Cloud gaming could account for half of 5G traffic

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Video traffic management outfit Openwave Mobility chatted to some operators and they reckon cloud gaming will account for 25-50% of 5G traffic.

The anecdotal finding was arrived at during a livecast hosted by Openwave, which was apparently attended by a bunch of operators. Most of them, we're told, believe cloud gaming could represent 25% to 50% of 5G data traffic by 2022. This assumption was heavily influenced by observing the trajectory of the cloud gaming industry in general.

"The recent emergence of cloud gaming platforms including Google Stadia, Apple Arcade, Microsoft xCloud and Snap Games has not escaped the attention of the operator community," said John Giere, CEO of Openwave Mobility. "OTT players have ambitious plans to become the 'Netflix for gaming', hosting libraries of thousands of instantly accessible games that, ultimately, will consume three to four times the amount of bandwidth on 5G networks, compared to standard definition video traffic. Needless to say this will impact mobile operator data strategies.

"While 5G network rollouts are still in their infancy, OTTs are already planning Augmented, Virtual and Mixed Reality services, in addition to cloud gaming. Combined with the expected continued growth of streaming video, these services will rapidly eat into the additional bandwidth provisions of 5G."

While still in its early stages, the potential for cloud gaming does seem huge. At the very least, being able to offload the processing of gaming to the cloud will open up a new generation of thin client devices. On top of that there are things like mobile MMOs, augmented reality and virtual reality, all of which will rely not just on the increase bandwidth of 5G but crucially the [low latency characteristics](#). So while this straw poll is hardly definitive, it's easy to imagine cloud gaming exploding in the 5G era.