

RHODY ESPORTS



Proposal:
Provision of an
Esports Computer
Lab for Students

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<https://its.uri.edu/rhody-esports/>

Rationale

Esports is a growing area of digital transformation and collegiate competition among universities. Esports provisions a pathway for increased social connections among students, alignment with new degree programs, increased university reputation, and a host of other benefits. It also provides a critical venue to close the gender and equality gaps through inclusion of wider demographics and non-traditional students in sporting events and campus communities. The following proposal covers support and engagement opportunities between URI IT, Union, and student interest groups.

“Based on current growth trends, by the end of the decade roughly half of all higher education institutions in the United States will have some affiliation with esports in a official capacity”

Esports Foundry, 2022 Report

The University of Rhode Island leads innovation in multiple areas. With robust student gaming clubs and sporting already well established, esports enthusiasts seek to expand on the professional spaces available for esportsing events as well.

The Rhody Esports Coalition (REC) is a group of campus collaborators partnering to implement a small esports computer lab in the Memorial Student Union where both the student gaming club or any student interest groups could partake in competitive esportsing.

Following is supporting data, survey and feedback results, as well as the project budget. REC now seeks to finalize spacing allocation for the esports lab, and then funding, equipment, and technology upgrades.

REC welcomes new members interested in collaborating on this project.

Please contact Michelle Rogers for inclusion in future planning meetings: rogersmd@uri.edu.

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Project Goals



ESPORTS DATA



COMPARING REVENUE

Industry Revenue Reports, 2018

- Gaming 138 Billion
- Sports: 75 Billion
- US Films: 42 Billion

COMPARING GROWTH

Year over year growth:

- Esports 2018: 1 Billion
- NFL 2018: 8 Billion
- NBA 2018: 7.4 Billion

GROWTH

Global gaming market expected to double by \$500 billion by 2030.

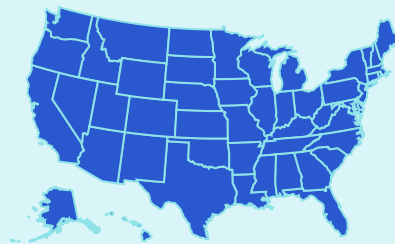


ESPORTS INDUSTRY

- Global esports revenue in 2021: 2 Billion
- 2020 esports global audience: 435.9 million
- 2020-2025 compound annual growth rate = 6%
- Top esports champions are age 20-24
- Esports audience at 540 million people in 2023.

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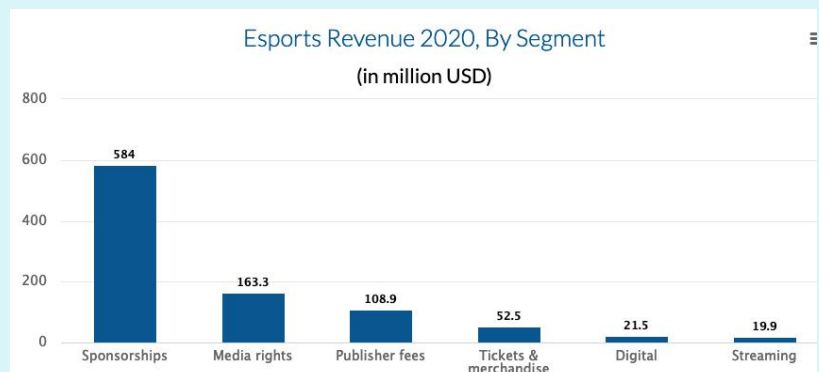
US ESPORTS GROWTH



CAGR 36%

Esports 2020-2025 Growth

US is largest esports industry after China

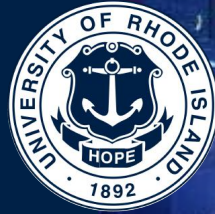


Student Survey

URI Student Gaming Club Survey Results

A survey of likert scale and multiple choice questions gauging esports interest was sent to the URI Student Gaming Club in February 2022, including alumni members.

Of 37 respondents 84% (n 31) said they were current members, and 87% said they were are full-time students (n 27). Findings reported here included all respondents.



KEY FINDINGS

N = 37



Interest

54% (n 20) of respondents were open to both informal and formal competitive esports programs.



Participation

73% (n 27) of respondents were interested in a structured esports program with both academic and athletic requirements for participation.



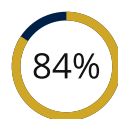
Location

Of respondents, 67% (n 16) felt having a central location on campus was critical. One respondent quoted, "Absolutely necessary, as it is synonymous with the presence of the organization... it makes it more open to newcomers as well."



Experience

79% (n 19) of respondents were interested in working with the campus on esports project implementations, and 48% (n 15) were interested in working in the esports industry after college.



Community

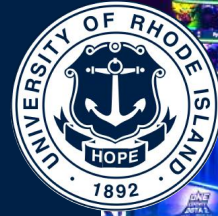
84% (n 31) expressed the moderate to extreme necessity of teams and clubs to their feeling of connectedness with the campus community.



Potential Impact

Paul Elliot with Varsity Esports Foundation conducted a study on current esports members.

The survey was sent to an undisclosed number of students in esports programs across the USA. A total of 40 survey responses were recorded, and no response rate measured.



KEY FINDINGS

(n = 40)



Improved GPA

Average GPA of players increased from 57.5% to 62.5% after joining an esports team.



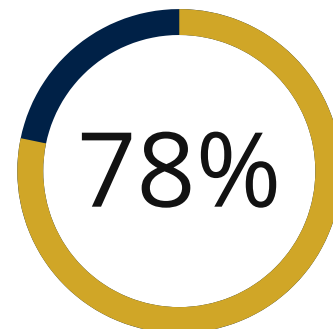
Benefits

82% of respondents reported esports benefited their life.



Community

78% of respondents reported a sense of belonging from esports programs.



Source: <https://www.varsitiesportsfoundation.org/blog-list/survey-participation-esports-clubs>

PROPOSED BUDGET

Desktop Setup x 2: Dell Alienware R15 - \$5,000, Monitor + Accessories - \$1,000	\$12,000.00
Internet Upgrade: Labor cost of running fiber from the distribution switch to the room. Cost of fiber cabling itself. Cost of 24 port gigabit managed switch with fiber uplink(s). Cost of equipment to mount switch (rack).	\$5000.00
Power Distribution: PDUs and added breaker.	\$8000.00
Large Viewing Screen: 65" LCD TV installation for streaming	\$2500.00
Modular Cooperative Gaming Furniture	\$5500.00
Total	\$33,000.00

Grants may provide earlier deployment.

Initial beta-pilot will be run by the student gaming club.

Partnerships & Collaboration

Through collaboration across multiple departments and groups the esports program will be able to provide students a holistic and supportive university and team experience.



STUDENT GAMING CLUB

- **Xan Allen**, President
- **Dylan Difilippo**, Secretary

IT SERVICES

- **Karlis Kaugars**, CIO
- **Michelle Rogers**, Director of Teaching & Learning Services
- **Katie Babula**, Manager of AV Services
- **Heath Loder**, Endpoint Support
- **Amanda Jensen**, Project Leader
- **Kevin Gray**, Project Leader

ACADEMICS - UNION

- **Bhavik Patel**, Senior Information Technologist, Memorial Union
- **Ryan Crowley**, Coordinator of Operational Services, Memorial Union

NIRSA: COLLEGIATE ESPORTS

URI is a member of the national intramural association: NIRSA. Like many intramural groups NIRSA hosts annual esports competitions for the Rocket League video game competition.

<https://nirsa.net/nirsa/tag/esports/>

STUDENT GAMING

URI already has a robust student gaming group that could utilize the esports lab, as well as any other students interested in competitive esports.

CONTACT

<https://its.uri.edu/rhody-esports/> | rogersmd@uri.edu