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Esports streaming is experiencing significant growth in pandemic

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It's been a tough year for sports, that's common knowledge, but a certain sport that has seen a surge in viewership, competition and value is one you can play at home.

Esports coverage, interest and participation has been proliferating for some time now. YouTubers and Twitch streamers have made significant money on the internet streaming their video games, and then competing in world-wide competitions, leaving their thumbs to earn them the big bucks.

It might sound crazy. How do people watch other people play video games? What's the drive behind it? The fact of the matter is people simply enjoy it. Here are some facts and projections discovered by The Citizen over the winter holidays.

This past November, the streaming website Twitch surpassed its previous record set in October as viewers watched over 1.7 billion hours of online gaming in the month alone according to Venture Beat.

Women make up more than 40% of the gaming lifestyle scene according to StreamElements CEO Doron Nir.

Esports, is valued at $950 million US dollars and is projected to grow to $1.6 billion by 2023 according to Statista.

Twitch represented 91.1% of esports streaming in Q3 of 2020 according to StreamLabs.

495 million viewers tuned into esports in 2020 and this number is expected to rise to 695 million by 2023 according to Roundhill Investments.

Published last week on the House of Highlights and theScore's Instagram page, gamer Skylar Howard researched the University of Kentucky's Twitch page and discovered the school invested into the esports industry.

Sports news site Bleacher Report also had their gaming page tagged in the post.

In e-sports folklore, Twitch is the most popular platform used.

The Amazon-owned streaming-service is home to some of the most popular figures.

Ninja, also known by Richard Blevins, who famously made his name playing Fortnite, currently has 16.5 million followers on Twitch, followed by his compatriot from the United States Turner Tenney (Tfue).

Third on the list is Mississauga's Michael Grzesiek (Twitch name Shroud) with 8.6 million followers on his account playing predominantly Apex Legends.

Video games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends and even Call of Duty have surfaced as some of the most sought out games to watch.

As for sports games themselves, Madden, NBA, FIFA and NHL are of course the most popular.

Back in April of 2020, Washington Capitals forward Alexander Ovechkin took on The Great One, Wayne Gretzky, on Twitch in an NHL charity tournament while in quarantine.

Recently in December, EA Sports FIFA Twitch page completed the competition's FIFA Global Series Europe Qualifier's reaching

943,869 viewers on the channel.

While continuing to surpass thresholds that were in its way, the growth of e-sports has led a university to begin a program. It has provided commentary and journalistic positions for many people and is quite the money-maker if you can enhance viewership experience with your exciting gameplay.

With expectations set to rise exponentially over the course of a three-year projection, and with the recent release of the Xbox Series X/S and the PlayStation 5, it prompts the question: how far can this really go?

The highly anticipated answer, in short, is we'll find out soon enough.