الرياضات الإلكترونية eSports

من إعداد: المحور الإنساني العالمي للتنمية والأبحاث GHPDR

Global Humanitarian Pivot for Development and Research

يحتوي هذا الملف على ثلاث مواد باللغة الإنجليزية، ومادة باللغة العربية مترجمة عن هذه المواد، وكما قدمنا ترجمة وافية لهذه المواد فقد أرفقنا النصوص الأصلية مع هذه الترجمة من أجل مزيد من الفائدة، ومن أجل أن يتمكن المواطن العربي من معرفة أدق التفاصيل المتعلقة بالرياضات الإلكترونية، خاصة أنّ هذه الرياضات صارت تستحوذ على اهتمام الجماهير حول العالم، وحصلت رسميا على اعتراف أولمبي، واعترافات دولية. ويسرنا في **المحور الإنساني العالمي للتنمية والأبحاث** https://humanitarianpivot.org/ أن نكون أول من طرح دورة تدريبية حول الرياضات الإلكترونية بما اكتسبته من أهمية عالمية، حيث تم تخصيص الكثير من الجوائز القيمة لهذه الرياضة من بينها جائزة بقيمة 135 مليون دولار، وهي القيمة الإجمالية لجائزة بطولة DOTA 2 International 2019. أمنياتنا لكم بالتوفيق، وبمزيد من النجاح.

المادة الأولى

ما هي الرياضات الإلكترونية؟

مقدمة في عالم الرياضات الإلكترونية العالمي

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الملخص:

أسماء مثل توم برادي، كريستيانو رونالدو، وليونيل ميسي معروفة للجميع، بينما لي "فاكر" سانغ-هيوك أقل شهرة. على الرغم من أن كيم "دوينب" تاي-سانغ ولوكا "بيركز" بيركوفيتش لا يزالان معروفين بشكل جيد، إلا أنهما يرتقيان أيضًا إلى مكانة الرياضيين المشهورين عالميًا. أشهر لعبة فيديو كمبيوتر في العالم، League of Legends، تضم لاعبين محترفين مثل Faker و Perks و Doinb. تعد هذه اللعبة واحدة من العديد من الأحداث الرياضية الطموحة والمحبوبة التي تشكل فئة الرياضات الإلكترونية سريعة النمو. يعمل المسؤولون في ما يشار إليه باسم "المنطقة الرمادية العالمية". الرياضات الإلكترونية هي خيار رعاية شركة مربح للرياضيين بسبب شعبيتها الهائلة (بعض الأحداث تجذب بانتظام عشرات الآلاف من المشاهدين)، لكنها أيضًا متغيرة وتفتقر إلى معايير محددة. تصف هذه المقالة الظاهرة العالمية للرياضات الإلكترونية؛ تقدم نظرة عامة على دور وممارسة الرياضات الإلكترونية؛ تسلط الضوء على سبب اعتبار الرياضات الإلكترونية جزءًا لا يتجزأ من ثقافة الإنترنت المتطورة وتقدم للقارئ هيكل الألعاب بشكل أوسع.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الرياضات الإلكترونية، التاريخ، التطور، الهياكل، ثقافة الإنترنت

مقدمة الرياضات الإلكترونية هي ببساطة ألعاب فيديو تُلعب في بيئة تنافسية منظمة للغاية. تتراوح هذه الألعاب من ساحات المعارك متعددة اللاعبين عبر الإنترنت (MOBAs) الشهيرة، والتي تتميز بتركيزها على اللعب التعاوني، إلى الشعبية المتزايدة لألعاب البقاء على قيد الحياة من منظور الشخص الأول وألعاب الواقع الافتراضي. تحدث هذه الزيادة في ألعاب الفيديو مع بدء فئة الشباب البالغين في خلق والتحكم في الاتجاهات الثقافية الجديدة. من الأهمية بمكان لهذه التغييرات هو تطوير علاقة أساسية بين الشباب والرياضة.

بينما تتناقص نسبة مشاهدة الرياضات التقليدية، تتزايد نسبة مشاهدة الرياضات الإلكترونية. (صناعة الرياضات الإلكترونية في عام 2022) كان الانفجار كبيرًا لدرجة أن جميع ألعاب الفيديو تقريبًا المتوفرة اليوم لديها نوع من الدائرة التجارية الوهمية. ما الذي أدى إلى هذا التغيير في الاتجاه؟ في أوائل العقد الأول من القرن الحادي والعشرين، تبدأ القصة في كوريا الجنوبية.

لمكافحة الأزمة الاقتصادية الشديدة، ركزت الحكومة الكورية الجنوبية على بناء البنية التحتية للاتصالات والإنترنت. (www.nytimes.com، 2014) سرعان ما أصبح PC Sound مكانًا اجتماعيًا معروفًا. إنه مكان لتناول الطعام مع بار ومناطق أخرى تستخدم للمقامرة. هذه المؤسسات شائعة مثل ملاعب كرة السلة القريبة، حيث يجتمع اللاعبون للتنافس وتكوين روابط حول اهتمام مشترك بألعاب الفيديو. وسرعان ما بدأت هذه الدول في تنظيم مسابقات رسمية. وإدراكًا للسوق الاستثنائية التي أنشأتها المنطقة، تدخلت الحكومة الكورية وأنشأت الرابطة الرياضية الكورية (KeSPA)، وهي أول هيئة حكومية في العالم مكرسة لتنظيم ألعاب الفيديو والرياضات الإلكترونية.

بسبب سياسة الحكومة الكورية الجنوبية لنمو الاتصالات، انتشرت العديد من محطات التلفزيون منخفضة التكلفة في نفس الوقت. تم تطوير إحداها خصيصًا لتغطية Naver eSports. أصبحت الرياضات الإلكترونية جزءًا مهمًا من الثقافة الكورية بسبب مزيج من الأماكن الاجتماعية الشهيرة التي تشجع المنافسة المركزة ومنصات البث المباشر للاعبين الخبراء. تم تطوير StarCraft (1998) و StarCraft II (2010) و Defense of the Ancients 2 (2013)، المعروف أيضًا باسم Dota 2، بواسطة Activision Blizzard و Valve Corporation، على التوالي، وأصبحت أول رياضات إلكترونية حقيقية. أنتجت Dota 2 شبكة قوية من المسابقات متوسطة الحجم والتي تطورت في النهاية إلى بطولات سرية وهامة. ومع ذلك، ساعد تطوير StarCraft لأول مطورين منظمين ومدعومين في اكتساب المزيد من الشعبية في الدائرة الكورية. حتى اليوم، لا تزال بعض بطولات الألعاب موجودة. تبلغ قيمة الجائزة للفائزين في DOTA 2 International 2019 135 مليون دولار من أصل 308 ملايين دولار، وهو أكثر من بعض الرياضات التقليدية مثل الجولف والقتال النهائي. تتمتع Dota 2 بشعبية لا تصدق، وتتمتع بطولتها الدولية الحالية بأكبر مجموعة جوائز من أي حدث رياضي إلكتروني بخمس مرات ونصف أكبر مجموعة جوائز ثانية. (www.forbes.com، 2019)

أسئلة البحث هي:

- ما هي الرياضات الإلكترونية؟
- ما هي الهياكل العامة وراء الرياضات الإلكترونية؟
- لماذا يجب اعتبار الرياضات الإلكترونية جزءًا من ثقافة الإنترنت المتغيرة باستمرار؟

مراجعة الأدبيات ملخص لتاريخ الرياضات الإلكترونية في أوائل السبعينيات، وسط قاعات جامعة ستانفورد المبجلة، بدأت الرياضات الإلكترونية في اكتساب شعبية لأول مرة وكانت من بنات أفكار مجموعة من طلاب جامعة ستانفورد غير المقصودة. لم يكن بإمكان هؤلاء الرواد أن يتخيلوا أن أنشطتهم ستؤدي إلى شعبية أول لعبة تنافسية من خلال لعب لعبة تسمى Space War. (تاريخ الرياضات الإلكترونية، 2021)

في 19 أكتوبر 1972، استضافت جامعة ستانفورد أول بطولة لألعاب الفيديو للعبة Space War. تمت دعوة طلاب ستانفورد للمشاركة في "أولمبياد المعركة الفضائية بين المجرات"، حيث فاز بروس بومغارت في منافسة الخمسة رجال الحرة للجميع وفاز فريق Tovar و Robert E. Mass بالمركز الأول. كانت الجائزة الكبرى عبارة عن اشتراك لمدة عام في مجلة Rolling Stone. (تاريخ الرياضات الإلكترونية، 2021)

نشأت معدات المنافسة الحديثة من منافسة ألعاب الفيديو. تم تقديم الجهاز في اليابان في عام 1974 من قبل شركة Sega كبطولة ألعاب الفيديو "All-Japan Games Championship TV" للألعاب في البلاد. (Borowy M. وآخرون، 2013)

نظمت Sega البطولة للترويج للعبة وتعزيز مبيعات ألعاب الفيديو في البلاد. أقيمت مسابقات محلية في 300 موقع في اليابان وتم اختيار ستة عشر متسابقًا نهائيًا للنهائيات في فندق Tokyo Pacific. وشملت الجوائز المقدمة أجهزة تلفزيون بالألوان والأبيض والأسود، ومسجلات كاسيت، وراديوهات ترانزستور. حضر أعضاء من شركات الإعلام والترفيه اليابانية الهامة ما تدعي Sega أنه أكبر حدث في تاريخ ألعاب الآركيد. أكدت Sega على قيمة هذه المسابقات في تعزيز بيئة تنافسية لألعاب الترفيه المتلفزة وتعزيز الشراكات التجارية بين الشركات المصنعة والمواقع والعملاء. (Borowy M. وآخرون، 2013)

تم إصدار أول لعبة آركيد Snake Hustle في الولايات المتحدة في عام 1977 من قبل شركة Gremlin Industries (التي اشترتها Sega في العام السابق)، وظهرت فيها Sabrina Osment و Lynn Reid، وهما لاعبتان محترفتان في ألعاب الآركيد من Gremlin Girls. قام الاثنان برحلات إلى 19 مدينة أمريكية مختلفة حتى يتمكن اللاعبون من التنافس ضدهما في مباريات الأفضل من ثلاثة للفوز بالمال. تمكن سبعة لاعبين فقط من أصل 1300 تحدوا هذا الزوج من الخسارة. (Drewis D.، 2018)

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أطلقت لعبة Space Invaders، التي أدخلت استخدام ارتفاع ثابت لجميع اللاعبين، فجر فترة ألعاب سباقات الآركيد في عام 1978. أضافت العديد من ألعاب الفيديو مؤخرًا طرقًا جديدة لمقارنة

الدرجات العالية مع اللاعبين الذين لعبوا ألعابًا مثل Asteroids لأول مرة في عام 1979. تطورت عملية حفظ الدرجات العالية إلى هواية تنافسية. (Borowy M. وآخرون، 2013)

جذبت أول بطولة ألعاب فيديو مهمة، وهي بطولة Space Invaders التي نظمتها Atari في عام 1980، أكثر من 10000 لاعب من جميع أنحاء البلاد وساعدت في نشر الألعاب التنافسية. الفائزة كانت Rebecca Heineman. (Marie M.، 2018)

بعد السفر في جميع أنحاء البلاد في الثمانينيات وتسجيل الأرقام القياسية في العديد من الألعاب، أطلق رجل الأعمال في مجال ألعاب الآركيد ومقره ولاية أيوا، والتر داي، Twin Galaxies، وهي شركة تتتبع الدرجات العالية. في وقت لاحق، ساعدت المجموعة في الترويج لألعاب الفيديو وجعل إنجازاتها معروفة من خلال الدوريات مثل كتاب غينيس للأرقام القياسية العالمية، وفي عام 1983 أنشأت الفريق الوطني الأمريكي لألعاب الفيديو. تشارك المجموعة في أحداث مثل جولة تحدي ألعاب الفيديو في أمريكا الشمالية وجولة غينيس للأرقام القياسية العالمية وأساطير ألعاب الفيديو. (Sunday Star-News، 1984)

من أجل تعريف الجمهور بهذه التحديات الحية للاعبين وزيادة الاهتمام بألعاب الفيديو، استخدمت Circus Electronics جولة متعددة المدن في عام 1983. (Borowy M. وآخرون، 2013) تمت تغطية المشاركين والبطولات في لعبة الفيديو هذه من قبل الصحف والمجلات مثل Life and Time، وارتقى بعض اللاعبين، مثل Billy Mitchell، إلى مكانة المشاهير الصغار في ذلك الوقت. تعمل هذه الأنواع من الأحداث الترويجية على تعزيز القدرة التنافسية للألعاب مع المساهمة أيضًا في طبيعة التسويق والترويج التي تركز عليها الرياضات الإلكترونية الحالية. (Borowy M. وآخرون، 2013)

كان العرض الأمريكي Starcade، الذي استمر لما مجموعه 133 حلقة من 1982 إلى 1984 وضم متنافسين يتنافسون للتغلب على أعلى الدرجات لبعضهم البعض في لعبة آركيد، أحد البرامج التلفزيونية القليلة التي تم عرضها خلال هذا الوقت. احتوى البرنامج التلفزيوني The Incredibles على بطولة ألعاب فيديو، واحتوت أفلام أخرى، بما في ذلك Tron من عام 1982، على بطولات في حبكاتها. تم لعب ألعاب الآركيد الحديثة في جولات من المنافسة في برنامج تلفزيون بي بي سي First Class في المملكة المتحدة. كانت لعبة Super Mario Bros. مفضلة بين لاعبي الآركيد التنافسيين في أول بطولة أمريكية للفريق الوطني لألعاب الفيديو التي أجرتها رابطة اللاعبين الترفيهية في الولايات المتحدة في يناير 1987.

تم إنشاء لعبة عبر الإنترنت تضم 16 لاعبًا تسمى Netrek 1988 بالكامل تقريبًا باستخدام كود مفتوح المصدر ومتعدد المنصات. Netrek هي ثالث لعبة عبر الإنترنت، والأولى التي تتميز ببيانات مستخدم دائمة، والأولى التي تستخدم خادمًا ميتا للعثور على خوادم ألعاب مفتوحة.

وصفتها مجلة Wired في عام 1993 بأنها "أول لعبة رياضية عبر الإنترنت". (Kevin K.، 1993)

تختلف الرياضات الإلكترونية عن الرياضات التقليدية في عدد من الطرق المهمة، بما في ذلك دور ناشري ومطوري الألعاب، وخطر التقادم، وتوزيع الألعاب وإمكانية الوصول إليها.

مناقشة

وراء الرياضات الإلكترونية تأتي أدوات المطورين في نوعين مختلفين. الأول هو المنظمون مثل Microsoft و Nintendo، الذين يرغبون في الابتعاد عن عناوينهم أو أنشطتهم التجارية من خلال السماح للمجتمعات باستضافة البطولات والألعاب مع الاستمرار في طلب موافقة المطور. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم تنظيم الألعاب الاحترافية بنشاط من قبل مطوري الألعاب المحمولة مثل Blizzard Games و Activision و Valve Corporation. من بين مطوري البث، Spotify هو الأكثر شهرة والأسرع توسعًا. هذا يعني أن الشركات الخاصة التي تمتلك حقوق الملكية الفكرية الحصرية للرياضة هي الكيانات الوحيدة التي تنظم المسابقات الاحترافية؛ هذا يعني أن مطوري الألعاب لديهم أكبر قدر من التحكم في كيفية لعب ألعابهم.

نقطة أخرى مهمة هي أنه على الرغم من أن الرياضات البدنية أبدية ولا تنتمي إلى أحد، إلا أنه يمكن دائمًا الحصول على كرة القدم والألعاب الرياضية اعتمادًا على اختيار مطوريها. إذا قرر المطور إغلاق اللعبة عبر الإنترنت، فستضيع اللعبة. يعد اختيار تفضيل العناصر الجديدة أو إيقاف الخسائر النقدية قرارًا متكررًا. أحد هذه الأمثلة هو Fractured Space، التي أوقف تطويرها بواسطة Edge Case Games في نهاية عام 2018 بسبب قلة عدد لاعبي اللعبة.

المطورون هم الطرف الوحيد الذي يتحكم في من يمكنه الوصول إلى ألعابهم لأنهم المالك الوحيد لحقوق الملكية الفكرية لتلك الألعاب. تختلف جودة هذه الألعاب اختلافًا كبيرًا عن الرياضات التقليدية. لتمكين اللعب، هناك حاجة إلى خوادم خاصة بكل منطقة. زمن الوصول هو مصطلح يشير إلى زمن الوصول المرتفع. لا يمكن لعب الرياضات الإلكترونية بسبب التأخير بين إدخال الإنسان وقراءة الأوامر. يمكن أن يتأثر تجربة المستخدم سلبًا بتأخير يصل إلى 100 مللي ثانية؛ في الواقع، يمنع زمن الوصول الكبير المباريات الاحترافية من الاستمرار حتى يتم حل المشكلة. في أغلب الأحيان، تكون الشبكة البطيئة أو المسافة من الخادم هي المسؤولة عن التأخير. ونتيجة لذلك، لن يتمكن اللاعبون من تلك المناطق أبدًا من التنافس في المشهد الاحترافي أو حتى لعب اللعبة بشكل صحيح إذا قرر المطور أنه غير مجدٍ من الناحية المالية لدعم جزء كبير من العالم.

الوصول إلى المشهد الاحترافي الحقيقي والتوزيع شيئان مختلفان تمامًا. للعمل في الوقت الفعلي والتنافس مع فرق أو شركات الإعلام، يحتاج اللاعبون إلى الوصول إلى الأدوات والموارد. المراهقون والشباب الذين نشأوا مع YouTube ووسائل الإعلام المجانية الأخرى هم السوق

المستهدف لأنهم لا يستطيعون تحمل رسوم الاشتراك الشهرية لعرض قنوات معينة. وبسبب هذا، فإن غالبية البث المباشر للرياضات على المنصات المجانية مأهولة بالمسوقين الذين قاموا برعاية مباريات معينة. هذه القاعدة غامضة أيضًا. من غير المحتمل أن تنتقل الصناعة بأكملها إلى منصات الدفع مقابل المشاهدة لأن جزءًا من الجاذبية يكمن في الاتصال المباشر الحقيقي بين اللاعبين والمشاهدين. يتفاعل البث المباشر مع المشاهدين من خلال الإجابة على أسئلتهم وإجراء محادثات عامة معهم. لا يمكن ضمان هذا الشعور بالاتصال الحميم والشخصي. حتى أن بعض المطورين لا يريدون أن يحدث ذلك. كانت إثارة اللعبة صاخبة جدًا حيال ذلك.

على الرغم من أهميته للرياضات الإلكترونية، إلا أن البث المباشر له مجموعة مشاكله الخاصة. يتم دفع اللاعبين المحترفين واللاعبين المتدفقين إلى البث قدر الإمكان لزيادة عائدات إعلانات فرقهم، ومع ذلك لا يتلقى اللاعبون سوى جزء صغير منها. إنهم متحمسون بشكل فردي للاستيقاظ وإنتاج الكثير من المحتوى من أجل جذب الرعاة، ولكن هذا يمكن أن يؤدي إلى الإرهاق وفترات طويلة من الجلوس، والتي يمكن أن يكون لها آثار سلبية على الصحة.

النتائج

منذ عام 2013، تقدم الجامعات والكليات الأمريكية منحًا دراسية رياضية لمنافسي الرياضات الإلكترونية، بما في ذلك جامعة روبرت موريس في إلينوي وجامعة بايكفيل. لتشجيع نوادي الرياضات الإلكترونية الجامعية على المشاركة في حدثها البالغ مليون دولار، قدم قسم الرياضات الإلكترونية الجامعية في Blizzard Entertainment مبادرة جديدة في عام 2017. بدأت الكليات في منح منح دراسية للطلاب المؤهلين للمشاركة في الرياضات الاحترافية للحصول على ائتمان أكاديمي. تشمل الكليات المشاركة كلية كولومبيا، وجامعة روبرت موريس، ومعهد إنديانا للتكنولوجيا. بدأت جامعة هاريسبرج للعلوم والتكنولوجيا في تقديم منح دراسية للاعبين الرياضيين

في عام 2018. في محاولة لتنمية الرياضات الإلكترونية، تعاونت أكبر رابطة مستقلة مع الشركة الإقليمية Japan Competitive Gaming في عام 2014.

يتسع نطاق منافسة الرياضات الإلكترونية مع تجاوز جمهور الإنترنت للجمهور الفعلي. استضاف مركز Staples Center الذي تم بيع جميع تذاكره بطولة League of Legends World Championship Season 3 في عام 2013، وفي سيول، كوريا الجنوبية، في عام 2014، قدمت Imagine Dragons عرضًا حيًا في حفلي الافتتاح والختام أمام أكثر من 40000 متفرج، باستثناء الألعاب. ظهر أول منشأة رياضية مخصصة في الولايات المتحدة لأول مرة في عام 2015 عندما تم افتتاح أول ساحة للرياضات الإلكترونية في سانتا آنا، كاليفورنيا. أعلنت الصين عن تشريع في عام 2021 يحظر على الأطفال الانخراط فيما يسمونه "المخدرات الروحية" - ألعاب الفيديو - لأكثر من ثلاث ساعات في الأسبوع. بالنظر إلى أن الصين سوق مهم، يثير القانون تساؤلات حول حالة وسائل الإعلام في البلاد.

نتيجة لعقود من التقدم التكنولوجي والنمو الهائل، ربما تكون هذه الظاهرة الحديثة قد تغلغلت في حياتنا إما بشكل مباشر أو غير مباشر من خلال الأصدقاء والعائلة. قد يقول البعض إنها مثال على المكان المثالي والوقت المثالي، لكن نجاحها ليس مجرد صدفة. 500 مليون مشاهد وحققت أكثر من مليار دولار من العائدات في عام 2021 وحده.

تصنيف ألعاب الفيديو التنافسية على أنها رياضة أمر مثير للجدل. (Ivov. Hilvoorde & Niek Pot، 2016) يدعي المؤيدون أن الأدوات هي رياضة غير تقليدية سريعة التوسع تتطلب توقيتًا دقيقًا وتنفيذًا فعالًا. يختلف آخرون، بحجة أن الرياضة يجب أن تجمع بين الأنشطة العقلية والجسدية. (Tjønndal A.، 2020)

يقال إن صناعة ألعاب الغرب المتوحش تقدر بمئات المليارات من الدولارات، لكن القواعد لا تزال غير محددة. كانت هناك قوانين قليلة تحكمهم عندما أصبحوا لأول مرة إحساسًا حقيقيًا في جميع أنحاء العالم في عامي 2012 و 2013. لا يزال هناك تصور سائد بأن ألعاب الكمبيوتر تدمر عقلك لفترة طويلة بعد فتح الأبواب، وبدأ الجمهور في اكتساب قبول عالمي، وحتى الأموال ارتفعت.

ضحك أعضاء اللجنة بصراحة على هذا الموضوع في عام 2013 في حلقة من Real Sports استضافها Bryant Gumbel. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports، 2023)

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، قام الكثير من الناس في مجتمع ألعاب القتال بتمييز مسابقات الألعاب التنافسية عن مسابقات الرياضات الإلكترونية الأخرى ذات الصلة بعالم الأعمال. استكشفت لجنة الرياضات الإلكترونية مع زوار من المجتمع الرياضي العالمي مستقبل الاعتراف بالرياضات الإلكترونية كرياضة حقيقية في بطولة العالم 2015، التي استضافها الاتحاد الرياضي العالمي.

في 25 يوليو 2001، أصبحت روسيا أول دولة تعترف بـ "الرياضة الإلكترونية" كنشاط رياضي شرعي. في 12 مارس 2004، تم تصنيفها مرة أخرى كرياضة بعد عدد من الإصلاحات في الرياضة الروسية. (سم. أمر الوكالة الفيدرالية للثقافة البدنية والرياضة من عام 2006) لأنه لم يلتزم بمعايير الرياضة المحدثة، تم إسقاطه من قائمة الرياضات في يوليو 2006. تم الاعتراف بالرياضات الإلكترونية مرة أخرى كفئة رياضية رسمية في أبريل 2017 بعد تصويت وزارة الرياضة لإضافة الرياضة الإلكترونية إلى قائمة الرياضات في يوليو 2016.

على الرغم من المخاوف من أن ألعاب الفيديو كانت تسبب الإدمان في ذلك الوقت، كانت الصين واحدة من أوائل الدول التي اعترفت بالرياضات الإلكترونية كرياضة شرعية في عام 2003. (Zhouxiang L.، 2016) عززت الحكومة الرياضات الإلكترونية من خلال السماح للاعبين بالمشاركة في الرياضة والتأهل للصين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ستساعد الصين رياضيي الرياضات الإلكترونية في الحصول على شهادة رسمية من وكالات اختبار المهارات المهنية التابعة لوزارة الموارد البشرية ووزارة الضمان الاجتماعي. في بداية عام 2019، تم الاعتراف بالرياضات الإلكترونية كعمل تجاري. بحلول يوليو 2019، سجل أكثر من 100000 شخص كرياضيين محترفين، وسيشارك أكثر من مليوني شخص في هذه المهنة بعد خمس سنوات من الآن، وفقًا للوزارة.

يتم تنظيم بعض الأحداث التجارية بتنسيق المسابقات الرياضية الدولية التقليدية من أجل الترويج للرياضات الإلكترونية كرياضة قانونية. تضمنت كل من دورة الألعاب الآسيوية للووشو وألعاب الهند الصينية، التي تلت ذلك، مسابقات شرعية. كانت ألعاب الهند الصينية لعام 2007 أول حدث رياضي متعدد الرياضات رفيع المستوى يستضيف مسابقات ميدالية رسمية جنبًا إلى جنب مع الرياضات التقليدية الأخرى. بصفتها حاملة أو حاملة ميدالية سابقة للمعارض، تم تضمين المعدات.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ستضم دورة الألعاب الآسيوية 2022، وهي ذروة المسابقات متعددة الرياضات في آسيا، أدوات مثل القتال على الميداليات. كتمهيد لأولمبياد 2022، تم تقديم ألعاب تعتمد على الألعاب مثل Hearthstone و StarCraft II و League of Legends كأحداث مذهلة في دورة الألعاب الآسيوية 2018. كان هناك ستة أحداث ميدالية إعلامية في دورة ألعاب جنوب شرق آسيا في عام 2019. إن حقيقة أن بطولات العالم للإبحار الشراعي أصبحت الآن تُقام بالكامل عبر الإنترنت منذ عام 2018 تدل على قبول هذه الرياضة من قبل الاتحادات الرياضية الرئيسية.

أول لعبة عبر الإنترنت تضم أكثر من مليون مستخدم فريد هي VendeeGlobe Shadow Rule 2020–2021. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports)

قرر الاتحاد السويدي للرياضة في يونيو 2021 رفض الاعتراف بالرياضات الإلكترونية كحدث رياضي، مما يعرض للخطر خطط كيفية تنظيم Valve للأمور من حيث السفر. كان من المقرر في البداية أن يقام المهرجان الدولي لعام 2021 في ستوكهولم في عام 2020. تأشيرات الرياضيين الدوليين على الرغم من أن Valve حاولت التنسيق مع السويد لاستضافة اللاعبين، إلا أن الحدث تم نقله في النهاية إلى رومانيا. ستقام مسابقات الرياضات الإلكترونية في دورة ألعاب الكومنولث في عام 2022 كاختبار لما قد يكون في النهاية برنامج ميدالية كاملة في عام 2026. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports، 2023)

الاعتراف بالرياضات الإلكترونية في الألعاب الأولمبية

يُعتقد أيضًا أن الألعاب الأولمبية تمنح الشرعية للرياضات الإلكترونية. عقدت اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية (IOC) مؤتمرًا في أكتوبر 2017 للاعتراف بالشعبية المتزايدة للرياضات الإلكترونية، وحقيقة أنه يمكن اعتبار الرياضات الإلكترونية التنافسية رياضة، وحقيقة أن المشاركين يتنافسون ضد الرياضيين في الرياضات التقليدية. التحضير والتدريب على المستوى اللازم لجميع الرياضات المعدلة للأولمبياد "مع قواعد ولوائح الحركة الأولمبية". (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports، 2023)

ذكر رئيس اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية (IOC) توماس باخ أن اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية ابتليت بالمنافسة الشديدة وعدم وجود هيئة عقوبات عالمية للرياضة. أقر توماس باخ بأن العديد من الرياضات الأولمبية نشأت من القتال الفعلي لكنه قال: "الرياضة هي التعبير المتحضر عن ذلك. إذا كانت لديك ألعاب إلكترونية تدور حول قتل شخص ما، فلا يمكن التوفيق بين ذلك وبين قيمنا الأولمبية". (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports، 2023) لهذا السبب، توصي اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية بالموافقة على أدوات أخرى للرياضات الإلكترونية التي تركز على محاكاة الألعاب الحقيقية مثل NBA 2K أو سلسلة FIFA.

لم تمنع مخاوف السلامة اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية من استكشاف إمكانية إدراجها في الألعاب الأولمبية المستقبلية. تم إثبات إمكانات المشهد الإعلامي من قبل اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية. قبل دورة الألعاب الأولمبية الشتوية لعام 2018 في بيونغ تشانغ، قامت إنتل برعاية StarCraft II والأحداث المتقدمة بالتعاون مع اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية، وشارك خمسة رياضيين من كوريا الجنوبية في تتابع الشعلة. كانت دورة الألعاب الأولمبية الصيفية لعام 2016 موجودة في ريو دي جانيرو مع عرض مماثل للرياضات الإلكترونية، لكن اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية لم تدعمها.

أكدت اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية أنها لا تعترف إلا بمسابقات الرياضات المحاكاة كأحداث أولمبية رسمية خلال القمة الأولمبية الثامنة في ديسمبر 2019، على الرغم من أنها ذكرت أيضًا أنها ستحقق في خيارين لمثل هذه المسابقات في المستقبل. الألعاب التي تستخدم الواقع الافتراضي أو المعزز وتتطلب الحركة (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports، 2023)

لجعل الألعاب الأولمبية أكثر جاذبية للجيل الأصغر سنًا، تدرس اللجنة المنظمة لدورة الألعاب الأولمبية الصيفية 2024 في باريس إدراج الرياضات الإلكترونية في الحدث بالتعاون مع اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية والعديد من منظمات الرياضات الإلكترونية الاحترافية.

يدعي أن هذه العناصر يجب تضمينها للحفاظ عليها. في النهاية، قررت اللجنة المنظمة أنه من السابق لأوانه إدخال الرياضات الإلكترونية في ألعاب 2024 كحدث ميدالية، لكنها لم تستبعد الأنشطة الأخرى المتعلقة بالرياضات الإلكترونية خلال الألعاب.

من حيث الإدارة والتنظيم الدوليين، تتنافس منظمات مثل الرابطة العالمية للرياضات الاحترافية والاتحادات الدولية على أعلى مرتبة. قد يكون من الضروري، كرابطة عالمية للمنظمات الرياضية، وضع معايير إضافية تلبي المتطلبات التنظيمية لرياضات معينة بالإضافة إلى مجموعة من المعايير المعترف بها عالميًا من قبل جميع مجموعات الرياضات الإلكترونية.

ثقافة الإنترنت في الرياضات الإلكترونية

أصبحت ثقافة الإنترنت جزءًا لا يتجزأ من ظاهرة الرياضات الإلكترونية، والتي شهدت ارتفاعًا كبيرًا في شعبيتها على مدار السنوات القليلة الماضية. الرياضات الإلكترونية هي شكل من أشكال ألعاب الفيديو التنافسية التي تطورت لتصبح ظاهرة عالمية، تجذب ملايين اللاعبين والمتفرجين والمستثمرين من جميع أنحاء العالم. أدى ظهور الرياضات الإلكترونية إلى ظهور ثقافة فريدة وديناميكية على الإنترنت متشابكة بعمق مع ثقافة الإنترنت الأوسع.

التركيز على المجتمعات عبر الإنترنت والشبكات الاجتماعية هو أحد الجوانب المميزة لثقافة الإنترنت في الرياضات الإلكترونية. يستخدم اللاعبون والمشجعون والمهنيون في مجال الأعمال منصات التواصل الاجتماعي وغيرها من المنتديات عبر الإنترنت للتواصل مع بعضهم البعض وإجراء مناقشات حول الرياضات الإلكترونية. توفر هذه المجتمعات عبر الإنترنت مكانًا للأشخاص للتفاعل وتبادل الأفكار والمشاركة في مجموعة من الأنشطة المتعلقة بالرياضات الإلكترونية.

جانب آخر ملحوظ في ثقافة الإنترنت في الرياضات الإلكترونية هو استخدام الميمات والعامية وغيرها من أشكال الاتصال عبر الإنترنت. استخدام الميمات (ميمات الرياضات الإلكترونية هي شكل من أشكال الفكاهة على الإنترنت غالبًا ما تتخذ شكل صور أو مقاطع فيديو أو عبارات جذابة، ويتم إنشاؤها ومشاركتها من قبل اللاعبين والمشجعين والمهنيين في الصناعة على حد سواء) وغيرها من أشكال الإنترنت الفكاهة منتشرة بشكل خاص في مجتمع الرياضات الإلكترونية، حيث غالبًا ما يستخدم اللاعبون والمتفرجون الفكاهة للترابط والتواصل مع بعضهم البعض. أصبحت اللغة العامية (اللغة العامية للرياضات الإلكترونية هي شكل من أشكال المصطلحات التي ظهرت في سياق ألعاب الفيديو التنافسية، وغالبًا ما يستخدمها اللاعبون والمعلقون والمتحمسون كوسيلة للتواصل مع بعضهم البعض والتعبير عن هوياتهم ووجهات نظرهم الفريدة) وغيرها من أشكال الاتصال عبر الإنترنت أيضًا جزءًا من معجم الرياضات الإلكترونية، مع العديد من المصطلحات والعبارات الفريدة لمجتمع الرياضات الإلكترونية.

أدت ثقافة الإنترنت في الرياضات الإلكترونية أيضًا إلى ظهور أشكال جديدة من إنشاء المحتوى وتوزيعه، مثل البث المباشر ومحتوى الفيديو والبودكاست. استفاد العديد من اللاعبين والمهنيين في الصناعة من هذه المنصات لبناء علاماتهم التجارية الشخصية وإنشاء محتوى جذاب يتردد

صداها لدى جمهورهم. أدى ظهور منشئي المحتوى أيضًا إلى ظهور أشكال جديدة من الرعاية والإعلان، حيث تتطلع العلامات التجارية إلى الشراكة مع شخصيات الرياضات الإلكترونية الشهيرة للوصول إلى جمهورها المستهدف.

ومع ذلك، فإن ثقافة الإنترنت في الرياضات الإلكترونية لا تخلو من التحديات. يمكن أن يجعل إخفاء الهوية وإمكانية الوصول إلى الإنترنت من السهل على الجهات الفاعلة السيئة مضايقة الآخرين أو التنمر عليهم، ويمكن أن تؤدي الطبيعة التنافسية للرياضات الإلكترونية في بعض الأحيان إلى سلوك سام بين اللاعبين والمتفرجين.

دفعت هذه القضايا العديد من الأشخاص في مجتمع الرياضات الإلكترونية إلى الدعوة إلى مزيد من التنوع والشمول والسلوك المسؤول عبر الإنترنت.

يوضح كل هذا مدى الاختلاف الجوهري بين الرياضات الإلكترونية والرياضات التقليدية، لكنهما يشتركان أيضًا في الكثير. تلعب الفرق ألعابًا مجدولة خلال بعض المواسم التي تؤدي إلى التصفيات والمنافسات الدولية المهمة. الآن بعد أن أصبح المزيد من اللاعبين بموجب عقد، تقوم المنظمة باستثمارات أكبر في مقرها ومرافق التدريب الخاصة بها.

تزداد شعبية Esports Adaptive Creation وتجذب عشرات الآلاف من المشاهدين. منذ البداية، كان لهم حضور دولي.

تواصل الرياضات الإلكترونية الحصول على حصة متزايدة من جداول أحداث الهيئات الرياضية الدولية الكبرى، ومن المتوقع أن تشارك رسميًا في دورة ألعاب الكومنولث 2026 في فيكتوريا، أستراليا. تقول اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية إن احتمال فوز الرياضات الإلكترونية بميداليات في أولمبياد 2024 سابق لأوانه، لكن أدائها في ألعاب لوس أنجلوس 2028 لا يزال مفتوحًا.

التبرعات هي حاليًا المصدر الرئيسي للدخل لغالبية كبيرة من المشاركين. جاءت غالبية التبرعات المبكرة من مساهمين متواضعين شاهدوا اللاعبين يتنافسون عبر خدمة البث. ومع ذلك، فإن هذه التبرعات لا شيء مقارنة بميزانيات الرعاية والمصادقة للشركات السخية التي يتم إنفاقها على التسويق. يتمتع رياضيو الرياضات الإلكترونية بنفس القدرة على بيع أسمائهم أو صورهم أو مهاراتهم لشركات الإعلان مثل الرياضيين التقليديين. ظهر لاعب League of Legends الصيني Ji-Hao "Uzi" Jian RNG مؤخرًا على لوحة إعلانات لفيلم Michael Jordan Shut Up and Dribble.

بدأ الرياضيون الكبار من الرياضات التقليدية في الظهور في فرق رياضية في الآونة الأخيرة. تم شراء نادي Overwatch ومقره بوسطن مقابل 20 مليون دولار في عام 2018 من قبل الملكية المشتركة لمايكل جوردان لنادي Liquid وروبرت كرافت، مالك فريق نيو إنجلاند باتريوتس.

تدخل الشركات أيضا. تستثمر كل شركة في العالم، بما في ذلك Tinder و Louis Vuitton و Nike و Adidas، في الرعاية. وفي الوقت نفسه، ستزيد الرياضات الإلكترونية فقط من إجمالي إيرادات السوق.

في الختام، أصبحت ثقافة الإنترنت جانبًا محددًا لظاهرة الرياضات الإلكترونية، حيث شكلت الطريقة التي يتفاعل بها اللاعبون والمتفرجون والمهنيون في الصناعة مع بعضهم البعض ومع المجتمع الأوسع. في حين أن ثقافة الإنترنت خلقت فرصًا وتحديات جديدة لصناعة الرياضات الإلكترونية، إلا أنها ساعدت أيضًا في تعزيز مجتمع ديناميكي ومنخرط من لاعبي الرياضات الإلكترونية والمتحمسين في جميع أنحاء العالم.

الخلاصة

لقد حظيت صناعة الرياضات الإلكترونية المزدهرة باهتمام كبير في السنوات الأخيرة، حيث يشارك عدد متزايد من الأفراد في ألعاب الفيديو التنافسية كلاعبين ومتفرجين ومستثمرين. في حين أن نمو الرياضات الإلكترونية كان سريعًا، إلا أن مسارها المستقبلي لا يزال موضوعًا ذا اهتمام كبير ومناقشة داخل الأوساط الأكاديمية والصناعية.

تساهم عوامل مختلفة في إمكانية النمو المستدام في عالم الرياضات الإلكترونية. أحد العوامل الرئيسية هو زيادة إمكانية الوصول إلى التكنولوجيا والإنترنت، مما سهل إنشاء مجتمعات عالمية من اللاعبين ومكن من بث وتدفق أحداث الرياضات الإلكترونية إلى جمهور كبير. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، قد يؤدي تطوير تقنيات جديدة، مثل الواقع الافتراضي والواقع المعزز، إلى توسيع إمكانيات تجارب الألعاب الغامرة، مما يعزز جاذبية الرياضات الإلكترونية لجمهور أوسع.

علاوة على ذلك، اجتذبت صناعة الرياضات الإلكترونية استثمارات كبيرة من مجموعة من أصحاب المصلحة، بما في ذلك أصحاب رؤوس الأموال الاستثمارية وشركات الإعلام والفرق الرياضية التقليدية، مما يؤكد بشكل أكبر إمكانية استمرار النمو والابتكار في هذا المجال. دعم هذا الاستثمار تطوير بطولات وبطولات ومنصات ألعاب جديدة، بالإضافة إلى إنشاء فرق محترفة وعقود لاعبين.

ومع ذلك، فإن مستقبل الرياضات الإلكترونية يخضع أيضًا للتحديات والشكوك المحتملة. لا يزال تأثير التقنيات الناشئة على الصناعة، مثل إمكانية ظهور منصات ألعاب جديدة أو تطور مشاهدة الرياضات الإلكترونية، غير مؤكد. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، قد تتطور العلاقة بين الرياضات الإلكترونية والرياضات التقليدية، حيث أعربت بعض المنظمات الرياضية عن اهتمامها بدمج الرياضات الإلكترونية في عروضها، بينما لا يزال البعض الآخر متشككًا.

بشكل عام، يعد مستقبل الرياضات الإلكترونية في العالم موضوعًا معقدًا ومتعدد الأوجه، مع مجموعة من النتائج المحتملة. ومع ذلك، بالنظر إلى المسار الحالي للنمو والابتكار، يبدو من المرجح أن تستمر الرياضات الإلكترونية في لعب دور مهم في عالم الألعاب والترفيه في السنوات القادمة.

المادة الثانية

تلبية احتياجات مستهلكي الرياضات الإلكترونية: منظور الاستخدامات والإشباعات

توماس فايس قسم إدارة الأعمال والإعلام والتكنولوجيا

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الملخص تقع خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية بين التعاون ـ المميز للعديد من الأنشطة الترفيهية ـ والمنافسة ـ ذات الصلة بخلق السلوك الترفيهي. وهذا يثير التحدي لمقدمي خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية لتقديم خدمات تلبي احتياجات المستهلكين. في ضوء هذه الخلفية، نطبق نظرية الاستخدامات والإشباعات (Rayburn and Palmgreen، 1984) ونحقق في الإشباعات التنافسية والترفيهية التي تدفع الاستخدام المستمر للرياضات الإلكترونية. نجري عشر مقابلات متعمقة مع خبراء وتحليل انحدار متعدد بناءً على بيانات المسح التي تم جمعها من 360 لاعبًا في الرياضات الإلكترونية. من خلال المنافسة والتحدي والهروب، فإن كل من الإشباعات التنافسية والترفيهية تدفع الاستخدام المستمر للرياضات الإلكترونية.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الألعاب عبر الإنترنت، الرياضات الإلكترونية، الاستخدامات والإشباعات.

1 المقدمة تشير الرياضات الإلكترونية إلى لعب الألعاب التنافسية وفقًا للقواعد المقبولة عمومًا للبطولات والبطولات على الإنترنت (Weiss، 2008). إنها تسمح بتكوين العلاقات الاجتماعية وتنمي القدرات البدنية للأفراد. يستضيف مزودو خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية مثل Electronic Sports League و National Gaming League و European Xtreme Gamers منصات الرياضات الإلكترونية. إنهم ينظمون وأحيانًا يبثون أيضًا أحداث الرياضات الإلكترونية. في هذا الصدد، يقدم مزودو خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية خدمات في قطاع B2B وفي قطاع B2C. فيما يتعلق بخدمات B2B، يبيع مزودو خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية مساحات إعلانية على مواقعهم الإلكترونية. كما أنها تقدم حقوق التسمية لأحداث الرياضات الإلكترونية. في الآونة الأخيرة، قاموا بالتنويع نحو إنتاج الفيديو و IPTV وخدمات الويب.

في سياق B2C، يبني مزودو خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية أعمالهم على عروض مجانية للعب مع معاملات صغيرة وخدمات اشتراك. وعادة ما يديرون العديد من البطولات المختلفة التي يتم فيها لعب مجموعة متنوعة من الألعاب المختلفة ويهدفون إلى تغطية النطاق الكامل للرياضات الإلكترونية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، غالبًا ما يقدم مزودو خدمات الرياضات الإلكترونية أيضًا خدمات ذات قيمة مضافة مثل تطبيقات الصوت أو منتديات الألعاب.

لاعبو الرياضات الإلكترونية هم مستهلكون يتشاركون النصائح والحيل على الإنترنت أثناء التنافس في ألعاب مثل FIFA أو Counterstrike من أجل المال والهيبة. على عكس الأنشطة الرياضية الواقعية، غالبًا ما يفتقرون إلى القرب المادي ويتواصلون بشكل أساسي من خلال منتديات الألعاب. وبالتالي، ينغمس لاعبو الرياضات الإلكترونية في بيئة افتراضية.

في حين أن البحث في مجال الرياضات الإلكترونية لم يجذب سوى القليل من الاهتمام العلمي حتى الآن (Ho and Huang, 2009; Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Weiss and Loebbecke, 2008)، فقد تطور الأدب حول استخدام الألعاب عبر الإنترنت بشكل عام ضمن موضوعين رئيسيين.

الموضوع الأول هو القبول والاستخدام (Choi و Kim، 2004 ؛ Hsu و Lu، 2004). من خلال فحص العمليات النفسية، تؤكد الدراسات التجريبية لاستخدام الألعاب عبر الإنترنت على أهمية أنواع مختلفة من التعاون أو التبعية بين اللاعبين (على سبيل المثال، Ho and Huang، 2009؛ Hsu and Lu، 2007).

الموضوع الثاني، الذي يقع ضمنه هذا البحث، هو الاستخدامات والإشباعات. تسلط الدراسات التي تعتبر اللاعبين مستخدمين نشطين للألعاب عبر الإنترنت الضوء على الاستخدام المستمر للألعاب عبر الإنترنت من خلال إشباع حاجة اللاعبين (Yee، 2007). ومع ذلك، نادرًا ما يتناول تيار البحث هذا السياقات التنافسية عبر الإنترنت. على وجه الخصوص، فإنه يستبعد التحقيق في إشباعات الاحتياجات السلبية مثل الهروب، والتي ترتبط عادةً بإدمان اللعبة، في السياقات التنافسية (Chen و Chen و Ross، 2010؛ Jansz و Tanis، 2007).

ومع ذلك، توفر البيئات التنافسية تجربة استخدام مختلفة للاعبين مقارنة ببيئة اللعبة التعاونية. على عكس الألعاب التعاونية عبر الإنترنت، تتضمن الرياضات الإلكترونية مشاهدة الألعاب على مواقع الويب ومقابلة الآخرين بانتظام في البطولات الواقعية.

من خلال تسليط الضوء على إشباع الاحتياجات في البيئة التنافسية للرياضات الإلكترونية، نهدف إلى تقديم مساهمة في تيار الاستخدامات والإشباعات في أبحاث الألعاب عبر الإنترنت. وبشكل أكثر تحديدًا، نحن نحقق في الإشباعات التنافسية والترفيهية التي تدفع الاستخدام المستمر للرياضات الإلكترونية؟ بناءً على المقابلات النوعية وتحليل الانحدار المتعدد، نفحص توقعات اللاعبين في الرياضات الإلكترونية واحتياجاتهم وتعرضهم لإشباعات الاحتياجات المقابلة (Weiss، 2009).

1 الخلفية النظرية

1.1 نهج الاستخدامات والإشباعات ينبثق نهج الاستخدامات والإشباعات (Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1984) من أبحاث تأثيرات وسائل الإعلام وهو موجه نحو إدراك المعلومات والموقف والسلوك للأفراد (Ruggiero, 2000). يفحص إشباعات احتياجات الأفراد فيما يتعلق باستخدام وسائل الإعلام فيما يتعلق بدورات الحياة والتغيرات المقابلة في المواقف والاحتياجات.

ويستند نهج الاستخدامات والإشباعات على افتراضات أن الاختلافات في تكاليف استهلاك وسائل الإعلام الجماهيري تحدث بين مختلف أعضاء الجمهور وأن هذه الاختلافات ترتبط بعوامل أخرى ذات صلة بالاتصال (Ruggiero, 2000). ويستند إلى ثلاث ركائز رئيسية، (1) المعتقدات والتقييمات، (2) إشباعات الاحتياجات المطلوبة، و(3) إشباعات الاحتياجات التي تم الحصول عليها. تصف المعتقدات والتقييمات الاحتمالية الذاتية للأفراد بأن الوسيلة تمتلك خصائص مميزة. في المقابل، فإن البحث عن الإشباعات التي تؤدي إلى استهلاك وسائل الإعلام هو نتيجة للمعتقدات. وأخيرًا، يشير إشباع الاحتياجات التي تم الحصول عليها إلى النتيجة الفردية للاستهلاك الفعلي لوسائل الإعلام.

يختلف نهج الاستخدامات والإشباعات عن دراسات القبول والاستخدام من خلال نمذجة الأفراد كمستخدمين نشطين لنظم المعلومات (Ruggiero, 2000). وعادة ما يقوم بتجميع إشباعات الاحتياجات الأساسية الناتجة في دوافع خارجية وداخلية (Ryan and Deci, 2000). يشير الدافع الخارجي إلى "القيام بشيء ما لأنه يؤدي إلى نتيجة قابلة للفصل" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 55). ويشير إلى إشباعات الاحتياجات مثل الاحتياجات الشخصية التكاملية والمنفعة الاجتماعية واحتياجات المراقبة (Ruggiero, 2000; Sangwan, 2005; Song et al., 2004). في المقابل، يُعرَّف الدافع الجوهري بأنه "القيام بنشاط من أجل إشباعاته المتأصلة بدلاً من تحقيق بعض العواقب القابلة للفصل" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 56). وهو يشير إلى إشباعات الاحتياجات مثل الاحتياجات العاطفية والمعرفية والهوية الشخصية والتكاملية الاجتماعية وتخفيف التوتر/التحويل (Wei and Lo, 2006).

ومع ذلك، فإن التجميع الانتقائي لإشباعات الاحتياجات الأساسية إلى فئات وفقًا للدوافع الخارجية والداخلية لا يصمد عندما تخدم نظم المعلومات أغراضًا ترفيهية. في حالة الألعاب عبر الإنترنت، على سبيل المثال، تشير احتياجات اللاعبين الاجتماعية التكاملية للانتماء إلى مجموعة ما جزئيًا إلى إشباعات الاحتياجات الخارجية مثل الاحتياجات الشخصية التكاملية أو احتياجات المنفعة الاجتماعية (Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Yee, 2007). في المقابل، قد تشكل احتياجات المراقبة إشباعات للاحتياجات الجوهرية لأنها تدعم تكوين "ذات افتراضية" (Cerulo، 1997).

1.2 إشباعات الاحتياجات في الألعاب أدبيات الاستخدامات والإشباعات حول استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية نادرة. ومع ذلك، فإن العديد من المصادر (مثل Mäyrä, 2008; Phillips et al., 1995; Sherry and Lucas, 2003; Yee, 2007) تدرس الإشباعات التي تم الحصول عليها من خلال الألعاب عبر الإنترنت والألعاب التنافسية غير المتصلة بالإنترنت بشكل عام. تسلط هذه الدراسات الضوء على عشرة من إشباعات الاحتياجات: خمسة تنافسية (المنافسة، والإنجاز، والتحدي، والسمعة، والمكافآت) موجهة نحو الازدهار من خلال المنافسة، وخمسة ترفيهية

(العلاقة الاجتماعية، والهروب، وتحقيق الذات، والمرح، والهوية الافتراضية) المتعلقة بالانغماس والتواصل الاجتماعي (Sherry and Lucas 2003; Yee 2007).

فيما يتعلق بإشباعات الحاجة التنافسية، تشير المنافسة إلى المنافسة وجهاً لوجه التي تنطوي على السعي إلى السلطة في مجموعات مفتوحة. على غرار السياقات التنظيمية (Baer et al. 2010)، فإنه يحدد الاستخدام المستمر في بيئات الألعاب (Lucas and Sherry, 2004; Sherry and Lucas, 2003; Taylor, 2006). الإنجاز يدل على تحقيق الأهداف الشخصية داخل اللعبة. إنه ذو أهمية خاصة لاستخدام الألعاب التنافسية غير المتصلة بالإنترنت (Sherry and Lucas, 2003). يعكس التحدي التحديات التي يحددها اللاعبون بأنفسهم داخل اللعبة والتي تستخدم لتحسين مستوى المهارة الشخصية. ترتبط هذه التحديات التي يحددها اللاعبون ارتباطًا وثيقًا بالتقدم داخل اللعبة (Mäyrä, 2008) ويقال إنها تحدد استخدام الألعاب (Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Sherry and Lucas, 2003). تحدد السمعة مكانة الأفراد داخل المجتمع (Wasko و Faraj، 2005). كإشباع للحاجة، فهو أمر بالغ الأهمية لاستخدام الألعاب عبر الإنترنت (Yee, 2007). المكافآت هي فوائد استخدام نظام المعلومات (Kankanhalli, Tan, Wei, and 2005). على هذا النحو، فإنها تدفع استخدام الألعاب التنافسية غير المتصلة بالإنترنت (Griffiths, 1991).

فيما يتعلق بإشباعات الاحتياجات الترفيهية، تشير العلاقة الاجتماعية إلى دافع اللاعبين للعب الألعاب من أجل الحصول على التقدير الاجتماعي من حيث التفاعل الاجتماعي والعلاقات طويلة الأمد. إنه يدفع نظم المعلومات (Brown, Venkatesh, and Bala, 2006; Venkatesh and Brown, 2001)، والوسائط (Wei and Lo, 2006)، واستخدام الألعاب عبر الإنترنت (Hsu and Lu, 2007; Yee 2007). يشير الهروب إلى استخدام البيئة الافتراضية لقمع التفكير في مشاكل العالم الحقيقي وتجنب المسؤولية (Chen, Chen, and Ross, 2010; Yee, 2007). في سياقات الألعاب، يتضمن انغماس اللاعبين في الواقع الافتراضي (Taylor, 2006). يصف تحقيق الذات الرضا غير الآلي عن احتياجات الأفراد لتأييد معتقداتهم ومواقفهم الخاصة (Ruggiero, 2000). إنه يحدد الاستخدام الترفيهي لنظم المعلومات (Heijden .d.v, 2004; Jansz and Tanis, 2007). تدل المتعة على المتعة المتصورة للاعبين عند اللعب من أجل الألعاب نفسها (Phillips et al. 1995). إنه المحرك المهيمن للاستخدام الترفيهي لنظم المعلومات (Heijden .d.v, 2004) والألعاب عبر الإنترنت (Jansz and Tanis, 2007). تعكس الهوية الافتراضية قدرة اللاعبين على الدخول في أدوار مختلفة والقيام بأشياء غير قادرين عليها في الحياة الواقعية (Sherry and Lucas, 2003). بالنسبة للاعبين، فإنه يمثل "آخر" قابل للبقاء في تكوين الذات (Cerulo, 1997).

1 نهج البحث

بناءً على مراجعة الأدبيات حول إشباعات الاحتياجات في الألعاب، قمنا بتنظيم بحثنا في خطوتين، جولة من المقابلات النوعية شبه المنظمة وتحليل انحدار متعدد كمي يعتمد على بيانات المسح.

أولاً، من أجل التحقق مما إذا كانت إشباعات الاحتياجات المحددة في الأدبيات مناسبة لدراسة حول الرياضات الإلكترونية، أجرينا مقابلات متعمقة شبه منظمة مع عشرة خبراء في الصناعة من أكبر دوري للرياضات الإلكترونية في أوروبا في كولونيا بألمانيا في أوائل مارس 2008. نظرًا للطبيعة الاستكشافية لدراستنا، اتفقنا على الحفاظ على سرية أسماء الأشخاص الذين تمت مقابلتهم (متوفرة عند الطلب). نتيجة لجولة المقابلة، تم الحكم بالإجماع على خمسة فقط من إشباعات الاحتياجات العشرة ذات صلة بالرياضات الإلكترونية. كانت الإشباعات الخمسة المختارة هي المنافسة والتحدي والعلاقة الاجتماعية والهروب والمرح (انظر الشكل 1).

1 تحليل البيانات

لقد اختبرنا صلاحية التقاء وتمايز المتغيرات من خلال AVE. يجب أن يتجاوز AVE من البناء 0.5 لإظهار صلاحية التقاء كافية. المتغيرات المستقلة لدينا، باستثناء المتعة، تتجاوز هذا الحد (انظر الجدول 1). لذلك استبعدنا المتعة من تحليل الانحدار المتعدد الإضافي واستمرنا في المتغيرات المستقلة الأربعة: المنافسة والتحدي والعلاقة الاجتماعية والهروب.

دافع الاستخدام	المنافسة	التحدي	العلاقة الاجتماعية	الهروب	المتعة
المنافسة	0.794	0.294	0.014	0.023	0.009
التحدي	0.294	0.794	0.073	0.063	0.027
العلاقة الاجتماعية	0.014	0.073	0.648	0.064	0.011
الهروب	0.023	0.063	0.064	0.569	0.007
المتعة	0.009	0.027	0.011	0.007	0.110

الجدول 1: AVE والارتباطات المربعة

لتقييم صلاحية التمييز، يجب أن تكون الارتباطات المربعة بين بناءين أقل إحصائيًا من AVE بواسطة تركيبات فردية. جميع الفروق المشتركة أقل بشكل ملحوظ من AVE للمتغيرات المستقلة الأربعة المتبقية (انظر الجدول 1).

العينة N = 360 كافية لإجراء تحليل انحدار متعدد (الحد الأدنى N ≥ 46) حيث أن R2 يتجاوز 0.023 (Green 1991). يتم إعطاء ملاءمة النموذج على مستوى الأهمية p <0.001 كما كشف عنها اختبار t و F (قيمة F = 14.856).

لضمان إمكانية إعادة إنتاج نتائج تحليل الانحدار المتعدد لدينا، تُظهر مصفوفة التغاير لمتغيراتنا المستقلة أن المتغيرات المستقلة تمتلك اتجاهات تأثير متطابقة (الجدول 2).

دافع الاستخدام	المنافسة	التحدي	العلاقة الاجتماعية	الهروب
المنافسة	3.062	1.466	0.348	0.507
التحدي	1.466	2.377	0.694	0.735
العلاقة الاجتماعية	0.348	0.694	2.790	0.805
الهروب	0.507	0.735	0.805	3.631

الجدول 2: مصفوفة التغاير لتحليل الانحدار المتعدد للمتغيرات المستقلة

من خلال تحليل الانحدار المتعدد، وجدنا أن أحد المتغيرات المستقلة الأربعة غير ذي دلالة بناءً على إحصائية p) p> 0.01؛ الجدول 3). المتغيرات المستقلة الثلاثة المتبقية، المنافسة والتحدي والهروب، مهمة (ع <0.01). المتغيرات المستقلة الخطية (VIF <10) تفسر 15.7٪ (R2) من التباين في استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية. نظرًا لأننا قمنا بقياس التركيبات بشكل عكسي، فإن جميع المتغيرات المستقلة الثلاثة تؤثر بشكل إيجابي على استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية.

دافع الاستخدام	المتوسط	الانحراف	VIF	Std. ß	قيمة t	قيمة p	Sig.

		المعياري				
المنافسة	2.858	1.681	1.354	-0.213	-3.561	0.000	< 0.01
التحدي	2.771	1.484	1.461	-0.180	-2.892	0.004	< 0.01
العلاقة الاجتماعية	2.920	1.651	1.113	-0.038	0.042	0.966	< 0.01
الهروب	4.457	1.897	1.127	-0.144	-2.634	0.009	< 0.01

الجدول 3: الأهمية و Betas لتحليل الانحدار المتعدد للمتغيرات المستقلة

باختصار، يوضح تحليلنا أن المنافسة والتحدي والهروب هي إشباعات للاحتياجات يتم الحصول عليها من خلال الرياضات الإلكترونية (انظر الشكل 2).

الشكل 2: نتائج الانحدار

2 المناقشة

وفقًا لدراستنا، تؤثر المنافسة والتحدي والهروب بشكل إيجابي على استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية (الشكل 2). تتوافق النتيجة المتعلقة بالمنافسة مع Jansz و Tanis (2007) و Sherry و Lucas (2003) و Yee (2007). ويؤكد أن اللاعبين يتوقعون أن توفر الرياضات الإلكترونية فرصًا للحصول على السلطة (Taylor, 2006).

تعكس أهمية التحدي أيضًا الأدبيات (Jansz and Tanis, 2007). ومع ذلك، على عكس Mäyrä (2008)، الذي يؤكد على التحديات الناشئة عن الاتجاهات الجديدة داخل اللعبة، فإنه يسلط الضوء على دلالة الرياضات الإلكترونية الرياضية. نظرًا لأن ألعاب الرياضات الإلكترونية هي ألعاب ذات مستوى واحد، فإننا نخمن أن تحدي الذات لا يتعلق بتأكيد الذات من خلال إتقان الألعاب بل يتعلق بالسعي وراء الشهرة داخل مجتمع الرياضات الإلكترونية.

على غرار Chen و Chen و Ross (2010) و Yee (2007)، نجد أن الهروب يؤثر بشكل إيجابي على استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية. ومع ذلك، قد يجادل المرء فيما إذا كان الهروب في سياق الرياضات الإلكترونية ينتمي إلى إشباعات الاحتياجات الترفيهية (Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Sherry and Lucas 2003). على عكس بيئات الألعاب التعاونية عبر الإنترنت، لا يتعلق الهروب في الرياضات الإلكترونية بالتجربة الاجتماعية المتمثلة في الانزلاق إلى أدوار الصور الرمزية وأن تصبح "الآخر" الافتراضي الذي يرغب اللاعبون في أن يكونوا عليه (Cerulo, 1997; Yee, 2007). بدلاً من ذلك، يتعلق الأمر بجمع قدرات الصور الرمزية عالية المهارة أثناء الانغماس في العالم الافتراضي من أجل اكتساب ميزة تنافسية، أي أداة تؤدي إلى القوة داخل اللعبة.

تجدر الإشارة إلى أن العلاقة الاجتماعية غير ذات دلالة داخل تحليل الانحدار المتعدد لدينا (انظر الجدول 2). هذا يتناقض مع الأدبيات السابقة حول الألعاب (Griffiths, Davies, and Chappell, 2003)، والقبول والاستخدام (Brown, Venkatesh, and Bala, 2006)، والاستخدامات والإشباعات (Sangwan, 2005). يبدو أن وظيفة العلاقة الاجتماعية التي يتم التحدث عنها كثيرًا في الألعاب (Griffiths, Davies, and Chappell, 2003) تتلاشى. وبالتالي، يجب أن نرى ما إذا كان التفاعل الاجتماعي في الرياضات الإلكترونية يخدم تحسين أداء اللاعبين بدلاً من التواصل الاجتماعي.

المنهج البحثي:

استنادًا إلى مراجعة الأدبيات حول إشباع الاحتياجات في الألعاب الإلكترونية، تم تنظيم البحث في خطوتين:

1. الخطوة الأولى: قمنا بإجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة معمقة مع عشرة خبراء من أكبر دوري للرياضات الإلكترونية في أوروبا في كولونيا، ألمانيا، في مارس 2008. الهدف كان التحقق مما إذا كانت احتياجات الإشباع المحددة في الأدبيات مناسبة لدراسة الرياضات الإلكترونية. بعد إجراء المقابلات، تم تحديد خمس فئات للإشباع التي تعتبر ذات صلة بالرياضات الإلكترونية وهي: المنافسة، التحدي، العلاقة الاجتماعية، الهروب، والمرح.

2. الخطوة الثانية: قمنا بإجراء تحليل انحدار استنادًا إلى بيانات استطلاع تم جمعها من لاعبي الرياضات الإلكترونية. تم تصميم مقاييس المسح باستخدام مقياس ليكرت من 7 نقاط لتقييم استمرارية استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية. تم جمع بيانات الاستطلاع من 360 لاعبًا في بطولة **World Cyber Games** في نوفمبر 2008.

لتحليل البيانات، استخدمنا SPSS 18 وتحققنا من الاعتماد الخطي بين المتغيرات المستقلة باستخدام **مؤشر تضخم التباين (VIF)**. ثم تم تطبيق تحليل الانحدار المتعدد باستخدام المعاملات الموحدة لتجنب التشويش الناتج عن تباين الأبعاد.

التحليل البياني:

تم اختبار الصلاحية التقاربية والتمايزية باستخدام AVE (متوسط التباين المقتبس). لتحقيق الصلاحية التقاربية يجب أن يكون AVE أعلى من 0.5. جميع المتغيرات المستقلة باستثناء "المرح" تجاوزت هذا الحد، لذا تم استبعاد "المرح" من التحليل. استمر التحليل بأربعة متغيرات مستقلة هي: المنافسة، التحدي، العلاقة الاجتماعية، والهروب.

نتائج التحليل:

- المتغيرات المستقلة مثل المنافسة، التحدي، والهروب لها تأثير كبير على استخدام الرياضات الإلكترونية. بينما لم يكن للعلاقة الاجتماعية تأثير كبير في هذا السياق.

- نتائج التحليل أظهرت أن التحديات والمنافسة والهروب عوامل رئيسية تؤثر بشكل إيجابي على المشاركة في الرياضات الإلكترونية.

المناقشة:

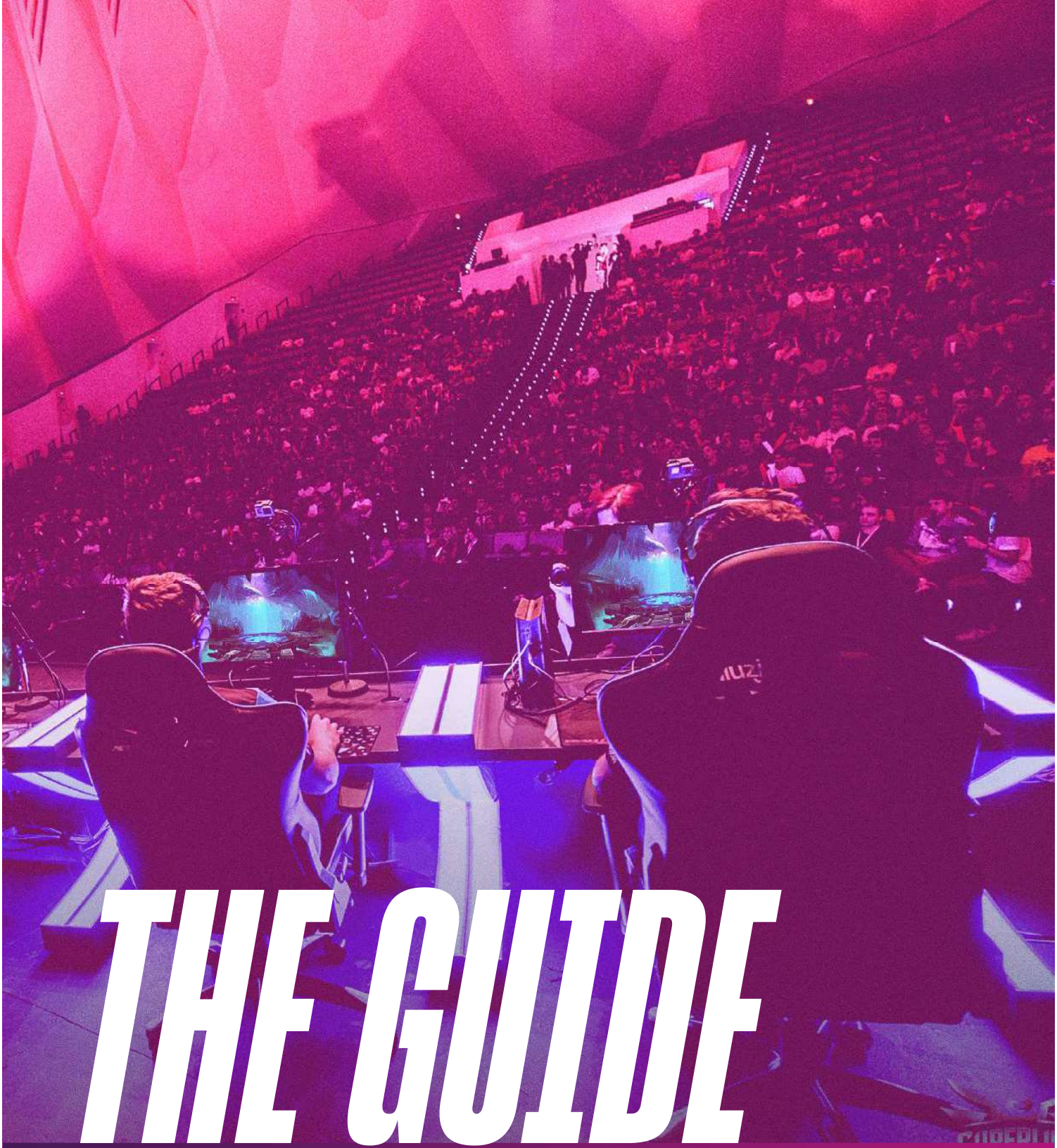
الدراسة تؤكد على أن المنافسة والتحدي والهروب هي عوامل تحفيزية رئيسية للاعبين في الرياضات الإلكترونية. الدراسة توضح أن العلاقة الاجتماعية لم تكن مؤثرة كما كان متوقعًا، مما يثير التساؤلات حول دور التفاعل الاجتماعي في الرياضات الإلكترونية.

الملخص والبحوث المستقبلية

بشكل عام، نكشف عن هيمنة إشباع الاحتياجات التنافسية في سياق الرياضات الإلكترونية؛ حيث ينظر اللاعبون إلى الرياضات الإلكترونية باعتبارها نشاطًا تنافسيًا (فايس، 2009). تسلط هذه الرؤية في حد ذاتها الضوء على خصوصيات رقمنة السياقات الراسخة ونقلها إلى العالم "الإلكتروني".

قد ينتقد المرء أن النتيجة الإجمالية التي توصلنا إليها قد تكون بسبب حقيقة أننا نجري استطلاعًا للاعبي الرياضات الإلكترونية من الدرجة الأولى. على سبيل المثال، قد تؤدي إعادة إجراء

دراستنا مع لاعبي كرة القدم في العالم الحقيقي إلى نتائج مماثلة إذا سألنا المشاركين في دوري الأبطال فقط. ومع ذلك، بالنظر إلى الرياضات في العالم "الإلكتروني"، يبدو أن معظم الأنشطة منظمة في دوريات. نظرًا لوجود عدد أقل بكثير من لاعبي الرياضات الإلكترونية مقارنة بلاعبي كرة القدم في العالم الحقيقي، يبدو أن نسبة عالية من لاعبي الرياضات الإلكترونية يسعون بشكل أساسي وراء إشباع الاحتياجات التنافسية. في البحوث المستقبلية، قد يرغب المرء في مواجهة قضية التكرار المحتمل بشكل أكبر. يبدو لنا أن الأمر يتعلق بشكل أساسي بموضوع أخذ العينات، والذي يرتبط ارتباطًا وثيقًا بتصميم بحث محدد للسياق.



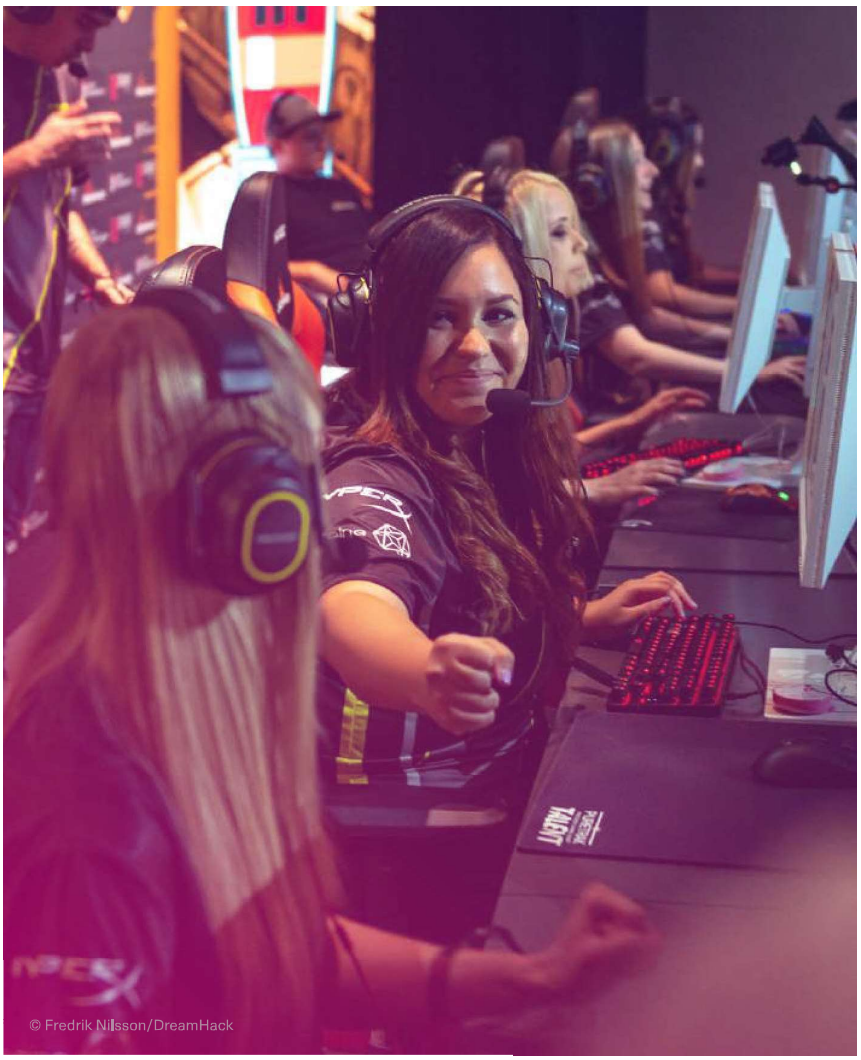
THE GUIDE TO ESPORTS

Kings League LVP – Liga de Videojuegos Profesional

ISFE Esports developed this paper with the support of the Entertainment Software Association (USA), the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, the Interactive Games and Entertainment Association (Australia and New Zealand), and the Interactive Software Federation of Europe, to help the understanding of the phenomenon of video game competitions, also known as 'competitive gaming' or 'esports'. For the first time, associations representing the video games industry, video game creators (publishers and developers), and stakeholders of the esports sector have analysed the scale of this growing economic activity to inform policymakers, regulators, institutions, and the public about what esports are, ensuring decision-makers are informed and facilitating a dialogue with the industry.

Esports generated revenues of USD $947.1 million in 2020[01] . It is estimated that there are over 215 million esports enthusiasts worldwide[a]. Although the video game industry is entering its fifth decade of existence, and people have been playing video games competitively for almost as long, the esports sector is still in the early stages of development. As such, it is growing at a very rapid rate, offering huge opportunities for job creation, economic growth, tourism, education, and the development of digital skills.

a Games and esports analytics firm Newzoo defines "enthusiasts" as people who watch professional esports content at least once a month.


© Fredrik Nilsson/DreamHack

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UNDER-STANDING COMPETITIVE GAMING

Millions of people around the world follow video game competitions or “esports”. In South Korea they have become a form of national entertainment broadcast on television and regarded as a strategic industry at government level[02]. In the former coal mining city of Katowice, Poland, esports events have helped to revitalise the city into a developing metropolis, making it the European “Mecca” for these types of competitions[03]. In the United States, among many other countries, they have been added to high-school and university syllabi and varsity programmes. In the United States alone, there are more than 200 varsity esports teams.[04]

Since their early stages, esports have made a great deal of progress. Led by some of the most successful creative companies in the world, the competitions of the most popular video games are staged in world-class arenas, watched by millions, and backed by global brands. The professionalisation of teams and the rapid growth of tournaments and leagues have led esports to become a fast-growing new form of popular entertainment.

The phenomenal rise of esports is an example of how the video games industry has adapted to evolutions in technology and innovation – from multiplayer in the home to worldwide real-time competitive play over the Internet facilitated by the roll out of high-speed broadband and the advent of digital streaming platforms.

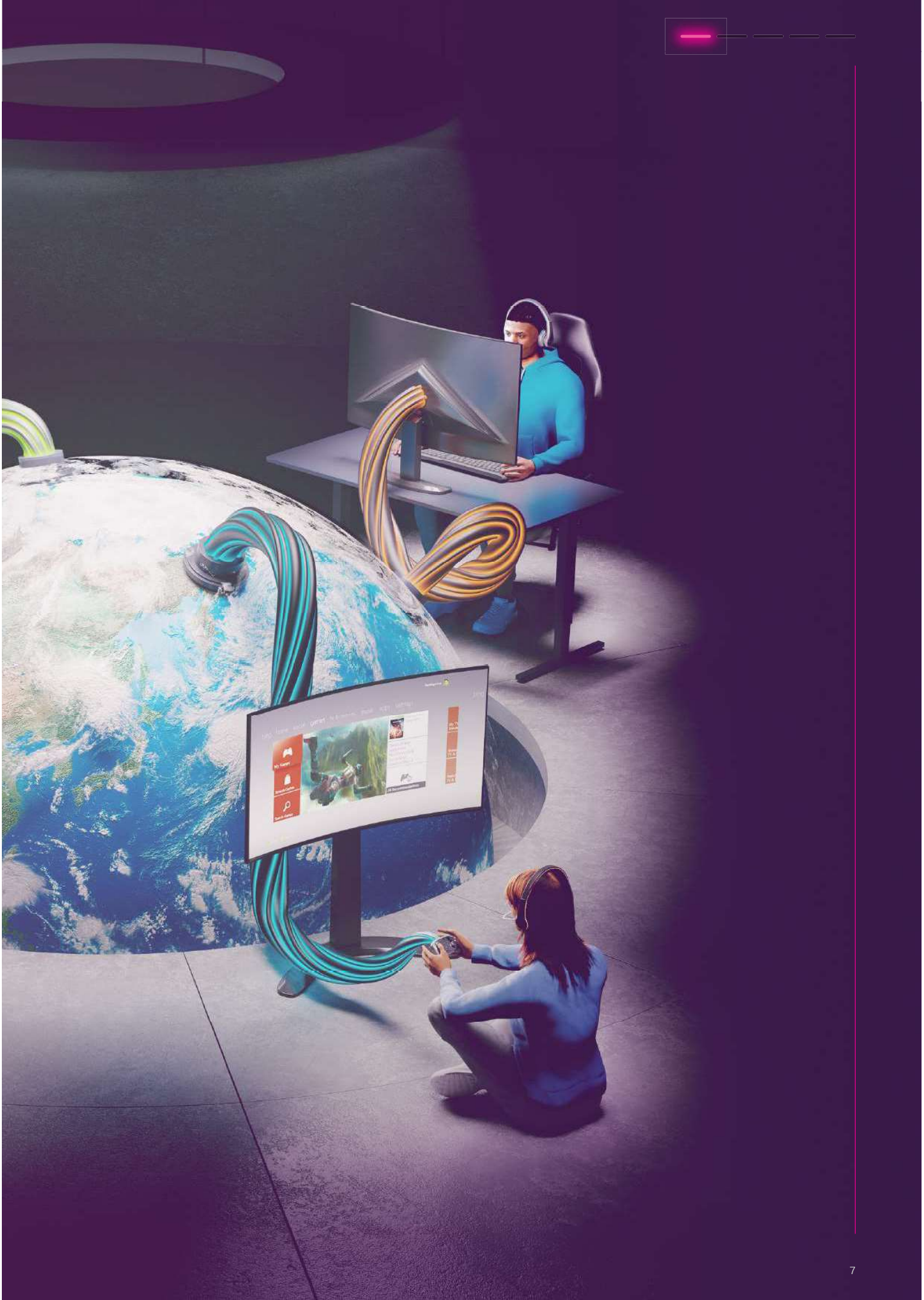
This paper will explore these topics in more detail and try to answer questions about how the sector can be developed in the best way possible, and about the challenges ahead.

ESPORTS EXPANSION AND THE INTERNET

Fast technological progress is inherent to esports. The development of new titles, gaming platforms and technologies (like live video streaming) help to explain the successive evolutionary leaps forward that the sector has experienced.

Among all the technological advances that have impacted its development, the availability and adoption of fast reliable broadband Internet is probably the most important of all: online playing and broadcasting have driven the growth of esports, allowing widespread competitive practice, talent scouting, community engagement, and content creation and consumption. Latency or an unstable Internet connection can have a significant adverse impact on competitive gameplay, which can be particularly problematic for local grassroots and amateur communities, which rely the most on online tournaments.

It is no coincidence that the regions that enjoy the fastest Internet connectivity are also today's most esports-friendly markets – Eastern Asia, Northern Europe, and North America.[05]



1.1.

What are esports?

Esports are leagues, competitive circuits, tournaments, or similar competitions where individuals or teams play video games, typically for spectators, either in-person or online, for the purpose of entertainment, prizes, or money. They are part of the video game industry and sometimes referred to as “competitive gaming”, “organised play”, “egaming” or “pro gaming”. This activity is structured: competitions are set up by an organiser for a specific game, have a concrete tournament format and rules, and are competed in by teams or players according to a selection or registration system. This structure is what differentiates esports from general video gaming, which can be enjoyed as a casual hobby or pastime.

When talking about esports, the image of stadiums packed with fans cheering international stars easily comes to mind. But that does not provide the full picture. Esports can be played at a professional or amateur level, at international or local events, in person in a venue or at a studio, or purely online from home or anywhere with an Internet connection. These categories are not necessarily exclusive: some esports tournaments can accommodate both professional and amateur players, can cater to a local and an international audience, and/or can mix online and in-person competition.

In most cases, esports involve the creation and distribution of video content, mostly through live streaming or broadcast. This video content can be home-made by the players themselves from their own homes or be part of a super-production multicast on a par with any world-class entertainment event ... or anything in between!

Esports do not have a single nature. Just as people do not compete in “sport” but rather in tennis, football, or athletics, each video game is essentially its own specialism. Just as there are varying levels of professionalism and a plethora of competitions in each of the aforementioned sports, these are also found in esports, with video game players competing in the Overwatch League, the League of Legends European Championship, the Rainbow Six Spain Nationals, or any number of other professional or amateur tournaments organised across the globe.

Without video games, there would be no esports. These games are at the centre of the esports phenomenon. As creators and owners of the games driving global esports growth, video game publishers are uniquely positioned to define the parameters of how their games are best used in the marketplace. Esports competitions harness creative works that are protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights[b], i.e., the video games. This is a characteristic present in some competitive endeavours (for example, card and board games such as Magic: The Gathering or Catan) but not in others – no one owns football, or bowling, or the game of rock paper scissors, but someone does own the intellectual property rights to the video games being played in esports. These rights must be respected, in particular in any commercial exploitation or use, and for this reason organisers of esports tournaments must obtain authorisations and licenses for the video games they wish to use in connection with their tournaments from the holders of the intellectual property rights concerned.

Esports include dozens of titles played in a variety of different tournament formats or competitive structures. Because of this diversity, different competitions cater to different audiences: from very competitive players to social players or just fans coming together for the game they love, the teams they cheer for or the stars they identify with. Esports are part of a much broader trend around the social and group enjoyment of video games.

ESPORTS CAN BE PLAYED AT A PROFESSIONAL OR AMATEUR LEVEL, AT INTERNATIONAL OR LOCAL EVENTS, IN PERSON IN A VENUE OR AT A STUDIO, OR PURELY ONLINE FROM HOME OR ANYWHERE WITH AN INTERNET CONNECTION

b Intellectual property rights ("IPRs") are predominantly copyright, neighbouring rights, and trademarks, but also include patents and trade secrets.

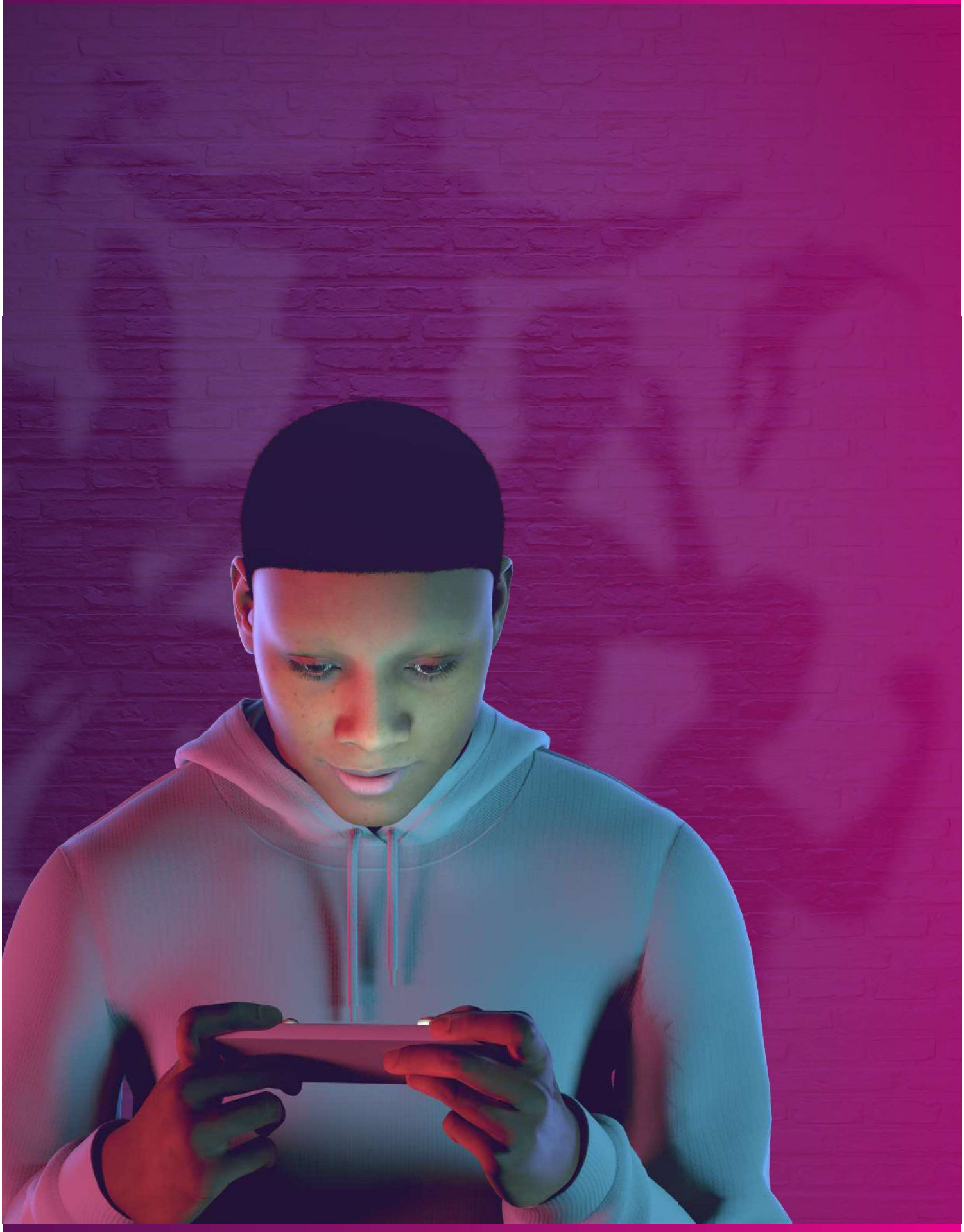
WHAT MAKES A VIDEO GAME A SUCCESSFUL ESPORTS TITLE?

All esports titles are video games, but not all video games make it into esports. A 2020 list[06] found 1,181,019 video games available across the existing major gaming platforms and distribution systems. But the number of successful esports titles is far smaller, possibly less than one hundred (see next point). What makes a video game a good esports title?

There is no straightforward answer, but it probably includes a mix of solid and balanced competitive mechanics, the right learning-curve (summarised in the popular motto "easy to play, hard to master"), an attractive and easy-to-follow presentation for viewers, and a set of services for players, tournament organisers and broadcasters (online multiplayer and content creation tools and APIs, among others[c]). In addition, many publishers of esports titles (and video games, generally) continually update the title's content and game mechanics to keep the players' experience fresh and engaging and to help the game stand out in a crowded marketplace. This continual influx of new content underscores the key role of publishers in not only creating but sustaining these dynamic worlds. There is no secret recipe, and even ambitious multiplayer games can fail in their quest to become successful esports titles.

Sometimes, video games develop esports competitions over time because "they have what is needed". Many times, it is a deliberate effort by their creators, one that is intentional, consistent (from design level to marketing) and sustained over time. According to Ubisoft's former Rainbow Six brand director Alexandre Remy "when you do aim for a competitive game, it brings a level of discipline in the design mechanics and the tech that ensures that you have a game that's as solid as possible in its foundations", while global tournament operator ESL considers Ubisoft's continued support a key component "for people to have a sense of security and longevity that makes them invest their time.[07]

c Some examples of multiplayer tools are ranked matchmaking (to pair players and teams of similar level so that beginners do not get paired with experts) and private matches (to be able to play with and against specific players or teams versus these being randomly assigned). Content creation tools allow for the possibility to broadcast and record games, e.g. spectator mode, replays, etc. Among other things, APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) allow the automated gathering and display of a game's data (stats, results, etc.).



1.2.

Esports genres and titles

As already stated, players do not "compete in esports" but in organised competitions, such as leagues and tournaments, for specific video games. For some less familiar with the industry, the word "esports" carries the connotation of sport simulation video games, but many of the most popular esports titles have nothing whatsoever to do with sports.

Video games can be classified in different ways, such as by the systems on which they are played (console, PC, mobile phone, etc.) or by the number of players that can play the game (single player and multiplayer games). But perhaps the most useful way to classify video games is by their genre. There are several genres in video gaming. Some have been present since the very beginning (adventure, fighting, shooters and sports, among others), while others are very recent (e.g. auto battlers and battle royale games). Although video games sometimes combine elements of different genres[d], it is still the most informative way to get an approximate idea of how a game looks and is played.

Although only a handful of video games or franchises[e] have generated global competitive circuits and audiences, all the genres presented here have several titles that enjoy healthy esports communities and competitions in different parts of the world. Here are some of the most popular genres and titles/franchises in esports:

MOST POPULAR GENRES IN ESPORTS

Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA)
Team-based strategy games where each player controls a character with unique abilities.
Examples: Arena of Valor[f], Brawl Stars, Dota 2, Heroes of the Storm, League of Legends, Smite, Vainglory.

Shooters
Games based on gun and other weapon-based combat from a first-person perspective (FPS) or from a third-person perspective where the player's perspective is behind and slightly above the game character.
Examples: *Call of Duty, Counter-Strike, CrossFire, Halo, Overwatch, Rainbow Six Siege, Valorant.*

Battle Royale (BR)
Games where a large pool of players or teams compete to be the last one standing.
Examples: *Apex Legends, Fortnite, Free Fire, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds.*

d For example, first-person shooters (FPS) like Valorant or Overwatch have character abilities like those seen in MOBAs, while some battle royale titles can be played in first-person, making their game mechanics similar to FPS video games.

e In the video games industry, a "franchise" is a set of video games belonging to the same series or universe for intellectual property purposes.

f Known as Honor of Kings in China.

Digital Collectible Card Games (DCCG)
A type of online card game based on strategic deckbuilding.
Examples: *Hearthstone, Legends of Runeterra, Magic: The Gathering Arena.*

Real Time Strategy (RTS)
Strategy games that allow players (usually 1 vs 1) to simultaneously play the game in "real-time" (versus turn-based strategy games like chess).
Examples: *Starcraft 2, Warcraft III: Reforged.*

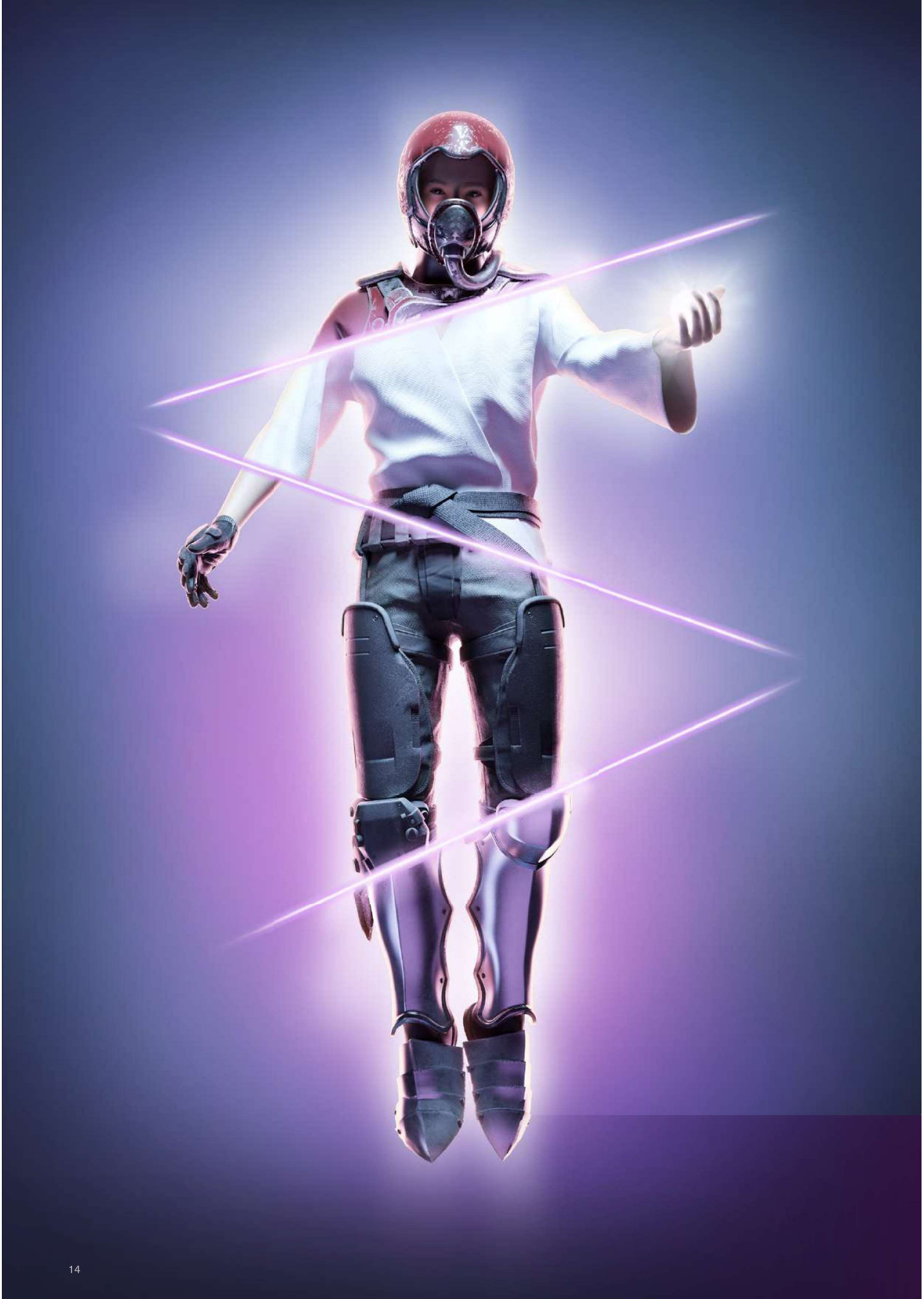
Fighting Games
Games built around close combat between a limited number of characters, in a ring-like area.
Examples: *Brawlhalla, Dragon Ball FighterZ, Injustice, Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter, Tekken, Virtua Fighter.*

Rhythm and Dance Games
Music-themed video games that challenge a player's sense of rhythm. They typically focus on dance or the simulated performance of musical instruments.
Examples: *Dance Dance Revolution, Just Dance.*

Sports Games
Video game simulations of sports.
Examples: *FIFA, Madden, NBA 2K.*

Racing Games
Video game simulations of motorsports.
Examples: *Asseto Corsa, DiRT, F1, Forza Motorsport, Gran Turismo, iRacing, MotoGP, Project Cars, TrackMania.*

Auto Battlers
Strategy games in which players tactically build and place in a chess-like grid opposing armies, which then fight without any further input from the players.
Examples: *Auto Chess, Dota Underlords, Teamfight Tactics.*



NEW GENRES AND NEW TYPES OF COMPETITION

Because video games are a constantly evolving creative medium, the mixing of and experimentation with different game mechanics and genres has sometimes changed our understanding of genres or led to the creation of completely new ones.

For example, Supercell's Clash Royale is a DCCG and tower-defence hybrid, while Psyonix's Rocket League is sometimes considered to belong to the sports genre, although its formula ("soccer" with rocket-powered cars) makes for a decidedly unrealistic "sport". Recently, we have seen the emergence of two new genres that have already become very popular in competitive video gaming, battle royale games (popularised around 2017) and auto battlers (2019).

But this creative impulse is not limited to new genres or games. Sometimes, established games produce new competitive formats beyond esports that are conquering audiences. For example, Electronic Arts' long-established life-simulation video game franchise The Sims has adapted the television talent show format to video gaming with The Sims Spark'd, a reality TV game show that presents a diverse cast of competitors thanks to the inclusiveness and low entry barrier of this popular video game franchise.[08]

1.3.

The presence of esports around the world

As we have seen, esports is a very varied sector involving a myriad of video games, catering to different types of audiences, with different tournament formats or competitive structures. For this reason, we cannot properly speak of one esports ecosystem, but must instead speak of many.

It is important to note that video games may have a distinct geographic presence and that their popularity as esports varies in different territories. For example, fighting games make hugely popular esports titles in Japan and the United States, but are considered niche in Europe. FIFA is one of the most successful video game franchises, but the game played in Europe, Oceania, and the Americas (FIFA 20, FIFA 21, etc.) is very different from FIFA Online 4, the PC-only game played in most of Asia.

Mobile game Free Fire broke audience records in 2019 and 2020 in Latin America and Asia, while there was a very small audience for the game in Europe. The reasons why some titles are more popular in some places than in others are varied. Video games are commercial products, and as such may not be distributed in all territories, or not be uniformly marketed, or may lack essential online infrastructure in regions without a suitable market penetration for that particular game or company, among other commercial considerations. But sometimes, the causes are more subtle, like distinct video gaming cultures.

The penetration of esports also varies around the globe. Although the biggest esports market audience-wise is the massive Chinese market, North America has a higher penetration of esports than any other region, compared to its population. But even on the same continent, the penetration of esports can vary significantly in different territories. For example, Spain has one of the highest penetrations by ratio of fans of any European market[09]. Consistently, Spain has one of the most developed national esports scenes in Europe, with a varied and extensive list of amateur, top-level, and professional competitions.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT VIDEO GAMES MAY HAVE A DISTINCT GEOGRAPHIC PRESENCE AND THAT THEIR POPULARITY AS ESPORTS VARIES IN DIFFERENT TERRITORIES

NUMBER OF ESPORTS ENTHUSIASTS PER REGION

Region	Enthusiasts (a)	% total population (b)
North America	18.2M	4.93
Latin America	18.3M	2.80
Europe	29.2M	3.90
Middle East and Africa	15.3M	0.90
China	88.0M	6.09
Rest of Asia and Pacific	46.4M	1.55
Global	**205.4M**	

Source: Newzoo (a); based on Newzoo and Worldometers.info data (b).

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SPAIN: A REGIONAL POWERHOUSE

Spain has powerful domestic tournament organisers, such as LVP and GGTech, and also enjoys the presence of international organisers such as DreamHack and ESL. Spain has hosted several world-level events, such as the League of Legends World Championships, the League of Legends All Stars, the Rocket League World Championships, the FIFA Interactive World Cup[g], plus several continental-level events. It was in Spain where PlayStation's competitive circuit, the PlayStation League, was initially conceived and launched. Since 2018, esports teams union ACE, the only one in a European country, has been representing over a dozen professional teams. Also, and a first in Europe, Spain's three largest telecommunications companies (Movistar, Orange, and Vodafone) started sponsoring teams and competitions in 2016. This opened the door to many non-endemic sectors entering esports in the country: sportswear (with brands such as Nike, Lotto or Kappa), body care (H&S, BIC Flex or Diesel Only the Brave), food and beverages (Domino's Pizza, Chips Ahoy!), insurance (Mapfre), and even professional services brands (Sogeti).

The reasons for Spain's successful esports profile are varied, but we can highlight a suitable regulatory environment for skill-based competitions and clear tax rules for prizes, high coverage, and the availability of access to high-speed and low-cost Internet, a solid video games user base and access via the Spanish language to the Latin American market.

g Now the FIFA eWorld Cup.

1.4.

Esports principles

Esports bring together players with different places of origin, cultures, and outlooks. This broad, varied player base is one of the reasons why the sector has been so successful internationally.

Seeking to create an open, inclusive, welcoming ecosystem for everyone, whatever their gender, age, skill level, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, the world's leading video games associations[h] agreed in November 2019 on a number of guiding principles applicable to all aspects of the global esports ecosystem.

PRINCIPLES OF ESPORTS ENGAGEMENT:

- Safety and well-being: All esports community members deserve to participate in and enjoy esports in safe spaces and to be free from threats and acts of violence and from language or behaviour that makes people feel threatened or harassed.

- Integrity and fair play: Cheating, hacking, or otherwise engaging in disreputable, deceitful, or dishonest behaviour detracts from the experience of others, unfairly advantages teams and players, and tarnishes the legitimacy of esports.

- Respect and diversity: Esports promote a spirit of healthy competition. Whether in person or online, all members of the esports community should demonstrate respect and courtesy to others, including teammates, opponents, game officials, organisers, and spectators. Esports is truly global and brings together players from different backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. We believe the broad and diverse player base of esports contributes to its success. We support an open, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all, no matter one's gender identity, age, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

- Positive and enriching game play: Esports can help build self-confidence and sportsmanship and boost interpersonal communication and teamwork skills. Esports brings players and fans together to problem solve through strategic play, collaboration, and critical thinking. Participation in esports can also lead to the development of new and lasting friendships among teammates, competitors, and members of the broader esports community.

These principles directly inform and impact the esports operations of the associations' company members, but more importantly, they aim to represent the whole esports sector.

h The Entertainment Software Association (ESA; USA); the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE); The Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESAC); the Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (IGEA; Australia & New Zealand); and Ukie (The Association for UK Interactive Entertainment). ISFE's national members in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the Nordics have also co-signed these Principles.

PROMOTING A POSITIVE GAMEPLAY ENVIRONMENT

Creating a safe, positive, and inclusive online experience for all players is of the utmost importance to the video game industry. Video game publishers and console makers work collaboratively to promote civility, build community, and incentivise positive behaviour. The industry has undertaken several initiatives to create tools and self-regulatory programmes to protect player's privacy, create a safer environment, and promote the involvement of parents and carers. Examples include age ratings (PEGI, ESRB, IARC)[i], the PEGI Code of Conduct[j], parental control tools, privacy compliance programmes, community standards, reporting tools, filtering software, and automatic and human moderation. The industry also organises regular information and educational campaigns in a non-stop effort to keep the communities of their games and platforms safe and free of harassment.

For example, Electronic Arts' commitment to making their games' communities positive, fun, fair and safe places for all has led to a dedicated "Positive Play" team focused on ensuring that the principles of positive play are integrated across EA's products and services[10]. EA's broader approach to positive play across its business closely mirrors the Principles of Esports Engagement, with a focus on safety and well-being, integrity and fair play, respect and diversity, and positive and enriching game experiences. At the core is the Positive Play Charter, written with input from EA's player community, which lays out in four points the behaviour that players of EA's games expect from each other: (i) treat others as they would like to be treated, (ii) keep things fair, (iii) share clean content, and (iv) follow local laws. Possible penalties are also made clear, ranging from short-term bans or suspensions to permanent bans for recurring or severe offenders. "We won't tolerate racism, sexism, homophobia, harassment or any form of abuse. We can build better, healthier communities inside - and outside - our games, and that's what we are here to do", read the post announcing the Positive Play Charter[11].

Another example is the Esports Player Foundation, a national elite player development organisation based in Germany. Players in their support programmes receive in-game training, personal and mental coaching, dual career support and other services that are designed to lead to the best possible competitive career for highly talented players. The programme also includes education on how to serve as a positive role model, not only for esports fans and players, but also for more casual gamers. Successful and famous players have a high impact on the community, so positive attitudes are not only encouraged but are a condition for enrolment.

i PEGI and ESRB are used in Europe and North America, respectively. IARC is widely used for digital distribution and mobile apps.

j The PEGI Code of Conduct is a set of rules to which every publisher using the PEGI system is contractually committed. The Code deals with age labelling, promotion and marketing and reflects the video games industry's commitment to provide information to the public in a responsible manner.


CHAT
HEY TRACY, YOU ARE SUCH A #!?*%...!!!!
BAN USER?
YES
NO

© Kiri Bashkirov/Ubisoft

ESPORTS STAKEHOLDERS

2.1.

Who forms the esports sector?

Esports competitions are the result of the collective effort of five different types of actor, all of them essential to develop a fully formed ecosystem:

- Publishers[k]
- Tournament organisers
- Teams
- Professional and amateur players
- Fans and communities

PUBLISHERS

Publishers are companies that finance the development, marketing, and manufacture of video games, and are responsible for bringing those video games to market through their arrangements with distributors, retailers, and platforms.

k We could have included developers and video game platforms here. Although different in origin, these three actors have been converging. See the "Other Stakeholders – Developers and Platforms" box for more elaboration.

Publishers typically hold the intellectual and industrial property rights to the video games they finance (and their franchises). This makes publishers the most significant voice in the way the competitive ecosystems of their games are structured. More importantly, in the process of producing a new title, publishers define its core characteristics – features, design, value proposition, etc. This "DNA" of a video game has an enormous impact in both enabling competitions and the way these competitions are or should be shaped.

Video games, and competitive titles in particular, are long-term investments: a title can take years to develop at considerable expense (in some cases, exceeding USD $100 million, with production costs constantly rising), and after its release, may need to be supported for years in order for the publisher to make a return on its investment. Competitive online games require publishers to operate and maintain a sophisticated network infrastructure for thousands (sometimes millions) of players, endlessly reworking, rebalancing, and adding new content to keep them updated, playable, and enjoyable, and constant player support and community management. This makes such games very expensive to create, market and maintain. For example, a major video game release budget is usually in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Intellectual property rights protection is therefore fundamental for the development and sustainability of the esports sector, as without publishers being willing to invest heavily in the development and maintenance of competitive titles, there would be no esports.

MAIN PUBLISHERS AND THEIR COMPETITIVE TITLES OR FRANCHISES

Activision Blizzard	Call of Duty, Hearthstone, Overwatch, StarCraft, Warcraft
Bandai Namco	Tekken, Soulcalibur, Dragon Ball, Project Cars
Electronic Arts	Apex Legends, EA SPORTS FIFA, EA SPORTS Madden
Epic Games	Fortnite, Rocket League
Microsoft	Forza, Gears of War, Halo
PUBG Corporation	PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds
Riot Games	League of Legends, Legends of Runeterra, Teamfight Tactics, Valorant, Wild Rift
Sony Interactive Entertainment	Gran Turismo
Supercell	Brawl Stars, Clash Royale
Take-Two Interactive	NBA 2K
Ubisoft	Brawlhalla, For Honor, Just Dance, Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege, TrackMania
Valve	Counter-Strike, Dota 2
Warner Bros.	Injustice, Mortal Kombat

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS – DEVELOPERS AND PLATFORMS

A game developer specialises in creating video games. Developers take a concept for a game and turn it into a final product.

Many well-known developers are subsidiaries of, or fully integrated into, publisher organisations. In such cases, the intellectual property (IP) rights are owned by the publishers. In other cases, namely where a developer is independent of a publisher, IP ownership is established on a contract-by-contract basis, but in general, it is common for developers to assign their IP rights to publishers in return for access to funding, increased marketing capabilities, the publisher's distribution network, and other assistance.

Regarding video games platforms, these are hardware or online platforms for the distribution, installation, running, and updating of video games. All the major console manufacturers (Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony) also act as publishers, and many publishers have their own in-house development studios and have created their own distribution and online video gaming manufacturers (Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony) also act as publishers, and many publishers have their own in-house development studios and have created their own distribution and online video gaming services.

TOURNAMENT ORGANISERS

While some esports tournaments and events are organised by the publishers themselves (including some of the biggest ones), many are organised by third-party promoters or tournament organisers.

Tournament organisers design and produce video game competitions, amateur or professional, and they do so in line with the terms and conditions set by the publisher for each video game, having a contract or having obtained from the publishers any relevant licenses or authorisations required to organise or broadcast each competition. Sometimes, these licenses or authorisations are general, but they usually take the form of private contracts in which the publisher and the tournament organiser establish how the publisher's intellectual property is to be used, the territorial scope of the competition, the terms and conditions for its public communication, and any other points deemed necessary.

SOME INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT ORGANISERS

Company	Country of origin
AfreecaTV	South Korea
Beyond the Summit	United States
BLAST Entertainment	Denmark
DreamHack	Sweden
ESL	Germany
EPICENTER	Russia
Esports Engine	United States
Gfinity	United Kingdom
Liga de Videojuegos Profesional (LVP)	Spain
ONE Esports	Singapore
PGL	Romania
Starladder	Ukraine
VSPN	China

Typically, tournament organisers run multiple tournaments and leagues, usually spanning different video games and levels of competition (professional, amateur, or casual). For example, the global tournament organiser ESL stages, among many other competitions, the Intel Extreme Masters, ESL One, and the Pro League, which involve some of the world's best esports teams competing against one another in Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, DOTA 2 and other video games at an elite level, and the ESL Play online tournaments platform that allows casual and amateur players to compete against one another in a wide range of titles.

A distinctive characteristic of esports is that, in many competitions, participation is not restricted to professional or amateur players. This is true even for world-class tournaments or events. The EA Sports FIFA Global Series or the Fortnite Champion Series are two examples. In contrast, there are leagues and tournaments that invite specific professional teams as partners. While these competitions do not have open qualification, they allow competing teams to partake in the league or tournament decision-making process, or to help shape the future of the competition.

TEAMS

Esports teams (sometimes called "team organisations" or just "esports orgs") are companies or associations that employ players to participate in competitions on their behalf. Many of these organisations have rosters that play different games: most esports teams leverage their brand and structure in a wide array of different titles, as opposed to being exclusively tied to a single game or league (although sometimes they may develop separate branding for different games or competitions).

While associations are mostly linked to amateur competition, professional esports teams (organisations that pay players to represent them at tournaments and leagues and where those players' esports activity is their main paid occupation) are almost universally private companies.

There are now hundreds of professional teams playing in esports tournaments and events around the globe. Professional teams have developed complex organisational structures and employ highly technical staff, including coaches, analysts, scouts, dieticians, physiotherapists, and psychologists (the latter showing the industry's concern for the wellbeing of players as well as the understanding that good results and well-managed players are synonymous).

PLAYERS

Players encompass, at the highest level, high-paid professionals hired by teams to compete in world-stage tournaments and leagues, through to players playing at any level from grassroots events to top-level national or international competitions. In fact, as already mentioned, a major attraction of esports is that ordinary players can sometimes participate in the very same competitions as the big esports stars. Increasingly, there are also players at the scholastic and collegiate levels. Players may be part of a varsity programme or a member of a school esports club. Some collegiate players now receive scholarships for participation in esports varsity programmes. In the United States, for example, members of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) award more than USD $16 million in esports scholarships annually[12]. Collegiate players may compete in intercollegiate events or, sometimes, professional-level events competing for tournament prize money against professional players.

Professional competitive video gaming has been made possible through a combination of factors. The increased popularity of video gaming has brought larger audiences and money, so that esports teams can devote resources to remunerate players, and players can afford to make esports their primary occupation. Devoting time to training has increased the level of performance, which has helped increase the attractiveness of esports for players and audiences, creating a virtuous circle. Although professional video game player is a relatively new profession, it is still subject to existing labour laws in the relevant territories where the activity is taking place.

While they may earn prize money from the tournaments they compete in, most amateur players participate in esports competitions purely for entertainment, social or aspirational reasons.

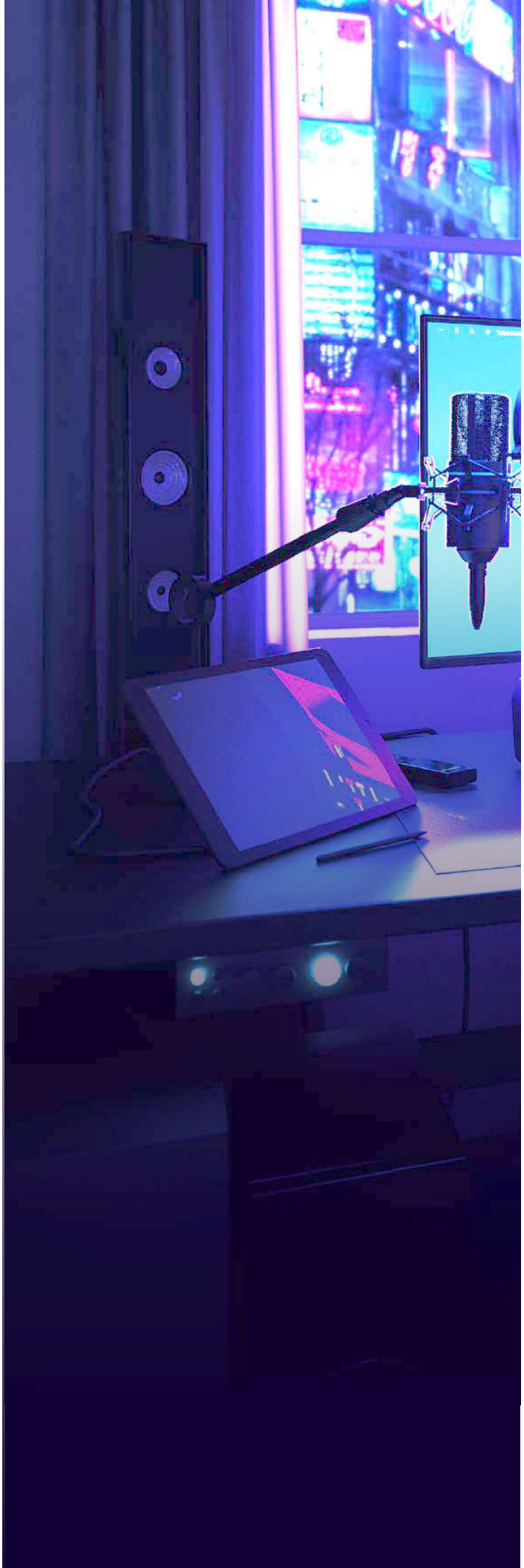
Some players become public figures and enjoy considerable popularity thanks to their competitive successes, for creating popular content on video streaming platforms, or a mixture of both. These players may obtain personal sponsorships, and the biggest stars may even have lucrative exclusive contracts with a content platform. It is not an easy road, though: as in most areas of life, success requires devoting a substantial amount of time and effort and requires considerable talent. Some esports players may become social influencers in their own right, but there are also social influencers in the esports space who are not themselves players.

FANS AND COMMUNITIES

There is no show without an audience, and we would not be speaking of esports without the millions of eyes that watch them every day on live video or the many fans who will travel across country, and even internationally, to watch live games, often many times a year.

But because every video game is different, they cater to different types of audiences and demographics. Besides, the esports fan is a highly specialised one. Fans follow their game of choice and form communities around specific competitions, geographical areas, websites, teams, players or other personalities. There are thousands of gaming communities of all sizes, geographic locations, and demographics, each with a distinct composition reflecting the intrinsic multiplicity of the sector: there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to reaching out to gaming communities of all sizes, geographic locations, and demographics, each with a distinct composition reflecting the intrinsic multiplicity of the sector: there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to reaching out to esports fans.

Finally, esports communities share some common traits: they are enthusiastic, passionate, and engaged. And they expect engagement from players, teams, organisers, and video game publishers themselves, which is why community management plays an oversized role in esports compared to other sectors.



ESPORTS TALENT: PLAYERS, CASTERS, AND CONTENT CREATORS

In a predominantly online sector such as esports, it is only natural that fans primarily use online means to interact with other fans. In the beginning, it was through blogs, websites, and message forums. These types of online communities still exist today but have been largely superseded by the communities built around Internet video personalities: youtubers and streamers.[l]

These esports influencers (sometimes called 'talent') may be professional players, but many of them fall in the porous categories of casters and content creators.

Casters[m] have been an integral part of esports since the beginning. They have a similar function to radio or television hosts or sport commentators. Casters introduce the matches, speak over the gameplay to inform and entertain the viewer, interview the players and coaches, and many times also create other types of side content.

Content creators produce live or recorded entertainment or educational materials, most of the time a mix of both, as an ancillary service separate from the esports competition itself. The will to improve or to understand gameplay is a main driver for the esports audience.

Some individuals migrate across categories. For example, Tyler 'Ninja' Blevins was a professional Halo player before becoming one of the world's biggest streamers.

Talents can be self-employed and/or salaried by a company or organisation.

l A 'youtuber' is a person who produces or appears in recorded videos on YouTube, or by extension another video-sharing platform. 'Streamers' broadcast themselves in real time, on live streaming platforms such as Twitch or YouTube, among others.

m Also 'shoutcasters'. The term derives from the software SHOUTcast, popular in the early days of Internet radio.

2.2.

The role of intellectual property rights

Esports are not a mere set of rules. Video games are comprised of numerous intellectual property rights, including those that are vested in the software and game mechanics, the art, the score, the sounds, the characters and voices, and the art of the in-game world. Publishers invest heavily in the development of their games and rely on their intellectual property rights to protect that investment, market their games, and grow their audiences.

Video game franchises are closely associated with their creators. Publishers are therefore very discerning over how their games are played or used. Publishers are uniquely positioned to set the appropriate tone and environment for the esports scene for each of their respective franchises. Each franchise attracts a different type of player and publishers cater the competitive gaming experience to those players — using tools both in and outside of the game. Because a franchise's specific intellectual property is inextricably tied to its competitive environment, intellectual property rights are an incredibly important tool to foster the industry's growth.

A game's release is not the end of its development. Whilst the rules of football, for instance, do not substantively change from year to

year, a video game that does not iterate, rebalance, or innovate frequently, will not remain competitive. To avoid stagnation, publishers create entirely new rule sets, game modes, add content, adjust existing mechanics, and completely cut aspects from their games. The decision on what to include, add, or remove from a game is usually entirely within the applicable publisher's exclusive discretion, by virtue of their ownership of the IP rights in their games. In fact, the owner of the IP rights in a game is the only person who can alter a game's underlying ruleset.

Esports games, tournaments, broadcasts, and other content are all enabled via IP rights. This means that approval from the rights holders is needed to host competitions, broadcast streams, make video content or to even play the games. EULAs (end user license agreements) usually prohibit the commercial use of games without the relevant rights holder's permission. Tournament organisers, therefore, must ensure that they have the necessary rights to make the game publicly available at their events or through other distribution channels.

Esports could not exist without the strong protections and control that intellectual property rights afford to game creators, and that competitive gaming has been able to keep pace with the innovation in the video game industry is a testament to this fact.

TOP-TIER COMPETITIONS

Publishers have the most significant voice in structuring the competitive circuits of their titles. While many different approaches have been taken to the ecosystem of a game, most publishers keep top-tier competition under their direct management, or at least under strict scrutiny, to showcase both the very best of their elite players and the game being played in the very best conditions.

From amateur to professional and from local to international, only tournaments or leagues organised or directly endorsed by the publishers can be considered official game competitions.

Of course, top-tier competitions are the cream of the crop and some of the most recognisable properties in esports. Here we list some of them:

- Apex Legends Global Series by Electronic Arts
- Call of Duty League by Activision Blizzard
- Clash Royale League by Supercell
- Dota Pro Circuit by Valve
- EA SPORTS FIFA Global Series by Electronic Arts
- ESL Pro Tour: CSGO by ESL
- Fortnite Champion Series by Epic Games
- League of Legends World Championship by Riot Games
- NBA 2K League, a joint venture between the NBA and Take-Two Interactive
- Overwatch League by Activision Blizzard
- Rainbow Six Circuit by Ubisoft

2.3.

Primary partnerships

To operate, communicate, and economically develop competitions, esports stakeholders form multiple partnerships among themselves and with third parties such as venues and studios, technology providers, logistics and hardware suppliers, content distributors, brands, and educational and other institutions, among others.

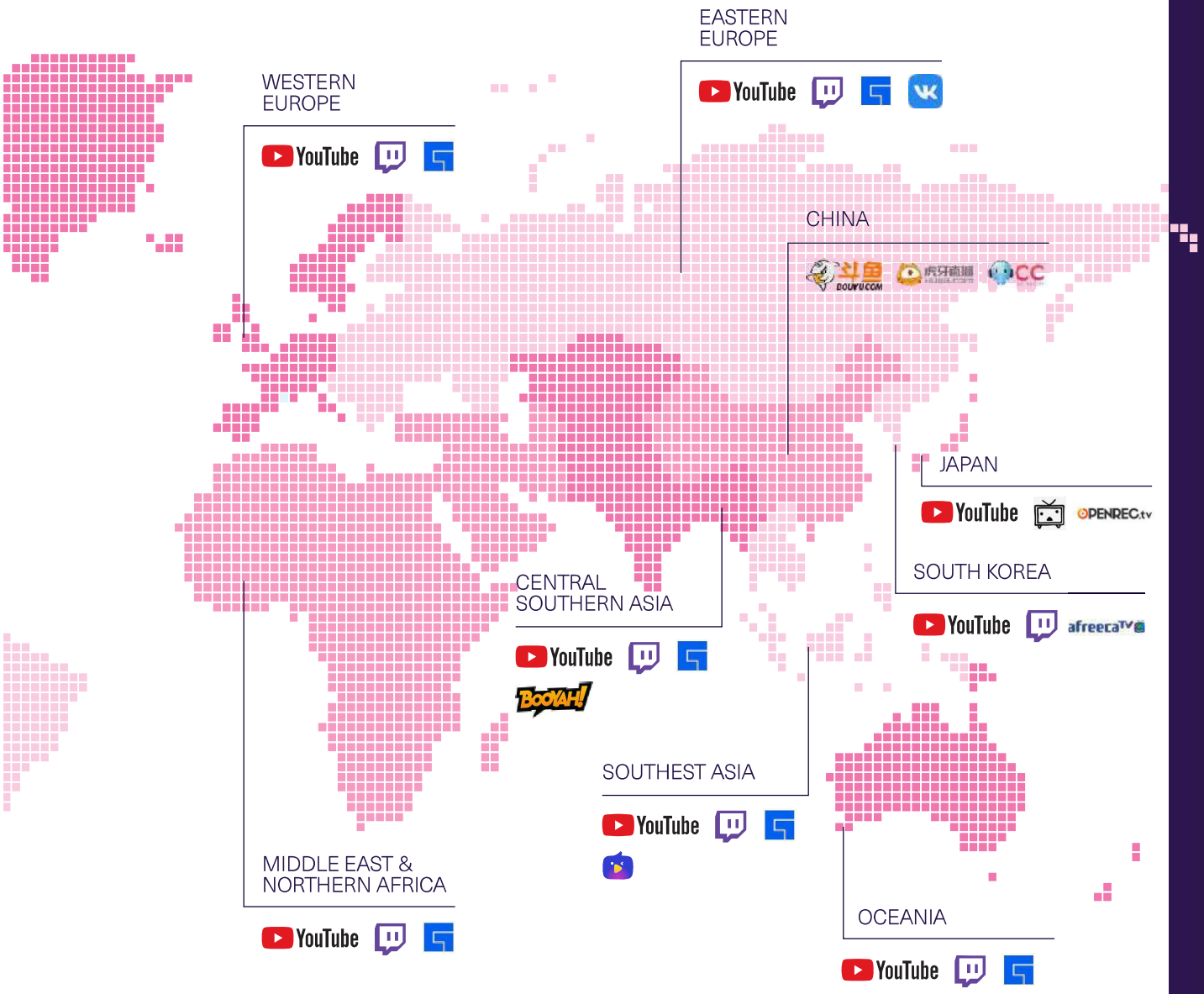
But there are two types of third-party partnerships that have helped define the esports sector: the ones formed with media platforms and sponsors.

MEDIA AND STREAMING PLATFORMS

These are platforms for the distribution of content. Esports are consumed mainly via on-demand and live online video streaming, although it is free live streaming services that have come to define the consumption and commercial exploitation

of esports. Some leading platforms in the sector are Facebook Gaming, Twitch, YouTube, and in China, DouYu and Huya.

Many online video platforms are free for both the content producer to showcase their productions and for the spectator to watch, so they rely on advertising as a main revenue source. Hence, attracting a sizable audience becomes paramount, and for this reason these platforms sometimes enter into exclusive contracts with the most popular publishers, tournament organisers, teams, players or community personalities. A unique feature of these platforms, which esports have helped to popularise and which in turn has increased their reach, is co-streaming or watch parties, where a channel is allowed to air another broadcast while providing unique commentary on the action.



Source: Newzoo (2021). Global Esports & Live Streaming Market Report 2021

Linear TV and so-called "over the top" (OTT) services have also entered esports. While repackaging or adapting esports content or properties from online to television presents some hurdles (many esports matches do not have a pre-determined duration, such as the 90-minutes of a soccer match, for example), they already represent a significant market opportunity for traditional linear broadcasting companies such as the BBC, Sky, ESPN, Fox Sports, and Canal+, all of which have introduced esports in their programme grids or online services.

SPONSORS

Most revenue for tournament organisers and teams comes from companies or organisations promoting their brands to the different esports audiences (see Chapter 3). In the past, sponsors and advertisers had been brands endemic to the sector: technology firms such as ASUS, Intel or Nvidia, or gaming hardware companies like Logitech or Razer. But as the sector has become more mainstream, major non-endemic brands have moved in, for example: Adidas, BMW, Coca-Cola, KIA, KitKat, Nike, Visa, and Louis Vuitton.

These brands sponsor tournaments, leagues, teams, and even individual players and community personalities. Being an online-endemic sector, most of a brand's presence is accordingly online, although in the quest for the attention of the elusive esports fan, brands value very highly the direct contact that live events and commercial activations provide.

2.4.

Associations

Although esports are largely built around commercial stakeholders, industry trade associations and not-for-profit organisations play an important role in unifying and representing the various disparate actors in the sector, in developing and improving esports for all, from the grassroots to international levels.

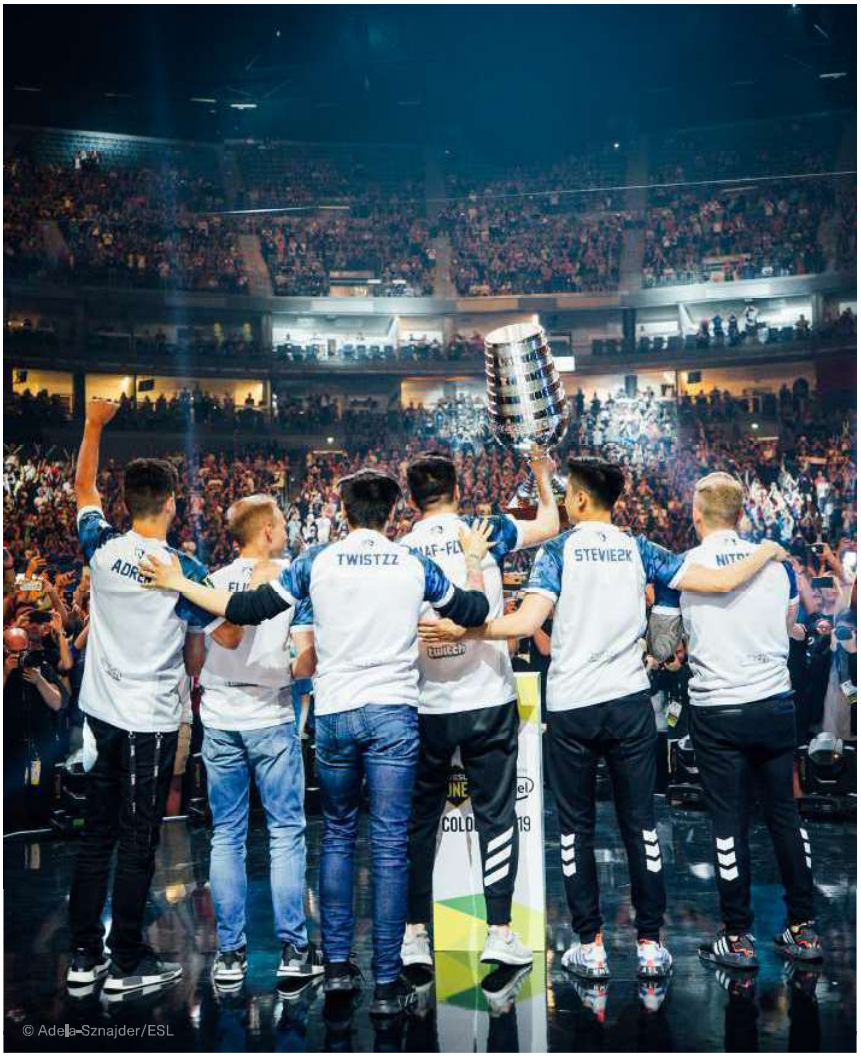
Trade associations serve as the voice of the video games industry and its esports sector. They strive to effect and promote the positive impact that video games have on society, empowering consumers and promoting responsible gameplay. The industry has put in place successful self-regulatory systems such as the age ratings bodies ESRB in Northern America and PEGI in Europe, which manage the attribution of the correct age rating of video games, aim to inform parents about age-appropriate video games, and to keep young players safe. Likewise, the video game industry's trade associations formulated the universal Principles of Esports Engagement in 2019 (see Chapter 1).

Most of the publishers of the games played today in esports competitions worldwide are members of one or more national or regional trade associations, often both. And many times, these associations also represent other important stakeholders, including tournament organisers and professional teams.

Because they bring together the main actors of the industry, including first and foremost the owners of the video games themselves, the trade associations and their esports groups have become the collective and authoritative voice of the esports sector around the world.

MAIN TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Name	Acronym	Territory
Entertainment Software Association	ESA	United States
Entertainment Software Association of Canada	ESAC	Canada
Interactive Games and Entertainment Association	IGEA	Australia and New Zealand
Interactive Software Federation of Europe	ISFE	Europe Comprises of: → AEPDV (Portugal) → AEVI (Spain) → ANGI (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden) → VGFB (Belgium) → game (Germany) → IIDEA (Italy) → OVUS (Austria) → SELL (France) → SIEA (Switzerland) → SPIDOR (Poland) → Ukie (United Kingdom) → VGFN (Netherlands)
Korea Association of Game Industry	K-Games	South Korea



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THE IMPACT OF ESPORTS

In this chapter we will address esports' growth and expansion and their effect on job creation and the economy of countries and territories, an impact that makes esports an exciting sector for forward-looking public authorities as well as the private sector.

AWARENESS DRIVES ESPORTS GROWTH

Lack of familiarity with esports among the population and among social and political elites and in economic spheres impairs the development of the sector. Mainstream press coverage of esports tends to omit the numerous opportunities the sector creates for personal, social, and economic development. On the other hand, the acknowledgement by the public sector and other levels of society of the positive contribution of video games and esports to the economy, culture, and education can promote growth, reduce misinformation, and increase awareness around this very promising sector.

One positive way to raise awareness would be to endorse success stories, such as when a local team or player achieves international recognition; when a city successfully bids to host a global event; or when a famous publisher, team or tournament organiser establishes or opens a local branch in a territory. Raising awareness of the sector brings knowledge and knowledge fosters understanding, which is key to benefitting from any new trend or sector.

3.1.

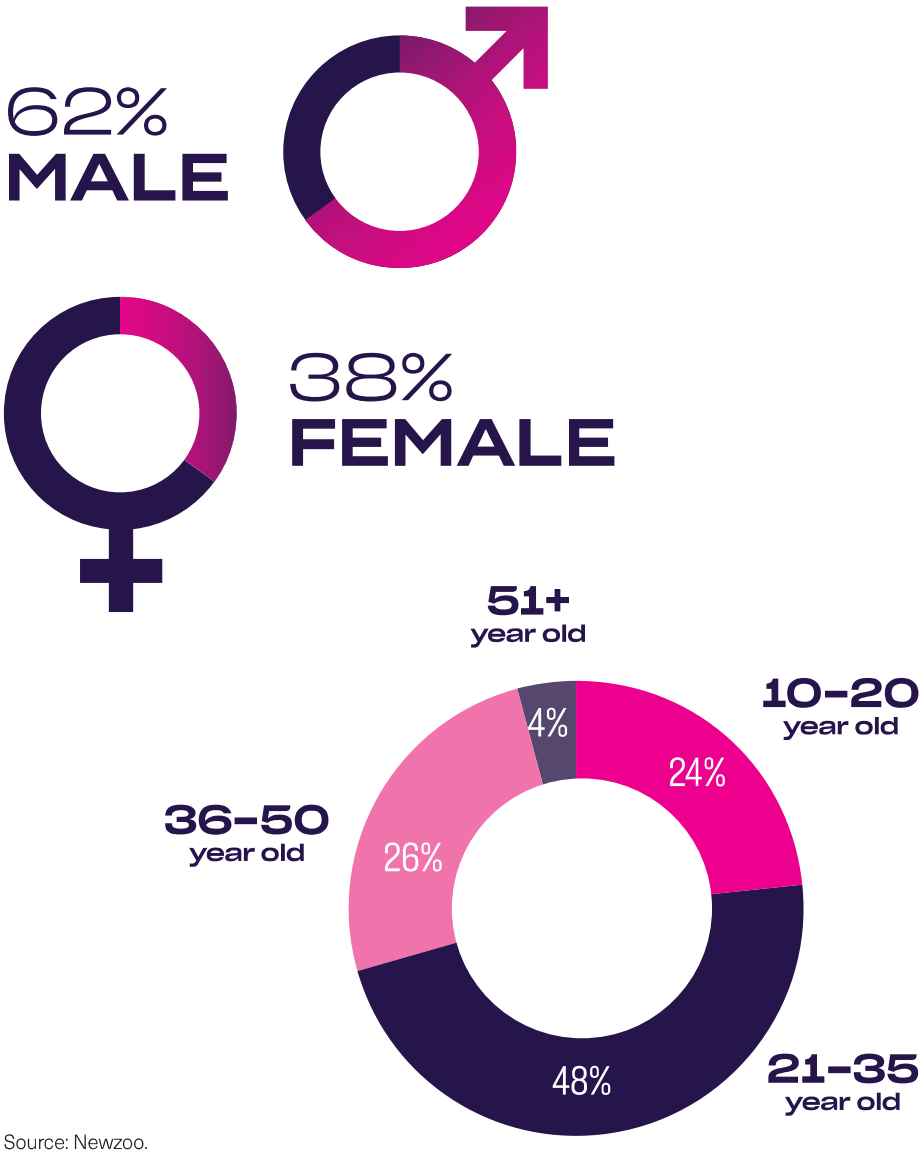
The esports audience

The esports economy is audience driven. According to games and esports analytics firm Newzoo, the total number of esports enthusiasts in 2021 is 240.0 million worldwide and is expected to grow over the next two years to 291.6 million by 2024, while the total audience is 474.0 million and is expected to reach 577.2 million in 2024[13].

ESPORTS AUDIENCE GROWTH (GLOBAL) **CAGR:** +7.7%

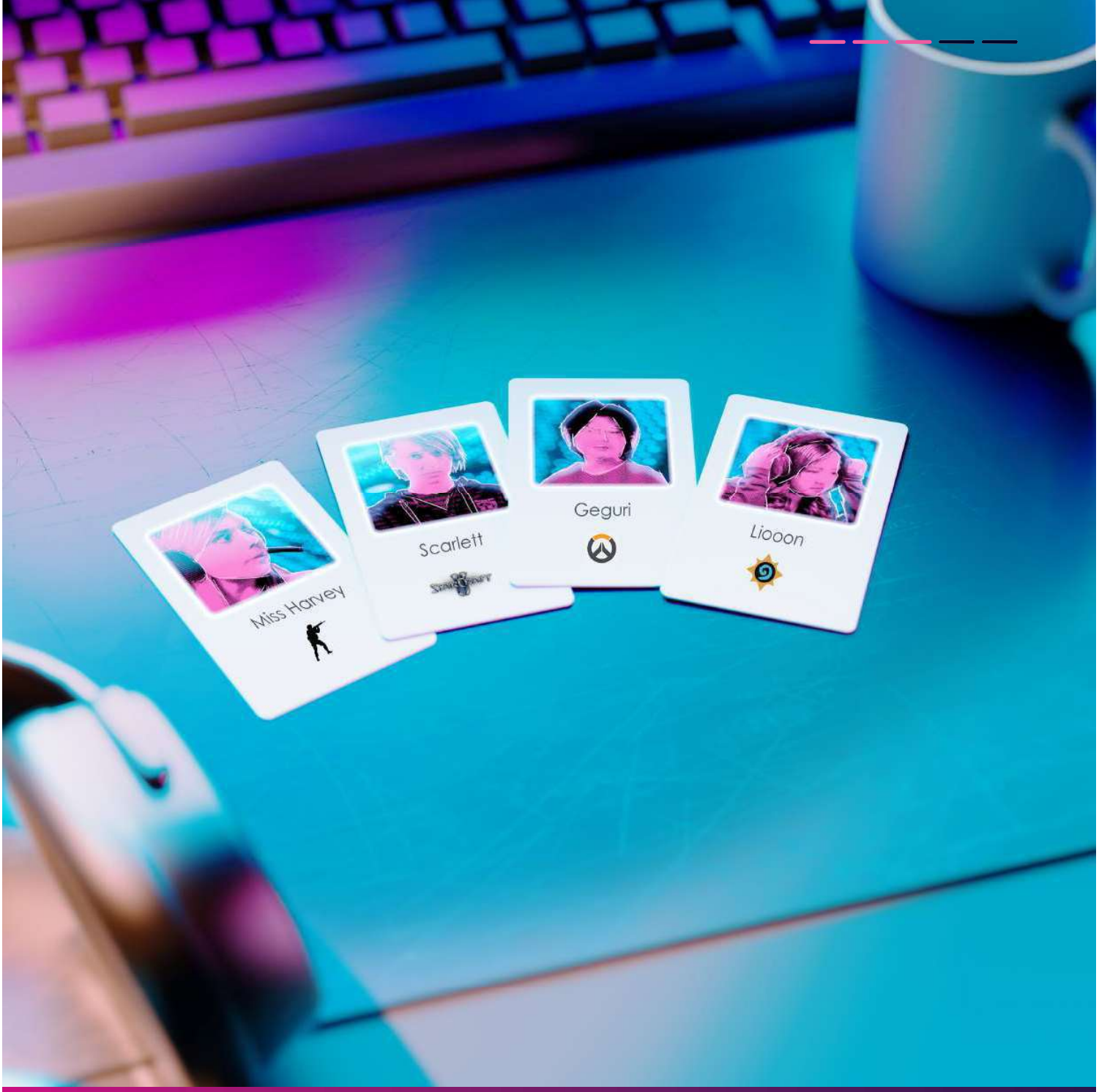
Due to rounding esports enthusiasts and occasional viewers do not add up to the total audience

Although the composition of the fanbase of different games can vary considerably, at an aggregated level, esports fans skew male and adult, with 78% aged over 21 and 62% male[14]. The female audience is increasing year over year, and reached 38% in 2020. Getting access to the Millennial/Generation Z demographic is the main reason brands enter esports: young adults have proven difficult to reach via TV or other traditional media, earning the monikers "cord-cutters" and "cord-nevers"[15].



Source: Newzoo.

These figures are attracting the attention of entrepreneurs, investors, brands, media, and other corporations. Yet, it is important to remember that this growth is not evenly distributed. As with any new sector, there are big differences in the level of esports popularity and development around the globe (see Chapter 1).



Left to right, **Stephanie Harvey (missharvey)**, pioneer professional Counter-Strike player, winner of five women world championships; **Sacha Hostyn (Scarlett)**, Canadian StarCraft II player, entered the Guinness Book of Records as the highest-earning woman in esports; **Kim Se-yeon (Geguri)**, South Korean Overwatch player, first woman to play in the Overwatch League; **Li Xiaomeng (Liooon)**, Chinese Hearthstone player, first woman to win the Hearthstone Grandmasters Global Finals

3.2.

The esports economy

Esports are revolutionising how consumers watch, follow, and engage with video games. Esports competitions provide an outlet for millions of fans and a meaningful way to connect with others. As esports audiences keep growing and the companies keep experimenting with new revenue sources, the economic size of the sector will match its already sizable popularity.

Next, we will describe the composition of direct revenue as well as the indirect economy generated by the esports sector.

ESPORTS REVENUES

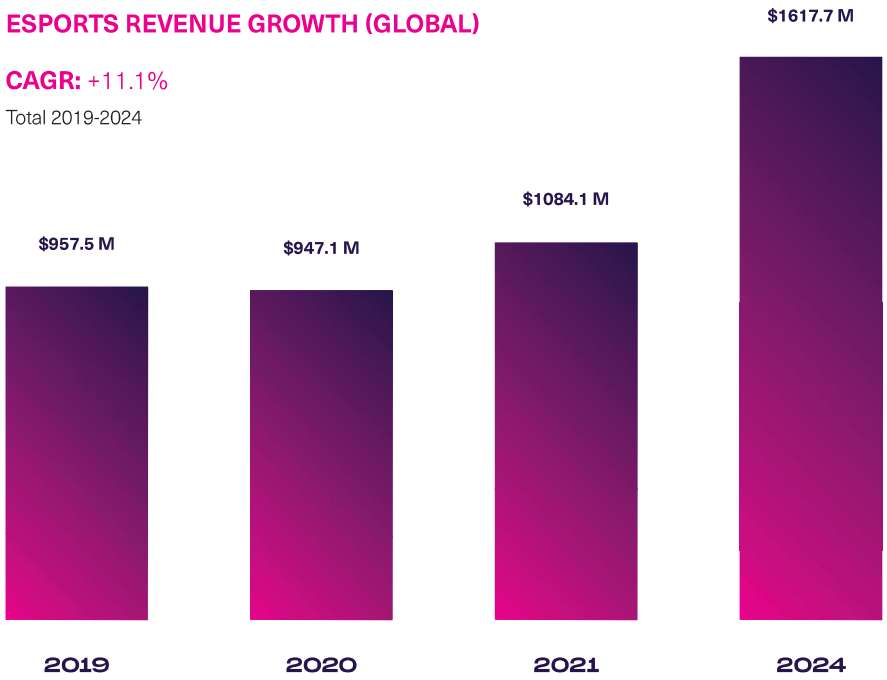
Games and esports analytics firm Newzoo forecasts worldwide esports revenues for 2021 of just below USD $1.1 billion[16]. This is a modest figure compared to the over USD $175 billion revenue estimated for the video games industry worldwide in 2021[17].

Although the esports industry contracted slightly in 2020 during the worldwide pandemic, in the next three years the sector is expected to experience double-digit growth to over USD $1.6 billion.

ESPORTS REVENUE GROWTH (GLOBAL)

CAGR: +11.1%

Total 2019-2024



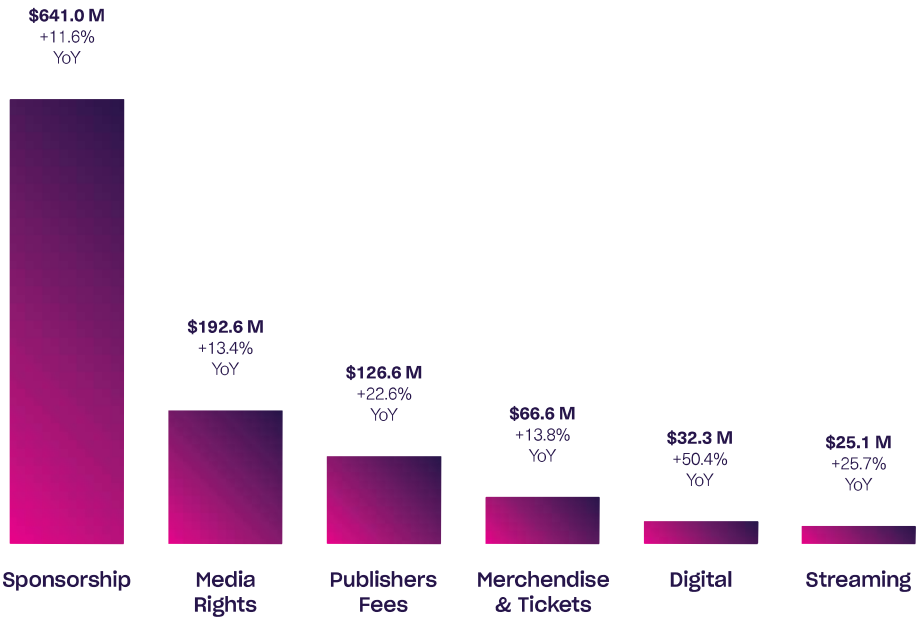
Source: Newzoo (2021). Global Esports & Live Streaming Market Report 2021

The revenue estimates consider six primary sources:

- **Sponsorships:** Revenue generated by teams and tournament organisers from sponsorship and advertising sold as part of a sponsorship package such as naming rights, logos on shirts, sponsored content, etc., but also in-game presence.
- **Media rights:** Revenue generated via the sale of content or the granting of rights to show content on a channel.
- **Ticketing & merchandising:** Revenue generated from the sale of tickets for events and of team and competition-related items. This includes sales by publishing houses (e.g. books or collectable player cards).
- **Publisher Fees:** Payments by game publishers to independent tournament organisers to organise events or competitions. This does not include spending by publishers on their own events.
- **Digital revenues:** Revenues from the sale of online items for games, linked to competitions or teams.
- **Revenues from streaming:** Revenues generated by professional players or streamers on their own channels or on team channels.

Indirect revenues from sales of specialised hardware and peripherals, of esports-related games or in-game products, from services like in-game communications, or the side economy of live events (travel and hospitality) are not included in the above estimates. The estimates also exclude prize money and players' salaries. This leaves us with the following revenue forecast for 2021 by source[18]:

ESPORTS REVENUE STREAMS (GLOBAL)



As seen on the graphic, the esports sector depends heavily on sponsorship: almost 60% of the sector's revenues come from this source. This may prove challenging in times of economic contraction, as marketing budgets are very cyclical and subject to a limited number of clients. But the sector is still in its early stages of development and is experimenting with revenue sources and business models.

ESPORTS AND COVID-19

The global health emergency put a temporary brake on much of the world's economic life, with public performances, sports and entertainment events being particularly affected. By contrast, the esports sector appeared to thrive during the pandemic[19]. This rosy picture is not completely accurate. To be sure, most video games competitions did not stop but quickly adapted their operations to total or partial remote production or introduced innovative security measures such as sanitary bubbles, guaranteeing the continuity of their events while safeguarding the health of audiences, players, officials and of broadcast and other staff. But even the esports sector was not immune to the COVID-19's impact, as the pandemic reduced the number of live events (and certainly made those that were able to continue more onerous to stage), and in particular, the big international tentpole events, which impacted the sector's economic growth.

Lockdowns and social distancing have led to an increase in the consumption of audio-visual content online. This and the lack of or reduction in the availability of alternative entertainment have meant that esports audiences increased to reach record levels[20]. Nevertheless, games and esports analytics firm Newzoo calculated a 12% hit to the projected revenues of the sector in 2020[21], primarily from the cancellation or postponement of live events. As seen in the graphic above, 2020 saw a net decrease in the revenues for the sector, but they are expected to grow by a solid 49% in the next three years.

The health crisis is a major challenge for the sector, but at the same time the sector has shown its creativity, resilience and increased professionalisation, and has revealed its ability to quickly adapt, putting safety measures in place and continuing to operate and increase its audiences.

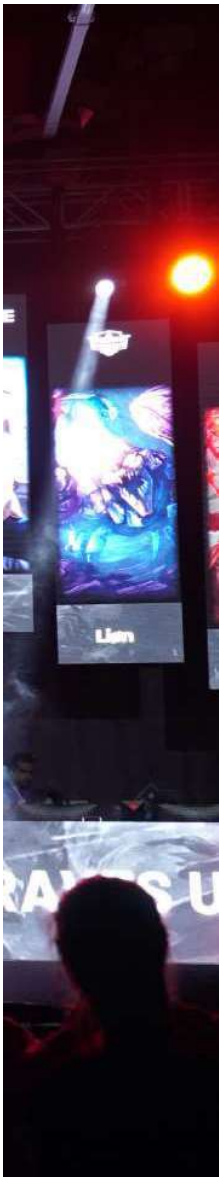
SPILL-OVER EFFECTS OF ESPORTS

As we have seen, the definition of esports revenues is narrowed to the sources created directly by the competitive properties themselves, but they do not account for sales of products or services (or the increase in sales) directly driven by the existence of esports.

For example, Dota 2's biggest yearly tournament, The International, comes with a set of virtual in-game objects, information and extra content (the "Battle Pass") that fans can buy, and which also supports the competition, as part of the revenues collected goes to the prize pool. In 2019, Battle Pass revenues surpassed USD $137 million, of which over USD $34 million went to the tournament's prize pool[22], although none of this money is included as esports revenues. Beyond direct monetisation strategies, esports impacts the video game industry in other ways such as via increased engagement and exposure or via longer lifespans for individual video game titles.

The growing popularity of esports has also positively impacted the computer hardware and electronics industry through the creation and sale of specialised gaming hardware (PCs, displays) and peripherals for competitive gaming.

AN UNEQUIVOCAL BENEFICIARY OF ESPORTS GROWING POPULARITY HAS BEEN THE COMPUTER HARDWARE AND ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY



Beyond industry-endemic companies, the indirect impact of esports can also be seen in other existing businesses, from snack foods to luxury brands to universities. Many organisations are adapting their products or services to cater for new clients or needs around competitive gaming. For example, law firms have been “early adopters” of esports, providing advice and producing reports and studies. Law practices all over the world have become specialists in the sector and, in Spain, the Madrid Bar has created the first esports section in an official bar association[23]. Agencies of various kinds have wholeheartedly embraced esports and some have become fully embedded in the sector, offering services from marketing to content and event production, talent representation and even team management and tournament organisation.

Examples of other services in high demand include coaching, self-improvement programmes/applications, infotainment content, bars and social centres, and online communications tools such as Discord or Team Speak.

3.3.

Investments in esports

This entrepreneurial boom means esports-related investment is also growing. Esports are no longer an exotic venture in a niche sector, but a legitimate area of interest for all types of investors, from angel investors and family offices to venture capital companies.

The appeal of investing in esports comes from three main sources:

- Strong growth: Revenues and audiences are expected to grow at robust rates (see above).
- The target audience: The core audience of esports is the hard to reach millennial and centennial demographic, a sought-after audience for many brands.
- Diverse business models: Esports present many different job and business opportunities (see below).

From 34 investment deals[n] and US$490 million invested in esports in 2017, the volume of disclosed deals in 2018 rose to US$4.5bn in 68 deals[24]. The biggest recipients were game developers and publishers and live streaming and other video gaming-related services. Over 50% of the deals were venture capital, the rest being divided between private equity, family office, strategic investor, and to a lesser extent public offerings.

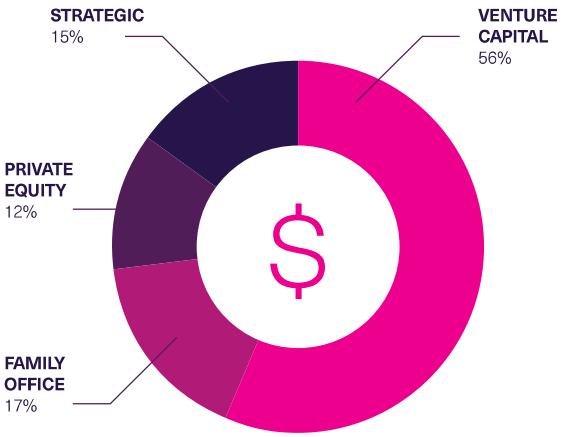
$4.5B

USD invested in 2018

n Including venture capital, family office investments, private equity, and M&A.

BREAKDOWN OF ESPORTS INVESTMENTS

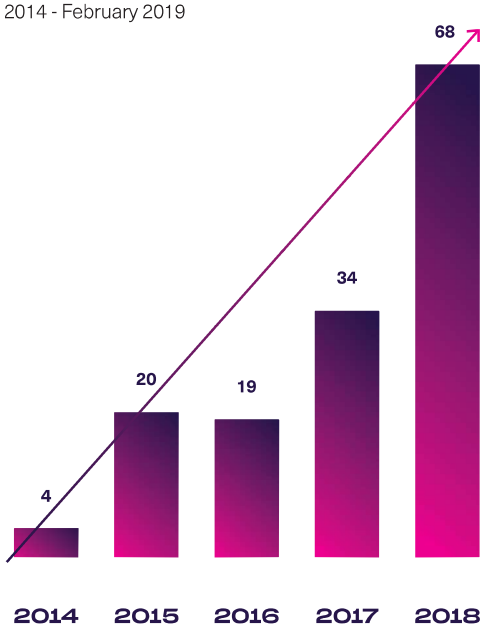
2018 by investor type



Source: Deloitte and The Esports Observer.

NUMBER OF INVESTMENTS IN ESPORTS

2014 - February 2019



ESPORTS ARE NO LONGER AN EXOTIC VENTURE IN A NICHE SECTOR, BUT A LEGITIMATE AREA OF INTEREST FOR ALL TYPES OF INVESTORS

Investing in esports is not simple, though. In the ultra-competitive video gaming industry, it is very difficult to predict with precision what will happen in the next 2-3 years, let alone in 5 or 10. But the sector shows a great deal of stability too. From publishing companies to tournament organisers and team organisations, many of today's main actors were already in the sector 10 years ago. This shows that it is nevertheless possible to make informed strategic decisions. At the same time, in the past few years, hundreds of new companies have been established and are thriving. Hardware and games have changed, the audience has grown exponentially, but expertise built on experience, which the sector has amassed, has allowed both the expansion of those early trailblazers and the explosion of new businesses in many geographical areas.

3.4.

Esports jobs

Esports professionals are not just pro gamers! While esports are generating a huge number of business opportunities, they are also creating new jobs or providing opportunities for development to existing ones. In the first eight months of 2020, job-vacancies website Hitmarker had 5,018 esports jobs advertised from 1,014 esports brands in 322 cities around the world[25]. For the whole of 2020, Hitmarker advertised 6,236 esports jobs globally[26].

As with the indirect economy generated by esports (see above), the first beneficiary of the boom in esports-related jobs is the video game industry itself. When it comes to competitive games, developers are principally responsible for keeping a game competitive and balanced. However, developer resources can also be used specifically for esports. This includes, for example, the creation of team-themed in-game items, or technology that helps maintain competitive integrity (e.g., Riot Games developed a "Chronobreak" tool to restart games from a specific point in case of a bug[o]).

The professionalisation of esports in all areas is evolving very quickly. The time when even top-level esports properties were volunteer-run is long gone. In fact, most of the positions demanded by the sector require highly skilled professionals. According to esports and social researcher Nicolas Besombes, "the constant growth of the phenomenon has gradually led the various stakeholders to (i) seek new skills (sometimes in other sectors of activity such as sport or media for example), to (ii) increase their human resources, and to (iii) surround themselves with increasingly qualified people," and he identifies over 100 different roles the esports sector employs in segments as different as broadcasting, event organisation, health management, sales and marketing[27]. Although employment is growing throughout the sector, not all roles are in equal demand. For example, Hitmarker shows the following high-demand segments globally[p].

o A bug is an error or flaw in a computer program that causes it to behave in unintended ways.

p This is not the complete picture, as some esports roles are not susceptible to appearing in job-vacancies listings, most notably players. Also, the impact of the global health crisis may have temporarily impacted the demand for events and other production personnel.

TOP 10 HIRING SECTORS IN ESPORTS (2020)

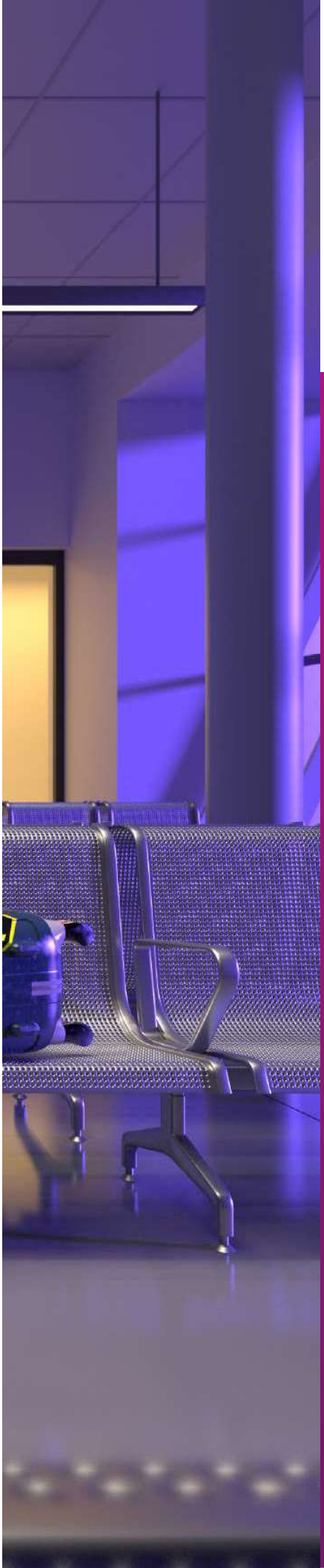
Percentage over total jobs offered

Sector	Percent
Marketing	9.90%
Software Engineering	8.31%
Executive & Management	7.68%
Business Development & Sales	7.61%
Technology	6.72%
Social Media	5.18%
Talent	3.87%
Editorial & Writing	3.21%
Project Management	3.03%
Coaching	2.97%

While some of the roles are endemic to a type of esports stakeholder (for example, teams employing players), the nature of esports as an entertainment content sector means some roles or employment niches such as business development and marketing or technology-related roles are in demand by most or all of the actors, from teams to tournament organisers and from media platforms to sponsors, explaining the higher demand for them.

But it is not only individuals who can benefit from knowing the wide array of career opportunities the esports sector has to offer, institutions and territories (see next section) stand to benefit from the sector's growth too, for instance, by providing education or attracting the talent the sector demands.


C21 DEPARTURE GATE
EUROPEAN MASTERS
FIFA22
MADRID GAMES



ESPORTS TALENT TRAVELS THE WORLD

Esports are transnational endeavours. Most competitions attract international participation and audiences. Consequently, esports talent needs fast, inexpensive, and frictionless access to those markets. Players, coaches and other technical staff, analysts and commentators lead itinerant lives going from one organisation to another and from event to event as the market and the competitive calendar demands. To lure talent to national teams and leagues, and to be able to host internationally renowned esports tournaments, it should be possible for esports professionals to travel to participate in these competitions with the minimum amount of red tape possible.

Visas for esports talent (players, coaching and other team staff, commentators, and other irreplaceable professionals) should be granted on very short notice for tournament-oriented short-term stays. To develop an advanced ecosystem, esports talent should have the same status as high-skilled professionals for mid or long-term stays in a country.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THE OPPORTUNITIES OF ESPORTS

Esports are set to be one of the sectors with the greatest expansion opportunities in entertainment in the upcoming years. To make the most of their huge potential, it is important to understand the different opportunities they open up in fields like the economy and job creation, education, and local and national development.

4.1.

Opportunities for territories

In their relatively short history, esports have proven to be a powerful transformative force for some territories.

The idea seems counterintuitive. Esports are a global digital phenomenon, but they also create strong social links among players and fans. At the end of the day, esports are based on relationships of competition and collaboration between players, teams, and companies. Players and fans have always felt the need to meet in real life, sometimes travelling hundreds or thousands of miles to compete in front of a live audience, to get to see in person their heroes and villains, and to socialise with other fans. We see this need reflected in how all the major international tournaments hold live events. But beyond the major events, esports have had since the beginning a strong grassroots activity organised by local fans. These local communities and competitions (whether city or country-based) are now bigger than ever, and in most cases, they enable the organic growth of the sector: without a large, diverse, and active fan base, it is considerably more difficult to build sustainable esports properties in a territory.

NATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

With the continued growth of esports across the world, some governments have understood the potential of the sector for the development of their territories. Countries like Denmark, Japan, and South Korea, among others, have launched plans to support and grow esports. These plans usually focus on building sustainable ecosystems, developing national talent, creating opportunities for entrepreneurship, employment, and commerce and, in general, establishing a vision for the sector in the mid-term.

In dealing with esports, one common trait of the countries mentioned is that the national strategy has been established on the basis of a dialogue between the public authorities and the main economic actors. This has created goodwill and the right environment for cooperation between public and private stakeholders and, as a result, these countries have been able to create concrete initiatives with broad support, something very much required in the context of a new and dynamic sector. This dialogue has solidified in different

structures: a trade committee in South Korea[28], a national commission or panel in Denmark[29], and a workgroup in Japan[30].

Although esports are growing in most of the world without significant public sector involvement, these kinds of actions may allow countries to take advantage of synergies between the public and private stakeholders, which may result in a stronger, more balanced growth in the long-term. On the other hand, the entrepreneurial nature of esports means that the most straightforward explanations for a thriving esports sector are business and technology-friendly social, economic, and regulatory practices and environments. Despite being polar opposites size-wise, the United States and Singapore are two examples of countries that have "bred" global esports actors despite no particular commitment from their governments.

CREATING A FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR ESPORTS

In most of the world, video game competitions are regulated by general laws that apply to every business activity (commercial, labour, intellectual property, consumer protection, data protection, and competition laws, etc.), plus private contracts, and codes of conduct. There are very few instances of countries that have directly regulated esports, allowing the industry to grow and expand as the industry has become more popular with fans. Conversely, territories that have adopted regulations placing obstacles in the way of esports have not proved to be efficient and may have even slowed down the economic development of esports in the territories in which they have been introduced. Alternatively, some territories have enacted regulations in cooperation with the video games industry that have effectively supported the development of esports.

For example, the very strict Japanese law on prizes has been postulated as one of the causes for the comparatively slow growth of esports in a country with both a huge gaming culture and high-quality Internet infrastructure[31]. On the other hand, the elimination of barriers or uncertainties can supercharge esports' growth. Until late 2016, it was assumed that esports could be considered a game of chance under French law, a situation that changed when the French Digital Law (Loi pour une République Numérique) explicitly excluded esports as a game of chance, which created a favourable environment for the rapid growth of the esports sector in the French market.

It is important to remember that the esports sector is a part of the video games industry, rather than to treat it as its own form of entertainment or as a part of a totally separate sector. There is a danger that a poor understanding of this very dynamic sector can lead to well-meaning but inappropriate regulation that will stifle development. The video games industry has a proven record of efficient self-regulation at regional and international level as regards minor protection and responsible gameplay. It is also important to remember that esports are essentially transnational, so there is a need to find solutions that can work in more than one jurisdiction.

LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

Over the years, esports events have gone from Internet cafés and local LAN parties to theatres, convention centres, stadiums, and other large venues around the globe. From stadium owners to cinema operators trying to reinvent themselves by investing in esports capabilities, live esports events have reinvigorated private and government infrastructure. Esports events can be held independently of the season, opening up the range of events that can be held in a territory or venue all year round. Understandably, they have the potential to be a major draw for tourism.

But this is not the only benefit for towns, cities and regions considering hosting esports events. While the short-term economic impact is indeed significant, the long-term effect of the perception of a city as an attractive place to live for the young and educated is one reason why authorities are embracing these events, especially in small and medium sized cities[32].

Hosting an esports event is not necessarily a one-time occasion. Building a long-term connection with an event or series of events means local authorities, businesses and stakeholders can build stable relationships around the event, which will bring development and stable jobs. The creation of esports-ready venues (or the adaptation of existing venues to host esports) offers similar opportunities.

Attracting esports companies helps to build long-term economic development of a territory as well. As we have seen in the previous point, esports companies employ a very diverse set of high-skilled staff. The Internet-based nature of esports means that transnational operations can be done anywhere: a tournament involving European teams can be operated and broadcast from North America, and vice versa. This international reach means that esports workplaces attract a cosmopolitan workforce and contribute to expanding the reputation of a town or region. For example, Palm Beach County, Florida, incentivised the establishment of a facility for Misfits Gaming Group, a team organisation. The county valued the fact that esports jobs were remunerated much more highly than the average in the county, which was USD $53K[33].

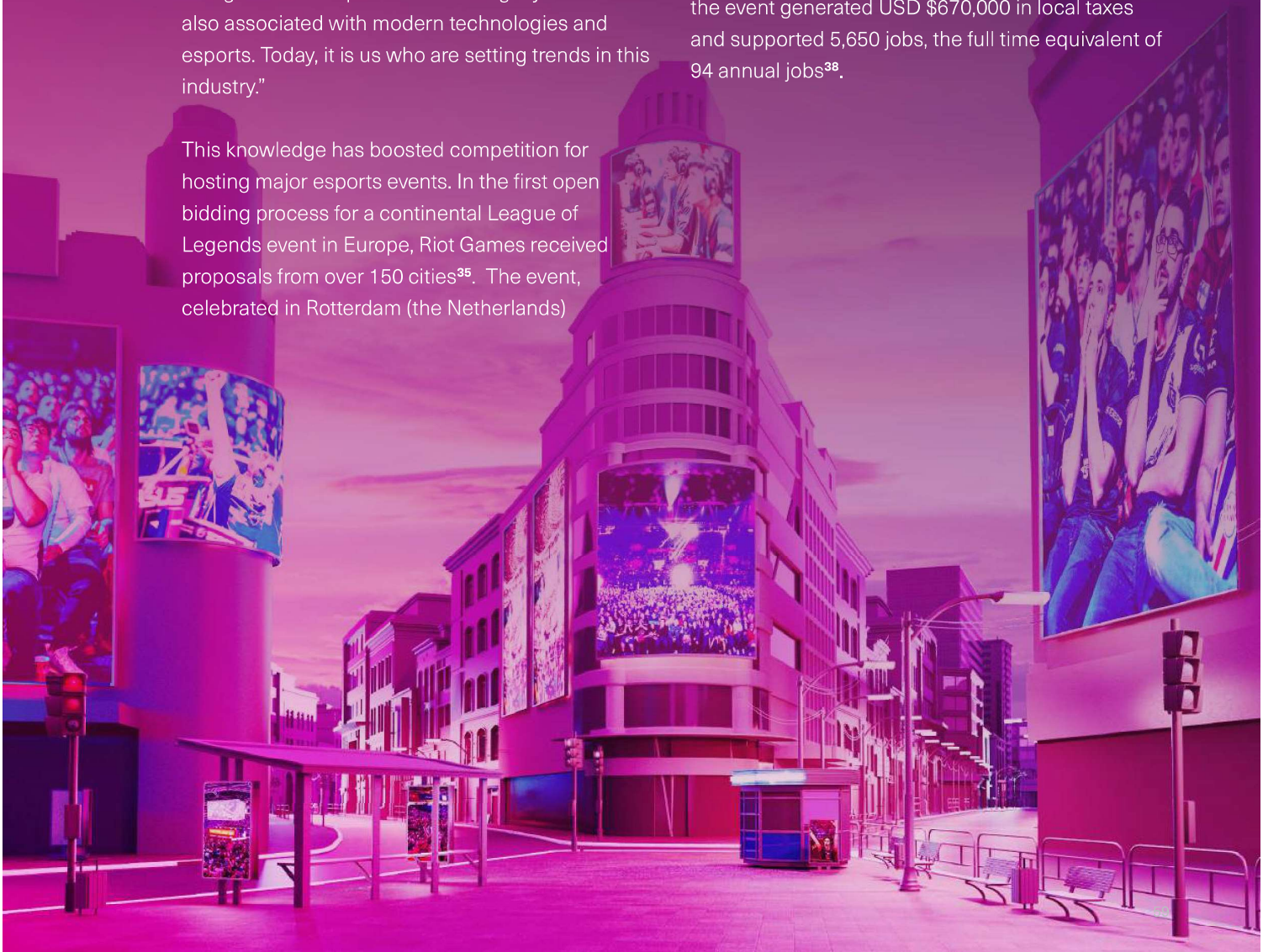
CITIES COMPETE TO HOST ESPORTS EVENTS

According to the study 'Host Cities and Esports Events: Perceptions and Ambitions', in a survey targeted at more than 500 cities worldwide, most cities surveyed (84%) said that hosting esports events could be used as a driver to reach out to new and young audiences, while 56% thought that hosting esports could provide less well-known cities with a shortcut to increase the awareness of their city in the global events market[34].

Katowice, Poland, has become a well-known case study. Once a declining industrial town, the celebration since 2013 of ESL's Intel Extreme Masters has positioned the city as one of the world's esports capitals. In the words of Mayor Marcin Krupa, "we have become a city that not only is recognised for its post-industrial legacy but is now also associated with modern technologies and esports. Today, it is us who are setting trends in this industry."

This knowledge has boosted competition for hosting major esports events. In the first open bidding process for a continental League of Legends event in Europe, Riot Games received proposals from over 150 cities[35]. The event, celebrated in Rotterdam (the Netherlands) represented a return of €2.36 million from visitors, but more importantly, positioned the city in the imagination of esports fans. "Attracting these kinds of events is good for the image of the city," declared Kees de Jong, marketing manager for Rotterdam Ahoy, the event's venue. "Rotterdam wants to position itself as a young, vibrant, dynamic city. Rotterdam stands for innovation and progress."[36]

As a result of the success of the Six Major Raleigh, an international tournament of the video game Rainbow Six: Siege which brought USD $1.45 million in direct economic impact, a coalition of local stakeholders lead by the city of Raleigh, North Carolina, created the Greater Raleigh Esports Local Organising Committee (GRELOC) dedicated to attracting local and global competitive video gaming events and promoting Raleigh's world-class, esports-ready facilities and infrastructure[37]. Similarly, according to NYC & Company, the 2018 Overwatch League Grand Finals generated an estimated economic impact of USD $12.8 million; the event generated USD $670,000 in local taxes and supported 5,650 jobs, the full time equivalent of 94 annual jobs[38].



4.2.

Educational and social opportunities

In the 21st Century, digital skills are as vital as literacy and numeracy. They encompass not only technical abilities to apply Information and Communication Technologies, but also digital literacy, safety, collaboration, and content creation. These skills are essential for personal fulfilment and development, employment, social inclusion, and active citizenship.

Furthermore, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transition of societies as teleworking and distance learning have become a reality for many people. Existing skills gaps between those who have the necessary competences to function and thrive in the digital society, and those who are lagging, have been widened by this sudden and quick transition.

Esports can help people to acquire these key competences and skills. They enable players to immerse themselves in rich imaginative worlds and to collaborate or compete with friends or other fellow gamers around the world. Video games pose significant intellectual challenges in terms of processing information, solving problems, devising strategies and plans, and interpreting information from a range of different media, both verbal and visual.

Finally, esports can also be used as a tool for social and educational inclusion.

ESPORTS IN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Commercial and educational video games are already established in classrooms. Teachers who have used games have observed a significant improvement in several key skills such as problem-solving and analytical, intellectual, and spatiotemporal skills[39], as well as an increase in creativity, collaboration, initiative, attention, and communication[40].

Besides skills, games can be used to teach diverse subjects. For example, in 2020 the Polish government announced that the video game This War of Mine by 11 bit Studios was going to be placed on the official reading list for high school students and made available for free to support the teaching of sociology, ethics, philosophy, and history[41]. Since 2009,

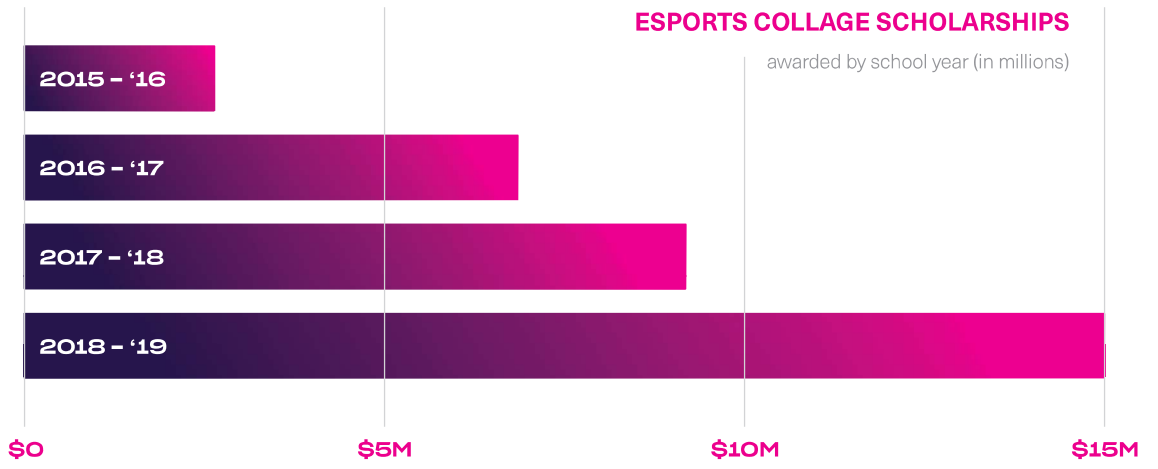
European Schoolnet (a network of 34 European Ministries of Education) and the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE) have teamed up for Games in Schools, a project aimed at training teachers across Europe on the use of commercial video games as pedagogical support in the classroom[42].

A much newer phenomenon, esports are increasingly found on the curriculums of higher education institutions, with several now offering specialised esports-related degrees or courses.

Besides this, there are three other areas where we are seeing a surge in the presence of esports:

- **Scholastic and collegiate/varsity esports**
  Competitions in and between educational institutions, where teams representing a school, college or university compete against teams from similar educational institutions, are thriving. Institutions are investing in collegiate esports to attract students and activate their student body. In many cases, these institutions offer incentives to esports talent in the form of scholarships. This may open opportunities for students who may have had difficulty accessing other academic or athletic scholarships. According to NACE (National Association of Collegiate Esports), around 200 colleges/universities in the United States offered USD $15M in scholarships in 2019. In the US again, collegiate organisation TESPA involves 850 schools and 20,000 players[43].

Connected learning
This is an approach to education that advocates for broadened access to learning that is socially embedded, interest-driven, and oriented toward educational, economic, or political opportunity. Connected learning is realised when a person can pursue a personal interest or passion, with the support of peers and mentors, and is in turn able to link this into academic, career or civic achievement, making school more relevant and connecting young people to future career pathways. Connected learning esports programmes in universities like the University of California, Irvine are incorporating Career Technical Education, STEM, English Language Arts, and even social and emotional learning[44]. In the same vein, the Digital Schoolhouse programme of Ukie, the UK's video games trade association, uses play-based learning to engage pupils and teachers with computing. The programme is aimed at primary and secondary schools across the United Kingdom and is delivered by an expert network of schools and teachers. In relation to esports, the Digital Schoolhouse Team Battle tournament has reached over 10,000 pupils and 1,000 teams in schools and colleges across the UK. According to Digital Schoolhouse, through immersive careers education, the tournament can help to engage students with digital and soft skills, as well as enable future talent to aspire to careers they have yet to discover[45]. Also, according to a study from the University of Surrey, United Kingdom, female



video gamers are three times more likely to choose STEM[q] degrees compared to non-gamers[46]. The promotion of esports may contribute to bridging the gender gap found in the maths and science fields.

→ **Social inclusion**
People with low levels of education have an increased risk of unemployment, lower lifetime earnings, lower participation in lifelong learning, and less adaptability to change, making them a particularly vulnerable group. Video games and esports have been used in education to engage and motivate children and young people who cannot access a place in a mainstream school or are at risk of permanent exclusion from school, and act as a positive vehicle to facilitate the development of positive personal skills and attributes, such as the ability to cooperate and explore, self-management, independence, responsibility, initiative and enterprise[47].

By incorporating the pursuits and interests of young people, we may not only raise more engaged students, but also better citizens for an increasingly interconnected world.

DIVERSITY

World-class competitions usually feature players from dozens of countries. Amateur tournaments are organised in most corners of the world. Esports have the capacity to be more inclusive and accessible than other competitive endeavours because of the variety of games as well as the comparatively low entry barriers in terms of access and equipment. In addition, esports competitions are gender-inclusive, and women have been on stage in some of the biggest global competitions, such as the Overwatch League or the Hearthstone Grandmasters Global Finals.

Video games themselves are no longer a male-dominated pastime. Currently, around 46% of the world's video gaming enthusiasts are women[48]. Although not yet at the same level, the number of female esports enthusiasts is growing at an accelerated rate and represents 38% of the audience. Historically, however, women have been underrepresented among esports professionals, representing only a fraction of professional players.

Nevertheless, the proportion of women in esports is gradually increasing, thanks in part to trailblazers who have reached the top echelons of video games competitions and to ground-breaking initiatives, such as the French Incubator Programme. This is a partnership between Women in Games France, Riot Games and Ubisoft France that offers personalised individual coaching, media training, meetings with professionals, and participation in mixed-team tournaments. "'See it to be it!' is such an important part of inspiring women into esports! The more women that are successful – and seen to be so, across a multitude of roles within the esports sector, the more girls and women will enter the sector," says Marie Claire Isaaman, CEO of UK-based Women in Games[49]. Isaaman also cites the need to support programmes that help women explore the varied opportunities and professional roles that are available in esports.

In addition to initiatives like those mentioned above, a small number of women-only tournaments offer additional possibilities for female esports players to compete. These tournaments aim to provide a positive and inclusive environment for female esports players. Some of the tournaments act as a stepping-

q STEM education focuses on four disciplines — science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

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stone to major competitions. However, there are relatively few of these sorts of women-only tournaments, and they do not currently match the spectacle, prestige, or commercial success of many of the sector's more famous, male-dominated, tournaments, "the more the big tournament organisers can showcase female talent at the top the better".

In the areas of racial and ethnic diversity in esports, representation often varies depending on the game and platform. The fighting game community, in particular, has been traditionally perceived as the most ethnically diverse community in competitive video gaming[50]. The origins of the community in the arcade halls of the 80s and 90s and the sustained practice of focusing on live face-to-face competitions seems to have fostered a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging that has nurtured the current diversity of the community, from top players to tournament organisers, commentators, and content creators[51].

The fighting game community has also been a forerunner in showcasing the talent of female, transgender, and non-binary players, from pioneers Marie-Laure Norindr (Kayane) and Ricki Ortiz to sensation Dominique McLean (SonicFox) who won "Esports Player of the Year" at The Game Awards 2018.

Although there is still progress to be made, the dynamic growth of esports presents a unique opportunity for the video game industry writ large. The most prominent actors in the esports sector are firmly committed to building a diverse and inclusive environment, in which all members of society can compete without discrimination. The Principles of Esports Engagement established by the main global trade associations (see Chapter 1) are an affirmation of this commitment. The associations look forward to strengthening ongoing partnerships throughout esports that help to create a more diverse and welcoming community for all.

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CONCLUSION

Esports have proven to be one of the most exciting developments in entertainment in the last few years and are poised to become mainstream thanks to their increasing popularity. However, it should not be forgotten that they are still in an early stage of development globally, and in their very infancy in many territories. It is therefore extraordinarily important to promote the conditions that will allow for their growth and maturity.

A direct and fluid dialogue between the video games industry and policymakers is the best way to ensure the continued and sustained growth of the sector. National and international industry-wide associations are here to help coordinate and facilitate this dialogue by providing an authoritative voice for the sector, reliable information about the state of esports, and access to the relevant stakeholders in every territory.

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THE GUIDE TO ESPORTS

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The Entertainment Software Association (USA), the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, the Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (Australia and New Zealand), and the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (representing national trade associations in 15 European countries) are the global voices and advocates for the video game industry, of which esports are an important part. Our members are the publishers and developers who make esports a reality. For more information, visit us at:

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What are Esports?
Introduction to the Global Phenomenon of Esports

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Abstract. *Tom Brady, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, and others are household names, while Lee Faker Sang-Hyeok is less well-known. Although Kim Doinb Tae-sang and Luka Perkz Perkovi are still well known, they are also rising to the status of world-renowned athletes. The most popular computer video game in the world, League of Legends, has professional players like Faker Perks and Toinb. The League is one of the many ambitious and well-liked sporting events that make up the fast-growing esports category. Administrators operate in what is referred to as a global gray area. Esports is a lucrative corporate sponsorship option for athletes because of its enormous popularity (some events regularly draw tens of thousands of viewers), but it is also fluid and lacks defined standards. This article describes the global phenomenon of esports; provides an overview of the role and practice of esports; highlights why esports is considered an integral part of the evolving internet culture and introduces the reader to the structure of gaming more broadly.*

Keywords: esports, history, evolution, structures, internet culture

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Introduction

Esports are simply video games played in a highly organized competitive setting.

These games range from the well-liked multiplayer online battlegrounds (MOBAs), which are characterized by their emphasis on cooperative play, to the rising popularity of single-player first-person shooter survival battle royales and virtual reality games. This rise in video games occurs as the young adult population begins to create and control new cultural trends. Of particular importance to these changes is the development of a fundamental relationship between youth and sport.

While the viewership for traditional sports is decreasing the viewership for esports is increasing. (Esports Industry in 2022) The explosion was so substantial that almost all of the top video games available today have some kind of fictitious commercial circuit. What led to this change in direction? In the early 2000s, the narrative opens in South Korea.

To combat the severe economic crisis, the South Korean government has concentrated on building out its telecommunications and internet infrastructure. (www.nytimes.com, 2014) PC Sound quickly became a well-known social space. It is a dining establishment with a bar and other areas used for gambling. These organizations are as common as nearby basketball courts, where gamers congregate to compete and form bonds over a common interest in video games. These nations soon began holding official competitions. Recognizing the extraordinary market created by the region the Korean government stepped in and created the Korea Sports Association (KeSPA) the world's first government body dedicated to the regulation of video games and esports.

Due to the South Korean government's policy for the growth of telecommunications, numerous low-cost television stations mushroomed at the same time. One of them was developed specifically to cover Naver eSports. Esports have become a significant part of Korean culture because of a mix of well-liked social venues that encourage focused competition and live streaming platforms for expert gamers. StarCraft (1998), StarCraft II (2010), and Defense of the Ancients 2 (2013), also known as Dota 2, were developed by Activision Blizzard and Valve Corporation, respectively, and became the first real esports. Dota 2 spawned a potent network of modest-sized competitions that eventually developed into secretive, significant tournaments. However, StarCraft's development of the first organized and sponsored developers helped it gain more popularity on the Korean circuit. Even today, some gaming leagues exist. The prize pool for the DOTA 2 International 2019 winners is $135 million out of $308 million, which is more than some traditional sports like golf and ultimate fighting. Dota 2 is incredibly popular, and its current international championship has the largest prize pool of any esports event at five and a half times the second largest prize pool. (www.forbes.com, 2019)

The research questions are:

- What are esports?
- What are the general structures behind esports?
- Why esports should be seen as a part of the ever-changing internet culture?

Literature review

A synopsis of esports' history

Early in the 1970s, amid the revered halls of Stanford University, esports first began to gain popularity and was the unwitting brainchild of a group of Stanford University students. These pioneer hunters could not have imagined that their activities would lead to the popularity of the first competitive game by playing a game called *Space War*. (History of Esports, 2021)

On October 19, 1972, Stanford University hosted the first video gaming tournament for the game Space War. Stanford students are invited to participate in the Intergalactic Space Battle Olympics, with Bruce Baumgart winning the five-man free-for-all and the Tovar and Robert E. Mass team taking first place. The grand prize is a year's subscription to Rolling Stone. (History of Esports, 2021)

Modern competition equipment originated from video arcade competition. The device was introduced in Japan in 1974 by Sega as the All-Japan Games Championship TV arcade video game tournament for the nation. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

Sega organized the tournament to promote the game and promote video game sales in the country. Domestic competitions were held at 300 locations in Japan and sixteen finalists were selected for the finals at the Tokyo Pacific Hotel. Televisions in both color and black and white, cassette recorders, and transistor radios were among the prizes given out. Members of significant Japanese media and entertainment sector corporations attended what Sega claims to be the largest event in the history of arcade games. Sega stressed the value of these competitions in fostering a competitive environment for televised entertainment games and enhancing manufacturer-venue-customer commercial partnerships. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

The first Snake Hustle arcade game was released in the United States in 1977 by Gremlin Industries (bought by Sega the year before), and it featured Sabrina Osment and Lynn Reid, two professional female arcade players from the Gremlin Girls. The two made trips to 19 different US cities so that players might compete against them in best-of-three games for the chance to win money. Only seven of the 1300 players who challenged this pair managed to lose. (Drewis D., 2018)

Space Invaders, which introduced the use of a consistent height for all players, inaugurated the dawn of the period of arcade racing games in 1978. Many video games have recently added new ways to compare high scores with players who first played games like Asteroids in 1979. High scorekeeping has developed into a competitive hobby. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

The first significant video game tournament, the Space Invaders Tournament by Atari in 1980, attracted over 10,000 players from all over the country and helped popularize competitive gaming. The winner was Rebecca Heineman. (Marie M., 2018)

After traveling the nation in the 1980s and setting records in numerous games, Iowa-based arcade entrepreneur Walter Day launched Twin Galaxies, a business that keeps track of high scores. Later, the group assisted in promoting video games and making its achievements known through periodicals like the Guinness Book of World Records, and in 1983 it established the US National Video Game Team. The group participates in events including the North American Video Game Challenge Tour, the Guinness World Records Tour, and Video Game Masters. (Sunday Star-News, 1984)

In order to introduce audiences to these live gamer challenges and increase interest in video games, Circus Electronics employed a multi-city tour in 1983. (Borowy M. and al., 2013) The participants and tournaments of this video game were covered by tabloids and magazines like Life and Time, and some of the players, like Billy Mitchell, rose to the status of minor celebrities at the time. These kinds of promotional events enhance the competitiveness of the games while also contributing to the nature of marketing and promotion that current esports are centered on. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

The American show Starcade, which ran for a total of 133 episodes from 1982 to 1984 and featured competitors competing to beat each other's top score in an arcade game, was one of the few television shows that were shown during this time. The television show The Incredibles had a

video game tournament, and other movies, including Tron from 1982, contained tournaments in their plots. Modern arcade games were played in rounds of competition on the BBC television show First Class in the UK. Super Mario Bros. was a favorite among competitive arcade gamers at the first American National Video Game Team Tournament conducted in the United States by the Recreational Players Association in January 1987.

A 16-player online game called Netrek 1988 was nearly totally created using open-source, cross-platform code. Netrek is the third online game, the first to feature persistent user data, and the first to use a meta server to find open game servers. It was touted as "the first online sports game" by Wired magazine in 1993. (Kevin K., 1993)

Esports differ from traditional sports in a number of significant ways, including the role of game publishers and developers, the risk of obsolescence, and the distribution and accessibility of games.

Discussions

Structures behind esports

Developer tools come in two different varieties. The first to give up are the organizers like Microsoft and Nintendo, who wish to stay away from their titles or commercial activities by letting communities host tournaments and games while still demanding developer consent. Additionally, professional games are actively organized by mobile game developers like Blizzard Games, Activision, and Valve Corporation. Of the two streaming developers, Spotify is the most well-known and expanding the quickest. This means that private companies with exclusive intellectual property rights to the sport are the only entities organizing professional competitions; this means that game developers have the greatest control over how their games are played.

Another important point is that although physical sports are eternal and belong to no one can always get football and sports games depending on their developer’s choice. If the developer decides to close the game online, then the game will be lost. Choosing to favor new items or stop monetary losses is a frequent decision. One such instance is Fractured Space, whose development by Edge Case Games was halted at the end of 2018 because of the game's small player population.

Developers are the only party with control over who has access to their games because they are the sole owners of the intellectual property rights to those games. The quality of these games differs greatly from traditional sports. To enable play, region-specific servers are needed. Latency is a term for high latency. Esports are unplayable due to the delay between human input and command reading. The user experience can be negatively impacted by a delay of up to 100 milliseconds; in fact, significant latency prevents professional matches from continuing until the issue is resolved. Most often, a slow network or a distance from the server are to blame for the delay. As a result, players from those areas will never be able to compete in the professional scene or even play the game properly if a developer determines it is not financially viable to support a sizable portion of the world.

Access to the genuine professional scene and distribution are quite different things. To operate in real time and compete with media teams or businesses, players require access to tools and resources. Teenagers and young adults who grew up with YouTube and other free media are the target market because they cannot afford the monthly subscription charge to view certain channels. Because of this, the majority of live sports streams on free-to-play platforms are populated by marketers who have sponsored particular matches.This rule is also ambiguous. It is unlikely that the entire business will migrate to pay-per-view platforms because part of the attraction lies in the real direct connection between players and viewers. Live broadcasts interact

with viewers by answering their questions and having general conversations with viewers. This feeling of intimate and personal connection cannot be guaranteed. Some developers do not even want that to happen. The excitement of the game was very loud about it.

Although essential to esports, streaming has its own set of issues. Professional players and streamers are pushed to stream as much as they can to increase their teams' ad revenue, yet players only receive a small portion of it. They are individually motivated to get up and produce a lot of content in order to attract sponsors, but this can lead to exhaustion and long periods of sitting, which can have negative health effects.

Results

Since 2013, American universities and colleges have offered sports scholarships to esports competitors, including Robert Morris University in Illinois and the University of Pikeville. To encourage collegiate esports clubs to participate in its $1 million event, Blizzard Entertainment's Collegiate Esports Division introduced a new initiative in 2017. Colleges have begun awarding scholarships to students who qualify to participate in professional sports for academic credit. Participating colleges include Columbia College, Robert Morris University, and the Indiana Institute of Technology. The Harrisburg University of Science and Technology started offering athletic players scholarships in 2018. In an effort to grow esports, the biggest independent league teamed up with regional company Japan Competitive Gaming in 2014.

The breadth of esports competition expands as the internet audience surpasses the physical audience. A sold-out Staples Center hosted the League of Legends World Championship Season 3 in 2013, and in Seoul, South Korea, in 2014, Imagine Dragons performed live at the opening and closing ceremonies in front of over 40000 spectators. excluding games. The first dedicated sports facility in the United States debuted in 2015 when the first esports arena opened in Santa Ana, California. China announced a legislation in 2021 that forbade kids from engaging in what they refer to as "spiritual opiates"—video games—for more than three hours per week. Given that China is a significant market, the law raises questions about the state of the media in the nation.

As a result of decades of technological advancement and tremendous growth this modern phenomenon may have permeated our lives either directly or indirectly through friends and family. Some might say it is an example of the perfect place and perfect time, but its success is no mere coincidence. 500 million viewers and generated over $1 billion in revenue in 2021 alone.

The classification of competitive video games as sports is controversial. (Ivo v. Hilvoorde & Niek Pot, 2016) Advocates claim that tooling is a rapidly expanding non-traditional sport that necessitates precise timing and efficient execution. Others disagree, arguing that sports should combine mental and physical activities. (Tjønndal A., 2020)

The Wild West game industry is reportedly valued at hundreds of billions of dollars, but the rules are still undefined. There were few laws governing them when they first became a real sensation around the world in 2012 and 2013. There was still a prevalent perception that computer games destroy your brain long after the floodgates opened, audiences started to acquire universal acceptance, and even the money soared.

The panelists openly laughed at the subject in 2013 on a Bryant Gumbel-hosted episode of Real Sports. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports, 2023)

Additionally, a lot of people in the fighting game community set competitive gaming competitions apart from other esports competitions that are relevant to the business world. An esports panel with visitors from the worldwide athletic community explored the future of

recognizing esports as a real sport at the 2015 World Championships, which were hosted by the Worldwide Sports Federation.

On July 25, 2001, Russia became the first nation to recognize "cybersport" as a legitimate sporting activity. On March 12th, 2004, it was once again categorized as a sport following a number of reforms in Russian sports. (Centimeter. Federal Agency for Physical Culture and Sport Order from 2006 Because it did not adhere to the sport's updated standards, it was dropped from the list of sports in July 2006. Esports were once again recognized as an official sport category in April 2017 after the Ministry of Sports voted to add cybersport to the list of sports in July 2016.

Despite worries that video games were addictive at the time, China was one of the first nations to acknowledge esports as a legitimate sport in 2003. (Zhouxiang L., 2016) The government has promoted the esports by allowing players to participate in the sport and qualify for China. In addition, China will help esports athletes obtain official certification from vocational skill testing agencies of the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Social Security. At the beginning of 2019 esports were recognized as a business. More than 100000 people have registered as professional athletes by July 2019 and more than two million people will participate in this profession five years from now according to the ministry.

Some business events are held in the format of traditional international sporting competitions in order to promote esports as a legal sport. The Asian Wushu Games and the Indochina Games, which followed, both featured legitimate contests. The 2007 Indochina Games were the first high-profile multisport event to host official medal competitions alongside other traditional sports. As a previous exhibition bearer or bearer's medallion, equipment has been included.

Additionally, the 2022 Asian Games, the pinnacle of multisport competitions in Asia, will feature tools like the medal fight. As a lead-up to the 2022 Olympics, game-based games like Hearthstone, StarCraft II, and League of Legends were introduced as spectacular events at the 2018 Asian Games. There were six media medal events at the Southeast Asian Games in 2019. The fact that the sailing world championships have now been conducted entirely online since 2018 demonstrates the sport's acceptance by the main sports federations.

The first online game with more than a million unique users is Vendee Globe Shadow Rule 2020–2021. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports)

The Swedish Sports Confederation decided in June 2021 to deny esports recognition as a sporting event, compromising plans for how Valve organized things in terms of travel. The 2021 International Festival was initially scheduled to take place in Stockholm in 2020. International athletes' visas Although Valve attempted to coordinate with Sweden to host players, the event was ultimately moved to Romania. Esports competitions will be held at the Commonwealth Games in 2022 as a test run for what might eventually be a complete medal program in 2026. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports, 2023)

Olympic Games recognition

The Olympic Games are also thought to give esports legitimacy. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) hosted a conference in October 2017 to acknowledge the growing popularity of esports, the fact that competitive esports can be regarded as sports, and the fact that participants compete against athletes in more traditional sports. preparation and training at the necessary level for all sports adapted for the Olympics "with the rules and regulations of the Olympic movement". (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports, 2023)

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach stated that the IOC has been plagued by intense competition and the lack of a global sanctioning body for sport. Thomas Bach acknowledged that many Olympic sports arose out of actual combat but said: "sport is the civilized expression about this. If you have e-games where it's about killing somebody, this cannot be brought into line with our Olympic values." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports, 2023) For this reason the IOC recommends approving other tools for esports that focus on simulating real games such as NBA 2K or the FIFA series.

Safety concerns have not stopped the IOC from exploring the possibility of including it in future Olympic Games. Media spectacle's potential has been demonstrated by the IOC. Prior to the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, Intel sponsored StarCraft II and advanced events in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee, and five South Korean athletes took part in the torch relay. The 2016 Summer Olympics were co-located in Rio de Janeiro with a comparable esports display, but the IOC did not support it.

The IOC maintained that it only recognized simulated sports competitions as official Olympic events during the 8th Olympic Summit in December 2019, although it also stated that it would investigate two options for such competitions going forward. Games that use virtual or augmented reality and require movement (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports, 2023)

To make the Olympic Games more appealing to the younger generation, the organizing committee for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris is considering including esports into the event in conjunction with the International Olympic Committee and several professional esports organizations.

He claims that these elements must be included to preserve them. Ultimately the organizing committee decided it was too early to introduce esports into the 2024 Games as a medal event but did not rule out other esports-related activities during the Games.

In terms of international governance and organization, organizations like the World Professional Sports Association and International Federations compete for the top rank. It may be necessary, as a global association of sports organizations, to establish extra criteria that satisfy the regulatory requirements of particular sports in addition to a set of norms that are universally acknowledged by all esports groups.

Internet culture in esports

Internet culture has become an integral part of the esports phenomenon, which has experienced a meteoric rise in popularity over the past few years. Esports is a form of competitive video gaming that has evolved into a global phenomenon, attracting millions of players, spectators, and investors from around the world. The emergence of esports has given rise to a unique and dynamic online culture that is deeply intertwined with the broader internet culture.

The focus on online communities and social networking is one of the distinctive aspects of internet culture in esports. Social media platforms and other online forums are used by players, fans, and business professionals to connect with one another and have debates about esports. These online communities offer a venue for people to interact, exchange ideas, and take part in a range of esports-related activities.

Another notable aspect of internet culture in esports is the use of *memes*, *slang*, and other forms of online communication. The use of *memes* (esports memes are a form of internet humor that often take the form of images, videos, or catchphrases, and are created and shared by players, fans, and industry professionals alike) and other forms of online humor is particularly prevalent in the esports community, where players and spectators often use humor to bond and connect with

each other. *Slang* (esports slang is a form of jargon that has emerged in the context of competitive video gaming, and it is often used by players, commentators, and enthusiasts as a way of communicating with each other and expressing their unique identities and perspectives.) and other forms of online communication have also become a part of the esports lexicon, with many terms and phrases unique to the esports community.

The online culture of esports has also given rise to new forms of content creation and distribution, such as live streaming, video content, and podcasts. Many players and industry professionals have leveraged these platforms to build their personal brands and create engaging content that resonates with their audiences. The rise of content creators has also given rise to new forms of sponsorship and advertising, with brands looking to partner with popular esports personalities to reach their target audiences.

However, internet culture in esports is not without its challenges. The anonymity and accessibility of the internet can make it easy for bad actors to harass or bully others, and the competitive nature of esports can sometimes lead to toxic behavior among players and spectators.

These issues have prompted many in the esports community to advocate for greater diversity, inclusion, and responsible behavior online.

All of this demonstrates how fundamentally different esports are from traditional sports, but they also have a lot in common. Teams play scheduled games during some seasons that lead to the playoffs and important international competitions. Now that more players are under contract, the organization is making greater investments in its headquarters and training facilities.

Adaptive Creation Esports is growing in popularity and attracting tens of thousands of viewers. Since the beginning, they have had an international presence.

Esports continues to take an increasing share of the events calendars of major international sporting bodies and is expected to officially take part in the 2026 *Commonwealth Games* in Victoria, Australia. The IOC says the prospect of esports winning medals at the *2024 Olympics* is premature but their performance at the *2028 Los Angeles Games* remains open.

Donations are currently the main source of income for a sizable majority of participants. The majority of the early donations came from modest contributors who watched the players compete via the streaming service. These donations, however, are nothing compared to the generous sponsorship and corporate endorsement budgets spent on marketing. Esports athletes have the same power to sell their name, image, or skill to advertising companies as traditional athletes do. A billboard for the Michael Jordan film *Shut Up* just featured RNG Jian Wuji Ji Hao, a Chinese League of Legends player.

Large-name athletes from traditional sports have started to appear on sports teams more lately. The Boston-based Overwatch club was purchased for $20 million in 2018 by Michael Jordan's joint ownership of Club Liquid and Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots. Businesses are also entering. Every company in the world, including Tinder, Louis Vuitton, Nike, and Adidas, invests in sponsorships. Esports, meanwhile, will only raise the market's overall revenue.

In conclusion, internet culture has become a defining aspect of the esports phenomenon, shaping the way players, spectators, and industry professionals engage with each other and with the broader community. While internet culture has created new opportunities and challenges for the esports industry, it has also helped to foster a dynamic and engaged community of esports players and enthusiasts around the world.

Conclusion

The burgeoning industry of esports has garnered significant attention in recent years, as an increasing number of individuals engage in competitive video gaming as players, spectators, and investors. While the growth of esports has been rapid, its future trajectory remains a topic of considerable interest and debate within academic and industry circles.

Various factors contribute to the potential for sustained growth in the world of esports. One key factor is the increasing accessibility of technology and the internet, which has facilitated the creation of global communities of gamers and enabled the broadcast and streaming of esports events to a massive audience. Additionally, the development of new technologies, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, may expand the possibilities for immersive gaming experiences, enhancing the appeal of esports to a broader audience.

Moreover, the esports industry has attracted significant investment from a range of stakeholders, including venture capitalists, media companies, and traditional sports teams, further underscoring the potential for continued growth and innovation in this space. This investment has supported the development of new leagues, tournaments, and gaming platforms, as well as the creation of professional teams and player contracts.

However, the future of esports is also subject to potential challenges and uncertainties. The impact of emerging technologies on the industry, such as the potential for new gaming platforms or the evolution of esports spectatorship, remains uncertain. Additionally, the relationship between esports and traditional sports may evolve, as some sports organizations have expressed interest in incorporating esports into their offerings, while others remain skeptical.

Overall, the future of esports in the world is a complex and multifaceted topic, with a range of potential outcomes. However, given the current trajectory of growth and innovation, it seems likely that esports will continue to play a significant role in the world of gaming and entertainment in the years to come.

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Fulfilling the Needs of eSports Consumers: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective

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Fulfilling the Needs of eSports Consumers: *A Uses and Gratifications Perspective*

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Abstract

eSports services are situated between cooperation - distinctive for many hedonic activities - and competition - relevant to the creation of hedonic behavior. This raises the challenge for eSports providers to offer services that fulfill consumers' needs. Against this background, we apply Uses and Gratifications theory (Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1984) and investigate which competitive and hedonic need gratifications drive continuous use of eSports. We conduct ten in-depth expert interviews and a multiple regression analysis based on survey data collected from 360 eSports players. With competition, challenge, and escapism both competitive and hedonic need gratifications drive continuous eSports use.

Keywords: Online Gaming, eSports, Uses and Gratifications.

1 Introduction

eSports denotes playing competitive games according to generally accepted rules of leagues and tournaments on the Internet (Weiss, 2008). It allows for the formation of social relationships and develops individuals' physical abilities.

eSports providers such as the Electronic Sports League, the National Gaming League, and the European Xtreme Gamers host eSports platforms. They organize and occasionally also broadcast eSports events. In this regard, eSports providers offer services in the B2B- and in the B2C-segment. Concerning B2B services, eSports providers sell advertising space on their websites. They also offer name rights to eSports events. Recently, they have diversified towards video and IPTV productions and web services. In the B2C context, eSports providers build their businesses on free-to-play offers with micro-transactions and subscription services. They typically manage a multitude of different leagues in which a variety of different games are played and aim at covering the entire breadth of eSports. Additionally, eSports providers often also provide value-added services such as voice applications or game forums.

eSports players are consumers who share tips and tricks on the Internet while competing in games such as FIFA or Counterstrike for money and prestige. Different from real-life sport activities, they often lack physical proximity and communicate predominately through game forums. Hence, eSports players immerse in a virtual environment.

While research in eSports has so far only attracted little scientific interest (Ho and Huang, 2009; Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Weiss and Loebbecke, 2008), the literature on more general online gaming use has developed within two broad themes.

The first theme is acceptance and use (Choi and Kim, 2004; Hsu and Lu, 2004). Through examining psychological processes, empirical studies of online gaming use emphasize the importance of various types of cooperation or dependency between players (e.g., Ho and Huang, 2009; Hsu and Lu, 2007).

The second theme, within which this research is situated, is Uses and Gratifications. Studies considering players as active online gaming users highlight the continuing use of online games through players' need gratification (Yee, 2007). However, this research stream rarely addresses competitive online contexts. In particular, it excludes the investigation of negative need gratifications such as escapism, which are typically associated with game addiction, in competitive contexts (Chen, Chen, and Ross, 2010; Jansz and Tanis, 2007). Competitive environments however provide a different use experience to players compared to collaborative game surroundings. In contrast to collaborative online gaming, eSports involves watching games on websites and meeting others regularly at real-life tournaments.

By illuminating need gratifications in the competitive environment of eSports, we aim to make a contribution to the Uses and Gratification stream of online gaming research. More specifically, we investigate *which competitive and hedonic need gratifications drive continuous eSports use*? Based on qualitative interviews and a multiple regression analysis we examine players' eSports expectations, their needs, and their exposure to corresponding need gratifications (Weiss, 2009).

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Uses and Gratifications Approach

The Uses and Gratifications approach[1] (Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1984) stems from media effects research and is geared to the perception of information, attitude, and behavior of individuals (Ruggiero, 2000). It examines individuals' need gratifications regarding media use with relation to life cycles and corresponding changes in attitudes and needs.

The Uses and Gratifications approach rests on the assumptions that differences in the costs of mass media consumption occur between different audience members and that such differences correlate with other communication-relevant factors (Ruggiero, 2000). It rests upon three main pillars, (1) beliefs and evaluations, (2) need gratifications sought, and (3) need gratifications obtained. Beliefs and evaluations describe the subjective probability of individuals that a medium possesses distinct characteristics. In turn, the search for gratifications leading to media consumption is a result of beliefs. Finally, need gratifications obtained refers to the individual outcome of actual media consumption.

The Uses and Gratifications approach differs from acceptance and use studies through modeling individuals as active IS users (Ruggiero, 2000). It typically clusters resulting basic need gratifications in extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation "refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 55). It denotes need gratifications such as personal integrative, social utility, and surveillance needs (Ruggiero, 2000; Sangwan, 2005; Song et al., 2004). In contrast, intrinsic motivation "is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 56). It refers to need gratifications such as affective, cognitive, personal identity, social integrative, and tension release / diversion needs (Wei and Lo, 2006).

[1] Due to space constraints, we do not provide an in-depth discussion of Rayburn and Palmgreen's (1984) model.

Yet, the selective clustering of the basic need gratifications into categories according to extrinsic and intrinsic motivations does not hold when IS serves hedonic purposes. In the case of online gaming, for instance, players' social integrative needs of belonging to a group in part refer to extrinsic need gratifications such as personal integrative needs or social utility needs (Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Yee, 2007). In turn, surveillance needs may constitute intrinsic need gratifications as they support the formation of a 'virtual self' (Cerulo, 1997).

2.2 Need Gratifications in Gaming

Uses and Gratifications literature on the use of eSports is rare. Yet, several sources (e.g., Mäyrä, 2008; Phillips et al., 1995; Sherry and Lucas, 2003; Yee, 2007) examine the gratifications obtained through more general online and competitive offline gaming. Those studies highlight ten need gratifications: five competitive ones (competition, achievement, challenge, reputation, and rewards) geared towards prosperity through competition, and five hedonic ones (social relationship, escapism, self-fulfillment, fun, and virtual identity) relating to immersion and socialization (Sherry and Lucas 2003; Yee 2007).

Concerning the competitive need gratifications, *competition* refers to head-to-head competition involving striving for power in open groups. Similar to organizational contexts (Baer et al. 2010), it determines continuous use in gaming environments (Lucas and Sherry, 2004; Sherry and Lucas, 2003; Taylor, 2006). *Achievement* denotes the accomplishment of personal in-game goals. It is of particular relevance for the use of competitive offline games (Sherry and Lucas, 2003). *Challenge* mirrors the self-set in-game challenges of players used to improve personal skill-level. Such self-set challenges are closely linked to in-game progress (Mäyrä, 2008) and said to determine gaming use (Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Sherry and Lucas, 2003). *Reputation* defines an individuals' status within a community (Wasko and Faraj, 2005). As need gratification, it is crucial for online gaming use (Yee, 2007). *Rewards* are benefits of IS use (Kankanhalli, Tan, and Wei, 2005). As such, they drive the use of competitive offline games (Griffiths, 1991).

Regarding hedonic need gratifications, *social relationship* denotes the motivation of players to play games in order to gain social recognition in terms of social interaction and long-term relationships. It drives IS (Brown, Venkatesh, and Bala, 2006; Venkatesh and Brown, 2001), media (Wei and Lo, 2006), and online gaming use (Hsu and Lu, 2007; Yee 2007). *Escapism* refers to employing the virtual environment to suppress thinking about real world problems and avoid responsibility (Chen, Chen, and Ross, 2010; Yee, 2007). In gaming contexts, it involves players' immersion in virtual realities (Taylor, 2006). *Self-Fulfillment* describes the non-instrumental satisfaction of individuals' needs for endorsing own beliefs and attitudes (Ruggiero, 2000). It determines hedonic IS use (v.d. Heijden, 2004; Jansz and Tanis, 2007). *Fun* denotes the perceived enjoyment of players when playing for the sake of the games themselves (Phillips et al. 1995). It is the dominant driver of hedonic IS (v.d. Heijden, 2004) and online gaming use (Jansz and Tanis, 2007). *Virtual identity* mirrors players' ability to step into different roles and to do things they are not capable of in real life (Sherry and Lucas, 2003). For players, it presents a survivable 'other' in the formation of self (Cerulo, 1997).

3 Research Approach

Building on the literature review on need gratifications in gaming, we organized our research in two steps, a round of qualitative semi-structured interviews and a quantitative multiple regression analysis based on survey data.

Firstly, in order to check whether the need gratifications identified in the literature are suitable for a study on eSports, we conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten industry experts of Europe's largest eSports league in Cologne Germany in early March 2008. Due to the exploratory nature of our study, we agreed to keep interviewee names confidential (available upon request). As a result of the interview round, only five of the ten need gratifications were unanimously judged relevant to eSports. The five selected gratifications were competition, challenge, social relationship, escapism, and fun (see Figure 1).

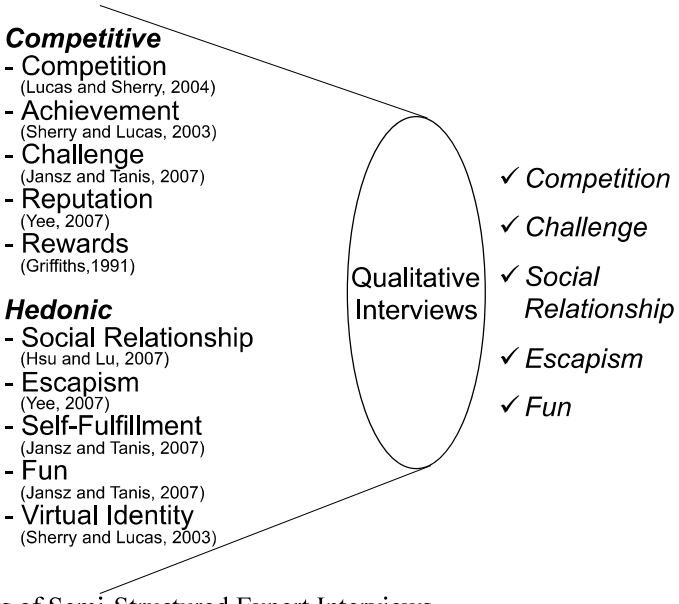

Figure 1: Results of Semi-Structured Expert Interviews

Secondly, we conducted a regression analysis based on survey data collected from eSport players. We thereby aimed at highlighting the effect of the remaining gratifications on continuous eSports use (hereafter eSports use). For the survey, we developed single-item measures (Phillips et al., 1995; Rossiter, 2002). We weighted each measure on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from '1 = applies fully' to '7 = does not apply at all'. In order to determine eSports use, we divided each day of the week into six-hour periods starting at 12am and calculated the corresponding variable through summing up the periods during which respondents play in the course of an average week (Sherry and Lucas, 2003).

Through two sets of pre-tests, we assessed item reliability prior to the final survey of eSports players. For the first pre-test, conducted in late March 2008, we sent a questionnaire to 35 eSports players in order to learn about any content discrepancies between the item measures. We observed that the differentiation between challenge and competition appeared vague, especially considering the connotation of the terms in different cultures (the questionnaire was provided in Chinese, English, and German). We modified the wording of the items and then conducted a second pre-test among 60 players in April and June 2008. The second pretest did not reveal any content or comprehension discrepancies. To collect survey data, we attended the World Cyber

Games (WCG) in Cologne in November 2008 and randomly sampled 360 eSports players who we addressed face to face. To avoid common method bias, we outlined the objective of the survey and guaranteed respondents anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

To analyze the survey data, we used SPSS 18. We assessed multi-collinearity through computing the Variation Inflation Index (VIF) for every independent variable in our model. A VIF below the threshold of 10 points to linear independence of the corresponding instruments. We applied multiple regression analysis using standardized coefficients in order to avoid distortions resulting from varying measurement dimensions of the variables in our model. We investigated corresponding model fit through a t- and an F-test and checked for minimum required sample size through Green's (1991) sample size index. Further, we examined convergent and discriminant validity through Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

4 Data Analysis

We tested for convergent and discriminant validity through AVE. AVE from a construct should exceed 0.5 to reveal sufficient convergent validity. Our independent variables with the exception of Fun exceed this threshold (see Table 1). We therefore *excluded fun from further multiple regression analysis* and *continued with* the four independent variables *competition, challenge, social relationship, and escapism*.

Use Motive	Competition	Challenge	Social Relationship	Escapism	Fun
Competition	0.794	0.294	0.014	0.023	0.009
Challenge	0.294	0.794	0.073	0.063	0.027
Social Relationship	0.014	0.073	0.648	0.064	0.011
Escapism	0.023	0.063	0.064	0.569	0.007
Fun	0.009	0.027	0.011	0.007	0.110

Table 1: AVE and Squared Correlations

To assess discriminant validity, the squared correlations between two constructs should be statistically lower than the AVE by individual constructs. All shared variances are significantly lower than the AVE for the four remaining independent variables (see Table 1).

The sample of N = 360 is sufficient for running a multiple regression analysis (min. $N \geq 46$) as the R^2 exceeds 0.023 (Green 1991). Model fit on the $p < 0.001$ significance level is given as revealed by our t- and F-test (F-value = 14.856).

Assuring the reproducibility of our multiple regression analysis results, the covariance matrix of our independent variables shows that the independent variables possess identical effect directions (Table 2).

Use Motive	Competition	Challenge	Social Relationship	Escapism
Competition	3.062	1.466	0.348	0.507
Challenge	1.466	2.377	0.694	0.735
Social Relationship	0.348	0.694	2.790	0.805
Escapism	0.507	0.735	0.805	3.631

Table 2: Covariance Matrix of Multiple Regression Analysis Independent Variables

Through multiple regression analysis, we found one of four independent variables insignificant based on the p-statistic ($p > 0.01$; Table 3). The remaining three independent variables, *competition*, *challenge*, and *escapism*, are significant ($p \leq 0.01$). The linear independent variables (VIF < 10) explain 15.7% (R^2) of the variance in eSports use. Since we measured constructs reversely, all three independent variables positively influence eSports use.

Use Motive	Mean	Std. Dev.	VIF	Std. ß	t-Value	p-value	Sig.
Competition	2.858	1.681	1.354	- 0.213	- 3.561	0.000	< 0.01
Challenge	2.771	1.484	1.461	- 0.180	- 2.892	0.004	< 0.01
Social Relationship	2.920	1.651	1.113	- 0.038	0.042	0.966	> 0.01
Escapism	4.457	1.897	1.127	- 0.144	- 2.634	0.009	< 0.01

Table 3: Significance and Betas of Multiple Regression Analysis Independent Variables

In summary, our analysis shows that competition, challenge, and escapism are need gratifications obtained through eSports (see Figure 2).

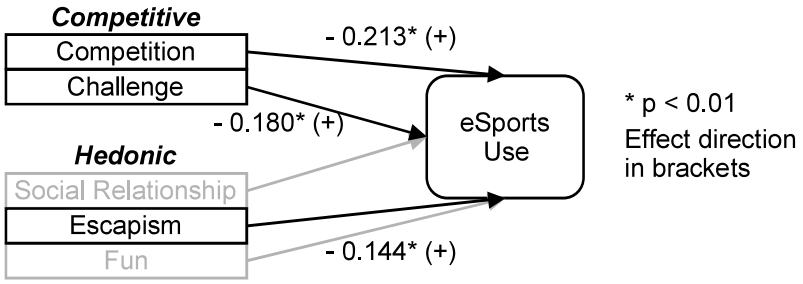

Figure 2: Regression Results

5 Discussion

According to our study, *competition, challenge and escapism* positively effect eSports use (Figure 2). The finding regarding *competition* is in line with Jansz and Tanis (2007), Sherry and Lucas (2003), and Yee (2007). It confirms that players expect eSports to provide opportunities for power obtainment (Taylor, 2006).

The importance of *Challenge* also reflects the literature (Jansz and Tanis, 2007). Yet, in contrast to Mäyrä (2008), who stresses challenges arising from new in-game directions, it highlights the sportive connotation of eSports. Since eSports games are single-level games, we guess that challenging oneself is less about self-affirmation through mastering games but about the striving for fame within the eSports community.

Similar to Chen, Chen, and Ross (2010), and Yee (2007), we find *escapism* positively effecting eSports use. However, one may argue whether escapism in the context of eSports belongs to hedonic need gratifications (Jansz and Tanis, 2007; Sherry and Lucas 2003). Different from collaborative online gaming environments, escapism in eSports is not about the social experience of slipping into avatars' roles and becoming the virtual 'other' players would like to be (Cerulo, 1997; Yee, 2007). Rather, it is about gathering the capabilities of highly skilled avatars while immersing into the virtual world in order to gain competitive advantage, i.e., an instrument that leads to in-game power.

It is worth noting that *social relationship* is insignificant within our multiple regression analysis (see Table 2). This is in contrast to prior literature on gaming (Griffiths, Davies, and Chappell, 2003), acceptance and use (Brown, Venkatesh, and Bala, 2006), and Uses and Gratifications (Sangwan, 2005). The often-pronounced social relationship functionality of gaming (Griffiths, Davies, and Chappell, 2003) seems to fade. Hence, it has to be seen whether social interaction in eSports serves the improvement of players' performance instead of sociality.

Finally, we need to discuss the exclusion of *fun* from the multiple regression analysis due to a lack of convergent validity. Players did not appear to associate fun with eSports being an end in itself. Possibly, they have a different comprehension of fun in the competitive context of eSports; one that we were unable to identify through our semi-structured expert interviews and pre-tests.

6 Summary and Future Research

Overall, we reveal the dominance of competitive need gratifications in the eSport context; players observe eSports as a competitive activity (Weiss, 2009). This insight itself sheds light on the specificities of digitizing established contexts and transferring them to the 'e'world.

One may criticize that our overall finding may be due to the fact that we survey top-league eSports players. Redoing our study for instance with real-world football players would possibly generate similar results should we only ask champions-league participants. However, considering sports in the 'e' world, most activities seem to be organized in leagues. As there are far less eSports players than 'real world football players, a high percentage of eSports players seems to be mainly after competitive need gratifications. In future research, one may want to confront the issue of a potential tautology further. To us, it seems to be mainly a sampling topic, which is closely related to a context-specific research design.

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