

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL CONSUMPTION IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER THE LAUNCH OF OBLIVION REMASTERED USING SQL

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Abstract: *This paper analyses the digital consumption patterns of players during the first week after the launch of Oblivion Remastered, a modernized version of the iconic role-playing game originally released in 2006. Using PostgreSQL and Power BI, nine datasets were integrated to calculate correlations between social and economic indicators such as playtime, reviews, revenue, and online popularity. The results show strong relationships between reviews and revenue, followers and sales, while Google Trends data reveal the temporary nature of online interest.*

Key words: *Oblivion Remastered; digital sociology; user behavior; game analytics; symbolic economy*

1. Introduction

The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion Remastered was released in April 2025 as a modernized version of the classic role-playing game first launched in 2006. The new edition attracted significant attention from both long-time fans of *The Elder Scrolls* series (Gamalytic, 2025; Google, 2025), and this launch provides a relevant opportunity to examine broader questions related to digital consumption.

In contemporary sociology, the study of large-scale digital interactions has become increasingly important. Video games represent cultural products that generate extensive user data, allowing for the observation of symbolic capital and its influence on cultural consumption (see Bourdieu, 1979). At the same time, they embody dynamics of fashion and differentiation, in which temporary popularity shapes collective behavior (see Simmel, 1904). Their hybrid status as both cultural artifacts and data-rich platforms makes them particularly useful for bridging sociological theory and empirical analysis.

From a methodological perspective, this paper emphasizes the integration of data

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science tools into sociological inquiry. The use of *Structured Query Language* (SQL) enables efficient management and correlation of heterogeneous datasets, while visualization platforms facilitate the exploration of complex temporal dynamics. Such tools allow researchers to capture not only descriptive trends but also statistical associations that reveal the interplay between symbolic recognition and measurable outcomes (see Weber, 1922).

2. Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to analyze user behavior during the first week after the launch of *Oblivion Remastered*. In particular, the study aims to identify statistical relationships between social interaction and economic outcomes, following the sociological perspective that exchange processes structure individual and collective behavior (see Blau, 1964).

A secondary objective is to highlight how symbolic recognition within digital communities—expressed through followers, reviews, and visibility—can be transformed into material value, consistent with theories of cultural capital and symbolic economy (see Bourdieu, 1979). At the same time, the paper seeks to illustrate how methodological tools from data science can be applied to sociological research in order to provide a quantitative perspective on digital consumption.

3. Theories to be Tested with SQL

3.1. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)

The logic of social exchange emphasizes that interactions between individuals are motivated by perceived rewards and costs. In the digital context of *Oblivion Remastered*, reviews and playtime can be understood as forms of symbolic contributions within the community. Users invest time and effort in exchange for recognition, validation, or the improvement of collective knowledge (see Blau, 1964).

SQL correlations allow these interactions to be captured in quantifiable terms. The positive relationship between reviews and revenue, or between concurrent users and playtime, illustrates how symbolic acts of participation generate measurable effects at economic level. This confirms the principle that collective activity is structured by reciprocal benefits (see Blau, 1964).

By operationalizing Blau's theory through SQL queries, the analysis demonstrates that digital environments are suitable laboratories for studying exchange. The patterns revealed suggest that even in highly mediated contexts, individuals act in ways that balance personal investment with collective recognition (see Blau, 1964).

3.2. Symbolic capital and economy (Bourdieu, 1979)

According to Bourdieu (1979), symbolic resources such as prestige and recognition play a decisive role in structuring consumption and social position. In the case of *Oblivion*

Remastered, followers, reviews, and ranking positions represent symbolic assets that can be converted into material gains.

SQL correlations confirmed that symbolic capital correlates strongly with economic outcomes, being in line with Bourdieu's (1979) ideas. Followers were positively associated with copies sold, and rank demonstrated a direct relationship with revenue. These measurable links show how symbolic recognition in digital spaces translates into sales performance.

This dynamic reinforces the idea that symbolic and economic dimensions are deeply interconnected. By integrating sociological theory with technical database operations, the analysis makes visible the mechanisms through which symbolic prestige produces economic value in cultural markets, in line with Bourdieu's (1979) theories.

3.3. Rational action (Weber, 1922)

Weber's (1922) concept of rational action emphasizes that individuals make decisions based on a calculation of efficiency and utility. In the digital sphere, this logic is reflected in the ways players rely on reviews, community activity, and visibility before deciding to purchase or engage with a game.

SQL-based correlation analysis provides evidence for this reasoning. The strong association between reviews and revenue, and the moderate relationships between concurrent users and copies sold, suggest that players rely on rational indicators of quality and popularity in their decisions (see Weber, 1922). Negative correlations, such as between viewers and purchases, also show that not all signals are equally effective in guiding rational choices.

This methodological translation of Weber's theory into SQL reinforces the claim that rationality is observable in digital behaviors. By turning abstract principles into quantifiable associations, the analysis confirms that rational action continues to shape cultural consumption (see Weber, 1922).

3.4. Fashion theory (Simmel, 1904)

Simmel viewed fashion as a social process marked by temporary enthusiasm and differentiation. In the digital age, online trends replicate this mechanism: players seek novelty, align with collective enthusiasm, and quickly move on to new objects of attention, similar with Simmel's theory (1904). *Oblivion Remastered* provided an ideal setting to observe such dynamics during its launch.

SQL correlations demonstrated the volatility of fashion effects. Strong negative relationships between Google Trends and revenue, followers, and reviews show that peaks of interest often fail to sustain long-term engagement (Simmel, 1904). Popularity, while intense, tends to fade quickly, confirming the transient character of fashion-driven behavior.

By testing Simmel's (1904) theory with SQL data, the analysis highlights how contemporary cultural products experience cycles of rapid ascent and decline. This

confirms that fashion remains a key explanatory factor for digital consumption.

4. Materials and Methods

The empirical foundation of this study relied on a relational database structured in PostgreSQL, chosen for its capacity to manage heterogeneous and large-scale datasets in a transparent and reproducible manner.

Nine interrelated tables were included in the database, covering variables such as followers, revenue, reviews, copies sold, average playtime, concurrent users, Google Trends data, top-seller rank, and Twitch statistics (Gamalytic, 2025; Google, 2025; TwitchTracker, 2025). All datasets were indexed by date as the primary key (Figure 1), which allowed their integration into a single coherent structure. Temporal aggregation was applied in order to harmonize daily and hourly data series.

	date date	avg_interest numeric	copies integer	revenue bigint	reviews bigint	topsellerrank integer	estimated_viewers integer	average_playtime integer	concurrentusers bigint	followers bigint
1	2025-04-23	43.70833333333333	1683647	32022114	7782	1	300000	3	131189	58127
2	2025-04-24	29.79166666666667	1148697	53805130	13076	1	350000	4	131694	77486
3	2025-04-25	24.08333333333333	1565010	73305285	17815	1	340000	5	130878	91406
4	2025-04-27	25.37500000000000	1957195	91675254	23898	2	310000	7	160117	103374
5	2025-04-28	18.66666666666667	2019854	94610206	26635	2	300000	8	126001	107586
6	2025-04-26	26.12500000000000	1846705	86499914	21021	2	320000	6	148322	98264

Figure 1. An image of all databases

Data processing was carried out through SQL queries in PostgreSQL, which ensured rigorous cleaning procedures, the computation of descriptive statistics, and the construction of derived variables. In relational databases, the **JOIN** operation is used to combine data from two or more tables based on a common key, most frequently a shared variable such as *date*. This allows heterogeneous datasets to be integrated into a single structure without losing their individual attributes. In the present study, JOIN operations made it possible to align daily revenue, reviews, followers, and search trends, despite the fact that these indicators originated from different sources and were recorded at different frequencies. Such operations are essential in sociological research based on big data, as they provide a coherent and analyzable dataset from otherwise fragmented digital traces.

Logical JOIN (Figure 2) operations integrated the tables, while statistical functions enabled the calculation of Pearson correlation coefficients (Figure 3). These correlations provided the empirical foundation for linking user activity, symbolic visibility, and economic outcomes. Power BI was subsequently used only for visualization purposes, offering dynamic dashboards and graphical representations of the results.

```

WITH daily_trends AS (
  SELECT date, AVG(interest) AS avg_interest
  FROM google_trends
  GROUP BY date
)
SELECT
  dt.date,
  dt.avg_interest,
  cs.copies,
  r.revenue,
  rv.reviews,
  tsr.topsellerrank,
  tt.estimated_viewers,
  ap.copies AS average_playtime,
  ccu.concurrentusers,
  f.followers
INTO tabela_finala
FROM daily_trends dt
JOIN copies_sold cs ON dt.date = cs.date
JOIN revenue r ON dt.date = r.date
JOIN reviews rv ON dt.date = rv.date
JOIN top_seller_rank tsr ON dt.date = tsr.date
JOIN twitch_tracker tt ON dt.date = tt.date
JOIN average_playtime ap ON dt.date = ap.date
JOIN ccu ON dt.date = ccu.date
JOIN followers f ON dt.date = f.date;

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Fig. 2. The logical JOIN operation

From a sociological perspective, the methodological design rests on four theoretical pillars. Firstly, social interactions can be examined through the lens of exchange theory, where individual contributions and benefits shape collective outcomes (Blau, 1964). Secondly, the symbolic dimension of digital behavior, such as recognition through reviews or rankings, reflects the transformation of symbolic capital into economic value (Bourdieu, 1979). Thirdly, correlations between indicators allow for an interpretation of user decisions as rational actions guided by efficiency and calculation (Weber, 1922). Finally, the temporal volatility of online interest can be understood as an expression of fashion-driven consumption, where temporary popularity influences user engagement (Simmel, 1904).

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SELECT CORR(revenue, reviews) FROM tabela_finala;

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Fig. 3. An example of Pearson correlation in PostgreSQL

The role of SQL in producing these results should be emphasized. The integration of nine heterogeneous datasets into a single relational structure was achieved through PostgreSQL, which ensured that temporal alignment and variable consistency were preserved throughout the analysis. Logical JOIN operations allowed the construction of daily series from sources with different recording frequencies, while aggregate functions enabled the transformation of raw metrics into interpretable indicators. This process illustrates how database technologies support the validity of sociological research by maintaining both accuracy and transparency.

Beyond integration, PostgreSQL also made it possible to conduct statistical tests within the database itself. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated using built-in functions, ensuring that the analysis remained fully reproducible and free from external data manipulation. By allowing complex queries to combine descriptive statistics with relational operations, SQL served as a methodological bridge between data science and sociological interpretation. This reinforces the claim that contemporary sociology benefits from adopting computational tools that extend beyond traditional qualitative or small-scale quantitative methods.

By combining PostgreSQL as the primary analytical environment with sociological theory as an interpretive framework, the methodology demonstrates how computational tools can be effectively employed to capture the social and economic dynamics of digital consumption.

5. Results

The statistical analysis revealed several strong associations between social and economic indicators. The most significant finding was the almost perfect positive correlation between user reviews and revenue ($r = 0.99$), showing that collective evaluation was directly reflected in the game's financial performance. This result is consistent with Blau's (1964) perspective, which emphasizes that social interactions and exchanges generate measurable outcomes.

Additional correlations strengthened the picture of symbolic recognition as a factor in economic success. Followers and copies sold correlated positively ($r = 0.59$), while top-seller rank showed a strong association with revenue ($r = 0.84$). These findings confirm that symbolic capital, expressed through visibility and recognition within digital communities, can be transformed into material value, in line with Bourdieu's (1979) theory.

At the same time, the data also pointed to discrepancies between online visibility and consumption. A negative correlation was observed between viewers on streaming platforms and copies sold ($r = -0.83$), as well as between Google Trends interest and the number of followers ($r = -0.93$). Such dynamics illustrate the volatility of popularity in digital environments, reflecting Simmel's (1904) idea that fashion-driven phenomena generate temporary but unstable attention.

In the last theory which I tested, moderate positive correlations were recorded between concurrent users and reviews ($r = 0.42$) and between playtime and concurrent users ($r = 0.31$). These patterns suggest that decisions to engage with the game are not random but follow a rational calculation of utility based on community activity and prior evaluations, in line with Weber's ideas. (1922).

Overall, the results indicate that the first week of *Oblivion Remastered* was characterized by a dense interplay between symbolic recognition, social interaction, and economic outcomes. These measurable relationships establish a robust basis for sociological interpretation.

Beyond the direct correlations, the results also showed the importance of compound effects. For instance, the combination of reviews and concurrent users appeared to act as a reinforcing mechanism, where high visibility coupled with collective evaluation significantly boosted the game's position in sales rankings. This layered effect suggests that different indicators do not operate in isolation, but in cumulative ways that strengthen social and economic outcomes (Blau, 1964).

Another relevant finding is the asymmetry between symbolic and material dimensions. While symbolic visibility was strongly associated with sales, the opposite was not always valid: high revenue days did not always correspond to increased community recognition. This nuance illustrates Bourdieu's (1979) argument that symbolic capital has its own dynamics, only partially overlapping with economic capital, and highlights the autonomy of cultural recognition in digital markets.

The volatility captured by negative correlations between Google Trends and followers also deserves attention. Although trending searches suggested bursts of popularity, they were often disconnected from stable community growth. This discrepancy mirrors Simmel's (1904) analysis of fashion, according to which social enthusiasm is ephemeral and does not necessarily lead to long-term integration. In the digital sphere, such discrepancies emphasize the difference between visibility peaks and durable symbolic investment.

Finally, the moderate but significant associations between concurrent users, reviews, and playtime indicate rational mechanisms of engagement. Users seem to calibrate their involvement based on signals of quality and activity within the community, consistent with Weber's (1922) model of rational action. This means that the decision to purchase or spend time in-game was not merely impulsive but grounded in the perception of collective validation and efficiency.

6. Conclusions

The results of this study confirm that digital consumption during the first week after the release of *Oblivion Remastered* can be understood through established sociological frameworks. The strong correlation between reviews and revenue highlights how patterns of social exchange produce tangible outcomes, reflecting Blau's (1964) argument that interactions and evaluations structure collective behavior.

At the same time, the transformation of symbolic recognition into economic success is evident in the association between followers, rankings, and sales, illustrating Bourdieu's (1979) view that symbolic capital can be converted into material resources. This connection shows that in digital marketplaces, visibility and prestige function as essential resources in shaping user decisions.

The volatility observed in Google Trends and streaming data, where initial peaks of attention did not correspond to stable user engagement, supports Simmel's (1904) interpretation of fashion as a driver of temporary enthusiasm. Such trends highlight the unstable nature of popularity in the digital environment, where novelty and differentiation are crucial but often short-lived.

Furthermore, the presence of rational patterns in user engagement, visible in the relationship between community activity and copies sold, aligns with Weber's (1922) concept of rational action. Users appear to make purchasing and engagement decisions based on a calculation of utility, drawing on reviews, visibility, and peer activity as sources of information. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of combining sociological interpretation with computational tools. PostgreSQL provided a rigorous environment for the integration and analysis of heterogeneous datasets, while Power BI supported the communication of results. This shows how database technologies can enrich sociological inquiry by allowing large-scale behavioral data to be studied with precision and transparency.

The study is not without limitations. The analysis covers only the first week of release, a period of heightened attention, which may not reflect long-term dynamics. Moreover, correlation analysis identifies associations but cannot determine causality. Future research could expand the timeframe, incorporate longitudinal models, and include additional data sources, such as community discussions on forums and social media platforms.

In conclusion, the launch of *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion Remastered* provides an illustrative case of how symbolic recognition, community interaction, and rational decision-making converge in the digital marketplace. By integrating sociological theory with data science methods, the study highlights the potential of digital sociology to capture and explain the dynamics of contemporary cultural consumption.

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