

HANGRY ANIMALS!®

COLLABORATIVE GAME PLAY

FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

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Executive Summary

How might we create a more equitable gaming experience to influence social impact behaviours through habitual actions in order to create positive outcomes for charities and young people in terms of their sense of purpose and social impact.

Abstract

We explored whether an equitable, family-aware giving model can live within children's play activities, shaping real-world pro-social behaviour without pressure. Over the course of the project we gathered parent/guardian survey data, desk research, conducted interviews with parents, young people and industry professionals, journalled relevant experiences i.e. events, conversations, and reviewed our brand touchpoints.

The results shown in our sample group indicate that under 16's prefer to play computer games on their own more often than not. They do play with friends, but the majority of their gaming is conducted in solo mode as a means of relaxation. This outcome presents us with a challenge as to whether collaborative gaming is suitable for our key demographic and whether responsible local collaborative game experiences could be

developed. Live service gaming, and online co-operative play appears to be more of a maturer gamer norm than we assumed at the outset of this research. This has resulted in our need to pivot the style of game, motivations and rewards as well as wish fulfillment within the experiences we want to produce.

Our initial target market for this research was 9-11 year olds and the survey was advertised as such. However, due to public requests and interest on our social channels, we changed the target market to 16 and under. Parents and their children were very interested in supporting the project and wanted to share their insights and views. In line with our values of community and inclusion, we welcomed their participation and were keen to capture their perspectives.



Who We Are

We're a purpose-driven entertainment studio based in Wales, building at the intersection of games, animation and interactive storytelling to turn play into real-world animal welfare impact. Founded by Andrew Minton (CEO/Founder) and Ceri Angel (COO/Creative Strategist; R&D lead), Hangry Animals operate as a small core team with a flexible bench of specialists we draw on for production, writing and development, when needed.

With over 25 years of experience within the creative space from gaming to branding, animation and print, we anchor our brand in character-led IP that can live across games, comics and screen. Our studio has been developing this transmedia IP since 2022, with a USPTO-trademarked brand, university collaborations and prototypes that blend charity, game play and entertainment. The ambition is a durable, values-led franchise that families recognise and trust.



Our Mission

To build an ecosystem where players play, earn/unlock, and can optionally donate - with parents in control and the impact on charities made transparent. In practice, that means cause-aligned content and rewards that feel native to the game, with clear prompts and simple explanations of "where the money goes." Our vision frames this as "gaming that gives back," supported by features like community challenges, rewards that unlock new levels and experiences, and an infrastructure layer that helps charities generate additional revenue in a trackable, ethical way.

Beyond a single title, Hangry Animals is a multi-pillar IP: games, comics, animation and merchandise designed to complement each other. Characters evolve across experiences; players build identity and collections; and partner charities co-design content so impact stays authentic. Our strategy outlines a fixed share of sales revenue for charitable partner causes and we have a roadmap for donation-friendly DLC (Downloadable Content) that integrates alongside player progression within the games rather than feeling bolted on.

On the product side, we want to incubate multiple game concepts for example, a food-delivery job simulator, an food fight auto-battler and an animal-rescue Role Playing Game or (RPG), all aligned to the same principle: fun first, purpose built-in. The exact mechanics, narrative, game genre and style we choose to proceed with will be shaped by the feasibility evidence in this report and by ongoing tests with kids, parents and partners.



Introduction

We wanted to conduct this research as our initial findings for our IP highlighted that charities struggle to reach younger audiences and lack modern donation infrastructures; meanwhile children want games with meaning without losing fun. The aim of this R&D was to conduct further research, identify potential obstacles, validate our thinking, and find out first hand from parents and children how gaming, charity work and animals fit within their household.

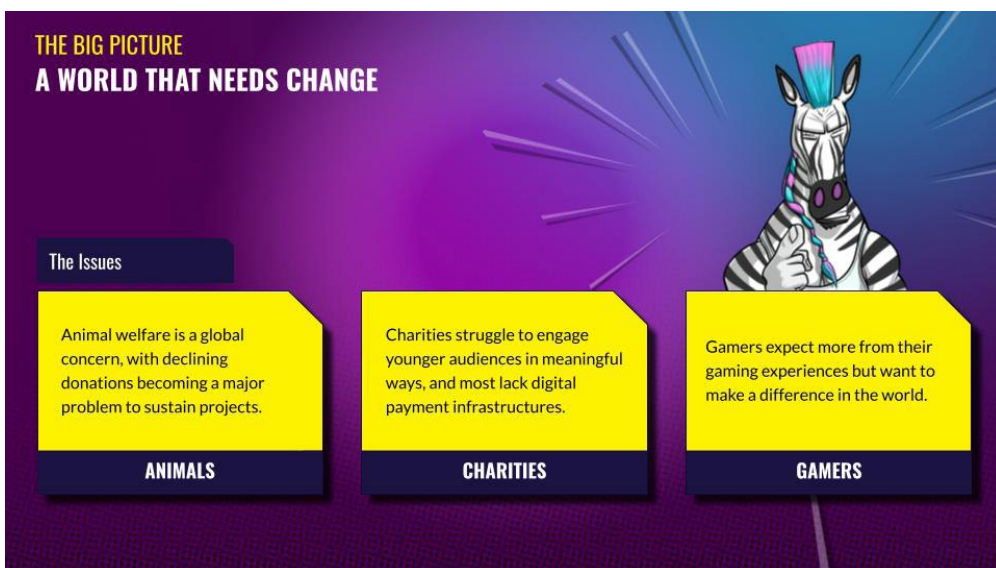
The opportunity we set out to explore is how collaborative game play can foster social cohesion while manifesting real-world impact on a global scale.

There was a gap in our understanding of how the collaborative decision-making of players within games can translate into real-world action, particularly in areas like animal welfare and conservation. Are younger audiences (ages 11-14) driven by financial incentives and real world impact - and if so, how? What are the motivators that encourage them to participate in meaningful, community-driven decision-making?

We set out to understand the following:

- Children's gaming habits
- The role of parents in decision-making
- Charitable activities in the home
- Which platforms and marketing routes matter and what our findings inform us on the type of game we should create first

Success of this project means finding evidence that families are open to purchase gaming experiences where there is alignment with a good cause. Where smaller, more frequent spends on games are preferred over larger one off purchases, identifying the safest and most common new game discovery patterns, what type of games are young gamers playing and where. These outcomes will help define the user experience, design, and game mechanics we build, and what type of gaming experiences we create that people will want to play.



Extract from our company pitch deck

Project Timeline

01 Feb

PDR Meeting
Collating initial sources and insights

02 March

PDR Meeting
Alacrity Meeting
Jeff Sheen Meeting
Hope Rescue Meeting & Site Visit
Ongoing research and analysis

03 April

Kick off Meeting with Oh Blimey
Media Cymru Midpoint Meeting
PDR Meeting
Ongoing research and analysis

04 May

Creation of survey for parents/guardians
Automate Email Comms for Interview Participants
Ongoing research and analysis

05 June

Promote survey on socials
Ongoing research and analysis

06 July

PDR Meeting
Closed Survey
Analyse survey for parents/guardians
Choose Participants and Conducted Interviews

07 Aug

Analyse all data
Complete Feasibility Report
Project Ends

Key Signifiers of Our Study

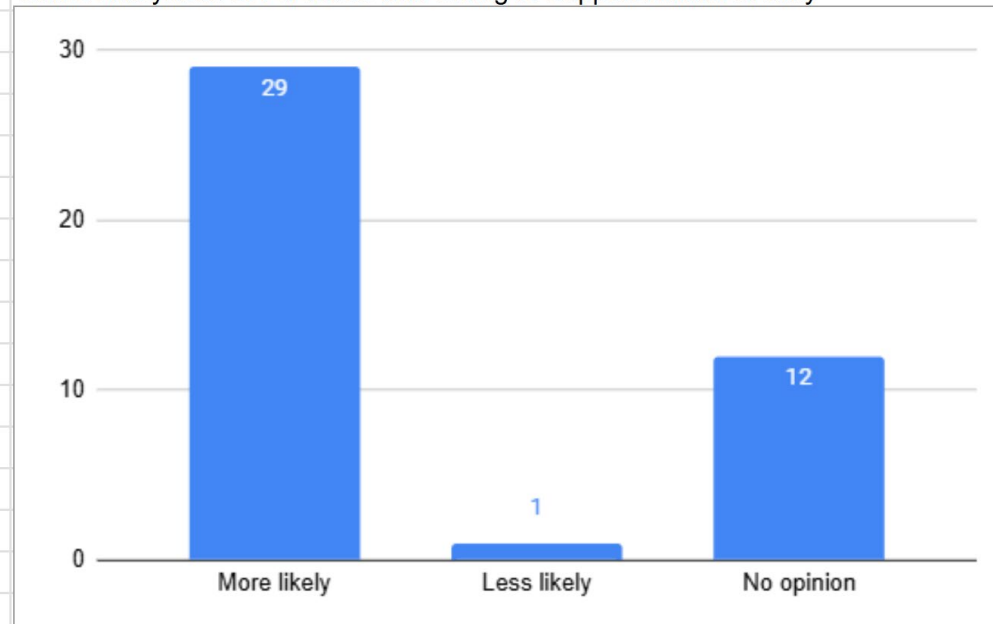
Links to Animal Charities are Strong

Parents are open to purchasing games aligned to good causes. In our survey, we discovered that parents were “more likely to purchase if a game supports animals/children”.

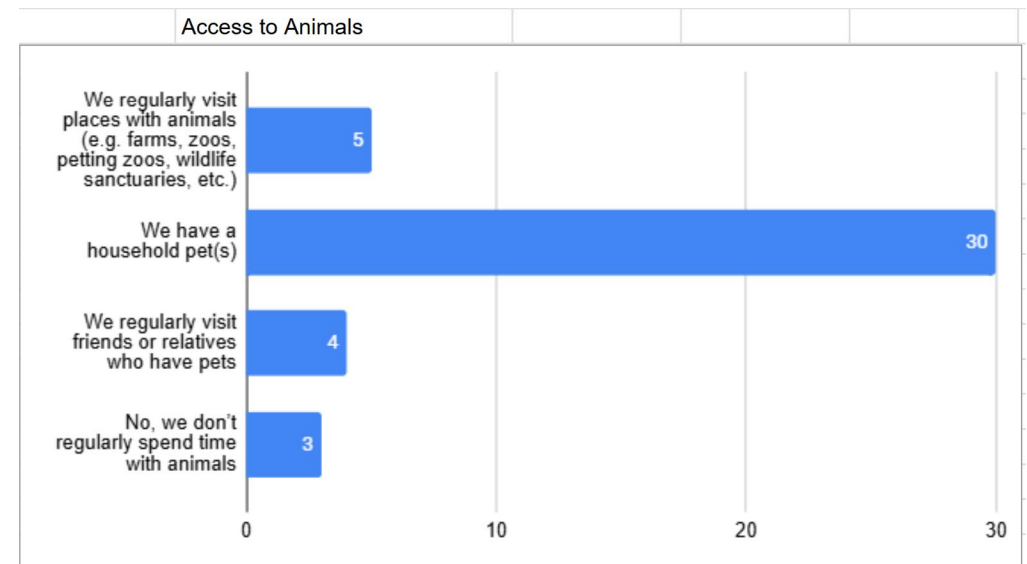
In addition, those with household pets are more likely to support animal charities and purchase a game that supports them.

Animal-led causes resonate with younger children and tweens.

Game Likelihood of Purchase with Giving to Support Animal Charity



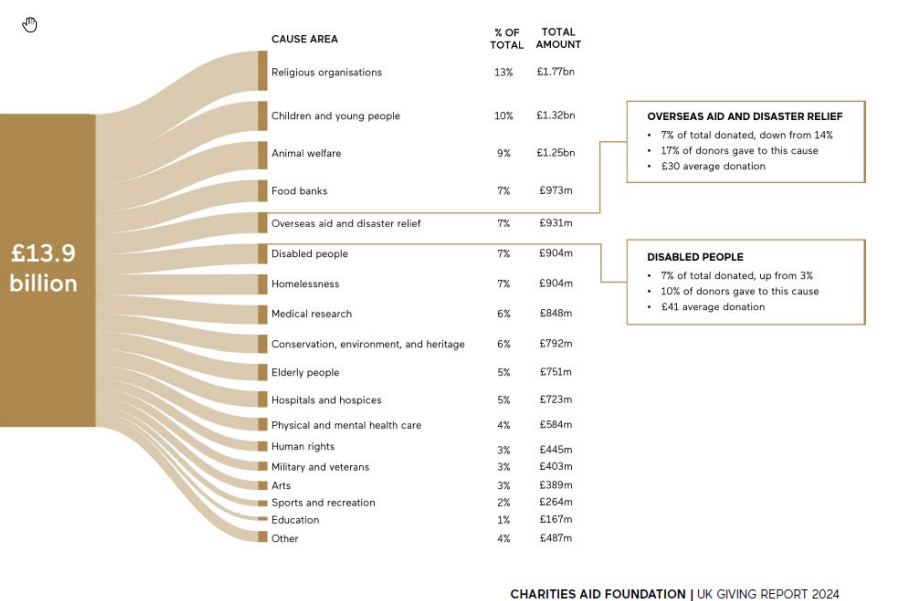
Our findings based on our survey completed by parents



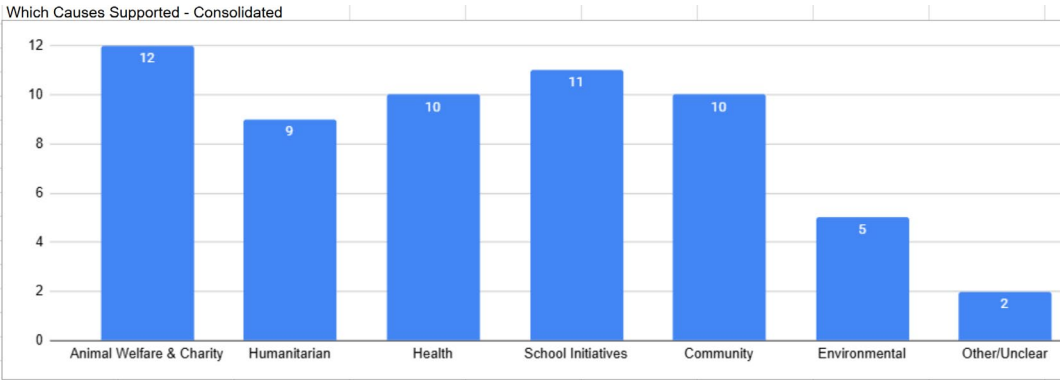
Key Signifiers of Our Study

Animal-led causes remain high on the list for support and receiving donations

Figure 10. Amount received by each cause area



UK Giving Report 2024 has placed Animal Welfare in the Top 3 charities that received the most donations



Our findings based on our survey completed by parents

Key Signifiers of Our Study

Gaming genres most influenced by charitable causes

Which Types of Gamers Are Most Likely to Purchase Games Supporting Charity?



Based on 39 survey responses analyzing charity influence across gaming genres

Key Insights:

- **Racing game players** show the highest charity influence at 63.0%
- **Casual/cosy and Simulation** gamers also show above-average charity influence (54%+)
- **Education game players** have solid charity influence at 50.7%
- **Strategy gamers** show the lowest charity influence at 42.0%
- Most gaming genres show above-average charity influence compared to the overall baseline

Gaming genres vs charitable influence by gender

How Gender Affects Charitable Gaming Preferences Across Different Genres



Gender Pattern Insights:

- **Female gamers** show significantly higher charity influence across most genres
- **Racing games:** 77.1% female vs 47.5% male charity influence
- **Education games:** 61.5% female vs 35.8% male influence
- **Multiplayer games:** 61.3% female vs 43.3% male influence
- **Only exception:** Strategy games where males show higher influence (48.8% vs 25.0%)
- Female gamers are consistently more motivated by charitable game purchases

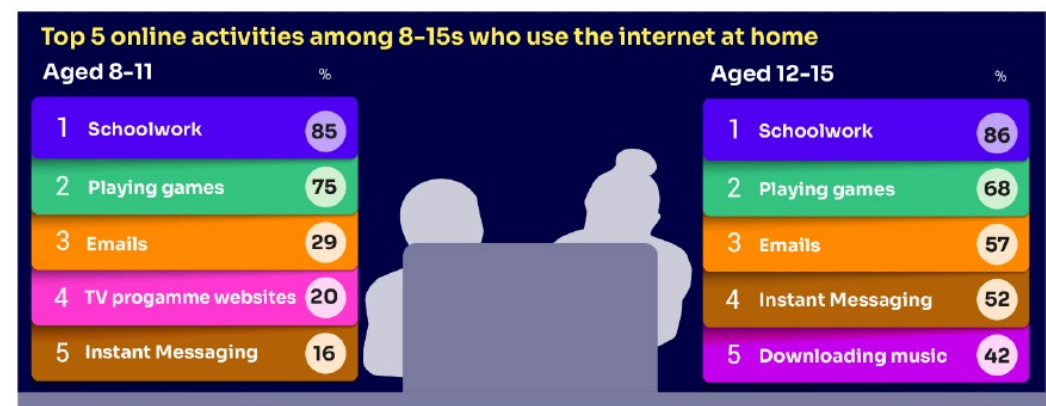
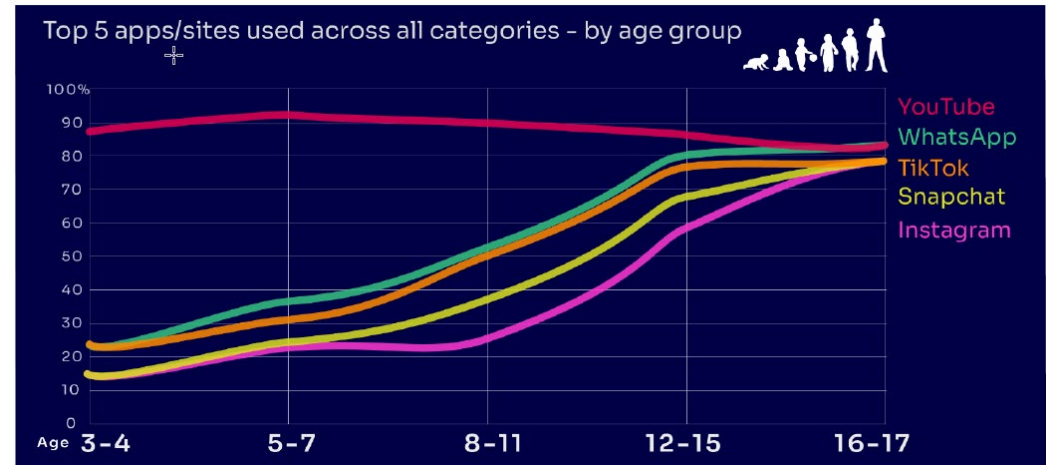
Key Signifiers of Our Study

Design for Organic Reach & Discovery

Kids find games via friends/siblings and YouTube/streamers. This means that “watch-and-share” moments, and creator-friendly experiences are a key factor in influencing the download or playing of games through popularity of appeal from social media celebrities in the gaming and non-gaming space.

95% of teens use YouTube; with watching gaming content hugely popular. Influencers drive game popularity (Fortnite, Minecraft) and shape player behaviours. Teens engage by watching, learning, sharing achievements, and following trends.

YouTube streamers play a key role in game discovery



Ofcom Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2024

Key Signifiers of Our Study

Our Charity Partner Fit is Strong

Hope Rescue's principles, processes, care and values have the potential to provide teachable and empathy-first play experiences; visiting them sharpened our direction for more than one game concept that could help raise awareness and fund several initiatives over time.



“It has been another incredibly challenging year as we continue to see demand for Hope Rescue services far exceed the support we can provide, and lack of capacity remains a concern.”

*Sarah Passmore, Chair of Trustees, Hope Rescue.
Annual Report 2024*

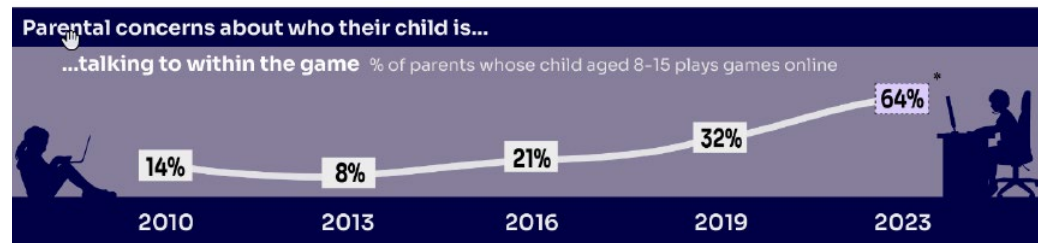
Key Signifiers of Our Study

Safety By Design

Parent approvals, play activity dashboards, spend oversight, and age-gated access are already part of our must haves, and the research identified and confirmed these requirements, especially considering the ever changing landscape of online safety regulations in the UK, safeguarding young gamers.

"I don't play Roblox because it has chatting and you can talk to loads of people, even if you block them they can still reach you. There's lots of bullying as well—stuff like that happens to my friends."

Interview Participant



Ofcom Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2024

Key Signifiers of Our Study

Digital Donating Is Mainstream

Initial research highlighted that charities with no digital infrastructure are struggling. Over 48% of donations are now digital according to Barclays Giving: A New Landscape report in 2022, some stating this has risen to over 60% in the UK over 2023-2024.

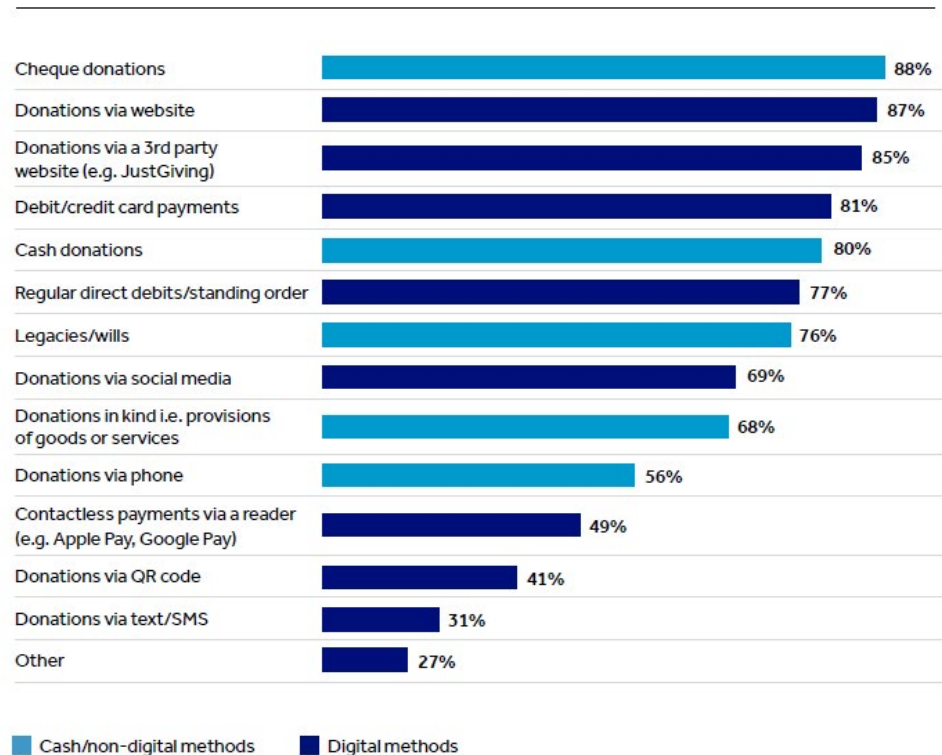
As younger audiences are opting for digital first transactions on a broader range of platforms, most charitable organisations lack the in-house expertise to manage these demands. The introduction of a seamless way to give, in exchange for access to exciting gaming experiences scored well on our survey results, with both parents and children.

Our desk research and interviews uncovered numerous online platforms offering bundles of existing games or retrofitting games with development studios, to incorporate aspects of education surrounding sustainability, but none offered direct donations within a single gaming experience through a token or in game economy. Skins, items, levels in exchange for a nominal donation were prevalent, but not the norm.

This provides us with a huge opportunity to provide a fair equitable exchange of value directly within our games, where the exchange of money for a synthetic in-game token similar to how Fortnite, Roblox, Playstation credits work. It opens up the world of nominal donations of the users tokens in exchange for perks and further unlockable experiences, directly to each approved Charities own token treasury held within our ecosystem.

Most game platforms are the custodians of their own in-game economy and any notion of a donation is discretionary or one shot campaigns on the whole. But integrating the charities themselves as part of the token distribution and withdrawal to Fiat currency, giving can become an intrinsic part of not only games, but items, skins, props and unique experiences for players. Hangry Animals bridges the world of web 2.0 as we know it right now, but we're also incorporating aspects of web 3.0/digital collectibles along the way. Maybe embracing the potential of what web 3.0 can offer fans, players, charities and our evolving business model, can be explored further in our next phase of research and growth.

Donation channels: % of charities that have received donations from each channel



Barclays Giving: A New Landscape, 2022

“A combination of technology with an emotive touch will ensure charities stay ahead of the pack.”

Nazreen Visram, Head of Charities,, Public Sector Team, Barclays Corporate Banking
Barclays Giving: A New Landscape

Key Signifiers of Our Study

Rapid Prototyping

Our experience of Game Jams and Expo's have shown us that it's possible to build quickly (with the right team) and test with suitable audiences i.e. game developers, gamers, school groups etc.

Further validation of our games can be proven with small, proof of concept prototypes in weeks rather than months. With game tech getting more and more accessible and with the advent of assistive AI within the game engines themselves, it is now much easier to create a prototype at pace to put in the hands of gamers, without the big expenses typically associated with game development. Bezi and Unity's own AI tools are very intuitive and as a result have led to Unity posting record profits for the past six months since implementing these tools natively. Unreal Engine has followed suit with its own assistive tooling. It's never been easier to get a game idea out there.



Our first experience of a Game Jam hosted by Welsh Ice.

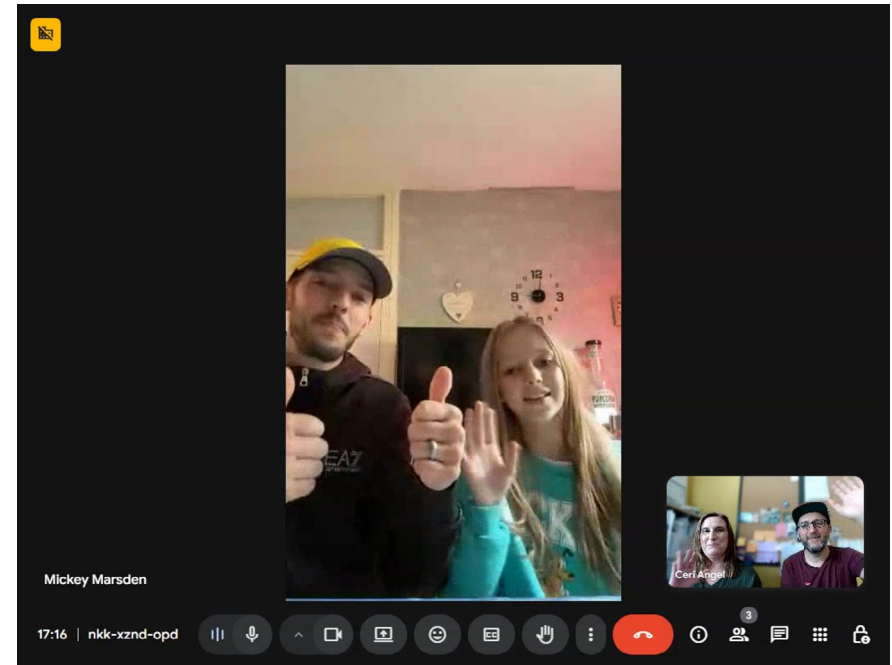
Key Signifiers of Our Study

Strategic Shift

Our discovery of solo game play amongst our primary audience as a preferred play style, alongside our survey data and interviews has provided us with evidence and design considerations that further validate our direction. It has provided us with themes, genres and platform challenges we now need to explore further in the next phase of our development.

“If there was a game that every time someone played it and it was helping the charity, I would play it at least twice a day or five times a week.”

Interview Participant



Interview participants

Methodology

Approach

Utilised Miro post-its and discovered there were six clear categories, triangulated quantitative signals (our survey) with qualitative inputs (interviews, charity visit, journals), and logged unexpected results and findings as they emerged.

Participants

Parents/guardians (42 survey responses), interviews with children (x4), charity stakeholders (Hope Rescue), plus conversations with advisors, speaker events and industry experts.

Desk Research / Literature Review

Explored existing studies and reports on gaming behaviours, motivation, digital giving, safety, and children's online experiences to identify gaps and inform your approach.

Surveys (Parents/Guardians)

Collected quantitative and qualitative data through structured surveys, covering topics such as gaming habits, charity perceptions, money, animals, and in-game purchases.

Interviews (Children)

Conducted 30–40 minute semi-structured interviews with 7–15 year olds observed by parents, capturing insights into their gaming preferences, motivators, and views on animal welfare and giving.

Player Motivation Studies

Used interviews, surveys and desk research to examine what motivates tweens/teens to participate in collaborative or prosocial in-game actions (e.g. badges, community recognition, rewards).

Ethnographic Insights

Looked at children's broader "digital lives" (devices, platforms, privacy behaviours) to understand how game discovery, safety, and community dynamics shape play.

Industry Experts

Participated in structured sessions with mentors and advisors (from Media Cymru, Alacrity, Unity, Stargazy, etc.) to validate findings, stress-test ideas, and align with best practices.

Iterative Analysis & Reporting

Collated findings into post-it insights, categories, producing a foundation for prototype design and funding/investment opportunities.

Events & Industry Experts / Talks

Attended several networking events and talks to gain insights from professionals currently producing games, social content, and gaming-for-good initiatives. Built new contacts, explored industry trends, and brought external perspectives into the research.

Sources We Analysed (overview):

Primary Research (Gathered)

- Articles
- Reports
- Gaming Platforms and Market Places
- Surveys/Polls

Desk Research (First Hand)

- Parent/Guardian Survey
- One to One Interviews with young gamers (supervised with adult)
- Journals
- Newsletters
- Articles
- Social Engagement

Our Findings

Top 5 Key Insights

Watching, Not Just Playing

R&D interviews and journals indicate that many kids discover and engage with games via creators (YouTube/Twitch) and often watch game play sessions as much as - or more than - they play themselves.

Solo Play Over Social Play

Our survey and interviews revealed that those under 14 prefer playing games alone. In some instances they have had negative experiences when playing with others, including with their friends. Lack of trust and fairness was a core factor.

Impact and Recognition Matter

Players want to see their contributions having a real world impact and be recognised for it. For example, if they donate to an animal charity, they want to see a visual representation i.e. chart and a thank you email, or digital items they can share on their social channels.

Genre Influences Giving

Our survey indicates that players of casual and adventure games were more likely than other genres to say they'd donate to an animal charity. While not every genre showed the same alignment, this suggests that lighter, story-driven or pick-up-and-play experiences create a stronger link between play and charitable action.

Creators Over Ads

Our R&D, supported by Ofcom findings, shows that young audiences often place more trust in creators and streamers than in traditional advertising. Many don't even recognise influencer posts as ads, instead believing the creator genuinely likes or recommends the product.

Thematic Findings

The thematic findings below combine evidence from our mixed-methods R&D: a parent/guardian survey (n=42), interviews with 7–15-year-olds (n=4), a charity site visit, advisor sessions, journals/events, and desk research.

We coded insights in Miro (post-its → clusters → themes), triangulating quantitative signals with qualitative context and stress-testing anomalies through follow-up conversations.

While analysing the data, it became apparent that we have 6 recurring themes:

- Player Motivation & Engagement
- Money & Value
- Community
- Safety
- Platforms & Discovery
- Charity Messaging

These translate directly into design constraints and go-to-market levers. Where relevant, we note pivots (e.g. solo-first play) and the implications for validation in the next phase.



Thematic Findings

1. Understanding Motivation, Engagement & Play Styles

Solo Play Over Collaborative Play

Interviews and journals noted grieving and “not playing fair” pushing some children to prefer solo (single player) or Co-op (Collaborative/Multiplayer) play. Implication: start with low-friction solo/co-op play and clear boundaries.

Familiar Touchpoints Build Trust

Minecraft and Roblox were the most frequently cited references in interviews, alongside the behaviour of “finding games on YouTube/Roblox.” Implication: intuitive UI, shareable moments, creator-friendly features, and “watch me play” beats. Our survey also showed free playtime increases retention, builds brand trust, and boosts likelihood of being played/downloaded.

Short Sessions Work Best

Advisor input and interviews pointed to session length and cognitive load as key. Short, satisfying play bursts, with clear progress and minimal friction, are more engaging than long marathons. This supports design choices like bite-sized missions and simple UI.

Game play Over Graphics

High-end visuals mattered less than responsive, interesting game play loops. In fact, genre preference (casual/adventure) and recognisable mechanics carried more weight than polish. This matches industry studies (ISFE, Deloitte) showing Gen Z prioritises adaptive, personalised play over visual fidelity.

Empathy, Animals and Humour Drive Appeal

Research shows kids are strongly drawn to animals, humour, and care-based mechanics. Our survey and interviews highlighted that calm, sensory loops and “looking after” features (like pets or habitats) feel meaningful and fun, particularly when they avoid guilt-tripping. This aligns with wider research that cause-linked mascots and playful personification help children connect.

Overstimulation Can Exclude

Neurodivergent players, flagged overstimulating environments (too fast, too noisy, too cluttered) as overwhelming or even unsafe. This supports accessibility settings such as sensory toggles, control mapping, and balanced sound design.

Mimicking Streamer Culture

Interviews revealed that younger players mimic the style and language of their favourite streamers — reinforcing the influence of creator culture and the blending of “watch” and “play” behaviours.

Market Loves Co-op; Our Audience Doesn't

Our industry research highlights that co-op game play is popular (i.e. Palworld/Helldivers), but not for the younger audiences who prefer solo play.

Thematic Findings

2. Donations, Value & In-game Economy

Money Equals Helping

Younger participants increasingly equated “helping” with giving money, rather than volunteering or making/selling things. Implication: build clear, bite-sized monetary actions parents can approve, paired with visible outcomes.

Cause Fit Drives Purchases

Our survey found players were more likely to buy if the game supported animals (46.8%) or children (46.8%), followed by mental health (37.1%) and food/disaster aid (32.3%).

Recent Spending Habits

Survey data shows 37.1% had bought a game in the last 6 months and 27.4% had purchased in-game items. Implication: value framing matters — donations must feel optional and earned, not constant.

Genre Shapes Giving

Our survey indicates that players of casual and adventure games show a stronger link to donation likelihood than other genres — aligning with lighter, story-driven or care-based play.

Social Proof Encourages Action

Emotional and peer-based validation — seeing friends also play or donate — increases willingness to give, reinforcing the role of community in driving charitable behaviour.

Transparency and Approval Matter

Donation prompts need to be per-transaction, with caps and receipts parents can trust. Friction and comprehension should be measured in testing, ensuring giving feels optional, not demanding.

Thematic Findings

3. Social Spaces, Belonging, Inclusion & Community

Friends/Siblings & Creators Drive Discovery

Friends/siblings 58.1%; YouTube/streamers 43.5%. Implication: discovery and messaging should ethically lean into peer/creator communication; keeping community as an initial focus.

Managing Communities Requires Care

Our comms and journals highlighted that different channels need different approaches, and that maintaining safe, active communities comes with an operational load. Parent-inclusive formats (like newsletters) need to be built on with a suitable strategy.

Inclusive Communication

Constraint-based emotes and non-text tools can make shared spaces safer and more welcoming for neurodivergent players. Design constraints become creative tools.

Silent Play Habits

Many younger players often play in silence or alone — a reminder that not all engagement is social, and audio-heavy or constant-chat environments aren't always preferred.

Identity & Sharing

Boys were more likely to describe gaming as part of their identity, while girls were less likely to openly share their gamer status. Implication: design inclusive spaces that support different comfort levels in self-identifying as a gamer.

Fandom Fuels Belonging

Research highlighted that fandoms (e.g., Minecraft, Roblox, Pokémon) give children a sense of belonging, offering shared reference points and community language.

Livestream Culture Builds Connection

Livestreaming was seen as a way to feel close to creators and peers, reinforcing parasocial bonds and collective experiences beyond just game play.

Representation Builds Safety

Kids reported that seeing characters “like them” — in background, identity or personality — helps create a safe, welcoming atmosphere.

Watching Influences Playing

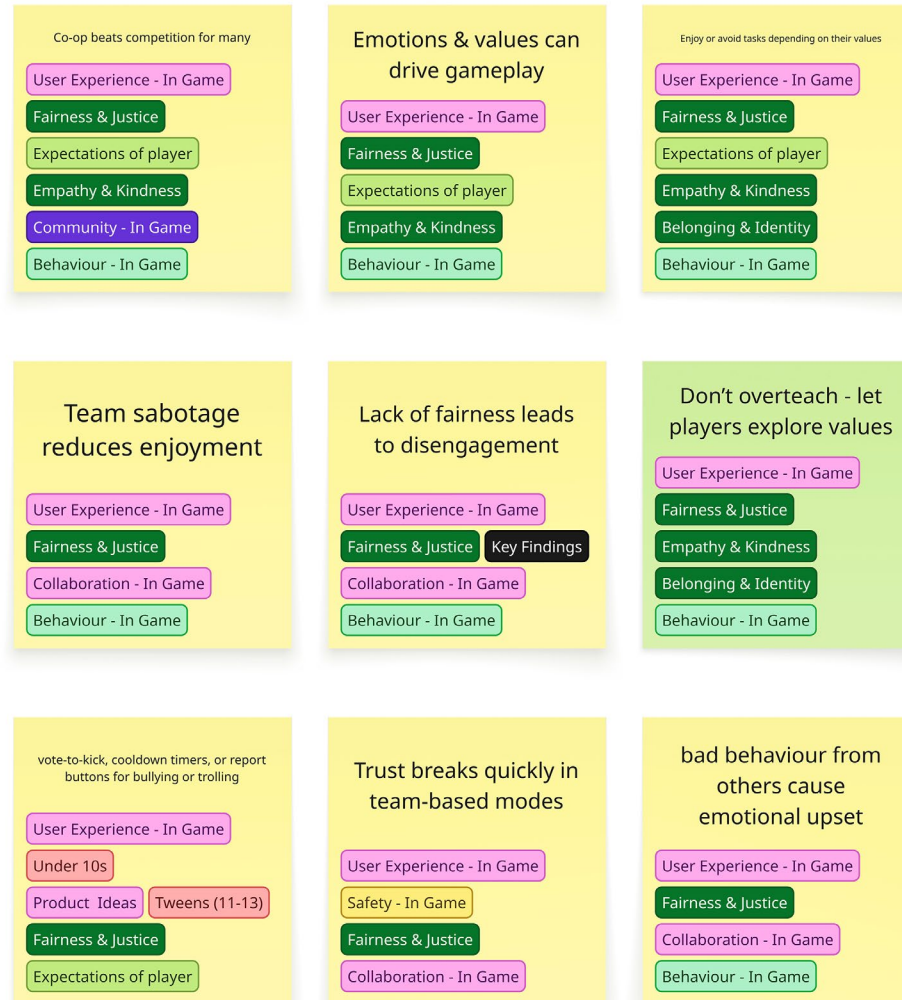
Children watch gamers as much as they play themselves and are more likely to play, download or purchase a game if a streamer or creator has posted about it.

Discovery Through TikTok and YouTube

Discovery pathways leaned heavily on TikTok and YouTube, with these platforms cited repeatedly in interviews as where kids first hear about or see new games.

Thematic Findings

Miroboard Cluster Examples



Thematic Findings

4. Safety & Moderation

Safety by Design is Non-Negotiable

AADC/Online Safety expectations and our own protocols place consent, reporting and spend controls as must-haves. Community features should be phased rather than open on day one, to build confidence and trust from both sides. UK Online Safety Act makes platforms accountable for safeguarding children's online experiences as of July 2025, companies can be fined up to £18m or 10% of global revenue if found in breach of new regulations.

Fair Play Affects Engagement

Team sabotage, griefing, and a lack of fairness consistently reduce enjoyment and lead to disengagement.

Transparency Builds Trust

Lack of clarity about data use or monetisation was flagged as a turn-off. Platforms that show where money goes, what is collected, and how it is used earn greater trust.

Kindness as a Mechanic

Research highlighted that positive reinforcement — rewarding kindness or helpful behaviour — can shape culture and improve in-game experiences.

Voice Chat Seen as Risky

Open voice chat is often perceived as unsafe, with concerns about bullying, inappropriate language, and stranger danger.

Clear Age Ratings Matter

Parents and players see transparent age ratings and guidance as signals of safety and reliability, reducing hesitation to engage.

Parental Controls Must Be Simple

Parents want easy-to-use dashboards for spend, chat, and playtime. Complexity reduces uptake and weakens safeguards.

Distrust of In-Game Ads

Kids voiced scepticism toward in-game ads, often questioning whether they were misleading or safe. This reinforces the need for transparency and ad-free or trusted brand integrations.

Safer with Trusted Friends

Children feel safer and more comfortable playing with friends they know rather than strangers online.

Chaos Can Be Fun (in Context)

Chaotic behaviour and pranks are tolerated if they're clearly part of the expected tone of the game (e.g. slapstick mechanics).

Cooperative Play Builds Resilience

Playing together helps kids practice emotional regulation and improves tolerance when things go wrong.

Predictable Rules Reassure

Younger players prefer predictable rules, consistent enforcement, and visible consequences for bad behaviour. Players also expect protective mechanisms to be clearly visible and active.

Thematic Findings

5. Platforms, Tools & Discovery

Prototyping Is Faster Than Expected

Modern engine templates and pre-built assets reduce time and cost for early vertical slices, lowering the bar to test multiple game play loops quickly.

Where & How Kids Discover Games

Survey and interviews show friends/siblings and YouTube/streamers top the list, with interviews also highlighting YouTube and Roblox as common discovery routes. Implication: design for watch-and-share moments. Discoverability is limited until the game reaches 1000 plays on Roblox.

Platform as a Research Variable

Notes highlighted trade-offs between creator platforms (speed, built-in discovery) and PC/Steam (wishlist, later validation). Both should remain in play for testing.

Playable Demos Beat Trailers

Short, free-to-play demos sparks more interest than cinematic trailers, giving players a direct feel for mechanics.

Visuals Drive Discovery

Game visuals were a key factor in discovery and first impressions, often guiding whether a game was explored further, but overall fidelity in game wasn't high on the list.

Offline Mode Adds Safety

Parents and kids liked the option to play without being online, seeing it as safer and less distracting.

Download Size Shapes Decisions

Large file sizes were noted as a barrier, with lighter downloads favoured for accessibility and quick trial.

Streamers Sell Games

Watching streamer game play was identified as a powerful driver of downloads and purchases, reinforcing creator influence.

Mobile & Console Are Top Choices

Survey data pointed to mobile and console as preferred play devices, ahead of PC for younger audiences.

Peer Discovery Builds Momentum

Shared discovery with peers — learning about a game from friends — strongly boosted interest and likelihood to try.

Thematic Findings

Miroboard Cluster Examples



Thematic Findings

6. Mission-aligned Messaging & Charity Focus

Value Perception Shifts with Charity

Parents justified purchases more readily when linked to causes their family cared about. Charitable framing increased both monetary value (spend is “worth it”) and educational/moral value (games seen as better influences).

Demographic Nuances

Girls were more open to values-led games than boys. Parents were more likely to justify spending when a charity was involved. Parents also favoured school-linked charity activity as a safe, trusted route.

Trust & Transparency Are Essential

Parents and players want to see where money goes, while charities require brand-safe framing and involvement in content design. Transparency builds credibility and long-term trust.

Microgiving Best Fit

Smaller, bite-sized donations were seen as more impactful and approachable, making giving feel easy rather than a barrier.

Animal Charities Resonate Strongest

Animal causes were the most effective motivator across all age groups. Stories about animals, foster empathy and emotional connection.

Don't Overteach Values

Kids respond better when allowed to explore empathy and values through play rather than through teachable moments or lessons.

Framing Donations as Play

When giving is presented as perks for bonus missions, story packs or quests, players see it as part of the fun. Mascots and emotional framing further boost intent to purchase.

Purpose Builds Loyalty

Values-led missions create stronger brand loyalty. Parents viewed games linked to causes as a better influence, reinforcing empathy, awareness and kindness.

Meaning Over Money

Younger players seek meaning and purpose in play more than financial gain. They want donating to be “doing good” rather than having to make extra effort, making it seamless.

Authentic Charity Missions

Charity-driven content must feel authentic, not forced. Teens in particular were sceptical of mechanics that appeared bolted-on or manipulative.

Real-World Impact Matters

Players and parents alike value seeing tangible outcomes — charts, updates, or thank-yous that make their contribution visible and meaningful.

Technical Considerations & Feasibility

Our research uncovered several technical challenges we need to consider in the next phase. Below are a highlight of themes which appeared throughout the data across surveys and interviews. With the evolving landscape of gaming now requiring age verification to access mature content in the UK, it certainly has us rethinking our assumptions about launching our games on platforms like Steam and Roblox. None of the technical barriers are beyond scope or capabilities, but for our first product we need to consider which of the below are attainable.

Donation Perks

Extra content in the form of themed seasonal missions not available in standard games. Cosmetic skins and items associated with causes we support, to ensure there is a recognition and awareness raised for each cause or campaign. Avoid in-game donations, provide clear instructions to parents to evaluate enjoyment and moderation of child's in-game activity.

Accessibility from the Start

Open to a broad player base with deaf and motor restrictive game play through a wide range of input devices. Treating accessibility as a major selling point not a bolt-on, but part of the game mechanics. Cognitive load balancing to ensure neurodivergent or players with mental health difficulties have a comfortable experience, without the overwhelm of fast paced decisions.

Leaderboards

Avoid creating experiences where competition is the primary focus. Build trust and brand loyalty through fun games first. Competitive games can bring toxic energy.

Consent & Control

Giving/Donations must be optional and not Pay to Play/Progress. Donations need to provide a visual 'status' reward only and not be advantageous to players. Settings for game play provide optimum variability in game play speed, difficulty and input device choices, as well as sound, onscreen helpers and time to regroup in play.

Platform Rethink

Research highlights that Roblox/YouTube are better early touchpoints than Steam for this audience (plus Online Safety compliance pressure on Steam). This keeps platforms as a variable to test. Recent industry news has impacted our initial next steps. Further information has been provided in the next steps section.

Community & Online Safety

Gradual introduction of communication methods with other players through built trust. Emotes, Friend & Family closed invites, only introduce in game chat in moderated live service events (Not part of main games feature)

Market Considerations & Feasibility

Consumer Trends

The children's gaming market in 2025 is shaped by rapid technological shifts, evolving household behaviours, and changing expectations around value, creativity, and social responsibility. For under-16s, gaming is an expressive, creative, and increasingly financialised environment. These shifts offer opportunities for new models of play, particularly those aligned with values-led engagement, family participation, and digital donations.

Gaming as an Ever-Evolving Landscape

Gaming trends among younger audiences are highly dynamic, with discovery driven by social media, influencer culture, and community platforms rather than traditional advertising. Reports from Reinout te Brake (LinkedIn, 2025) emphasise that game discovery now starts with play itself, with players expecting hands-on demos, streamer endorsements, and community validation before committing to a title. This has implications for how games aimed at children must be launched and tested, with teaser trailers, influencer integration, and community participation seen as critical touchpoints.

Devices, Platforms & Access

Contrary to assumptions that mobile dominates, console gaming is resurging among Gen Alpha, with 69% of US pre-teens now reporting regular console play—outpacing older demographics (Statista, 2024). This resurgence has also driven growth in accessories such as controllers, VR headsets, and streaming gear, reflecting the blending of play and content creation. Families report gaming together on consoles, with 82% of parents playing alongside children.

At the same time, cross-platform access remains critical, as children expect to move fluidly between mobile, console, and PC. Games that restrict to one device risk exclusion from friendship networks where shared play is the norm.

**“Yeah, it’s all free [Yandex Gaming Platform].
There are just adverts. You can pay to
remove the adverts and get extra rewards,
but I never do. It’s a bit of a waste of money.”**

Interview Participant

Market Considerations & Feasibility

Influence of Social Media and Discovery

Children and teens now discover games via TikTok, YouTube, and streamers, with micro-influencers swaying preferences too. Nearly half of under-16s trust influencer recommendations as much as those from family (Ofcom Children's Media Literacy Report, 2024). Game discovery is participatory—linked to watching, sharing, and streaming, not just playing. This creates pressure for studios to design and generate content that is as watchable as it is playable.

Social & Creative Engagement

Research consistently shows that young players value social connection and creativity above graphics or fidelity. Platforms like Roblox and Minecraft dominate because they empower user-generated content, collaboration, and ongoing creative projects. Children report that the friendships, role-playing, and shared experiences within these platforms matter more than technical quality, echoing Deloitte's findings that Gen Z and Gen Alpha seek adaptive, personalised experiences.

Community as currency: Young gamers want to belong to groups and communities that extend beyond the game.

User-generated content: Players expect tools to build, share, and express identity.

Emotional engagement: Fun, humour, and small achievements resonate strongly, especially with tweens.

Values, Safety, and Parental Expectations

Parents remain concerned about online safety, screen time, and spending controls. Successful child-friendly games address these concerns through:

- Parental dashboards (spending, chat, time controls).
- Age-gating and behavioural AI filters.
- Inclusive design, offering diverse representation and accessible options.

Alongside this, values-led content is rising in visibility. From climate awareness to empathy training, games are expected to model positive citizenship. Our research shows that children are open to games with humour, explorative chaos, and fun—but that purposeful elements make experiences “stickier” and more meaningful, especially when tied to real-world causes.



Market Considerations & Feasibility

Spending & Microtransactions

Spending habits among under-16s are firmly digital-first:

- UK data shows average monthly in-game spending of £12 per child, rising to £200–£240 annually on premium content.
- 56% of gamers are willing to pay premiums for skins, items, or exclusive content—seen as digital status symbols.
- Subscriptions such as Roblox Premium or Fortnite Crew are normalising recurring payments, shaping early consumer expectations around digital value.

These patterns reinforce the need to design microtransaction or marketplace models that are parent-approved, transparent, and aligned with fair and equitable exchange of value.

Digital Donations & Purpose-Driven Play

The charitable giving landscape has shifted decisively toward digital:

- 48% of donations are now digital, with websites (78%) and debit/credit cards (68%) dominating.
- Trust and transparency remain challenges—32% of donors cite lack of trust as a barrier, while 27% cite lack of clarity on impact or where their money is going.
- Players and parents alike respond positively when donations are embedded seamlessly into the experience rather than added as “bolt-on” extras.

Our research confirmed that animal causes rank highest in empathy and intergenerational appeal, with parents and children both preferring charity links to feel direct, visible, and purposeful.

“Well, I feel really happy when I give to charity because I feel like I did something special.”

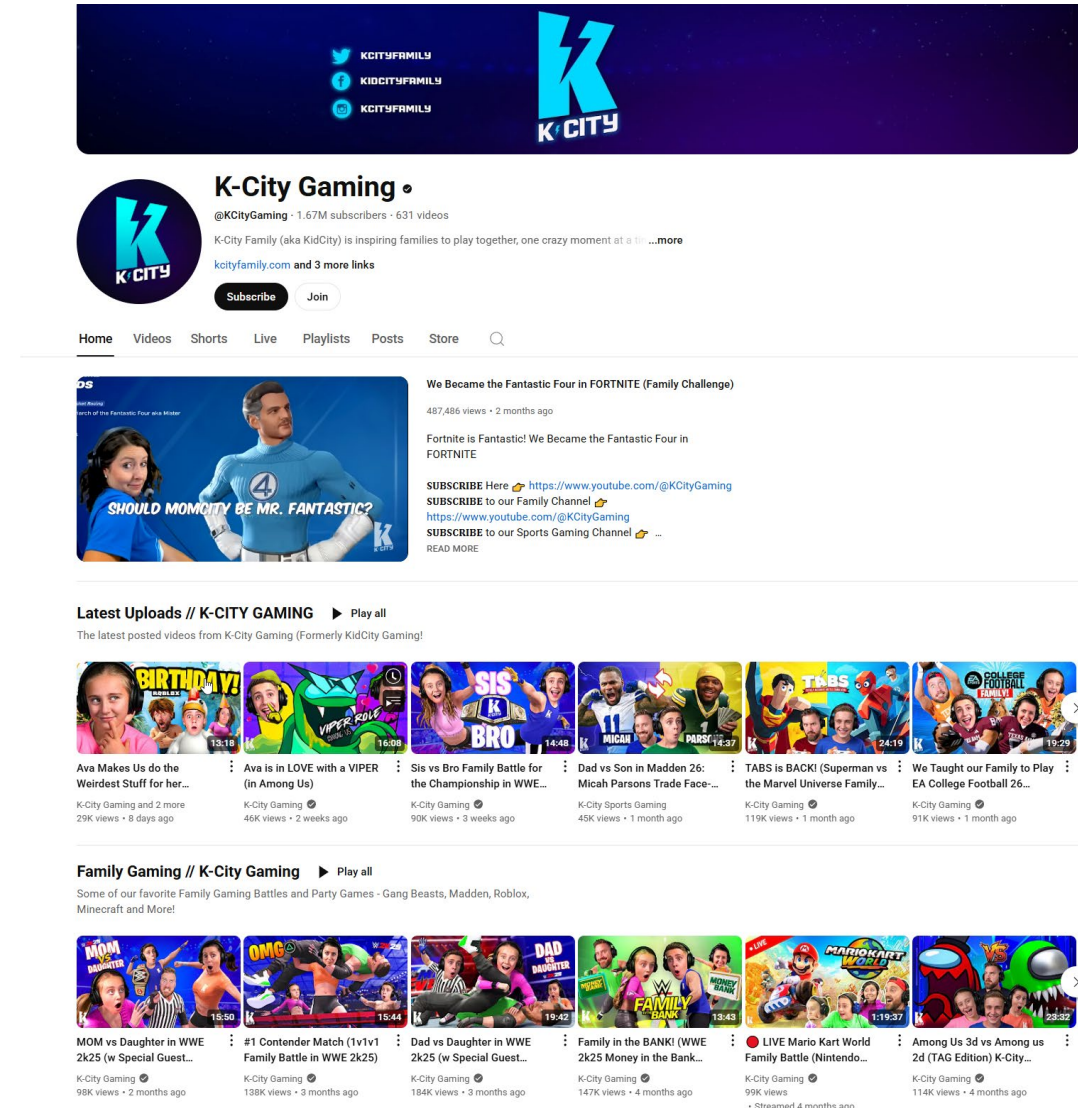
Interview Participant

Market Considerations & Feasibility

Key Takeaways for Feasibility

- The children's gaming market is highly social, creative, and values-led, demanding games that act as platforms rather than one-off products.
- Spending is already habitual among children, but expectations of transparency and trust, especially from parents, create an opening for donation-integrated models.
- Discovery and engagement are dominated by influencer ecosystems and community-led validation, requiring early, organic and authentic participation strategies.
- Purpose-driven play, particularly around animals and conservation, aligns strongly with intergenerational trust and appeal.
- Families increasingly game together on consoles and cross-platform titles, making interoperability and inclusivity essential design considerations.

Together, these trends reinforce that the children's gaming market is open to experiences that blend fun, creativity, and real-world impact. Hangry Animals' research, aligned with industry data from ISFE, Ofcom, Deloitte, Statista, CAF, and Barclays, suggests a clear appetite for games that allow children to play, spend, and donate in ways that feel meaningful, safe, and socially connected.



K-City Gaming (formerly KidCity) — a family-friendly channel sharing game play, live streams and fun challenges. The rebrand reflects the family's growth and adapting to market trends with a new era of content.

[K-City Gaming \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Market Considerations & Feasibility

Competitive Analysis

The “play-for-impact” category exists and is growing. Our positioning leans character-first and story-driven, with family-aware design and transparent per-purchase prompts. That complements macro impact platforms rather than competing with them, and suggests partnership routes and clear differentiators for messaging.

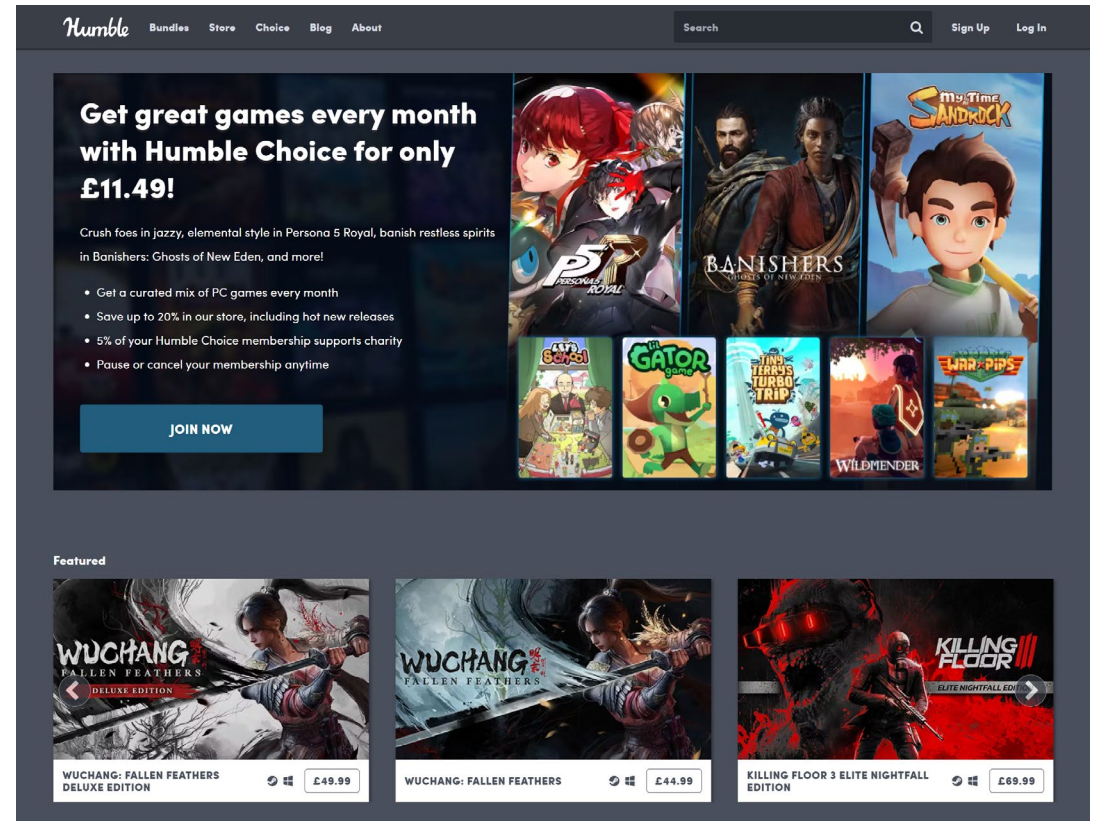
During our interviews and event attendance stage of the research, we uncovered several platforms promoting cheap bundles of popular games in exchange for an optional percentage of purchase revenue being donated to the buyer's chosen charity or foundation.

Humble Bundle

Humble Bundle has a long history of success in gaining heavily discounted bundles of impressive game titles from developers to offer as amazing deals on its website. Humble Bundle has raised over \$257 Million for charities since its formation in 2010. Customers have the option to select a percentage of the sale to a chosen charitable cause. The company came under pressure for attempting to impose a 15% cap on the charitable donation per sale, which faced public opposition.

100% to Charity

The platform sometimes offers 100% to charity deals as occasional incentives, but these are few and far between as there are still licensing, staff, infrastructure and payment processor fees to be accounted for prior to any donations being given to its charity partners. Looking at platforms like Humble Bundle it's clear to see they are not developing their out impact driven IP, and are reliant on third party title's charitable appetite to drive sales.



www.humblebundle.com

Market Considerations & Feasibility

Planet Play

Another interesting development in the sustainability space, was our conversation with Felix Bradshaw from PlanetPlay; a gaming store recognised by the United Nations Development Programme for its work on in game surveys inviting players to share how gaming can support climate action and nature protection. Planet Play works directly with studios to retrofit calls to actions in game titles, as a means of gathering valuable insights in gamers opinions towards climate change. They also operate in a similar way to Humble Bundle but are more focused on sustainability over a broader remit of charitable causes. PlanetPlay offers games at a discounted rate, but they're bigger offering is that of cosmetics (skins, weapons, vehicles & items) for well known gaming titles, that are exclusive to climate change campaigns or good causes.

Loyalty scheme

The platform has a visible loyalty system and information on how many trees are planted from each game or item purchased. What's interesting about PlanetPlay is working with studios, it seems most of the bigger titles are reluctant to integrate any API or tech they are not familiar with, from a security perspective, so surveys or any in-game call to action for good causes, is likely to take hold, but newer titles and smaller studios are more open to this type of collaborative approach.

DLC's

The DLC's (Downloadable Content) packs are a lower barrier to entry for a younger player base, but visibility of the platform and the causes they support is more likely to come from a parent or guardian, due to the financial requirements and now in the UK, age verification steps introduced into law. The opportunity for us here, is likely a collaboration in favour of a competitive strategy, to which Planet Play are seemingly open to support in the near future.

The screenshot shows the Planet Play website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Planet Play logo, a search bar, and links to Store, Hub, and a shopping cart. The main feature is the 'Hell is Us' game page, which includes a large image of a character in a dark, atmospheric setting. The game title 'HELL IS US' is prominently displayed. Below the title, there's a 'Pre-Purchase' button and the price '44.99 GBP'. A small impact icon indicates '7.8 Trees saved'. Below the main image, there's a row of smaller game thumbnails. A 'Labor Day Sale' banner is visible below the main game page, featuring a 25% off storewide sale from August 29th to September 1st. The banner includes a coupon code 'LABORDAY25'. Below the banner, there's a row of four game cards: 'Balatro' (11.11 GBP, 1.4 trees), 'Ready or Not' (44.99 GBP, 6.7 trees), 'Clair Obscur: Expedition 33' (41.99 GBP, 7.2 trees), and 'WUCHANG: Fallen Feathers' (44.99 GBP, 10 trees). Each card shows the game title, price, and the number of trees saved.

Risks & Challenges

Safeguarding/Compliance

Avoid eroding trust through misuse of safeguarding practices. Seek parent review, test often before any open public beta testing takes place.

Regulatory & Compliance Issues

Challenges with laws around digital giving when engaging with tweens. Parent/Guardian oversight of purchases required, leading us to avoid in-game monetisation completely as it's too risky considering our target demographic. Gift Cards, Prepaid cards, virtual tokens and DLC's outside of the core game, are the most likely options available to us.

Technical Implementation

Challenges in integrating blockchain or other tracking tech. There is an opportunity through use of blockchain technology to anonymise the player activity, without the risk of identifying a player by name or location. The blockchain is still in its infancy and any narrative on socials associated with the project utilising 'crypto' style tech, brings mixed reactions and risks tarnishing the brand built for a safer younger audience. As the tech matures, and becomes more of a commonplace component in a modern games 'tech stack' we may reconsider its usage.

Monetisation Balance

Striking the right balance between revenue and ethical fundraising, and where the donation prompts appear within our platform is nuanced.

Spending

In Game spending on average is below £10 each time. Ensure focus is on experiences and not reliant on in game spending for core revenue. Parents are also confused by in-game currencies, therefore education or better communication is needed, or avoid currency altogether. Research also shows hesitation for experiences whether nudges to donate in-game are ethical or even compliant with regulation.

Education & Knowledge Base

Parents that aren't technically minded or up to speed with gaming trends, platforms and digital payments interfaces may avoid engaging with or introducing experiences to their children if the experience is over complex and the user experience misleading. Concern on how safe the platform may be also brings into question whether their money is safe on newly introduced platforms.

Scalability Issues

Ensuring infrastructure can support growth and a large user base. Growth comes with expenses and whatever platforms we opt to embrace, our ability to maintain fast load times, database connectivity that is persistent, and a support service to deal with issues quickly will require a technical strategy beyond our current staffing scope.

Runway

Budget, time, lack of funding and investment opportunities are all stalling factors. The ability to stay lean and develop in stages to showcase vertical slices, proven prototype tests with audiences is key to securing interest and further investment from third parties.

Risks & Challenges

Impact Ambiguity

Ensure the donation feature is clearly linked to an outcome or good cause is visible for each player in the game dashboard. Doing so, will increase the willingness to donate and for parents to give consent to give more over time. Verifiable outcomes are a must

Charity Partnerships

Finding the right partners who align with the mission and are already established, but not the key players i.e. WWF. It is important to us that we foster long term relationships with charities that are open to exploring gaming as an alternative revenue stream with us, with a willingness to try and learn from our experiments. Charities that also truly need our support, who fit into our £1-2m annual turnover or less as a threshold to engage.

Content & Messaging

Communicating impact clearly to players and donors is paramount. Any mishaps in donation tracking, confusion around percentages given, will cause issues in a public forum, it's important we devise a clear agreement for all parties involved to follow.

Marketing

Our products and games need to be marketed at parents for trust and advocacy alongside the players (children). Payer and Player strategies will be required to find the sweet spot. Trust, value for money, visibility of good causes for Parents, fun, social appeal, entertainment games for tweens.

Stagnation

The longer a game takes to release, the greater the missed opportunity to capture a trend or the attention of an audience open to new and exciting experiences. This is also true for the team developing the game, stagnation affects us internally too.

Platform Options

Opting for a single platform for launch has benefits from a budgeting standpoint, but risks exposure and cloning of our games onto other platforms. Devising a simultaneous launch strategy may need to be considered to safeguard young players from scam copy-cat games as well as protecting our own Intellectual Property. There are new and upcoming platforms such as Gliffy that take 0% revenue share in our sales, which is a tempting move compared to Apple, Google, Steam who each command a handsome 30% of sale revenue.

Platform Fit & Visibility

Research shows console and mobile to be the most popular, but web based experiences and free to play platforms have a presence. PC/Steam's rise in popularity paired with safer ways to browse due to online safety act/age verification rules implemented recently will have an impact on strategic fit for launch.

Risks & Challenges

Genre/Tone

Our research has uncovered that cosy games or simulator style games are resonating with our target audience. But we should explore light action or RPG collectorthons too.

Community Engagement

Our own social channels show that community does pay back, but requires sustained effort to maintain engagement over time. Communication cadence is a complex strategy with multiple verticals involved. In order to maintain organic relationship with a user base, we must adapt an influencer/ambassador led strategy to retain attention in the products and brand moving forward.

Community Safety

With the UK Online Safety Act now part of UK Law, platform providers are bound to protect younger audiences. We're encouraged to hear this, as these guardrails will provide clearer guidance for developers and trust for parents and guardians allowing their children to engage with online games on PC/Steam as well as the big 3 console's Xbox, Playstation and Nintendo. The Safety Act also brings complications and barriers to reaching our core audience through platforms such as Steam.

Online safety laws causing studios to rethink online game modes



Video game developers are reconsidering in-game features as a result of new online safety laws, according to a top law firm.

In this week's edition of *The Game Business Show*, Wiggin senior associate Isabel Davies talks about the impact of the UK's Online Safety Act which is designed to protect users, particularly children, from online harms.

These include 'illegal harms', which are things like terrorism, child sex abuse material and so on. And legal harms, things like pornography, which are deemed harmful to children.

www.thegamebusiness.com/p/developers-are-holding-back-game

Obstacles We Encountered

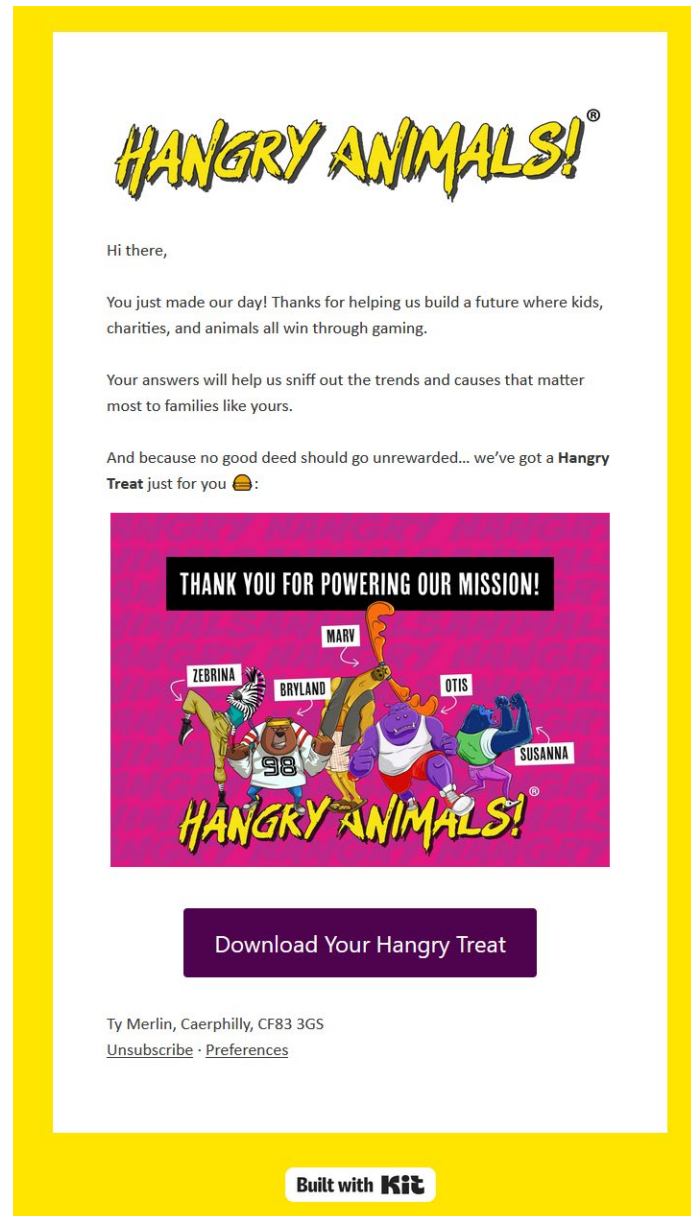
Dependencies on external collaborators (e.g. consultants, mentors, or charity partners) sometimes created bottlenecks when responses or deliverables took longer than expected.

Interview recruitment was delayed due to the availability of both parent and child, even during the Summer holidays.

We required a mailing app to collect emails and send out relevant correspondence i.e. invites, thank you's. This was a new process for us, and therefore we required additional support in order to set it up. We used Kit, and although there were no issues with the set up. The app brought about many issues. Some due to lack of knowledge and experience in using the app, but mainly our mailers were highlighted as junk for those who use Outlook. This impacted our interview recruitment, as not everyone would have seen the email. We reached out to those who showed an interest in being interviewed with their child via DMs instead.

Other responsibilities and work load impacted aspects of our research.

Addressing outdated copy and visuals on our website prior to sending out survey communications over email and socials, took a significant amount of time and effort to get right, but was a necessity for the narrative we are re-shaping in the project.



A digital thank you card was sent to those that completed the survey and requested it

What We Would Do Differently

- Use a resource calendar early on to spot overlaps or gaps. Be more realistic with timings and expectations on work load.
- Identify external dependencies at the start, and create backup options (e.g. wider freelancer pool, alternative charity contacts, expertise support).
- Budget earlier for essential apps and experienced people to run them as well as alternative travel arrangements if trains or buses are experiencing essential works.
- Use both online and in-person fallback groups.
- Build relationships with multiple specialists in case one becomes unavailable.
- Recognise slower organic growth and allow more time for marketing traction.
- Manage expectations of the user base around the website, by opting for a campaign landing page over complete website overhaul in future.
- Plan any comms, process and apps earlier, and test sooner (i.e. email mailers, surveys)

Conclusion & Feasibility Assessment

Our challenge asked whether we can create equitable gaming that builds habitual social-impact behaviour and delivers positive outcomes for charities and young people. Our data says yes, with caveats: families are open to cause-aligned purchases if approvals are clear and optional; discovery sits with peers and creators; charities like Hope Rescue can co-design authentic content. The big correction is social structure—kids in our sample prefer solo because open multiplayer feels unfair or hostile—so we should design solo-first, add safe, staged social features, and prove value through tiny, comparative prototypes. If parent-approved purchases hold as a habit proxy, and impact reporting stays crystal clear, we have a dependable path to an equitable “gaming that gives” experience.

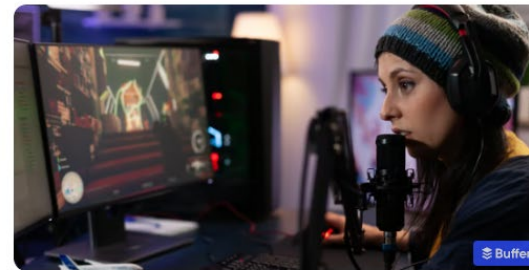
Our Brand Moving Forward

We present as kid-safe, parent-first and charity-respectful. We updated our website and socials to reflect this shift away from earlier, more technical positioning; this was a direct result of running the survey and speaking to parents. Channel tests show parents respond strongly to animal-led narratives and helpful explainers.

We didn't anticipate that parents would sign up to our newsletter, we gained an additional 21 subscribers - which is half of those who completed our parent/guardian survey. This has prompted us to change our content in the newsletter to suit this new audience. Previously it was focused on game dev, NFTs and Web3.

Since updating the website and creating new socials, our brand guidelines need to be updated. We also introduced a new colour palette.

The H.A.M - Hangry Animals Magazine



Are Streamers the New Brand Ambassadors?

About ten years ago, something quietly shifted in children's entertainment. A new type of "celebrity" appeared - not on Saturday morning TV, but on Twitch. By the mid-2010s, platforms like Twitch an...

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The H.A.M - Hangry Animals Magazine

Written by  Hangry Animals and 1 other

Conclusion & Feasibility Assessment

Recommendations for Game Development, Accessibility and Donation Mechanics

With our research analysed and themes/trends identified, these are the specific approaches we would take to implement these findings into a playable MVP to playtest directly with our target audience.

Solo Play

Single player first with offline cooperative play later. Examples to explore: ghost runs, shared community meters, friend-only help tokens—avoids public-server risks while still enabling “togetherness.”

Donation Flow

Small donations for items, skins, bonus levels, parent receives receipt of purchases, spending caps; pair every sale/transaction with a clear, verifiable outcome (e.g., “£X funds Y at [partner]”). Make parent-approved purchases the default setting. Donations need to be optional not forced.

Testing

Compare performance of two vertical slices: a cosy simulation game inspired by Hope Rescue vs an action adventure challenge. Measure engagement and feedback head-to-head. Game flow needs to be short, satisfying and fun to play.

Platform as Variable

Test one vertical slice on a creator platform such as Roblox (for discovery) and on PC such as Steam (for wishlists/followers) before choosing a path. Brand discovery will be gradual.

Accessibility & Safety by Default

Staged community features (no open chat → emotes → limited friends), AADC (Age Appropriate Design Code) aware UX, and low cognitive load. Safety-by-design isn’t optional (AADC + OSA). When user to user service is likely to be accessed by children, stricter regulations exist for us to follow. Privacy and security is the highest priority for any online accessed features, age-appropriate UX, parental reporting tools, and tiered access to community features that place the player and parent/guardian in control.

Rapid Prototyping

Modern game engine templates/assets mean we can test more mvp game loops, faster and cheaper than expected — encouraging iterative design prototyping rather than committing to launching too early and failing.

Charitable Giving (app stores)

Donations inside larger platforms are constrained: Apple supports donations for approved nonprofits via Apple Pay; on Google Play, policies around donations and Families compliance apply. Structuring support for charities will be easier off platform via membership/access passes to start.

Micro-giving and proof of impact

Position giving as optional, bite-sized and unlocks earned (quests, bonus packs), with fast “you did this” feedback (thank-you, progress bar, shareable badge, visible social status for donating).

Conclusion & Feasibility Assessment

Recommendations for Game Development, Accessibility and Donation Mechanics

Age Ratings & Expectations

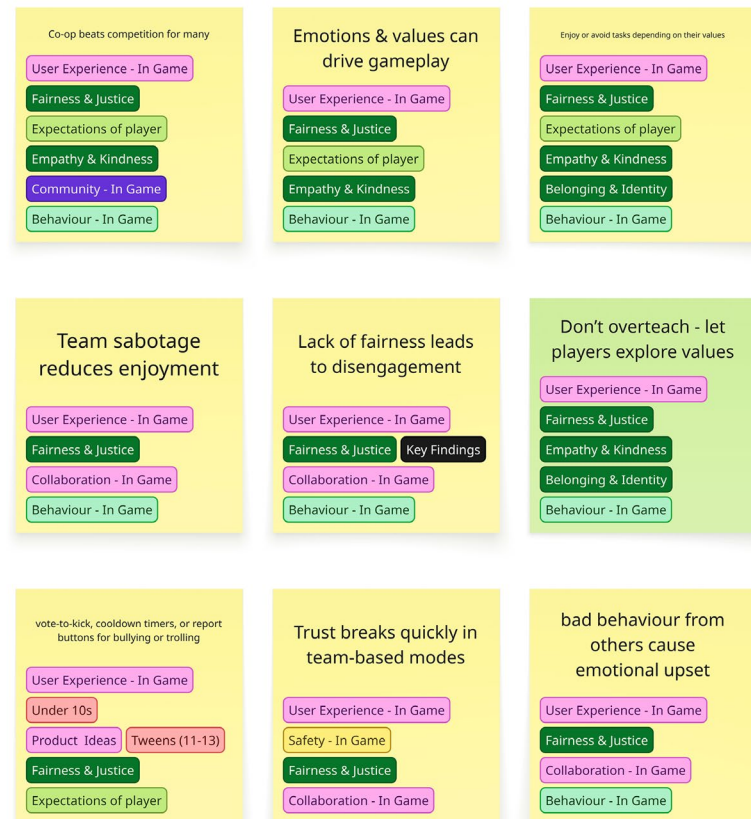
Plan PEGI at concept stage; ratings/labels are a trust signal for parents and interact with console parental controls. Watch the evolving guidance around gambling-like mechanics. Maintain wholesome, family friendly and comedic feel through our communication channels.

Community Stewardship

Start with offline or local friends-only modes; layer public features later with easy settings, reporting and consistent enforcement of safety rules. This reduces moderation overhead and aligns with safety codes.

Payments & Compliance

When accepting donations, consider donating agreed proportion of sales directly to a registered charity in the sales transaction with attribution to the business. If selling charity-aligned content, keep the offer crystal-clear ("X% of this item funds Y, reported monthly").



Conclusion & Feasibility Assessment

Marketing Concepts

Initial ideas and approaches we could consider based on our discoveries.

Trust Building

Show where and how donations are being spent

Make “where it goes” obvious i.e. impact charts, updates, wins. Social content and newsletter, transparency is a differentiator.

Parent-proof landing + explainer

A single, parent-first page with a 60-sec video on “how donations work,” sample receipts, and caps/controls.

Socials & Engagement

Mini surveys over time

Create a series of micro-questions to keep a rolling feedback loop in the newsletter

TikTok UGC prompt pack

Release 6 pre-made CapCut templates for followers to share their gaming experiences such as “My best delivery”, “Chaos clip”, “Before/after rescue”. Feature the best clips weekly.

“Good News Friday” reels

Weekly 20 sec verticals spotlighting the impact gamers are having on charities we/they support: “12 vaccinations funded this week, thanks, Hangrys!”. Crosspost LinkedIn for partner credibility.

Discovery/Platforms

Design for discovery

YouTube/creator-friendly clips; “watch-and-share” moments.

Platform as a research variable

Use creator-first platforms for fast audience signal, and PC/Steam for wishlist validation. Track wishlist cadence during events (festivals, demos) rather than only totals.

Playable demos

Our audience prefers playable demos over watching ads. Provide short, free slices to encourage game play on relevant platforms. Gather feedback, always.

Steam wishlist magnets

Offer a free digital asset redeemable at purchase for anyone who wishlisted and joined the newsletter before X date.

Marketing Beats (Steam)

Anchor marketing to beats: Coming Soon page → demo drop → game genre festival/Next Fest participation → “last call to wishlist” push → launch sale window.

Conclusion & Feasibility Assessment

Marketing Concepts

Collabs/Partners

Influencer activity must be clearly labelled

If we collaborate with creators, disclosures must be obvious (CAP/ASA rules) and even more so when content is likely to reach under-12s.

Creator-first launch channels

Partner with micro creators across three niches (i.e. family gaming, cozy/sim, animal/pet rescue). Give each a unique quest code that unlocks a digital asset for their viewers when the creator hits a donation milestone.

“Watch-to-Unlock” moments

Time-limited streams where watching 15+ minutes drops a free digital asset; combine with a visible charity progress bar overlay.

Tracking

Simple KPI metrics

Track: wishlists/day, email sign-ups/day, demo→wishlist %, CTR on “impact” creatives, creator code redemptions, and newsletter reply rate to the one-question survey/poll each publication.

Paid Advertising that respects safety

Paid ads that target adults (25–45) with interests in animals/family gaming. Test three creatives: game physics, donation impact, creator testimonial. Optimise for email sign-ups/wishlists not direct sales. A/B test different content, visuals and messaging for each social platform and target market to ensure views, likes maintain steady growth.

Events & PR

Brand and Product Awareness

Use Impact ‘Indie Games Expo’, style events to gather wishlists/emails and observe interest in the game(s). Have physical presence of team and game at events.

Panels, Speaker and Livestreams

Apply to relevant panels, speaker slots and livestream events (Impact ‘Indie Games Expo’, charity tech meetups, Twitter spaces).

Playable demo roadshow

Take a polished demo to school fairs, libraries, scout groups. Pair with “offline mode” kiosks and a QR to wishlist; collect parent emails with a prize draw.

Game

Genre matters

Surveys indicate casual/adventure games are more open to donate-linked play than other genres. Build a vertical slice where we can validate our messaging surrounding the user flow with parents and kids combined, financial decision makers and wish fulfillment of the child.

VIP day-one access

Handpick X superfans (newsletter + Discord) for a 24-hour early access “Rescue Rally.” Capture quotes/clips for launch day.

Creator classroom packs

For teachers/after-school clubs: a “30min of kindness” game activity using our demo, plus take-home codes and digital gift packs for families.

Conclusion & Feasibility Assessment

Marketing Concepts

Animals/Charity

Animal-led narratives

People love animals and humour, and games with animal stories or games where caring for animals is part of the challenge, are popular. Using animal-centric themes, visuals and social content segmented by channel for market testing.

Animal Shelter co-marketing kits

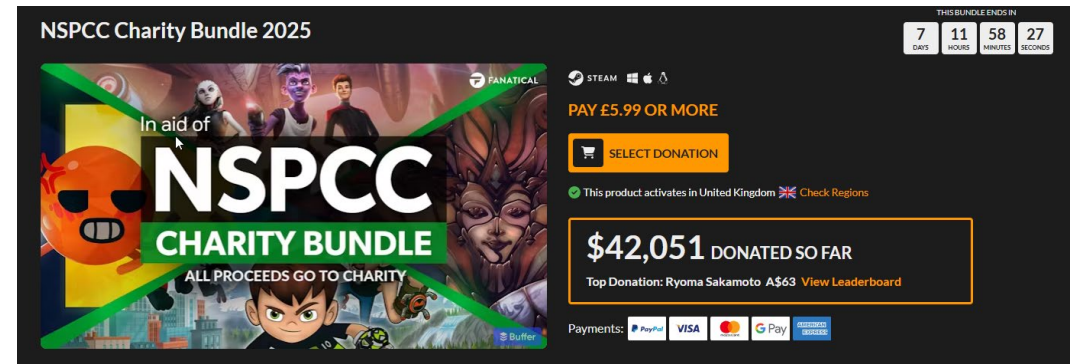
Provide partner shelters with plug-and-play social posts, a 20-sec vertical trailer, and tracked links so they can rally their supporters to wishlist/download.

Charity bundle weekends

Coordinate “Matched DLC Weekends” where a sponsor or partner matches community DLC donations up to a cap; run a real-time counter. Additional top up donations when milestones are reached.

Retail & local tie-ins

Pet shops/vets/rescue centres display QR codes (“Save a shelter dog while you play”). Offer in-store digital asset codes; track footfall and conversion.



Charity bundle social examples

How the Seed R&D Shaped How We Work

Project Management

We formalised ClickUp as our source of tasks, project timelines and knowledge capture.

Knowledge Capture

Due to previous experiences of trying to remember what we did, processes, events etc last minute, we were aware that we needed to document reflections and observations within a decent time frame. This resulted in creating and updating our journals, posting monthly roundups on LinkedIn and ensuring we set time aside each week to update ClickUp and journals as needed. The journals included debrief notes after interviews, events and charity visits.

They helped us to reflect on the experience, document the experience and utilise the content for socials, this report and the newsletter. This information was also built over time, providing us with a record of these experiences as they occur.

Alongside the journals, we have created topic sections i.e. game psychology, monetisation for us to update either after events, talks, meetings or if we have found a source of research that will influence the project in some shape or form.

We have an extensive spreadsheet of weblinks of articles and PDF reports that we continue to update when we find relevant information that's influential to our project, and provides evidence for future funding and investment applications.

Game Development

Prototyping has changed since being on this journey. Identifying genres, user surveys to gather trends, metrics on platform sales by genre, age ranges is now helping to steer our product market fit much better. Follow the data, build for the audience, and test, test, test.

Speaking to other game studios and developers and immersing ourselves in local developer communities has truly enabled us to find our feet creatively. Seeing what other studios and indie developers are building, fuels us. Sharing the experience in a supportive community is rewarding. Gaining insights at events and game jams, with rapid development cycles has shown what is possible with an idea when we execute it quickly to see what works.

How we approach what platform we decide to launch on, is now an even bigger consideration with the advent of the UK Online Safety Act imposing Age Verification rules onto the platforms themselves. It opens up platforms that contain mature content not suitable for younger eyes, as options to us, due to the hefty fines for non compliance in protecting younger players online. PC, Console, Mobile/Hybrid or Web presents a complex challenge. But the research has helped us narrow down our choices considerably through interviews, industry developments and policy changes. We're now more confident in a launch strategy backed by data that's been validated by the most important factor, our audience.

How the Seed R&D Shaped How We Work

Newsletter

Posting the survey on LinkedIn and Facebook provided us with new subscribers. But they are a different audience to what we had. Our subscribers initially consisted mostly of game devs, web2-3 enthusiasts and supporters that have been with us from day 1. Since the new subscribers, we have now adapted our newsletter content to be more parent-inclusive. Topics now include industry insights that are relevant to what we're building, the online safety act, what platforms are keeping kids safe online, gaming for good...and more. Ceri is now writing one newsletter a month in order to provide a different perspective and topics. Prior to this project, the newsletter was written reactively rather than strategically.

We experienced insights into email comms and automation, potentially something we look into when we have the budget. The survey was a great way to capture new subscribers, however our email comms needs more work, and may require a paid subscription to the app and a marketing strategy expert to provide suitable solutions.

Although we use Paragraph.com for our newsletter and subscribers, we recognise that it doesn't provide as much data as other platforms like Substack. We will be adding Google analytics to the Paragraph dashboard so that we can find out a more detailed open rate, discovery, and what our readers are interested in and adapt accordingly.

The reason we use Paragraph is that fans of Hangry Animals and digital collectors can 'collect' a newsletter of their choice. We can reward anyone who collects our newsletters in the future via means of discounts on merch, exclusive 1 of 1 digital collections or access to events. Mechanics like this allow us to truly reward the most loyal of fan bases. The downside is that Paragraph is very niche and not as popular as Substack. We will be considering having a strategy for Substack and building an audience there. We do have a profile on Medium, but our audience is very small.

Socials & Visibility

In order to share the survey to a wider audience, our socials required new content. We signed up to SocialBee, which provided us the option to create many posts very quickly for the relevant platforms. It's saved us a lot of time and attention. And we will continue using it.

We updated our Facebook account, which hadn't been updated in many years. There is still some work to do, and it's very time consuming. However due to this project, our page has been updated with the new brand and artwork, with a number of posts.

LinkedIn has been the biggest surprise for us. We created a page in order to have the logo on our profile, but then it became a way for us to post monthly highlights, grow the audience and post content that may not be suitable for our personal profiles.

We are committed to building in public when it's appropriate with monthly "Hangry Highlights," retrospectives, and sharing early to learn early.

We celebrate small wins and document what changed our mind, not just what confirmed it.



Example artwork created for social posts

How the Seed R&D Shaped How We Work

Networking

Realised the importance of turning up - whether it's attending events or helping others, and giving back the same way others have helped us. When it's two of you working from home, it's easy to forget there's a world outside.

Increased the number of events we attend, as each event has provided us with either a strong connection, conversations that have made an impact or led us to new discoveries and people.

This project reminded us that we can't do it all ourselves and there are many experts that are willing to provide support. When we have the funds, bringing these experts on board to aid in the project will have a massive positive impact not only on the project itself, but on our wellbeing.

It also reminded us that we need to continue building new relationships and maintain the ones we have. Not only are we learning from others, we're being introduced to those that can have a positive influence on the project in many different ways.



How the Seed R&D Shaped How We Work

Website & Brand

Prior to sending out the survey, we knew the website required an overhaul. Our main concern was if a parent clicked on the weblink to find out more about Hangry Animals before completing the survey, the website was unclear with content and pages that were bolted on over time.

We utilised the Empathy Map method provided to us by PDR, to determine who the website is for, what information we need to include and how it will need to be delivered (both visually and written).

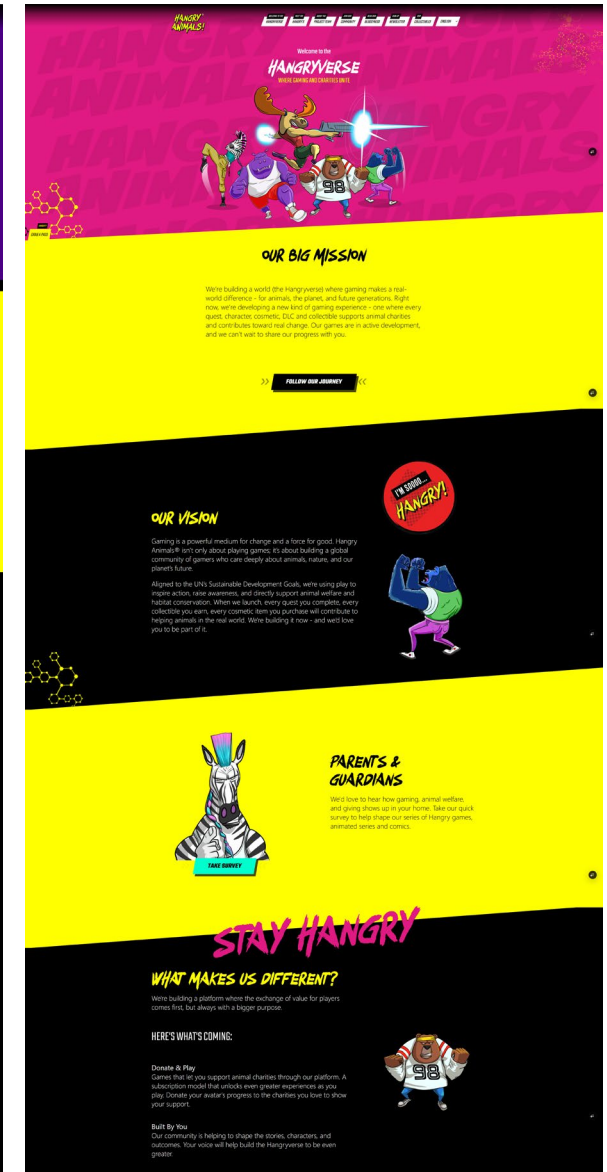
We identified parents, gamers (all ages) and charities/potential collaborators as our main audience. However for the purpose of time, and the survey being released, we decided to focus on parents and gamers.

This resulted in new copy, clearer narrative, consistent pages and brand, and updated privacy terms.

www.hangryanimals.com



Website before starting the seed project



Website after beginning the seed project, but before engaging with parents

Next Steps

1. Stay up to date with AADC/Online Safety Act and observe what platforms like Steam and Roblox are putting in place to protect young players that may affect how we build and market the game(s).
2. Meeting with Alacrity to discuss our findings, commercialisation and monetisation and determine which type of game to progress with.
3. Start posting content on Facebook, Instagram and X again with predominantly evergreen and engagement focused content to continue building the audience.
4. Add Google Analytics to the newsletter platform in order to track open rate and popular topics.
5. Start planning a Substack strategy
6. Add relevant findings from this report to include as part of a pitch deck to investors.
7. Decide on a prototype game to build and test with our community. Put in front of young gamer groups and seek feedback on feel, fun, energy as well as a simulated donate step to gather cadence on user experience.
8. Seek investment or collaborate with Hope Rescue on a kickstarter or campaign to raise capital to develop the game for them.
9. Discussing a potential future partnership with PlanetPlay. Our games, collectibles and experiences being available on their marketplace, as well as potential sponsored assets licensed to other gaming experiences as part of a growing brand awareness strategy.

“It’s an exciting time to be developing the next evolution of games with purpose. We’re gathering valuable insights to build experiences which encourages behaviour change, or at least re-enforces how games can have a positive impact on people and animal welfare.”

*Andrew Minton
Hangry Animals Founder/Director*

Industry Updates

Since writing the initial draft of this report, several industry factors have already impacted the direction we were going to take based on our findings.

Although Roblox was seen as a favourite to find and play games, and therefore a clear winner for us to create and/or advertise on this platform - it's not ideal for new IP.

Roblox now has a growing reputation for copycat games profiteering from unauthorised, near-identical clones of indie developer titles, launched on the platform and reportedly generating millions in revenue per release.

Roblox benefits from these titles financially and therefore protection of new IP is not respected. There are open calls for the CEO of Roblox to resign, due to several high profile cases and issues around safety with the platform, alongside the banning of high profile influencers who brought online groomers to justice by entrapping them in stings conducted off the platform and reported to the authorities. Roblox has a long way to go to earn the trust of our brand, as we represent an audience at a vulnerable stage in their lives.

During this time, Steam did not have any safeguards in place to protect young players, however since the new UK Online Safety Act regulations brought into law in July 2025, Steam are making headway in protecting young players. Over the next few months, we will be analysing the progress and third party reviews to determine if Steam will now be the best option for us to showcase our games, safe in the knowledge that mature content sits away from the eyes of younger players.

Since the draft of our report, Steam have now implemented age verification checks for all accounts in the UK, and require a credit card attached to each active account wishing to access mature content. Steam are deploying these measures in line with the UK Online Safety Act written into Law in July 2025.

Knowing that these protections are being taken seriously and as we monitor the developments, Steam is becoming more of a viable launchpad for our games compared to Roblox. In addition, payment processors like Mastercard and Visa have reportedly been applying a lot of pressure on Steam, triggered via social campaigns surrounding abusive imagery towards women in several game titles, to gatekeep their mature content. Age verification is a requirement for any game or virtual experience launched on Steam which contains content not suitable for younger gamers. This will strengthen trust from a parental perspective to allow their children to navigate the games on the platform freely under sub accounts with filtered content.

[Risks to children playing Roblox 'deeply disturbing', say researchers](#)

[Valve Confirms PayPal Has 'Stopped Processing' Steam Transactions In Some Countries As NSFW Game Row Continues](#)

[Mastercard and Visa face backlash after hundreds of adult games removed from online stores Steam and Itch.io](#)

["We approached payment processors because Steam did not respond" - Australian pressure group Collective Shout claims responsibility for Steam and Itch.io NSFW game removal](#)

Special Thanks

Conducting this research project enabled us to rethink how we approach bringing products to market by validating the need, size of opportunity and whether consumers would pay for these products in the knowledge that a proportion of sales will fund good causes.

We would like to thank the following for having an integral part in this project. With the help of those mentioned below, we were able to gather a variety of insights across the sector, build a series of unbiased questions to gain feedback, learn new processes and gain deeper understandings - all of which will inform our next steps.

PDR

R&D expertise, processes and methodology, connections, project guidance, support

Lucy Heskins, Oh Blimey

Survey & refining questions, unbiased approach, Mailer Building and automations.

Jeff Sheen, Stargazy

Game theory, technical direction, concept validation, development strategy.

Andy Tuite, Alacrity

Business strategy, monetisation, go to market and revenue models.

Media Cymru

Funding and support

Hangry Animals



ALACRITY



HANGRY ANIMALS![®]

COLLABORATIVE GAME PLAY

FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

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