

TIME TO PLAY

Esports is a big deal on and off campus.
How can higher ed get in the game?



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THE GAME — AND GAMERS — ARE CHANGING

Hard to believe it, but we've been gaming for a really long time. The first home version of *Pong* was available in 1973, before the official end of the Vietnam War. From those humble beginnings, a massive industry has emerged. Best estimates now say gaming is worth over \$68.5B a year, growing to \$196B by 2022¹.

Along the way, both the technology and community have evolved. The rise of esports is taking gaming to a new level, transforming gaming from an immersive personal experience into a competitive public event. Whether they watch in real life or via popular esports gaming platforms like Twitch, it's estimated over 557 million people will participate in esports this year as players, spectators, or both². This means more viewers than the NBA (63M) and maybe the NFL in the near future (141M)³.

As gaming moved from arcades to arena, it's changed along the way. Some of these changes are critical to driving the enthusiasm you're seeing today for esports and gaming in general. And they're also why you should be invested bringing an esports program to campus.

¹ The Global Games Market Will Generate \$152.1 Billion in 2019 as the U.S. Overtakes China as the Biggest Market
² The Incredible Growth of ESports in 2019
³ With Viewership and Revenue Booming, Esports Set to Compete with Traditional Sports

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We are Lenovo Legion



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A NEW KIND OF PLAY

Esports is a uniquely co-competitive genre

Before the rise of online multiplayer gaming, video gaming was generally a solitary experience for most. The LAN party — where gamers dragged their PCs to a central location and played across a local network — changed that. The rise of broadband meant multiplayer gaming could happen anywhere, anytime.

This means more people playing, and an easier ability to play in teams, but the most popular esports titles are cooperatively competitive. Winning might be the ultimate goal, but the game is the thing. Players show off, trade moves, and flex digital muscles with close friends and complete strangers.

Esports taps into a culture looking for personalization

Today's gamers are obsessed with hyper customization, personalizing everything from the shape of their weapon to the color of their avatar's socks. Sometimes customizations get unlocked by achievement or an in-game purchase, thereby becoming status symbols in and out of the game.

These customizations allow players to fully express their individuality inside the game while maintaining intensely engaging experiences. It's made esports gaming more diverse and inclusive, which is especially important for drawing students out of their apartments and dorm rooms and into a collective campus experience.



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Esports is community- and culture-driven

Both the collaborative nature and increasing diversity of the esports world drive an amazing culture that is global and increasingly multigenerational. As with traditional athletics and their fans, esports gamers and followers have their own vocabulary and even favorite fashion brands.

Popular sites like Twitch, in addition to social media channels, keep players and fans engaged even when they are away from the game. And for institutions of higher education, this means that in addition to studies, socializing, and everything else, students (and even staff) have a new kind of big game on their mind.





The next big thing

So how does higher education get into the game? How can you harness esports enthusiasm to drive school spirit, highlight new skills, and attract a new generation of star student athletes?

Your students are already deep into esports, and it's about a lot more than just playing. They're talking about the games, sharing and streaming about games, adopting fashion trends, and spending lots of money. Some of them are even getting rich, with salaries that can match well-paid professional athletes, all without breaking (much of) a sweat.

But it's not just students — some institutions are getting in on the game too. Whether it's informal intramural events or head-to-head competitions with other colleges and universities, esports has arrived on campus. According to the National Association of College Esports (NACE), official varsity esports programs are big and getting bigger across the country.



Over 115 colleges and universities offering scholarships⁴



17,899 active players at tournaments⁵



Over \$157 million total in prize money⁶

It is expected that by 2021, viewership for esports will exceed 84 million viewers in the United States⁷. The 2019 NCAA football championship between Alabama and Clemson earned 27 million views⁸, but the growth trends for esports are much sharper.

⁴ NACE
⁵ Esports Earnings
⁶ Esports Earnings
⁷ With Viewership and Revenue Booming, Esports Set to Compete with Traditional Sports
⁸ 2019 CFP title game was most-watched Alabama-Clemson matchup



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Build it and they will game

An official esports program, whether you're sponsoring a team or hosting a tournament, can have a huge impact on the student community.

- Encourages student socialization and school spirit, drawing diverse students together to participate in a shared celebration of gaming achievement, whether they're together in an arena or streaming and sharing online
- Brings attention to popular technology degree programs, including game design
- Serves as a focal point for research on everything from player kinesiology and psychology to game design and other technology studies
- Helps attract and retain the next generation of star athletes and students

NACE has over 130 member institutions⁹ with official varsity esports teams, and the number keeps growing. Whether they're a cutting-edge leader like NYIT and their dedicated Wisser Arena¹⁰, or schools repurposing space in libraries or dorms, schools are creating both the physical and digital infrastructure required for a winning esports program.

These spaces can serve as gathering spots for esports enthusiasts to watch teams compete or do their own gaming in the hours between practice and sanctioned event. Researchers can also use the space to measure things like heart rates, ergonomics, and reflexes. It's an investment not just in technology, but campus research, culture, and spirit as well.

⁹ NACE

¹⁰ NYIT unveils esports arena

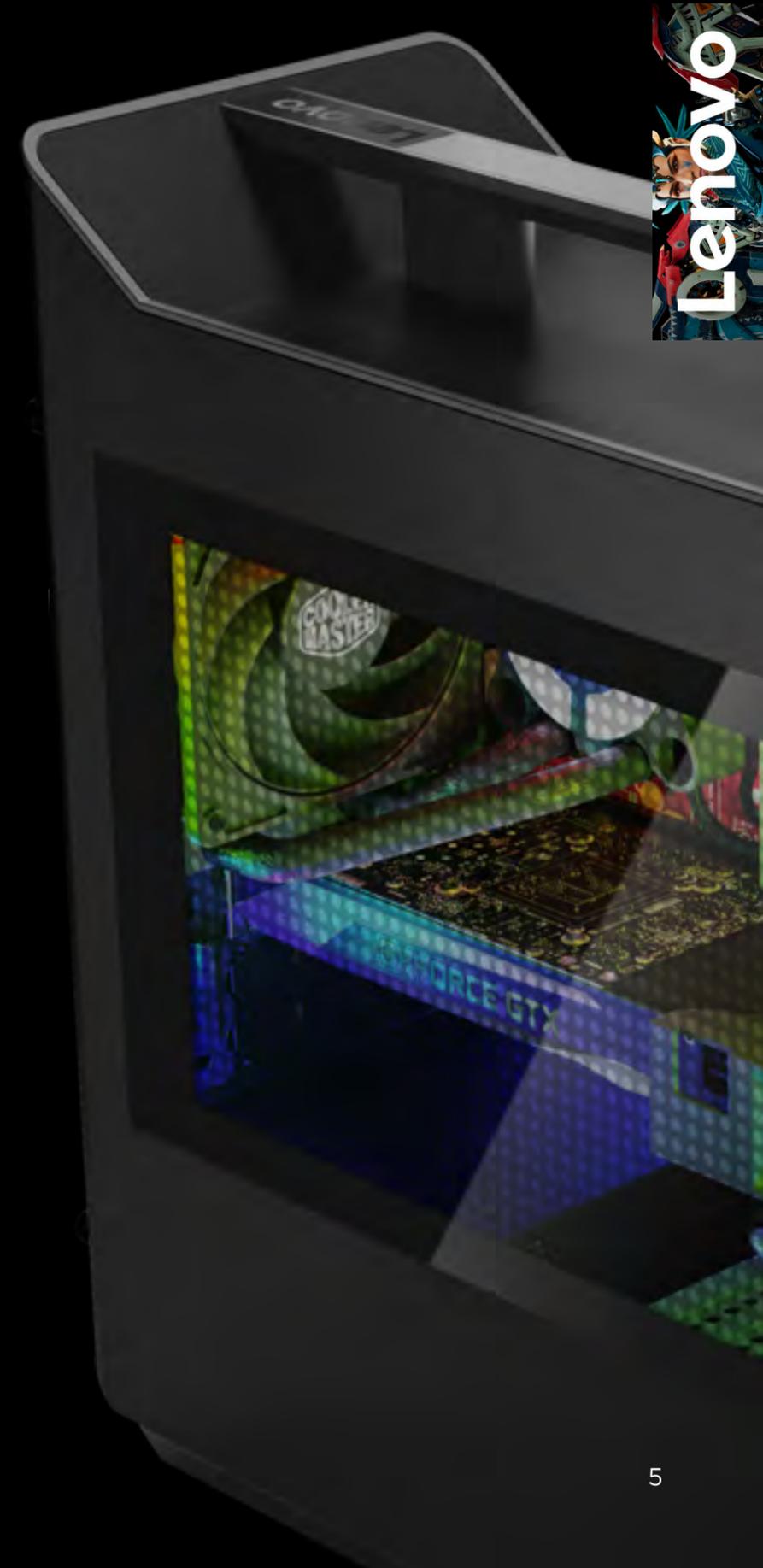


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Gearing up to win

In addition to the physical space, what's required to support esports athletes beyond high-speed, low-latency network connectivity?

- Gamers have a simple test for CPU performance: immersive gameplay. This requires breakthrough game mechanics as well as amazing graphic capabilities. They're both required to drive the high frame rates and low latency players expect. Together, they ensure game experiences are fast and flawless.
- Beyond the CPU, they need big displays. In addition to player monitors, esports facilities also need their own 'jumbotron' displays that let local spectators keep up with the game.
- Gaming also requires a specialized set of input peripherals, from customized keyboard to super stylish joysticks and mouse devices. As with traditional athletics, players will often gravitate to a particular brand or style — get player input on requirements and configurations, they're very knowledgeable.



WE ARE LENOVO LEGION™

While gamers can get emotionally connected to their gear, colleges and universities need to be smart. This means choosing PCs that stand up to the high expectations of the players, the game titles, and the overall IT environment.

Our specialized Legion series combines everything you love and trust about Lenovo™ hardware with a performance design and feature set especially made for gamers. This ensures that whether your esports program is on level one or aiming for a championship, your athletes always have the power they need.

Serious style and substance: Legion tower

In a world focused on mobility, hardcore gamers still love their tower PCs. Our Legion T530 offers 8th Generation Intel® processing with discrete Radeon Graphics Vega. The stylish design features red LED lighting that adds just a little bit more drama to the game play.

Maximum mobility: Legion laptop

Esports is about more than just players. Big events also have announcers, commentators, and coordinators just like traditional athletics. That's why our Legion laptop series is a perfect fit, bringing almost as much performance and the same stylish design to users who need more mobility and flexibility.

The high-end performance and graphics capabilities of the 17" Legion Y740 offer Intel® processing, onboard NVIDIA graphics, and an ultracool RGB keyboard. It's a little funky and superfast — just what the game demands.



Legion T730 Desktop Tower



Legion Y540 Laptop



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Optimal PC settings: Lenovo Vantage for gaming

Lenovo Vantage allows for automated tuning with game detection, giving optimal graphics and power performance when not gaming. Legion Edge's Hybrid Mode, a feature within Vantage, automatically switches between graphics modes, saving battery during non-game use. Vantage also allows for overclocking to be enabled for the CPU and memory to prevent game lag. In addition, lighting can be personalized to match the mood or making playing in the dark easier. Vantage gives players more time gaming, less time tweaking.

Legion Ultimate Support: the game changer

When you need support for your Lenovo Legion laptop or desktop that will optimize your gaming experience, you need Legion Ultimate Support. Advanced-level Legion Ultimate Support technicians are available 24x7 by phone or chat. They have a wealth of product knowledge but also know about key gaming communities and forums. Legion Ultimate Support technicians can also assist with settings, tuning, hardware and software optimizations, and other gaming-related needs that will help maximize your gaming experience. This means you're getting more than just a machine built for serious play, but a partner invested in making sure your esports program succeeds. Imagine serious fun delivered with all the dependability of enterprise services — that's what a Lenovo esports partnership can bring to the game.

For more information about Lenovo's solutions for esports, contact your sales representative.



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