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National University of Ireland Maynooth

Lecture 08-12-2023

Colloquium 'Arts Meet Sciences'

FROM ALAN TURING'S AI CHESS GAME TO ESPORTS: ARE THE NEW GENERATIONS MOVING AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL SPORTS COMPETITIONS?

Esports, or competitive gaming, refers to 'a multiplayer video/computer game competition organized as a spectator sport, typically involving professional contestants and watched by viewers online'. The global esports industry had generated \$947.1 million in revenue in 2020, with esports enthusiasts and occasional viewers at 220.5 million and 215.4 million respectively. As a booming industry and a new leisure pursuit, esports is now getting mainstream attention and gaining recognition in the wider cultural spectrum. This presentation provides an overview of the history of esports and discusses its relationship with traditional sports, highlighting the controversies and challenges facing the rapidly evolving esports industry and community. It points out that esports is not only a new form of entertainment and competition, a lucrative business and a unique cultural phenomenon in the computer age – more importantly, it is a reference point for the next generations. As the esports grows, broader and deeper collaboration between game publishers, esports organisations, tournament organizers, the esports community, licensed betting companies, gambling regulators, governments and law enforcement agencies is needed to safeguard the integrity of the industry and strengthen its legality and sustainability.

Zhouxiang Lu is an Associate Professor within the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at National University of Ireland Maynooth. His research interests are nationalism, national identity, sport history, and cultural history. His recent publications include *The Routledge Handbook of Nationalism in East and Southeast Asia* (2023), *A History of Competitive Gaming* (Routledge, 2022), *Chinese National Identity in the Age of Globalisation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), *A History of Shaolin: Buddhism, Kung Fu and Identity* (Routledge, 2019), and *Politics and Identity in Chinese Martial Arts* (Routledge, 2018). He is currently working on a new monograph on the history of sports video games and virtual sports.