

**Call for Papers: *Journal of Electronic Gaming and Esports***

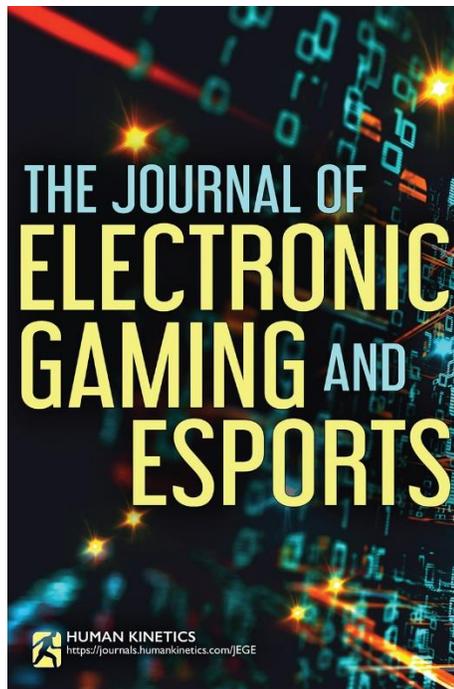
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Special Issue 01:

Diversity and Sustainability in  
Electronic Gaming and Esports

Special Issue Guest Editors:

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Information about *the Journal of Electronic Gaming and Esports* (JEGE)

[JEGE](https://journals.humankinetics.com/jege) is an international indexed and peer-reviewed journal focused on publishing innovative empirical, theoretical, review, interdisciplinary, and industry-related research on all aspects of video games; esports; gaming on personal computers, mobile devices, consoles, and cloud-based platforms; haptic gaming and technology; virtual, augmented, mixed, and extended reality gaming and technology; new and emerging technology used for recreation, rehabilitation, and competition; and more.

Information about the Special Issue

The esports and gaming ecosystem is constantly changing, with new games, new technology and ever-evolving stakeholders (e.g., players, fans, consumers, event organizers and managers, governing bodies, game developers etc.) (Hedlund et al., 2021; Scholz, 2020; Taylor, 2012). If esports and gaming strive to be an international and inclusive activity for everyone, then understanding the diversity of electronic gaming and esports and how they intersect with essential topics such as gender, identity, racism, multiculturalism, equality, accessibility, inclusion, sustainability, environmentalism, globalism (and glocalism), just to name a few, are of utmost importance. Hypothetically,

esports should allow for equality that is rarely possible in sports, but research shows that successful participation depends on overcoming a range of cultural, social, material and physical factors (also see Anderson & Johnson, 2021).

Esports has long been entrenched in what T.L. Taylor (2012) calls “systems of mastery and exclusion,” in which it is difficult for anyone who does not fit the normative concept of the “gamer” to thrive. This is further compounded by how gaming culture unfolds in the esports space. There have been times when this reality had become more evident to the larger gaming public, such as in 2012 when contestant Miranda “Super Yan” Pakozdi was publicly and repeatedly sexually harassed on the esports reality show *Cross Assault* for nine days before forfeiting (Harper, 2014). In 2016 Kim “Geguri” Se-Yeon, the first woman to play in the *Overwatch* League, was accused of cheating because it was “unbelievable” a woman could be that skilled (Cullen, 2018; Ashcraft, 2016), or when one league put a limit on the number of queer and transgender women who were allowed to compete in a women’s *League of Legends* tournament due to their perceived “unfair advantage” (McWhertor, 2015; Witkowski, 2018). These norms also vary based on specific esports subcultures. The fighting game community, for example, is situated “in a culture where even the best and brightest of women players are treated with disdain, hatred, and abuse” (Harper, 2014). Even exceptional non-binary esports athletes such as Dominique “SonicFox” McLean, who “cemented their position as the best Mortal Kombat player of the last decade” among numerous awards and accolades, are often subjected to harassment and trolling behaviour (Ennis, 2019; Joho, 2019). Chiquita Evans, the first woman drafted into the NBA 2K League in 2019, had faced competitive disadvantages in previous years where teammates refused to play with her (Dator, 2019). Based on many of these examples, it is easy to see why many women’s esports competitions and events are unfortunately perceived as, at best, highly controversial and, at worst, examples of their inherent lack of skill (Taylor, 2012; Vossen, 2018; Witkowski, 2018). At the same time, when diverse esports athletes achieve high levels of success, as noted by Chiquita Evans, “Women have actually come to me and told me I was an inspiration, and so it wouldn’t be right for me to give up, because they believe in me” (Dator, 2019).

Intersecting with these gendered concerns is the rapidly increasing issue of harassment, racism and inequality in gameplay spaces. Braithwaite (2016) recounted numerous examples of esports culture filled with sexist, homophobic, misogynistic, racist and toxic behaviors. Marginalized players have been forced to develop coping strategies for dealing with the inescapable harassment that takes place in gaming spaces (Cote, 2017). This year, 83% of adults and 60% of children faced harassment while gaming online (ADL, 2021). Eight percent of those adults and ten percent of those children reported: “being exposed to discussions in online multiplayer games around white

supremacist ideology” (ADL, 2021). These findings align with research that highlights how voice chat in online games is frequently a sight of vocal profiling and gendered, racist, and homophobic harassment, which is incredibly intense for people of colour (Fletcher, 2020; Gray 2011; Gray, 2014; Nakamura, 2013). Addressing diversity issues will help to improve the overall sustainability of esports.

Finally, we must also contend with the role of electronic gaming and esports in global economic, political and environmental processes. As Partin (2017) argues, it is essential to make sense of the political, economic, and socio-technical apparatus that enables gaming and esports to continue for profit. Partin suggests that we need to lift the veil on ‘sports’ as a typical framing for competitive gaming and reveal the inequities that reside in publisher-owned distribution platforms and cloud computing services. Indeed, Brock and Johnson (2020, 2021) stress that changing models of game monetization provides new contexts for productive labour and consumption. Related to these concerns is the need to pay more attention to the American and Eurocentrism that dominates discussions about electronic gaming and esports. As Mukherjee (2017) argues, games research tends to neglect questions about empire and colonialism, which shapes the ethics and politics of game design and culture. Harrer (2018) too demonstrates how neocolonial themes in games casually reproduce racism for the sake of entertainment. Lastly, we must also examine the environmental impact of electronic gaming and games. As Abraham (2020) notes, it is often a trope when discussing the game industry to celebrate its size and success whilst overlooking (or downplaying) its role in climate change. Abraham argues that research needs to pay more attention to the sustainability of electronic gaming at a time when the United Nations is calling for the industry to take action (also see Dyer-Witthford and de Peuter, 2021).

We are interested in submissions *from any discipline* including but not limited to: Social Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Kinesiology, Sports and Exercise Science, Cultural Studies, Humanities, Game Studies, Gender Studies, Critical Race Studies, Disability Studies, Fan Studies, Human-Computer Interaction and Health Sciences.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Games, culture, and identity
- Prejudice, stigmas and inequalities (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism etc.) in gaming and esports
- Toxicity and “esportspersonship” in online gaming and media
- Age discrimination in competitive and online play
- Social stratification and monetization in gaming
- Streaming challenges and opportunities

- esports fans and audiences
- Sexualization and/or commodification of players and bodies
- Online and in-person harassment
- Competitive vs casual players
- Disability, accessibility, and gameplay
- Health, illness, and injury
- Stereotype threat and competitive play
- Economic, social and ecological sustainability in gaming
- Activism in games and competitions
- Esports work: labour and employment conditions
- Sexual assault and discrimination in the workplace (including Twitch, competitive gaming, and the industry)
- Healthy gaming lifestyles
- Organizing games and competitions for an inclusive and safer world
- Inclusive online gaming platforms
- Building inclusive gaming and esports facilities of the future
- Politics in gaming and esports organizations and communities
- Inclusive governance of esports
- Challenges and opportunities facing esports franchises and investors

Important Dates:

Initial Abstracts (*maximum 1000 words*) Deadline: March 1, 2022

Abstracts should be emailed to: [jege.si.das@gmail.com](mailto:jege.si.das@gmail.com)

Initial Submission Responses Sent Out By: April 15, 2022

Full Paper Submission: October 1, 2022

Manuscripts submitted through ScholarOne: [https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hk\\_jege](https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hk_jege)

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Manuscripts rejected for the special issue will be considered for standard publishing in JEGE. Additional questions can be directed to any of the special issue guest editors.

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