

Esports – US – 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Trends in the esports and gaming industries, and how to leverage these in marketing
- Demographics of gamers who engage with esports
- What factors are negatively impacting gamers' engagement with esports
- Which game genres players are interested in, and entry points to esports viewership
- What marketing and brand sponsorships esports viewers notice
- Gamers' attitudes toward esports including gender-related issues and spending

52% of gamers do not understand the appeal of watching esports and the most significant barrier to watching seems to be a lack of interest in the games being played. Streamers can make games more entertaining by injecting their personalities into the activities, but esports players must often make due with just their skill, and a little help from the commentators. Some of the most popular esports games are more than a decade old, and new games are coming out all the time, which makes maintaining interest a constant struggle – especially as sponsorships and investments into the esports industry begin to waver.

In November 2022, an \$8bn Ponzie scheme originating from the head of cryptocurrency and NFT exchange FTX, rocked the financial world. The crypto exchange was also a major backer of esports; their \$210m deal with TSM in 2021 set a new record in esports investments. However, in the wake of scandal, money and deals have dried up as fast as the supposed popularity of crypto and NFTs in gaming. FTX isn't alone in causing esports hardships, the industry seems to be struggling from many factors, but may ultimately be returning to pre-pandemic levels as others have.

51% of male gamers aged 18-34 have watched esports in the last six months, so it's not all bad news for the industry. The young core demographic is still



“Esports has become a popular form of entertainment and an effective marketing tool, but it has also attracted professional players who take the game seriously. As a result, it is no longer just fun and games, but rather a legitimate sport that must be managed with the same level of respect and professionalism as any other competitive league.”

– **Brian Benway, Senior Analyst – Gaming and Technology**

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engaged. Many young women also enjoy watching esports, and more often than men watch because they either were or wanted to be a competitive player. Toxicity has long been an issue in competitive gaming, if 2023 can bring a positive change, hopefully the need for greater viewership starts with combating toxicity on an off the competitive stage.



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