

Videogame Developers Are Making It Harder to Stop Playing

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Videogames have gotten harder to turn off, mental-health experts and parents say, raising concerns about the impact of seemingly endless gaming sessions on players' lives.

Game developers for years have tweaked the dials not only on how games look and sound but how they operate under the hood, and such changes have made videogames more pervasive and enthralling, industry observers say.

The World Health Organization in June added "[gaming disorder](#)" to an updated version of its International Classification of Diseases, warning about a condition in which people give up interests and activities to overly indulge in gaming despite negative consequences. It is expected to be formally classified in January 2022.

Many games today are free, available on multiple devices, and double as social networks. Where once games were played and put away for a while, now game companies are routinely delivering new content aimed at keeping players constantly engaged. Some new content is available only for a limited time, a maneuver that tugs at people's fears of missing out, psychologists say.