

# eSports - US - June 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and esports
- How brands can partner with esports organizations, teams and players to reach fans
- What the balance of online and in-person esports events is going to look like
- Which games/genres have succeeded in a tumultuous year and which have stumbled

The US esports audience is not only growing, but also welcoming any outside support from brands and sponsorships that can help deliver more video game content. One third of adults have watched esports within the past year, and three quarters of those esports viewers support brands that sponsor esports.

Despite ongoing investments and relatively uninterrupted online competitions, the COVID-19 pandemic still hindered esports. Sponsorships were paused while in-person events were cancelled. Still, the increased importance of video games within mainstream pop culture during the pandemic bolstered competitive gaming through this rough period.

The lack of in-person events continues to threaten esports growth in the US, as many locations dedicated to esports competitions have yet to reopen. Construction was halted on dedicated stadiums and hesitation to attend in-person events linger even with a vaccine. Three quarters of esports fans are looking forward to the day where they can attend an esports event in person, but that day may not come until 2022 or later.

The focus on digital broadcasts and live streamed events creates a path for non-gaming brands to add to the esports landscape. There are plenty of opportunities to partner with esports organizations, teams and players in and outside of competitions to reach dedicated fans that see esports more as a form of entertainment than a high-stakes competition.



"In-person events might face an uphill battle, but there are still plenty of opportunities for brands to work with esports organizations, teams and players to connect to an excited fanbase."

- John Poelking, Senior Gaming Analyst

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