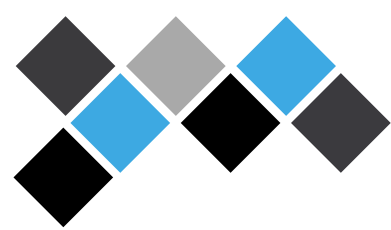




ESPORTS

A Guide for Public Libraries





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Introduction

In September 2019, Potttsboro Area Library in Potttsboro, TX, began an esports program funded by a IMLS grant. With ten new gaming computers and a vastly improved internet connection, Potttsboro Library has acted as a staging location for an esports team in association with Potttsboro High School, opening new hours on Saturdays for the team to practice in private. This collaboration also includes the esports club of nearby Austin College, whose students serve as mentors for the library's club, and the North America Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF), which has provided information and assistance in setting up the team to play in its high school league. In addition to being used by the team, four of the gaming computers are open for public use, which has attracted younger patrons to the library and provides new options for children and young adults in an area where internet access is otherwise extremely limited.

This guide is intended for public libraries that are interested in esports or video games for any reason—to increase participation of young adults in library programming, to encourage technological skills and literacy, to provide a space for young people to gather and practice teamwork, etc. The information presented in this document is not intended to explain everything a library might need to know in order to start an esports team or other related programming (the resources, needs, and capabilities of public libraries are too diverse to be entirely covered by a single guide); instead, it is intended to provide a foundation of knowledge and an account of how one library-based esports program has found success.

If you're interested in learning more or have specific questions about how the Potttsboro program works, please reach out to **Dianne Connery**, director of Potttsboro Library, at library@cityofpotttsboro.com.



Esports 101

What Are Esports?

Esports, much like email, are a digital form of a previously physical entity. Just like physical sports, esports are video games that are played by teams of professional players during seasonal periods. The term “esports” refers to video games that are played competitively by scholastic, club, and professional teams. The types of games that esports feature vary widely, but most fall into several popular genres, including real-time strategy (RTS), multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), and first-person shooter (FPS). Esports attract thousands of players and millions of viewers worldwide each year and have even been acknowledged by the International Olympic Committee as a legitimate form of competition for amateurs and professionals.

Professional esports tournaments, which are often streamed online, can feature prize pools of millions of dollars. As esports grow in recognition and acceptance, many colleges and high schools have begun esports programs that compete against each other in amateur leagues. These teams operate very similarly to other high school sports, including regular practice times and guidance from coaches. Esports allow young people who feel alienated from or cannot play traditional sports to experience the benefits of team competition while increasing their technology skills along the way.

Why Are Esports a Good Fit for Libraries?

Video gaming and people who claim it as their main hobby have often gotten a bad rap in larger pop culture, conjuring up images of lone nerds hunched in the dark of their parents’ basements for days on end. That image may represent the worst of gaming, but it is not the average player’s experience. Far from being an isolating, mind-numbing hobby, video gaming, especially competitive esports, has a number of positive outcomes for its players that can easily translate into success in other spheres.

Critical Thinking: Competitive video games involve much more than just mindless button-mashing. Good players are also good strategizers, who find creative, real-time solutions to complex problems posed by opponents. Experienced players become better at processing sensory information and making good decisions based on that information.

Teamwork: Most esports are not solo endeavors. Players must coordinate with one another to achieve their goals, often dividing up the work and assigning different tasks to players with the best skill sets for the job. Effective leadership is a critical component of esports success, as is the ability to work as part of a group while potentially sacrificing individual recognition.

Self-Image: Like traditional sports, esports have the ability to boost their players' confidence and self-esteem. Esports players have the opportunity to practice improving their skills, experience success, and learn from failure in the safe environment of competition. As an added bonus, while not completely devoid of health risks (professional esports players have to take steps to reduce the risk of eye strain and carpal tunnel syndrome), esports have far less chance of injury than traditional sports like football.

Technical Literacy: Esports familiarize their players with the technologies that are quickly finding their way into every corner of society. This aspect is especially important for players who may not have much access to technology outside of their esports environment. Playing video games competitively allows those players to practice hardware and software troubleshooting while attaining a level of comfort with technology that might be difficult to achieve otherwise.

As with all activities, too much of even a good thing can be detrimental to one's health and wellbeing. Scholastic esports leagues and clubs provide a structured environment that, when managed well, help their young players maintain a healthy balance of school, life, and competitive play, just like more traditional sports teams. Public libraries, with their focus on information literacy, community-building, and personal wellbeing, can be excellent places for young people to grow those skills through esports teams.



Esports & the Public Library

Making a Library Team

While each library and each scholastic esports team looks different, there are several common factors for any organization to consider before diving into the world of esports:

Dedicated Staff Member: Like any complex programming, a library esports team requires oversight from a dedicated member of staff. Pottsboro used a portion of its grant funding to hire a part-time project manager to supervise team business, but teen librarians and technology managers also make good candidates for this role. Depending on your library's staff structure, it may work better for a pair of staff members to co-lead the team. Running an esports team, while rewarding, is hard work, so it's vital that these staff members communicate with and receive support from library administration.

Coach: Having a coach is just as important for esports as it is for traditional sports teams. If the staff member/members coordinating the program don't have the time or technical skills required for a more active coaching role, try reaching out to any nearby colleges or universities with their own esports program (see "Partnerships," page 9) and see if they would be willing to help. In a pinch, a local parent, intern, or volunteer can serve in this role as well.

Hardware: Before starting your team, you'll need to choose what hardware your team will play on. While most games are playable on console (Xbox, PlayStation, etc.) and PC (gaming computer), the majority of esports events use PCs. Gaming PCs can be more expensive than consoles, but they provide greater customization options and opportunities for competitive and team play. This guide assumes PC use, but it can be adapted to consoles as well. For more on hardware requirements, see "Technical Requirements," page 10.

Game: Large esports teams and clubs may play many games, but it's probably wise for a library team just starting out to choose only one. Pottsboro's team

plays *Overwatch*, a popular arena-style FPS with a wide variety of characters and options for team composition. Choose the game that works best of the size and interests of your team, keeping in mind the technical requirements to play it. For a selection of popular esports games, see page 24.

Players: Different games will require differently sized teams of players. Ideally, an esports team should be large enough to form two full in-game teams so players can practice against each other. While there are many popular individual esports, this guide focuses on team-based games and play.

Auditions: The popularity of video games may mean you have more interest than your library's team can support. In that case, you may need to hold auditions to select the regular members of your team. Establish criteria beforehand, like gameplay skill, sportsmanship, etc., and schedule a time for interested teens to try out. Consider inviting representatives from any partner organizations to help you make decisions.

Schedule: Like traditional sports, esports require consistent practice in order to improve skills and group coordination. This can be a loud and sometimes emotional process. In order to avoid disturbing other patrons, practices should be held during periods where the library is otherwise closed or low-traffic. Consider scheduling weekly meetings for team members to practice together under the supervision of a library staff member or coach. Pottsville added four additional library hours on Saturday exclusively for esports team practice. The extra time is divided into three 60-minute blocks (with breaks) so all team members get a chance to play. Alternatively, scheduling practice in a separate activity room may allow greater flexibility.

Tournaments and Events: After practicing on their own, teams will want to elevate their game by competing with others. For starters, consider scheduling scrimmages with other area teams. In addition, national organizations for scholastic esports teams regularly sponsor tournaments for popular games. The North America Scholastic Esports Federation (see page 9) runs free-to-play tournaments multiple times a year. If your program is affiliated with a local high school, you might consider the [High School Esports League](#), with the caveat that membership is priced based on the number of participants.

Internet Videos: From live-streaming and let's plays to Discord and DLC, much of video game culture exists online. One way for your esports program to explore that environment and create additional opportunities for growing members' individual technical skills is through the creation of video-game-focused internet videos. See "Creating Internet Videos," page 12.

Other Ways Libraries Can Interact with Video Games

Starting a library esports team requires a significant investment of time, effort, and money. If your library isn't ready to or can't commit the resources required to run its own esports team, there are other, less involved ways of interacting with this popular and diverse medium.

Video Game Lending Collections: Like a DVD or a CD, a single physical copy of a video game can be played by multiple people as long as they own the hardware on which to play it. Video games are more expensive than many items libraries' lend, however, so additional restrictions and precautions to prevent loss and theft may be necessary.

Video Game Programming: Many public libraries already run game nights where teens play friendly matches of popular video games. The Nintendo Switch is an ideal console for rotating group play, with popular games like *Mario Kart* and *Super Smash Bros* providing quick multiplayer rounds that are fun for players of all skill levels.

Esports Watch Events: If you want to gauge your community's interest in esports, consider planning an esports watch event. Check this [calendar](#) for esports tournaments and events being streamed around the world every day. Don't know where to start? Try [Games Done Quick](#), a family-friendly, twice-annual charity marathon where pro "speedrunners" stream themselves playing a variety of games as fast as possible.

For more info on games and gaming in the library, check out the ALA's [GamesRT roundtable](#).



Partnerships

Starting an esports team might seem like a massive endeavor, and as we like to say in the video game world, it's dangerous to go alone. But you might not need to—by partnering with outside organizations, you can tap into additional resources and expertise to help make your program as successful as possible.

Local Partners

High Schools: Partnering with local high schools is a great way to recruit committed members and create more opportunities for your team. Pottsboro Library is collaborating with Pottsboro High School, where students in a technology class helped design and implement the esports program, in addition to surveying the students to establish how it could be tailored to their interests.

Colleges and Universities: In addition to collaborating with high schools, a library esports team can benefit from partnering with local higher ed institutions. Pottsboro Library's esports team is partnered with [Austin College Esports](#), a collegiate team whose members serve as mentors and advisors for Pottsboro's students.

North America Esports Federation

The [North America Scholastic Esports Federation](#) (NASEF) works with high schools and community organizations to create a healthy, competitive environment for esports teams. Not only does NASEF organize scholastic tournaments in which teams compete against one another, it also hosts a variety of resources (including curriculum guides, webinars, and workshops) to help team organizers run successful, edifying programs for local young people.

Pottsboro Library's esports program, including its partnership models with Pottsboro High School and Austin College, was developed with help from NASEF's resources. If you're interested in the possibility of an esports team or club at your library, NASEF has many resources to help you get started.



Technical Requirements

It's important to ensure that your library has the physical resources to run an esports program. With almost all technical requirements, more is better. While meeting the minimum technical requirements will allow games to function, sub-optimal hardware or bandwidth will make competitive play very difficult and your equipment will become obsolete quickly, forcing expensive upgrades or an early shut-down to the program.

Due to rapidly shifting requirements both for both games and hardware, information in this section may prove to be outdated in a few years. Be sure to double-check with online resources (as well as your library's technology manager) before investing significant resources in gaming equipment.

Recommended Online Resources:

- [Tom's Hardware](#): Comprehensive tech reviews, buying guides, news, and editorials
- [GPU Boss](#): Compare different brands and models of graphics cards
- [Recycle My Machine](#): Partnered with NASEF to provide low-cost gaming PCs to schools and community groups (like libraries!) with a 100% buy-back guarantee

Computers: Competitive gaming requires far better computers than simple internet browsing does. You should check the recommended specs for any games you plan to use in order to make sure you can afford computers that can run it. Any computer used for gaming should have at least 8GB of RAM and will benefit from 30GB+ of available hard drive space. Specific needs for processors, videos, and monitors change quickly. There are a number of websites that can be used to compare hardware components; we recommended a few of them above. Spec requirements for specific games, like this [one](#) for *Overwatch*, are available on a variety of gaming/PC websites.

Many gamers choose to build their own computers rather than buying complete ones. Assembly is challenging, but can be cheaper and allows greater control

over a computer's capabilities. Consider contacting local computer suppliers to see what options (and non-profit discounts) might be available for your library.

Internet Connection: For team games of 5 players or more, at least 10 Megabytes-per-second (10Mbps) of bandwidth is recommended. Games that require only a single player to be active at a time will require less, depending on the exact format used for competitive play. However—and this is especially true of high-traffic networks, like libraries tend to have—increasing the number of people on using a single network will drastically reduce internet speeds. As part of its grant, Pottsville increased the bandwidth of its network from 18Mbps to 500Mbps. This change not only allowed for a smooth gaming experience for the esports team but also increased public access to high-speed internet in an area where such a resource is typically limited.

Games run far better with a wired Ethernet connection than with Wi-Fi. If you absolutely must use Wi-Fi, try to make sure that the entire network is devoted to the games (for the reasons mentioned above), either by holding practice sessions when the rest of the library is closed or getting a separate Wi-Fi network dedicated exclusively to gaming.

Software: Any computers used for gaming must be kept up-to-date with their operating systems. Most games will require regular patching, which can sometimes take over an hour and will consume significant bandwidth. Fortunately, systems will typically notify users when a software update is available.



Creating Internet Videos

Recording, editing, and sharing video game play footage aren't strictly necessary for a public library esports program, especially one where the primary goal is socialization or team play. Esports programs that aim to provide additional avenues for building digital literacy and technological competence, however, may benefit from offering access to additional ways to interact with digital formats. Not only does video editing create an opportunity for team members to increase their familiarity with technology, finished videos can also serve as marketing materials for the library and portfolio items for their creators.

Recording

In order to record video game footage, you'll need access to software that allows you to record computer screens. While there is a wide range of available software with an even wider range of features and price tags, one of the best is completely free. [OBS Studio](#) is an open-source live-streaming and video-recording software with a relatively simple interface and configuration options. OBS may have a steep learning curve for some, but it also has many user-created guides and tutorials—ranging from [entry-level](#) to [in-depth](#)—to help new users troubleshoot and problem solve.

Choosing the right capture software will depend on your library's program, needs, participants, and budget. [FlashBack Express](#) is the free version of a proprietary software with similar tools to OBS but a user interface some may find less intimidating. [Camtasia](#) isn't free or open-source, but offers more customization, video editing tools, and a slightly discounted price to government and non-profit organizations. If none of those options fit your organization's needs, consider consulting one of many online lists of "[best video game capture software](#)" to find an option with the features that are best for your program.

Editing

What your library's esports team does with captured game footage is up to you—and your team members! Your team's creators might make trailer-like promotional videos, analyses of competition footage, "let's play"-style videos of team practices, or highlight reels.

As with game recording, the amount of time, effort, and money your library will want to put into video editing depends on your program's needs, goals, participants, and resources. Video editing is one area where partner institutions can take the lead; for Pottsville's program, the local high school provides space and software for video editing, as well as offering students assistance and tips.

Video editing can also be done in-library with open-source or proprietary editing software. Because most of the video editing needed to create projects with game footage is relatively simple, free and open source options are likely to suit your program's needs. A couple options include [HitFilm Express](#), a video editor with optional, paid add-ons; [OpenShot](#), a beginner-friendly option with an easy-to-use interface; and [Lightworks](#), a more advanced tool for the tech-savvy. If your library already has access to professional-level software—like [Adobe Premiere Pro](#)—through a maker-space or technology program, that's a option too, though we wouldn't recommend purchasing professional-grade software for an esports program alone; the free options available should be more than enough to satisfy your video-editing needs.

Plenty of how-to articles and videos exist online for each of these editing programs, and some even have dedicated help forums. Use these to become familiar with your chosen software before starting your first project (if someone from the library will be creating videos) or so that you can help answer questions (if team members are in charge of video creation).

Uploading

[Twitch.tv](#) and [youtube.com](#) are the two biggest hosts of video gaming content on the internet. Twitch specializes in livestreams, with chat functions and a

subscriber-based monetization scheme for popular streamers. While Twitch is ideal for real-time, unedited content, it is not well-suited to long-term video storage or uploading edited content. YouTube is the real leader for edited video game content and likely the best place for you to host your videos.

If your library already has a YouTube channel, consider creating a playlist (or more than one) for your esports content. If not, make a channel with an easy-to-understand name, like "Potttsboro Library Esports Team," and upload your finished products there. It's relatively easy to upload videos to YouTube, but there are things you can do to make it easier for other libraries, esports teams, and interested community members to find your content. Much of that boils down to a couple of easy SEO (search engine optimization) tips.

1. *Informative video titles.* Make sure your video titles are informative and contain keywords that people looking for your videos might search. This could include the name of your library/team, the name of the game your team is playing, the context of the video (practice, tournament, promotion, highlights), etc.
2. *Useful tags.* There may be an impulse in the library world to transfer our metadata systems to YouTube, but things like Dublin Core and LCSH just aren't as effective in the popular digital environment as simple keyword tags. Tag your videos with the name of your library, the name of the game being played, the word "esports," and other relevant information to make your videos easier for your patrons and stakeholders to find.
3. *Descriptions.* Use the video description to give additional context that doesn't fit in your video title. You can also use video descriptions to link to other library or esports team content (like websites and social media feeds) and give credit to the creator/editor of the content.

There are plenty of ways to make your content more findable beyond those covered here. For more information about SEO and YouTube, check out this [article](#) and this [guide](#). There are also many additional resources on SEO optimization available both in print and online.



IP & Privacy Considerations

Recording, editing, and uploading video game footage to the internet requires some special intellectual property (IP) and privacy considerations, especially when those featured in the videos are minors. Before launching an online component to an esports program, its coordinators should research and develop a solid understanding of the current state of IP and privacy laws, terms and conditions, and regulations affecting all of their chosen technologies.

IP Considerations for Video Sharing

[YouTube's current policy](#) on video game streaming allows for the creation and uploading of video game content, including recordings (edited or raw) of esports practice or tournaments streamed on Twitch or other sites. [Twitch's policy](#) allows for the streaming of almost all legally-purchased video games; exceptions are usually content, not IP, related. In addition, many (but not all) video game developers publish user-created-content-specific guidelines, so you should check to see if your team's game is covered by any developer policies. Policies relating to popular esports games include:

- **Blizzard** (*Hearthstone, Heroes of the Storm, Overwatch, Starcraft II, Warcraft, World of Warcraft*): [North America Blizzard Video Policy](#)
- **Epic Games** (*Fortnite*): [Fan Content Policy](#)
- **Nintendo** (*Super Smash Bros*): [Nintendo Game Content Guidelines for Online Video & Image Sharing Platforms](#)
- **Psyonix** (*Rocket League*): [Terms of Use](#)
- **PUBG Corporation** (*PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds*): [Player-Created Content](#)
- **Riot Games** (*League of Legends*): [Legal Jibber Jabber](#), [North America Community Competition Guidelines](#)
- **Ubisoft** (*Rainbow Six: Siege*): [Video Policy](#)
- **Valve** (*Counter-Strike, DOTA 2, Team Fortress 2*): [Valve Video Policy](#)
- **Xbox Game Studios** (*Halo*): [Game Content Usage Rights](#)

Many of the policies above (which are fairly representative of the industry) permit the uploading and sharing of user-generated content as long as that content is *not monetized*. There are usually some exceptions to this non-commercial rule, such as when the creator is a part of the [YouTube Partner Program](#) or the [Twitch Partnership Program](#), which allow popular users to monetize their content with ads and other features. In order to apply to be a part of these programs, an organization's channel must meet certain requirements, including a minimum number of video views and subscribers.

The size and popularity of most public library YouTube channels makes it unlikely that any related esports channels will meet the criteria for partnership application. Library esports teams should feel confident uploading content to YouTube channels, with the acknowledgement that much video game-related user-generated content exists in a somewhat undefined gray area policed by imperfect algorithms. You may need to be prepared to submit a counter-claim if any of your videos do receive copyright complaints.

In addition, recordings of tournament play may be restricted by tournament organizers. Check with any organizers before recording/uploading content of a competition. Video editors and uploaders should also be wary of using copyrighted music in their video creations, as the use of such music is grounds for a video's deletion off of the YouTube platform. Video creators are advised to use royalty free music or music from the featured game itself, not outside songs or tracks.

Privacy

According to [YouTube's child safety policy](#), minors are allowed to appear in YouTube videos as long as they are not involved in dangerous or exploitative activities. [Twitch's terms of service](#) require all users to be over the age of eighteen or supervised by a legal guardian when using the platform. Libraries should inform team members and their guardians about any plans to stream/upload content featuring their esports team. The library should also solicit parental/guardian permission to broadcast team members' images via a waiver

or similar form (such as a modified [photo release form](#)) when a young person signs up for the team.

Your library should also take additional steps to protect team members' privacy online, such as referring to team members by gamertag or in-game name (IGN) instead of by their real names (a practice that is common in most esports anyway) in online content.

A Note on ESRB Ratings

Many popular esports games (including some of the titles listed in the glossary at the end of this guide) have received an [ESRB](#) (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) rating of M (mature), meaning that the game is best suited to players age 17 and older. Does that mean that M-rated games should be banned from library collections and teen programming? Well, it depends. Which video games are appropriate for whom is subjective and opinions are likely to vary widely even within a community. This may mean restricting all persons under the age of 17 from checking out M-rated video games or attending programming that uses them, it may mean allowing under-17 participation only with a permission slip from parents/legal guardians, and it may mean allowing unrestricted access to M-rated games deemed appropriate by libraries (*Halo* but not *Wolfenstein*, for example).

ESRB ratings are one metric by which games may be evaluated, but they are, like any appropriateness-rating system, imperfect. We recommend that any librarian considering starting an esports team choose a game that they believe, after thorough research, to be a good fit for their purposes, their community, and its values. The good news is that there are plenty of great esports titles (and video games in general) with ratings of T (teen) and below, so you needn't feel as though controversial content will inhibit your ability to create a good gaming program.



Glossary

Esports and video games in general have a vast lexicon of terminology and jargon that can make it difficult for those unfamiliar with the scene to begin learning about it. We've collected a list of common terms and important acronyms to help you get started in deciphering esports materials.

The terms below are organized by alphabetically and by category (out-of-game terms, in-game terms, genres, and popular esports games). For additional terms and definitions, check out this [list](#).

Out-of-Game Terms

coach/player. Just like in physical sports, esports teams are composed of players and lead by a coach. Some professional teams even have multiple, specialized coaches. As a general rule, if you hear a term associated with traditional sports in an esports context, it probably has a similar meaning when used to refer to gaming.

live stream. A stream is an activity where a player or players display a game as they play it to an audience. An individual who is streaming will generally provide entertaining commentary in order to attract viewers, while esports events usually have a commentator or commentators curating the stream and addressing the audience in order to allow the players to focus on their game. Streams are still the most common method of broadcasting esports, but as acceptance for the medium has grown, esports have expanded their presence to traditional sports organizations like [ESPN](#) as well.

North American Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF). An organization that organizes scholastic esports in North America. [NASEF](#) works with a variety of games and organizations to establish leagues, as esports currently lack the existing frameworks used by traditional sports.

play maker. An individual player who executes actions that enables their team to follow up from an advantageous position.

screen caster. Also known as a “caster” or “commentator,” screen casters provide commentary and analysis for esports events. Much like traditional sports commentators, good screen casters are both charismatic and knowledgeable about the game being played.

shot caller. In team-based esports, a shot caller is the player in charge of directing the team during games, making split-second decisions, and determining moment-to-moment tactics. A shot caller’s decisions can make or break a game very easily, making it a position requiring both skill and trust from the team.

Twitch. The most common platform used for streaming. It is a free website that can be used by anyone with an account. Twitch allows live commentary while streaming, which gives the person or people running the stream an avenue with which to directly interact with the audience.

In-Game Terms

ability. An action taken by a character that creates an effect. Abilities generally have a “cooldown” period during which they cannot be activated again, and sometimes consume resources to activate (draining what is frequently referred to as a “mana bar”).

- **targeted.** An ability that is activated while targeting an enemy or ally, either taking effect instantly or seeking the target out.
- **skill shot.** An ability that can be cast without a target. This makes it possible for the ability to miss, but it also allows the player to fire the ability blind when anticipating their opponent’s actions.
- **buff.** An ability that provides a temporary increase to the target’s capabilities.
- **debuff.** The opposite of a buff, weakening the target in some way.
- **area of effect (AoE):** An ability that hits an area, making it effective against groups.

- **damage over time (DoT):** An ability that doesn't inflict damage all at once, instead dealing damage over a duration of time.

actions per minute (APM). The number of specific, distinct actions taken by a player in a single minute. Activating an ability, clicking the mouse, and pressing a key all count towards this number. Mostly used in reference to RTS games and sometimes MOBAs.

build. The customization of a player's in-game capabilities, such as using different pieces of equipment focusing on improving certain abilities over others. Builds can heavily impact how characters function, sometimes changing play style completely.

character. A specific character that a player can choose to play as during a game. Characters will generally have a specific role or roles they are intended for, but unconventional play styles have been known to be highly effective when done correctly, and can act as nasty surprises to opposing teams.

counter. A strategy or character (also called a "counter pick") that is particularly effective against specific strategies or characters. Counters can be general-purpose options that happen to be even more effective under the right circumstances or may be largely unusable outside of the specific situation where they shine.

crowd control (CC). An ability or weapon that somehow limits the actions of its targets. Common forms of CC (and common terms for them) include preventing the target from moving (root/bind), preventing them from using abilities (silence), or rendering the character totally unable to take any actions (stun).

faction (race). Generally applied in RTS games, a faction is the collection of units and mechanics a player has access to while playing. Different factions, much like characters in other genres, have specific gameplay focuses that make them unique when compared to their counterparts.

kills/deaths/assists (K/D/A). A score value composed of the number of times a player has killed an enemy player, died themselves, and participated in kills

without landing the killing blow. Used as one measure of a player's success, although what counts as good values can vary depending on the role being played.

- **K/D ratio.** The ratio of kills to deaths a player has obtained, either in a single game/series, a season, or lifetime.

killstreak. The number of kills a player has achieved without dying. Sometimes provides mechanical benefits to the player or incentives to the opposing team member who ends the killstreak.

map. The digital space in which a game takes place. Some games have many maps while others have very few or only one. The map can affect team compositions and strategies depending on how it is laid out.

meta. Expectations about how players will approach the game based on community experimentation to determine the most effective ways of achieving specific goals.

pick/ban phase (draft phase): In character-based games with team compositions that cannot be changed during the game itself, the draft phase is a period where players select the characters they will play. Both teams will also generally receive the ability to ban certain characters, removing them from the pool of availability for both teams.

- **banned out.** A player who has had all of the characters they are best at playing banned or hate drafted, forcing them to use a character that they are less familiar with and potentially hurting their ability to play the game.
- **hate ban.** A character banned out of spite or distaste by a team, rather than as a specific response to their opponents.
- **hate draft.** A character drafted into a team with the specific goal of preventing the enemy team from getting them.
- **pocket pick.** A character unsuitable for general use that a player has practiced using for the specific situations where they will be effective.

role: In team-based esports, players will generally specialize in certain characters and play styles that come together as a cohesive whole. While terminology can

vary wildly between genres and individual games, here are a number of common terms (and variations).

- **tank.** A character with high health and durability, frequently possessing strong defensive abilities or crowd control. Tanks generally protect their allies or lead the charge on enemies, absorbing damage and disabling threats in order to allow the rest of the team to do their jobs undisturbed. "Bruiser" tanks have strong personal damage, allowing them to function solo, while "juggernaut" tanks are extremely dangerous and hard to kill, but lack methods to get close to their enemies.
- **DPS.** Short for "damage per second," a DPS character is one who excels at doing large amounts of damage very quickly in order to kill enemies. "Burst DPS" are characters that can deal an enormous amount of damage in a short period of time but generally must wait for a set period of time before attempting to do so again. "Sustained DPS" refers to characters that can deal damage consistently without relying on long cooldowns to be effective.
- **support.** A character that is relatively powerless in a void but is able to help other characters to do their jobs more effectively. Supports generally do little damage but possess abilities that can buff allies, heal, and/or debuff or crowd control enemies. "Healers" is an alternative term for a support character that focuses on healing.
- **carry.** A character or player that is the focus of their entire team's design. So-called due to "carrying" their team to victory, a carry can kill entire opposing teams or win fights unless the opposition is able to disrupt or kill them. The rest of the team will generally be characters chosen for their ability to synergize with the carry.

respawn. A character reappearing on the map after dying, usually in a home base of some type.

stats. Short for "statistics," stats refer to the underlying numbers unique to a character or unit in a game. Stats make characters better or worse suited to certain styles of play and determine their efficacy in a given role.

Genres

first-person shooter (FPS). A game played from a first-person perspective with game play emphasizing the use of projectiles for fighting. FPSs have been a staple of competitive gaming from the start and have remained important into the modern era. Although applied to a wide variety of genres and settings, FPS game play is relatively consistent across games.

real-time strategy (RTS). A game played from a top-down perspective, RTS games see each player controlling vast armies and managing their growth while attempting to outmaneuver their opponent and destroy their units. RTS games are usually played one-on-one, but involve an enormous amount of strategy and skill.

economy. A player's resources, including how fast they gain them, how fast they spend them, and which resources they have more or less of. Resources are used to build units and unlock new capabilities.

micro: A player's fine control of individual units during fights, combining reflexes, precision, and motor skills.

macro: A player's skill at reaching their objectives over the course of the entire game. Macro includes a player's economy and when and where they choose to expand their area of control, among many other factors.

zerg rush: A term originating in *Starcraft*, a zerg rush is a strategy where one player forgoes long-term building to create a large army of cheap units before attempting to overwhelm their opponent early in the game before they have had a chance to create an army strong enough to resist.

multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA). MOBAs are direct descendants from RTS games and share their interface and camera style. Rather than controlling armies, however, a MOBA player controls a single character throughout the game, growing in power as they level up their chosen unit.

massively multiplayer online (MMO). MMO games have very large numbers of players in shared spaces within the game. They provide uniquely large-scale content that can involve enormous numbers of players. While not currently a

major part of the esports scene, MMOs see tournament play and have the potential to become more widely-played competitively in the future.

fighting game. Fighting games concentrate solely on an arena-style battle between two players. Players try to defeat their opponent in matches consisting of multiple rounds. As one of the longest-running competitive genres, fighting games often have very dedicated communities, extremely deep levels of analysis, and possess a wide lexicon of terms and concepts unique to the genre.

2D. Fighting games that take place in a 2-dimensional space. 2D fighters have a greater focus on area control and vertical movement.

3D. Fighting games that take place in a 3-dimensional space. 3D fighters have a larger emphasis on positioning and horizontal movement.

team. Team fighting games have each player selecting multiple characters, controlling them one at a time and fluidly switching between characters during a round.

combo. A series of attacks that, when executed correctly, can be executed in sequence without allowing an opponent to escape. Combo usage forms the core of most fighting game play.

super meter. Also known simply as “meter.” While specific terminology varies between games, most fighting games provide a meter that fills up as the player takes and deals damage. This meter can be expended to use super attacks (or “supers”) or sometimes for other uses like enhanced versions of regular moves.

Popular Esports Games

Call of Duty (CoD). One of the most popular FPS series of all time, *Call of Duty* allows for wide customization of a player’s abilities while rewarding strong personal performance and skill. *ESRB Rating: M*

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO). A mainstay of the competitive FPS scene, *Counter-Strike* is known for being team-oriented and cerebral, with a great deal of a given round’s outcome decided before the first kill. *ESRB Rating: M*

Defense of the Ancients 2 (DOTA 2). The successor to the first MOBA, DOTA 2 boasts the most complex and technical play of its genre. Less standardized than esports mainstay *League of Legends*, DOTA 2 has a very open meta that enables an extremely wide variety of different strategies. *ESRB Rating: Unrated, T equivalent*

FIFA. A series of single-player sports games where one person controls an entire team of soccer players. Real-world teams and players serve as the characters with which the game is played. *ESRB Rating: E*

Fortnite Battle Royal. A massively popular battle royal game where up to 100 players scavenge, build forts, and fight each other one-on-one or in small teams to be the last person standing. Unique from many of the other titles on this list in that it is free to play. *ESRB Rating: T*

Guilty Gear. A classic 2D fighter series that was dormant for many years, *Guilty Gear* has seen revitalization recently after the franchise's ownership was fully returned to the developer. *Guilty Gear* has a large, colorful roster and one of the longest-running continuous communities of any game. *ESRB Rating: T or M, depending on title*

Halo. A popular sci-fi FPS that codified many of the genre's standards. *Halo* provides limited player customization other than weapons and resources found on the map, forcing an aggressive playing style by both teams. *ESRB Rating: M*

Hearthstone. A digital collectable card game using characters and lore from *Warcraft*. Turn-based gameplay revolves around decks of thirty cards and an associated character with unique ability. *ESRB Rating: T*

Heroes of the Storm (HOTS). *Heroes of the Storm* is characterized by shorter game length and wider diversity of game play compared to its competitors. Unlike most other MOBAs, HOTS uses a wide variety of maps with varying game play objectives, forcing players to take both the map and their opponents into account when preparing for games and allowing for very unique character designs. *ESRB Rating: T*

League of Legends (LoL). The most popular MOBA currently played and one of the largest esports franchises in the world. *League of Legends* possesses a colossal roster of characters but tends towards a strictly defined role-based meta. *League* is also known for frequent game rebalances, causing rapid shifts in effectiveness between different characters and strategies. *ESRB Rating: T*

Overwatch. A character-based FPS and one of the most popular esports games active today. *Overwatch* offers a wide variety of characters with distinct play styles and unique abilities, giving it more spectacle compared to some more traditional FPS games. *ESRB Rating: T*

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG). A battle royal game in which up to 100 players scavenge for weapons and equipment in order to fight each other solo or in small teams with the goal of being the last person/team standing. *ESRB Rating: T*

Pokkén Tournament. A fighting game based on the Pokémon franchise, *Pokkén* is unique in that it switches back and forth between 2D and 3D game play during a round, giving it a greater level of game play diversity at the cost of some depth. *ESRB Rating: E10+*

Rainbow Six: Siege. An FPS in which two teams of five unique characters go head-to-head and compete to see whether the attacking team can secure an objective before being killed by the defending team. *ESRB Rating: M*

Rocket League. A high-powered sports game where two teams of three players attempt to score goals by pushing a soccer ball with rocket-powered cars. *ESRB Rating: E*

Starcraft II (SC). A quintessential pillar of the competitive gaming community, *Starcraft* has been a defining part of the development of esports over the past two decades. Mechanically, *Starcraft* is a sci-fi themed RTS. While the game only contains three factions, each one has enormous depth and a wide variety of usable tactics. *ESRB Rating: T*

Street Fighter. One of the oldest and most successful 2D fighting game series, *Street Fighter* is among the most influential series of all time and is what many people first think of when the idea of a “fighting game” is raised. *ESRB Rating: T*

Super Smash Brothers (SSB): A series of some controversy in the fighting game community, competitive *Smash Bros* has had a consistent audience for many years and is a very popular game even outside of the tournament scene.

- **Melee (SSBM):** The second *Smash Brothers*, *Melee* is considered by many to be the best competitive game in the series and still sees tournament play even today. *ESRB Rating: T*
- **Ultimate (SSBU):** The most recent release in the series, *Ultimate* has the largest character roster and has addressed or fixed some of the competitive issues in previous entries, making it popular among audiences who like the series and desire greater character variety than *Melee*. *ESRB Rating: E10+*

Team Fortress 2. An early character-based FPS, *Team Fortress 2* emphasizes extremely different and limited play styles among its characters, forcing teams to play with good coordination in order to cover their weaknesses and emphasize their strengths. *ESRB Rating: M*

Tekken. Another long-running series and arguably the most well known 3D fighter. *Tekken* has come into enormous popularity in the past few years as a result of the extremely high quality of *Tekken 7*. *ESRB Rating: T*

Warcraft (WC). A fantasy-themed equivalent to *Starcraft* with a wider variety of faction choices. *ESRB Rating: T*

World of Warcraft (WoW). The most popular MMO game for most of the genre’s existence, *WoW* has defined what it means to be an MMORPG (MMO role playing game) for years. Still hugely popular today, *WoW* has a number of competitive scenes. *ESRB Rating: T*



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Further Reading

For more information about esports and video gaming in general, check out these books (and maybe consider adding some to your library's collection?):

- Bissel, Tom. *Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter*. 978-0307474315.
- Geissinger, Eric. *Gamer Nation: The Rise of Modern Gaming and the Compulsion to Play Again*. 978-1633883796.
- Gee, James Paul. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. 978-1403984531.
- Harris, Blake J. *Console Wars: Sega, Nintendo, and the Battle that Defined a Generation*. 978-0062276704.
- Hustad, Douglas. *Gaming and Professional Sports Teams*. 978-1599539652.
- Jin, Dal Yong. *Korea's Online Gaming Empire*. 978-0262014762.
- Kent, Steven. *The Ultimate History of Video Games*. 978-0761536437.
- Kutner, Lawrence et al. *Grand Theft Childhood: The Surprising Truth About Violent Video Games and What Parents Can Do*. 978-0743299510.
- Li, Roland. *Good Luck Have Fun: The Rise of eSports*. 978-1510725904.
- McGonigal, Jane. *Reality is Broken: Why Video Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. 978-0143120612.
- Mooney, Carla. *Inside the E-Sports Industry*. 978-1599538914.
- Richards, Paul William. *Esports in Education: Exploring Educational Value in Esports Clubs, Tournaments and Live Video Productions*. 978-1673224436.
- Rogers, Ryan. *Understanding Esports: An Introduction to the Global Phenomenon*. 978-1498589802.
- Schell, Jessie. *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*. 978-1138632059.
- Scholz, Tobias M. *eSports is Business: Management in the World of Competitive Gaming*. 978-3030111984.
- Schreier, Jason. *Blood, Sweat, and Pixels: The Triumphant, Turbulent Stories Behind How Video Games Are Made*. 978-0062651235.
- Taylor, T. L. *Raising the Stakes: E-Sports and the Professionalization of Computer Gaming*. 978-0262527583.
- Taylor, T. L. *Watch Me Play: Twitch and the Rise of Game Live Streaming*. 978-0691183558.



Websites and pages linked to in this guide, in order of appearance:

Esports & the Public Library

High School Esports League: www.highschoolsportsleague.com

Esports Calendar: www.esportscalendar.com

Games Done Quick: www.gamesdonequick.com

ALA's GamesRT: games.ala.org

Partnerships

Austin College Esports: www.austincollege.edu/campus-life/student-life/clubs-organizations/esports

NASEF: www.esportsfed.org

Technical Requirements

Tom's Hardware: www.tomshardware.com

GPU Boss: gpuboss.com

Recycle My Machine: esports.recyclemymachine.com

"Overwatch System Requirements": www.wepc.com/benchmark/overwatch-system-requirements

Creating Internet Videos

OBS Studio: obsproject.com

Entry-Level OBS Tutorial: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdqOXl6lFB0

In-Depth OBS Tutorial: www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7teWxV5BCE

FlashBack Express: www.flashbackrecorder.com/express

Camtasia: www.techsmith.com/video-editor.html

"Best Video Game Capture Software": <https://www.pcworld.com/article/3040695/the-best-pc-game-video-capture-software-5-top-recording-tools-compared.html>

"11 Free and Open Source Video Editing Software": itsfoss.com/open-source-video-editors

"The Best Game Recording Software": www.pcgamer.com/game-screen-recorder

“Top 5 Best FREE SCREEN RECORDING Software (2020)”:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiOCi3kUXjw

“The 7 Best Game Recording Software of 2020”: www.lifewire.com/best-game-recording-software-4171306

HitFilm Express: fxhome.com/hitfilm-express

OpenShot: www.openshot.org

Lightworks: www.lwks.com

Adobe Premier Pro: www.adobe.com/products/premiere.html?promoid=19SCDPSM&mv=other

Twitch: www.twitch.tv

YouTube: www.youtube.com

“YouTube SEO 101: Get Started Optimizing Video”:
searchengineland.com/youtube-seo-101-289416

“Electronic Commerce: Search Engine Optimization”:
libguides.rutgers.edu/c.php?g=336740&p=2267128

IP & Privacy Considerations

YouTube “Video Game and Software Content”: support.google.com/youtube/answer/138161?hl=en

Twitch “Community Guidelines”: www.twitch.tv/p/legal/community-guidelines

North America Blizzard Video Policy: www.blizzard.com/en-us/legal/dd76b654-f2c4-4aaa-ba49-ca3122de2376/blizzard-video-policy

Epic Games Fan Content Policy: www.epicgames.com/site/en-US/fan-art-policy

Nintendo Game Content Guidelines for Online Video & Image Sharing Platforms: www.nintendo.co.jp/networkservice_guideline/en/index.html

Psyonix Terms of Use: www.psyonix.com/tou

PUBG Corporation Player Created Content: www.pubg.com/en-us/player-created-content

Riot Games Legal Jibber Jabber: www.riotgames.com/en/legal

Riot Games North America Community Competition Guidelines:
developer.riotgames.com/policies/na-tournaments

Ubisoft Video Policy: www.ubisoft.com/en-us/videopolicy.html

Valve Video Policy: store.steampowered.com/video_policy

Xbox Game Studios Game Content Usage Rights: www.xbox.com/en-us/developers/rules

YouTube Partner Program: support.google.com/youtube/answer/72851

Twitch Partnership Program: www.twitch.tv/p/partners

"Child Safety on YouTube": support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801999?hl=en

"Use of Twitch by Minors and Blocked Persons": www.twitch.tv/p/legal/terms-of-service/#2-use-of-twitch-by-minors-and-blocked-persons

Sample photo release forms: wikis.ala.org/professionaltips/index.php?title=Use_of_Photos_in_Publicity_Materials#Sample_forms

ESRB: www.esrb.org

Glossary

"A Gamer's Glossary of Terms and Acronyms": www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/computers/tips-and-solutions/gaming-week-gamers-glossary

ESPN Esports: www.espn.com/esports

NASEF: www.esportsfed.org