Eventbrite®

The eSports Effect:

Gamers and the Influence of Live Events

Introduction

The gaming industry is seeing a cultural shift. Instead of playing or watching eSports at home—alone or in small groups—fans are seeking more opportunities to come together in person by the thousands to sharpen their skills and watch their favorite players and teams compete live. More than 48 million gamers in the U.S. and Western Europe watch or participate in eSports, and over a quarter of these participants are attending live events.[1] And these record-breaking numbers continue to skyrocket year over year.

Recognizing this incredible growth and high demand for live gaming tournaments, Eventbrite conducted a survey of gamers worldwide to better understand this phenomenon. We uncovered valuable information about what drives gamers to attend these events in person, versus simply streaming the competitions online; how attending live eSports events affects purchasing behavior, both at and following an event; and how developers, major publishers, and other event organizers can further capitalize on this trend to deliver greater value to sponsors and to gamers who seek out great live-action experiences.

The following report is a compilation of the findings from an Eventbrite survey completed by more than 1500 attendees of live eSports tournaments and competitions ticketed globally on Eventbrite from 2013-2014. The results reveal new and interesting insights about gamers, the eSports industry, and more.

[1] Source: Newzoo: Sizing & Profiling eSports' Popularity Report, April 2014.
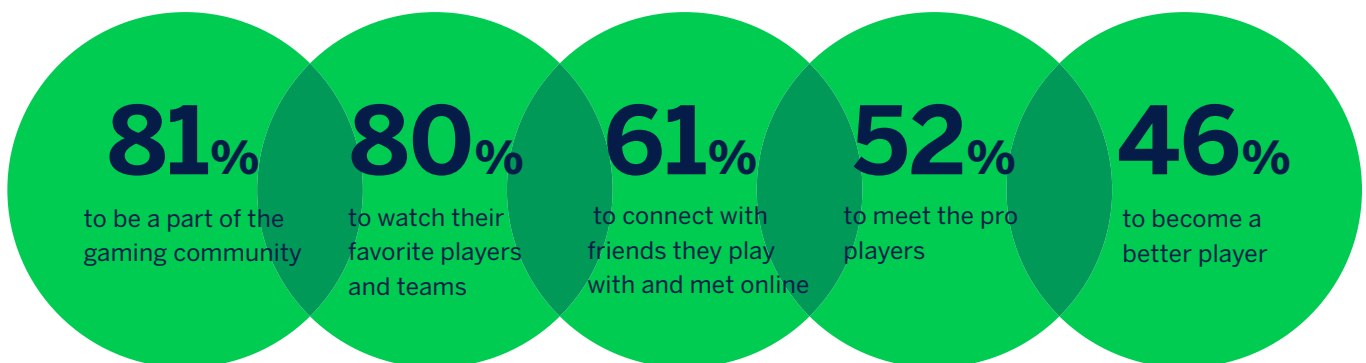
Live events are all about the community and atmosphere

Forty-one percent of respondents who attend eSports events reported having no personal interest in playing in a tournament themselves. So, why do they go? Eighty-one percent of gamers attend to be a part of the gaming community. They also seek to make connections: 61% say they go to live events and tournaments to connect with friends they've met and play with online, and 41% said they attend to forge new relationships. Sixty-five percent of gamers also said attending live eSports tournaments gives them something to talk about with their friends, whether they attend with them or not.

Gamers also enjoy simply being a part of the atmosphere. Sixty-six percent say that attending a live eSports event gives them another way to experience games, with many commenting that the big sights, sounds, screens, and stage are all compelling reasons to see it live. They also find the competitive excitement of the fans to be contagious.

In addition, many gamers go to meet the pro players (52%), learn how to become better players (46%), and simply enjoy watching the competition firsthand (80%). One other unique part of the atmosphere is the cosplay: 13% of participants indicate that they dress in cosplay for the event, and even more said they attend simply to see others in costume play out the characters in their favorite games.

Why gamers attend live

81% to be a part of the gaming community

80% to watch their favorite players and teams

61% to connect with friends they play with and met online

52% to meet the pro players

46% to become a better player

"Hear the announcements first!"

"I love watching online, but being there is more exciting."

"For the same reason someone would attend an NFL game, I love watching the game played at the highest level."
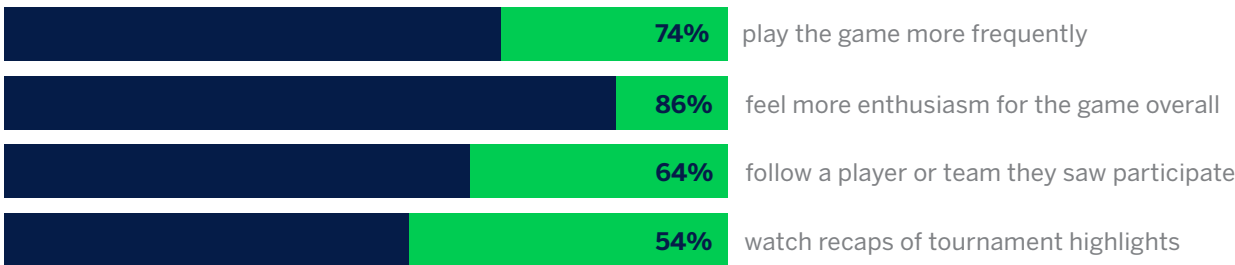
eSports event goers spend and play more

Live eSports events are a huge driver for participants to both play and purchase more. Forty-seven percent say that after attending an eSports event live, they are more likely to purchase new content related to the game played, and 78% of all event participants indicate that they're likely to spend money on in-game content within a week of attending an event. One reason for the uptick in in-game purchases? Seventy-four percent of gamers who attend an eSports event play more frequently online after watching in person.
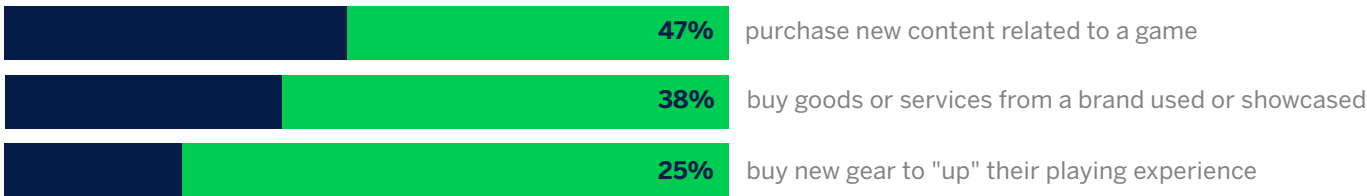
The willingness to spend doesn't only apply to the games played—it applies to event sponsors too. Thirty-five percent of those surveyed indicate that attending a live eSports event gives them exposure to new brands and equipment they're excited about. Thirty-eight percent also said they are likely to purchase products and services they saw being used or showcased at an eSports tournament. Gamers overall are receptive to products at tournaments, a boon for event organizers looking to capture more revenue and return through the incorporation of more brands and partners into their live gaming experiences.

After going to an eSports event, gamers are increasingly likely to

Be even more avid fans

74%	play the game more frequently
86%	feel more enthusiasm for the game overall
64%	follow a player or team they saw participate
54%	watch recaps of tournament highlights

Buy more stuff

47%	purchase new content related to a game
38%	buy goods or services from a brand used or showcased
25%	buy new gear to "up" their playing experience

30% play even more because they bought new content

41% go to buy exclusive gear that they can't get anywhere else

Gamers want more events, more often, and in more places

Live eSports event participants love to attend as many gaming events as possible and are willing to travel far and wide and attend other types of gaming events and conventions in order to get their fix. Forty percent of respondents would like to see more live eSports events outside major cities, and an impressive 38% of respondents were even willing to travel to another country or continent for an eSports tournament.
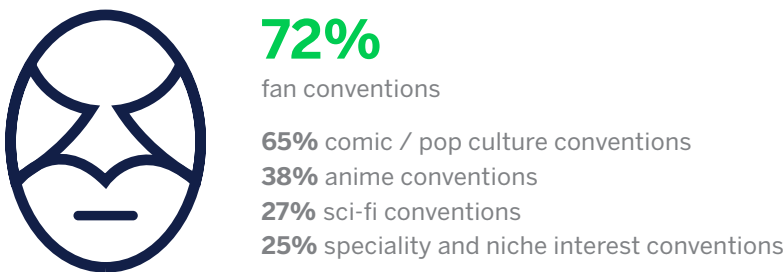
The large events and tournaments aren't the only ones in demand. Fifty-four percent of respondents said they also attend LAN parties and local area meetups. Publishers and developers can also count on gamers who attend live eSports events to be the ones who go to launch parties (35%) as well as celebrity appearances and signings (28%) In general, they are highly engaged in gaming events across the spectrum, with an average of 30% attending three or more events in a given year.
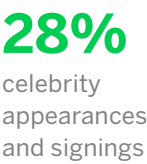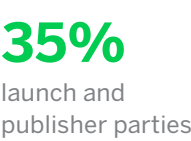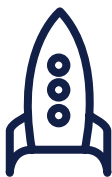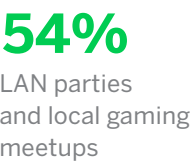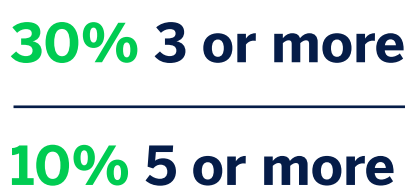
Access to this audience, however, isn't limited to events dedicated solely to gaming. Gamers also love a good con: 72% said they attend fandom events, with the most popular besides gaming conventions like PAX Prime being comic (65%), anime (38%), sci-fi (27%), and specialty/niche interest (25%) cons. That's music to the ears of convention directors and large event production companies. And while many cons may already offer unique gaming halls and experiences for gamers, incorporating live-action game play and even pro-level competition just might be one other way to further enhance and engage fans—and bring in more revenue.

67% want more events, more often

40% want live events outside major cities

38% will travel to another country or continent

eSports competitions aren't all they attend

72% fan conventions

65% comic / pop culture conventions
38% anime conventions
27% sci-fi conventions
25% speciality and niche interest conventions

54% LAN parties and local gaming meetups

35% launch and publisher parties

28% celebrity appearances and signings

Gaming events attended per year

30% 3 or more

10% 5 or more

Making live eSports events more impactful

Across all survey responses, there were some clear trends of what gamers want more of from eSports event organizers. One was the desire for more exclusive opportunities that a gamer could only experience at the live event, or ways to have a more VIP experience. For example, 43% of attendees want ticketed access to pro-player team meet and greets. Other suggestions from respondents included adding reserved seating to guarantee them the opportunity to sit up close, next to the action.
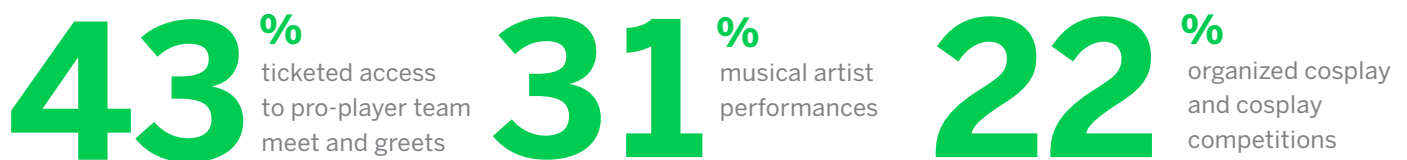
Gamers are also looking for a broader variety of things to play and do at the actual event. Several respondents requested the presence of games everyone can play, or a kind of mini-tournament within the larger tournament.

Many gamers also want more interactive activities built around the event, rather than simply watching. Thirty-one percent expressed a desire for musical artist performances, for instance, and 22% would like to see organized cosplay and cosplay competitions. Respondents also suggested raffles, trivia competitions, or panels with the players and other personalities.

For many attendees, sessions on how to improve their game, such as training for special in-game content, would make an eSports event really stand out. These demos are one way to encourage the audience to become more invested in the game, while also promoting the purchase of your own content.

Other gamer requests to take your event up a notch? Better and cheaper food, free water and beer, more comfortable seats, more SWAG, cleaner toilets (mentioned several times!), and fixing technical difficulties with streaming.

What gamers want

43% ticketed access to pro-player team meet and greets

31% musical artist performances

22% organized cosplay and cosplay competitions

"Games everyone can participate in."

"Give us something to do between matches without losing our seats."

"Offer a small LAN area where people can play while watching the tournament."

What they are willing to pay per ticket to attend

41% willing to pay up to **49** $ €

18% willing to pay up to **99** $ €

19% willing to pay up to **200** $ €

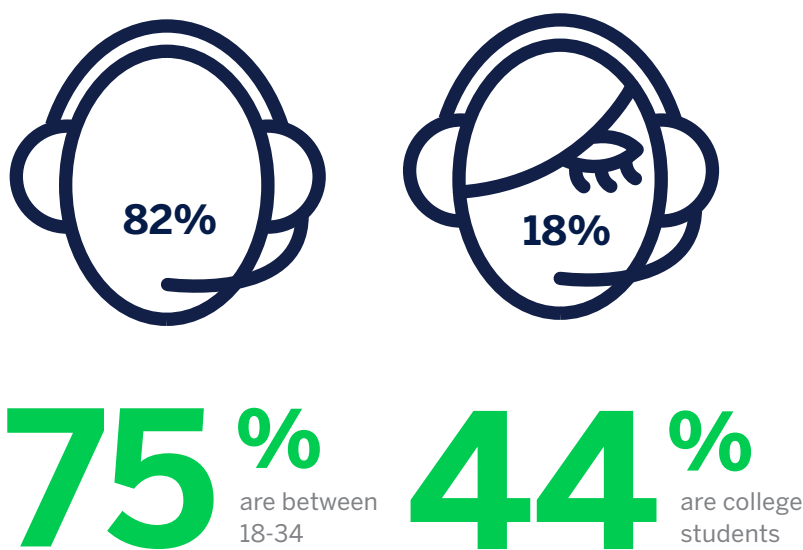# The live eSports event gamer

Unsurprisingly, most eSports event attendees are male (82%) and nearly half of attendees worldwide are college students. These live event-goers are also already highly invested in gaming: two-thirds (67%) game for more than three hours a day, and more than one-third (38%) watch over ten hours of game play each week.

There's a wide variety of genre preferences of games played by attendees, but of respondents who self-selected as "hardcore gamers," the most prominent genre selections were MOBAs, MMORPGs, and first-person shooter games.
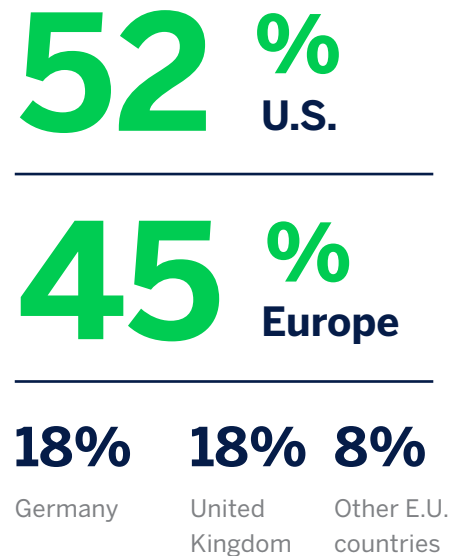
In addition to enjoying a variety of gaming genres, eSports event attendees also enjoy traditional sports (a question many in the industry have asked). Over half (54%) indicate that they also watch traditional sports, and, of those, 10% watch an average of ten or more hours of traditional sports per week.

Of those polled, 54% are from the U.S. and 45% are based in Europe. The rest reside across Canada, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific regions.

Who they are

82%

18%

75% are between 18-34

44% are college students

Where they live

52% U.S.

45% Europe

18% Germany

18% United Kingdom

8% Other E.U. countries

Most popular majors

34% computer science

8% business mgnt. & acounting

11% engineering

13% sciences & medicine

How much they **play** vs. watch

67%
play games 3 or more hours per day

30%
play games 5 or more hours per day

38%
watch game play 10 or more hours per week

54%
say they also watch traditional sports

What games they play

Game Genre	Casual gamer	Avid gamer	Hardcore gamer
MOBAs	20%	26%	35%
MMORPGs	19%	24%	23%
Role-playing	33%	28%	14%
Action/Adventure	41%	26%	8%
Real-time Strategy	38%	23%	12%
First-person Shooter	33%	26%	19%
Fighting	30%	10%	4%
Racing	28%	7%	2%
Sport	19%	4%	2%
Collectible Cards	39%	21%	10%
Casual	28%	5%	1%
Simulation	34%	16%	8%
Puzzle	36%	10%	2%

Casual gamer
plays an hour a day or less
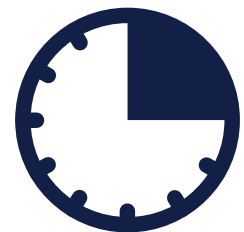
Avid gamer
plays 2-3 hours a day
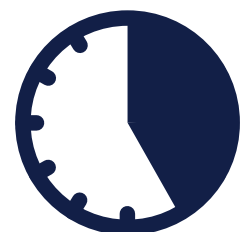
Hardcore gamer
plays 4-5 hours a day or more

Conclusion

Just as fans of traditional sports wouldn't miss the big game, and music fans anticipate their favorite artist's next tour, eSports fans go to live events to be a part of a community and take part in a thrilling, singular experience where they can see the best of the best in action. These tournaments and conventions are a unique social experience where gamers have the chance to meet and interact with other people who share their interests, and forge new friendships.

This passion and sense of exclusivity translates into real revenue. These live events effectively market games while also driving incremental purchases in person or in-game the next time attendees play. Gamers have shown that they spend more money and become even more avid fans after attending a live event. This is good news for sponsors of live events as well, because gamers are more likely to buy items featured at the event, both during and after attending. And with gamers clamoring for more and more events, this mutually beneficial relationship leads to greater revenue potential for the industry as a whole.

Fans are actively seeking the level of inspiration, engagement, and community that live events bring—they are looking for an experience that will give them something to talk about with their friends, both online and offline. If you are a current eSports event organizer, you know the demand for your events is greater than ever. If you're a developer or publisher not in the event business yet, eSports is a great opportunity to reach fans and inspire greater connection to your games. Fan convention directors have a real opportunity as well to continue growing their events and to incorporate more immersive and competitive gaming experiences into their events in order to attract more gamers and overall attendance.

About Eventbrite

Eventbrite enables people all over the world to plan, promote, and sell out events of all kinds. Since 2006, the platform has processed over 200 million tickets and registrations worldwide, totaling more than $3 billion in gross ticket sales. In 2014 alone, the company processed $1.5 billion in gross ticket sales for attendees in 187 countries. The online event ticketing service makes it easy for everyone to discover events, and to share the events they are attending with the people they know. In this way, Eventbrite brings communities together by encouraging people to connect through live experiences. Learn more at www.eventbrite.com.

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