



## E-Sports Is Not Just For Nerdy Guys Any More

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Revenue for the growing e-sports market is expected to hit \$905 million in 2018, up nearly 40 percent from the reported \$655 million earned in 2017, according to Newzoo, a provider of market intelligence across the global games, e-sports and mobile markets. By 2019, that's expected to hit \$1.1 billion and by 2021, \$1.65 billion.

That set the stage for the E-Sports Activation Conference in New York City ahead of the inaugural E-Sports NewFront, where advertisers, brands, marketers and media buyers gathered to learn about the attributes of this rapidly growing genre.

One panel immediately addressed a misconception about who takes parts in e-sports and here's a hint: it's not just nerdy guys who live in their parents' basements.

A panel titled "Women in Esports and the Video Game Industry," moderated by Sarah Davanzo, VP, consumer, market insight and foresight, disruptive innovation at L'Oréal Group, was quick to squelch that common misconception.

"Women in e-sports is certainly a broad statement," said Davanzo. "SuperData from 2017 says that 41 percent of all gamers in the United States were women, and that number is growing. But what we as marketers need to focus on is who exactly these women are."

"We did some research that supports the participation of women in esports," said Sade Ayodele, managing account supervisor, Ketchum Sports & Entertainment. "And the next step is really exploring what are these women doing, what do they like, what are their spending habits, and what are their gaming habits. We need to dive in deep so brands can speak to them smartly and naturally."

"We've ran almost 2,000 events over the last couple of years and one of the things that has moved me the most is how diverse our audiences are," added Ann Hand, CEO of Super League Gaming. "It speaks a lot to how much gamers are utilizing an anonymous environment to come together and play, and how gaming isn't something you are going to grow out of."

"It's a lifestyle for men and for women," she added. "We treat everyone alike, as it should be."

Also featured at the session were Irene Scholl-Tatevosyan, lead attorney, e-sports, Nixon Peabody LLP and Emily Sun, co-founder Smash Sisters.

Described as a form of interactive entertainment, where gaming, like television and movies, caters to a specific audience in search of a specific category of interest, the secret sauce in the future of gaming for women could be incorporating characters in these games the audience can relate to, according to Hand.

"Not only do we want to see the brands catering to women, we want to see all facets of women represented - from executives to influencers to everyday people," she said. "Like anything else, there is a degree of comfort and familiarity, particularly if you are spending a great deal of time in the gaming world. And this would be all the more reason to get women involved."

For Sun, it is about treating women who are active in esports with equal value and respect.

"As unimportant as this may sound, I would love to buy myself an e-sports t-shirt that is actually created for a woman," she said. "We are equally relevant and we represent a tremendous opportunity to advertisers showcasing their

brands. So, why not recognize the value of women in this community?

Scholl-Tatevosyan, who represents the legal aspect of e-sports and gaming, offers another take on the e-sports landscape.

"Once upon a time, this was a stigma to gaming; a misconception of who exactly was involved. Now, not only is this legitimate, and potentially highly profitable for sponsors, it offers opportunities for any young individual, women included.

"There is so much more to e-sports than anyone might realize," she added. "And now is the time to strike when the iron is hot. This is not just a hobby for the male population anymore. It is a business, and it can offer a satisfying career path."