The evolution of e-sports

"Understanding the attraction of e-sports as a genre and an analysis of its growth and sustainability"

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1. Abstract

E-sports is a growing phenomenon within the media industry and has -in recent years-become a more mainstream attraction. Even amongst followers of the genre, there is still some discussion as to whether or not e-sports should be treated the same way as traditional athletic sports within our modern media landscape. Whilst growing in popularity, e-sports has followed in many of the same footsteps as traditional sports, however is yet to become a mainstay on linear network television.

The purpose of this study is to aid in determining what genre classification e-sports should fall under whilst also understanding the justification for and against this decision. Beyond understanding e-sports as a genre, an invention has also taken place to discover and suggest a potential rightful place for this genre in our modern media landscape. To this end, the research question is as follows:
"***What is e-sports as a genre and how does it fit in to a modern media landscape?***".

In order to answer this research question; a variety of investigative techniques are used; these include: Two semi-structured in-depth interviews and analysis of these results, one focus group interview and analysis of these results, a research investigation and analysis of existing work within the subject and research of existing work in regards to defining a media-text's genre and understanding it's attraction. The two subjects of the in-depth reviews are both experienced professionals within the e-sports industry, this is to gain an informed, in-depth opinions from qualified informants that can base their views on valid experience. The ten subjects of the focus group are consumers of the genre and therefore fans of e-sports; this is to gain insight from an external perspective, finding out why they find the genre appealing and things they would or would not change if given the choice.

Based on an analysis of the research conducted, it's concluded that e-sports should be classified as a subgenre of sport, within certain distinctive differences from traditional athletic sports. In regards to how this genre should fit into a modern media landscape, a discussion is provided regarding it's unique platform for consumption (live-streaming) and some of the influencing factors facilitating the rise of this platform along with limitations in

terms of target audience, ultimately, it's concluded that it may not be necessary for e-sports to branch into traditional linear TV broadcasts; as it's symbiotic growth with a live-streaming platform has, and will continue to be, pivotal to its success.

3. Intro

Since moving to Norway eleven years ago I have become surrounded by friends and family engaging in what has been—until relatively recently—simply considered "playing video games" by the vast population. This activity fascinated me up to the time that I downloaded my first online game, four years ago, and began to understand it's appeal. To my surprise what has developed since then and has piqued my interest even more so, is its growth as a visual medium in addition to an interactive one; that is, it's now not only played, but watched by millions of people worldwide. Streaming platforms such as Twitch.TV, Youtube live events and Youtube gaming have quickly developed and adapted to cater for this growing phenomenon allowing them to take advantage of this unexpected market shift.

The global e-sports audience reached 385 million in 2017, made up of 191 million e-sports enthusiasts and a further 194 million occasional viewers. The number of e-sports enthusiasts is expected to grow by another 50% toward 2020, totaling 286 million (Warmann, 2017).

The term "e-sport" as defined by the Oxford Dictionary is: "A multiplayer video game played competitively for spectators, typically by professional gamers." however a more in-depth analysis is required to understand it's commonalities with traditional, well-established genres and also the ways in which it's disrupting and revolutionising the media industry.

Combined with my existing interest in content production, especially regarding modern and innovative platforms; seeing the rapid growth of e-sports as a genre has left me with an abundance of unanswered questions: What is the attraction for spectators? In what ways has it innovated the industry and how can it continue to do so? Who is the audience and what do they expect from the future of e-sports? How has e-sports integrated into our day-to-day media consumption and what role may these streaming platforms play in the potential downfall of traditional TV broadcasting?

I have chosen to answer these queries under the fundamental question:

"What is e-sports as a genre and how does it fit in to a modern media landscape?"

In its infancy, competitive computer gaming was—at best— a local rivalry between one person and their counterpart challenging each other to best an individual's top score. Alongside the immense growth of the computer-gaming technology industry, an equally intense growth was observed in the requirement for multiplayer games and platforms designed to facilitate competition with local friends, eventually expanding into a multi-national online platform.

Competitive tournaments have existed since the 80's but it was Red Annihilation, a Quake competition held in 1997 which is commonly considered the first major e-sport contest. It held an attendance of over 2,000 participants with the first place prize winner receiving a Ferrari previously owned by the game's lead developer John Carmack (Edwards, 2013).

Since Red Annihilation, tournaments, participants, audiences and prizes have grown exponentially; for example, one of the industries biggest games—League of Legends—boasted 57.6 million unique viewers during a tournament final in 2017 (Lolesports, 2017) and a Dota 2 tournament had a cash prize of 24.7 million dollars that same year (Esportearnings, 2018). Approximately 300 million people around the world are watching e-sports today and that number is still growing. By 2020, the figure is expected to reach closer to 500 million (Elder, R., 2017). Thus; it's understandable that traditional media companies have developed an acute interest in capitalising on this growing media trend.

Considering how quickly e-sports has emerged from a niche market to mainstream media, I will also be investigating the viability and longevity of this entertainment genre to discover if it's a temporary viral phenomenon within an ever-changing industry, or if it can grow and adapt to become a sustainable and reliable part of our modern media landscape.

4. Method

This chapter will detail the methods and procedures used to research the underlying question of this thesis.

In the field of social research, qualitative and quantitative research are two of the most important ways of understanding and obtaining data or information relating to modern society (Larsen, 2013, p. 18). Quantitative research can be construed as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality. By contrast, qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that embodies a view of social reality as a constant shifting emergent property of individuals' creation (Bryman, A. 2012).

The use of a qualitative methodology over a quantitative one in this thesis can be justified when considering the primary goal of this investigation is to discover and analyse the public's perception and the appeal of e-sports as a genre and to gain insight into its potential future.

Due to the relatively recent emergence of this genre, there is little existing research and literature available to build on when compared to more traditional genres; this has also contributed toward the rationale of using a qualitative methodology. One of the benefits of qualitative research is that the researcher is closer to the informants, making the discussion more subjective and responsive to the informants experience (Lund & Haugen, 2006, p. 22).

4.1 Qualitative interview

In media science, qualitative interviews are usually used to analyse the production and receipt of media texts, media actors' activities and strategies, as well as events and episodes within the media or the public (Østby, Helland, Knapskog & Hillesund, 1997, p. 82).

In order to collect and produce the empirical evidence necessary for concluding this investigation, I have chosen two different qualitative interviewing techniques.

The first method shall be a focus group consisting of ten informants, all attendees of "The Gathering", one of the worlds largest computer gaming conventions held annually in Hamar,

Norway (The Gathering, 2018). The second method; two in-depth interviews with Norwegian professionals within the e-sports industry.

4.1.1 Focus Group

A focus group is suited to gaining insight into the attraction of e-sports as a medium of entertainment as it encompasses a wider array of opinions than a more targeted, in-depth interview. It should be directed towards informants with an understanding of the genre, ideally it's target audience; therefore, the ten subjects of this focus group will all be participants of "The Gathering". This occasion provides a unique opportunity to gather opinions from the exact target audience of e-sports as well as providing a platform to gain insight from industry professionals with a vested interest in the genre.

Krueger & Casey (2000) discuss, among other things, how a focus group can positively affect the informants. The method may seem less threatening to participants than individual in-depth interviews when discussing perceptions, ideas and opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2000 p. 76).

E-sports and computer gaming share a similar target audience; typically between the ages of 16 and 26 years old (Warmann, 2017). To increase the validity of this research, it's an advantage to interview informants within a homogenous group, where they can talk more openly about the topic within an appropriate environment and without reservations regarding public perception of their opinions outside of the genre's subculture.

The group interview consisted of ten participants between the age 18 to 21 and lasted 1.5 hours where I acted as a moderator and put forward pre-formulated questions to the informants. I exploited the local environment within the e-sports event as stimulus material used to provoke discussions and establish a common understanding. The interview was recorded, with approval from the participants and transcribed afterwards.

4.1.2 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were suited to analysing and discussing this topic, particularly the potential future of e-sports as a genre within an ever-changing media landscape, as they provide a more thorough understanding of a person's opinion and can be adjusted and tailored during the interviewing process to target more relevant information. Two different in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants within Norwegian e-sports production to avoid narrowing feedback down to a single persons experiences and perspectives. As a rule, we can say that you use depth interviews where you want to study opinions, attitudes and experiences (Tjora, 2012, p. 105).

To demonstrate the validity of the opinions and perspectives gained in these in-depth interviews, below is a brief background on the participants, highlighting their relevant qualifications to this industry:

Øyvind Helland works as a content developer in NRK. Through his many years at NRK-Super, he gained significant experience working with a lot of e-sport games and other multimedia content. He has been a game director for Superia, radio host, online journalist and built NRK Super's gaming website "nrksuper.no/spill" in 2007. Since his transition to NRK Development in the autumn of 2017, he has also worked with NRK Sports in the making of their first e-sports pilot and in the same year started NRK Gaming in Trondheim. He can provide a good insight into NRK's future plans and relationships within the e-sports industry and is a good representative for Norwegian media when it comes to e-sports production both historically and looking forward.

Olav Leiknes is an entrepreneur in the Norwegian e-sports industry. He started and built what is now one of the country's biggest e-sports clubs, formerly known as Nyx eSports, now called Bitfix Gaming. The club has over 50 professional players divided into different game branches and levels. In addition to that he also works for the company House of Nerds and was also a project leader who started one of Norway's largest e-sport events Gigacon (now known as Polaris). This event reached a new Norwegian milestone in 2018, with over 1.2 million views on their live broadcast. He has a more in depth knowledge of the

behind-the-scenes aspects to creating a source of revenue within e-sports and has experience within the industry, as opposed to simply observing from a media standpoint.

Both depth interviews with these informants are semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are characterised by the fact that the topics to be asked about are defined in advance. Prior to the interview, an interview guide has often been prepared[1] (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog & Larsen. 2002, p. 102).

Semi-structured approaches vary from fully structured as they allow for flexibility and change throughout the duration of the interview. Due to the expansiveness of this subject, a completely unstructured approach would be too likely to diverge from the main goal of this interview and is therefore not suitable.

A semi-structured technique has been deemed to be most suitable for these interviews as it allows for informants to dynamically expand into relevant subject areas, providing further context to their beliefs, but can be reined back into focus when needed. This is important -as in the given context- the informant is a more qualified expert in the subject area and therefore, to limit the scope of this interview based on the interviewers knowledge or expectations, could limit the quality of information gained. It does however, still allow the interviewer to maintain sight of the objective and the fundamental questions which need to be answered, ensuring that the results of this process are relevant and can fit within the research design.

The interview with Øyvind Helland lasted for approximately one hour and took place at the informant's workplace, whereas the interview with Olav Leiknes was done over Skype and also lasted approximately one hour. In order to ensure that the informants' answers were correctly interpreted, both interviews were taped with the approval of the informants and transcribed afterwards. Throughout this investigation, it has been important to maintain a critical and analytical view of the informants answers considering them as personal opinions based on experience.

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[1] Interview guides can be found in the appendix of the thesis.

4.2 Scope of work

N.B., The following chapter relies heavily on the glossary of terms contained within the appendix of this thesis.

In order to define a scope for this body of work, certain limitations must be defined, especially in regard to which media-texts are investigated or analysed.

A distinctly large majority of the total viewership of e-sports is held by a small overall portion of the available platforms or games, as is also the case in traditional sport. To consider "The english premier league" a typical sports production would be fair as it's one which is most associated with the genre and has the most viewers. It would be inappropriate to base assumptions of sports productions on lesser-viewed or more obscure sports such as cheese-rolling or underwater-hockey, as they do not represent the interests of a typical follower of the genre. Equally, when referring to e-sports, only popular and industry leading games will be considered, such as LoL to represent MOBA games and CS:GO to represent FPS games.

Within the context of this investigation, both "video game live-streaming" and "e-sports live-streaming" will be discussed. Generally speaking, all e-sports event's are live-streamed, but not all live-streamed events are e-sports. For the sake of clarity; when discussing conventional video game streaming, this shall be referred to as "streaming" whereas e-sports events specifically will be denoted as such.

The overall perspective for the comparisons between each genre will be done primarily from a production or spectators viewpoint. The similarities drawn between internal professionals (competitors in this case), law and economical models of each industry will not be investigated unless they are intrinsically linked to a media classification or means of consumption for this media-text, as they would not be relevant to the overall hypothesis put forward in this paper.

The context of this paper makes certain cultural assumptions in that it refers primarily to e-sports and sports within western media. E-sports is already a more socially accepted genre

within eastern countries such as South Korea and already has a place on Korean linear TV broadcasts. Though mention of this may be made, unless explicitly stated, the general mention of each media-text will refer to western culture only.

5. Background

To best understand an analysis of e-sports and it's future, a discussion of its background and history will serve to provide any foundational knowledge prerequisites and give context to arguments and theories outlined later in this thesis. This chapter will therefore aid in describing and defining what a genre is with specific consideration to how it applies to e-sports. Given its relative infancy, there is still some debate amongst people as to whether or not e-sports is a legitimate genre of entertainment, especially here in Norway. By reviewing the data collected from interviews in addition to conceptual history, the below analysis will also provide discussions and arguments to both support and counter this claim.

5.1 What is e-sports?

E-sports is defined as 'A multiplayer video game played competitively for spectators, typically by professional gamers' in accordance with the Oxford English dictionary.

To better understand what an e-sport is, it is perhaps worth considering what a conventional sport is. As per the definition, a sport is 'An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment'.

The most famous example of a classic sport, which is easily recognised world-wide, is football (also known as soccer). In football, a team of players use their physical, mental and reactionary prowess, in accordance with an overall tactic and strategy to defeat an opponent within the rules of the game. E-sports can be similarly described, with the (arguable) removal of "physical prowess". The clear defining characteristic between the two is -amongst people who would not consider e-sports a sport- the lack of physicality and athleticism. At its most simple, e-sports could be considered as competitively playing video-games for the entertainment of others.

Currently, e-sports are not widely viewed on television with some notable exceptions such as it's BBC broadcast in 2015 (BBC, 2015) and NRK broadcast in 2017 (NRK, 2017). As of

2018, there are two main platforms for consuming e-sports as entertainment, which are Youtube (owned by Google) and Twitch.TV (owned by Amazon). As with traditional sports, the primary way of viewing this form of media is via live-stream (the computer equivalent to live-television), and in this scenario, Twitch.TV is by far the more dominant platform. Twitch.TV was acquired in August 2014 by Amazon in a deal worth US$970 million (MacMillan & Bensinger, 2014).

League of Legends, a multiplayer MOBA game released in 2009 is considered to be the largest e-sport, hosting a world-championship annually. Each year these finals are hosted in a different international setting, the 2017 championship being hosted in China, held games in Wuhan, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing (Lolesports, 2017).

By way of comparison, the LoL World Championship China boasted an average concurrent viewership (Including Chinese viewers) of 33,050,499 and a total views (including all Twitch.TV channels) of 73,552,808 (E-sports charts [ESC], 2018); whereas the 2013 UEFA Champions league final, one of the largest international football competitions, drew 360 million television viewers (Sportskeeda, 2013). These statistics clearly show that traditional sports is still a much larger industry than e-sports, but the comparison gives perspective of the enormity of e-sports, especially when considering the comparative age of each genre.

5.2 What is a genre?

We don't engage with media in a vacuum. Rather, we enjoy and make sense of particular media texts in relation to other texts of similar type. In media studies these types of text are known as genres (Gillespie, M. & Toynbee, J., 2006 p. 44).

Distinguishing one genre from another can come very naturally to many of us. If you were to turn on a television today it would likely not take long to distinguish a news program from a comedy. This is because the majority of media texts within any given genre often have many similarities and are based on common conventions. To this end; we can identify commonalities and conforming qualities of new media texts with existing well-established genres to identify where it would most likely be categorised and if it can in fact be

categorised under what already exists. In the event that a new media text cannot be categorised under an existing genre, this would provide grounds to define a new genre, such as in the case of e-sports.

From a creators perspective, it's important to associate a product with a specific genre to easily explain what is being produced. It makes for an easy and understandable way of informing investors and potential purchasers about the product and how it should be marketed in accordance with existing conventions such as target audience and product expectations. The term "genre" covers two different conditions, one is the production pattern, on the other hand, the receiver's expectations of a product (Larsen, P. 2008, p. 31).

Regardless of being the consumer or the creator of media, this means all parties involved are, at all times, either consciously or subconsciously aware of a products genre. Continuing with the example of football in traditional sports, there are common and conventional patterns which are adhered to for a football production. The requirement for professionals in specific skill sets such as sound engineers, EVS operators and a director who knows the type of production. The requirement of commentators for the benefit of the viewers, hosts and specific production facilities within the production environment, whether that be within a stadium, studio or commentator box. Similarly, spectators will have a number of expectations based on past experiences. They know how this type of program should look and will be disappointed unless this is achieved. The genre is kind of a contract between the industry and spectators (Larsen, P. 2008, p. 31).

A genre is a collection of texts to be used for the same purpose, and therefore has certain special discursive features. These traits can be on many different levels and concern many different textual aspects (Larsen, P. 2008, p. 34).

Rick Altman, professor of Cinema and Comparative Literature, proposed a methodology for defining a genre throughout his many publications in the past three decades, these methodologies will be further investigated through the following sections of this chapter as a basis for defining the genre of e-sports.

5.2.1 E-sports as a genre

The television, film and entertainment industry is dominated by a constant demand of renewal leading to the uprising of more and more so-called "hybrid genres" or creative ways to mix and match different attributes of existing, well established classifications.

Innovation within a genre doesn't necessarily mean that something completely new has been invented, but more likely a new combination of attributes from different types of genres, as is the case for e-sports.

In the book "Post-TV", Strangelove (2015, p. 92) categorises e-sports as "a genre of entertainment that combines hedonistic, competitive, and cooperative elements". Throughout the research conducted as part of this thesis; when asked about e-sports and genres, all informants answered that they would classify e-sports in the same category as traditional sports, in their opinion of both a consumer and production perspective. This has been a heated point of conversation for the past few years, as to whether or not e-sports should in fact be classified as a sport. Some will say that e-sports will never be a sport, simply because there is not in enough physical activity, whilst others draw large amounts of comparisons between the two and put forward more researched perspectives.

To provide a more comprehensible comparison between e-sports and sports, a structured argument must be put forward, including a clear system for defining a genre. In his multiple articles published between 1984 and 1999, Rick Altman described a method of analysing media texts in a way that can allow them to be categorised within a genre. He referred to this method as the semantic/syntactic approach to a genre (Altman, R., 1984), which he later expanded to become the semantic/syntactic/pragmatic approach (Altman, R., 1999).

To analyse and compare the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic attributes of e-sports and sports, a single case study or example is needed. For this purpose, comparisons will be drawn between the 2017 League of Legends World Championship (e-sports) and the 2017 UEFA Champions League (sports). Both of these tournaments represent some of the largest viewerships within their respective genres, and often set precedents which other media texts can then adhere to. It would also have been appropriate to compare a seasonal scenario for

these texts, wherein a comparison could be drawn between the 2017 League of Legends NA LCS and the 2017 English Premier League, however a tournament context can display more easily identifiable qualities within a shorter period of time compared to a season-long narrative.

A comparison of semantic aspects of e-sports and sports:

Semantic elements within a genre consist of the objects found in any given media text. Examples include characters, equipment, style, sets and locations. The semantic approach thus stresses the genre's building blocks, while the syntactic view privileges the structures into which they are arranged (Altman, R. 1984). Taking a historic war movie as an example, semantic aspects to categorising this genre would include soldiers, tanks, guns, explosions, etc. They are commonalities between all texts of a similar genre, to the extent that a consumer would likely notice the lack of them due to pre-conceptions and expectations already formed prior to viewing.

Regarding the two examples outlined, we find numerous shared semantic aspects which can be easily identified. Both texts have a presenter or host to welcome the viewers to the show. To assists the host, both texts have an analyst desk, consisting of both staff and guest analysts (often former competitors from each respective game). The equipment used on these desks can be found in both productions, often a replay system with functionality to enhance and highlight gameplay footage (E.G., Slow-motion, viewing angles and highlighting/focusing software to be used in explanations.). Each text hosts multiple characters in the form of competitors, who together create a team; and a manager/coach to supervise. Commentators are also common throughout, usually consisting of a team that divide into pairs of two (A "colourcaster" and a "shoutcaster") for each game. The different roles of each of these commentators are also common between the two media texts.

Both texts contain three main environments; a section to host the audience, a field for competitors to face each other and a studio for the presentation team. The two genres have a similar level of formality in terms of dress code and presentation style, and use a similarly complex vernacular designed to be understood by newcomers to the game but also appeal to seasoned fans.

The main semantic difference between the two media texts can be found in one of the set locations, specifically the arena in which the two teams compete (arguably the most important part of the production). The 2017 Champions League final was hosted in the Millenium stadium, Cardiff; whereas it can be argued that the main arena for competition of the League of Legends Worlds Finals was in fact a virtual arena, known to fans as "Summoners Rift".

A comparison of syntactic aspects of e-sports and sports:

While the semantic approach has little explanatory power, it is applicable to a larger number of media-texts. Conversely, the syntactic approach surrenders broad applicability in return for the ability to isolate a genre's specific meaning-bearing structures (Altman, R. 1984). The syntactic aspects of a media text can be considered as the ways in which the semantic elements interact with each other, or are used. To continue with the previous example of a historical war movie: the soldiers, use guns and tanks (all semantic elements) to fight in a war between the north and the south (the syntactic elements).

In the book "TV - En innføring" the author describes a typical sports production with six sequences. Opening video, news about the teams involved or the athletes, ceremony before the match, studio panel, the game/competition itself, finished by interviews with participants (Enli, Moe, Sundet & Syvertsen, 2010, p 151).

These six sequences are all designed to convey a form of entertainment. The opening ceremonies are designed to prepare and focus the audience, to gain their attention and remind them of the context of the media they are viewing which is done via the use of audio and visual queues.

The next sequence, the team / competitor news is common throughout both texts, and fulfills two purposes. It provides informative media, facts about status of teams or players and the rules of the game. It provides a brief history and context of any given game by reporting on past reality. Beyond strictly informative purposes, this sequence also begins to build narratives for the viewers to follow. A common narrative used by each media text may be the typical "David and Goliath" or "underdog" story. Examples include the UEFA group stage

game on 23rd Nov between Rostov and heavy favourite Bayern Munich. In the League of Legends world cup group stage, a similar upset can be found in the LoL Worlds finals group stage where european newcomers "Misfits" beat fan favourites "TSM" and then again in a tie-breaker scenario. These narratives are particularly important within sports as they give the audience a reason to support a team which is not necessarily their favourite. It fuels empathic feelings from the viewers helping prevent a scenario where long-time fans are inclined to only view the games or episodes which involve their particular team; a problem more prominent in sports and e-sports compared to any other genre. These themes are common throughout the pre-game ceremonies and studio panels, continuing to build on narratives and give context and stakes to the games about to take place. They aim to manipulate the emotions of the audience and generate excitement through media techniques such as countdowns, theme music and historic highlights of previous events. They begin to highlight the syntactic context of the competition to provide entertainment having established an environment to do so.

The next major phase of both a traditional sport and e-sport production is game or competition itself; easily considered as the climax of the event. This is what the other sequences are built around supporting. It focuses on the teams and the conflict or competition between them. This is how the production uses it's semantic aspects to create entertainment; whereas in some genres, the appeal of a particular character and their interactions within the world around them may be enough to provide entertainment, sports and e-sports rely heavily on the interaction between two or more different characters. These interactions generate entertainment in the exact same way between the two genres, providing emotional highs and lows throughout the duration of the event, provoking feelings of both elation and devastation depending on the outcome. It is one of the few genres which intentionally divides it's viewers reactions, providing happiness to the winning fans, and disappointment to those whose team did not win. In many ways, this provides a similar appeal to emotional gambling.

The final primary sequence to a sports production is interviews and analysis of the game. These are done in the same way in each genre where an interviewer will discuss the main talking points of the game with some of the competitors, both winners and losers. Finally, a short analysis of the game will take place back at the production desk to break down some of

the events which unfolded, giving viewers time to internalise and process the results and spark conversation going forward, further enhancing the media texts publicity and significance in the viewers mind.

If you look at this from a strictly production view, there's no real difference and that's the reason why in both of the biggest channels in Norway, TV2 and NRK, any e-sports production they've had has been under the sports department and it will continue like that (Helland, 2018).

A comparison of pragmatic aspects of e-sports and sports:

In his 1999 book "Film/Genre", Altman expanded on his original model to include pragmatic aspects of a genre, to facilitate the inclusion of aspects relating to audience and institution. Though semantic/syntactic terminology may be useful in describing the effects of generic discursivity, it is not by itself sufficient to expose or explain them (Altman, R. 1999).

Institutions use genres to create varying products to appeal to the maximum potential audience. In this regard, e-sports can in fact be considered a different genre to traditional sports, as, although the audience may overlap, there is a distinct portion of each viewership which does not. The distinction here is that a typical fan of traditional sports will be older than one of e-sports. The average age of a football spectator is around 41 years old (Notte, 2017) whereas for e-sports, this number is closer to 28 (Bathurst, 2017).

Although there is the above mentioned difference from an institutional standpoint, there are still many similarities. The primary goal of each production is to generate revenue from advertisements and sponsorship. Both production owners have a team of partners (many of which overlap into both genres), who's brand can be seen throughout the media text. Both sets of competing teams have sponsorships -and beyond that- it is common place for individual competitors to have personal sponsorship agreements. In football this may be a specific brand of boot, whereas in e-sports, this is more likely to be a gaming peripheral such as mouse or keyboard, regardless; the model is the same.

Both genres aim to primarily generate revenue from viewership, in the form of advertisements. The same techniques will be used to highlight star-players or popular teams.

This may result in an obligation to show certain players faces more so than others, or a bias in regards to selecting individuals for feedback and interviews. Also the same sponsorship deals to make mention of certain brands throughout production such as the "State Farm analyst desk" in League of Legends can be observed. External companies use both genres as an advertising outlet, with the same approach to each.

In regard to audience, Altman suggests viewers may read media-texts in different ways, therefore creating different genres. It is through audience's perception that new genres are created, and in the research analysed later in this paper, all subjects perceive e-sports to in fact be the same genre as traditional sport. Altman went on to acknowledge that the diversity in ways in which audiences consume media means they may effectively be re-creating genres. This is related to the comparison between e-sports and traditional sports as audiences use the media-text for the same benefits or pleasures, they each achieve the same goal in the eyes of the viewer; in the same way that two foods may taste different, but they still fundamentally satisfy hunger.

E-sports and traditional sports share a requirement for flexibility in live broadcasting, more so than most other genres. This is a somewhat unique skill set as it relies heavily on improvisation and dynamically planning for multiple outcomes. This quality comes from the indeterminate scheduling aspects of a tournament setting or series design; games won and lost can result in tie-breaker situations causing a requirement for extra games to be played within the same time-frame, potentially extended the length of a broadcast by many hours. This is something that football on mainstream television has had to overcome in regards to "stoppage time", "additional time" and finally a "penalty shoot-out", if the game remains tied for long enough. Similarly, both genres have to deal with delays; pitch invaders or flares as a common cause for stoppage in football which prevent play, whereas in e-sports these stoppages in play are often caused by technical difficulties. Although not ideal in either situation, and although they aren't intentional qualities; these similar difficulties and similar approaches to overcoming them further highlight the comparable nature of these genres.

6. Understanding the attraction

There are many attractions to every genre; the following section will serve to identify which of these are applicable, or unique to e-sports. Different genres appeal to different consumers for a variety of reasons; it's therefore important to consider these differences and understand why they appeal to certain audiences to gain maximum market exposure.

6.1. Who is the audience?

When asked about the target audience and who watches e-sports, Øyvind Helland discusses how it relates to the differences in generations. When working with e-sports in NRK, they base their productions on a target audience of under 30 years of age and who are predominantly male. This was concluded by the results of market-research, as expected given that modern generations have a naturally greater interest in computer games due to a history of having grown up in an environment which exposes them to it from a young age. In an audience sample of 40-50 years olds, most people will show little interest in e-sports as they would have had to develop an interest during their adulthood in competition with what they have already grown up with; although not impossible, this is significantly less likely. He also adds that it is uncertain how this will develop in the future, when todays younger generations become seniors, therefore making it more commonplace for a 60 year old to carry forward a childhood interested in e-sports (Helland, 2018).

According to the 2017 e-sports market report The E-sports Enthusiast, audiences are young (millenials) and male, with half of them aged between 21 to 35 and 71% male. The majority of enthusiasts are in full-time employment and enjoy a good income. This makes them a very desirable target group for different parties, especially big brands. E-sports enthusiasts are digital natives, and are more likely to be consuming content online than through traditional media outlets (Warman, 2017).

6.2. What is the attraction to e-sports?

In accordance with the 2017 Norwegian youth research report "Ung-undersøkelsen", male informants between the ages of 18 and 29 years old shared -for the first time- a main interest in gaming over anything else (Bakken, A., 2017. p. 67).

Helland attributes this growth in gaming popularity, again to a generational quality of how gaming has integrated into a modern lifestyle. Games are made to engage and excite; which is what they have been purposefully developed and adapted for over the past 30-40 years (Helland, 2018). He also points out that today young people are often viewed as a very impatient television viewer, they have a need for fast entertainment and high pace, something the older generation does not. E-sports in particular caters well to this market; games within League of Legends for example are often played in short series between 20-60 minutes each and between 2 to 5 games (best of three or best of five in tournament settings, or multiple teams playing one after another in a season format), giving built-up satisfaction from anticipation in long games as well as immediate gratification in fast-paced shorter games. This is also reflected in opinions of informants from the focus group interview conducted as part of this research, where the informants say they rarely watch a football match because "it's going too slowly".

The whole of e-sports has been deliberately created and built up with the intention of giving spectators and gamers what they want, while for example football has developed more organically for hundreds of years, it was not made to be a spectator sport. So we have ended up with the traditional sports a little bit coincidentally. E-sports on the other hand is not organic, it's made to suit and it's designed to work perfectly for a viewer (Leiknes, 2018).

One unique characteristic of e-sports compared to traditional sports is that the gameplay is constantly changing, whereas football has followed extremely similar sets of rules for hundreds of years. Updates and balance tweaks to characters, items and rules create an ever-changing style of play, preventing stagnation. There are two approaches to this, known as "perfect-balance" and "perfect-imbalance". Football as a sport follows the perfect balance model where rules are designed to make everything as fair as possible, to become a better and therefore more entertaining player, one must improve within that environment; it is entertaining to the viewer to see the absolute limits of player potential. Many successful e-sports, most notably League of Legends follows a "imperfect-balance" model, where characters, strategies and tactics aren't designed to be as fair as possible, in fact one particular instance will be considered the best in each update of the game. The idea being that by the time the strongest approaches are figured out, the game updates again and competitors are

forced to innovate and discover the new best way of playing. This provides spectators with something new each season, even if they have watched thousands of games in the past. It also allows spectators the satisfaction of seeing somebody playing to an "off-meta" strategy, I.E., playing something arguably weak at the time, but something that player may be particularly talented at. This can surprise audiences and other competitors, and gives the production team something to highlight and discuss -what's more- it gives spectators the knowledge to go home and try this in their own games in a very accessible way; whereas a spectator of traditional sports is much less likely to go home and enjoy replicating an amazing feat of athleticism, such as a very fast sprint or powerful kick of a ball, just because they seen their favourite player do it.

E-sport is made for an impatient viewer, because something is happening at all times. As the different "branches", or games, develop and compete with each other, the biggest ones become extremely engaging and viewer-friendly. The gaming companies themselves develop their games to a greater extent, both to create entertainment from spectating, or by playing (Helland, 2018).

One of the points which was discussed during the focus group interview was the social aspect of e-sports. Although both gaming and e-sports are often viewed as something introverted and antisocial, this is far from the truth (Leiknes, 2018). Major entertainment events and sporting events are in a special class when it comes to attracting the audience. Generally, events based on competition create grounds for engagement and social interaction (Enli et al., 2010, p. 211). The informants in the focus group report that they frequently gather to watch different e-sport events and to cheer for their favorite teams. In both 2016 and 2017, Oslo Cinema set up a "viewing party" at its cinemas of the League of Legends Worlds Final and had full halls throughout the event (Nfkino, 2017). All participants of the focus group conducted for this thesis said that they would like more events like this and more opportunities to watch their favourite e-sport with others, both friends and strangers with the same interests.

Another outstanding focus in the opinions put forward by participants of the focus group was the significance of the social aspects of streaming e-sports, specifically "Twitch chat".

Twitch-chat is multi-user instant messaging service provided for each channel or stream hosted by Twitch.TV. This manifests differently than a traditional forum conversation due to amount of participating users. For example; 250,000 users could all be speaking (in short messages) at the same time, this often means that to get a point across, the same message will be entered by thousands of users multiple times to avoid it being pushed off the screen too quickly, almost like voting for the content of the chat box, unique and private opinions often pass by unseen. An obvious example of this in LoL Worlds group stage is when a European and North American team compete against each other, the main topics of the chat is somewhat of a battle between repeating "EU > NA" and repeating "NA > EU". It is a unique interactive environment which involves contributing as a community larger than yourself to represent a shared opinion. The informants point to how it is a way of viewing with thousands of people, even though you might be alone, the feeling of being a part of a community, experiencing something together, sets a mood for how the game is going based on the comments, like a crowd chanting in football.

All popular e-sports to date follow a free-to-watch business model which created revenue from advertisement and sponsorship, not from selling subscriptions or limited license to view the production. This is a very modern model which is proving to be more and more successful, but from a spectators point of view, it is simply the difference between paying for entertainment and having it for free; this is a significant factor in the appeal of this genre. The other way in which this free-to-watch model benefits e-sports is it servers as an advertisement to sell a game, which will in-turn create revenue for the developer, even free-to-play games such as League of Legends generate revenue by microtransactions. The lack of this product to advertise in the case of football (as football has no licensed product to sell) is a contributing factor to why major footballing events follow a pay-to-watch model, this can be considered a deal-breaking characteristic to a more casual viewer.

7. E-sports future

Beyond considering what e-sports is, to properly understand it's place within our existing media landscape, it is important to consider what e-sports is set to become. This is of course impossible to know for certain, but by investigating the past facts and analysing the opinions

of the people who can control this (those being media professionals within the industry and media-consumers as a whole), one can create an informed and educated opinion.

One of the most prominent questions regarding the future of e-sports from a media and production perspective, and also one of the most reoccurring; is "does e-sports have a place on traditional television?" Helland thinks the next few years will have a lot to say when it comes to this and stated: "We hope and believe that the traditional TV-market has a place in the development of e-sports, but if the already well-established platforms like Twitch and Youtube continue to consolidate their role and make their position even stronger, it will hardly be worth it for NRK to even try" (Helland, 2018). Viewed from an audience perspective, the informants from the focus group also agree that it would take a lot for them to ever choose -for example- NRK's broadcast, over the official stream on Twitch, but are accepting of the possibility that it has potential if done correctly. Some of the factors that they believe could peak more interest include, if this was broadcast on NRK web TV instead of linear TV, and if there was a high quality stream with good Norwegian commentators and Norwegian professional players on the panel. There are many who would have watched -for example- Norwegian pro skier Petter Northug sit and comment on CS-GO at NRK. "Although ESL makes its broadcast excellent, it's something else to be able to get it into the Norwegian reality, have Norwegian guests, Norwegian top gamers and offer good content in Norwegian. I think we certainly have a place, but we must get it right" (Helland, 2018).

Another point of conversation regarding the future of e-sports, expanding on the question of "Is it a sport?", is if it is considered a sport, "should it then be a part of global sports events such as the olympics". In 2017, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announced that e-sports will be a medal sport at the 2022 Asian Games in China, the boldest step yet toward mainstream recognition of competitive gaming. Tony Estanguet, co-president of the Paris bid committee, has confirmed that e-sports could be added to the Olympic programme as an official medal sport in 2024. It is under discussion and will be decided during 2019 (Graham, 2017). The Olympic Channel, a digital platform launched after the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games with a budget of $450 million, was created by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to maintain year-round interest in the Olympic movement and get young people interested in sport. Its executive director, Yiannis Exarchos told Reuters that "As a youthful

digital platform we cannot ignore the phenomenon of e-sports, we want to explore the area more deeply" (Grohmann, 2018).

The last two years have seen massive strides made regarding gaming and mainstream media, this is in-part due to the modern ways in which we communicate to each other, specifically via social media. Celebrities and professionals can now form more personal relationships with their fans through the likes of Instagram and Twitter which creates an environment for both marketing potential, and sharing of personal interests amongst like-minded individuals.

This new (extremely public) way of communicating has connected well-known professionals from the gaming and e-sports world, with more traditional celebrities famed for singing, football and so on. A prime example of this is Tyler "Ninja" Blevins, who in march of 2017 broke the world record for most simultaneous viewers of a single player on Twitch (Klebo-Espe, 2018). The major contributing factor for this boom in popularity was because the 26 year old streamer teamed up with world known rapper "Drake" to play the game "Fortnite - Battle Royale". Blevins has also on multiple occasions played the game with other well known artists and football players such as Tottenham Hotspurs' Harry Kane, Dele Alli, and Kieran Trippier, making him the biggest streamer on Twitch (Twitchmetrics, 2018).
This mixing of communities is in some way validating the appeal of video gaming, and introducing it to a more mainstream market. Many fans or followers of well-known celebrities who now publicly play or follow certain games are inherently more likely to become more accepting and supportive of this interest, further removing from any existing stigmas attached to it from previous decades. Social media has played a large part in the uprising of gaming and e-sports, which is likely to continue aiding its growth in future (Leiknes, 2018).

In 2018, Riot Games (the producers of the game League of Legends) became the first e-sports title to win an Emmy after they were awarded with the Sports Emmy for Outstanding Live Graphic Design. They were nominated and received the award for the opening ceremony of the League of Legends World Championships finals 2017, which was held in the home of the 2008 Beijing Olympics; the Beijing National Stadium. More specifically they won the award for an augmented-reality dragon which flew around the stadium on the broadcast. Global

Executive producer at Riot, Ariel Horn, accepted the award speaking about how esports are inspiring children and are the future of sports: "It's an honour to be working with these kids who have never experienced sports before and frankly, that's what we're all here for right? Because we all love sports. I think we'll all come together around the future of sports and in the end, this award is for the kids that found sports for the first time, through video games, how crazy is that?' (Stewart, 2018).

E-sports is intrinsically linked to technology, and streaming as a platform for consuming media. Technological capability has always had a massive impact of all forms of media (Skinner, 2007) and e-sports more so than any type of media text suffers or benefits from this. The latest emergence in the technological entertainment industry has been that of VR or Virtual Reality. Mark Zuckerberg said to Business Insider in 2016 "We are betting that Virtual Reality is going to be an important technology. I am pretty confident about this. And now is the time to invest. We just announced that there have already been one million hours of video consumed in Gear VR and we just started shipping that with Samsung. So this is really encouraging" (Döpfner, 2016). Once a fantasy for many science-fiction enthusiasts, VR is rapidly becoming a readily accessible source of entertainment with huge strides of progress being made over the past two years. After casual entertainment, the natural progression of gaming has historically tended towards competition and in turn, e-sports. Though VR does have the potential to enhance other genres of entertainment, in regards to integration, it is clear to see that entertainment platforms already consumed via a digital medium will be most ready to adapt to this change should it take over in the future.

As mentioned previously in this paper; genre appeal and interests are often carried forward from a childhood interest (Helland, 2018). In 30 years from now, the majority of decision-making individuals within the media industry will be those who have in-fact grown up in an environment which exposed them to technology and likely video gaming since a young age. With this generational shift in management, opportunity arises for a more universally accepted perspective on e-sports. Of-course by this time, there will already have been such advancements in the genre that the discussion regarding its social acceptability will likely be redundant, it is still an impactful consideration when investigating a potential future.

In the late 2000s, television no longer referred to an object to be watched; it had transformed into content to be streamed, downloaded and shared. Tens of millions of viewers have "cut the cord", abandoned cable television, tuned into online services like Netflix, Hulu, and Youtube, and they watch pirated movies and programmes at an unprecedented rate. The idea that the Internet will devastate the television and film industry in the same way that it gutted the music industry no longer seems far-fetched. The television industry however, remains driven by outmoded market-based business models that ignore audience behavior and preferences (Strangelove, M., 2015. p. 3). To this end, e-sports is already ahead of the curve in regards to its choice of platform; the question of how e-sports can penetrate a linear broadcasting environment has the potential to become redundant in the near future, in-fact, it may be more the case that traditional sports will be forced to try to adapt and follow a more similar model to that of e-sports.

8. Conclusion

The phenomenon that is e-sports is difficult to categorise, it defies certain norms from traditional sports yet has so many undeniable similarities. It's future -to those involved in the industry- seems universally recognised as bright, though there is still some debate as to how it fits into our modern media landscape. As this is a fairly new and constantly evolving genre, there has been little literature created and less definitive existing knowledge to assume compared to more traditional media-texts, therefore my informants, their experiences and opinions, as well as analysis, have been important sources in order to answer the question presented as the topic of this thesis: "What is e-sports as a genre and how does it fit into a modern media landscape?"

With regard to e-sports as a genre, past research and debate has shown that defining a new genre of media-text is inherently a responsibility of the consumer; though large institutions may attempt to market or advertise a product as one thing or another, this is simply an attempt to sway the public toward the desired conclusion and no one official governing body has full control over this, the ultimate decision is still dependant upon how the audience perceives what they consume. The research conducted in this thesis has shown that the perception of e-sports -by its primary audience- should classify it as a sub-genre of sport as

that is how they choose to consume it. Similarly to how the target audience of an "animated children's comedy" may personally struggle to classify a "dark comedy" as a true comedy movie, the opinions of one subset of fans cannot be the defining contribution to attribute a definitive categorisation; instead, a more holistic view taking a step back to consider all similarities and differences must be considered in order to present a reasonable argument, as is the case with "e-sports vs traditional sports" where one must consider the facts beyond the immediate differences in physical activity to see the basal similarities.

To expand on the perception of e-sports as a subgenre of sport in the consumers eyes, special attention must be made from an institutional perspective wherein the skills and production requirements are recognised to be universal across both genres. Professionals (barring the athletes themselves) from both a management and production standpoint share the same fundamental bodies of knowledge and in-fact likely possess the skills required to perform the same role within each respective media-text, I.E., A presenter, interviewer, sound specialist or director from a traditional sports production could quite likely pursue a career in the same role within e-sports, and vice-versa, this further solidifies the argument for a shared parent genre between the two.

The most distinctive difference between e-sports and sports as genres from an analytical perspective is the typical audience. Generally speaking, e-sports has grown with a modern generation of technically adept youngsters, whereas many traditional sports, especially football (the easily largest) have grown over hundreds of years, favoured amongst the working class.

Comparing e-sports to traditional sports, we see that e-sports is almost as popular as ice hockey among Millennials; 14% of North Americans aged 21-35 are E-sports Enthusiasts, while 18% of this group watch ice hockey. The most popular team sport in North America, American football, is watched by 40% of Millennials. However, it is more popular among older age groups, suggesting that popularity among younger fans is declining (Warman, 2017). These numbers and typical audience characteristics perhaps do not speak toward classifying e-sports as a genre, but are essential considerations when discussing it's future and how it fits into our modern media consumption habits.

E-sports and live-streaming have grown hand in hand, each feeding off the success of the other; though perhaps not essential, the symbiotic relationship between the two has been a massive factor in such exponential growth. Based on my findings and research, I believe it is clear to see that e-sports will continue to grow and become more socially normal; we have observed this over the past few years and see no clear reason why this growth would stop. Helland, one of my informants, states: I think we see that -even beyond just e-sports- linear TV is in decline, quite sharply over the last two years in fact. Lately, the only primary age group still favouring linear TV over streaming is that of 40+ years of age, so even the 30-39 year-olds are looking more toward streaming and on-demand media for a platform for entertainment. We look at all programs, completely independent of e-sports, but e-sport has always lived within the world of streaming, so it makes sense that it has the most to gain from this shift (Helland, 2018). This quote summarises my opinions well on the future of the genre, and the advantageous position it holds being born on the most revolutionary and quickest growing platform.

The huge strides being made toward mainstream attractions such as the olympics and Asian games cement e-sports place within modern culture. The fundamental principles of marketing apply; if people are willing to buy it, it will sell, and therefore will be successful; the decisions being made to include e-sports wherever possible is evidence that it will sell, and attract an audience.

Both sports and e-sports share a powerful quality protecting them from the decline of traditional linear television in favour for more on-demand consumption habits; this is that they both function as live events. Although this is a disadvantage in terms of rewatchability and the lifetime of a particular production instance, the appeal derived from the indeterminate results of each game has many advantages. The short lifespan of each production means that it's unlikely to ever be cast aside or saved for the purposes of "binge watching" as the ultimate goal is to see and experience the result of that specific game, this is significantly diminished if the outcome is already known. The free-to-watch model prevents lost revenue to illegal streaming and piracy as there would be no advantage for spectators to watch via these methods. To this end, e-sports has positioned itself to both embrace change and protect itself from external negative trends within the industry, an ideal model for success.

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9.1 Glossary of terms

Live-streaming
Also known as "streaming", where one or more people host a live-broadcast of themselves for the entertainment of others. This will normally include capturing the host's computer screen (when playing games or creating digital content), with a section of the broadcasting frame dedicated to a player-camera or webcam. Similar to live-vlogging. Streamers will often interact with viewers via a chat system, webcam, and/or microphone.

FPS Game
A first person shooter game. I.E., A game whose character you view from a perspective that he/she would see, typically with the goal of aiming and shooting at targets.

Turn-based Strategy Game
A subgenre of strategy games where inputs and actions are performed on a turn-by-turn basis most similarly recreating the experience of traditional board and card games.

RTS Game
A real time strategy game. A subgenre of strategy games where inputs and actions are performed in real time at a player's discretion, not on a turn-by-turn basis. Typically involving a player controlling multiple units or characters from a third person perspective, such as directing the overall strategies and tactics of an entire army.

MOBA Game
A multiplayer online battle arena game. A subgenre of RTS games containing largely similar gameplay characteristics to other RTS games but with the distinction of only controlling one singular unit or character from a third person perspective.

Battle Royale Game
Commonly referred to as "Battle-royale" or "BR". Participants are dropped into a map and forced to survive for as long as possible (until only one remains) whilst the available playing area constricts over time, forcing player interactions. The name "Battle Royal" comes from a Japanese science fiction / thriller movie released in 2000 of the same name, also known as "Batoru Rowaiaru".

Free-to-play
A video game that has a significant portion of it's content accessible to the public without the need to purchase or pay for anything.

Microtransaction
A small financial transaction conducted online. Within the gaming industry this typically refers to the individual purchase of a specific piece of game content, usually not integral to the overall gameplay. Examples may include aesthetic changes such as colour schemes or specific character adornments.

Quake
An FPS game developed by id Software and published by GT Interactive in 1996.

League of Legends
Commonly referred to as "LoL" or "League". A MOBA game developed and published by Riot Games and released in October, 2009. One of the most successful games of all time and is entirely free-to-play, supported by microtransactions. One of the largest current competitive e-sports.

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive
Commonly referred to as "Counter-Strike", "CS" or "CS:Go". An FPS Game which is the fourth major installment of the Counter-Strike series developed by Hidden Path Entertainment and Valve Corporation. Previous games in the Counter-strike series have helped establish a competitive e-sports scene. CS:GO is one of the largest current competitive e-sports.

Fortnite - Battle Royale
A FPS Battle Royale game released on 25 July 2017 by producers Epic Games. Fortnite has the unique selling point to most other BR games as players are allowed to build their own defensive structures in real time.

LAN Party
A social gathering of like-minded gaming enthusiasts with the intention of socialising and playing video games. Originating in early computer gaming prior to advancements in internet connectivity when playing on a LAN or Local Area Network was required to partake in multiplayer games and tournaments.

9.2 Interview guides

Depth interview
A. Opening questions
- Who are you and what do you do for a living?
- How long have you been working in your current occupation?
- How did you get into this industry? (Why E-sports?)
- Do you play videogames yourself?
- Excluding work, how much time do you spend interacting with video games and E-sports?

B. What is E-sports/E-sports as a genre
- How would you define E-sports?
- How do you think most people who aren't exposed to it perceive E-sports initially?
- Which existing genre would you consider E-sports as a visual medium?
- Can it be compared to other genres? If so, which and why?
- In what ways does it stand out from more traditional genres?
- Why do you think it has grown so fast?

C. Audience and attraction
- Who do you believe is the targeted audience and who is the actual audience?
- What about E-sports appeals to this audience?
- What forms of media do you believe is best for reaching this target audience? (Pros/cons)
- What is creative/innovative about E-sports?

D. E-sports future
- Do you think E-sports will be shown on TV in the future? (Why/why not?)
- How has E-sports helped to strengthen the recent boom in online streaming as a media platform?
- Do you believe E-sports and streaming is harming traditional TV broadcasting?

- In what ways could E-sports need to change to become more mainstream in society?

- Where do you see E-sports in five years, is it here to stay? (National/International)

Interview guide

Focus group

A. Opening questions

- What is e-sport?

- How much time do you spend following and watching E-sports? (For example during one week)

- How much time do you spend actively playing video games? (For example during one week)

- How long have you considered yourself a gamer.

- How long have you watched E-sports?

- Do you find as much interest in traditional sports (If not, why)?

- Do you view E-sports as a sport? (Why/Why not?)

B. Why esport?

- Why did you start watching E-sports and how did you find out about it?

- What types of games are best suited to being an E-sport?

- When do you watch E-sports? (Live, when appropriate)

- Where do you watch E-sports? (With friends, alone etc)

- Would you be interested in more viewing events?

- Would you be interested in / have you beefore been to a live E-sports event?

- What specific things makes E-sports interesting to you?

- Which existing genre would you consider E-sports as a visual medium?

- Do you think you would watch E-sports if it was on TV or continue to stream instead?

- How does e-sport stand out from other types of entertainment?

C. The future of E-sports

- Why do you believe NA E-sports as an entertainment platform is more successful than Europe?

- What would it take for you to watch norwegian E-sports?

- Where do you think E-sports will be in 5 years?

- Do you believe E-sports will be a successful olympic sport and expand the olympics viewership?

- Will VR change the future of E-sports?

- Does the introduction of VR and augmented reality provide the potential for E-sports to overtake traditional sports?