

The Gamblification of Gaming

Several online games popular among teens incorporate gambling-like elements, which can potentially lead to gambling behaviors later in life. Here are some notable examples:

1. Social Casino Games

These are free-to-play games available on social media platforms, such as **Doubledown Casino**, **Slotomania**, and **Zynga Poker**. They simulate gambling activities like poker, slots, and roulette without real money initially, but often encourage players to spend real money to buy virtual currency or items

2. Skins Gambling

This involves betting virtual items ("skins") from video games, such as weapon or character customizations, on third-party websites. Players wager these skins in casino-style games, such as roulette or coin flips, with the chance to win more valuable skins or lose their existing ones.

3. Loot Boxes

Loot boxes are virtual items in games that players can purchase or earn, containing randomized rewards. The uncertainty and randomness of loot boxes mimic gambling mechanics, as players spend real or virtual currency without knowing exactly what they'll receive. Games like **FIFA Ultimate Team**, **Overwatch**, and **Fortnite** have been criticized for their loot box systems.

4. Coin Master

This mobile gaming app has faced criticism and legal scrutiny for incorporating gambling-like mechanics. Players spin a virtual slot machine to earn coins, shields, or attacks, which are then used to build villages or attack other players. The game's mechanics have been accused of misleading players into believing outcomes are random, while allegedly being manipulated to encourage spending.

5. Embedded Gambling Mini-Games

Some games include gambling-like mini-games within their main gameplay. Examples include virtual slot machines, big-wheel spins, or casino card games embedded within larger games. Players may need to engage in these activities to progress, gain lives, earn in-game currency, or obtain special items

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9517771/>

Impact on Teens

Exposure to these gambling-like elements in games has been linked to increased likelihood of engaging in real-world gambling later in life. Studies suggest that teenagers who encounter gambling mechanics in video games are at heightened risk of developing gambling problems

<https://www.belganewsagency.eu/study-finds-gambling-elements-in-video-games-lead-to-increased-gambling-among-teens>

In summary, these examples illustrate how gambling-like mechanics embedded in popular online games can influence teenagers' attitudes and behaviors toward gambling, potentially leading to problematic gambling habits.

Here are some specific examples of popular online games that are not overtly gambling-focused (i.e., not casino games), but subtly incorporate gambling-like mechanics:

1. FIFA Ultimate Team (FIFA Series)

- Players purchase "packs" containing randomized player cards, similar to loot boxes. The uncertainty and excitement of opening packs mimic gambling behaviors.

2. Fortnite

- Offers loot boxes called "Loot Llamas" in the "Save the World" mode, containing randomized items. Players spend real or virtual currency without knowing exactly what they'll receive.

3. Overwatch

- Features loot boxes containing randomized cosmetic items, encouraging repeated purchases to obtain desired items.

4. NBA 2K Series (MyTeam Mode)

- Players buy randomized card packs to build their teams, similar to FIFA Ultimate Team, creating gambling-like anticipation and spending patterns.

5. Genshin Impact

- Uses a "gacha" system, where players spend in-game currency (often purchased with real money) to randomly obtain characters and weapons, creating gambling-like excitement and uncertainty.

6. Roblox

- Some user-created games within Roblox include gambling-like mechanics, such as randomized item drops, loot boxes, or virtual slot machines, despite Roblox itself not being explicitly gambling-oriented.

7. Clash Royale

- Players open randomized chests to obtain cards and resources, encouraging repeated engagement and spending to progress faster.

8. Apex Legends

- Offers loot boxes ("Apex Packs") containing randomized cosmetic items, encouraging players to spend real money for uncertain rewards.

9. Call of Duty Series

- Certain titles have featured loot boxes or randomized supply drops, where players spend real or virtual currency for uncertain rewards.

10. Mario Kart Tour

- Uses a gacha-style system where players spend virtual currency (often purchased with real money) to randomly unlock characters, karts, and gliders.

These games subtly incorporate gambling-like mechanics through randomized rewards, loot boxes, or gacha systems, potentially influencing teens' attitudes toward gambling and increasing the risk of problematic gambling behaviors later in life.

Note: Genshin Impact was the model for the game used in the Youth Video