



ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ESPORTS

Jenny, S. E., Besombes, N., Brock, T., Cote, A. C., & Scholz, T. M. (Eds.). (2025). *Routledge handbook of esports*. Routledge.

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Any digital game researcher and aficionado must have heard the term esports at least once and probably has seen several matches, either online or in person. While researchers from other fields might not consider esports a relevant and rich field to study, the authors of the reviewed handbook prove the academic milieu otherwise. Jenny et al. offer a thorough base for esports, divided into ten elaborated sections with rich referential material over more than 700 pages. The handbook was peer-reviewed by esports industry figures and researchers, and authors claim that their book brings new information that cannot be found in academic research yet. Each subchapter is supported with questions for discussion and provides interviews on the topic with key figures in the industry.

The authors aim to bring forth a “vast interdisciplinary overview of esports” (p. xiii), encompassing every aspect of this field of study and of the world of digital games. Tens of authors participated in this handbook and provided their expertise through ten sections, which we shall briefly discuss to familiarize you with the magnitude of this handbook. The first section named “Introduction to Esports” looks at esports from scratch: it elaborates the very base of the term, discusses definitions of esports, its origins and development to today’s state, the stakeholders involved, kinds of genres and games involved in esports, including the development and publishing of a suitable game for esports that may contribute to its success. The section ends with the equipment and infrastructure needed to play games and organize esports events.

The second section named “Esports Research” focuses on the status and key topics of such a young field as esports, the environment wherein esports research can be performed, as well as journals where researchers can publish their insights and findings related to esports. The authors also recommend research topics, and the following two subchapters detail the methodology of esports research. Esports players are pivotal parts of the third section. The motivation behind becoming an esports player is discussed, as well as the typology of esports players and their skills. The authors analyse players’ performance, coaching, they discuss the connection of esports with applied sport psychology, as well as esports players’ health and wellness, ergonomics and injuries, parental and family support, and career development. The section provides an exhaustive view of these important human catalysts of esports.

The fourth section describes esports business and management. From financial and business models through the organization of esports events, venue design, hospitality and tourism, branding and marketing, sponsorship, public relations to human resource management, the section provides the practical and entrepreneurial aspects of being involved in esports. We can see that not only active agents in esports (thus players) are important, but also passive agents, who provide the environment for players and viewers.

The fifth section of the book looks at media and communication in esports. Its presentation in media, production, streaming, spectatorship, and fandom are thoroughly

discussed with specific rationale on how they influence and shape esports. Education is further dealt with in the sixth section. The authors provide an overview of education programs at various stages of education, how competitive esports events are organized at schools and the framework of support for making esports part of education. Options for students are discussed and suggestions for the programs to obtain better alignment with esports philosophy are proposed.

The seventh section discusses critical concerns in esports. It introduces esports governance and law, the possible inclusion of esports in the Olympics, esports gambling, ethics and cheating, toxicity, diversity, equity and inclusion in esports, how people with disabilities can enjoy esports, and concludes with environmental sustainability. Since the stigma of digital games being pop cultural phenomena suitable for children, or a non-serious medium and causing harm can still accompany discussion about digital games and esports in general, the authors thoroughly discuss each potential concern regarding esports and this section in particular can contribute to a better understanding of esports by the general academic public.

The eighth section aims at introducing global esports cultures. The authors focus on each continent and provide a thorough probe into the history and development of esports in the given regions and the tradition of esports there. The penultimate, ninth section focuses on the future of esports, as well as its sustainability, and the final, tenth section concludes the handbook with all the key term definitions in esports.

The *Routledge handbook of esports* is a unique and complex publication that aims to cover all aspects of esports, and shall probably serve as a multidisciplinary bible for every researcher investigating digital games and esports. Ten rich sections composed by experienced authors provide a detailed view of esports, and discuss every possible aspect that might be of interest. It is a much needed publication.

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