THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Networked Society Institute

Esports Spectatorship in Australia

Research Paper

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September 2018

Martin Gibbs, Marcus Carter, David Cumming, Robbie Fordyce, and Emma Witkowski

Contact

Martin Gibbs – martin.gibbs@unimelb.edu.au

ISBN

978-0-7340-5327-5

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Cover Image

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the support for this project provided by the Melbourne School of Engineering, The University of Melbourne. We would also like to thank Naomi Robinson for assistance with the research. We would also like to thank David Saliba and Mia Consalvo for input and suggestions at the begin of the project. We would also like to thank Kate Murray and Adam Lodders and the Networked Society Institute for their support in producing this report.

Executive summary

Esports – the organised, professional and spectated play of competitive digital games – has evolved into a massive global industry in the past decade. Boasting significant market value and broad global audience reach, esports is driven by modern highspeed internet infrastructure and live-streaming platforms like Twitch.tv. However, esports has yet to take hold as an industry in Australia, largely due to geographical isolation from major esports regions compounded by Australia's traditionally lacklustre network infrastructure.

Although the esports industry relies on various revenue streams, sponsorship and advertising deals provide the industry's main source of funding. Teams, tournaments and esports organisations of various sizes are sponsored by major international companies like Intel, Samsung and Mercedes-Benz. This is unsurprising considering the global reach of esports. According to the '*market intelligence*' firm Newzoo (2017), the esports audience in 2017 is estimated to be 385 million, with rough half of those being '*enthusiasts*' and the other half '*occasional viewers*'. Furthermore, they estimate that the esports industry generated roughly US $696 million in revenue through ticket sales, media rights, game publisher fees, advertising and merchandise, sponsorship, media rights, in-game microtransactions, and betting in 2017. Newzoo estimates this amount to grow to US $906 million in 2018. Revenue growth for the esports industry has been significant, with current estimates pointing to a year-over-year growth of 41% in 2017, of which US$517 million is in advertising, sponsorship, and media rights (Newzoo 2017). While global industry reports are optimistic about the future of esports, the Australian esports scene is limited in comparison to overseas markets.

In this report, we start by approximating the size of the esports market in Australia by comparing publicly available statistics and collecting a list of major global and Australian esports events. Secondly, we provide an overview of key Australian esports titles, explaining how they're played as esports and their place within the Australian esports landscape. Thirdly, we explore the practice of spectating esports and discuss motivations behind esports spectatorship. We then present a preliminary study consisting of 18 semi-structured interviews with esports spectators regarding their engagement with and consumption of esports content. From our findings, we identify and detail three salient categories of non-exclusive esports spectator types*: players*, *fans* and *recruits*. We conclude with a summary of key changes in the Australia esports landscape during 2018 and important upcoming developments.

Contents

1 Introduction

While tournaments and competitions for multiplayer digital games have existed for many years, esports has undergone rapid professionalization and expansion in the past decade. Supported by flagship tournaments with millions of spectators, considerable investment from within and outside the gaming industry, and the dramatic growth of live-videogame spectatorship online, esports have become an important part of gaming culture and practice (Jin, 2010; Taylor, 2012). The most popular English-language live-streaming platform, Twitch.tv, boasts over 800 million visits per month, and '*Gaming'* is the second most popular channel on YouTube. In response, established global brands are making significant investment into this contemporary '*media sport*' (Witkowski, 2013). Esports thrives on major sponsorship and spectatorship to drive its already deeply networked communities.

Internationally, consolidation of the global esports industry is currently underway. As of 2015, China's Tencent Holdings is the sole shareholder in Riot games – one of the largest international esports gaming companies. AT&T in the United States has, through its acquisition of Time Warner and Turner Media, obtained control of *CS:GO League*, a league broadcast channel on YouTube Gaming and Twitch.tv. European sports leagues are rumoured to be advancing plans into launching esports leagues, with many sports clubs in Europe and the United States establishing or acquiring their own esports teams. This has been observed locally in Australia with the Adelaide Crows and Essendon Bombers each purchasing a team in the *Oceanic Pro League*.

However, the Australian esports scene is less developed in comparison to other major international esports regions. The most popular esports titles (*Dota 2, League of Legends, Counter Strike: Global Offensive,* and newly arrived *Fortnite*) involve fast-paced action, and the increased latency caused by Australia's geographic isolation from other countries puts Australians at a disadvantage when playing against international opponents. This has isolated local competitors, effectively requiring Australian players to relocate to gain the experience necessary to compete at the global level. This barrier, alongside other regional issues such as access to top level tournaments, investment and sponsorship, and exposure to professional esports practices, has inhibited the local Australian scene from developing at the same rapid rate as in North America, Europe and Asia.

In this report we present the results of a preliminary study into esports spectatorship in Australia. We sought to understand what infrastructural, social and economic factors distinguish the Australian esports scene and can explain the lack of growth compared to other regions. Our findings indicate that the production of Australian-specific content that highlights esports drama and contextualises esports events will help drive Australian esports spectatorship and mitigate existing technical and economic barriers.

2 The Size of the Australian Esports Market

Estimates of the global esports market made by market research firms vary, but all claim a large and rapidly growing, global esports market. For example, the '*marketing intelligence*' firm Newzoo estimates the global esports audience in 2017 consisted of 191 million frequent viewers or '*enthusiasts*' and 194 million '*occasional viewers*' (Newzoo 2017). However, little academic research has been done on the size and extent of global esports market and the esports markets in particular countries. This extends to Australia and only a few estimates exist of the specific size and extent of the Australian esports scene. The Australian-focused *Digital Australia Report 2018* presents general data on the whole of videogaming in Australia, including Australian esports spectatorship (Brand et al. 2017). However, their methodology only assesses whether an individual has ever watched esports, omitting any information regarding spectating frequency or level of engagement. Estimating the Australian portion of this market is difficult due a lack of existing data, the disproportionate popularity of esports in populous Asian countries (in particular, China and South Korea), and the dispersion of local Australian esports communities across different videogame titles. Complicating this is the privileged nature of some of this information, with tournaments often concealing direct information about attendance and viewership. The Gemba Group – a Sydney based sports marketing research firm – estimates 1.5 million esports 'fanatics', or 'fans that are highly passionate about the sport', in Australia 'who are mostly young males' (Condon 2016), although their methodology employs terminology that seems to conflate 'competitive electronic gaming' as equivalent to 'esports'. The *Digital Australia Report 2018* suggests that of the 67% of Australians who play games, 33% also had watched or competed in an esports event (Brand et al. 2017). Although we agree that a considerable number of Australians currently engage in esports spectatorship, these high estimates are likely to have conflated esports with other similar videogame-watching practices, such as 'Let's Play' videos on YouTube or live-streamed casual play on platforms such as Twitch. Our estimates of the Australian esports scene are much more conservative, although still indicate a significant media phenomenon.

In order to provide a conservative, educated estimation of the size of the Australian esports spectator community, we collected publicly available viewership numbers from large esports tournaments across ten prominent esports titles in Australia since 2014 (see appendix A). This data reports peak concurrent international viewership (across live-streaming platforms in multiple languages) and the number of unique viewers during a tournament. We then estimate the size of the Australian audience based on the percentage on Australian ownership and engagement with each game title, provided by the 'SteamSpy.com' tool, which consistently cites Australian 'players' (having played in the last two weeks) at between 1.4 – 2% across all game titles played via the Steam digital store.[1] We note that this method does not permit cumulative totals, as our qualitative study indicates many spectators engage with more than one esports game. This is supported by attendance numbers at the *Intel Extreme Masters World Championship 2016* event (113,000 physical attendees in Katowice, Poland), which featured important finals for *CS:GO* and League of Legends. Although headlining two landmark finals, the total peak and cumulative online viewers were not significantly higher than title-specific esports events. Based on these figures, we believe we can confidently estimate the number of Australian esports spectators for the largest esports events (world championships) to be *at least* 300,000 in 2016 and 2017, which we consider to be a conservative estimate. In alignment with US/EU esports surveys, we believe it is highly likely that primary demographic within this is cohort is 16-25-year-old males.

[1] Steam is the primary digital store for online games similar to iTunes, owned by Valve who developed *Dota 2* (2013) and *CS:GO* (2012).

3 Key Australian Esports Games

The popularity of watching videogame play on YouTube and Twitch has shown that most videogames have some appeal for a spectator experience, but not all are appropriate for professional competition and sports-like spectatorship. Here, we overview the seven games that dominate the Australian esports market: *Dota 2, League of Legends, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Overwatch, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, Fortnite Battle Royale* and *Hearthstone.*

It is worth noting that esports spectator communities in other regions often focus on different games: South Korea has a historical investment in the *StarCraft* franchise (*Starcraft*, 1998; *Starcraft II*, 2010), Russia has a disproportionately large *World of Tanks* (2010) esports community, and the United States has a much higher presence of first-person shooter games such as those in the *Call of Duty* series. Furthermore, the global esports market is highly competitive, with new sectors and genres emerging and often rapidly capturing large audiences. A key example is *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds.* It was released in 2017 but quickly overtook *CS:GO* and *Dota 2* as the most popular PC game on Steam (Leack, 2017). *Fortnite Battle Royale* (2017), released later in the same year, quickly overtook *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, Dota 2 and CS:GO* to become the most popular game (D'Anastasio, 2018), all with a rapidly growing esports scene. This is a difficult challenge for investors – and players – chasing a constantly shifting esports audience. Regional customer interests and infrastructure also influences how esports manifests in differing territories and must also be considered (Stein and Scholz, 2016).

Dota 2 (2013)

Dota 2 is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) game developed by Valve Software. Two teams of five players compete against each other to destroy a structure known as an "Ancient" held in the opposing team's territory while simultaneously protecting their own. The perspective of the game is a third-person perspective, with players controlling a single "hero" from an isometric perspective. The game features a vast range of 115 playable heroes, each with their own strengths, weaknesses and abilities. This large pool of heroes provides an additional layer of strategy during the banning phase, which takes place before the match itself. The two teams take turns banning the use of certain heroes by the other team, thus creating a system where a team must consider the opposing team's strengths and strategies while also adapting to hero bans placed upon them. The game is defined by fast-paced combat, skill-based play, and a game time averaging between 30-60 minutes. *Dota 2* includes complex maps that display interesting points of tension that tend to happen at specific places in the game (Egliston, 2015).

League of Legends – LoL (2009)

League of Legends (*LoL*) is a MOBA game and the sole product developed by Riot Games. Much like *Dota 2*, *LoL* involves two teams of five which compete against each other to destroy structures in the opposing team's base while simultaneously defending their own. *LoL* also has a large pool of playable characters, currently with 137 "champions". *LoL* is also played with a similar pre-match banning system. Although both *Dota 2* and *LoL* play similarly on the surface, minor differences like friendly fire, items and reward attribution set them apart. *LoL* is generally quicker than Dota 2, with games taking usually 20-30 minutes.

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive – CS:GO (2012)

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (*CS:GO*) is a first-person shooter developed by Valve Software. Although *CS:GO* has various game modes, in esports the most prominent game mode is "bomb defusal". In this mode there are two teams of five: terrorists and counter-terrorists. The goal of the terrorists is to plant a bomb in one of two designated sites on the map and have it detonate, while the counter-terrorists must prevent this. Additionally, terrorists can also win by eliminating all counter-terrorists. For the counter-terrorists to win, they must eliminate all terrorists or defuse the bomb if it has been planted. The counter-terrorists have 40 seconds to defuse the bomb once it is planted. Rounds adhere to a 1 minute 55 seconds timer: if the terrorists have not planted the bomb within this period, the counter-terrorists win. Due to the short duration of rounds in this game mode, matches are usually best of 30, with teams switching sides halfway through so both have a chance to play as terrorists and counter-terrorists. Another layer of strategy exists in the "economy", which refers to the money reward and equipment buying system that persists between rounds in the match. Depending on the performance of each team and individual players in the previous round, money is rewarded to buy equipment like better guns, grenades and other gear for the upcoming rounds. Certain actions, often riskier ones (e.g. eliminating an opponent with a knife) will reward more money than others. Teams must consider the economy when deciding on their playstyle and purchasing gear to put themselves at an advantage against the opposing team while also optimising their assets.

Overwatch (2016)

Overwatch is a team-based first-person shooter developed by Blizzard Entertainment. Two teams of six players compete against each other to complete an objective related to the kind of map being played. There are four kinds of maps played in *Overwatch* esports, one of each featuring in the best-of-four structured matches (a fifth map is played in case of a tie). These are: 1) Assault – An attacking team must capture two points while a defending team must prevent them and stall out the timer. 2) Escort – An attacking team escorts a mobile payload to a delivery point while a defending team must stop them and stall out the timer. 3) Hybrid – A combination of the previous two modes. An attacking team must first capture a point defended by the opposing team. If captured, the attackers must then escort a mobile payload to a delivery point while the defenders try to prevent them and stall out the timer. 4) Control – a "king of the hill" style mode where two teams compete over control of a central point. Once a team claims control of the point, they gain progress towards completion until they lose control. Once a team reaches 100% completion, they win the round. Three rounds are played, each taking place in a different part of the map. Overwatch currently features 28 playable "heroes", each with their own unique strengths, weaknesses and abilities. Much strategy in *Overwatch* revolves around the selection of certain heroes that complement each other and adhering to specific playstyles afforded by these hero synergies.

PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds – PUBG (2017)

PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds (*PUBG*), developed by PUBG Corporation, is a battle royale shooter game that can be played in first or third person. It is often considered as the seminal title that spurred the current battle royale craze. Unlike other esports titles, *PUBG* features a large number of competitors, ranging from 80-100. These competitors, either participating as individuals or in teams of up to four, play in a large open-world game map and start with minimal equipment. Players then search for gear like weapons and armour to eliminate other opponents with the goal of being the last individual or team remaining. In this vein, players only have one life and do not respawn during the match. As the match continues, the “safe area” of the game map shrinks to force players out of hiding as the number of remaining survivors decreases. In *PUBG* esports, points are awarded based on their finishing position and kill count. These points, accumulated over a number of rounds, are used to determine an overall winning player or team. The ability to play *PUBG* in either a first or third person perspective has resulted in two metagames developing. In third-person, the player’s camera can be manipulated to look around corners, whereas this is not possible in first-person, thus changing the strategies needed for success. This has also led to some fracturing in the game’s esports scene, with certain regions like Australia preferring and performing better in first-person perspective, while others like China prefer and perform better in third-person perspective. However, recent tournament results indicate that this divide is being crossed, with prominent Chinese team *Oh My God* winning the *PUBG Global Invitational 2018* first-person perspective tournament (James, 2018).

Fortnite Battle Royale - Fortnite (2017)

Fortnite Battle Royale (*Fortnite*[2]) is a battle royale third-person shooter developed by Epic Games that adds fort building mechanics to the established battle royale formula. Much like *PUBG* and other battle royale titles, 80-100 players compete as either individuals or teams of up to four start with minimal equipment in a large open world map with the goal and being the last one standing. As well as scavenging for gear, players in *Fortnite* can also salvage material from the environment for build structures in the world to aid in their survival, offense and tactics. As with *PUBG*, *Fornite* esports uses a points system based on finishing position and kill count. Although relatively new to the esports scene, *Fortnite* is well positioned to become a major esports title in the next year, with Epic Games pledging US $100 million in prize pool money for upcoming competitions in 2018 and 2019. The first competition benefiting from these funds is the *Summer Skirmish*, which features an US $8 million prize pool.

[2] Epic Games have developed two games under the title of “*Fortnite*”. However, the “*Fortnite*” has become synonymous online and in the media with *Fortnite Battle Royale*, rather than *Fortnite: Save the World*. As such, we adopt the same naming convention in this paper.

Hearthstone (2014)

Hearthstone is a digital collectable card game (CCG) developed by Blizzard Entertainment. As a digital CCG, *Hearthstone* is a turn-based game and does not require quick reactions and fast inputs like most other esports titles. This makes it particularly well suited to Australian esports players, as high latency does not impact the playing of *Hearthstone*, allowing Australians to viably compete internationally online. *Hearthstone* is played between two opponents, each with a deck of 30 self-curated cards. Players also choose a "hero", which grants them unique special abilities. Each player has a health pool of 30 points: once a player loses all 30 points they are defeated. The cards in each players' decks consist of a variety of spells, equipment and minions. These cards must be used together by the player to deplete their opponent's health points while defending their own. Players must strategically build their decks using cards that synergises well with each other, usually to execute a predetermined strategy. As well as in game strategy, *Hearthstone* esports often involves strategic thinking outside of the game. For example, Law (2016) highlights how *Hearthstone* players commonly "scout" their opponents during tournaments by engaging in clandestine observation of other competitors' matches to prepare against their playstyles, strategies and decks in advance. Such behaviours have become integral to *Hearthstone* practice and metagaming.

Rocket League (2015)

Rocket League (*RL*) is physics-based vehicular soccer game developed by Psyonix. The game is similar to soccer in that it is features a single ball and is played on a rectangular field, with the main objective of the game to score points by moving the ball into the opponent's goal. Unlike soccer, each team usually features three players controlling rocket-powered cars. Players must use their vehicle in the same way a soccer player would use their body to hit the ball. On the pitch are "boost pads", which grant players the ability to increase the speed of their vehicles for a short period of time and launch into the air. Also, unlike soccer, the field has walls and a ceiling. Players are able to drive up these walls and engage in vertical acrobatics, adding another dimension of skilful play. The team with the most goals at the end of the five-minute round is the winner. If both scores are equal, the round enters overtime until one team scores a goal. These parallels with soccer and familiar sporting iconography makes *RL* easily comprehensible for a layperson audience, unlike other esports.

4 Understanding Esports Spectatorship

A significant body of academic research into esports practice – the performance, play, professionalization and appeal of competitive digital gaming – has been established over the past decade (e.g. Jin, 2010; Taylor, 2012). However, much of this literature has focused on the players, professionalization, tournaments and the industry (Taylor, 2015b; Taylor, 2016).

"Its this kind of vicarious experience, like you're just watching your friends have fun"
P6 (27M) on the appeal of esports

The study of esports spectatorship is currently emerging as an important topic of research in the area. However, at the moment, not enough is known about the nature of media consumption around this emerging practice beyond the importance of live-streaming (both casual and competitive play) principally based on the Twitch.tv platform (Carter, Nansen and Gibbs, 2014; Johnson and Woodcock 2017; Taylor, 2015a; Witkowski, 2012). Weiss and Schiele (Weiss, 2011; Weiss and Schiele 2013, based on 2008 data) studied the reasons for watching esports, finding that competition, challenge and escapism were positively correlated, but only examined esports engagement in comparison to playing video games. Cheung and Huang (2011) found that esports consumption motivations aligned with those of traditional sports, whereas Taylor and Witkowski (2010), speaking from work on spectatorship at *Dreamhack* (one of the largest digital gaming festivals in Europe), highlight how everyday play intermingles with esports spectatorship as a seamless part of gaming practice. A more recent (N=880) survey by Hamari and Sjöblom (2016) using '*The Motivations Scale for Sports Consumption*' (Trail and James, 2001) found that escapism, acquiring knowledge and enjoying aggression were the key motivational factors associated with the frequency of watching esports. Hamari and Sjöblom also found that there was no correlation between player's (self-perceived) skill and watching frequency, and that drama was not correlated with viewing motivations, a finding we believe is due to the current nature of esports media.

While a many esports spectators play the game being played by the competitors, some market reports estimate that ~40% of spectators don't play the games themselves (Newzoo, 2015). We are sceptical of such a high-number being applied to the current Australian context; it is likely that many of these 'spectators' have little to no ongoing engagements with esports. However, in well-established esports markets like South Korea, esports culture merges with popular and gaming culture – particularly in the 16-25 demographic – leading to a spectator model that broadens beyond existing and fanatic players (Chee, 2006; Kim and Thomas, 2015; Seo and Jung, 2016). Again highlighting the gap in current research, prior work has focused on experienced or highly motivated spectators due to recruitment methods: 80% of the participants in Hamari and Sjöblom's (2016) survey watched esports weekly or more; Cheung and Huang (2011) only examined engaged spectators by drawing on online comments on forums; and, Weiss and Schiele (2011; 2013) developed and validated their survey through interviews with esports players, and conducted their survey with 360 players at the World Cyber Games in Cologne in 2008. We expect that the appeal of, and engagement with, esports varies considerably across spectators and cultures at key peak events, and based on the development of the community.

5 Our Study

We conducted 18 semi-structured interviews with a breadth of esports spectators (aged 16-48), recruiting participants via the University campus, a gaming café and at 'Oz Comic-Con' in Melbourne. Interviews were structured around 6 key questions which provided insight into (1) the breadth of ways that Australian esports spectators engage with esports; (2) how they initially became involved; (3) how they engage with traditional sports (if any); (4) in what ways they paid money for esports; (5) the importance of tournament attendance to esports spectatorship in Australia; (6) and, their interest in Australian specific esports content. Due to the limited sample size, we are unable to make claims about the demographics or size of the esports market in Australia. Additionally, as a portion of the data was collected at an amateur esports tournament at 'Oz Comic Con', we acknowledge that our findings may describe esports spectators at physically-attended esports events more so than remote spectators.

Results

People who watch esports – the *spectators* – engage in a range of different behaviours. Our work has identified several non-exclusive *spectator types*: *players*, *fans* and *recruits*. Each possesses substantially different forms of engagements with esports This sets the stage for identifying numerous insights for the design and development of esports media and how the Australian esports scene can be better supported.

Correlating with prior work, Players were drawn to viewing esports and engaging with third-party content that assisted their pursuit of expertise in the games they played. Fans were more likely to engage with multiple esports titles and player/team personalities across multiple digital media outlets, and were characterised by an interest in physically attending tournaments. Recruits, were primarily non-players of esports titles but 'gamers' in a more general sense. They engaged with esports stories during notable tournaments and when encountered on social media and content sharing sites like reddit.com as part of participation in game cultures and as part of maintaining a gamer identity.

Players:

The 'player' is a type of spectator who watches esports events as a part of a personal or professional interest in improving their own performance during games. In short, they watch *because* they play. The player often only watches a specific videogame, and will do so with less interest in the spectacle of the game and more interest in the technique, grand strategies, and tactical maneuvering of the players in the game. Beyond watching their chosen game, players are interested in commentary and match information that breaks down the consequences and benefits of playstyles, as well as broad statistical data about the match. Players are motivated by a desire to develop and improve their own play, seeking to improve their performance in competitive matches.

Fans:

The 'fan' is spectator who is similar to the classic sports fan: they're interested in supporting a team across a range of different videogames. They watch roundups, highlights, and read commentary. They love attending events, and enjoy doing so as a community event. The goal for fans is following top-tier players and teams across events, rather than hoping for any kind of personal improvement in their gaming skills.

We can see from the findings in the *Digital Australia Report 2018* (Brand et al, 2017)[3] that approximately 33% of active videogame players watched esports in 2017. Of these, 52% watch to learn strategies, and 10% watch as part of following an esports team. In our categorisation, this would indicate that approximately one in two of all Australian esports spectators are 'players', and one in ten are 'fans'. As noted in Appendix A, there is a significant array of esports clubs and societies on university campuses across Australia, and these are likely to be significant stakeholders in building and maintaining the esports industry in Australia in the coming years.

What is clear from this preliminary study and our prior work is that while the amateur play of esports games drives engagement, ongoing esports spectatorship and engagement (online and at physical tournaments) is intertwined with broader video game culture and esports fans consider esports part of their everyday gaming practices. Our recruitment at, and observations of, an amateur esports tournament at 'Oz Comic Con' in Melbourne on 12/06/16 saw considerable enthusiasm and support from the community of engaged 'gamers' present. Considering 67% of Australians play videogames (Brand et al. 2017), the way esports is increasingly becoming part of video game engagement reflects the enormous potential growth for esports in Australia.

Recruits:

As with traditional sports, not everyone who watches sports necessarily plays the games. The 'recruit' spectator is interested in games generally, and often plays digital games, but unlike the player they rarely actual play any esports titles. Like the fan, the recruit is very interested in esports as a viewed event, but much less interested in specific teams, and is more interested in the overall event and the media roundup of play. Recruits attend and watch esports events and viewing as part of participation in 'gamer cultures' and as part of maintaining a gamer identity.

[3] The report indicates that 67% of Australians play video games for an average of 89 minutes per day, with an average age of 34 and 46:55 F/M breakdown.

On Engaging with Esports

Player engagement with esports media is often driven by the 'metagame' and the way digital games are frequently 'patched' by the developer. In this usage, the 'metagame' refers to what tactics and styles of play are currently popular (Carter, Gibbs and Harrop, 2012). Competitive play – particularly team-based – requires an understanding of the metagame to optimise team selection of characters with different abilities, and to better anticipate team strategies and play accordingly. P1 (24/M)[4] noted that "*keeping up with the metagame*" and "*trying to understand how changes would change the way I have to play*" drove them to third-party sites to engage with esports content.

The video game live-streaming platform '*Twitch.tv*' is the dominant medium on which live esports spectatorship occurs, with all but one participant having used Twitch at some stage. Engagement of this type is thus typically at home in the domestic environment via PCs or mobile devices. Of note in this regard is the fact that participants would often not differentiate between watching competitive esports tournaments and watching competitive esports players while they practice, educate, entertain and interact with fans to build a fan base. Looking for top-streamers by games was often the method cited for this type of engagement.

For *Players*, such practices are opportunities to learn how to improve their play, while *Fans* utilize such streams to follow, support and learn about different competitors. As noted by prior work that has studied esports players, it is through practices like these that competitors are required to be not only highly highly-skilled at the game, but also skilled at entertainment. *Recruit*-spectators were less likely to engage with live-content at home, generally because it was often not pitched at their level of knowledge.

Video-on-demand (VOD) content via sites like YouTube was also a highly prevalent form of engaging with esports. *Players*, sought out VOD content that highlighted specific expert play or curated highlights of large tournaments that they do not have time to watch. This is a different genre of VOD content to the VOD content engaged with by *Fans*, who were drawn more to live content for the shared, social experiences – and *Recruits* – who sought out VOD content specifically targeted to outsiders with lesser understanding of the game mechanics, drama and content. As esports increasingly expands to multiple tournaments across an expanding number of games, such time-saving VOD content may be a popular method of supporting engagement with Australian esports specifically, and introducing more spectators to the scene.

> **"The Oceanic region as a whole needs to improve, not only like, player and viewer base, but needs to be taken more seriously"**
>
> P12 (19/M) – Amateur Esports Competitor

Beyond watching esports matches, spectators (primarily *Fans)* engaged with esports through following teams, players, esports competitions through news sites and social media (primarily Twitter and Facebook) "*to stay in the loop*" (P14, 27M). It is our impression that *Fan*-spectators routinely and regularly engage with a wider variety of esports content than *Player*-spectators. A common criticism of existing esports media made by our participants was that they currently "*only learn about teams when they arrive at the tournament, you don't know their backstory"* (P2/23F). This can often render tournament finals uninteresting if the better-known teams are eliminated. By seeking out information about players and tournaments *Fans* are working to build allegiances and relationships with esports players that better contextualise and inform their spectator experience of live-tournaments.

[4] Interviewees are referred to by a unique identifier (P1-P18), their age and their self-reported gender.

On Becoming Involved with Esports

Our study found that the amateur play of esports games drives initial engagement. People – specifically Players – mostly engage with esports as a result of their engagement with that specific game. However, our observations of an amateur BGA e-Sports[5] tournament during 'Oz Comic Con' highlighted the manner in which video-game and 'geek cultures' overlap with esports culture, reflecting a different route for engagement with esports and interestingly, where the spectator does not necessarily play the game they are engaged with. We found that Fans had often become involved with esports via their engagement with broader gaming culture, as opposed to coming into esports through a specific game title. That is, participating in esports fandom may be an opportunity for people to perform their identity as invested game-players beyond having knowledge of specific game titles or being able to demonstrate expertise at gaming. Through this understanding of their involvement in and engagement with esports, we can identify the importance to this spectator-type of physical and collective events in supporting shared social experiences. In addition, we also noted the importance of the presence of esports at events like 'Oz Comic Con' and 'PAX Australia'.[6] PAX Australia is a large gaming convention in held annually in Melbourne and it was cited by several participants as their first exposure to esports.

Reflecting esports spectators existing monetary engagement, Twitch.TV streamer 'Grossie_Gore' received donations of £106,033 from just 160,000 followers in 2015.

(Karhulahti, 2016)

Considering the ubiquity of video-gaming in Australia (84% of 15-34-year-olds), we would then also argue that broader mainstream exposure of esports will significantly increase the raw number of esports spectators in Australia. While further research on this is warranted, several *Fans* reflected on the importance explaining to people how esports is more than just televised play, but "*doing something at a level that's at a high level skill set… abilities which you as a normal person cannot do*" (P7, 30M) and "*you have to be a professional and good at the game…it takes skill just like a boxing match does"* (P5, 27M). This professionalization of gaming practices is engaging to people who play video games, even if they don't play the specific title being played. This is bolstered by the similarities between games within esports genres (e.g., the popular CS:GO is in the FPS genre, and play can be vicariously enjoyed by spectators familiar with any game in that genre, such as Call of Duty, Battlefield, Halo, and so forth). Thus, while the play of esports titles currently drives engagement, its exponential growth in EU and US markets is based on its growing exposure to the established video-gaming market.

[5] BGA esports is a Melbourne-based company that aims to bring amateur esports tournaments to events within Australia. This tournament was their first, with a $5,000 prize.
[6] Originally known as the Penny Arcade Expo, PAX is to a series of annual gaming culture festivals held in cities through the USA and in Melbourne, Australia.

On Monetary Engagement with Esports

Participants indicated a variety of ways they currently spend money around their engagement with esports, as well as having generally positive attitudes towards subscription-based premium services that tailored to their specific needs, and as an opportunity to support Australian esports.

None of the spectators in our limited sample paid for the Twitch's premium service, Twitch Prime (an $8.99 service) or donated money to streamers. This latter practice has emerged as a significant income stream for esports personalities. In February 2016, popular UK-based League of Legends streamer 'Grossie_Gore'[7], revealed his total donations had reached £106,033 in 12 months (Karhulahti, 2016). The increased exposure of Australian streamers via local tournaments, or Australian content-specific sites, may be a significant way for Australian-based esports players to gain followers to help support professionalisation. The significant conversion rate (£106,033 from roughly 160,000 followers) for a popular esports streamer indicates the potential for monetary engagement *player-spectators* are willing to have with esports.

We raised the idea of an Australian-specific esports site, and the notion of paying for such content. Participants commented on engagement as thresholds for paying for content; "*I think if there was engagement from the website owners with the people and they could do responses to people that would be interesting or run you through something, maybe tips and techniques kind of videos. It would have to be engagement with the participants and the players, the sportspeople themselves*" (P8, 32M), corresponding with the types of engagement that esports players are already facilitating via *Twitch.TV* streams. *Fans* cited the importance of such a site engaging with more than one title, "*if it was broader and had a few different genres*" (P5, 27M), and also (if being a broadcaster) having engaging commentators. The majority of our participants acknowledged the fact that the Australian-scene was small in comparison to the rest of the world, and a common theme was an interest in supporting the development of Australian esports in anyway, including subscriptions to streaming services and dedicated Australian content sites.

Other means of monetary engagement included investing in the computer hardware required to play and watch esports ("*I've put money into my own specs and like my keyboard, my mice, and my chair, like $900 all up*"), the cost of attending tournaments (a 3-day pass to PAX Australia costs $180), the cost of premium content in games (often being several hundred dollars), and paying to play in LAN café's ($2-4 an hour).

[7] As of August 2018, Grossie_Gore has around 350,000 followers on Twitch.TV, 16,000 subscribers on YouTube, 61,000 followers on Twitter (Socialblade.com, 2018).

On Tournaments and Physical Events

As part of broader video-game culture in Australia, esports provide social events and shared social experiences that are difficult to find in amateur play.

"I think the more it can get out there the better, because regardless of being online it's still a social thing and it's a way for people to connect and see other people with similar interests"

P15 (23F), on the sociality of esports

Physical esports gatherings such as tournaments were identified as being important for *Fans* who were interested in shared social experiences. Several *Fans* identified their attendance at physical tournaments as an important trigger for their growing interest in esports. As a spectacle, many would attend a large esports tournament if possible, drawn to the idea of 100,000+ esports stadium events that occur internationally. Those who had attended physical esports events said that being part of a large crowd contributed greatly to their experience of the esports event.

Players generally indicated they would (or already have) attended a physical tournament, but were less enthusiastic about tournaments as social gatherings. However, they emphasised the importance of the competitiveness of players in attendance (and a scepticism about the quality of a local tournament). Amateur tournaments – such as those held at LAN Cafés with ~$500-$5,000 prizes were a popular idea with (or provoked interest from) *Player*-type spectators, but less-so with *Fans*. Like local and amateur clubs for traditional sports, LAN Cafes are community hubs for video-game culture, and we saw high-familiarity with Melbourne's various esports friendly LAN Café's in our participants.

In contrast, *Recruits* were typically intimidated by the notion of attending an esports-only tournament, related to assumptions that they would not understand what is going on, and the perceived hostility of gamer cultures. All spectator-types attended larger gamer gatherings (primarily PAX Australia in this study) reflecting opportunities to engage different spectator-types, and encourage *Recruits* and *Players* to become the more engaged esports *Fan* spectator.

Overwatch World Cup, Sydney 2017

In 2017, a large esports tournament visited Australia for the first time. The Overwatch World Cup – Sydney Qualifiers (OWC Sydney), was held in The Star Event Centre towards the end of July, 2017. As its name suggests, the game played at event was Overwatch, a class-based team FPS developed by Blizzard Entertainment, who also hosted the tournament. While no official attendance figures for the event were released, the venue's website claims that it can hold around 800 people in the seating area in the configuration used for OWC Sydney (Event Centre, 2018). While an 800 person attendance figure is relatively modest compared to the 7000 of IEM Sydney earlier in 2017, it was not an unsubstantial event, with a prize pool of $72,000 (USD). Additionally, the event was a qualifier for the series' finals which were held in California later in the year, in contrast to IEM Sydney which was the final of its series. While OWC will not return to Australia in 2018 (along with all other OWC 2017 host countries except the United States), Blizzard will host the season 2 final of their Overwatch Contenders series (a developmental series for aspiring esports professionals) in Melbourne during September as a part of the inaugural Melbourne Esports Open. Blizzard are also reportedly considering adding a team representing an Australian city to their franchise-based Overwatch League for its second season (Byrne, 2018). Overall, OWC Sydney demonstrates that not just major esports organisations are hosting events in Australia, even comparatively smaller international esports organisations like OWC see Australia as a viable esports market. Despite a relatively small amount of physically present spectators, its online viewership was many time larger. According to analytical service esports Charts (2017), OWC Sydney had a total overall peak of almost 320000 viewers, with roughly 76% of them from China. This furthermore demonstrates the international focus of OWC and similar events. While physically situated in distinct geographical locations, the wider audience outside those physically present of esports is resoundingly international.

OWC Sydney 2017 stats (Esports Charts, 2017)	
Event length	4 days
Prize Pool	USD $72,000
Physical attendees	7000
Peak concurrent online views:	319 thousand
Total hours watched:	1.1 million hours
Average engagement:	3 hours 54 minutes

On Australian-Specific Esports Content

Participants were generally in favour of Australian-specific esports content, and there were strong feelings that a hub for such content would significantly help the scene grow. Some *Player*-type spectators generally emphasised a concern around the skill-level of local teams, indicating a preference against *watching* Australian content if the Australian teams were not internationally competitive. This aligns with the interest of this spectator-type in harnessing esports spectating to inform their own play. However, several *Players* also expressed an enthusiasm for local amateur leagues and competitions, reflecting an interest in esports as a space to enact and demonstrate their expertise, not just develop it. P13 (25M) specifically identified tournaments restricted to lower-ranked or local-only players as an opportunity to facilitate Australian players to compete, develop a fan-base and grow their skills, which would in turn help Australians become more competitive internationally.

> **"I feel like our commentators are really boring in some parts so I feel like we need to have more charismatic commentators."**
>
> P14 (27M), on the importance of local commentators.

Fans and *Recruits* were strongly interested in content that profiled the local scene – including amateur leagues that fed into international scenes – and facilitated the drama of the viewing experience (a finding in contrast to Hamari and Sjöblom's (2016) survey that profiled only highly-experienced esports spectators). P3, P6 and P14 all expressed a desire for content commentated by Australians, including international matches. Commentators were identified by many as being key to the viewing experience. Participants not currently engaged with esports voiced significant enthusiasm for Australian-specific content which was seen to be "*more relevant*" and "*more approachable*". In both spectator-types, there was a clear interest in understanding the human-stories around esports (including rivalries, team backgrounds, and under-dog stories) and a feeling that this was missing in existing esports coverage. For *Recruits* this is likely exacerbated by teams constantly changing their names and players.

6 2018 Developments

2018 has seen some notable changes to the Australian esports landscape that began to develop towards the end of 2017. The first notable development is the growing association of Australian esports teams with physical locations, as opposed to previously being effectively placeless. In this sense Australian esports is growing to more resemble conventional spectator sports. This phenomenon is not unique to Australia and seems to be mirroring movements towards more conventional league and team structuring within the international esports industry. The most prominent example of this in Australia is the Gfinity Elite Series, a newly created esports league featuring 7 teams representing and based in Australian cities. Unlike some existing teams based in a specific Australian city, all teams in the Gfinity Elite Series reference their associated city in their team name much like teams in conventional sports leagues would. On the international stage, Blizzard Entertainment's new Overwatch League similarly features franchised teams representing major cities across the USA, the UK, China and South Korea. In building a league based around a geographically localised franchise team format, owners are reportedly expecting greater opportunities for merchandising and ticket selling afforded by this traditional format used in conventional sports leagues (Heitner, 2017; Ashton, 2017).

The Australian development has coincided with the recent acquisition of numerous esports teams by Australian sports clubs and companies, particularly the AFL. For example, two teams in the Oceanic Pro League were each acquired by the Adelaide Crows and the Essendon Bombers, who have since provided the teams with access to the clubs' facilities and resources (Essendon Football Club, 2017; Adelaide Football Club, 2017). In the Essendon Bombers' case, their acquired esports team was rebranded with the club's own branding, now named "The Bombers" but omitting any explicit reference to "Essendon". The Collingwood Magpies and the Geelong Cats are also reportedly interested entering the esports market through a similar process of acquiring and rebranding an existing Australian esports team (Colangelo, 2017). While not as apparent as the city-based branding of teams in the Gfinity Elite Series, the acquisition and rebranding of teams in the Oceanic Pro League by AFL clubs demonstrates a shift towards a club-based franchises in the Australian esports landscape, especially as traditional sports companies begin to hold larger stakes in the scene.

While not directly acquiring teams, a growing number of Australia sporting businesses and institutions are beginning to support and form partnerships with existing Australian esports teams. Among these cases is the Sydney Cricket Ground, which has offered to house *OPL* team Dire Wolves in their newly formed "Esports High Performance Centre" (Sydney Cricket Ground, 2017). The Australian Esports Association (AEA) was formed in 2013 to "*lead a collaborative industry wide movement for the growth of esports through advocacy, representation, promotion, regulation and engagement of esports in Australia*" with the aim of getting formal recognition of esports by the Australian Sports Commission (AESA, n.d.). The Esports Games Association Australia (EGAA) formed in 2017. The aims of the EGAA are to "*to set and improve standards for the whole industry to help advance the Australian esports scene*" (EGAA, n.d.). While standardization and regulation of the esports industry in Australia appears to be an important part of the agenda of these organizations both have very limited enforcement, standardisation and regulatory power at this time.

Intel Extreme Masters (IEM), 2017

2017 saw numerous international esports organisations host esports events in Australia for the first time. Perhaps the most notable was ESL's Intel Extreme Masters (IEM) series, who hosted the finals of their international circuit at the Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney's Olympic Park around the beginning of May. IEM Sydney was a Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) tournament featuring a range of well-known international esports teams. IEM hosts a variety of international esports tournaments in multiple countries, designed initially as a way for ESL to expand outside Europe in 2006. The annual IEM Championships in Katowice, Poland has consistently held the record as the largest esports event in the world. According to IEM (2017), the 2017 championships drew a total of 173,000 physical spectators. While no Australian teams made the play-offs at IEM Sydney, roughly 7,000 spectators attended each day of the event to watch the spectacle of world-class esports teams play against each other for the $250,000 (USD) prize pool. IEM Sydney broke the record for the largest Australian esports event and stands as landmark event in Australian esports history, opening the door for more esports events by international organisations in Australia and the Oceanic region. IEM returned to Sydney in May, 2018, reportedly drawing 18,000 attendees (Rutledge, 2018). Based on interviews with spectators at IEM Sydney and another 2017 esports event in Sydney, there were four main motivations for attending in person (Cumming, 2018). Firstly, attendees sought to be entertained by engaging in narratives that unfolded at and around the event and watching exciting play. Secondly, the events also served as an educational resource, with some attendees using the professional play on exhibition to improve or augment their own personal play and others using the event as an opportunity to learn about live esports events as an experience. Thirdly, the events offered a venue to socialise, both to reinforce existing relationships and to build new ones with like-minded individuals. Fourthly, some attended as a way to show active support for their favourite teams, players, or for the Australian esports scene as a whole.

IEM Sydney 2017 stats (Esports Charts, 2018)	
Event length	6 days
Prize Pool	USD $250,000
Physical attendees	7000
Peak concurrent online views:	1.3 million
Total hours watched:	16.6 million hours
Average engagement:	12 hours 48 minutes

New Developments in Australian Esports

2018 also heralds the return of some major esports events that were held in Australia for the first time in 2017. Namely, the Intel Extreme Masters returned to Sydney in early May, almost a year after the inaugural IEM Sydney 2017. IEM Sydney 2018 was held over 3 days and reportedly drew 18,000 attendees (Rutledge, 2018). This return by IEM to Australia signals a sustained interest in Australia as an esports market by international esports companies after the initial influx of esports events in 2017. Based on this developing interest, Australia seems positioned to grow as an esports capital within the Oceanic region. Other large international esports events hosting events in Australia this year include the Oceanic Open Series, a qualifier of the Rocket League Champion Series with a prize pool of $15,000, the Hearthstone Championship Tour and the PUBG ZIMO Australia Invitational 2018.

Local interest in Australian esports development has been notably expressed through the Melbourne Esports Open. The event, set to take place on the first weekend of September 2018, will be held at in the Melbourne and Olympic Parks precinct, including the Rod Laver Arena and Margaret Court Arenas. Visit Victoria "partnered up" with TEG Live and ESL, the largest independent international esports company, to organize the event (Premier of Victoria, 2018). The Open will feature *The Overwatch Contenders Australia* Season 2 finals, *The League of Legends Oceanic Pro League* finals and the *High School Esports League Victorian League of Legends* state final. The Open with also feature a series of open tournaments for *Minecraft* (2011), *Overwatch* (2016) and *Forza Motorsport 7* (2017) that ticket holders can enter and compete in for prizes. The partnership has committed to hold the event annually until 2022, hoping to draw spectators from interstate and overseas and establish Melbourne as "Australia's Home of eSport" (Premier of Victoria, 2018). The Victorian government predicts an attendance of 10,000 people at each day of the event. Along with existing and upcoming Australian esports leagues such as the Oceanic Pro League and the Gfinity Elite Series, 2018 has seen the Australian esports scene mature, establishing itself further through support by local and international stakeholders.

Authors

Marcus Carter is a Sydney Research Accelerator (SOAR) Fellow and Lecturer in Digital Cultures in the Department of Media and Communications at The University of Sydney. His research focuses on the social, persuasive and educational dimensions of gameplay. He has published extensively on a wide range of games, including *EVE Online, Minecraft, DayZ, Candy Crush Saga, Warhammer 40,000* and television's *Survivor*. Recently, he edited the book, *Internet Spaceships Are Serious Business: An EVE Online Reader*, for the University of Minnesota Press. He was previously *President of the Digital Games Research Association of Australia* (2016-2018).

David Cumming is a PhD candidate in the Interaction Design Lab at the School of Computing and Information Systems, the University of Melbourne. His PhD research focuses on the spectatorship of esports and the factors influencing esports consumption. His work has been recently published and presented at the *Digital Games Research Association International Conference (DIGRA) 2018* in Turin, Italy. He comes from a media studies and journalism background, having previously studied at *Curtin University*.

Robbie Fordyce is a Research Fellow in the Networked Society Institute at the University of Melbourne, and a Research Associate at Swinburne University of Technology. His research focuses a praxis-based media theory with interests in 3D printing, video games, globalization, and activism, often through the lens of post-autonomist Marxist thought. His work has been published in ephemera, *Games and Culture*, *The Fibreculture Journal*, and *The Journal of Peer Production*.

Martin Gibbs is an Associate Professor in the School of Computing and Information Systems, the University of Melbourne. His research interests lie at the intersection of Science Technology Studies (STS) and Human Computer Interaction (HCI). Current projects include: *Media Ecologies of the H*ome; *Digital Commemoration*; and *Esports Spectatorship*. He was program co-chair for the *Digital Games Research Association International Conference (DIGRA)* in 2017 and 2018. His recent co-authored book, *Death and Digital Media*, was published by Routledge in 2018. He is currently working on an edited collection for Routledge, *Residues of Death*, and a co-authored book for Oxford University Press, *Digital Domesticities*.

Emma Witkowski is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Design and the co-director of the Playable Media Lab at RMIT University. As a socio-phenomenologically informed ethnographer, her research explores esports cultures as networked media sports, networked careers in digital games, research methods for networked play, livestreaming and LAN tournaments from grassroots to mega-LANs, and high-performance networked team practices. Emma teaches core games research courses within the RMIT Game Design program. She is a keynote speaker for *DiGRA China* in 2018 and has recently co-edited (with Torill Mortensen) a special edition for *MedieKultur* on *Media-ludic approaches: Critical reflections on games and research practice*. Her current research is with Essendon Football Club on esports ecosystems and multi-sports institutions. She is a board member of the Australian Esports Association.

Appendix A:
Table of esports viewership habits

In our table below, we provide details on the size of a range of the most popular esports events from 2014 to early 2018. Our methodology for gathering this data has varied, as a range of professional data capture services have emerged during the latter part of this project. As is visible from the data, different games have wildly different viewership rates, with Blizzard's *Hearthstone* game yet to break the million-viewer mark, while Tencent's purchase of Riot has led to League of Legends World Cup breaking the 100 million viewer mark in 2017, mainly due to 104.7 million unique viewers accessing the event from mainland China.

Table 1: Global estimated user engagement with selected esports

Year	Tournament	Esport	Peak Concurrent	Unique Viewers
2016	IEM World Championship	Multiple	2,000,000	34,084,629 +
2018	Asia Championships	Dota 2	18,983,498	?
2017	The International	Dota 2	10,935,730	?
2017	The Kiev Major	Dota 2	5,249,343	?
2016	The Boston Major	Dota 2	5,463,576	?
2016	The International	Dota 2	?	142,811,479
2016	The Manila Major	Dota 2	3,500,000	?
2016	The Shanghai Major	Dota 2	1,042,173	?
2015	The International	Dota 2	4,606,264	?
2015	ESL One Frankfurt	Dota 2	1,061,441	?
2014	The International	Dota 2	2,000,000 +	20,000,000 +
2018	ESL Pro Finals	CS:GO	121,581	?
2018	IEM Sydney	CS:GO	1,293,556	13,500,000
2018	DreamHack Masters	CS:GO	1,401,984	?
2017	IEM Sydney	CS:GO	484,465	8,000,000
2017	WESG	CS:GO	535,236	?
2016	MLG Columbus	CS:GO	1,600,000	?
2015	ESL One Katowice	CS:GO	1,012,745	8,780,000
2015	ESL One Cologne	CS:GO	1,300,000	27,000,000
2015	Dreamhack Cluj	CS:GO	985,052	25,090,864
2017	World Championship	LoL	106,210,010	?
2016	World Championship	LoL	28,263,260	43,000,000
2015	World Championship	LoL	14,000,000	34,000,000

Year	Tournament	Esport	Peak Concurrent	Unique Viewers
2017	Hearthstone World Championship	HS	1,802,846	?
2016	Hearthstone World Championship	HS	696,607	?
2015	Hearthstone World Championship	HS	200,000	?
2014	Hearthstone World Championship	HS	132,000	?
2018	Overwatch League - Inaugural Season: Playoffs	OW	1,227,637	?
2018	Overwatch Contenders 2018 Season 2: Korea	OW	49,311	?
2017	Overwatch World Cup	OW	840,182	?
2016	Overwatch World Cup	OW	638,206	?
2017	WGL Grand Finals	World of Tanks	197,682	?
2015	WoT World Championship	World of Tanks	?	2,600,000
2018	SMITE Masters 2018	Smite	103,431	?
2017	SMITE World Championship	Smite	108,952	?
2016	SMITE Super Regionals 2016	Smite	24,422	?
2015	Smite World Championship	Smite	1,000,000+	2,900,000
2018	PUBG Global Invitiational 2018	PUBG	60,149,609	?
2018	PUBG ZIMO Australia Invitational 2018	PUBG	8,686	?
2017	IEM Oakland PUBG Invitational 2017	PUBG	90,8012	?
2017	PandaTV PUBG League	PUBG	1,935,423	?
2018	Fortnite Summer Skirmish	Fortnite	804,350	?
2018	Fortnite Celebrity Pro-Am	Fortnite	2,174,818	?
2018	RLCS Season 5 World Championship	RL	171,771	?
2018	RLCS Season 4 World Championship	RL	184,739	?
2017	RLCS Season 3 World Championship	RL	206,252	?

Table 1 Details

Data has been drawn from across a wide range of competitions and represents less than 1% of major esports events over the last three years. Different event series have different viewership, marketing, prize, and engagement habits. We have drawn our data from different aggregation services, some of which ceased operations in 2016 and 2017, with others starting in 2017. Data availability is contingent on the reporting by events, game publishers, and streaming platforms. In a number of cases these data are not available, and reliable estimates cannot be established.

Data limitations: *Granular information about HS and LoL is limited due to proprietary data controls.*

Esport acronyms: *CS:GO – Counter-Strike: Global Offensive; LoL – League of Legends; HS – Hearthstone; OW - Overwatch; PUBG – PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds; RL – Rocket League*

Appendix B:
Australian University esports Clubs, 2017

Victoria

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Deakin University	Deakin esports Society [1]	Yes
Federation University	N/A	
La Trobe University	La Trobe University Competitive Online Game Society	Yes
RMIT University	RMIT League of Gaming [2]	
Swinburne University	Swinburne esports Club [3]	
University of Melbourne	Society for Electronic Entertainment [2]	Yes

New South Wales

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Charles Sturt University	N/A	
Macquarie University	Macquarie University Gaming and Computing Society [2]	
Southern Cross University	N/A	
University of Newcastle	N/A	
University of New England	UNE Gaming Society [2]	
University of New South Wales	UNSW LoLSoc [4]	Yes
University of Sydney	Sydney University Competitive Online Games Society	Yes
University of Technology Sydney	UTS LoLSoc [4] EGG: The Gamer's Guild [2, 5]	Yes
University of Wollongong	UoW Video Game Association	Yes
Western Sydney University	UWS esports Club [3]	

Australian Capital Territory

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Australian National University	ANU Esports	Yes
University of Canberra	UCREC [2]	Yes

Western Australia

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Curtin University	Curtin Esports	Yes
	Curtin Smash [4]	Yes
Edith Cowan University	ECU esports Society	
Murdoch University	Esports at Murdoch	Yes
	LoL at Murdoch [4]	Yes
	CSGO at Murdoch [4]	Yes
	DOTA at Murdoch [4]	Yes
	Overwatch at Murdoch [4]	Yes
	Hearthstone at Murdoch [4]	Yes
University of Notre Dame	N/A	
University of Western Australia	N/A	

South Australia

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Carnegie Mellon University - Australia	N/A	
Flinders University	Flinders University Digital Gaming Enthusiasts [2]	Yes
	Flinders University League of Legends Club [4]	
Torrens University	N/A	
University of Adelaide	EVAC [2]	Yes
	Adelaide Uni LoL Club [4]	Yes
	Adelaide University esports Club [3]	
University of South Australia	N/A	

Northern Territory

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Charles Darwin University	Charles Darwin University Esports	Yes

Queensland

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Bond University	N/A	
Central Queensland University	N/A	
Griffith University	GU LoL [4] Griffith Uni Smash Bros [4]	 Yes
James Cook University	JCU DOGMA Cairns [2]	
Queensland University of Technology	N/A	
University of Queensland	University of Queensland Games Society [2] UQ LoL [4]	Yes
University of Southern Queensland	USQ League of Legends Club	Yes
University of the Sunshine Coast	N/A	

Tasmania

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
University of Tasmania	UTAS esports	

National

University	Name	Officially Affiliated
Australian Catholic University	N/A	
University of Divinity	N/A	

Officially affiliated: has a recognised relationship to the local University's clubs/societies system.

- [1] Operated by the Deakin Gamers Society
- [2] General gaming society or other special interest society that is also inclusive of esports
- [3] Inactive
- [4] Dedicated to a specific game
- [5] Open to non-university members

Appendix C:

Australian/Oceanic Esports Events, 2016-2017

Year	Tournament	eSport	Prize Pool (AUD)	URL	Notes	Competing Regions
2017	Intel Extreme Masters, Sydney	CS:GO	$260,000	Link	Part of the international *Intel Extreme Masters* series	International
2017	CyberGamer Pro League Autumn 2017	CS:GO	$16,000	Link		AU
2017	ZEN League CS:GO Invitational, Australian Qualifiers	CS:GO	$20,000	Link	ANZ qualifiers for the international ZEN CS:GO Invitationals	ANZ
2017	ESL AU and NZ Championship	CS:GO	$10,000	Link		ANZ
2017	WPGI Female League	CS:GO	$10,000	Link	Female only league	AU
2017	ESL AU and NZ Championship, Season 1	Rocket League	$7,500	Link		ANZ
2017	CyberGamer Pro League, Season 2	Rocket League	$1500[1]	Link		AU
2017	Smite Oceanic Pro League	Smite	$10,000	Link		Oceania
2017	Overwatch World Cup Sydney Qualifiers	Overwatch	$93,751[6]	Link	Qualifiers for *Overwatch World Cup*, run by Overwatch developers Blizzard Entertainment	International
2017	Full Circle Oceanic Summer Series	Overwatch	$10,000	Link		Oceania
2017	ESL AU and NZ Championship	Overwatch	$12,000	Link		ANZ
2017	Paladins Masters Oceania Qualifiers	Paladins	$8,000	Link	Oceanic qualifiers for international league	Oceania
2017	Oceanic Pro League	League of Legends	$0	Link	Winners qualify to play in International wildcard series	Oceania
2017	SMITE Oceanic Pro League	Smite	$10,000	Link		Oceania

Year	Tournament	eSport	Prize Pool (AUD)	URL	Notes	Competing Regions
2017	CWL Sydney Open	Call of Duty	$60,000	Link		AU
2017	Pokémon Oceania International Championships	Pokémon Sun and Moon	$100,000[5]	Link		Oceania
2016	DI Another Day 2	Super Smash Bros (Melee, Wii U, 64, Project M)	$2960[2]	Link		AU
2016	IeSF World Championships Australian Counter-Strike: GO Qualifier	CS:GO	$4200[3]	Link	Broadcast on SBS2. Australian qualifiers for international league	AU
2016	Oceania esports Masters	CS:GO	Unknown	Link		Oceania
2016	ESL AU and NZ Championships:	CS:GO	$20,000	Link		ANZ
2016	PAX Rocket League Tournament	Rocket League	$6,510[6]	Link		AU
2016	IeSF World Championships Australian League of Legends Qualifier	League of Legends	$>200[4]	Link	Australian qualifiers for international league	AU
2016	League of Legends Unigames	League of Legends	$0	Link	Part of the *Australian University Games* competition	AU (Universities)
2016	IeSF World Championships Australian Hearthstone Qualifier	Hearthstone	$640[3]	Link	Australian qualifiers for international league	AU
2016	Oceania esports Masters	SMITE	$25,000	Link		Oceania

Notes

1. Worth of prizes
2. Pot derived from entry fees paid by competitors. Total prize money estimated based on number of competitors multiplied by entry fee.
3. Also includes airfares to and accommodation in Jakarta for the World Championships
4. 1st place prize consists of $200 and airfares to and accommodation in Jakarta for the World Championships. 2nd-4th place prizes not disclosed
5. Official estimate based on attendance. Spread across video game and trading card game competition, split unknown.
6. Originally in USD, converted using 4/11/2016 exchange rates

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