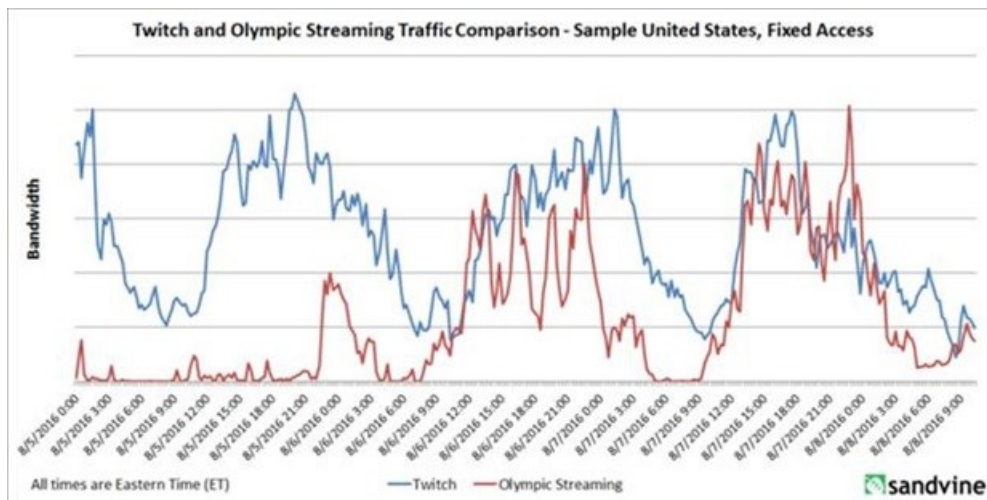


Online gaming offers new markets to brands

As more gamers play sports online, major brands, such as Gillette, are capitalising on this multi-million dollar industry.

“MOBA | Dota | Dota 2 | LoL – confused? Do not be. MOBA stands for Multiplayer Battle Online Arena and Dota is a game – Defence of the Ancients...,” explains Margie Knap, senior strategist at The MediaShop. “ICYMI (in case you missed it), we live in a world of acronyms.

“You may get a case of FOMO if you overheard a conversation along the lines of ‘Did you watch Dota 2 on Twitch? UNiVeRsE walked away with the \$2.7m prize!’ DYKT (did you know that) you can find all the Dota2 images on DeviantArt? Twitch? Amazon’s live gaming platform (which occupied more bandwidth than Olympics 2016 streaming did).”



To quote *Trusted Reviews*: “Since the dawn of time, man has competed against fellow man for gold and glory. Cavemen clubbed each other to death, Spartans raced up and down Greece’s hills at heart-thumping pace, and skilled archers and riflemen altered the course of battles. Today, we call such competition ‘sport’, and we try to be quite civilised about it. So civilised, in fact, that you can now do it from your desk...”

Video gaming has become a professional sport! MOBA stands for Multiplayer Online Battle Arena, where players compete for prize money running into millions of dollars. According to www.esportsearnings.com a total of \$286,622,337 prize money has been recorded across 20,708 tournaments, 34,595 players, 274 games and 570 teams (1998 to 7 February 2017). From 1 January 2017 to 7 February 2017 a massive \$7,608,592 prize money has already been paid out.

Enhanced internet speeds increase participation

This is not a new phenomenon. E-sports has been around for just under 20 years. However, it has become more accessible due to lower computer prices and enhanced internet speeds. Gamers can test their skills with players around the globe and they can watch others battle it out as well (some 35 million people watched the League of Legends World Championships at the end of 2015).

E-sport viewers are ‘dedicated viewers’, according to the stats – an average viewer watches 19 times a month with a session length of 2.2 hours (mygaming.co.za). People turn out in their droves to watch the games play out in stadiums. Players have turned ‘professional’ and computer gaming has become organised and highly competitive. An official organisation was formed in 2016, the World E-sport Association (WESA) to be in charge of the sport, a FIFA for gamers (www.wesa.gg).



What does this mean from a business perspective?

You might think that you have stumbled into a scene from Big Bang Theory. Sheldon and Leonard have ordered the latest Dota2/ League of Legends / Global Offensive – they have taken leave to match their skills against other Sheldons and Leonards, they have ordered in takeaways, they have bought merchandise ranging from t-shirts to peak caps. Except this is not a sitcom, this is real life. This is not urban legend. This is real. These guys sit next to you at work, they live next door, and your son/son-in-law is a gamer as well.

Dell and eLeague have just announced a new partnership to support their vision of producing high quality, innovative e-sports tournaments to reach audiences both via TV and online streaming platforms (E-sports Marketing Blog January 2017).

Gillette partners with ESL

The male grooming brand, Gillette, has aligned itself with some of the most prominent and respected athletes and sports leagues in the world. In January this year, it announced a new partnership with ESL (the world's largest e-sports company), through a sponsorship of the League of Legends Intel Extreme Masters World Championships in Poland from 24-26 February (E-sports Marketing Blog January 2017).

Traditional sports clubs, such as Premier League football teams, are starting to buy e-sports players to represent them in competitions.

South African relevance

Do you have FOMO yet? Is this relevant for South Africa you may be asking. Yes, without hesitation.

Point your browser at www.telkomgaming.co.za and you will have an answer to one of your questions. Click on 'live' and you will be directed to a YouTube page and you can watch games live, watch games you missed, watch interviews, how to train, how to prepare yourself and the commercial opportunities abound. Opportunities for retargeting are rife; you can advertise your motherboards, your energy drinks, merchandise, anything that will appeal to an affluent market. This is not a cheap sport.

TV, the third screen in this scenario, is also broadcasting games. SuperSport screened the eLeague games throughout 2016 on SS5, SS6, SS7, SS8. The audiences are small, but they are there and they will continue to grow. If your message is on YouTube, on Telkom Gaming, Twitter, and on SuperSport, you will reach a market that is very difficult, if not impossible to reach through traditional channels. YRIH.

Acronyms

- FOMO – Fear Of Missing Out
- ICYMI – In Case You Missed It
- DOTA – Defence of the Ancients
- DYKT – Did You Know That
- MOBA - Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
- YRIH – You Read It Here

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>