

International Journal of Esports



Nordic Esports Research Special Issue - Editorial

This special issue contains four articles which showcase contemporary approaches to esports. The articles are based on work presented at a series of workshops arranged in the Nordic countries with support from NOS-HS; the Joint Committee for Nordic research councils in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The workshops were organized to explore the state of esports scholarship in the Nordic region, with one of the aims being assessing differences between approaches within this region as well as supporting the work of early career researchers.

The article by Siutila seeks to understand the organization of esports from the standpoint of national esports associations. It presents an investigative look at eight national esports associations based in Europe. The study is based on interviews with representatives of the associations as well as contextualizing discussions with players and other stakeholders. Overall, despite differences in regulatory and cultural context, the study finds similarities in aims, organizational structure and activities.

The article by Ng et al. investigates connections between esports, gaming genres, and physical activity among adolescents in Finland. The study is based on two large scale surveys deployed in Spring and Autumn 2020 where a lockdown was in effect. The main findings are that all forms of gaming activity increased during lockdown with a positive association between gaming behavior and sports video games at both time points and lower physical activity for esports gamers at the second time point.

The article by Nielsen offers a systematic review of the research literature on toxic behaviour in esports, reviewing 54 articles which report empirical results on the phenomenon. The main finding is that the majority of the reviewed work is based on self-reported data, e.g., surveys or interviews, and the article argues that methods for capturing naturalistic behaviours are both underdeveloped and under-utilized. The author emphasises online video-based behavioural analysis as especially promising in this context.

The article by Malinen is a study of the connections between Formula One motorsports and Formula One esports. The focus is on Instagram representations of drivers and esports athletes, and the main method is critical discourse analysis. Results show differences in volume, quality, and variety of content across these two domains, with one main difference being that of team presence. This suggests that the team is a key aspect of how real-life race drivers maintain a star image in contrast to esports athletes.

We hope these four articles will serve to inspire continued scholarship in esports, both as consolidation of established approaches as well as inspiration for further academic exploration using a diversity of theory-methods packages capable of capturing the dynamism and rapid development of contemporary esports.

Anne Mette Thorhauge, Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen

Andreas Gregersen, Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen

Patrick Prax, Associate Professor, University of Gothenborg

Veli-Matti Karhulahti, Senior Researcher, University of Jyväskylä