



2011 PopCap Games Social Gaming Research - Focus on Social Game Cheaters  
Information Solutions Group

# RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This information represents a subset of the recently released 2011 PopCap Social Gaming Research, which compares current social gaming behavior and interests of US and UK Internet users to a previous study completed in February 2010. To access the results of this study click here: [2011 PopCap Social Gaming Research Results](#)

This portion of the research focuses on those who cheat by using hacks, bots or cheats while playing online social games to unofficially and unfairly modify the game to give themselves an advantage over others. It also examines these individual's propensity to participate in other type of societal cheating including but not limited to cheating on tests, taxes, relationship.

Based upon the survey results, 101 or 8% of the social gamers have used hacks, bots or cheats in an online social game occasionally or regularly.

## **Data Collection Overview**

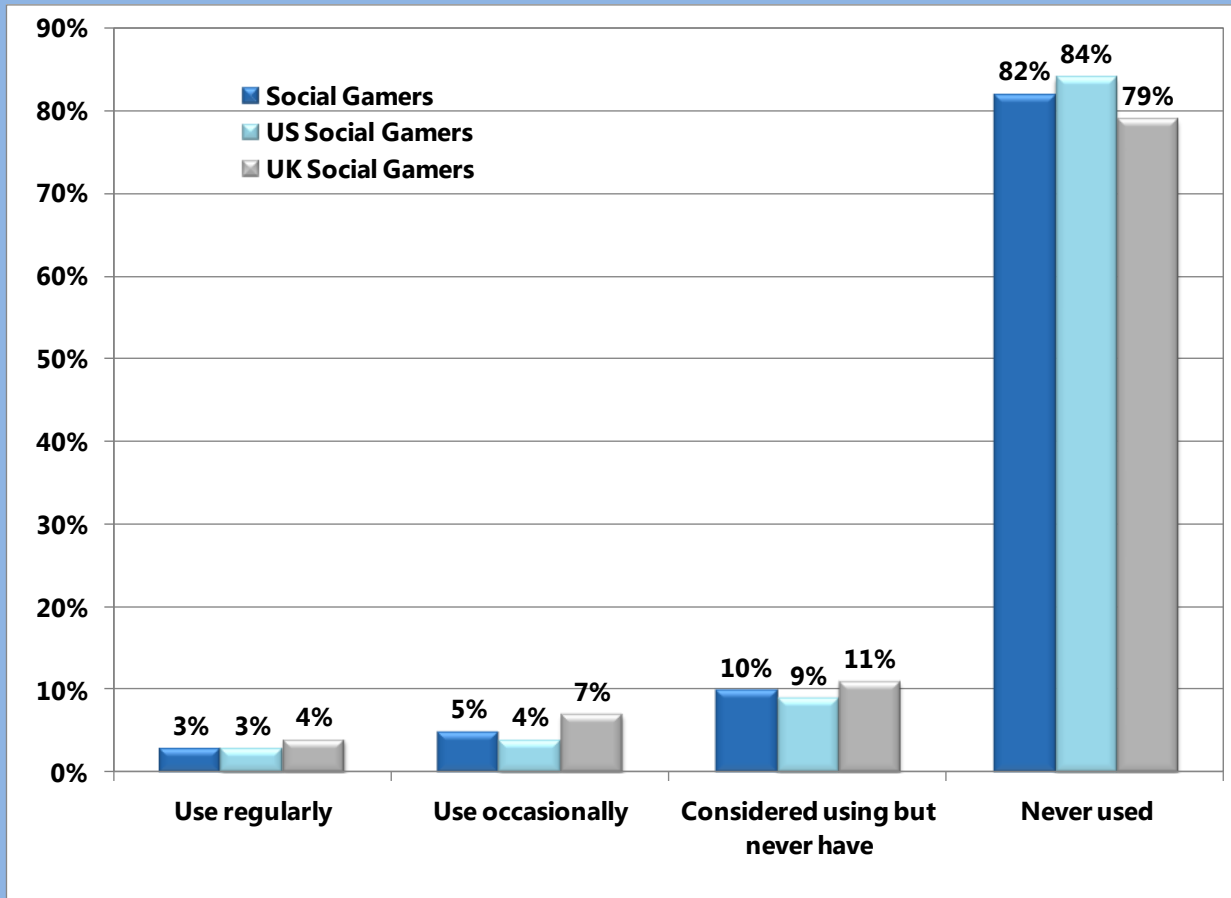
- Methodology: Web survey (ePanel)
- Audience (US and UK Internet users)
- Survey period: September 15, 2011 - September 22, 2011
- 1,201 qualified responses (801 US, 400 UK)

## **Survey Qualifications**

- Live in the United States or United Kingdom
- Play social games more than 15 minutes per week

# USE OF HACKS, BOTS AND CHEATS IN SOCIAL GAMES

- While the majority (82%) of the 1,201 social gamers have never used a hack, bot or cheat to gain an advantage in a social game, 8% or 101 use them regularly or occasionally.
- Social gamers in the UK are more likely cheat while playing social games, with 11% using them regularly or occasionally, compared to 7% in the US.



Q28 Which of the following best describes your use of hacks, bots and cheats in online social games?

# SOCIETAL CHEATING AMONG SOCIAL GAME CHEATERS

% Strongly agree

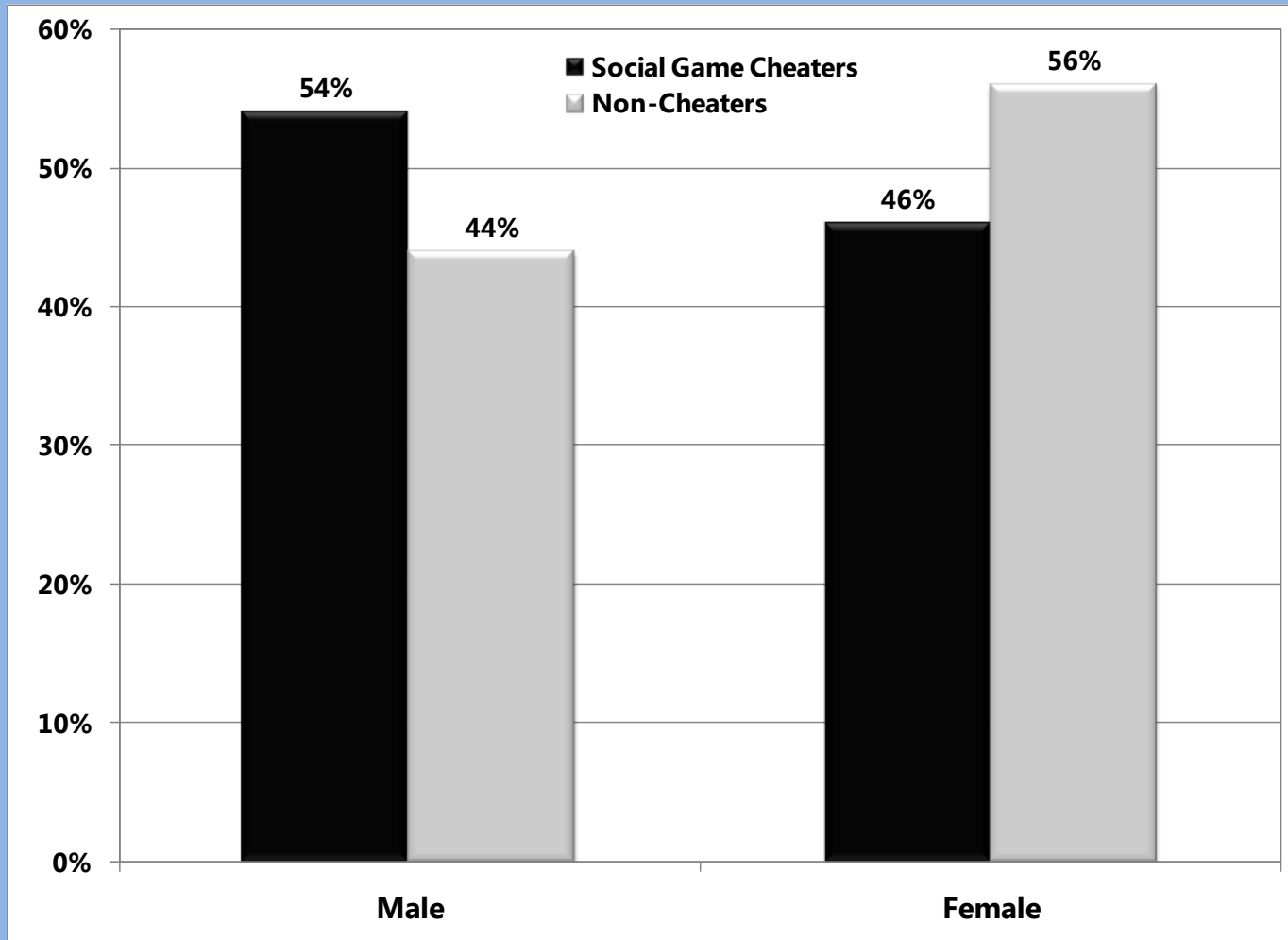
- Those who cheat while playing social games also cheat more in a variety of real life situations.
  - 53% also admit to cheating on tests in school, 49% have cheated while in a committed relationship, while 43% have cheated on their taxes.
  - Those in the UK cheat on their taxes more, as well as take magazines from a waiting room or items from a hotel.

	All Social Game Cheaters	All Non-Cheaters	US Social Game Cheaters	US Non-Cheaters	UK Social Game Cheaters	UK Non-Cheaters
I have cheated on tests in school	53%	16%	51%	17%	55%	12%
I often take cups or towels from a hotel	51%	14%	45%	14%	60%	13%
I have parked in a handicapped parking spot but I am not eligible	51%	12%	53%	11%	48%	13%
I have cheated while in a committed relationship	49%	15%	47%	15%	51%	13%
I often take packets of sugar, jam or butter from a restaurant	47%	22%	47%	22%	46%	23%
I often take magazines from a waiting room	43%	9%	36%	8%	54%	10%
I have cheated on my taxes	43%	8%	33%	8%	58%	8%

Q30 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself?

# GENDER

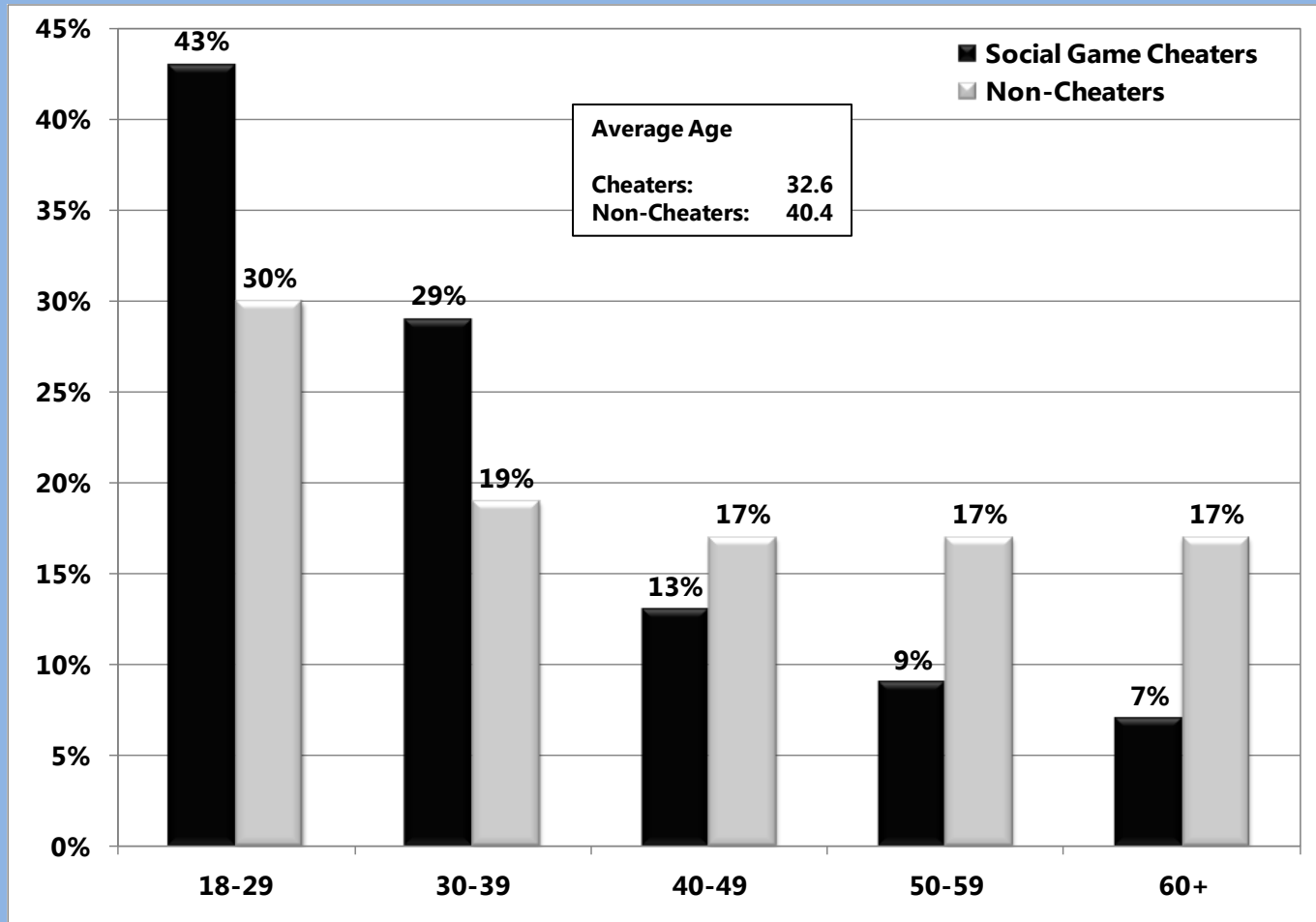
- Males are more likely to cheat while playing social games (54% vs. 46%).



Q31 Gender

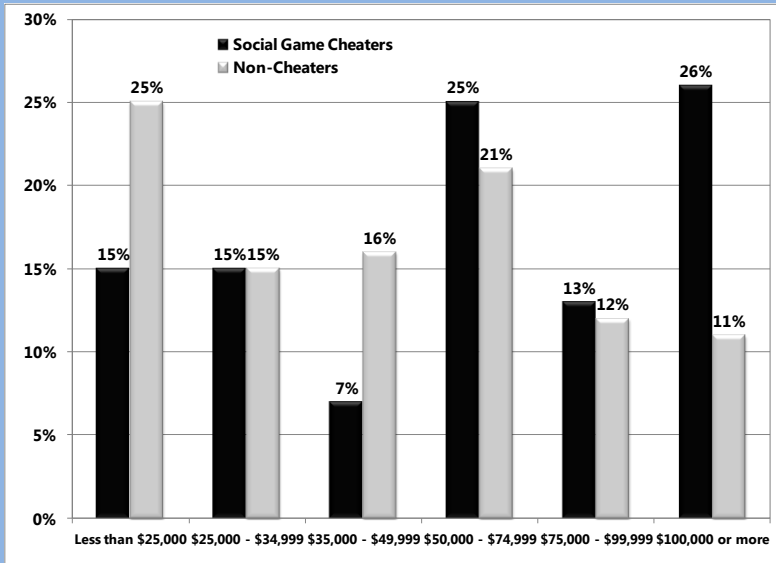
# AGE

- Social game cheaters are younger, with an average age of 32.6 vs. 40.4 among non-cheaters.
- 72% of the social game cheaters are under 40 years old, compared to 49% of the non-cheaters.

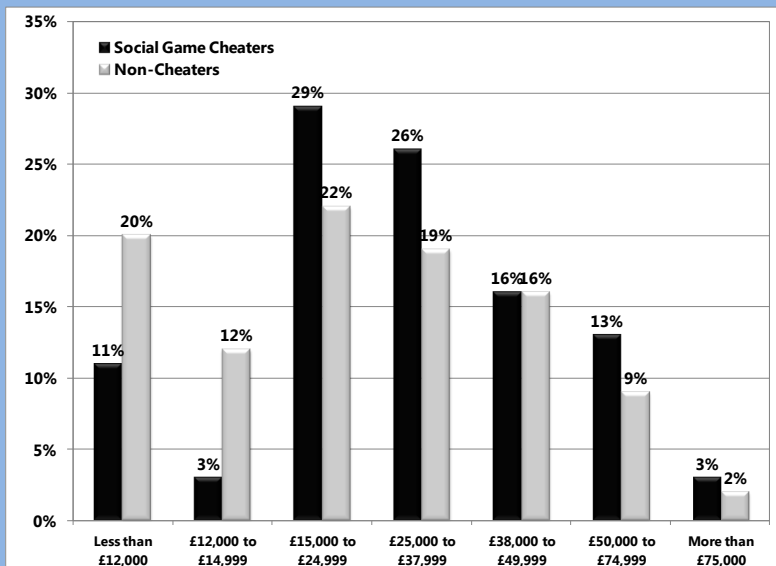


Q32 Age

# ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME



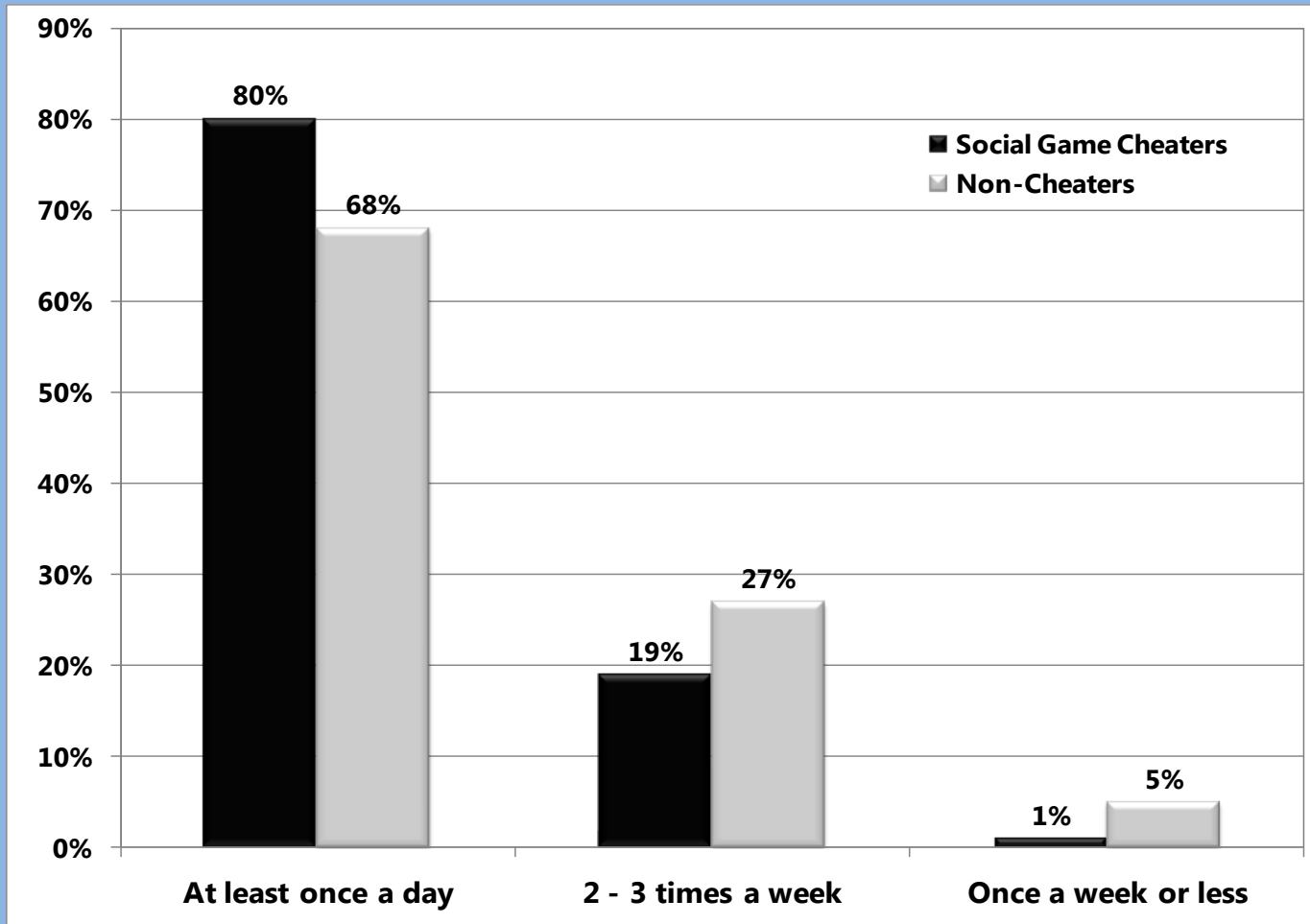
- The annual household income of US social game cheaters is higher.
  - Two-thirds (64%) earn at least \$50,000, compared to 44% of non-cheaters.
- The annual household income of UK social game cheaters is also higher.
  - 58% earn at least £24,999, compared to 46% of non-cheaters.



Q36 Annual household income

# FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL GAMEPLAY

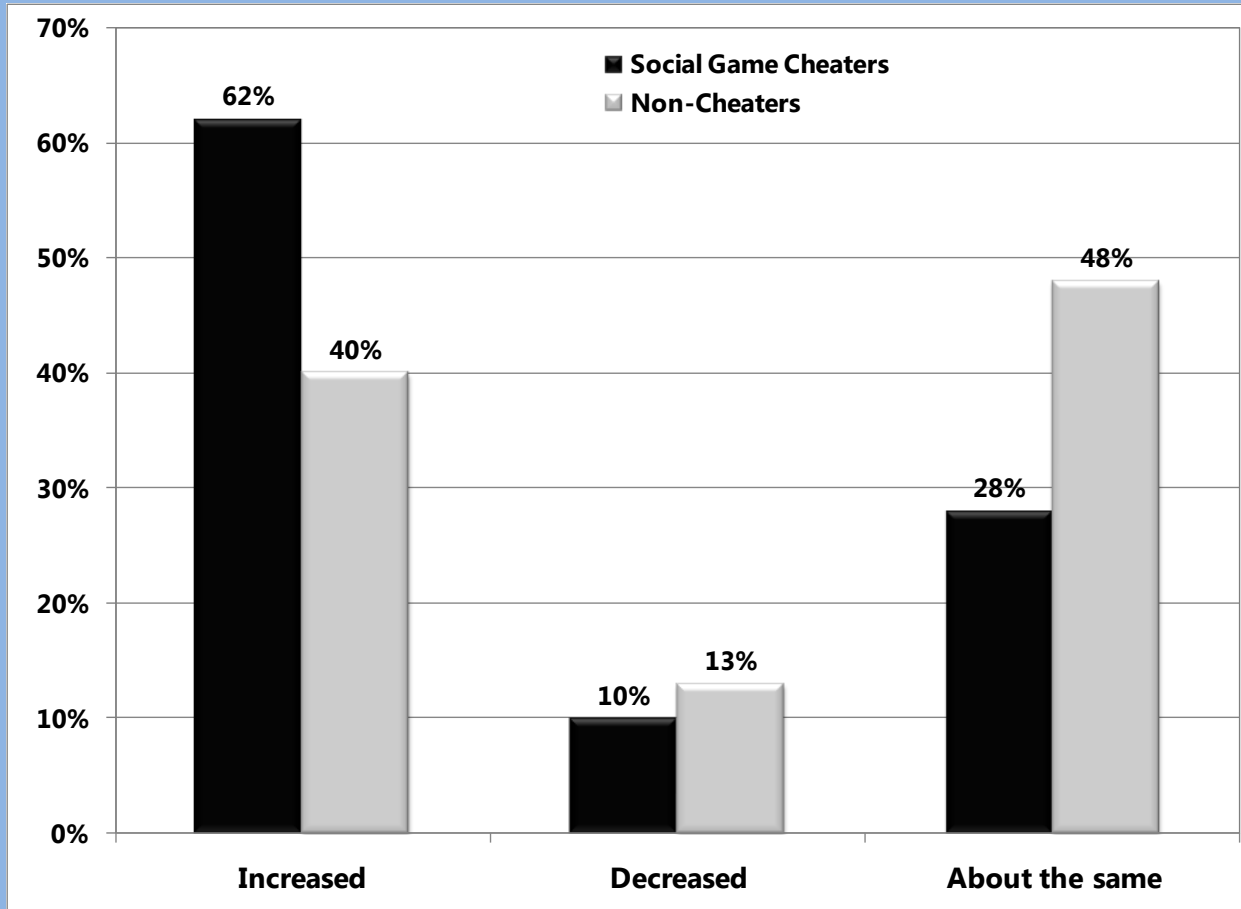
- Those who cheat while playing social games are more active social gamers, with 80% playing at least once a day.



Q2 How often do you typically play social games?

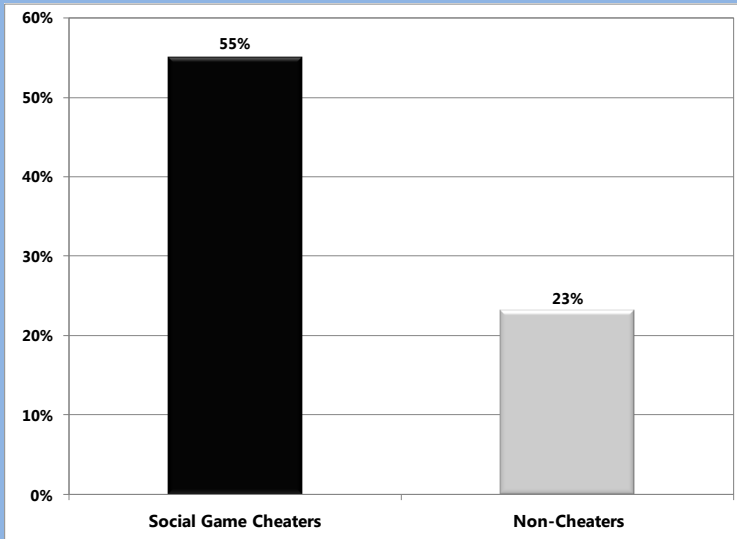
# CHANGES IN GAMEPLAY OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS

- Social game cheaters are also increasing their gameplay activity, with 62% indicating their social gameplay has increased over the past three months compared to 40% of non-cheaters.

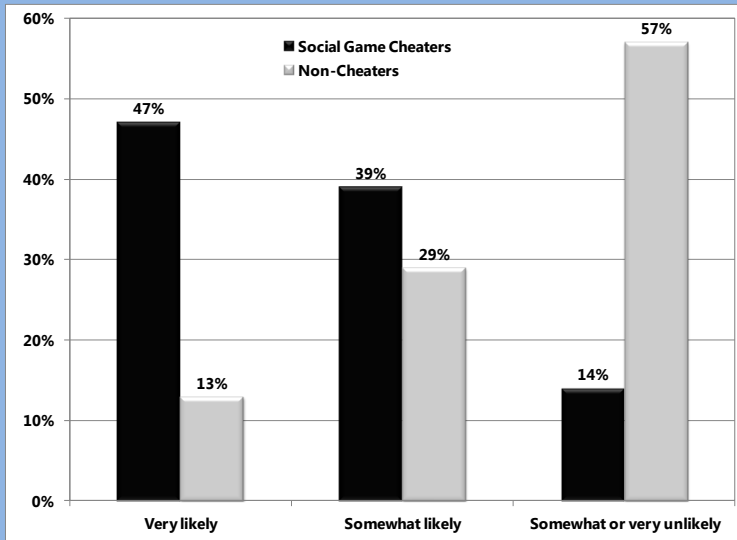


Q9 How has your gameplay on social networking sites changed over the past three months?

# PURCHASING VIRTUAL CURRENCY



- Social game cheaters are more likely to purchase virtual currency with real-world money.
  - At 55%, more than twice the number of cheaters have purchased virtual currency.
  - 86% of the cheaters are Very or Somewhat Likely to purchase a virtual item to gain a short-lived advantage, compared to 42% of non-cheaters.

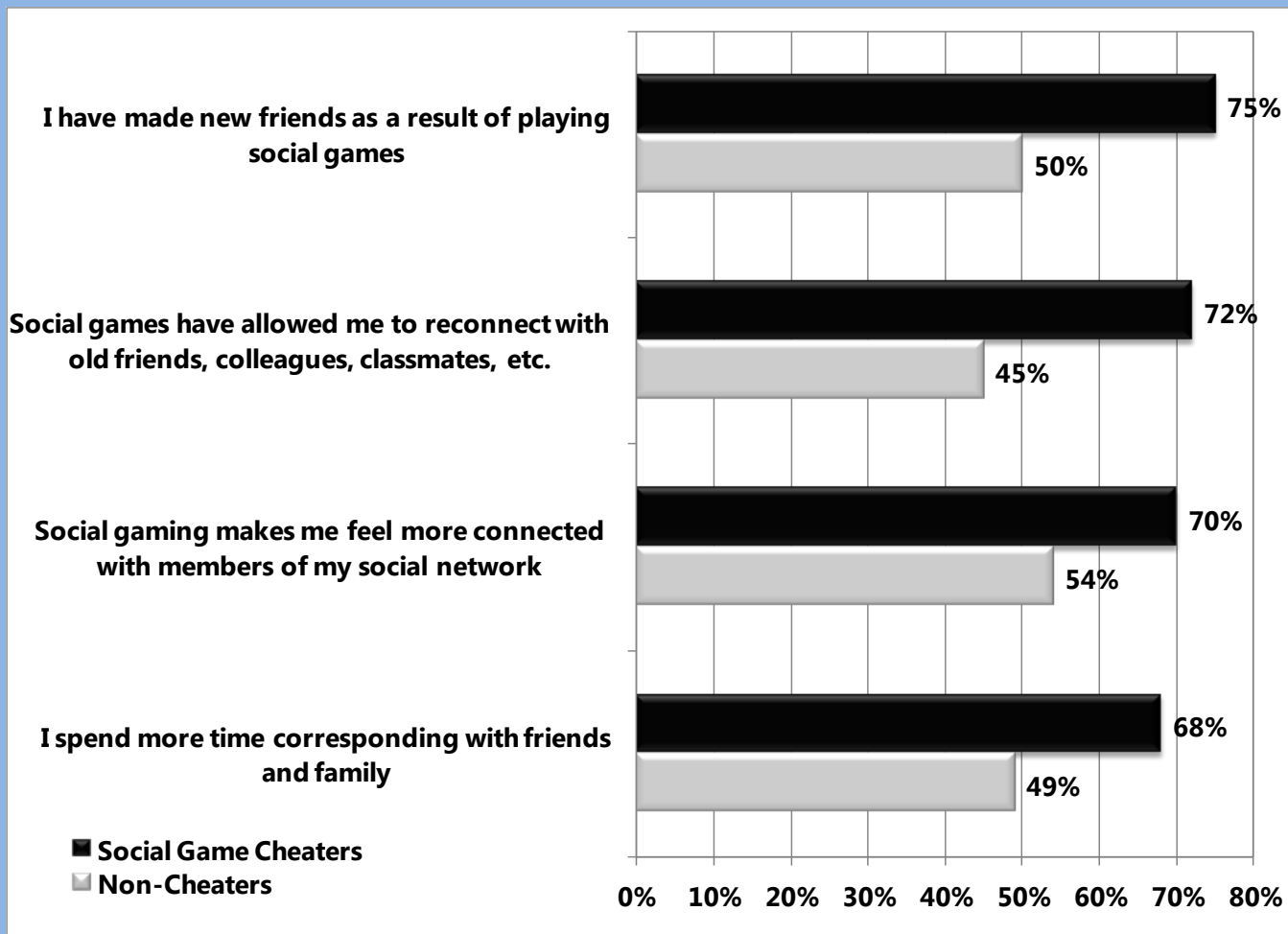


Q22 Have you ever purchased virtual currency with actual (real-world) money?  
Q24 How likely would you be to purchase a virtual item with (real-world) money if it gave you a modest short-lived advantage in a game, e.g., power up special, bonus multiplier or special weapon or tool?

# INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL GAMING ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

7 = Strongly agree  
1 = Strongly disagree

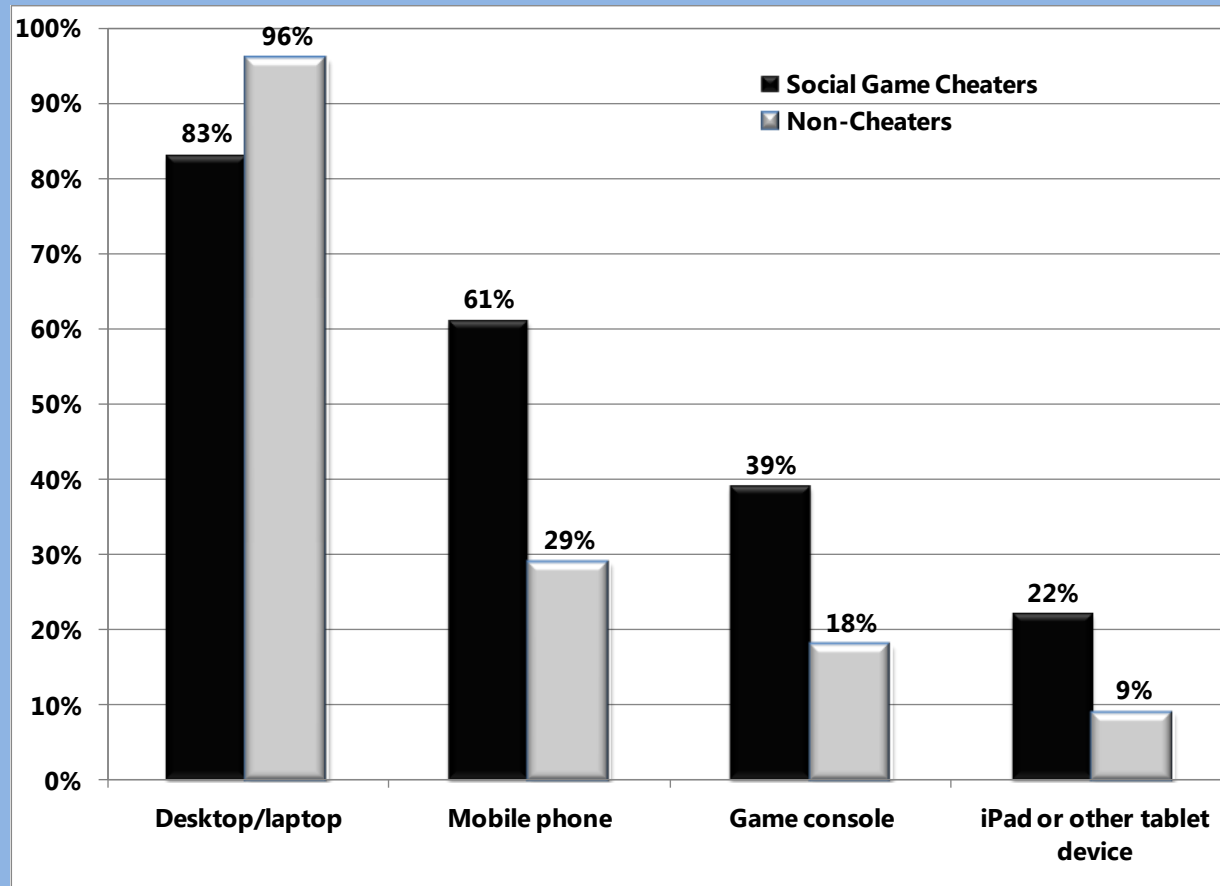
- Social game cheaters are more socially connected as a result of playing social games.



Q17 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how your involvement in social games has influenced your relationship with others?

# DEVICES USED TO ACCESS SOCIAL GAMES

- Cheaters are more likely to play on multiple devices.
  - Fewer play social games on a desktop or laptop computer (83% vs. 96%).
  - Twice as many play social games on a mobile phone, game console and/or tablet.



Q5 Which devices do you use to access games on social networking sites?

# WHERE HEAR ABOUT NEW SOCIAL GAMES

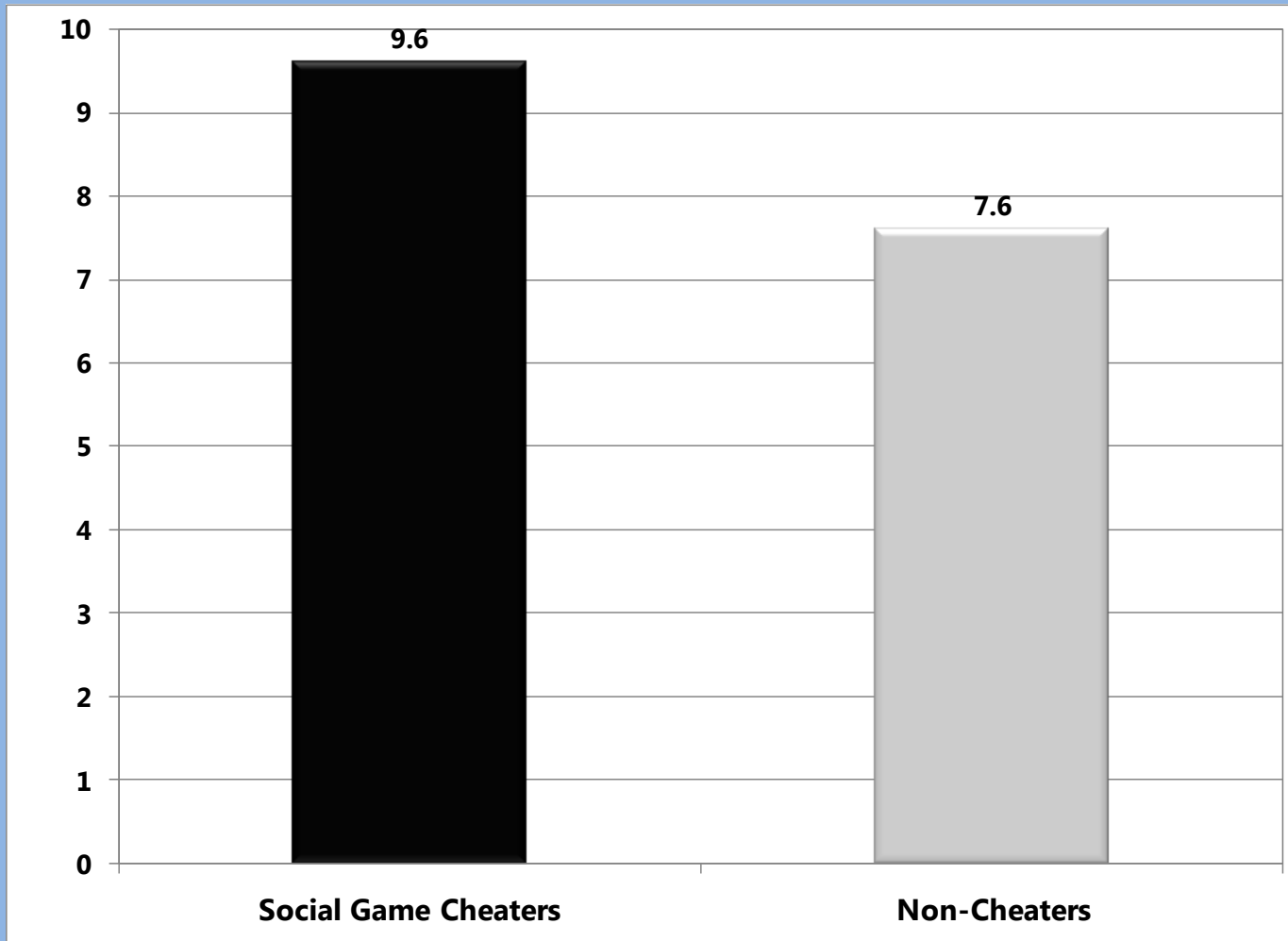
- Social game cheaters are more likely to seek out information about games through online searches or blogs, while non-cheaters tend to be more passive and learn about new games through advertisements and recommendations.

	<b>Social Game Cheaters</b>	<b>Non-Cheaters</b>
Online search through Google, Yahoo!, AOL, Bing, and/or read about it on a blog or website other than a social networking site	65%	41%
Advertised or promoted on a social networking site	56%	49%
Mentioned in an article in a newspaper or magazine or on TV	37%	14%
Advertised on a site other than a social networking site	35%	23%
Receive alert from an online friend who is playing a game	34%	37%
Recommendation from a friend, relative or colleague	27%	38%

Q4 How do you typically hear about new social games?

# NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL GAMES PLAYED

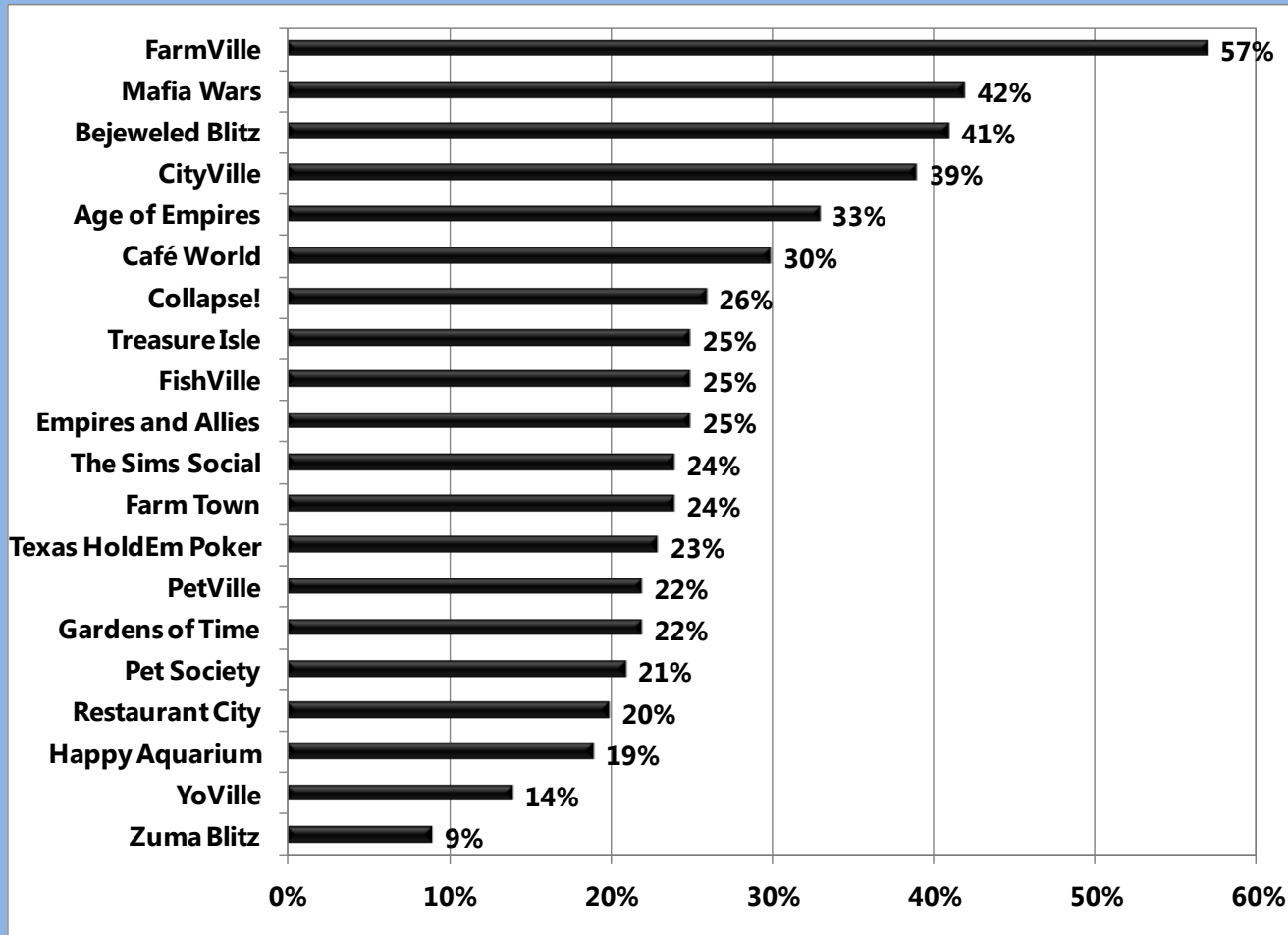
- Social game cheaters have played more social games than non-cheaters.



Q12 How many different social games have you played?

# GAMES CURRENTLY PLAYING AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

- Based upon weekly gameplay of social game cheaters, the games where you would be least likely to find cheaters are Zuma Blitz and YoVille.



Q13 Which of the following games are you currently playing at least once a week?

## **Q28: Use Hacks, Bots and Cheats**

# SOCIAL GAME CHEATERS

	Overall (1,201)	Cheaters (101)	Non- Cheaters (1,100)	US Cheaters (59)	US Non- Cheaters (742)	UK Cheaters (42)	Non- Cheaters (358)
Number of years playing social games							
< 6 months	17%	20%	17%	19%	14%	22%	24%
7 - 12 months	13%	16%	13%	14%	12%	19%	14%
1 - 2 years	23%	25%	23%	27%	22%	21%	24%
> 2 years	46%	40%	47%	41%	52%	38%	38%
Frequency of social gameplay							
Several times a day	41%	43%	41%	44%	44%	40%	35%
Once a day	27%	37%	27%	34%	25%	40%	30%
2- 3 times a week	26%	19%	27%	20%	25%	17%	31%
Once a week or less	5%	2%	5%	2%	6%	2%	4%
Number of hours per week playing social games							
< 1 hour	21%	20%	21%	22%	18%	17%	26%
1 - 5 hours	44%	43%	43%	39%	45%	48%	42%
6 + hours	35%	36%	38%	39%	36%	36%	31%
Devices used to play social games							
Desktop/laptop computer (PC or MAC)	95%	83%	96%	88%	97%	76%	94%
Smartphone	28%	50%	26%	56%	26%	43%	27%
Game console	20%	39%	18%	39%	19%	38%	16%
iPad or other tablet device	10%	22%	9%	24%	11%	19%	6%
Standard or Web-enabled mobile phone	10%	32%	8%	29%	6%	36%	10%

# SOCIAL GAME CHEATERS

	Overall (1,201)	Cheaters (101)	Non- Cheaters (1,100)	US Cheaters (59)	US Non- Cheaters (742)	UK Cheaters (42)	Non- Cheaters (358)
Number of social games played (in total)	7.8	9.6	7.6	10.3	7.5	8.5	7.9
Games played at least once a week							
Farmville	51%	57%	50%	64%	51%	48%	47%
Bejeweled Blitz	44%	41%	44%	37%	43%	45%	47%
Mafia Wars	29%	42%	27%	44%	28%	38%	27%
Texas HoldEm Poker	20%	23%	20%	27%	20%	17%	18%
The Sims Social	19%	24%	19%	20%	18%	29%	21%
Gardens of Time	18%	22%	18%	29%	17%	12%	21%
Empires and Allies	11%	25%	10%	22%	9%	29%	11%
Relationship to those playing social games with							
Personal (real-world) friends	63%	52%	64%	64%	64%	36%	63%
Online friends	57%	68%	56%	71%	56%	64%	58%
Online strangers	37%	40%	36%	37%	40%	43%	29%
Other relatives	26%	9%	28%	14%	29%	2%	25%
Why play social games							
Fun and excitement	57%	49%	57%	53%	60%	43%	53%
Competitive spirit	43%	48%	42%	47%	42%	48%	41%
Stress-reliever	42%	23%	43%	27%	45%	17%	40%
Mental workout	32%	32%	32%	29%	32%	36%	32%
Connect with others in social network	24%	28%	24%	29%	25%	26%	22%

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Social networking websites where play social games							
Facebook	91%	94%	91%	93%	89%	95%	95%
Google+	17%	50%	15%	47%	16%	52%	12%
MySpace	15%	38%	13%	42%	14%	31%	9%
Bebo	7%	22%	5%	8%	4%	40%	8%
How hear about new social games							
Advertised or promoted on a social networking site	50%	56%	49%	53%	50%	62%	48%
Receive alert from an online friend playing a game	37%	34%	37%	37%	37%	29%	38%
Recommended by a friend, relative or colleague	37%	27%	38%	29%	41%	24%	32%
Online search	35%	54%	33%	49%	35%	62%	31%
Read about on blog	17%	29%	16%	27%	16%	31%	15%
Played games on other platforms prior to social games							
Yes	83%	93%	82%	93%	83%	93%	79%
Change in social gameplay over past three months							
Increased	42%	62%	40%	59%	39%	67%	40%
Decreased	12%	10%	13%	12%	12%	7%	15%
About the same	46%	28%	48%	29%	49%	26%	45%

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Purchase virtual currency with real-world money (% of total)							
Yes	26%	55%	23%	56%	25%	55%	21%
Purchase virtual gifts for others							
Yes	32%	66%	29%	65%	28%	67%	30%
Likelihood of purchasing virtual item for short-lived advantage							
Very likely	16%	47%	13%	44%	15%	51%	11%
Somewhat likely	30%	39%	29%	41%	29%	37%	29%
Somewhat or very unlikely	54%	14%	57%	15%	57%	12%	60%
Aware of hacks, bots and cheats							
Yes	46%	100%	41%	100%	42%	100%	37%
Use of hacks, bots and cheats (% of total)							
Regularly	3%	42%	0%	44%	0%	38%	0%
Occasionally	5%	58%	0%	56%	0%	62%	0%
Considered, but never used	10%	0%	10%	0%	10%	0%	12%
Never used	82%	0%	90%	0%	90%	0%	88%
Should game producers monitor online games for cheaters and ban rule breakers? (% of total)							
Yes	40%	79%	36%	78%	37%	81%	33%
Country							
US	67%	58%	67%	100%	100%	0%	0%
UK	33%	42%	33%	0%	0%	100%	100%

# SOCIAL GAME CHEATERS

	Overall (1,201)	Cheaters (101)	Non- Cheaters (1,100)	US Cheaters (59)	US Non- Cheaters (742)	UK Cheaters (42)	Non- Cheaters (358)
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	44%	54%	44%	54%	45%	55%	40%
Female	55%	46%	56%	46%	55%	45%	60%
<b>Age</b>							
< 29	31%	43%	30%	39%	29%	48%	31%
30 - 39	20%	29%	19%	27%	17%	31%	25%
40 - 49	16%	13%	17%	14%	14%	31%	22%
50 +	32%	16%	34%	20%	40%	21%	22%
<b>US Region</b>							
Southeast (AL, FL, GA, IN, KY, NC, SC, VA)	26%	14%	15%	14%	15%	N/A	N/A
East (DC, DE, IN, MD, MI, OH, PA, WV)	17%	21%	17%	21%	17%	N/A	N/A
West (AZ, CA, CO, HI, NV, UT)	17%	21%	27%	21%	27%	N/A	N/A
Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NJ, NH, NY, RI, VT)	15%	17%	10%	17%	10%	N/A	N/A
Midwest (IL, KS, IA, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD, WI)	11%	10%	9%	10%	9%	N/A	N/A
South (AR, LA, MS, NM, OK, TX)	9%	7%	4%	7%	4%	N/A	N/A
Northwest (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)	5%	10%	18%	10%	18%	N/A	N/A

# Research Methodology

This research was conducted by Information Solutions Group (ISG; [www.infosolutionsgroup.com](http://www.infosolutionsgroup.com)) exclusively for PopCap Games. The results are based on 1,201 online surveys completed by members of Toluna's Internet ePanel in the United States and United Kingdom between September 15 and September 22, 2011. Of the 1,201 respondents, 101 (8%) use hacks, bots or cheats in an online social game occasionally or regularly, while 1,100 (92%) have never used hacks, bots or cheats in an online social game.

To qualify for participation, individuals must play social games for more than 15 minutes a week. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20, the results will differ by no more than 2.5 percentage points from what would have been obtained by seeking out and polling all US and UK Internet users age 18 and over. Smaller subgroups reflect larger margins of sampling error. Other sources of error, such as variations in the order of questions or the wording within the questionnaire, may also contribute to different results.

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