. GIFCT's mission is to prevent TVE from exploiting digital platforms through our vision of a world in which the technology sector marshals its collective creativity and capacity to render TVE ineffective online. In every aspect of our work, we aim to be transparent, inclusive, and respectful of the fundamental and universal human rights that TVE seek to undermine.

🌐 **www.gifct.org**   ✉ **outreach@gifct.org**