Welcome to Spotlight. I’m Adam Navis. And I’m Liz Waid. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. Sangam Stadium is a huge sports arena in South Korea. It can hold almost 70,000 people to watch games. In 2002, FIFA World Cup games were played here. Tens of thousands of people crowded into Sangam Stadium to watch. Millions of people watched the games live on television. In October of 2014, the Sangam Stadium was full again. This time, millions of people were watching the game live on the internet. A huge computer screen showed people in the stadium what was happening. But the screen did not show people throwing or kicking balls. Instead, the huge screen showed colourful heroes attacking strange creatures. Two teams of young men sat in front of computers. They were playing the popular computer game League of Legends. The two teams were competing for a one million dollar prize! The event was the 2014 World Championship of League of Legends. This event is part of the growing world of esports. Today’s Spotlight is on esports. The “e” in esports stands for electronic. Instead of playing physical games, people play games on a computer. Most of these games are played on the internet. And just like physical sports, other people watch the games. In 2013, more than 71 million people watched professional esports. One popular way to watch esports is on the website Twitch. In 2013, people watched 12 billion minutes of esports on Twitch! South Korea is the global center for professional esports. In South Korea, professional esport teams earn money playing computer games. Millions of people watch these games on television or the internet. Sports arenas are often filled with cheering fans. And many of the players become as famous as actors or musicians. People love esports for the same reasons that people love other sports. The competition is fun. The play is exciting to watch. The players are highly skilled. However, people like esports for other reasons too. Esports is creative. The video games create new, exciting worlds. In the games, people can do things that they cannot do in normal life. Players use complex plans to win the games. They must work together as a team. Just like in physical sports, esport teams in South Korea prepare for the games by training. Many of the teams live together. They have paid trainers. The teams train for 12 hours every day, or sometimes more! They can get injuries in their arms or hands, just like with physical sports. Professional esport players are not the only people who spend many hours playing computer games. In South Korea, places called PC Bangs are very popular. The PC Bangs are all about playing computer games. They usually have one big room filled with many computers. There are no windows. People pay to play the games. They can also buy energy drinks and food. Young people spend many hours there. News reporter Matt Shea travelled to Seoul, South Korea to make a documentary film about esports. He said, “There is a PC Bang on every street corner. This is one reason that Korea is the main global force in esports.” Many people are concerned about the problems that can come with esports. One main problem is technology addiction. Young people especially can play so many games that they cannot stop. Some experts estimate that half of South Korean children have problems with using computers and the internet too much. Because of this problem, the South Korean government made a special Shutdown Law in 2011. This law made rules for children using the internet. Children under 16 were not permitted to use the internet between midnight and six in the morning. Later, the government changed this law. Today, parents are responsible for setting rules for their own children. Also, the government established technology addiction treatment centres all over the country. These centres treat millions of people every year. One of the biggest problems in esports is performance-enhancing drugs. Many players are serious about winning games. These players often take drugs to improve their performance. Some kinds of drugs help the brain to concentrate. Others can help calm a person. Still other drugs give a person extra energy. Using drugs can be very dangerous. Bjoern Franzen worked in the esport business for many years. In 2014, he wrote in his blog, “Using drugs in esports is one of the industry’s secrets. It is a natural thing for some League of Legends players to take three different kinds of drugs before a game. They will even do this to extend their training for a few extra hours.” As esport becomes more popular, people have a greater interest in fixing this problem. The Electronic Sports League, or ESL, is the world’s largest esports organization. In July of 2015, the ESL announced new rules. It is developing official rules against performance enhancing drugs. Another problem is player exploitation. At times, managers or trainers have used their players unfairly for money. They force the players to practice many hours at a time. They only pay the players small amounts of money while they prepare for games. Some have even forced players to cheat in games. In the most famous case, a star player named Promise was caught cheating. He felt great shame. So he wrote a note, and jumped off a very high building. He wanted to die, but he survived. This shocking event helped people to see the corruption in the esport industry. After that, many more people tried to change it. Although there are problems, esports continue to become more popular. Rahul Sood is a businessman with the internet website Unikrn. Unikrn shows esport games. Sood believes strongly that esport is going to get bigger and bigger. He says that it is spreading all over the world. Sood told the BBC, “People are growing up on this sport. They start at a very young age. It’s everywhere. It’s a global thing.” Do you play esports? What is your favorite game? Tell us what you think. You can leave a comment on our website. Or email us at radio@radioenglish.net. You can also comment on Facebook at Facebook.com/spotlightradio. The writer of this program was Jen Hawkins. The producer was Michio Ozaki. The voices you heard were from the United States and the United Kingdom. All quotes were adapted for this program and voiced by Spotlight. You can listen to this program again, and read it, on the internet at www.radioenglish.net. This program is called, ‘The Sport of Video Games’. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye.