



eSports in Hong Kong Challenges and Opportunities

The world's fastest-growing sport is live video gaming, a business that is estimated to be worth about US\$1.5 billion by 2020. Controversial for a number of reasons, eSports are popular with young people.

What are eSports?

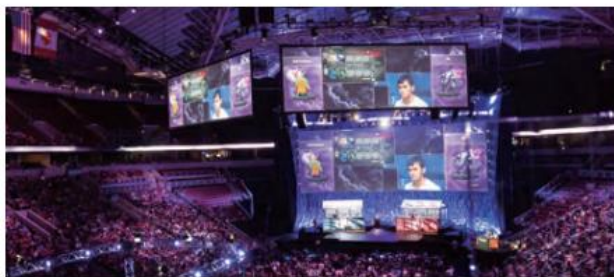
In competitive video gaming, known as eSports, players compete for prize pools of up to US\$24 million. It is also a popular spectator sport online and offline. The majority of popular eSports are team-based games played in leagues or tournaments culminating in a final. Many leagues now offer regular salaries and player rights. Counter-Strike, League of Legends, StarCraft 2 and Dota 2 are some of the most popular eSports.

Key points from respondents

- 68.4%** want greater development of the eSports industry in Hong Kong
- 38.5%** watched eSports tournaments in the 6 months before the survey
- 13.4%** entered casual eSports competitions occasionally
- 9.2%** were interested in eSports careers

Reported hurdles to working in the industry

- 58.9%** family opposition
- 48.3%** stigma attached to eSports



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▲ Annual international Dota 2 tournament at the KeyArena in Seattle

Comments from Youth I.D.E.A.S. think tank members

Ernest Chan, group convener This study reviews eSports in South Korea, mainland China and Taiwan where it has been promoted by building eSports stadiums, by making it a formal part of the sports industry and by launching undergraduate professional training programmes.

Keith Leung, group deputy-convener The global eSports economy has grown to US\$700 million and audiences reached about 400 million in 2017. They are forecast to grow with eSports becoming a medal event at the 2022 Asian Games. This study of youth perceptions shows that they believe it has job opportunity and economic development potential.

Denis Huen and Andy Leung, group members The HKSAR government should recognize eSports officially and help participants to take part in recognized, world level tournaments. It should study how eSports can be developed by setting up an e-Sports hub and encouraging IVE and THEi to organize tertiary professional training programmes, for example.

Controversy: beware

The head of the British eSports Integrity Commission (Esic), says eSports are largely unregulated and ripe for exploitation. The South Korean government acknowledged a problem by introducing the "Cinderella Law" in 2011 to counter youth gaming "addiction." It forbids children under 16 from playing computer games between midnight and 6am.

Sources

- theguardian.com/sport/2017/jun/16/top-addiction-young-people-gaming-esports
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shutdown_law
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ESports

Report No.27 HKFYG Youth I.D.E.A.S.

Employment and Economic Development group

Title e-Sports in Hong Kong

1,407 HKFYG members aged 15-29 responded to the survey. 20 eSports workers, players and spectators of similar age took part in focus group discussions. Seven industry experts, professionals and interested student leaders were interviewed.

More details [in Chinese]

yrc.hkfyg.org.hk/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2018/01/e-Sports-in-Hong-Kong-Full-Report.pdf

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