

examining the pandemic's impact on communication/collaboration, responses fell into one of four categories: those who mentioned difficulties with remote communication/collaboration, such as not being able to have quick chats with teammates, those who did not find it difficult or even found it easier to communicate/collaborate remotely, usually due to the ease of access to messaging apps such as Slack, and responses that were either a mix of the two previous categories, or undecided. For the last survey question, we coded results to the final survey question based on if participants agreed with a return to the office as a means of increasing productivity, if they disagreed or thought that a return to the office would decrease productivity, if they opted for a mixed or hybrid approach to remote/office work, or if we could not tell their opinion based on the response. Finally, after quantifying the categories established for these two survey items, we performed a Pearson r and t-test to see if these specific responses indicated any relationships.

Survey Results

As previously noted, our study began with emailing a survey to all IGDA members and proceeded with follow-up interviews with those participants that indicated interest. In the future, we would like to collect more interview data to further expand these results and recommendations for the future of game development post-pandemic.

Participants

A total of 246 members of the IGDA responded to the survey, but one response did not review the informed consent and their data was removed, leaving a final response rate of 245. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to 71, with the majority between 30-45 years old; 69% (169) respondents were male, 24% (59) female, 4% (10) nonbinary, and the remaining 3% (7) chose not to disclose gender. The age and gender spread matched the general profile of IGDA members as noted in the organization and Western University's 2020 Game Developer Satisfaction Survey (Weststar, p. 5-6; 2021), and thus is most likely an accurate representation of larger IGDA membership. Though respondents provided a number of unique role titles, these roles can be condensed into four categories, with 38% (93) supervisory or administrative roles such as project managers/directors, 37% (90) programming or development roles such as software developers, 17% (42) creative roles such as freelance artists, and the remaining 7% (17) academic roles such as professors or graduate students (the remaining 3 participants did not provide a title/role). That said, despite these four discrete categories emerging organically, roughly a third of responses held titles such as "Lead Art Director" or "Senior Project Manager/Developer," reflecting the fact that the boundaries between roles within game development are often porous, especially in the case of creative directors.

Mental Health & Remote Work Experience

Illustrated by Figure 1 below, participants rated their mental health slightly lower during the height of the pandemic ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.58$) than prior to the pandemic ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.2$), indicating the pandemic as a likely cause of this dip, $t(245) = -11.57$, $p < .00001$.