



## Exploring Cultures, Practices, Pitfalls, and Possible Future Pathways

### Guest Editors

Jens F. Jensen, Aalborg University

Kenneth Holm Cortsen, University College Northern Denmark

Esports has rapidly evolved from a niche pastime into a global phenomenon that intersects with multiple dimensions of contemporary life. As a form of competitive gaming, it embodies elite performance, strategy, and digital dexterity. As an industry, it drives innovation, sponsorship, and media engagement, constituting a dynamic sector with substantial economic impact. As part of the experience economy, esports further offers immersive entertainment and community-driven events that redefine audience participation and co-creation.

Beyond its commercial and competitive aspects, esports is increasingly recognized as a powerful medium for learning, fostering competencies such as collaboration, problem-solving, and digital literacy. It also constitutes a vibrant cultural field, shaping identities, narratives, and social practices within digital leisure. Participation in esports—whether as players, spectators, content creators, or organizers—reflects broader transformations in how individuals engage with technology, play, and social interaction.

The approaches to esports as both an empirical field and an analytical object are highly diverse. T.L. Taylor's work examines the cultural practices of esports and the aspirations associated with professional gamer identity (Taylor 2012). Svensson and Pargman

analyse the *sportification* of esports, exploring how esports legitimizes itself as a sport (Svensson & Pargman 2024). Andy Miah investigates the *olympification* of esports, addressing whether and how esports may become an Olympic discipline. While these studies are interested in the practices and the potentials of esports, scholars such as Brett Hutchins link the emergence of esports to the sociocultural conditions of second, or reflexive, modernity (Hutchins 2008).

Lately Lu Zhouziang has documented “A History of Competitive Gaming” (2022) presenting an overall historical approach to esports. Further Anne Tjønnedal has edited “Social Issues in Esports” (2023) as a comprehensive research publication identifying important issues such as gender, mental health and integrity, diversity and inclusion.

Even though these approaches do not share the same theoretical or methodological framework, it is possible to understand esports both as a particular circuit of culture and as part of a broader circuit of culture (du Gay, 1996). This approach facilitates the analysis of how esports are represented, what identities are negotiated, what modes of consumption and production are currently dominant or marginal, and what regulatory frameworks are established and which regulations need to be formulated, realized, and policed.

This call invites interdisciplinary contributions that examine esports through lenses including, but not limited to, media studies, education, business, cultural studies, sociology, and game studies. We welcome theoretical, empirical, and practice-based papers that explore esports as a site of innovation, interaction, and influence in the digital age. This volume intends to explore issues such as:

- How can the esports gaming experience be conceptualized and described?
- What is the significance of multimodal representation in shaping the esports experience?
- How does gender influence the cultural practices of esports?
- What are the elements in esports that contribute to toxicity and exclusion?
- What role can esports play in teaching and learning?
- What role does esports play in the continuity/discontinuity of the history of sport in general?
- What are the challenges of future esports practices in relation to game design, organization, economic structures, and regulation?

- What are the constituent elements of esports ecosystems?
- How does match-fixing challenge esports?
- What key issues related to health and training are relevant to current as well as future esports practices and research studies?
- How are cross-media interactions and convergent media practices relevant to the study of esports?

## References

- Crawford, Garry, Victoria K. Gosling & Ben Light. 2011. *Online Gaming in Context. The social and cultural significance of online games.* London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- du Gay, Paul. 1996. *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman.* London: Sage.
- Hofmann, Annette R. & Pascal Mamudou Camara. 2024. *Critical Perspectives on Esports.* London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003383178>
- Hutchins, Brett. 2008. Signs of meta-change in second modernity: the growth of e-sport and the World Cyber Games. *New Media & Society Vol. 10 (6)*, p. 851-869. Sage Publications.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444808096248>
- Miah, Andy. 2017. *Sport 2.0. Transforming Sports for a Digital World.* Cambridge: The MIT Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7441.001.0001>
- Rogers, Ryan ed. 2019. *Understanding Esports. An Introduction to the Global Phenomenon.* Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books.  
<https://doi.org/10.5771/9781498589819>
- Svensson, Daniel & Daniel Pargman (2024). Esports and Sportification. A View From Sweden. Hoffmann & Camara, eds.: *Critical Perspectives on Esports.* Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003383178-6>
- Taylor, T.L. 2012. *Raising the Stakes. E-sports and the professionalization of computer gaming.* London: The MIT Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8624.001.0001>
- Tjønndal, Anne, ed. (2023). *Social Issues in Esports.* Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003258650>
- Zhouxiang, Lu (2022). *A History of Competitive Gaming.* Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003095859>

Abstract  
Around 150 words

Full article  
Around 3,000 - 3,500 words

Video essay  
Max 7-12 minutes

Text to video essay  
1,000 - 1,500 words

### Practical information

Abstracts: 150 words

Full article: 3,000-3,500 words

Video essays: Max 7-12 minutes, accompanied by an academic text (1,000-1,500 words) that explicitly reflects on the scholarly/academic contribution. Videos must be original.

Abstracts and articles should be submitted to Annemette Helligsø (anhe@ikk.aau.dk). Detailed author guidelines and further information are available on the journal's website: <https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/ak>

### Video Essays

You are welcome to take the opportunity to produce a video essay following these guidelines:

Video essays must be a maximum of 7–12 minutes long and accompanied by an academic guiding text of between 1,000–1,500 words that clearly reflects on the publication's scientific/academic contribution. Video essays must be original works of publishable quality within a strict scientific context and can take argumentative, expository, explanatory, documentary, performative, essayistic, poetic, symbolic (metaphoric), or artistic forms—or a combination of these. The guiding text must clearly explain the argument in the video essay and/or the insight the viewer can gain by watching and listening to it. This guiding text must follow the instructions in the article stylesheet.

**Note:** The European Accessibility Act (EAA) requires audiovisual media broadcasters to incorporate features such as closed captions and audio descriptions to make content accessible to people with hearing or visual impairments. Contributors to video essays are therefore **obligated to include closed captions** in all video essay submissions to meet these access requirements.

Video essays must be final and submitted as a separate **mp4** video file. *Academic Quarter* supports only the publication and not the technical development of video essays, but contributors are welcome to discuss video essays in progress with the editors.

Video essays and the guiding text are reviewed together. The criteria for reviewing submissions are:

Submission/review of abstract

**April 15<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Abstract Response

**May 1<sup>st</sup> 2026**

Submission of Articles/Videos

**July 17<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Peer Reviews Response

**September 15<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Resubmission of Articles/Videos

**October 20<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Layout/Copyedit

**November 21<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Publication

**December 15<sup>th</sup> 2026**

- a** The clarity of the argument (coGENCY).
- b** The technical and stylistic execution of the video material.
- c** The clarity of the guiding text.

**Deadlines**

Submission/review of abstracts:	April 15, 2026
Response to authors on abstracts:	May 1, 2026
Submission of articles/videos for peer review:	July 17, 2026
Peer review returned to authors:	September 15 2026
Resubmission of articles/videos after peer review:	October 20, 2026
Layout/copy-editing:	November 21, 2026
Publication:	December 15, 2026