**Definition**

Electronic sports — also known as esports — is the practice of playing video games in a competitive environment. Similar to sports, esports range across a variety of games and involve top level players battling it out for major cash prizes and to be crowned best in the world.

In the past decade, esports has grown to become a booming industry with a collective worth of over 100 billion dollars worldwide. Local and international events have also attracted millions of viewers, even surpassing online viewings of NBA streams at major events. With esports slowly becoming more streamlined, more mainstream companies and organisations have begun to capitalise onto the success of esports to further their growth (Booming eSports Industry to Hit $138B 2018, 2018, July 31).

With various teams competing against each other from across the globe, one such country isolates itself from the rest, this being Australia. Australia stands out from the rest of the competition, as it is a well-known country with almost no global representation through players or events (Murray, 2020). It is considered ‘isolated’ from the rest of the world and as such, is looked down or ignored as being a contributor to the community (Gibbs, 2018). Not only is Australia missing out on a growing industry that could expand our country’s social and economic welfare, they are missing out on many more benefits. Esports offers a chance for those who are unable to participate in regular sports the opportunity to play and compete in similar environments. This exposure allows players to feel part of a social community in which they feel welcome and familiar with as well as improving fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

**Australia’s Lack of Player Representation**

Almost no players in large professional teams are of Australian background. Top level teams are sponsored by organisations, with the most well-known organisations residing in Korea and North America. This makes it harder for Australians to make it ‘big’ and become well known/become sponsored by these international companies.

So how exactly does one become sponsored by these companies if they reside across the globe? Well, one way that a player can become sponsored is through talent searching.

Talent searching is where a player will perform well in their game and will typically have a higher skill rating compared to the rest of the local player base, making them stand out (Murray, 2020). However, due to Australia’s population compared to that of Korea and North America, it is very small meaning that there are less players in each region making it much more difficult to improve as a player.

There is also a lack of variety in competition because of such a small player base which results in players playing the same people constantly and becoming stuck at a skill wall making it harder to improve and put themselves out internationally. It also creates a large skill gap between that of a domestic player and international player as internationals live in a larger populated region and are thus, better (Murray, 2020).

An alternative that was made to pass this wall is that local talents began to play on international servers to make themselves noticeable to the international player base. This was difficult to maintain however, as Australia’s ping latency is extremely high, meaning that players experience lag and packet loss frequently and even more so when playing on international servers (more on this later).

In terms of Australia’s organisations, there is too much of a split for such a small population. Organisations are constantly scattered as there are too many independent events and companies in each esport with most game events not being officially sponsored by each game’s corresponding companies. This makes it even harder for international organisations to scout talent properly and makes Australia’s esports seem extremely unorganised (Gibbs, 2018).

**Australia’s Lack of International Events**

Large events play a key role in a country’s esports presence, as it brings both competitors and spectators to the country to experience their competitive culture. Australia is extremely lacking in this area as there are very few major events that occur and is falling significantly far behind other countries such as America who have multiple major events each month (Manisier, 2019).

Some people may argue that Australia’s lack of events is due to its isolation and the cost of travel to get there. However, this is not the case as major events such as IEM, hosted in Sydney each year brings thousands of spectators each year which fill out Olympic stadiums, proving that it is possible for Australia to host big events (Manisier, 2019).

Smaller Australian majors on the other hand almost never receive international entrants, which results in both less attendance overall and credibility within each esport’s respective scenes. I believe, that if Australia wants to capitalise onto the success of esports, things need to change.

**Australia’s Internet Problem**

As stated earlier, one way a player can be recognised by a big organisation and/or do well internationally is through international sponsorship. One way that was established was through playing on international servers which results in players experiencing lag and various other internet issues which are infamously common in Australia (Murray, 2020).

So, what exactly is lag and how can it help to benefit Australia’s internet issues and help us perform and become more internationally noticed? Lag is a very noticeable input or delay within a video game. This is due to Australia’s terrible and inconsistent internet layout and current plans in motion.

In fact, Australia’s internet is so inconsistent that it often forces players to pay for internet cafes or attend interstate offline tournaments which can be expensive for organisations to organise. It also puts players at a disadvantage as they may not be using the same equipment that they are used to at home where they play the game more regularly.

**Solving Australia’s Internet for the Players**

Currently, Australia’s internet works through copper wiring which cover the majority of the country. However, this type of internet is extremely outdated making Australia fall behind from the rest of the technological world putting it at 62nd in the world in terms of internet speed (Australia's Internet Speeds Are Getting Faster, Slower Than Everyone Else, 2020).

Various solutions currently do exist, such as NBN, which have attempted to bring Australia’s internet to higher and more modern speeds. One problem with NBN is that it uses the existing copper network which severely limit the maximum speeds that could be achieved (NBN Fibre to the Node: Everything you need to know, 2018). If future plans for esports were to be sustainable for the future, this method of improving the internet would not be sufficient.

Fibre optic, the same system which South Korea use for their internet would also be considered a good solution. Fibre optic consists of tubes of light which act as the network, it is extremely fast as data is carried at light speed (T A, 2017). However, due to Australia’s large land size, it would extremely costly and difficult to cover the whole country in this technology.

The proposed solution however is something a little more unique and more sustainable for the future. Starlink satellites are a project created by Space X to provide global internet coverage at speeds never seen before (Nash, 2020). These satellites were to be able to be connected to transceivers located in each person’s house. My proposal is to recycle existing copper wiring located across Australia in order to mass produce these transceivers.

This method is cheap and utilises existing technology and would be readily available nationwide. It would also allow for faster speeds which stand as the main overlaying factor in Australian esports and would let players bridge the skill gap between Australia and other countries, allowing them to perform better internationally.

**Solving Australia’s Lack of Events and Scattered Data**

With internet having its solutions, there still stands the weakness of Australia’s events and difficulty for organisations to find data. These two problems could be solved using a single solution, this being that of a large collective data website. This would allow for a unionisation between all esports organisations in Australia for game results to be uploaded to and be supported by the AIS (Australian Institute of Sport). It would be available for both mobile and desktop and would serve as a centralised database for every single esport and display the data easily for competitive analysis.

Australia is lacking in this area of competitive display as it is very hard to identify individual players from an international standpoint. It also allows for international players to take notice and possible interest in the scene which would allow for more major events to be hosted in Australia and for the country be taken more seriously.

Existing databases such as [ausmash](http://ausmash.com.au/) which serve as the ‘*Smash Bros.’* community database in Australia have proven to be extremely effective when deployed correctly and will be easily integrated into the centralised database using external calls so that community can continue using both.

This database would allow for all results from events to be viewed easily and would make Australia seem stronger as an esports driven country internationally. Gaming profiles for professional players could also be made to allow for statistic displays and easier talent searching for organisations within the country.

**Conclusion and What’s to Come**

To start preparing for the fixing of Australia’s internet, Australia should take steps into removing any unused copper wiring and engineering ways to mass produce the transceivers that will be used with the Starlink satellites. It is also recommended that the AIS begins to unify and start forming a development team for creation of the database as well as create proper esports government ruling to allow Australia to become a serious esports country.

I hope you have enjoyed reading my report on the future of Australia’s esports. If we were to use one or both of these proposed solutions, Australia’s esports future could be better capitalised on with many bright opportunities to come.

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