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Our mission at DollarSprout is to help readers improve their financial lives, and we regularly partner with companies that share that same vision. If a purchase or signup is made through one of our Partners links, we may receive compensation for the referral. Learn more here. Video games have come a long way since Pong was released in 1958. More and more people are spending more of their free time on their smartphones and online gaming, and the gaming industry has surged in popularity over the last ten years, with over 53% of American households now reporting that they own at least one gaming console.[1] As such, it comes as no surprise that the video game industry boomed in 2023, with revenues exceeding \$248 billion.[2]With this explosion of gamers, new opportunities to earn money through games are emerging. From video game blogs to YouTube channels to tech support, you can turn your passion for gaming into a rewarding side hustle.Ways to Get Paid to Play GamesWhether youre aiming for side income or a full-time gig, playing real money-earning games can help you make extra cash, upgrade your gear, or fund your next game purchase.Consume ads or complete sign-up offers. Some games pay you between \$0.50 and \$10 to watch ads or install apps, sharing the advertisers fees.Games of chance. Legal casino-style games, like digital slots or Blackjack, offer cash prizes for lucky winners.Earn milestone rewards. Reach certain levels or complete tasks in games to earn cash or gift cards. The more you play, the more you can earn.Games of skill. Competitive games like Fortnite or League of Legends host tournaments with prize pools worth millions each year.Gaming as a business. Stream, blog, or get sponsorships to turn your hobby into a serious income stream. Top gamers can make over \$500,000 a month.[2]Gaming careers. Jobs like game testers, developers, or journalists allow you to earn while staying in the gaming industry.Apps and Games That Pay Real MoneySome platforms let you earn real cash by completing micro tasks like watching ads or playing games casually, offering an enjoyable way to make extra money without the pressure of competition.Consume Ads or Complete Sign-Up Offers1. Freecash Freecash.com offers multiple ways to earn money, including game app testing, earning cashback on in-app purchases, and unlocking payouts by reaching specific game levels. During my testing, I earned between \$10 and \$50 a month, which is typical for moderately active users. On one particularly active month, I pulled in over \$100 by completing high-value offers and cashing in on Leaderboard bonuses. For anyone new to Freecash, the sites low withdrawal minimum of \$0.50 makes cashing out achievable even with smaller earnings. I found it straightforward to redeem my earnings through PayPal, gift cards, and even cryptocurrency, making it one of the more versatile platforms for earning a bit of extra cash in your downtime.2. Swagbucks Swagbucks offers a simple way to earn extra cash by playing games, completing surveys, and shopping online. Ive been using Swagbucks for over seven years, and while its not a get-rich-quick scheme, its reliable for earning some side income each month. One of the nice features is the \$10 sign-up bonus, which makes it easy to start earning immediately. Install a game: Earn anywhere from 500 to 5000+ SB (roughly \$0.50 to \$50) by reaching certain levels.Play games: Accumulate SB just by playing, which you can redeem for gift cards.Get cashback: Receive cashback from in-game purchases if you decide to make them.Ive found that installing games and reaching specific milestones is the most lucrative option but always pay attention to the detail like the level you need to reach and the time frame. Swagbucks clearly outlines these requirements, making it easy to know what youre getting into. In my best months, Ive managed to earn around \$20 to \$30 from these gaming offers.3. InboxDollars More than just a gaming app, InboxDollars is a market research company that rewards users for sharing insights about their shopping, online, and gaming behavior. Big brands pay InboxDollars to gather feedback on the games users are playing, and in return, members earn cash rewards for completing paid surveys or reaching specific milestones in games.InboxDollars features a diverse selection of arcade games, including card games, strategy games, word games, and action games. Users can also enter cash tournaments or win prizes through popular titles like Monopoly Go!, Big Cash Bingo, and Solitaire Joy. Plus, youll instantly receive a free \$5 bonus just for creating an account.Having used InboxDollars, I found it easy to earn rewards. In my first week, I earned \$8 by trying out various features, including playing games and completing surveys.5. CashKick CashKick is a rewards platform where users can earn real cash by completing tasks such as playing games, taking surveys, and signing up for offers. Users can earn approximately \$1 to \$5 for playing games and completing tasks, depending on the specific activity.To start, users create a free account on CashKick and can immediately begin exploring the available games. The platform features a variety of casual and competitive games, allowing users to earn points that convert to cash. For instance, playing a game like Bubble Shooter may earn you a specific number of points for each level completed. Additionally, users can accumulate earnings by participating in promotions and daily challenges.6. Rewarded Play Rewarded Play is an Android-only mobile app that allows users to earn cash and gift cards by playing a variety of games, including puzzles, arcade titles, and casual games. Players earn points for every game played, with potential earnings typically ranging from \$1 to \$5 per game, depending on the games complexity and duration.The app features a diverse selection of over 1,000 games, catering to different interests and skill levels. Users can accumulate points not just by playing, but also by participating in daily challenges and promotions, which can boost earnings.To get started, simply download the app and create an account. After registering, you can browse through the game library and select games to play. Points can be redeemed for free gift cards once you reach the minimum payout threshold, which is \$5.Games of Chance? Blackout Bingo Blackout Bingo adds a competitive twist to the classic game of bingo that I found surprisingly engaging. Instead of just marking numbers, youre racing against another player in real-time, which turns up the intensity in a way thats pretty different from the traditional bingo hall vibe.The app has over a million downloads and plenty of positive feedback, which is what initially caught my eye. The Skillz-powered system does a good job of matching you with players at a similar skill level, making the competition feel fairsomething thats not always guaranteed in cash games.I liked that Blackout Bingo starts with free practice games, letting you get a feel for the mechanics before diving into the cash tournaments. Its not a guaranteed money-maker, but its a fun way to mix strategy with the potential to earn real cash. Keep in mind that cash tournaments arent available everywhere, so youll want to check if its accessible in your state. *Cash tournaments are not offered in the following states: AR, CT, DE, IN, LA, and SD8. Solitaire Cube Solitaire Cube offers a modern, competitive spin on the classic card game that many of us grew up playing. I was intrigued by the chance to go head-to-head against other players for cash prizes, rather than just playing against a clock. Each player gets the same deck, and its all about who can score the most points the fastest.What stood out to me was how easy it was to get started with practice games, which helped me get familiar with the pace before jumping into cash tournaments. If head-to-head isnt your style, you can also participate in larger tournaments where winners advance, creating a fun bracket-style competition. *Cash tournaments are not offered in the following states: AR, CT, DE, IN, LA, ME, and SD9. Pool Payday Pool Payday brings the classic game of pool to your smartphone with a twist: you can play for real cash prizes. What initially drew me in was the chance to sharpen my skills in free games before diving into cash competitions. The app lets you go head-to-head against other players in real-time, and its more engaging than I expectedespecially when youre aiming for that perfect trick shot.As I played, I found that mastering the basics like ball positioning and calling pockets made the transition to cash play feel more strategic. The apps layout is straightforward, and I appreciate that winnings are easily redeemable through PayPal or Apple Pay. Its not a surefire way to make money, but if youre good at pool and enjoy the thrill of competition, its a fun way to potentially earn a few bucks.10. 21 Blitz 21 Blitz combines the excitement of blackjack with the strategy of solitaire, challenging players to stack cards that total 21. This engaging game pits you against other players in real-time matches, where quick thinking and sharp decision-making are key to winning cash prizes.21 Blitz offers free practice rounds to get you comfortable with the gameplay before entering paid competitions. Its intuitive design and competitive format make it a popular choice for those looking to sharpen their card skills and earn rewards.11. Big Buck Hunter Big Buck Hunter transforms the popular arcade hunting game into a dynamic mobile experience where precision and timing are your best allies. Compete in head-to-head challenges or tournaments, testing your shooting skills against players from around the world.Whether youre practicing in free modes or entering cash competitions, Big Buck Hunters familiar gameplay loop keeps you engaged while offering the excitement of real-world rewards.12. Bingo Cash Bingo Cash adds a competitive twist to the classic bingo format, offering players a chance to test their luck and strategy against others in real-time. What makes Bingo Cash stand out is its player-matching system, which ensures that youre always up against someone of a similar skill level, making every round feel fair and balanced. Its a simple yet addicting way to enjoy a familiar game while vying for real money rewards.Earn Milestone Rewards13. Mistplay Mistplay is an Android-only loyalty platform for gamers. I found it intriguing because it rewards users with points for playing a variety of games, which can be redeemed for gift cards to well-known retailers like Amazon, Google Play, and the iTunes Store.After downloading the app and creating an accountwhich takes just a minutel was prompted to share my preferences for games. The selection is impressive, featuring popular titles such as Super Mario Run, Pokemon Go, Fruit Ninja, Solitaire, and Candy Crush Saga. I enjoyed exploring different genres, from action to puzzles, as I chose several games to play.As I played, I discovered that the app awards points based on my engagement. Typically, I earned between 2 and 20 points for each gaming session. To illustrate, it generally requires 400 points to redeem a \$0.50 gift card, which means that earning \$1 could take about 12 hours of gameplay. While this payout might seem modest, I appreciated the fact that I could play casually and earn passive income without feeling pressured. Related: Mistplay Review 202514. Cash Giraffe Cash Giraffe offers a lighthearted approach to mobile gaming, with a variety of casual games that reward you for achieving milestones. From puzzles to adventure games, Cash Giraffe has something for everyone, making it easy to earn money while having fun.The apps versatility allows players to choose from a range of games and progress at their own pace, making it ideal for anyone who enjoys playing a mix of game types. Unlike more intense competition-based apps, Cash Giraffe focuses on rewarding time spent and progress made, making it perfect for gamers who prefer a more relaxed way to earn.15. Gamehag Gamehag is a gaming loyalty platform that allows users to earn rewards by playing games and completing various tasks. Users accumulate Soul Gems for each activity, which can be redeemed for rewards such as gift cards, in-game currency, or even gaming peripherals. The platform features a range of games, including popular titles like League of Legends, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, and Fortnite.To get started, users simply create an account, select games to play, and earn Soul Gems based on their engagement. Notably, Gamehag has a low minimum payout threshold of just \$0.05, making it easy to cash out once you have enough gems.A user shared on Reddit that they earned around 1,000 Soul Gems within a few hours of gameplay, which allowed them to redeem a \$5 gift card. However, they mentioned that while it was enjoyable to earn rewards while gaming, the payouts could sometimes feel low compared to the time invested.16. Cashy Cashy is a mobile app that allows users to earn rewards by playing a variety of games, completing offers, and watching videos. Users can expect to earn around \$0.01 to \$0.02 per minute spent on games, translating to potential monthly earnings of approximately \$5 to \$10 based on usage frequency.The app features a selection of casual titles, including Solitaire, Bubble Shooter, and various strategy games, providing a fun way for users to engage with games and earn rewards. For cashing out, users can redeem their earnings through free PayPal cash or gift cards for popular retailers like Amazon and Google Play once their balance reaches \$5.17. Money Well MoneyWell is a mobile app designed to help users earn rewards by playing games and completing various tasks. The app offers a diverse selection of games, including puzzles, arcade titles, and casual games. Users can expect to earn around \$0.01 to \$0.05 per minute while playing, leading to potential monthly earnings between \$5 to \$15, depending on how frequently they engage with the app.In addition to gameplay, MoneyWell allows users to complete offers and surveys for extra rewards. Users can redeem their accumulated points for cash via PayPal or gift cards to retailers like Amazon and Walmart.Games of Skill (Esports)If youre consistently outperforming friends in games like Call of Duty, you might want to explore the world of e-sports. This booming industry features organized competitions for both amateurs and professionals streamed to millions of fans.18. Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS) Counter-Strike: Global Offensive is a premier first-person shooter known for its tactical gameplay and team-based mechanics. Players engage in rounds of intense combat to complete objectives like bomb defusal or hostage rescue. It hosts numerous tournaments, with high-profile events like the ESL Pro League featuring prize pools often exceeding \$500,000.19. DOTA 2 DOTA 2 is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) game where teams of five players compete to destroy the opposing teams Ancient structure. The International tournament consistently sets records for the largest prize pools in esports history, often surpassing \$40 million. Both amateur and professional tournaments provide ample opportunities for skilled players.20. League of Legends League of Legends is a strategic MOBA where teams battle to destroy each others Nexus. It features a vibrant competitive ecosystem with numerous tournaments, including the League of Legends World Championship, which has a prize pool typically around \$2.34 million. Regional leagues also offer significant rewards for teams demonstrating exceptional skill.21. Fortnite Fortnite combines shooting and building mechanics in a battle royale format, where players compete to be the last one standing. The game hosts various competitive events, such as the Fortnite World Cup, showcasing a prize pool of \$3.30 million. These tournaments attract top players globally, highlighting their skills in fast-paced competitions. Other Skill-Based Games with Big Prize LeaguesCompetitive gaming extends beyond major titles, offering substantial prize pools across various games. Many games feature structured leagues and seasonal tournaments where players can compete solo or form teams. In addition to Call of Duty, Rocket League, and Hearthstone, notable titles include: Apex LegendsPUBGValorantStreet Fighter VVIFAGears of WarSuper Smash Bros. UltimateMagic: The Gathering ArenaDota UnderlordsWorld of Warcraft ArenaThese competitions reward skill, strategy, and teamwork. For the latest tournament news and prize pool updates, check out resources like ESPN Esports and Liquipedia.Platforms to Compete for Cash PrizeIf youre looking to compete in multiple games without being restricted to just one, platforms like WorldWinner and GamerSaloon offer versatile ways to earn money.WorldWinner allows you to enter cash tournaments across games like Spades, Angry Birds, and Solitaire. You can practice for free before committing to a tournament, with a minimum entry fee of \$0.25. Payments can be made via PayPal or credit/debit card, and winnings are credited back to the same card. New users can receive a \$10 Bonus Bucks credit with the promo code WELCOMER on their first deposit.GamerSaloon is accessible through both an app and a website, offering cash tournaments across a diverse selection of games, including popular titles like Call of Duty and NBA 2K. Players can either join existing tournaments or create their own, competing solo or as part of a team. To begin, users must create an account and make an initial deposit that serves as their entrance fee. Each tournament details the entry fee, required gaming system, and start date, with winnings available via PayPal or check.These platforms provide excellent opportunities for players who want to earn money through competitive gaming without being tied to one specific title.Other Ways to Get Paid to GameGaming as a BusinessAs the gaming landscape continues to grow, many players are discovering alternative ways to monetize their skills and passion beyond traditional competition. From live-streaming gameplay to creating engaging content, there are various avenues available for gamers looking to turn their hobby into a profitable venture.Twitch/Twitch is a leading live-streaming platform where gamers can watch e-sports competitions, music performances, and more. It supports integration with consoles like Xbox and PlayStation, making it accessible across various devices.To monetize their broadcasts, streamers need to gain at least 500 regular viewers per video to apply for Twitch Partner status, which enhances their earning potential. Twitch pays \$2.50 for each subscriber, and streamers can also solicit donations directly from their audience.Notable Twitch personalities exemplify the platforms earning potential:Ninja (Tyler Blevins): 19.5 million followers, estimated net worth of \$50 million.xQc (Felix Lengyel): 12 million followers, also around \$50 million in net worth.Shroud (Michael Grzesiek): 10.7 million followers, with an estimated \$20 million net worth.TimTheTatMan (Timothy Betar): 7 million followers and an estimated net worth of \$8 million.Top streamers on Twitch can earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 monthly, showcasing the platforms potential for monetization. Ultimately, Twitch provides a robust environment for both casual gamers and competitive players to transform their passion for gaming into a profitable venture.YouTube GamingYouTube offers an exciting platform for gamers to showcase their skills and turn their passion into a career. Starting a gaming channel is straightforward and inexpensive; all you need is compelling content and decent equipment. Many creators begin by filming on their smartphones and editing the footage to create engaging play-throughs, tutorials, or commentary.Content is vital when building your YouTube channel. Whether generating play-through videos, discussing different gaming systems, or sharing tips, your content must captivate your audience. As your channel grows, expectations for higher-quality content and professional presentation increase, directly impacting revenue potential.YouTube allows gamers to earn through ad revenue, channel memberships, and sponsorships. Creators can monetize their channels after reaching 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours within the past year. Successful channels can generate substantial income based on views and engagement.Related: How to Make Money on YouTube: A Guide for BeginnersStart a Gaming BlogStarting a blog can help you build an audience and potentially earn a side income.Five years ago, if you told me Id be making a living blogging, I wouldve laughed. Back then, I was a registered nurse, feeling unfulfilled in my 9-to-5 job. My journey into blogging began somewhat accidentally and has since transformed into a seven-figure online business.To kick off your own gaming blog, choose a platform like WordPress. Focus on creating engaging content, whether its game reviews, walkthroughs, or industry news. With just 5,000 monthly visitors, many bloggers can start earning around \$1,000 per month through affiliate marketing and advertising.As your audience grows, your income potential expands significantly. Attract sponsors eager to reach gamers, and utilize affiliate marketing to promote gaming gear, earning commissions of \$1 to \$100 per sale.Consider integrating your blog with platforms like YouTube or Twitch to broaden your reach. You can also create digital products, such as courses or eBooks, based on your gaming insights, potentially earning \$20 to \$200 per course sold.Gaming CareerIf youre passionate about gaming but specific games or apps dont interest you, theres a world of career opportunities waiting for you. From testing and developing games to providing tech support and reporting on industry trends, there are various paths to explore that let you turn your love for gaming into a fulfilling career.Game Tester/Game testers play a vital role in the video game development process, providing feedback on beta versions of new products. Their main job is to identify bugs, glitches, and usability issues, which helps developers make necessary adjustments before the game is released. While some companies may require specific software knowledge, many just want passionate gamers to share their experiences and suggestions for improvement.Entry-level game testing positions typically pay between \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year, with experienced testers earning upwards of \$60,000.[3] Testers can also work as freelance contractors, allowing for greater flexibility and a variety of projects. If youre detail-oriented and love gaming, becoming a game tester can be an exciting way to enter the industry and gain valuable experience.Game Developer/Game developers are the creative forces behind video games, responsible for everything from the graphics you see to the functionality of the game features. If you have strong graphic design and coding skills, coupled with a passion for gaming, this could be an ideal career path for you.In terms of compensation, salaries for game developers can range from \$50,000 to over \$100,000 annually, depending on experience and specialization. Entry-level positions typically start around \$50,000, while seasoned developers or those in leadership roles can command much higher salaries.[4]While a college degree is not always essential, having a solid foundation in programming languages, game design principles, and familiarity with development tools like Unity or Unreal Engine is crucial. Many aspiring developers choose to enhance their skills through online programs or boot camps focused on video game design and coding, making the field more accessible than ever.Video Game JournalistIf youre an avid gamer with a knack for writing, a career as a video game journalist might be for you. In this role, youll cover a wide range of topics, from reporting on the latest gaming trends and new releases to interviewing prominent gamers and providing breaking news about the gaming industry. You might also attend major gaming events, tournaments, or product launches, which can add excitement and depth to your articles.You can start your journey in this field by seeking positions with industry-specific blogs, websites, or magazines. Alternatively, freelancing or creating your own gaming blog can help you build a portfolio of writing samples before pursuing full-time roles. While a degree in journalism can be beneficial, its not strictly necessary; many successful video game journalists thrive on passion, experience, and strong writing skills.Salaries in this field can vary significantly, typically ranging from \$30,000 to over \$80,000 annually. Entry-level positions often start around \$30,000, while more established journalists can earn much more, especially if they contribute to major publications.[5]Tips for Maximizing Earnings with Gaming AppsNow that youre familiar with some of the best games that offer real money rewards, here are effective strategies to boost your hourly earnings with this side hustle:1. Diversify Your App Usage:Instead of relying on just one app, stack multiple gaming platforms to create a side hustle toolkit. This approach allows you to select the highest-paying offers across different apps, maximizing your potential income per hour.2. Take Advantage of Sign-Up Bonuses:Kickstart your earnings by capitalizing on sign-up bonuses offered by many gaming platforms. Additionally, consider utilizing referral programs: by inviting friends to join, you can earn passive income while expanding your gaming network.3. Set Clear Income Goals:Establish realistic daily income targetswhether its \$20, \$50, or moreto keep yourself motivated and accountable. Tracking your progress against these goals can help you refine your strategies and increase your earnings over time.4. Stay Informed and Adapt:Keep an eye on app updates and new features that may enhance your earning potential. Engaging with online communities and forums can provide insights into the best practices and hidden opportunities that can help you earn more.5. Prioritize Quality over Quantity:While its tempting to chase multiple tasks, focus on offers that provide the best return for your time. Prioritize games and tasks that have shown to pay out higher rates and consider dedicating your time to mastering a few apps rather than spreading yourself too thin.6. Transforming Gaming into a Viable Income StreamIf youre an avid gamer, making money with online games is worth a try. There are real money-earning games for those who enjoy being in front of an audience or playing tournament style, as well as options for more behind-the-scenes work. Make sure youre realistic about your expectations. Unless youre pursuing a full-time traditional job in the online gaming world, chances are slim that youll make a six-figure income. But if you put in the time, effort, and commitment to grow your platform, skills, and connect with an audience, your gaming habit can turn into a decent way to make money online.Related: Sources: Our mission at DollarSprout is to help readers improve their financial lives, and we regularly partner with companies that share that same vision. If a purchase or signup is made through one of our Partners links, we may receive compensation for the referral. Learn more here. Video games have come a long way since Pong was released in 1958. More and more people are spending time and money on their favorite games. 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Reach certain levels or complete tasks in games to earn cash or gift cards. The more you play, the more you can earn.Games of skill. Competitive games like Fortnite or League of Legends host tournaments with prize pools worth millions each year.Gaming as a business. Stream, blog, or get sponsorships to turn your hobby into a serious income stream. Top gamers can make over \$500,000 a month.[2]Gaming careers. Jobs like game testers, developers, or journalists allow you to earn while staying in the gaming industry.Apps and Games That Pay Real MoneySome platforms let you earn real cash by completing micro tasks like watching ads or playing games casually, offering an enjoyable way to make extra money without the pressure of competition.Consume Ads or Complete Sign-Up Offers1. Freecash Freecash.com offers multiple ways to earn money, including game app testing, earning cashback on in-app purchases, and unlocking payouts by reaching specific game levels. 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Fortnite Fortnite combines shooting and building mechanics in a battle royale format, where players compete to be the last one standing. The game hosts various competitive events, such as the Fortnite World Cup, showcasing a prize pool of \$3.30 million. These tournaments attract top players globally, highlighting their skills in fast-paced competitions. Other Skill-Based Games with Big Prize LeaguesCompetitive gaming extends beyond major titles, offering substantial prize pools across various games. Many games feature structured leagues and seasonal tournaments where players can compete solo or form teams. In addition to Call of Duty, Rocket League, and Hearthstone, notable titles include: Apex LegendsPUBGValorantStreet Fighter VVIFAGears of WarSuper Smash Bros. UltimateMagic: The Gathering ArenaDota UnderlordsWorld of Warcraft ArenaThese competitions reward skill, strategy, and teamwork. For the latest tournament news and prize pool updates, check out resources like ESPN Esports and Liquipedia.Platforms to Compete for Cash PrizeIf youre looking to compete in multiple games without being restricted to just one, platforms like WorldWinner and GamerSaloon offer versatile ways to earn money.WorldWinner allows you to enter cash tournaments across games like Spades, Angry Birds, and Solitaire. You can practice for free before committing to a tournament, with a minimum entry fee of \$0.25. Payments can be made via PayPal or credit/debit card, and winnings are credited back to the same card. New users can receive a \$10 Bonus Bucks credit with the promo code WELCOMER on their first deposit.GamerSaloon is accessible through both an app and a website, offering cash tournaments across a diverse selection of games, including popular titles like Call of Duty and NBA 2K. Players can either join existing tournaments or create their own, competing solo or as part of a team. To begin, users must create an account and make an initial deposit that serves as their entrance fee. Each tournament details the entry fee, required gaming system, and start date, with winnings available via PayPal or check.These platforms provide excellent opportunities for players who want to earn money through competitive gaming without being tied to one specific title.Other Ways to Get Paid to GameGaming as a BusinessAs the gaming landscape continues to grow, many players are discovering alternative ways to monetize their skills and passion beyond traditional competition. From live-streaming gameplay to creating engaging content, there are various avenues available for gamers looking to turn their hobby into a profitable venture.Twitch/Twitch is a leading live-streaming platform where gamers can watch e-sports competitions, music performances, and more. It supports integration with consoles like Xbox and PlayStation, making it accessible across various devices.To monetize their broadcasts, streamers need to gain at least 500 regular viewers per video to apply for Twitch Partner status, which enhances their earning potential. Twitch pays \$2.50 for each subscriber, and streamers can also solicit donations directly from their audience.Notable Twitch personalities exemplify the platforms earning potential:Ninja (Tyler Blevins): 19.5 million followers, estimated net worth of \$50 million.xQc (Felix Lengyel): 12 million followers, also around \$50 million in net worth.Shroud (Michael Grzesiek): 10.7 million followers, with an estimated \$20 million net worth.TimTheTatMan (Timothy Betar): 7 million followers and an estimated net worth of \$8 million.Top streamers on Twitch can earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 monthly, showcasing the platforms potential for monetization. Ultimately, Twitch provides a robust environment for both casual gamers and competitive players to transform their passion for gaming into a profitable venture.YouTube GamingYouTube offers an exciting platform for gamers to showcase their skills and turn their passion into a career. Starting a gaming channel is straightforward and inexpensive; all you need is compelling content and decent equipment. Many creators begin by filming on their smartphones and editing the footage to create engaging play-throughs, tutorials, or commentary.Content is vital when building your YouTube channel. Whether generating play-through videos, discussing different gaming systems, or sharing tips, your content must captivate your audience. As your channel grows, expectations for higher-quality content and professional presentation increase, directly impacting revenue potential.YouTube allows gamers to earn through ad revenue, channel memberships, and sponsorships. Creators can monetize their channels after reaching 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours within the past year. Successful channels can generate substantial income based on views and engagement.Related: How to Make Money on YouTube: A Guide for BeginnersStart a Gaming BlogStarting a blog can help you build an audience and potentially earn a side income.Five years ago, if you told me Id be making a living blogging, I wouldve laughed. Back then, I was a registered nurse, feeling unfulfilled in my 9-to-5 job. My journey into blogging began somewhat accidentally and has since transformed into a seven-figure online business.To kick off your own gaming blog, choose a platform like WordPress. Focus on creating engaging content, whether its game reviews, walkthroughs, or industry news. With just 5,000 monthly visitors, many bloggers can start earning around \$1,000 per month through affiliate marketing and advertising.As your audience grows, your income potential expands significantly. Attract sponsors eager to reach gamers, and utilize affiliate marketing to promote gaming gear, earning commissions of \$1 to \$100 per sale.Consider integrating your blog with platforms like YouTube or Twitch to broaden your reach. You can also create digital products, such as courses or eBooks, based on your gaming insights, potentially earning \$20 to \$200 per course sold.Gaming CareerIf youre passionate about gaming but specific games or apps dont interest you, theres a world of career opportunities waiting for you. From testing and developing games to providing tech support and reporting on industry trends, there are various paths to explore that let you turn your love for gaming into a fulfilling career.Game Tester/Game testers play a vital role in the video game development process, providing feedback on beta versions of new products. Their main job is to identify bugs, glitches, and usability issues, which helps developers make necessary adjustments before the game is released. While some companies may require specific software knowledge, many just want passionate gamers to share their experiences and suggestions for improvement.Entry-level game testing positions typically pay between \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year, with experienced testers earning upwards of \$60,000.[3] Testers can also work as freelance contractors, allowing for greater flexibility and a variety of projects. If youre detail-oriented and love gaming, becoming a game tester can be an exciting way to enter the industry and gain valuable experience.Game Developer/Game developers are the creative forces behind video games, responsible for everything from the graphics you see to the functionality of the game features. If you have strong graphic design and coding skills, coupled with a passion for gaming, this could be an ideal career path for you.In terms of compensation, salaries for game developers can range from \$50,000 to over \$100,000 annually, depending on experience and specialization. Entry-level positions typically start around \$50,000, while seasoned developers or those in leadership roles can command much higher salaries.[4]While a college degree is not always essential, having a solid foundation in programming languages, game design principles, and familiarity with development tools like Unity or Unreal Engine is crucial. Many aspiring developers choose to enhance their skills through online programs or boot camps focused on video game design and coding, making the field more accessible than ever.Video Game JournalistIf youre an avid gamer with a knack for writing, a career as a video game journalist might be for you. In this role, youll cover a wide range of topics, from reporting on the latest gaming trends and new releases to interviewing prominent gamers and providing breaking news about the gaming industry. You might also attend major gaming events, tournaments, or product launches, which can add excitement and depth to your articles.You can start your journey in this field by seeking positions with industry-specific blogs, websites, or magazines. Alternatively, freelancing or creating your own gaming blog can help you build a portfolio of writing samples before pursuing full-time roles. While a degree in journalism can be beneficial, its not strictly necessary; many successful video game journalists thrive on passion, experience, and strong writing skills.Salaries in this field can vary significantly, typically ranging from \$30,000 to over \$80,000 annually. Entry-level positions often start around \$30,000, while more established journalists can earn much more, especially if they contribute to major publications.[5]Tips for Maximizing Earnings with Gaming AppsNow that youre familiar with some of the best games that offer real money rewards, here are effective strategies to boost your hourly earnings with this side hustle:1. Diversify Your App Usage:Instead of relying on just one app, stack multiple gaming platforms to create a side hustle toolkit. This approach allows you to select the highest-paying offers across different apps, maximizing your potential income per hour.2. Take Advantage of Sign-Up Bonuses:Kickstart your earnings by capitalizing on sign-up bonuses offered by many gaming platforms. Additionally, consider utilizing referral programs: by inviting friends to join, you can earn passive income while expanding your gaming network.3. Set Clear Income Goals:Establish realistic daily income targetswhether its \$20, \$50, or moreto keep yourself motivated and accountable. Tracking your progress against these goals can help you refine your strategies and increase your earnings over time.4. Stay Informed and Adapt:Keep an eye on app updates and new features that may enhance your earning potential. Engaging with online communities and forums can provide insights into the best practices and hidden opportunities that can help you earn more.5. Prioritize Quality over Quantity:While its tempting to chase multiple tasks, focus on offers that provide the best return for your time. Prioritize games and tasks that have shown to pay out higher rates and consider dedicating your time to mastering a few apps rather than spreading yourself too thin.6. Transforming Gaming into a Viable Income StreamIf youre an avid gamer, making money with online games is worth a try. There are real money-earning games for those who enjoy being in front of an audience or playing tournament style, as well as options for more behind-the-scenes work. Make sure youre realistic about your expectations. Unless youre pursuing a full-time traditional job in the online gaming world, chances are slim that youll make a six-figure income. But if you put in the time, effort, and commitment to grow your platform, skills, and connect with an audience, your gaming habit can turn into a decent way to make money online.Related: Sources: Our mission at DollarSprout is to help readers improve their financial lives, and we regularly partner with companies that share that same vision. If a purchase or signup is made through one of our Partners links, we may receive compensation for the referral. Learn more here. Video games have come a long way since Pong was released in 1958. More and more people are spending time and money on their favorite games. Smartphone and online gaming have surged in popularity over the last ten years, with over 53% of American households now reporting that they own at least one game console.[1] As such, it comes as no surprise that the video game industry boomed in 2023, with revenues exceeding \$248 billion.[2]With this explosion of gamers, new opportunities to earn money through games are emerging. From video game blogs to YouTube channels to tech support, you can turn your passion for gaming into a rewarding side hustle.Ways to Get Paid to Play GamesWhether youre aiming for side income or a full-time gig, playing real money-earning games can help you make extra cash, upgrade your gear, or fund your next game purchase.Consume ads or complete sign-up offers. Some games pay you between \$0.50 and \$10 to watch ads or install apps, sharing the advertisers fees.Games of chance. Legal casino-style games, like digital slots or Blackjack, offer cash prizes for lucky winners.Earn milestone rewards. Reach certain levels or complete tasks in games to earn cash or gift cards. The more you play, the more you can earn.Games of skill. Competitive games like Fortnite or League of Legends host tournaments with prize pools worth millions each year.Gaming as a business. Stream, blog, or get sponsorships to turn your hobby into a serious income stream. Top gamers can make over \$500,000 a month.[2]Gaming careers. Jobs like game testers, developers, or journalists allow you to earn while staying in the gaming industry.Apps and Games That Pay Real MoneySome platforms let you earn real cash by completing micro tasks like watching ads or playing games casually, offering an enjoyable way to make extra money without the pressure of competition.Consume Ads or Complete Sign-Up Offers1. Freecash Freecash.com offers multiple ways to earn money, including game app testing, earning cashback on in-app purchases, and unlocking payouts by reaching specific game levels. During my testing, I earned between \$10 and \$50 a month, which is typical for moderately active users. On one particularly active month, I pulled in over \$100 by completing high-value offers and cashing in on Leaderboard bonuses. For anyone new to Freecash, the sites low withdrawal minimum of \$0.50 makes cashing out achievable even with smaller earnings. I found it straightforward to redeem my earnings through PayPal, gift cards, and even cryptocurrency, making it one of the more versatile platforms for earning a bit of extra cash in your downtime.2. Swagbucks Swagbucks offers a simple way to earn extra cash by playing games, completing surveys, and shopping online. Ive been using Swagbucks for over seven years, and while its not a get-rich-quick scheme, its reliable for earning some side income each month. One of the nice features is the \$10 sign-up bonus, which makes it easy to start earning immediately. Install a game: Earn anywhere from 500 to 5000+ SB (roughly \$0.50 to \$50) by reaching certain levels.Play games: Accumulate SB just by playing, which you can redeem for gift cards.Get cashback: Receive cashback from in-game purchases if you decide to make them.Ive found that installing games and reaching specific milestones is the most lucrative option but always pay attention to the detail like the level you need to reach and the time frame. Swagbucks clearly outlines these requirements, making it easy to know what youre getting into. In my best months, Ive managed to earn around \$20 to \$30 from these gaming offers.3. InboxDollars More than just a gaming app, InboxDollars is a market research company that rewards users for sharing insights about their shopping, online, and gaming behavior. Big brands pay InboxDollars to gather feedback on the games users are playing, and in return, members earn cash rewards for completing paid surveys or reaching specific milestones in games.InboxDollars features a diverse selection of arcade games, including card games, strategy games, word games, and action games. Users can also enter cash tournaments or win prizes through popular titles like Monopoly Go!, Big Cash Bingo, and Solitaire Joy. Plus, youll instantly receive a free \$5 bonus just for creating an account.Having used InboxDollars, I found it easy to earn rewards. In my first week, I earned \$8 by trying out various features, including playing games and completing surveys.5. CashKick CashKick is a rewards platform where users can earn real cash by completing tasks such as playing games, taking surveys, and signing up for offers. Users can earn approximately \$1 to \$5 for playing games and completing tasks, depending on the specific activity.To start, users create a free account on CashKick and can immediately begin exploring the available games. The platform features a variety of casual and competitive games, allowing users to earn points that convert to cash. For instance, playing a game like Bubble Shooter may earn you a specific number of points for each level completed. Additionally, users can accumulate earnings by participating in promotions and daily challenges.6. Rewarded Play Rewarded Play is an Android-only mobile app that allows users to earn cash and gift cards by playing a variety of games, including puzzles, arcade titles, and casual games. Players earn points for every game played, with potential earnings typically ranging from \$1 to \$5 per game, depending on the games complexity and duration.The app features a diverse selection of over 1,000 games, catering to different interests and skill levels. Users can accumulate points not just by playing, but also by participating in daily challenges and promotions, which can boost earnings.To get started, simply download the app and create an account. After registering, you can browse through the game library and select games to play. Points can be redeemed for free gift cards once you reach the minimum payout threshold, which is \$5.Games of Chance? Blackout Bingo Blackout Bingo adds a competitive twist to the classic game of bingo that I found surprisingly engaging. Instead of just marking numbers, youre racing against another player in real-time, which turns up the intensity in a way thats pretty different from the traditional bingo hall vibe.The app has over a million downloads and plenty of positive feedback, which is what initially caught my eye. The Skillz-powered system does a good job of matching you with players at a similar skill level, making the competition feel fairsomething thats not always guaranteed in cash games.I liked that Blackout Bingo starts with free practice games, letting you get a feel for the mechanics before diving into the cash tournaments. Its not a guaranteed money-maker, but its a fun way

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If head-to-head isnt your style, you can also participate in larger tournaments where winners advance, creating a fun bracket-style competition. *Cash tournaments are not offered in the following states: AR, CT, DE, IN, LA, ME, and SD. 9. Pool Payday Pool Payday brings the classic game of pool to your smartphone with a twist: you can play for real cash prizes. What initially drew me in was the chance to sharpen my skills in free games before diving into cash competitions. The app lets you go head-to-head against other players in real-time, and its more engaging than I expected, especially when youre aiming for that perfect trick shot. As I played, I found that mastering the basics like ball positioning and calling pockets made the transition to cash play feel more strategic. The apps layout is straightforward, and I appreciate that winnings are easily redeemable through PayPal or Apple Pay. Its not a surefire way to make money, but if youre good at pool and enjoy the thrill of competition, its a fun way to potentially earn a few bucks. 10. 21 Blitz 21 Blitz combines the excitement of blackjack with the strategy of solitaire, challenging players to stack cards that total 21. This engaging game pits you against other players in real-time matches, where quick thinking and sharp decision-making are key to winning cash prizes. 21 Blitz offers free practice rounds to get you comfortable with the gameplay before entering paid competitions. Its intuitive design and competitive format make it a popular choice for those looking to sharpen their card skills and earn rewards. 11. Big Buck Hunter Big Buck Hunter transforms the popular arcade hunting game into a dynamic mobile experience where precision and timing are your best allies. Compete in head-to-head challenges or tournaments, testing your shooting skills against players from around the world. 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League of Legends League of Legends is a strategic MOBA where teams battle to destroy each others Nexus. It features a vibrant competitive ecosystem with numerous tournaments, including the League of Legends World Championship, which has a prize pool typically around \$2.34 million. Regional leagues also offer significant rewards for teams demonstrating exceptional skill. 21. Fortnite Fortnite combines shooting and building mechanics in a battle royale format, where players compete to be the last one standing. The game hosts various competitive events, such as the Fortnite World Cup, showcasing a prize pool of \$30 million. These tournaments attract top players globally, highlighting their skills in fast-paced competitions. Other Skill-Based Games with Big Prize Leagues Competitive gaming extends beyond major titles, offering substantial prize pools across various games. Many games feature structured leagues and seasonal tournaments where players can compete solo or form teams. In addition to Call of Duty, Rocket League, and Hearthstone, notable titles include: Apex Legends PUBG Valorant Street Fighter V FIFA Gears of War Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Magic: The Gathering Arena Dota Underlords World of Warcraft Arena These competitions reward skill, strategy, and teamwork. For the latest tournament news and prize pool updates, check out resources like ESPN Esports and Liquipedia. Platforms to Compete for Cash Prizes If youre looking to compete in multiple games without being restricted to just one, platforms like WorldWinner and GamerSaloon offer versatile ways to earn money. WorldWinner allows you to enter cash tournaments across games like Spades, Angry Birds, and Solitaire. You can practice for free before committing to a tournament, with a minimum entry fee of \$0.25. Payments can be made via PayPal or credit/debit card, and winnings are credited back to the same card. New users can receive a \$10 Bonus Bucks credit with the promo code WELCOME on their first deposit. GamerSaloon is accessible through both an app and a website, offering cash tournaments across a diverse selection of games, including popular titles like Call of Duty and NBA 2K. Players can either join existing tournaments or create their own, competing solo or as part of a team. To begin, users must create an account and make an initial deposit that serves as their entrance fee. Each tournament details the entry fee, required gaming system, and start date, with winnings available via PayPal or check. These platforms provide excellent opportunities for players who want to earn money through competitive gaming without being tied to one specific title. Other Ways to Get Paid to Game Gaming as a Business As the gaming landscape continues to grow, many players are discovering alternative ways to monetize their skills and passion beyond traditional competition. From live-streaming gameplay to creating engaging content, there are various avenues available for gamers looking to turn their hobby into a profitable venture. Twitch Twitch is a leading live-streaming platform where gamers can watch e-sports competitions, music performances, and more. It supports integration with consoles like Xbox and PlayStation, making it accessible across various devices. To monetize their broadcasts, streamers need to gain at least 500 regular viewers per video to apply for Twitch Partner status, which enhances their earning potential. Twitch pays \$2.50 for each subscriber, and streamers can also solicit donations directly from their audience. Notable Twitch personalities exemplify the platforms earning potential: Ninja (Tyler Blevins): 19.5 million followers, estimated net worth of \$50 million. xQc (Felix Lengyel): 12 million followers, also around \$50 million in net worth. Shroud (Michael Grzesiek): 10.7 million followers, with an estimated \$20 million net worth. TimTheTatMan (Timothy Betar): 7 million followers and an estimated net worth of \$8 million. Top streamers on Twitch can earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 monthly, showcasing the platforms potential for monetization. Ultimately, Twitch provides a robust environment for both casual gamers and competitive players to transform their passion for gaming into a profitable venture. YouTube Gaming YouTube offers an exciting platform for gamers to showcase their skills and turn their passion into a career. Starting a gaming channel is straightforward and inexpensive; all you need is compelling content and decent equipment. Many creators begin by filming on their smartphones and editing the footage to create engaging play-throughs, tutorials, or commentary. Content is vital when building your YouTube channel. Whether generating play-through videos, discussing different gaming systems, or sharing tips, your content must captivate your audience. As your channel grows, expectations for higher-quality content and professional presentation increase, directly impacting revenue potential. YouTube allows gamers to earn through ad revenue, channel memberships, and sponsorships. Creators can monetize their channels after reaching 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours within the past year. Successful channels can generate substantial income based on views and engagement. Related: How to Make Money on YouTube: A Guide for Beginners Start a Gaming Blog Starting a blog can help you build an audience and potentially earn a side income. Five years ago, if youd told me Id be making a living blogging, I wouldve laughed. Back then, I was a registered nurse, feeling unfulfilled in my 9-to-5 job. My journey into blogging began somewhat accidentally and has since transformed into a seven-figure online business. To kick off your own gaming blog, choose a platform like WordPress. Focus on creating engaging content, whether its game reviews, walkthroughs, or industry news. With just 5,000 monthly visitors, many bloggers can start earning around \$1,000 per month through affiliate marketing and advertising. As your audience grows, your income potential expands significantly. Attract sponsors eager to reach gamers, and utilize affiliate marketing to promote gaming gear, earning commissions of \$1 to \$100 per sale. Consider integrating your blog with platforms like YouTube or Twitch to broaden your reach. You can also create digital products, such as courses or eBooks, based on your gaming insights, potentially earning \$20 to \$200 per course sold. Gaming Careers If youre passionate about gaming but specific games or apps dont interest you, theres a world of career opportunities waiting for you. From testing and developing games to providing tech support and reporting on industry trends, there are various paths to explore that let you turn your love for gaming into a fulfilling career. Game Tester Game testers play a vital role in the video game development process, providing feedback on beta versions of new products. Their main job is to identify bugs, glitches, and usability issues, which helps developers make necessary adjustments before the game is released. While some companies may require specific software knowledge, many just want passionate gamers to share their experiences and suggestions for improvement. Entry-level game testing positions typically pay between \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year, with experienced testers earning upwards of \$60,000.[3] Testers can also work as freelance contractors, allowing for greater flexibility and a variety of projects. If youre detail-oriented and love gaming, becoming a game tester can be an exciting way to enter the industry and gain valuable experience. Game Developer Game developers are the creative forces behind video games, responsible for everything from the graphics you see to the functionality of the game features. If you have strong graphic design and coding skills, coupled with a passion for gaming, this could be an ideal career path for you. In terms of compensation, salaries for game developers can range from \$50,000 to over \$100,000 annually, depending on experience and specialization. Entry-level positions typically start around \$50,000, while seasoned developers or those in leadership roles can command much higher salaries.[4] While a college degree is not always essential, having a solid foundation in programming languages, game design principles, and familiarity with development tools like Unity or Unreal Engine is crucial. Many aspiring developers choose to enhance their skills through online programs or boot camps focused on video game design and coding, making the field more accessible than ever. Video Game Journalist If youre an avid gamer with a knack for writing, a career as a video game journalist might be for you. In this role, youll cover a wide range of topics, from reporting on the latest gaming trends and new releases to interviewing prominent gamers and providing breaking news about the gaming industry. You might also attend major gaming events, tournaments, or product launches, which can add excitement and depth to your articles. You can start your journey in this field by seeking positions with industry-specific blogs, websites, or magazines. Alternatively, freelancing or creating your own gaming blog can help you build a portfolio of writing samples before pursuing full-time roles. While a degree in journalism can be beneficial, its not strictly necessary; many successful video game journalists thrive on passion, experience, and strong writing skills. Salaries in this field can vary significantly, typically ranging from \$30,000 to over \$80,000 annually. Entry-level positions often start around \$30,000, while more established journalists can earn much more, especially if they contribute to major publications.[5] Tips for Maximizing Earnings with Gaming Apps Now that youre familiar with some of the best games that offer real money rewards, here are effective strategies to boost your hourly earnings with this side hustle: 1. Diversify Your App Usage. Instead of relying on just one app, stack multiple gaming platforms to create a side hustle toolkit. This approach allows you to select the highest-paying offers across different apps, maximizing your potential income per hour. 2. Take Advantage of Sign-Up Bonuses. Kickstart your earnings by capitalizing on sign-up bonuses offered by many gaming platforms. Additionally, consider utilizing referral programs; by inviting friends to join, you can earn passive income while expanding your gaming network. 3. Set Clear Income Goals. Establish realistic daily income targetswhether its \$20, \$50, or more to keep yourself motivated and accountable. Tracking your progress against these goals can help you refine your strategies and increase your earnings over time. 4. Stay Informed and Adapt. Keep an eye on app updates and new features that may enhance your earning potential. Engaging with online communities and forums can provide insights into the best practices and hidden opportunities that can help you earn more. 5. Prioritize Quality over Quantity. While its tempting to chase multiple tasks, focus on offers that provide the best return for your time. Prioritize games and tasks that have shown to pay out higher rates and consider dedicating your time to mastering a few apps rather than spreading yourself too thin. Transforming Gaming into a Viable Income Stream If youre an avid gamer, making money with online games is worth a try. There are real money-earning games for those who enjoy being in front of an audience or playing tournament style, as well as options for more behind-the-scenes work. Make sure youre realistic about your expectations. Unless youre pursuing a full-time traditional job in the online gaming world, chances are slim that youll make a six-figure income. But if you put in the time, effort, and commitment to grow your platform, skills, and connect with an audience, your gaming habit can turn into a decent way to make money online. Related: Sources:

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