



**Reddit  
Hot Take:**

# **Gentle Gaming**

*How r/LowSodium subreddits are developing good vibes in (and outside) the gaming world.*

# A “Hot Take” is Reddit’s unique *POV* on an **emerging cultural trend**.

## We’ll unpack:

- What’s the trend?
- **Now:** Where it’s coming from?
- **Next:** What comes next?
- **Future:** How does it reveal the future?
- What should you do?



THE ORIGIN OF:

# GENTLE GAMING

**TREND SUMMARY:** *Surges of gamers are opting into communities where there's no toxic critiques—only praise and celebration.*

“Low Sodium” is a phrase which means “no salt,” or in other words, *no negativity*.

While coined a couple years ago during the peak of CyberPunk 2077's let down of a release, a separate 2077 “Low Sodium” community was made to filter out the animosity, so gamers could just enjoy the game for what it was.

Since then, mirrored “Low Sodium” communities are spawning for other popular games.

In an industry riddled with intense antagonism and high expectations, “Low Sodium” unlocks what makes gaming so special: pure, joyful escapism.



r/LowSodiumCyberpunk



## Low sodium general games subreddit?

No idea if this is a reasonable place to ask, but i really really like the low sodium concept. Is there a similar general gaming subreddit?

Because avoiding the echo chamber of **negativity for negativity's sake** is becoming more and more important to me.

Comments Award Share Save ...

BEST COMMENTS

I know that r/LowSodiumAnthem and r/LowSodiumDestiny exist but I don't know about a low sodium gaming sub in general. But that does sound like a good idea.

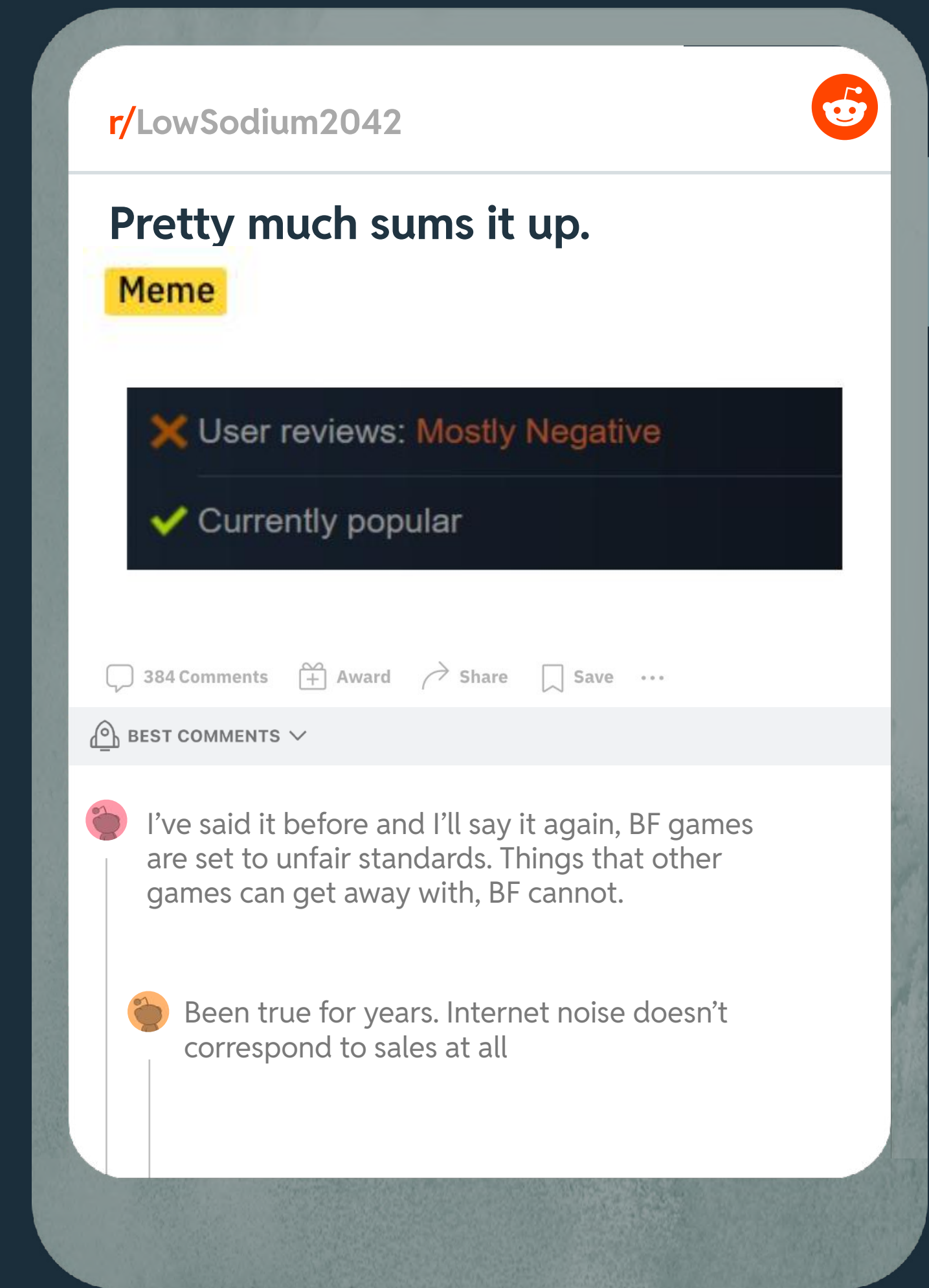


LEAVE THE NEGATIVITY AT THE DOOR

*Low salt is just more fun... and enticing...*

**+20000%**

**Growth of views to [r/LowSodium2042](#) over the last three months. Meanwhile, views to [r/LowSodiumHalo](#) are up +250% in just the last 30 days**



NOW: THE LARGER STORY

# WORDS HURT

There's an unfortunate truth: the online gaming world is polarized and filled with tough critics. And with that creates an atmosphere, which is not always pleasurable to join nor engage in. Ironic given the *purpose* of games...

Many gamers are now getting annoyed with controversies within their favorite communities. But they're not dropping out *entirely*. They're creating *new spaces* across Reddit to re-congregate.

When analyzing the language sentiment from gaming subreddits vs. their no salt counterparts, it's clear: "Low Sodium" is in fact both *more optimistic* + *less angry*. The appeal is strong.

***Low Sodium checks all the boxes: like-minded, passionate gamers, debate and discussion, and more positivity and optimism.***

+131%

Growth of conversation in **r/LowSodiumHalo** vs. (+39%) in **r/Halo** over the last four months

+52%

Growth of **unique authors** in Low Sodium subreddits vs. their counterparts (+31%) over the last four months

***Escaping***  
*the anger and reality*

+126%

Growth of **positive-tagged** keywords within Low Sodium gaming subreddits over the last four months

-43%

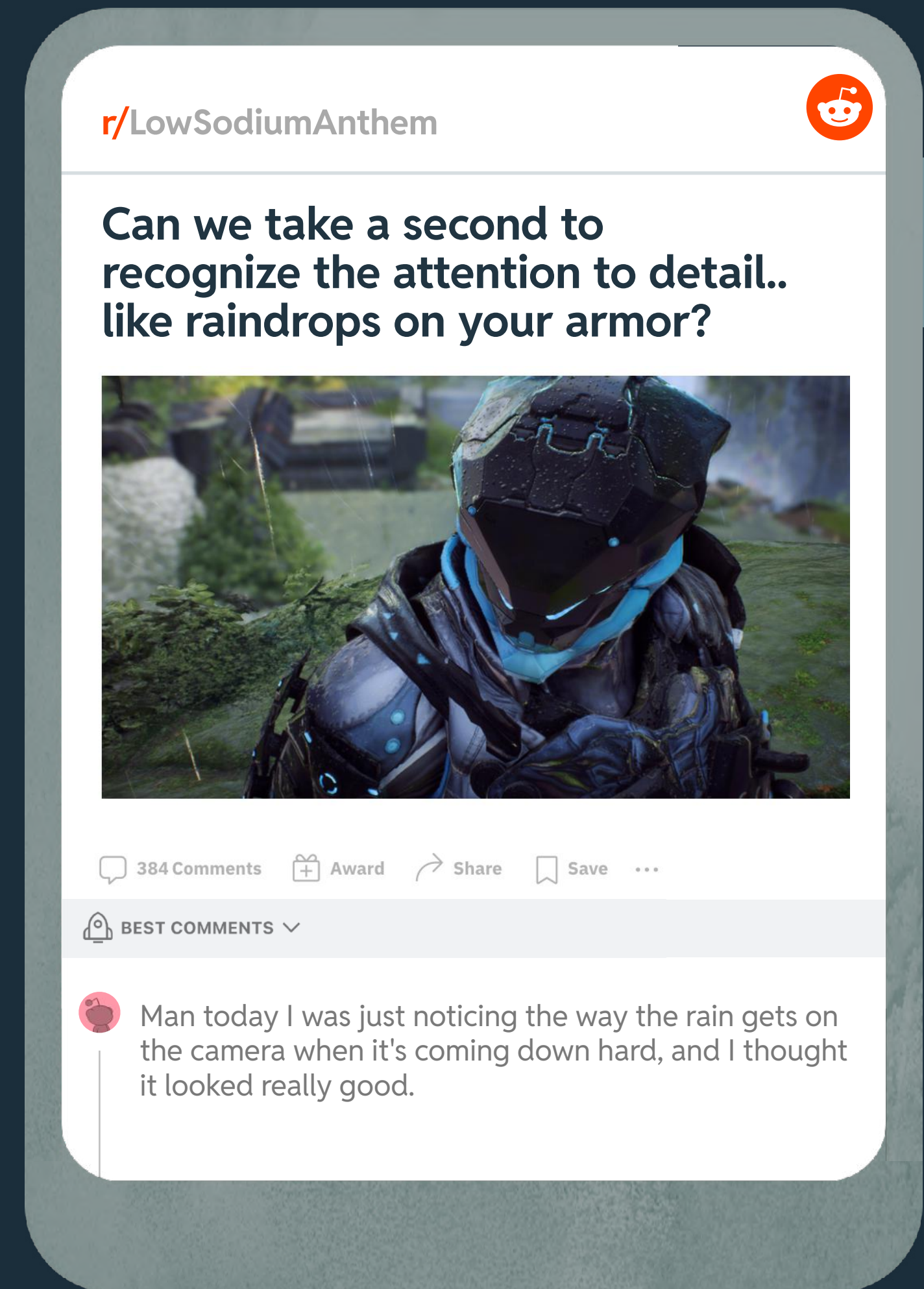
**Negative-tagged** keywords are less likely to appear in Low Sodium subreddits vs. their counterparts



*Low Sodium subreddits are:*

- **46** %

**Less angry** than their original gaming subreddit counterparts



AN INHERENT INTENSITY



“Gamers are the **worst**  
part of video games.”

— *Redditor* via *r/LowSodiumHalo*



NEXT: WHAT'S COMING

## IT'S THE MOOD

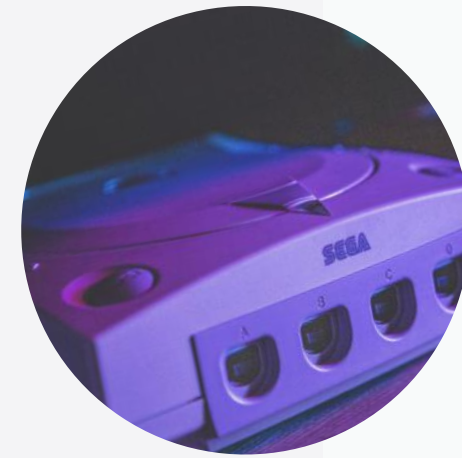
There's been a sea change. It's not just that gamers want environments which call for more positivity, but they're seeking out times, aesthetics, and sounds, which transport them back to more *wholesome* gaming experiences.

Specifically, this is driven by a longing for when gaming wasn't filled with expensive DLC, delays, system incompatibilities and release let downs.

Now, many are looking *back*, not forward. Setting up old systems, and firing up emulators are easy solves for the negativity that's so prevalent today. The old is *new* again.

But! You also didn't have to live through an older time to be nostalgic for it...

***Nostalgia is not just a longing for simpler times, but an escape from the current moment.***



+ **48** %  
Views to **r/RetroGaming**  
YoY

+ **63** %  
Views to **r/TipofMyJoystick** YoY,  
a subreddit helping gamers  
remember the titles old games from  
their vague descriptions





WHY RUSH?

## Growth of *r/PatientGamers*

+32%  
YoY

*A community “free from the news, hype and drama that surround current releases, catering instead to gamers who wait at least 12 months after release to play a game.”*



*“I was born in the 90s, first console was a GameCube because my parents didn't let me have video games until my teenage years. As an adult I bought a SNES and **I love the 16-bit art style, even though I never lived through it. Something about it is just so pretty.**”*

— [u/GentlyUsedToast](#) via [r/RetroGaming](#)



FUTURE: WHERE IT'S HEADED

## DEVELOPING A NEW VIBE

From Untitled Goose Game and A Short Hike in 2019, to Fall Guys and Ooblets in 2020, and then Unpacking and Turnip Boy Commits Tax Evasion in 2021, gentle indie games are having their moment.

In addition to distinct gentle gaming communities, or going back in time for gentle game experiences, there's a third option: create net-new gentle games for the moment that we're living in.

While realistic immersion, endless worlds, and intensive combat remain desired, there's an overlooked flourishing interest in the 8-bit, slow, low / no stakes and artisanal component of games.

And this spirit isn't just tethered to just games. The vibe is spilling over into art and music too.

**From:** Games as an output

**To:** Games as an input

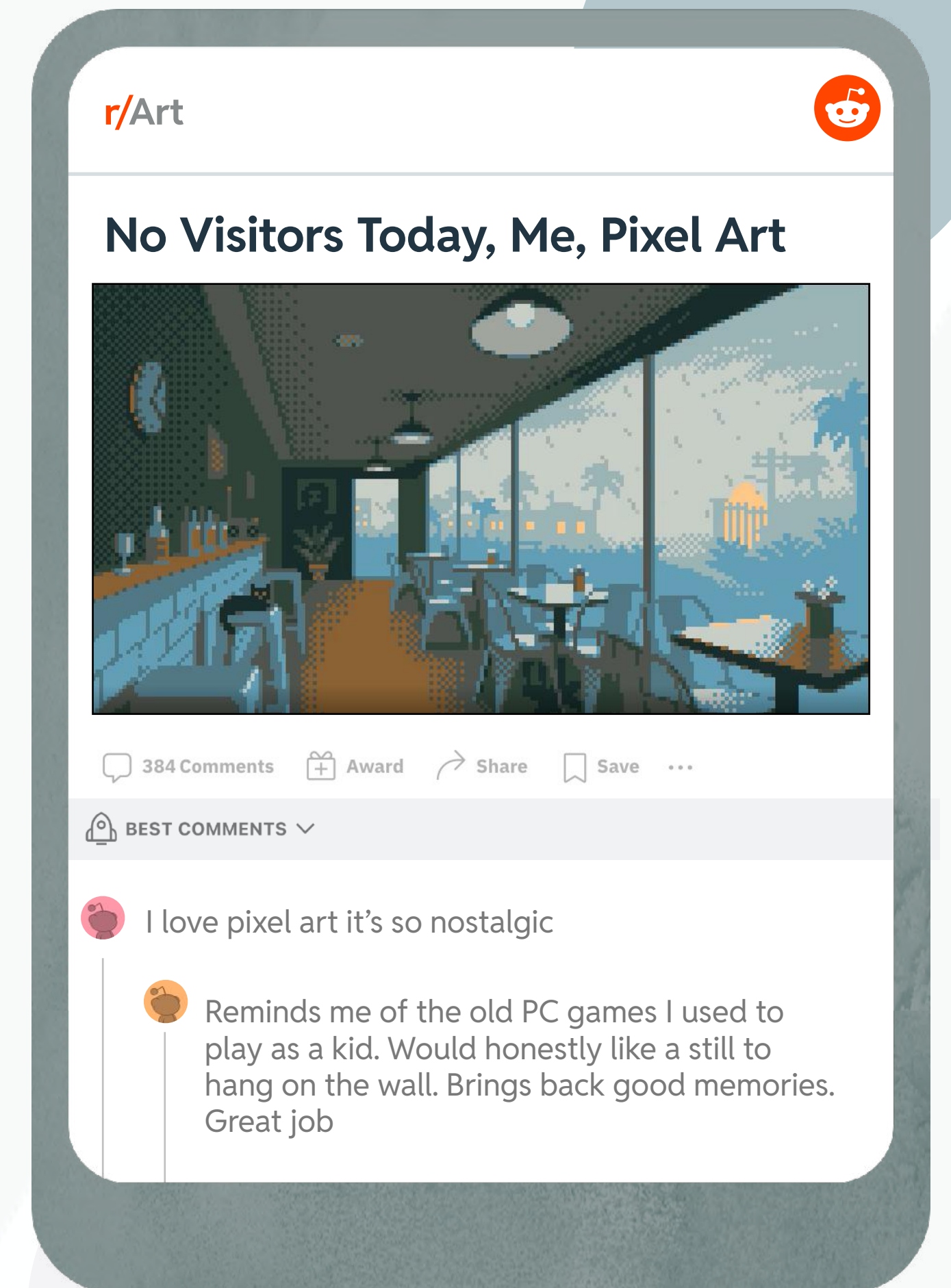
SOURCE: Reddit Internal Global Data, 2019-2021

+ 92 %

Growth of **r/PixelArt** YoY, while mentions of "Pixel Art" are up **+50%** site-wide

+ 82 %

Views to **r/ChipTunes** YoY, a subreddit dedicated to retro game sounding music



Growth of *r/IndieGames*

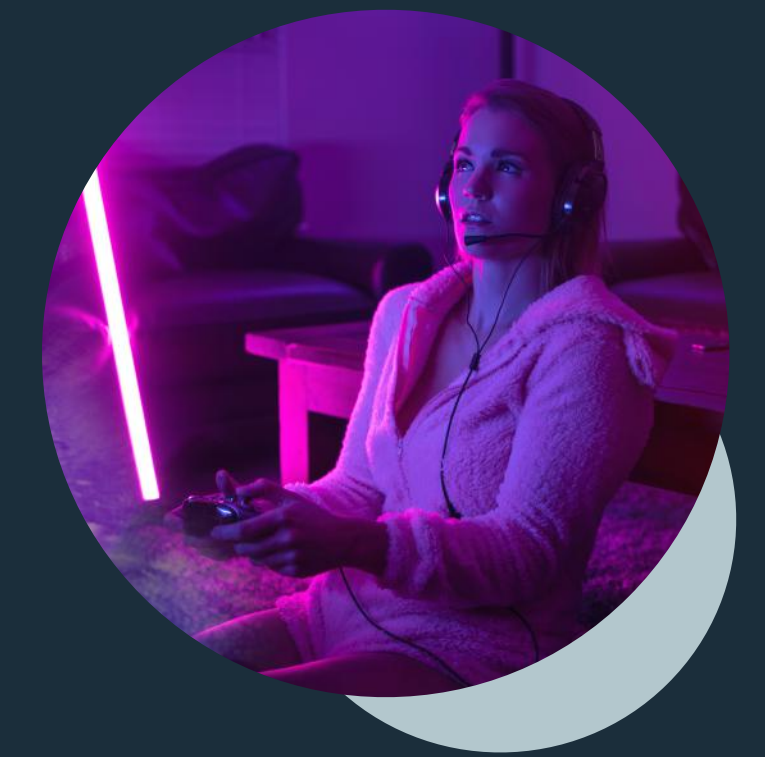
+41%

YoY

Growth of *r/IndieGaming*

+55%

YoY



**TL;DR**

**Everyday gaming bickering is now being solved with Low Sodium subreddits.**

**And this **gentle vibe** is running deeper than community—it's driving nostalgia, art and new game development.**

**Marketer Implication:**

Some gamers have lost the plot (the purpose of gaming), however not all have. Many still crave the innocence, enthusiasm, and appreciation that got them into gaming in the first place. There are opportunities...

*Acknowledge and reward those gamers who have stuck with you through thick and thin.*

*Lean into the absurdity, low stakes, artistic, or relaxation-factors of your game—helping others appreciate the gentler component of your titles.*

*Credit historical, classic inspirations or honor nostalgic elements weaving together the old and the new.*



# *Thanks!*

Want to Learn More?

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