

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.



“eSports still has a long way to go in the US to achieve the popularity it’s reached in other parts of the world. However, the shutdown of traditional sports during the COVID-19 lockdown accelerated the timeframe for esports to become mainstream entertainment.”
- **John Poelking, Senior Gaming Analyst**

This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and the esports market
- How the emphasis on free content has shifted esports’ focus from in-person to digital
- Why expanding esports’ diversity is necessary to accommodate a US audience
- How brands can work with esports players to reach consumers outside of competitions

The barriers to esports viewing continue to fall away as the global influence of esports continues to grow. Awareness and interest have been increasing for years and the shutdown of traditional sports, and reliance on gaming during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend. Many people watched esports for the first time or deepened their dedication to competitive video gaming. Although growth is anticipated to slow when traditional sports return, the esports audience will continue to diversify, opening up opportunities for non-gaming brands to participate in this growing market.

**BUY THIS
REPORT NOW**

VISIT:
store.mintel.com

CALL:
EMEA
+44 (0) 20 7606 4533

Brazil
0800 095 9094

Americas
+1 (312) 943 5250

China
+86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC
+61 (0) 2 8284 8100

EMAIL:
reports@mintel.com

DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

Table of Contents

Overview

What you need to know
 Key issues covered in this Report
 Definition
 COVID-19: Market context
 Economic and other assumptions

Executive Summary

Top takeaways
 Market overview
 Figure 1: Global esports revenue, 2018-20
 Impact of COVID-19 on gaming and esports
 Figure 2: Short-, medium- and long-term impact of COVID-19 on gaming and esports, August 2020
 Opportunities and challenges
 Competing and crossing over with traditional sports
 Figure 3: Recency of watching sports and gaming content, May 2020
 2020 audience will need to be retained
 Figure 4: eSports viewing in 2020 compared to previous years, May 2020
 Brands that support esports players get supported by viewers
 Figure 5: Interacting with esports players, May 2020
 Combine gameplay with gaming content
 Figure 6: Reasons to watch and avoid video game content – Gameplay, May 2020
 New games bring new opportunities for competitions
 eSports investments challenged by a lack of live events
 What's next

The Market – Key Takeaways

COVID-19 slowed booming esports market
 Sponsorships soar as ticketing sales plummet in 2020
 Increasing gamer population fuels esports audience growth
 A lack of traditional sports opens some doors to esports
 New opportunities emerge in growing esports landscape

Global eSports Market Size

eSports market remains strong, but growth is slowed by COVID-19
 Figure 7: Global esports revenue, 2018-20
 US implications for esports market
 Figure 8: Key drivers affecting Mintel's market forecast, 2019-25 (prepared in August 2020)
 Impact of COVID-19 on gaming and esports

**BUY THIS
 REPORT NOW**

VISIT: store.mintel.com
CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094
 Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300
 APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |
EMAIL: reports@mintel.com

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

Lockdown

Re-emergence

Recovery

Figure 9: Short-, medium- and long-term impact of COVID-19 on gaming and esports, August 2020

COVID-19: US context

Learnings from the last recession

Figure 10: Spending more time doing home entertainment activities vs prior year, 2008-10

Figure 11: Consumer spending on cable, satellite, other live TV; 2006-10

Global eSports Segment Breakdown and Performance

Sponsorships drive esports revenue

Figure 12: Global esports revenue, by revenue stream, 2020

COVID-19 hits merchandise and ticketing the hardest

Figure 13: Year-over-year growth of esports revenue streams, 2019 vs 2020

Four games dominate global esports viewing

Figure 14: Global live esports hours watched on Twitch, YouTube and Mixer, 2019

Target Audience – The US Gamer

Share of adults who play video games is growing

Figure 15: Share of US adults who play video games, 2018-20

Who are gamers?

Figure 16: Profile of US gamers, by key demographics, May 2020

Mobile attracts the largest audience

Figure 17: Gaming devices used, May 2020

Gaming is a daily habit

Figure 18: Frequency of gaming and weekly hours, May 2020

Casual gaming is common

Figure 19: Reasons to play video games, May 2020

Puzzle and board games have the largest audience

Figure 20: Types of games played, May 2020

Market Factors

Traditional sports shutdowns open door for esports

Delayed seasons leave hole in sports coverage

Figure 21: Sports leagues regularly viewed, July 2020

Passionate fans gravitate to esports to fill the void

Live events will be hard to come back to

Figure 22: Attitudes toward sports as a result of COVID-19, July 2020

Gamers play more during COVID-19 than they did before

Figure 23: How much gamers are playing video games since COVID-19 outbreak, May 2020

Sports fans take to social media to learn more

**BUY THIS
REPORT NOW**

VISIT: store.mintel.com

CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094

Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |

EMAIL: reports@mintel.com

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

Figure 24: Social media sites used to follow sports, July 2020

Streaming passes cable to be primary video entertainment

Figure 25: Video sources used, May 2020

Financial help coming to buoy esports organizations

Market Opportunities

Invest in the live experience once the dust clears

Make esports more relevant to all audiences, not just young men

Look to new games for emerging markets

Academic institutions can be practice for the big leagues

Mixer shuts down, opening the door for other platforms

Figure 26: Where Mixer viewers also watched gaming content, May 2020

The eSports Landscape – Key Takeaways

Eight games capture the attention of many esports fans

New industries extend influence into esports

Collaborations and exclusives will help organizations stand out

Overview of eSports Games

Fortnite

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

League of Legends

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

Overwatch

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

Dota 2

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

Rocket League

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

Hearthstone

**BUY THIS
REPORT NOW**

VISIT: store.mintel.com

CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094

Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |

EMAIL: reports@mintel.com

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

What it is

Spotlight on competitions

How Non-Gaming Brands Have Worked with eSports

Positive reception to outside sponsorships means opportunity for brands

Figure 27: Popularity of non-gaming brands in gaming, October 2019

Fashion and apparel

Figure 28: @LouisVuitton LoL partnership Twitter post, September 2019

Healthcare

Figure 29: @Cloud9 Kaiser Permanente partnership Twitter post, May 2020

Foodservice

Figure 30: @EAMaddenNFL Pizza Hut Stadium Twitter post, April 2020

Financial services

Figure 31: @MastercardNexus Twitter post, July 2020

Competitive Strategies

Crossing over with traditional sports

Sports organizations extend reach into eSports

Figure 32: @CycloneATH Madden Summer Challenge Twitter post, June 2020

eSports players train like athletes from other sports

Developers are working with broadcasting platforms for deals

Making eSports easier to find

Aggregating different eSports under one umbrella

Teams are becoming their own brands

Bringing eSports to big and small screens

Giving eSports the celebrity treatment

Celebrities get behind eSports

Figure 33: Celebrities and eSports investments

Validating eSports with awards

Incorporating 5G with the future of eSports

The Consumer – Key Takeaways

Competitive gaming attracts one third of adults

A flood of new viewers in 2020

Gameplay creates fans of gaming content

Games connected to US players have the greatest reach

YouTube gets the largest audience, but Twitch and Facebook have the most passionate fans

eSports fans see gaming competitions as a sport

Viewers see players as entertainers more than competitors

Work with eSports players outside of competitions

Digital events should take precedence over live ones

**BUY THIS
REPORT NOW**

VISIT: store.mintel.com

CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094

Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |

EMAIL: reports@mintel.com

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

Key Consumer Trend Drivers Impacting eSports

Technology

Rights

Identity

Figure 34: Mintel Trend Drivers – Technology, Rights, Identity and Pillars

Watching eSports and Gaming Content

eSports has attracted the attention of one third of adults in the past year

Figure 35: Profile of active esports viewers, by key demographics, May 2020

Making and viewing gaming content has gathered an audience in the past year

Figure 36: Recency of watching and broadcasting gaming content, May 2020

eSports can compete with traditional sports because of COVID-19

Figure 37: Recency of watching sports and gaming content, May 2020

eSports viewers branch outside of competitive gaming

Figure 38: Watching sports and gaming content, all vs active esports viewers, May 2020

eSports in 2020

Surge of new viewers in 2020 signals potential for future growth

Figure 39: eSports viewing in 2020 compared to previous years, May 2020

Twitch users have deepened engagement, but Facebook and ESPN are bringing in new audiences

Figure 40: eSports viewing in 2020 compared to previous years, by type of platform used, May 2020

eSports are here to stay

Figure 41: Perceptions of esports as a fad, May 2020

In their words: esports in the future

Why People Watch and Don't Watch eSports

Playing games often leads to gaming content consumption

Figure 42: Reasons to watch video game content, May 2020

Multicultural audiences seek skill, community in gaming content

Figure 43: Reasons to watch video game content – Select items, by race and Hispanic origin, May 2020

Boredom in gaming content creates disinterest

Figure 44: Reasons not to watch video game content, May 2020

What Games are Watched

Viewing interests spread across titles and genres

Figure 45: Number of games watched by esports viewers, May 2020

Sports games reach the largest share of esports viewers

Figure 46: Gaming genres watched, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Fortnite reigns on top in the US

Figure 47: Video games watched, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Older games reach an older audience, while newer games bring in younger adults

Figure 48: Video games watched, by generation, May 2020

**BUY THIS
REPORT NOW**

VISIT: store.mintel.com

CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094

Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |

EMAIL: reports@mintel.com

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

Platforms to Watch eSports

Most esports viewers don't depend on one viewing location

Figure 49: Number of sources used to watch esports, May 2020

Three quarters of esports viewers go to YouTube

Figure 50: Websites used to watch esports, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

ESPN touts sports brand to rule TV

Figure 51: TV channels used to watch esports, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Age draws a line between YouTube and ESPN

Figure 52: Platforms used to watch esports, by age, May 2020

Strategy games prop up Twitch and Facebook

Figure 53: Platforms used to watch esports, by video games watched, May 2020

Perceptions of eSports

Most adults see esports as confusing and insulting to sports...

Figure 54: Correspondence Analysis – Principal map – Perception of sports from general population, May 2020

Figure 55: Perception of sports from general population, May 2020

...while gaming content viewers see the innovative and diverse appeal of esports

Figure 56: Correspondence Analysis – Principal map – Perceptions of sports from gaming content viewers, May 2020

Figure 57: Perceptions of esports, all adults vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Perceptions of eSports Players

Different perceptions of esports and players present challenges and opportunities

Figure 58: Perceptions of esports and esports players, May 2020

In their own words: lack of physicality for esports players

eSports viewers see themselves in the competition

Figure 59: Professional video game aspirations, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Team-based and solo gameplay have similar appeal

Figure 60: Team vs individual game viewing, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Interacting with eSports Players

The appeal of eSports players extends beyond the competition

Figure 61: Interacting with esports players, May 2020

Twitch, Facebook viewers connect with athletes

Figure 62: Interacting with esports players, by platforms used to watch gaming content, May 2020

The Appeal of Live eSports

Online viewing is preferred over the live experience

Figure 63: Watching gaming online and in-person, all gaming content viewers vs active esports viewers, May 2020

Live esports viewing depends on the game people watch

Figure 64: Attending live esports events, by type of game watched, May 2020

Appendix – Data Sources and Abbreviations

BUY THIS
REPORT NOW

VISIT: store.mintel.com

CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094

Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |

EMAIL: reports@mintel.com

eSports: Incl Impact of COVID-19 - US - August 2020

Report Price: £3254.83 | \$4395.00 | €3662.99

The above prices are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

Data sources

Sales data

Consumer survey data

Consumer qualitative research

Abbreviations and terms

Abbreviations

Terms

Appendix – The Market

Figure 65: Payroll Protection Program relief in esports, July 2020

Appendix – Mintel Trend Drivers

Figure 66: Mintel Trend Drivers and Pillars

**BUY THIS
REPORT NOW**

VISIT: store.mintel.com

CALL: EMEA +44 (0) 20 7606 4533 | Brazil 0800 095 9094

Americas +1 (312) 943 5250 | China +86 (21) 6032 7300

APAC +61 (0) 2 8284 8100 |

EMAIL: reports@mintel.com