

# Desire for in-person interaction fuels tabletop gaming trend

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New research using online search, revenue and survey data shows people are ditching screen time to flock to more social, and more affordable, in-person entertainment - a post-pandemic trend that geek merch retailer Merchoid (<https://www.merchoid.com/uk>) predicts is set to keep surging.

While Netflix reported its first net loss in 2022, and is predicted to lose 700,000 UK customers over the next 2 years, tabletop gaming giants are enjoying record revenues. And it isn't just about preference. Affordable entertainment is becoming a priority, which Merchoid explores in a new report (<https://www.merchoid.com/uk/blog/post/rolling-dice-in-crisis-the-unexpected-boom-of-tabletop-gaming/>).

- No more streaming spend! A survey of 1,479 entertainment fans found that 22% have cancelled their streaming subscription this year and 43% are considering cancelling soon.
- Meanwhile Games Workshop, owners of the Warhammer IP, and Wizards of The Coast, owners of the Dungeons & Dragons IP, have each seen record-breaking revenue increases post-pandemic.
- 37% of us are spending more time on tabletop games than pre-lockdown, with 76% noting in-person interaction as essential to their enjoyment.

In an uncertain economic climate with soaring subscription service fees and growing cinema ticket prices, interactive classics are having a retro resurgence. In a cost of living crisis, people are cutting their losses where they can. Merchoid notes that tabletop gaming has seen an unexpected boom during a time of distinct consumer economic pressure, especially in the United Kingdom - where spending on other entertainment formats, such as streaming services, is falling.

The coronavirus lockdowns meant long periods of isolation, with most of us relying on technology for communication and entertainment. As life returned to normal, people worldwide remained hungry for social contact - and figures suggest digital pastimes are being ditched in favour of making up for lost time in the real-world.

Owner of Slice & Dice (tabletop gaming café), Samantha Whitehouse has felt the change in business: "We've had to move to a bigger venue just over a year after opening as we couldn't keep up with demand on weekends and we kept getting enquiries for bigger groups/events. We've seen a massive increase in people using our venue for celebrations, occasions and friendly catch-ups because they love having the game element to keep them all off their phones."

In fact, last year the value of the colossal UK video games market declined by 5.6% (<https://ukie.org.uk/news/2023/04/uk-consumer-games-market-valuation-2022>), led in part by increased interest in tabletop gaming. Of Merchoid's survey respondents, 37% stated they spent more time on tabletop games than before lockdown.

James Dance, Founder of Loading Bar, thinks tabletop "allows people to play in person in a way that they don't with online games" which "offers something social that scales up to bigger groups without large expenses like say Crazy Golf, Axe throwing etc".

Tabletop gaming is proving so popular that the owner of Ludoquist in Croydon, Nick Smith, regularly gets more people on his waiting list than can fit inside the venue. As a result, Games Workshop (Warhammer IP) has seen a +53.8% revenue increase since 2020, followed closely by Dungeon & Dragons IP owners Wizards of the Coast's 46.1% revenue growth.

Simon Ward, Director at Merchoid, notes:

"Tabletop gaming is redefining value in entertainment. As streaming service prices climb, people are pivoting towards board games - a one-time purchase for endless fun. It's not just about the game; it's about the community, shared experiences and the lasting memories. Tabletop games are proving their worth time and again, delivering a replayability that truly goes the distance".

You can find out more about the data at "Rolling dice in crisis: The unexpected boom of tabletop gaming"

(<https://www.merchoid.com/uk/blog/post/rolling-dice-in-crisis-the-unexpected-boom-of-tabletop-gaming/>) or explore solo and multi-player tabletop games on the Merchoid site.

(<https://www.merchoid.com/uk/toys-figures-and-plushies/games/>)