Women in eSports – The New Side of Gaming

According to Intel estimations, there are 1.8 billion gamers worldwide\(^1\). That means one-fourth of the world population plays computer games. By the end of the next two years, this number will grow by additional 300 million people — almost the size of the U.S. population\(^2\). Fans of electronic entertainment can be found in every demographic, regardless of nationality, age and gender.

Today, women represent 48 percent of all gamers\(^3\) and this population is growing quickly: According to research conducted by the Newzoo\(^*\) company, it has increased by 37 percent since 2011. Today this number is estimated at 820 million women.

This trend can be noticed in every part of the world. In Australia, women form 47 percent of all gamers, with 45 percent in Europe and 43 percent in Japan. In the United States, the number of adult female gamers is larger than number of young male gamers (male gamers under 18). The average age of American gamers, regardless of their gender, is 35. The average age of the most active female players is 43\(^4\). When we look at these numbers, it may seem surprising that only about 15 percent of playable characters in video games are female\(^5\).

Women in eSports
Regardless of gaming preferences, women players are definitely making their mark on the eSports scene. Teams are becoming more popular across the FPS, RTS and MOBA titles. While the world of professional players is still dominated by men, female players are building credibility in the tournament scene.

Intel supports three female Counter-Strike teams: Let the Games Begin! eSports, Team Property of Sweden, and CLG Red from North America, on their quest for worldwide success. As in all sports, female eSports competitors have to demonstrate consistent determination. Thanks to players’ perseverance, their momentum in the eSports scene is growing and tournaments are becoming more popular among viewers and sponsors. This year’s edition of the Intel Extreme Masters event will encompass a women’s Counter-Strike: Global-Offensive\(^*\) tournament, The Intel\(^*\) Challenge. Teams from all around the world will compete for the $30,000 prize pool.

Gaming for All Communities
An issue the industry needs to understand is why girls and women are underrepresented in eSports. AnyKey, a new organization from ESL\(^*\) and Intel, concentrates on building a welcoming environment for girls, women and other underrepresented groups in the gaming world. They have found online bullying and harassment to be a major reason women stop playing. To combat this issue, AnyKey will announce a code of conduct to address expectations of all participants and fans of eSports, encouraging a zero-harassment policy.

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\(^1\)https://blogs.intel.com/technology/2015/08/the-game-changer/
\(^3\)http://newzoo.com/in-the-press/women-get-action-video-games/
\(^4\)http://www.theesa.com/article/150-million-americans-play-video-games/
The 10th season of Intel Extreme Masters has attracted a record number of viewers, both online and in-person. This year’s final will be held at the Spodek Arena in Katowice, Poland, from March 4-6.

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