

The African Mobi Gamer: An untapped opportunity for advertisers

By [Leslie Adams](#)

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With 186 million gamers in sub-Saharan Africa recorded in 2021, with 95% of these playing on mobile, the region is predicted to be the fastest-growing mobile gaming market in the world.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) Sales director at Reach Africa, Leslie Adams discusses the boom in mobile gaming across the continent - and why audio is the future for in-game advertising

A study by Carry1st found that in the space of six short years (2015 – 2021), the number of gamers in sub-Saharan Africa has more than doubled, making up roughly 30-50% of the region's internet users.

The simple fact is that Africa is – and has always been – a mobile-driven economy. As a result, the continent's gaming ecosystem has been viewed and nurtured through a mobile-first lens, with the design and development of all new technologies keeping the device firmly front and centre.

An untapped opportunity for advertisers

The African mobile gaming market provides untapped opportunities for advertisers. At the root of this is gaming's inherent ability to truly capture audiences, dishing up what is currently the highest-value currency for advertisers: attention.

Think about it: in gaming, there's no risk of a consumer taking a bathroom break when an ad interrupts their favourite TV show (in fact, our phones often accompany us to the toilet!), or 'blanking' a digital banner ad because they're constantly bombarded with online advertising.

Gaming offers a completely captive audience; one that is happy to spend an accumulatively enormous period playing *Candy Crush* or *Township*.



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Five hours playing games, every day

Unlike other advertising mediums, which see audiences spiking at certain times – for example, Primetime for TV or Drivetime for radio – the mobi gamer will pick up their device multiple times throughout the day, whiling away hours spent in doctors' waiting rooms or during lunch breaks. And these minutes add up.

A 2023 survey conducted among 2,036 South African consumers found that 35% of gamers were spending up to five hours playing games, every day. There's also no risk of wastage, as ads are only served when a gamer is playing.

“ *In-game innovation: In the future, no one will stop for ads* ”

Unlocking the full potential of this medium

For several years now, brands have been taking advantage of various in-game ad formats compatible with cellular devices, such as playable, expandable and video ads, to name a few.

But this is only the beginning; we're in the infancy of unlocking the full potential of this medium. Uninterrupted in-game ads are an exciting new way for advertisers to reach gamers.

Currently, many advertisers make use of reward-based ads, with the gamer needing to watch an ad to unlock a certain level or reward. This is often frustrating for the gamer as it disrupts the gaming experience.

Uninterrupted in-game ads, however, integrate the brand or product into the game itself, becoming part of the experience while being impossible for the gamer to miss.

Audio: a new layer to gaming

With digital audio ad spend worldwide expected to reach \$8.95 billion this year, audio is adding a new layer to in-game advertising. Audio provides a powerful earphone into the heads and hearts of consumers.

Radio broadcasters have been sitting on these numbers for years. Consider that in South Africa alone, around 23 million people tune into radio on an average weekday, and you will see just how big the potential audio audience pie is. And when it comes to Gen Z, the highly-coveted new advertising demographic, audio streaming is found to be their number one mobile activity.

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3 reasons when audio is so powerful with in-game advertising

Audio so powerful when integrated with in-game advertising for three reasons.

1. It's immersive.

It connects with consumers emotionally and creates relationships while driving both engagement and action.

2. Audio is, quite literally, unskippable.

Audio can only serve if a user's volume is on – you can look away and miss a video, but when your sound is on, you can't avoid an audio ad.

3. We're more receptive to audio.

Gen Z, in particular, has been exposed to more advertising than any previous generation. As a result, they're dialling out.

The report *Ad blockers and advocacy: Why Gen Z is blocking paid ads in favour of real voices* has found that 99% of Gen Z consumers will hit 'skip' on an ad if it's an option and that 63% will use ad blockers to avoid online adverts – but they don't seem to mind audio ad formats, viewing it as part-and-parcel of the listening experience.

GADSME, a global in-game advertising platform, knows this and has already successfully added audio to its ad formats.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leslie Adams is the sales director at Reach Africa.

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