

The Rise of eSports: A Discussion on the Industry and its Potential Impacts on Gaming

by Christopher Irwin

For the latest Emerging Leaders of Gaming™ webinar, The Innovation Group teamed up with the American Gaming Association (AGA) to present a topic that has become increasingly more popular: eSports. Two of The Innovation Group's top analysts were joined by the following team of well-versed panelists who provided a high-level overview of the industry's history, discussed key issues the industry currently faces, offered their opinions on the future of eSports, and discussed eSports opportunities to both gaming and betting operators:



Brett Abarbanel, Ph.D.

Head, Social, & Recreational Gambling Research, UCLA

Brett brought to the webinar a wealth of information which she has gathered through her numerous studies on global gambling and social science applications.



Seth Schorr

Chairman, Downtown Grand Las Vegas

When it comes to casino implementation, Seth has been on the forefront of eSports in North America. He continues to lead the effort to develop the first fully integrated eSports program in a casino resort.



Hai Ng

Partner, Neomancer

Hai has over three decades vested in the technology industry and over a decade in gaming. By combining these two aspects, he has become one of the foremost experts on the eSports industry.

The fast-growing eSports industry can no longer be ignored. Industry estimates indicate that the industry generated total revenue of \$325 million in 2015, representing year-over-year growth of over 67% from 2014. Industry experts estimate that this figure will surpass \$1 billion in 2019. Regarding industry growth, Hai Ng noted that, “using eSports as a marketing tool has been working and will continue to work.” On top of this, estimates indicate that the eSports betting market was roughly \$2 billion in 2015 and is estimated to exceed \$23 billion by 2020. With the strong growth eSports has (and is expected to) achieved, there have been numerous ancillary products and services launched over the years. From eSports arenas to streaming services dedicated to eSports and even fantasy sports leagues, the industry has been a popular outlet for innovation and expansion.

The three panelists covered topics ranging from the historic growth of the industry to the popularity of skin betting, even including ideas on the direction eSports will take in the future. Though the hour went by fast, the panelists covered each topic from multiple angles. The main complaint attendees had about the webinar? It was too short. Given their depth of knowledge in the field, our panelists could have expanded on each individual topic for hours. However, given the popularity of Emerging Leaders of Gaming webinars and this topic in general, The Innovation Group will be expanding on the topics covered in this panel at the upcoming Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas September 27-29.

The webinar itself was a complete success. More than 220 viewers tuned in to listen to these working class panelists. Visit our [Emerging Leaders of Gaming page](#) to download audio and presentation materials from this recent eSports webinar. To learn about our upcoming G2E Preview webinar in September, follow us on social media.