The Rise of eSports

November 2017
Introduction

Recreational Gaming

Competitive Gaming

Is eSports a sport?

Is eSports a good hobby to have?

Conclusion
Years ago, eSports was a community of video gamers who would gather in conventions to play Call of Duty or League of Legends. Today, eSports not only represents a global industry full of massive commercial opportunity, but has become a career/lifestyle choice for those gamers good enough to enter the professional sphere.

We asked 58 of our tribes what they thought about eSports and their growing influence in contemporary society.
Do you play video games?

Whilst we found that the number of male and female gamers was similar, proportionally 63% of all male respondents were gamers, with only 23% of all female respondents identifying playing video games at least once a week.

The majority of those who don’t play video games at least once a week agreed that it was because they didn’t have enough time alongside studying at school or university.

A large proportion also agreed they found it boring, and would prefer to watch TV in their spare time.

Of the 36% who play video games, most viewed it as a bit of fun with a few finding it as a way to forget about their problems by entering into a fantasy world.

“I play video games almost everyday, and usually play Battlefield, Gears of War, Injustice, Halo, FIFA, Fallout, Destiny, Tekken, Street Fighter, Overwatch, NBA2K, Final Fantasy... Those titles are very fun and I forget about my problems when playing them.”

Battosai00, Male, 24, Aspirant, Solo:Selective

“I think video games take up a lot of time and can get repetitive. It gets more difficult to play games as you grow up because you have more responsibilities and commitments.”

Elizabethig, 19, Urban, VOD:Bingers
“Maybe I play games a little bit too much because I accidentally let out a little snort at the “at least once a week”. It’s more like once a day. I play A LOT of Overwatch. And I don’t just mean a few hours a week, I mean I play it religiously at this point. I pretty much grew up with a controller in my hand playing Call of Duty. I play a lot of the rooty tooty point-and-shooty games more than others (partly because it’s what I’m used to, but also because that’s what games mostly contain to be honest) but really, I’m in it for the story.”
Have you ever played video games competitively?

Of the minority that have played video games competitively, all agreed they would recommend the experience as a bit of fun and a way to get better at playing, in particular learning how to play under pressure. Also suggesting that small competitions are cheap, or sometimes even free to enter.

Whilst 88% have never played video games competitively, the regular gamers of this group all expressed an interest in joining in with competitive playing. They agreed that it would be a fun experience, with the added benefit of earning money and gaining a pro-title.

*In my opinion playing for competition would be awesome, fun and a good use of my time. Anyone would be interested in being a pro in any game, just for the title, you know… and for cash!*

Battosai 00, Male, 24, Aspirant, Solo:Selective

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I’d recommend any competition because you’ll be getting better playing any game. I also think any activity for money is interesting lol.”

Robinson85, Male, 25, Aspirant, Solo:Selective
The majority of those who believe eSports is NOT a sport base this on the grounds that it is virtual and ultimately not a physical activity. Whilst it has a competitive nature that is very similar to that of sport, it doesn’t involve the use of your body to a full extent. This group argued that it doesn’t require the physical training or dedication to push and challenge yourself like most other sports.

All of those who argue eSports is a sport, maintain that it requires a high level of dedication, skill, discipline and talent to reach a competitive level. This group all liken eSports to darts, golf and snooker – maintaining that if these defined are sports, why would eSports not be one too? Unsurprisingly, this is the opinion of the most regular gamers.

“I think true sport requires your body to move to a much fuller extent. Although eSports can test balance, coordination, timing etc. – it doesn’t allow you to use those skills to the utmost if you compare it to physical practice. Sport often tests endurance, power and strength which are rarely ever stretched in eSports.”

Elizabethig, 19, Urban, VOD:Bingers

“I think eSports is a sport, yes. Just because it doesn’t require running around or severe physical exertion it still needs a lot of mental energy. If darts is a sport, why would eSports not be one? It’s just as stationary.”

Raz_Cat, Female, 22
Monarch, Male, 24, Mainstream

“eSports are certainly something that require a lot of dedication and skill, so in some way they are a sport. But I think we’re seeing the definition of sport evolve beyond what it’s historically meant (physical activities).”

ScottPope, Male, 22, Alternative

“eSports are sports but in a different sense of traditional sports. Sports are competitive so why not. If chess is, this is.”
Abi.Elliston, 21

“No, eSports is not a sport. It’s just something someone could practise and be competitively good at. If that was a sport then baking could be a sport.”
Mostly all the 83% who believe eSport is a good hobby maintain that if people have fun and play only in moderation then it’s a positive activity. Even those who were not regular gamers understood that eSports could be sociable, relaxing, stimulating, and a form of escapism that can be great for mental health.

The 17% who argued conversely that eSports is not a good hobby did so on the basis that it would be used as a replacement to physical involvement in real life sport. Explaining that it leads to gamers becoming less active and more unhealthy. These statements tended to come from non-gamers, who viewed video games stereotypically as highly addictive and adversely affecting participants (e.g. psychologically making them introverted and less sociable).
LWright7, Male, 19
Leading Edge, Pop:Socials

“If someone engages with eSports every now and again, or maybe for an hour or so a day, then I do not see a problem. However, additions often emerge from eSports, or people replace involvement in the physical alternative with eSports. That is definitely a bad thing.”
“I don’t see why it’s not a good hobby to have. If people enjoy it for whatever reason, like appreciating the graphics; loving the narrative of the game from the beginning to the end of the story, or the competitive and tactical nature of it, then they should do it! I think you can learn from games in some ways much like you can from hobbies regarded as ‘useful’ such as reading. Many think gaming is addictive and adversely affects people but everything is bad in excess. Gaming is totally fine in moderation.”
Conclusion

• The tribal camp was mostly divided when it came to opinions on eSports, primarily being influenced by their individual relationship with gaming
• Results showed a higher proportion of male respondents (63%) identified as being regular gamers in comparison to that of female respondents (23%)
• As a group, these regular gamers tended to argue eSports can be defined as a sport – maintaining it requires a huge amount of dedication, talent and skill
• Non-gamers were less positive, arguing eSports fosters laziness and unsociable behaviour
• Despite this, both gaming and non-gaming camps agreed that eSports is a good hobby to have when played in moderation
Thanks!

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