

Who is GTA VI for? Lucia's role fuels discussion

Solange Uwimana
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Grand Theft Auto VI is putting a woman in the driving seat, and for some longtime women players, Lucia's arrival is **long overdue**. Her central role challenges assumptions about "who games are made for and whose stories deserve to be told", writes academic **Ingrida Lescauskiene**. The Guardian's Keza MacDonald also **sees a meaningful shift**. While she won't go so far as to call GTA VI "a feminist game", this "is the first GTA in which I have felt the women are treated as people", she writes, adding, "women can be as violent, visibly tough and deeply messed-up as the men". A Bain survey of US adult gamers **found** women account for 41% of those most likely to buy the game or play at launch.

That shift **toward empathy** has drawn criticism from some streamers, **Rolling Stone reports**, with complaints about tasks such as buying Lucia flowers and

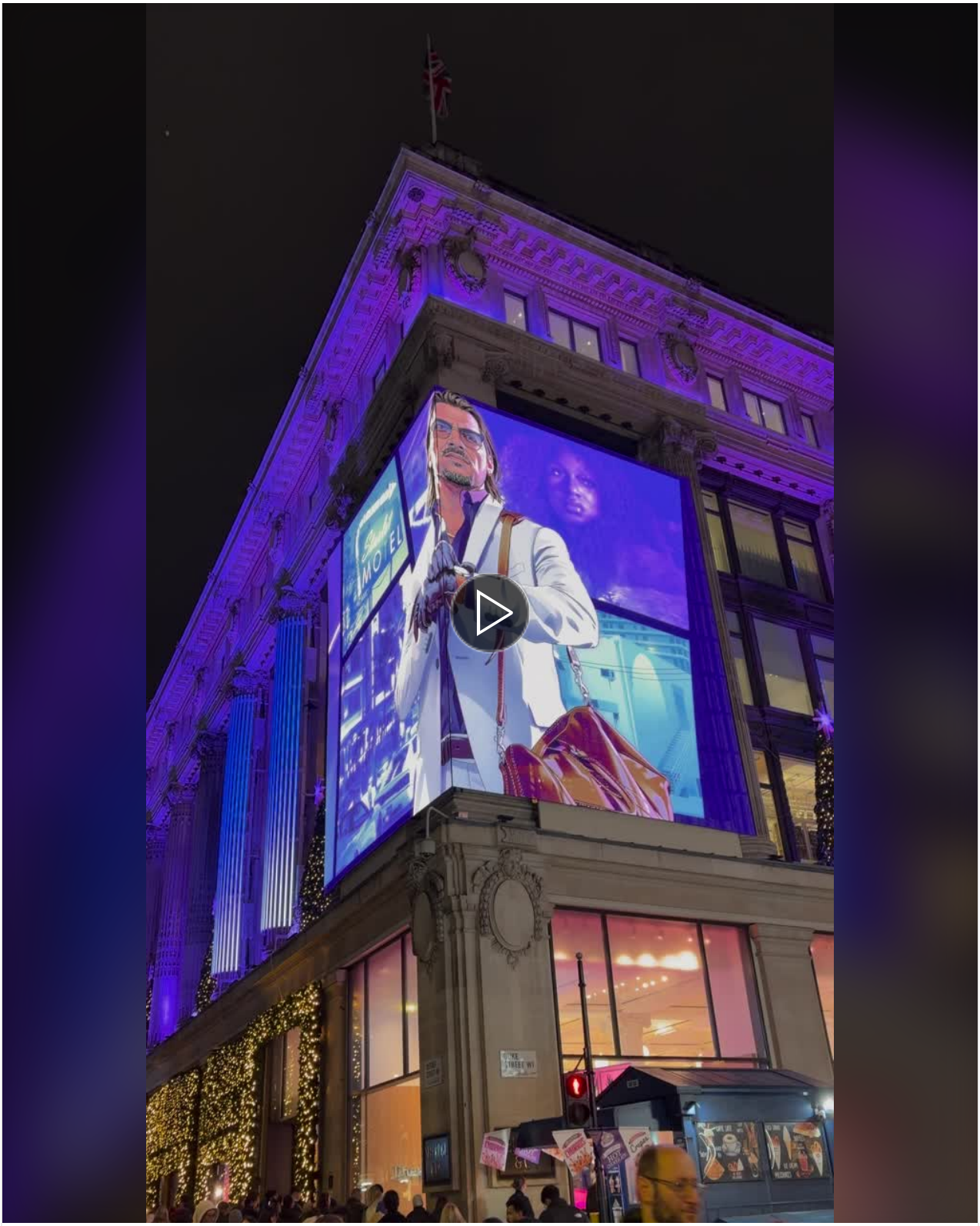
carrying groceries.

EDITORS' PICKS



Annie Krukowska
6h · Edited

There's a pink and blue Ferrari in the Selfridges window in London. It's ugly. It's also, apparently, irresistible, because grown men were queuing down Oxford Street to take its picture. Now I wish I did! 😄



2 · 2 Comments

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Deane De Menezes
3h

Grand Theft Auto (GTA) VI has launched, and its first fully voiced female lead, Lucia Caminos, is already dividing opinion. GTA is one of the biggest entertainment franchises in the world and this launch has fans waiting for 13 years since the last launch (wow!). Back to Lucia, she shares the story with Jason in a partnership that echoes Bonnie and Clyde, breaking a 27-year run of male-led mainline games since the game debuted.

According to **Esports Insider**, women make up about a third of esports viewers, yet they are roughly 5% of the esports workforce and under 1% of professional players.

The gap is structural. Women's tournaments fell 52% in 2025, even as prize pools hit a record $3.3 million, suggesting fewer, bigger events rather than a broader base. Online harassment adds a barrier: 58% of women gamers reported toxicity from male players, and 34% even avoid speaking in online games or had fake accounts to avoid being bullied.

Now a game this size is a useful test of whether big studios like **Rockstar Games** are changing who gets to lead. I think the debate on whether Lucia is a "step forward towards gender equality or a woke marketing move?" is the wrong question to spend time on.

A female co-lead with a backstory and flaws is a starting point. The real test is whether the people around the game, from game designers and writers to voice actors and the player community, make room for women to compete, produce and lead. I'll be watching whether women are on the writing and voice teams and whether the online community is welcoming to women players.

Early player reports of newly added game features that encourage empathy and attentive partnership are worth watching for. They are signals, not proof. Changes away from older series mechanics, like violence against women are also part of the same picture of making a more welcoming environment for women.

Those are the places where a welcoming environment is built or broken. If you have worked in games, esports or media, or been part of a gaming community that felt welcoming (or didn't), what made the difference?

#GrandTheftAuto #GTA6 #GamingNews #WomenInGaming #GenderEquality

#Esports

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Stephan Roehrig
3h · Edited

Sensor Tower's "The Attention Heist" report is a great read. It sizes GTA VI pre-orders at over $1.4 billion, maps which games share the most audience with GTA (Fortnite and Roblox look like the biggest overlaps), and tracks where mobile attention moves during the launch. I like the report overall.

One part I would handle with care: the 'average GTA VI player.' 72% male, 57% under 35, a typical age of 34, persona Sneakerhead.

Averages give you a first idea, but they do you a disservice when they become the picture of your audience, because the picture that sticks is the 'gaming bro.' The

industry has spent years trying to move past that stereotype. The global cultural attention for GTA 6 shows that we are way past that.

When I look at the numbers I see:

- The profile is modeled from Sensor Tower's Console Gamers persona and from players of existing GTA mobile games, on US Android phones.

- 43% of that audience is 35 or older.

- Across US players overall, 46% of weekly players are women and the average age is 37.

Be mindful of the skew in the data. A launch of this size, with an estimated 24.59 million total copies sold by day one, still reaches a very large group outside the average. It includes global players, parents, players who grew up with Vice City, hit driven and casual buyers who pick up one game a year, and of course 28% or more women. Each group responds to different messages, creators, and retail moments.

Marketing a game this big takes a look at the segments that make up the average.

Sensor Tower
75,613 followers
2d

🚨THIS is not a test. This is a revolution. GTA VI is about to go global.

Read the full report: The Attention Heist: GTA VI's Impact On Consumer Engagement 👉 **https://okt.to/EUBAMZ**

Our newest report uses our Video Game, Digital Advertising, and Mobile App Performance Insights to break down how other games and categories might be impacted by the largest game release of all time! And more importantly - WHO is playing.

Beyond the mind-blowing pre-sale and revenue figures for the **Rockstar Games**/**Take-Two Interactive** juggernaut, we analyzed previous high-profile game releases, audience exposure and overlap, ad spend milestones, and who's engaging in GTA-talk on sites like **Reddit, Inc.**

You want more numbers? We thought you might. Let's break down the average player:

👨🏽‍🤝‍👨🏽 72% Male, 57% under 35
📲 They are +29% more likely to use Discord, +23% more likely to use TikTok, and +21% more likely to use Twitch.
🍟 They dig into food apps! 19.2% share of the GTA audience uses DoorDash, while 16.5% use the McDonald's app.
‼️ And so much more!

Are you locked and loaded for Nov. 19th? This is the report you need to read before you settle in with your controller.

Microsoft Sony

#GTAVI #GTA #VideoGameInsights #DigitalAdvertisingInsights #CompetitiveInsights #Videogames

1

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Ren Reynolds
6h · Edited

The most subversive thing about GTA VI

Is that the game encourages the player to be a good partner.

At least according to many media reports. We'll have to wait to see if the data matches the headlines i.e., whether a significant proportion of male players avoided these tasks, though this might simply be because chores are less fun than rhymn'n stealin'.

So far, I've fixed a roof and some stairs in GTA so Lucia will be happy when she comes home – each of which is rewarded with a pink heart.

The horror.

I'm sure someone has already posted 'men caring for women is gay'

In my gameplay, I've also run drugs, killed people and run over my neighbours' bins – coz moral balance is important.

One interesting framing of this has been people's reactions to who wrote these elements of the game.

One faction thinks this aspect of the game must have been created by women creating their fantasy partner, which seems to presuppose:
a) there's something wrong with this norm and female writers should not put it in a game, and
b) that this is not an ideal that men aspire to too.

I touched on this in my post Choose Good: **https://lnkd.in/p/e_wKjnjE**

PS: Do non-Americans get GTA's dark joke in the cover pic for this story?

https://lnkd.in/e-CU7VKh
https://lnkd.in/evuSpRcZ
https://lnkd.in/e6ndzU8m

2

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Andrew Meritt
9h

This may be a controversial take and some may disagree with me - maybe even a lot but I believe GTA normalizes violence against women.

Now I don't play the game but I have watched friends play and I have seen enough clips online to see a pattern: Male characters love to hit female characters in the game.

I would love to see if there are any studies done on this topic. Too many men are playing this game and for some reason attacking women. One commentator called it men just taking out their aggression.

But does GTA normalize violence against women?

I think about how porn normalizes violence against women - men are watching porn

and acting out on women in real life.

So, does GTA normalize violence against women? I think the younger the kids are that play the game their brain is not fully developed to understand fantasy vs reality. So I do believe GTA normalizes violence against women!

8 · 1 Comment

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Sandra B.
10h · Edited

A Rolling Stone headline written by **Elisabeth Garber-Paul** about GTA 6 caught my attention: “Some gamers are pissed that ‘GTA VI’ makes them be nice to their girlfriend.”

That reaction says something worth discussing—not because a video game can solve domestic violence, but because the way we talk about respect, control, and

relationships shapes the culture young people absorb.

And this reaches the workplace, too. Domestic violence can affect an employee's safety, focus, attendance, and ability to stay employed. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that nearly 8 million paid workdays are lost each year because of domestic violence, while SHRM reports that many employers still lack a formal workplace prevention plan.

For HR and people leaders, trust matters. If an employee chooses to tell you what's happening, listen without judgment, protect their privacy, and connect them with appropriate support. You don't need to be a counselor or investigator to respond with care.

I volunteered for many years at a battered women's shelter and a rape crisis center, so I'm glad to see popular culture create openings for conversations about empathy and healthy relationships. Any opportunity to help young people—especially boys—think more deeply about respect and care is a positive one.

I'm also proud to know people who contributed their voices and talent to GTA 6, especially my dear friend **Jenny L.**, one of the writers who worked on the project as part of the **Rockstar Games** team.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, confidential support is available 24/7 through the National Domestic Violence Hotline: call **1-800-799-SAFE** (7233), text START to 88788, or chat at **TheHotline.org** (**https://www.thehotline.org**). If you're in immediate danger, call 911 if it's safe to do so.

#HR #WorkplaceSafety #DomesticViolenceAwareness #HealthyRelationships #Leadership

https://lnkd.in/gFZ8Bn8Q

Elisabeth Garber-Paul 👏🏽👏🏽👏🏽

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Nicole Jasmine Scott
17h

GTA VI is FINALLY HERE.

You can steal cars. Rob banks. Cause absolute MAYHEM.

But a WOMAN as a main character?

Apparently, THAT'S too much for some gamers.

SERIOUSLY?!

I LOVE video games.

Am I good at them?

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

My driving in GTA was a DISASTER.

To be fair, I don't drive in real life either.

ANXIETY.

Apparently, I’m a danger on the roads in EVERY universe.

But as a marketer? GTA FASCINATES me.

Nearly 30 years of chaos, controversy and loyal fans.

Rockstar built GTA around breaking rules.

So why are some fans upset when the game breaks THEIR rules?

And there’s something else.

How women are treated in gaming.

This one is personal.

Years ago, someone I thought was a close friend became well known in gaming.

When we spoke again, he admitted he’d mainly wanted sex, not friendship.

He also had some LOVELY things to say about my personality.

CHARMING.

Years of friendship, apparently out the window.

People say fame changes people.

Sometimes, it just shows you who they really are.

Reading that conversation years later?

It STILL hurts.

And reading what some men say about GTA VI brings those feelings back.

Different men. Different situations. But the same question.

Why are women still expected to be what men want us to be?

I’ve never shared this story publicly before.

Even now, I’m nervous.

Gisèle Pelicot said, “Shame must change sides.”

Our experiences are VERY different, but her message matters.

Why should women feel ashamed of how men treat them?

Remember GAMERGATE?

In 2014, women in gaming faced threats and harassment.

And here we are, STILL talking about it.

Now GTA VI has Lucia, a female main character.

And some commentators are having a MOMENT.

One even complained about buying your girlfriend flowers.

FLOWERS?!

Stealing cars? FINE.

Robbing banks? FINE.

Buying flowers?

SIR, THIS IS NOT A WAR CRIME.

Not liking a game doesn’t make someone sexist.

But blaming women because a game is changing?

THAT’S DIFFERENT.

And here’s the marketing lesson.

Loving a brand doesn’t mean you OWN it.

Some fans love GTA so much that they want it to stay exactly the same.

But brands need to grow.

And the people who love them need to make room for change too.

Rockstar built GTA on breaking rules.

Maybe now it’s breaking a few old ideas about women.

Women have ALWAYS been part of gaming.

We play. We create. We build communities.

And we’d quite like to be treated as PEOPLE.

WHAT A RADICAL CONCEPT.

GTA has levelled up.

Maybe it’s time some attitudes did too.

#GTA6 #WomenInGaming #GamingCulture #BrandStrategy #Marketing

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Jen Donahoe
21h

Everyone's likely playing and writing about GTA VI, but is anyone checking in with Women buyers and players? **Newzoo** compared GTA pre-orders against all premium game buyers, and the gender chart is the one I keep coming back to.

Women are under-indexing on GTA VI pre-orders and might be a bigger part of the launch than we anticipate.

• Women were 15% of GTA VI pre-orders against 27% of premium game buyers in the same period.
• GTA V sits at 22% women buyers since 2018, so GTA VI is starting 7 points behind its own predecessor.
• The gap shows up in every age group, and it's narrowest at 45 to 54, where women were 21% of pre-orders.

Lucia (the co-lead) gives women a reason to show up
• GTA VI is the first mainline GTA with a fully voiced female lead, and she co-leads the story with Jason.
• Pre-orders capture the fans who were always going to buy. Launch is when everyone else sees the game out in the world, and I think that's when women come in.
Holiday gift buying lands inside the launch window
• Newzoo is counting buyers, and from age 35 up a lot of those women are buying for their kids or their partners.
• A Nov 19 launch puts that gift purchase inside the first 6 weeks, which is the same window we just made our unit predictions on.

If you market a premium game, look at who's under-indexing in your pre-orders, because that's your post-launch audience plan already written for you.

🎙️ More on this with spicy arguments with **Eric Kress** and **Phillip Black** in **Deconstructor of Fun** This Week in Games 410. Missed you **Michail Katkoff**

https://lnkd.in/gGTZxrKr

27 · 3 Comments

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Marie Roker-Jones
1d

We have GTA VI before making space for women to feel safe in gaming.

Today, I want to celebrate the women who've been waiting to return to Vice City.

Women make up 46% of video game players in the United States.

A recent survey of 2,523 American women gamers found that 59% planned to play GTA VI within its first month.

Yet 48% of women gamers surveyed in the U.S. and U.K. said gaming culture didn't

welcome or represent them.

Women are valued as customers, but many still feel like outsiders.

GTA VI gives us Lucia as a playable lead, and that's worth celebrating.

But representation in a game doesn't resolve how women are treated in gaming communities.

When women face harassment in online gaming, they're told to mute, block, or report the player.

But the harassment continues.

As a member of the Geena Davis Institute's GDI Playbook Advisory Board, I want women's experiences influencing how games and gaming communities are designed, before harassment becomes something women are left to manage.

Gaming companies can't control every player's behavior.

But they can decide how seriously to address harassment through the products and communities they build.

The gaming industry has figured out how to profit from women gamers.

Why is their safety still treated as their responsibility?

To the women heading to Vice City today, enjoy yourselves!

The only chaos you should have to deal with is in the game.

25 · 4 Comments

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Alexandra Middleton
1d

Sucks to be an employer this week.

Cough, cough. I've come down with a rather serious case of GTA 6.

Bla bla bla you know how the joke goes.

Although I don't think I'll be playing GTA for quite the same reasons as everyone else.

I just want to explore the map.

Open-world exploration is probably my love language when it comes to gaming. It's why games like The Witcher 3 and Red Dead Redemption 2 never leave my list of top 5 games of all time.

Give me a massive map and I'll happily spend hundreds of hours wandering around, looking in buildings, exploring random locations and doing absolutely anything other than progressing the main story.

I cannot tell you how many rocks I looked under in Baldur's Gate 3.

I rarely finish campaigns either. Not because I get bored, but because I've spent 80 hours exploring and somehow only completed about 12% of the actual game.

I imagine GTA 6 will be much the same.

Everyone else will be discussing the storyline and I'll be three hours into investigating whether I can get inside a random building.

Will you be playing?

Quite a few people in my community have said they're worried it won't live up to the hype and are waiting for reviews before spending their money.

Are you jumping straight in, waiting for reviews or giving it a miss altogether?

31 · 13 Comments

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