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## Gaming Zeitgeist

Imagine, if you would, a scenario where you find out that your child has been depleting your bank account for some silly costumes in a game they like to play; for analogies I'll go with Fortnite. You approach them and question why they spent the money, and the response you get may fall amongst the lines of "I didn't know I was spending actual money" or "My friends would make fun of me if I didn't." These are but just a couple of the ways FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) in videogames is impacting America, as well as the world. For those uninformed, FOMO is an anxiety spawned from the idea of missing out on various events that may be happening elsewhere. It has an affect on the gaming industry in a number of ways; companies releasing multiple "special editions, releasing games in a series on an annual basis, or simply having friends peer pressure other friends into buying stupid cosmetics because they'd be "basic" otherwise just to name a few. The point remains: FOMO in games captures an American zeitgeist of vulnerable gamers because of hoe the reasons previously stated prey on these gamers. Now allow me to elaborate.

Kicking this off is the annual release of games in a series. Series such as "[Call of Duty](#)" or "[Battlefield](#)" or "[Pokémon](#)" or any of those sports games typically release on a yearly schedule, upgrading the game so players can enjoy a new experience. I shouldn't have to explain how this practice influences FOMO, but just in case: FOMO is influenced by this practice because it forces the player(s) to succumb to temptation; rather than simply enjoying the game they already have, the player will buy the latest version of the game because it's shiny, new, (hopefully) improved from the previous entry, and this way they keep up to snuff with everything. Their friends probably have the new version too, which ties into a reason further down on the paper, so getting the new version will allow them to keep playing with their friends. Many of those who enjoy gaming typically succumb to the annual release of game series, myself included; and I can personally say that I do this genuinely because I don't want to miss out on any

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new experiences I may have in the new games I can explore. Case and point, this is just one of the ways FOMO has influenced the gaming market.

Another way FOMO is through the release of multiple versions or editions of games being launched. To elaborate, sometimes games with enough money and/or effort behind them will come out with multiple editions of the same game just to pry more money out of you. The contents of these editions can range from the type you'd find in the [Madden](#) series (scroll down to compare products), which typically consist of a pass for more paid content among other in-game special items, to the "collector's editions", such as this one for [Cyberpunk 2077](#) (scroll down to product details), that have physical novelty items like figurines and soundtracks. And that's not even getting into pre-order bonuses and multiple special editions. Pre-order bonuses pretty much are how they sound: you buy a game in advance and get special bonuses for buying early. Said bonuses may come out later, they might not; that's up to the developer/publisher of the game. Multiple special editions are a different kind of beast; whereas I went over single special editions that were available pretty much everywhere you can buy the game in question, these special editions are exclusive to a specific retailer and usually have something exclusive about them, such as one retailer having a steel book case and another having a small collectable. All of this is a result of FOMO; whether it's a silly collector's edition or in-game items or the promise of playing early or simply securing a copy, players often pay for these special versions, myself included. Just another way FOMO affects the gaming industry.

One final way I know FOMO affects the gaming market is through microtransactions. If you don't know, microtransactions is when you pay real money for x character/item/service in a game. Whatever your paying for varies by game, but that's the basics of it. The part which FOMO plays in this is how you have players who will drop hundreds of dollars on these microtransactions for such trivial stuff, such as a favorite player in the FIFA games as shown [here](#). If you clicked the link, you probably saw that headline of those kids emptying their parents' bank account, something not uncommon in sports games. FOMO plays

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here because of how the only way to keep up in those games is through spending money to try and get those good characters. You spend because you don't want to be left in the dust. Then you have articles like [this](#), illustrating how normalized microtransactions are to the children who play microtransaction-filled games. If you read the article, you'll see how FOMO affects children gamers; how they don't want to be seen as poor by their friends in school.

Now I can understand that there are some who will brush off my claims as bubkis. Fair enough, everyone's entitled to an opinion as they say. However, I do implore you, whoever may doubt my words, search up some of those stories of children burning their parents' money for in-game goods. They're more common than you may think. As for those who are still with me, you may be thinking to yourself "Alright, what could we (America) do?" Well, we could follow the UK in their endeavor to regulate stuff like this. In summary, the UK has been trying to find and regulate trends in "addictive and harmful" technologies, with videogames being amongst these technologies. Click [here](#) if you're interested, but I believe that, were the U.S. to do something similar to this, stories of children emptying their parents' bank accounts would be much more sparse in the future. Otherwise, I don't see the situation improving much. At least not without some retaliation. To conclude, it is for these reasons, multiple variants of games, annual releases, and microtransactions, why I believe that a good American zeitgeist for vulnerable gamers is FOMO in games.