Game Changer

A TV Documentary about the cultural industry of E-Sports.

By

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Author's Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Media Communications, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: ____Matthieu Dumas_____

Dated: __29/07/2020_____

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Summary

"Game Changer" is a documentary discussing E-Sport and its stand in today's cultural industry. The aim of this documentary is to offer a vision of E-Sports that is renewed, far from the common depiction the genre receives in the media. It proposes a discussion on the current state of E-Sports in the world of entertainment, discusses the coverage it receives in the media, and finally tries to answer if E-Sports are in fact sports or not.

Game Changer is an 18 minutes' documentary, interviewing three professionals within the E-Sports industry; Alex Blaike, PR and Social Manager for ESL Australia, Gael Parpex Director of the Associations "Générations E-Sport", "Competition E-Sport" and co-founder of "Ma Team E-Sport" and finally Justin McNolley "MiracU" Pro-player for "Team Solo Mid" (TSM). They bring their experience and knowledge of the field, for us to make sense of what the culture is about, and give an insightful view on the genre, with the help of visuals and voice over.

It analyses the treatment Gaming and E-Sports receives in the media, pointing it out its unfairness, proposing that there might have been a recent shift, due to the growing popularity of the genre. It also draws the similarities between Sport and E-Sports, proposing that the development, growth, and institutionalization of both

disciplines into spectator sports, a primary form of entertainment, promotes E-Sports as an important media actor of today's society.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Stadium sold out, athletes competing on the stage, the whole broadcasted for millions of viewers online. Surprisingly we're not talking about the last Mc Gregor fight, but the Street Fighter final of 2016. With exponential revenues, a 1000% increase since 2012 (Statista;2020), E-sports has started to take its place in the entertainment industry, meanwhile, the literature about the genre is surprisingly small.

This documentary, first of all, defines the always evolving world of E-Sports while identifying reasons for its popularity. Then discuss the coverage the genre receives in the media, analyzing a potential shift in media coverage of the genre, and discusses the cultural importance of the industry and its future. This documentary proposes a view of E-Sport's culture that is renewed, interviewing different actors within the industry, in contrast with other documentary focusing on more futile sides of the genre, such as cash prizes and the lifestyle of athletes.

Far from the concerns about Gaming and E-Sports that the media and literature have on the subject such as "Are they really athletes?" (Kozachuk et al;2016) this dissertation proposes a discussion on the media coverage that the genre receives and offers the argument that the similarities between E-Sports and "Traditional" Sports, similarities in growth, (i.e.; audience and institutionalization), and reside in

the key term "Spectator Sports". An analysis of previous documentaries on the subject; "MTV True Life" (MTV;2003), "The King of Chinatown" (PsychoCrush;2009) 'The Celebrity Millionaires of Competitive Gaming' by Vice (2014) and "Super Gamers" (BBC;2016) will try to draw a common depiction of Gamers and E-Sports in this type of format.

In Chapter 3 the design of the documentary is discussed, from relating to the literature on storytelling to let the viewer "see the world anew" (Nichols 2002), to the technical aspects and difficulties such as the lack of control on the recording conditions that were met in the making of the video, in the context of a Covid-19 pandemic. This supporting document will chart the progress of the documentary, explain how this documentary was created.

It will be followed in Chapter 4 by a dialogue chapter that outlines and discusses the methods of production and the progress of this dissertation, what worked as intended, and what didn't, on both production and post-production wise.

Finally, it will offer an overall perspective of the finished product, further reflect on the documentary, and review its execution and a note on the questions raised - and conclusions drawn - by the documentary that E-Sport is a potentially important cultural actor in our contemporary society.

Aims of the product

The overall goal of this dissertation by practice is to define E-sports, and video games in general as an important social actor, valuable to cover for media industries and source of entertainment. The research being qualitative, it will try to answer different questions:

1. Show the craze about E-sports in General in the 21st century.

2. Is the treatment received by the genre in Legacy Media changing?

3. Is E-sport an important cultural industry of the 21st century?

4. Is E-Sport a Sport?

Chapter 2. Evidence of research

2.1 Literature Review

E-Sport and Legacy Media.

The image of video game players in media is usually negative, the rise in competitive E-Sports and amount of time people spend playing a videogame, raised a few questions among scholars (Kozachuk et al;2016)

- *Does playing video games affect Attention?*

- *Are they really athletes?*

- *Do video games shape players' offline and online social interaction?*

These are, according to Kozachuk', the main concerns about video games among the population, themes that are recurrent in legacy media coverage of the genre. Although researchers have begun to explore how playing video games may affect attention and cognition, little research exists. Green and Bavelier in 2003 researched the effect gaming can have on individuals and showed that video game players had better performance compared to non-video game players on a battery of tasks including the flanker, enumeration, useful-field-of-view, and attentional-blink tasks. However, other studies have failed to find the same results, there is mixed evidence to support the claim.

"Are they really athletes?" We will cover that question by adding: how does one become an elite athlete? does it requires countless of hard work? Or do innate abilities such as improved reaction time come into play? Or, and this is the most likely scenario, a combination of both that is required? (Ericsson et al;1993) Early data shows that elite Esport players have attentional abilities that are "off the charts" with very low reaction times and excellent performance on many simultaneous tasks. (Kozachuk et al;2016). But that does not matter in the narrative stuck with discpline. At the creation of 'Youtube Gaming' in august 2015, Jimmy Kimmel, Star of a famous American talk show was opening on the subject by saying:

"YouTube launched a new video network where you can watch people play videogame [...] it's called 'we should all be ashamed of ourselves for failing as

parent's channel […] I don't get it watching another person play for you" (Jimmy Kimmel Live/ABC)

Of course, this can be put on the account of novelty (2 years later he was inviting and playing E-sports with competitors.) As of today YouTube gaming as 83.4 million subscribers and is the second most followed category on YouTube after 'YouTube Music' with a hundred million subscribers. Donald Trump, another famous criticizer of the genre, will even add in 2019 after a school shooting:

"We must stop the glorification of violence in society. This includes gruesome and grizzly videogames that are commonplace" (Trump;2019)

We can see a bias in the depiction of video game in media and other institutions. These focus on clichés could be explained with Gramsci's theory of hegemony, (1994) Trump and Kimmel here represent the dominating class. This domination is referred to as 'hegemony' – referring to a process by which, through moral and intellectual leadership, one social class dominates the other. In Quaderni del Carcere or Prison Notebooks, in English, Gramsci was referring to the then bourgeoisie, socially dominant class of western Europe, as
 "the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers wage labor".
This context creates a social 'trap' for the community; they have a bad image, people think they are bad because of that image, they end up stuck in this endless vicious circle, where the public opinion see them as pariahs of society.

Of course, actors of this opinion have a different stand on the subject, this creates a plurality in the way the community is portrayed in the media, but the media are not the only influencer on public opinion. Watts and Dodds in their paper "Influentials Networks and Public Opinion formation" (2007) describe a public opinion system working thanks to three actors; the media, the 'influentials' and the general public. The term influencer defines someone who potentially as a lot of impact on the public opinion, due to being famous or having important role within society (Katz et al. 1955). In this model Watts and Dodds, define every actor as influencing each other, media influence the influencer, which then influences the general public, which himself has an impact on the media. Everything which influences or can influence public opinion belongs to it, art, education, street names … (Gramsci;1994)

Media are an important factor of public opinion, that's why concerning minority media reports should always be as biased as possible and avoid spreading pejorative thoughts about them, as it may influence the general public, in this case in a negative way. Simply by being different, any social group can receive unfair treatment by the media or the population in general. Facing something alien to us might be scary, and creates a fear of the other, the other is different from us, that is why he appears as foreign; "L'enfer c'est les autres" –"Hell is other people" (Sartre;1944) Concerning social Interactions, opposed to regular online multiplayer games in which players are physically distant and rarely meet offline, E-sports involves simultaneous watching gameplay on streaming websites, an audience talking and sharing about what they are watching (e.g., Twitch) and meeting others regularly (competition, training…) the need for solid team communication skills is crucial as well. In many ways then E-sports requires a high level of social skills like

interaction, communication, cooperation, negotiation and management (Kozachuk et al;2016).

Spectator Sports.

To begin with my study, I first tried to analyze where E-sports stand in academic research. E-sports is a relatively new topic in research. To affirm it, scholars have been analyzing its basis and comparing it with traditional sports and competitions. As the arena of 'sports' expands to include E-sports, many of the common definitions of sport are called into question. While traditional sports are of course associated with physical performance, the competitive play of videogames has a lot of similarities with traditional sports. Suits (1988) has defined sports as "simply athletic games institutionalized in certain ways" (p. 61), and Guttmann (1994, p. 158) notes a key criterion in the formation of "modern sports" is that "A bureaucratic organization emerges to administer regularly occurring tournaments and continue to adjust the rules and regulations." First, the athletic side of sports or games can be discussed, poker and chess, for example, are two really popular games that require less athletic ability. But furthermore, it is the similarities in the development of the two disciplines that are striking. Here what is discussed is 'Institutionalization's status' as 'a necessary requisite for a game to become sport' (Summerley;2019) Institutionalization happens when a game's community decides on a ruleset (what Abanazir, 2018, p. 5, refers to as the "source") that all players must answer to, for

competition, promotes an institutional philosophy, and allows that game to grow its scene. Studies suggest that sports and E-sports developed the same way;

Football's universal ruleset, for example, began under the Football's Association (F.A) rules in 1863, beforehand organizing competitions was very difficult. (Polley,2005) An example of this in E-sports would be the 'Smash Backroom', a private discussion forum where influential community members (players, video makers, etc.) established rules for competitive Super Smash Bros. Melee, a fighting game by Nintendo. Just like the F.A back then, it has no real authority, it's up to the tournament organizer to answer to these rule or not, but the rules are now widely accepted among the community, the comity has in the end, authority via the community. The rule sets implemented can be considered valuable for institutionalizing cultural capital. (Bourdieu, 1986) Seth Killian, founder of Evo (Evolution Championship series- Gaming competition) describes community rules as 'A social collective view' in the end connecting players and viewers. Some institutions like the ESL (Formerly 'E-sports League') are funded thanks to membership, alongside an initial investment and cooperation with sponsors. This reflects the early reliance of sports institutions such as the FA, on membership fees to fund the costs of equipment and events. Newzoo (2018) sees the franchising of teams under a traditional sports model as a potential area for growth and this has also helped the development of E-sport institutions. The similarity of league structure (points system, cup…) is not only considered commercially stable but also allows for the planning of tournaments, and a reliable source of entertainment (Summerlay;2019). Historically, developing spectatorship in any sport relies on several criteria identified by Rowe (2004) as follow:

1. competitions that award prizes,

2. venues with large crowd capacity,

3. a labour market of professional and semi-professional players

4. state funding donated to the development of the sport,

5. Merchandizing sales,

6. sports media,

7. institutionalization.

E-sports Institutions follow the same rules, even if points 2,3 can vary according to which game is played (example; Fortnite Tournament 2019 – small crowd in the live arena – 200 people – but huge viewership online -12 million single viewers). Point number 4 never happened in E-sports yet. Nonetheless, Major video game League competitions develop in the style of spectator sports. Sports institutions of both types can be seen as establishing values that help create the character of the sport and its community as part of the process of institutionalization. Both also try to promote their game through promotional events, the institution of universal rulesets and institutional 'philosophy'. The main difference is maybe the quick integration of sponsorship in E-sports. (Abanazir;2018)

2.2 Documentary research

The whole gaming culture is based on interactivity with video and sound. That is why I feel like a video documentary is the best way to introduce the genre to an audience.

Because my proposed form is a video documentary I had to take a look around at what people did before me. The first (ever) documentary I could find on the subject was from MTV True Life, a series of biographical documentaries entitled 'True Life: I'm a gamer' (MTV2003) only 17 years ago. This documentary responds to all clichés quoted in the previous section, it follows six young men showing their passion for videogames and follows them to a local competition where they intend to win a 200$ cash price. It follows the team around, introduces characters by them in-game name: 'Suicide Bob' 'Da Asian', shows their lifestyle… The clichés identified in the first part are all present. An interesting document though as it shows the evolution E-sport went through, small crowds and small prizes to worldwide events. The documentary focuses greatly on the lifestyle of the players, young males living together playing all day, confronting them for example with their roommate who mentions that "they really need to go out" and have them comment on the matter. There is no real narrative structure as it is a short documentary, it is more so an insight, not really exploring the culture but mostly confronting it to – one example would be that one of the gamers introduced is a body builder, after the voice over comments that it might be surprising to see an in shape gamer, they ask him how it could be possible that he got into this culture. Pressing the fact that playing video games and having good physical condition is impossible. The competitive side of gaming Is shown a lot though, the emphasis on rivalry is interesting, in 2003 the competitive side of gaming was mainly underground and this documentary shows it well, we witness the birth of competitive video gaming for the first time in a documentary.

Another documentary I encountered was the 'King of Chinatown', (PsychoCrush;2009). One of the first documentaries to follow the 'celebrity side' of

professional gaming, following the adventure of Justin Wong, a young professional Gamer, and his daily life. Back when gaming was still mostly passion-based and earning money was tough. This documentary has a strange feeling to it, what is supposed to be a story about Justin Wong is turns out to be a depiction of his over the top, over protective manager, who is trying to ride Justin's fame bus. The documentary overviews the culture with no depth – Justin is going to participate in a tournament from which they never go into details, this could be an omission in the documentary making, but what seems to be an interesting personal story about the best Street Fighter player of the world, ends up being almost uncomfortable in some parts if you are a video game enthusiast, the manager seeing the economic potential these gamers have and taking advantages of their sometimes lack in self-confidence, advising for example a player to drop out of school to play more. The music is also misplaced in some parts which is surprising. Once again, the most interesting part is the unintentional depiction of the E-Sports world, which was just beginning at this time. I came across several comments on the Internet and a lot of them disliked this documentary greatly.

 Which also goes for the next documentary only 4 years later 'The Celebrity Millionaires of Competitive Gaming' by Vice (2014). E-sports between these 2 documentaries changed a lot, from viewership to sponsors, the documentary shows the growth of the industry. This documentary is a real shift in the representation of E-sports by the media, in this Documentaries, the players are presented has young and newly rich, far from MTV's representation, we have here an insight on a cruel world where only the fittest survives, and where huge amounts of money is invested

while viewership is on the rise. As the title calls it seems like what matters now is the money involved in the domain because as shown in the documentary, being that rich playing video games, is inconceivable for some people. The journalist in charge of the documentary seems really unaware of video games and the world of E-Sports as a whole, asking basic questions, not realizing the difference between an E-Sport athlete and a gaming YouTuber (video maker) and almost seems disinterested in parts of the video. Two surprising moment stick out as a good example – first, on the weekend between competitions, the journalist follows a team into their house to see their routine. He first underlines how he feels left out when they start playing – training -. Then, instead of offering something interesting like playing with them – which could give a great insight to the culture and maybe allow for better conversations – he offers them to go the club, intending to get them out of their comfort zone. Once again, it seems like the clichés of gamers being anti-social and awkward sticks, but on top of that it is being played with. This documentary is available on YouTube and most of the top comments are negative. The visuals are interesting though, Vice production quality is good, and even if the depiction is not the best, there is interesting visuals that I ended up using in my video as examples of competitions.

Lastly, I paid attention to a documentary made by the BBC, 'The Super Gamers'. This documentary was made to show the reality of professional E-sports players, a lifestyle of practicing 10 hours a day, living with teammates and training together which exposes the truth behind the multi-billion-dollar industry. (BBC;2016) Another step in Media Depiction, a more serious take, considering the potential of the industry, the full stadiums, the increasing fan base, and one of the first to depict the

daily life of gamers as 'athletes', once again, the image of gamers and E-Sport enthusiast in undermined; when the voice over for example presents a world "closed off from large part of societies", but the documentary being led by a young E-Sport enthusiast and video maker makes the whole a lot more interesting, as his take tries to fairly depict the world of E-Sport. My documentary will try to follow the good sides of this one.

Overall the depiction of Gaming and E-Sports is rather negative, which I think raises a good question; who is the targeted audience for these documentary? The comments on the Internet makes it seems that these documentary are not for E-Sports enthusiast, because it covers the subject so lightly they will probably not learn anything new, and find instead palpable condescending moments, off putting. Meanwhile people who might not be familiar with the culture will simply end up witnessing more opinion pressing the clichés that follows E-Sport, not learning what it is about. Perhaps the target audience are people of other counter-cultures who want to dismissively, but not too dismissively, look at another counter culture while "learning" something about it.

To analyse the treatment the genre receives in the media. I intend to conduct a qualitative content analysis, which examines the relationship between a text and its likely audience and tries to determine the likely meaning of texts to audiences (Macnamara;2005). Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of guidelines regarding qualitative text analysis, qualitative message analysis includes text analysis, narrative analysis, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, interpretative analysis, and

semiotic analysis, according to Hijams (1996). This research will be a discourse analysis; showing to the viewer different media coverage of the subject and extract common themes and keywords. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that sampling strategies for qualitative research should be driven by a conceptual question. They suggest three techniques which can be used to gather quality examples:

- Selecting typical/representative examples;

- Selecting negative/disconfirming examples; and

- Selecting exceptional or discrepant examples

From this, I intend to take out adjectives, metaphors, verbs, imagery concerning Esport that will be then discussed with the interviewees. Neuendorf (2002) says: "Much as a survey researcher will use focus groups or in-depth interviewing (qualitative techniques)". This will serve in the documentary to put the genre in its media context.

2.3 Technical Research

According to Glynne (2012) "… the best ideas are always the simple one". It's for this main reason that when making a documentary, one should never move away from the key subjects that the documentary tries to answer; defining E-sport and discussing its media coverage.

To catch the attention of the viewer, one must "...acquire some really decent skills if you are editing yourself." Glynne (2012) This is something I've been working on for

the last two years on Adobe Premier Pro, trying to perfect visuals and sound mixing which I used to edit this documentary.

According to Rabinger in (1997), when making a documentary it is important to "...plan everything and make lists of everything you need to remember." He implies here that everything needs to be perfectly ready before filming, whether it is the questions that will be asked or the shot preparations. Questions and scripts for the voice over were written out clearly and sent to the participants up to a week before their interview. The questions were open and offering the possibility to the interviewees to express themselves as underlines Daley (1980) :

'The Interviewer must phrase the questions to ensure getting more than 'yes/no' answers and give encouragement by nodding and showing interest but preferably without actually speaking or interjecting as the interviewer may well be deleted in editing.'

Rabinger (1997) also mentions the need to focus on the audience's "attitude" toward the film. While constructing a documentary, it is important to keep the audience in mind and how it would react to it. Said audience can differ, therefore impacting the overall style of the documentary. The targeted audience for this documentary was young and active social media users, meaning I had to adapt my writing and editing to this audience.

All these different ideas taken into account, made the preparation of the documentary easier, and improved the overall quality of the final result.

Chapter 3: Constructing the Product

3.1 Design of application

This Video Documentary is in total 18 minutes. It is divided in three distinct chapters that could be broken down into shorter small sequences (5/6 min long), that would still be coherent. The reason for this is that this documentary is aimed at being published online, being able to cut the video suits a short online format. It is aimed at Video Platform such as YouTube, and is cut between chapters by a voice over, that is either setting the scene and asking questions, or bringing the viewer new information. The target audience for this documentary young but could be broader and that is made on purpose: The question "What is E-Sports?" will most likely attract viewers unfamiliar with the genre, while the media reception of the genre and similarities with traditional sports will attract knowledgeable viewers, while still being at reach for other viewers.

This documentary starts with a voice over setting the factors that explains the growth of E-sports in the most basic ways; video game, competitions and technologies. It follows with the introduction of the different characters and is intersected by a voice over, voice over that also concludes the documentary. The shots used come from different YouTube gaming Channels, or free of rights platform. The editing is fast paced and "informal", because I felt like a younger audience would be more recipient to it, Brylla and Kramer (2018) argue in "Cognitive theory and documentary film" that: "the cognitive dimensions of editors' work are often described as "mysterious," "magical," or, at best, "intuitive"" (p.303) I therefore followed my intuition concerning the edit, not only at the beginning but along the documentary.

The documentary is constructed to offer an introduction to the world of E-sports at first, and then follows up with questions relating to the growth in viewership, the treatment the genre receives in a media, and discusses E-Sport as an important media artifact. From the beginning the viewers know what subjects are covered and in which order.

Incorporating images from competitions and other visuals, was one of my main concern. Due to Covid-19 restrictions filming conditions were different, in terms of shot preparations for example it largely depended on what the interviewee had available; a webcam, an empty room… My questions were thoroughly prepared, but the shoot preparation was close to inexistent, as I Had to adapt according to what my interviewee had at his disposition. The same goes for visuals, I first intended to shoot visuals in live events but ended up having to use images available online.

The different participants are all from different countries, the viewer realizes the difference in accent and languages directly. It is said that "In documentaries we find stories or arguments, evocations or descriptions that let us see the world anew." (Nichols 2002) I took that directive to let the viewer see "the world anew" by seeing the subject of E-Sports with an international perspective; different countries and different occupations. Viewers might be happy to see someone speak from their own country, but also happy to discover other takes on the matter.

This documentary is catered for an audience willing to know more about E-Sports and the place it takes in today's cultural industry, meaning there is a lot of visuals from video games as well, being the essence of E-Sport.

3.2 Practical Construction

Due to Covid-19 restrictions filming conditions were different, in terms of shot preparations it largely depended on what the interviewee had available; a webcam, an empty room… My questions were thoroughly prepared, but the shoot preparation was close tough to put in place, as I Had to adapt according to what my interviewee had at his disposition.

All the interviews being made online, I used the Zoom software to set and record meetings, with the consent of my interviewees. The images found online where converted using VLC Media Player. The voice over of the video is interpreted by my friend Malcolm and recorded on an Olympus Voice recorder. The documentary also features 3D pictures, created with the help of a computer command prompt (See Appendix p 52).

All these elements were imported and edited on Adobe Premier Pro 2020.
To express good ideas and in the right way, the scripting of the voice over was important. I could have made the voice over myself, but the current voice over sounds better for the simple reason that this voice tone works well, and Malcolm had

already presented a radio show where several people underlined he had a nice voice.

The construction of the documentary is based on the questions raised in the introduction as stated before (P.8), these questions being based on the research question of this dissertation. It is segmented in three parts, excluding the intro and the conclusion.

3.3 ACCESS TO INTERVIEWS

According to Glynne (2012), when choosing who to feature in your documentary ""...you need to ask yourself why you want them there what function they serve." Interviewees for this documentary have been chosen on this principle, each of them playing a different role within the E-Sports industry. One of aspects that had to be taken in count for interviewees, was the limitations set by the Covid-19 restrictions. I had to limit myself to exclusively online interviews, but that turned out to be an advantage; instead of focusing on an Irish only panel, having to go to different locations, find where to shoot, prepare the set etc, every interview was made remotely, lifting these limitations. I do consider though, that visually, a documentary shot this way might be less appealing to the viewer, as in normal conditions the documentary is maker is supposed to find the set and prepare his shots before-hand. (Hart 1999).
I contacted two participants through email and one through twitter asking for an interview, who all gave me a writing approval (see appendix). For this Documentary I

interviewed three different actors of the E-Sport industry, that play different roles within the industry:

- **Alex Blaike, PR and Social Manager for ESL Australia**

. Alex Blaike is the head of Public Relation within the Australian Branch of ESL (E-Sports League). ESL is an E-Sports event organizer and production company that organizes competition throughout the world. It is the largest and oldest running Global E-Sports company in the world. While doing my research, having someone from ESL seemed like a priority. Mr. Blaike besides being a PR, is also known to be an E-Sports commentator, covering all kinds of live events. This is the first interview I conducted. I wanted him to go through the basics of the genre, of which he gave great definitions, and explain the reason for the always increasing popularity of the genre.

It turned out we spoke about a lot more, having conversations about the E-Sports and Video game industries and culture for almost an hour. His expertise and knowledge of the field was obvious, but he also offered a "backstage perspective", explaining his work with non-specialized media. Out of all the interviews, he also had the best recording set: being a commentator he had an extra side camera in his room giving a larger angle, and a microphone. Unfortunately, due to connections issues the first five minutes of the interview are pixelated.

Another uncommon aspect I have to mention for this interview is simply the time zone difference; Alex Blaike had an hour to spare in his afternoon for my interview between 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. GMT +8 – 5.am to 6.am GMT +0. But it was overall a great opportunity, and it brought good meaning to the documentary.

- **Gael Parpex Director of the Associations "Générations E-Sport", "Competition E-Sport" and co-founder of "Ma Team E-Sport"**

The second interview I recorded was of Gael Parpex, working in many associations, all aiming to promote the genre and facilitate its growth. "Générations E-Sport" is an online platform linking players and teams, facilitating communications between the two. "Competition E-Sport" is a platform promoting all kinds of E-Sports related events in France and lastly "Ma team E-Sport" is a platform allowing E-Sports clubs to receive adhesions and manage financial issues. These are all non-lucrative platforms that wish to help the growth of E-Sports in France.

As I started researching the domain of E-Sports, I realized that a lot of associations were acting in the genre, and it was a good balance with the big institution that ESL is. While ESL has more than a thousand employee around the world, Mr. Parpex is part of a team of three people, acting mostly on a local scale. In comparison to Alex's video set up, his was a simple webcam on his laptop, and integrated mic, a closer angle then from which he was moving out of sometimes.

This kind of profile is rarely seen in documentaries or stories about the subject, far from the image that E-Sports is a billion-dollar industry where everybody wins big, showing in the documentary when he mentions the lack of state support for associations like his for example. He also brought an insight of the culture from a French point of view, where the genre is developing but isn't as common as in other countries.

- **Justin McNolley "MiracU" Pro-player for "Team Solo Mid" (TSM).**

Justin McNolley who goes by the name "MiracU" in game, is an Irish "Player Unknown Battleground" Professional player, part of the American Team TSM, famous for having some of the best teams/players in many different E-Sports games, him and his team won a competition the week-end before our interview.

Having an E-Sports professional player in an E-Sports documentary seemed like an evidence. E-Sports athletes are often considered to be the main actors of the genre, and I wanted his opinion on the matter. I also wanted his take on the growth of the genre, as a player, formerly playing for fun at home, and now in front of thousands of viewers online, and how he felt about the industry has a player, a sort of retrospection of his role within the genre.

There was a doubt whether or not he will have a webcam for our interview, being on a trip with his team in Sweden. Unfortunately, he didn't get access to one therefore I had to come up with visuals for his interviews. He allowed me to use images from his twitter profile as illustrations.

3.4 Post-Production

According to Rabiger in 1998 "a film is really created in the editing process." Editing allows for the story to come together as one piece and make sense to the viewer. One of the main issues I had to face during this process was choosing the best out of the interviews; each interview ended up lasting around an hour, because we covered a lot with each interviewee. I edited two versions of the documentary, one for this dissertation and another one, longer, destined for YouTube.

During this process of editing one of the main thing was to watch the draft assembly over and over again making sure everything had a reason to be there. Some of the

visuals are from Pexels.com, website offering free of rights videos and images. To give a modern twist, 3D pictures were used at different moments throughout the documentary and generated with a command prompt, from free of rights pictures taken from Pexels.com.

The music that features in the documentary is created by my friend Jeremy, which he allowed me to use, one of them created for the documentary specifically (the piano opening). The music is both upbeat when it the rhythm goes up and more melodic when the rhythm of the video goes down. The music used could be identified as hip-hop/rap/trap that fits the modern vibe of the documentary and works with the targeted audience.

The topic of the documentary being E-Sports, and Video-game being the essence of E-Sports, few visuals came in mind quickly; I had to show footage of video games and E-Sports competitions. Then, as I wanted to compare how the genre was treated in the media, I researched images of media talking about the subject, and made a montage of the findings that summarizes the media coverage E-Sports receives to the viewer. The visual representation of what defines a spectator sport was edited on Premier Pro, and the sound effect used is from Sonic the Hedgehog, fitting with the subject matter of the documentary. I also used images from sports like football, tennis and Australian rules football, when the interviewees are mentioning the similarities between traditional sports and E-Sports, in terms of value, competitions, audience… to let the viewer see the similarities by himself, because after all, a "spectator" sport resides on spectatorship – what the viewer sees.

3.5 Ethical Aspects and Limitations

In terms of ethics, the documentary feature a clear bias toward the subject. But this is made deliberately, to discuss the arguments of this dissertation. All media aren't ignorant, and some of them do a fine job at reporting the matter, but the general take isn't. It is written in The NUJ code of conduct states that a journalist should "Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair." Most media covering fail in that matter concerning E-Sports (See Literature review), therefore I honestly conveyed the fact that their report were most of the time unfair.

Of course this is where the fine line between fact and opinion comes in. The NUJ code of conduct has for 4th point: "[A Journalist] Differentiates between facts and opinion". To discuss this subjects, I needed facts, deprived from my personal opinion. All the interviewees when asked about the media treatment had the same reaction, criticizing the media. But I left in the final edit what was the most factual. All interviews answer to the rule 5 of the NUJ code of conduct; "[A Journalist] Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means." From the first contact all participants knew exactly what they were being part of, and later signed a consent form. (See appendix). Participants spoke freely and were never asked to answer in any way, nor were the answers manipulated in post-production.

In terms of limitations, the time restrictions turned out to be a challenge, my first draft edit was longer. The format of this documentary fits well on a video sharing websites

such as YouTube or Dailymotion, where users are more willing to spend 15/20 minutes on a video, in opposition to Facebook or Instagram for example, where such a long format wouldn't work.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Production:

The idea of producing this documentary came in mind a while ago. Being a fan of E-Sports myself, seeing the way the subject was treated in the media felt unfair, while more and more of my surroundings was getting into the world of Video Game and E-Sports. It this clear contrast between what media were depicting and what I was witnessing that pushed me to produce this documentary.

The production process has been slowed down due to the lack of answers and a couple of cancellation by potential participants. I initially intended to have more people in the documentary, and even if most of the interviews went well and we went into depth the protagonists, the player's interview could have been better, I didn't get the depth I was expecting from this interview.

This documentary was set to be vibrant but also knowledgeable and calm at times. The result is not too far from that, the editing, my favorite process, played a huge role in that sense. The interviews where all made on zoom, which was a first for me, and that taught me that it is indeed handy, but doesn't match the quality a proper real life interview could have. This is one thing that could have really helped the video, but recent events decided otherwise. Alex's interview is good reflection of that: the video call I recorded had him pixelated for the first few minutes of the interview, this

might be due to a connection issue beyond my control… so I tried covering it in post-production. The sound recording was generally good, and not impacted by connection/computer issues.

Another surprise in the production of this documentary is that "MiracU" did not have a camera when I called him. It was disappointing but timing was running short, as the deadline was approaching and another player already canceled an interview. Alex Blaike was knowledgeable on the subject, and very comfortable throughout the whole interview, I guess his profession and background come in consideration, he mixed personal experiences with facts, a really qualitative interview. Gael Parpex also brought good points to the interview, from a perspective that is rarely seen in the media. All three interviewees expressed their pride seeing these subjects being studied academically, I truly believe that is why they all accepted in the first place.

4.2 Post-Production:

Editing was at first overwhelming, due to the length of the recorded interviews (almost an hour each) so I decided to work it step by step. I first edited the "raw" interviews into 30/35 minutes' segments of the best responses. I then added all cut interviews in a Premier Pro timeline, and took the best responses there once again. Following this I ended up with 25 minutes of interviews that I then segmented in with the voice over.

Finding visuals was also a challenge at first, I started looking for visuals that matched the interviewee's ideas, in addition to footage of games and E-Sports, the several references they were making needed visuals. An interesting part of the post

editing resided in the fact that "MiracU" did not have a webcam available, therefore I had to come up with visuals that would allow the viewer to know who is the player talking without any visuals. After the interview with MiracU, we agreed that I could use some of his team's footage, as well as an illustration he posted on Twitter.

Many responses from the first draft edit didn't make it into the final product, as It was too long. I tried to keep a good rhythm throughout the edit, cutting for example moments of long explanations with interesting visuals. The incorporation of subtitles was challenging at first, I wanted to translate the ideas as purely as possible, not losing meaning from one language to another. After doing so, I made my translation double checked by bilingual friends.

The addition of music was the last part of my editing that actually ended up changing it a bit; one of my favourite aspects in cinema, documentary and video making in general is the combination of music and visuals with the story. Toward the 14 minutes' mark for example I ended up changing one of the visuals because I felt like it didn't suit the music. Luckily I knew someone who could help me with the music, meaning I had a bit of freedom in my choices, one of the music featured in the video has been made exclusively for this documentary for example.

4.3 Lessons Learned:

During pre-production process it is essential to identify what you want from each interviewee, and what questions you hope to answer with your documentary. A good story board, or even chapters can greatly help for that. In terms of visuals I have to

admit that producing an academic documentary in these conditions was an experience I do not advice to everyone.

On a personal level, making a documentary this long takes a lot of engagement and preparation, which is sometimes stressful. Truth is that this stress stay as long as your project is stuck somewhere, resolving each potential issues one by one, and not getting overwhelmed is a priority.

In terms of interviews I personally found it hard to find which questions to ask sometimes, simply due to the fact that something that might be obvious to me, an E-Sports enthusiast, might not be as clear the common viewer. It was challenging to find questions that were both easy and graspable by everyone, but also in-depth questions, that would allow the interviewee to give the bottom of his thoughts, while making sure it is still fully relevant to the subject matter.

I also learned the truth that out of 120 emails sent, you might just get six answers, that concludes in three interviews. Even if studying Journalism for a while I was aware of this, when it concerns a documentary you are producing for a dissertation, it is a new level of frustration.

Final Thoughts:

This film was a great personal experience, I got to discuss a subject I enjoy with knowledgeable people, in the way I enjoy; making a video. While researching and preparing the documentary, I realized there was a lot of aspects of E-Sports that could have been talked about, but I decided to stay focus on the original proposal.

Interviewing people from the industry was great, but it also implied something; people were going to see it. It may sound silly, because of course some people were going to watch it anyway, but all participants asked me If I could send them the documentary once uploaded to YouTube, so they could share it. In total the interviewees gather around two thousand followers on Twitter, and ESL Australia, even if I doubt they will be sharing my documentary, gathers close to fifteen thousand viewers, while ESL Global has over a million followers. That added a part of stress I did not expect.

Conclusion

The purpose of this documentary was to analyses the current state of E-Sports in today's cultural industry. In literature E-Sports and gaming hold a very strange place, from articles praising the educational aspect they have to concluding on the potential addiction and social distancing, the literature is rather shy and incomplete often short cutting causes and consequences. In the media, E-Sport is bizarre industry attracting younger generations, where (young) influencers and people make fortunes by playing video games. In reality, E-Sport is a billion-dollar industry, cross cultural, cross border, attracting millions of viewers throughout the world.

The documentary aimed at answering several questions. First the showing the craze for the industry. It was made so by asking to the interviewees "What is E-Sport" and "How is the genre developing". The documentary gives it a definition that is proper to people from the E-Sport industry, a knowledgeable definition to a broader public, while underlining the recent impressive growth in viewership over the past few years, with the birth of global leagues for example. As expected, the E-Sport genre might

be living one of its brightest day which pushed the will to find out where does the industry stand in today's cultural industry. Of course it's really hard to get an exact answer, but a simple fact proposes so: the three protagonists, all from different countries, gave the same importance culturally to the subject, proving that the industry has a worldwide cultural impact.

The media coverage of the genre is unfair, respecting stereotypes concerning sensational cash prizes and anti-social behaviors that surround Gaming and E-Sports. During the process of this dissertation I came across a lot of legacy media YouTube's account who had a story about E-Sport but most of them were filled with critical comments, accusing for example the lack of engagement or fairness from the journalist rather frequently which needs to be underlined. What I found was that there is currently a shift in the way the media is depicting the subject. This shift could be that media companies understood the monetary value of E-Sport and reporting about it, but when doing so, as Alex Blaike rightfully underlines in the video, stereotypes about the genre and its actors come to mind and this is where the fine line draws, they might not have understood <u>how</u> to report it. Instead of reporting it as an enigmatic sub-culture and discuss its "values", they could simply report it like any other traditional sports.

They could simply report it like any other traditional sports, because the other conclusions that can be taken from this documentary is that E-Sport is a sport and more precisely a spectator sport. The physical aspect is of course different but in terms of institution, competitions, cash prizes, development of teams, sponsorship, audiences they are very similar if not identical. In terms of value, I felt like it was

important to go from the basic of sports; competition. The term "competition" gives sport all its essence, a game, a set of rules, a performance and finally a winner. It's on these different aspects and values, shared with E-Sports, that plays the documentary. This is though, I believe, an everlasting debate where sports enthusiast would surely have arguments against that, probably underlining the physical aspect and training/living conditions of athletes.

In terms of reflection toward the documentary, the production was challenging, as stated before, one of my main disappointments in terms of technical production, resides on the visual side; the shots of Gael Parpex's interview and the fact that the player had no camera. In terms of content, the final product is far from other documentaries about the subject, the goal was to shift away from them and it was kept in mind during the whole process, a more knowledgeable approach to the genre. I don't have the pretention to be able to give a conclusive answer as to where it stands in today's cultural industry but overall the documentary proved that the E-Sport industry is vibrant, and that it is already, for an always increasing audience, an important media actor of today's society.

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Appendices:

Consent Form

Researcher: Matthieu Dumas.

- The aim of this documentary is to discuss E-Sports and Video-Game as an important cultural actor of the late 20th and 21st century.

- You will be asked 20 questions about your work as an expert in the field.

- This research will be of benefit as it draws on the experience of professionals who are working at a time of change in the gaming industry. A lot of research up to this point has focused more on the capital side of e-sports. This research provides an opportunity to hear a group of knowledgeable professionals, talking about Gaming culture and E-Sport.

- All interviews will stay true and stored in a protected computer

- Personal participant information will not be used without consent, decided beforehand.

- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
  Matthieu Dumas: m.dumas95@gmail.com (researcher)
  Conor Kostick: conor.kostick@griffith.ie or Vincent McEntee: vincent.mcentee@griffith.ie (research supervisor)

- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature _____*Alex Blaike*___

Researcher Signature   Matthieu Dumas

Consent Form

Researcher: Matthieu Dumas.

- The aim of this documentary is to discuss E-Sports and Video-Game as an important cultural actor of the late 20th and 21st century.

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- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature _____Justin McNolley____

Researcher Signature   Matthieu Dumas

Consent Form

Researcher: Matthieu Dumas.

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  (research supervisor)

- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature ___Gaël Parper___

Researcher Signature   Matthieu Dumas

Script Voice Over

When you sit in a room, turn on your console, another world is introduced to you, you're pressing a button, it makes an action … but your actions have consequences. You directly interact and influence with the world that's in front of you,

what your experiencing is not only visual like in the dark rooms of the 7th art, here your part of the action, you experience the randomness, the struggle, and the competition

Since the dawn of time people always loved competition, from Olympics born in the Greek ages still famous nowadays,

Competitions is part of what makes us human, we strive to be better, stronger, faster, we set rules, creates contest that we strive to win.

With the growing interest of seeing other people compete in a game, and the technological advances society has seen, like computers, consoles… All the conditions seems to be reunited

for E-sports to become big, but at the beginning it wasn't and still isn't for some people.

So how did we get from this?

………………to this? ………………

E-Sports, just like video games are cross cultural and cross border, reuniting a broad public, building dreams of millions of people to boost their imagination and to offer them new experiences. Could E-sports become the most consumed media of the 21st century?

But first things first, what actually is E-Sport?

Video Game, the essence of E-Sport is considered the 10th art, and while the concepts of cinema or literature for example became common place, the way the 10th art expresses itself is, still widely misunderstood by scholars. One way it could

express itself is through E-Sports. Where do the video games and E-Sports stand in today's cultural industry? Are we witnessing the birth of a new culture?

A good way to analyse a phenomenon, is too study how the media treats the subject. Truth is, while the hype about e-sports and video game is growing, the media reception of the genre is… quite rough

The similarities often raise the question of whether E-Sports is in fact a sport or not, Historically, developing spectatorship in any sport relies on several criteria identified as follow:

1.

competitions that award prizes

2.

venues with large crowd capacity,

3.

a labour market of professional and semi-professional players,

4.

state funding donated to the development of the sport

5.

sports media

6.

Institutionalization,

And of course 7.

Merchandizing sales –

The elite disregards it, parents fear it while the rest can't stop talking about it, and this already means that it deserves our attention. Just like regular sports, E-sports competitions are organized for viewer to witness, action, rivalry, spectacular moments, plot twists, drama.

, maybe it's time to provide a view of E-sport that is renewed take it as a serious institution in society, in contrast with

commonly raised subjects by other documentaries or stories such as cash prizes, the lifestyle of athletes or 'getting rich by playing video games'.

The always increasing popularity of the genre, probably elevates E-sports as an important media actor of today's society.

List of Questions:

Personal:

First, could you introduce yourself and tell us what's your favourite game? when did you start playing?

Can you tell us a bit about your institution/job?

What got you into e-sports?

Cultural

Could you try to explain E-Sport for someone that doesn't know what it is?

What do you think about the E-sports scene today?

How is the genre developing?

Who are the main actors?

Who is the audience? Is it different from other genres?

Is it possible now to talk about video games without talking about E-Sports?

Where do video games stand in today's cultural industry? In terms of viewership Could it overtake movies and books in the future?

Jimmy Kimmel in 2016 was calling YouTube gaming "We failed education as parent's channel" and was inviting ninja to play 2 years later. What do you think about the treatment that the genre receives in legacy media? Do you see a shift?

Is there geopolitics in E-Sport? Countries that do it better?

Would you say that a new culture emerged from video games? If yes, can we say you're a cultural actor then?

Is it just a pop culture phenomenon or video games, with the help of E-sports, are (were?) meant to become a new dominant form of entertainment?

Video games are referred as the "tenth art" (7th movies, 8th comics 9th television): "While the grammar of cinema made it in common language (editing, shooting, director…) the way by which the tenth art expresses itself remains unknown by scholars" Le Monde November 2019. Are video games art? Any suggestions to help scholars understand video games?

Commercial

"Video games seems to be related closely with technological advance." Pierre Jean Bengozhi French economist said that. What do you think about this statement?

What makes companies be willing to invest in the genre?

What does it bring to the table?

When and why did the industry get so big? How did you notice personally?

Is it in anyway similar to the growth of viewership sports? (Rugby, soccer, boxing

etc.)

How would you explain that, while always growing in audience, it stays rather niche

in media coverage?

What do you think the future of e-sports looks like?

Subtitles in Order:

I'm Gaël Parpex and I'm the manager of "Génération E-Sport"

Génération E-Sport is a web platform facilitating the communication between teams
and players

Beside this I have two other platforms

"Compétition E-Sport" promoting tournaments in France

And we're opening in a few days "Ma Team E-Sport"

Which will allow E-Sports clubs and associations to collect memberships

Interesting, I had a debate with a friend a little while ago

Who was saying that, for him, E-Sport was only big events

And I said "No... No"

From the moment there is four people

sitting in front of the TV, with a controller each and play FIFA

If there are stakes behind, it is a competition

Amateur of course, but still a competition

To me E-Sport is the competitive spirit, across all video games

The E-Sport scene is starting and continuing to develop

With the birth of schools here and there to facilitate education

for players, coaches, managers

The problem is the legal status

E-Sport isn't recognized at what it's worth

Despite a huge potential market

It's not recognized at what it's worth

The State doesn't follow the ambitions of people willing to help the sector

The Media Coverage is a bit shy right now, concerning video games

I guess they have their own reason

In their shoes as a company,

They probably think it's not worth the investment

Something true today, might not be tomorrow

Society changes and

what's important is not getting stuck on an opinion and change it according to how the situation evolves

Us, we grew up in it but nothing was structured

Now, the world of E-sports and Video Games is building itslef slowly

In France, and worldwide rather efficiently

Today, how do you see that something is culturally important

It's what you talk about with your friends

As soon as a subject made it into society

and everyday conversations

It means that something happened

Therefore, the way I see it, Video Games took a cultural importance in France

The values are similar

As long as there is competition you can put them in the same category

And E-Sport is pure competition

There is prizes, competition...

Effort, there is effort in E-Sports

I hear people saying "You're behind your PC, it's not an effort"

You know, "effort" doesn't only mean running

In my opinion, that I think, a lot of people also have,

It will impose itself as a form entertainment

3D Photos:

3D Photography using Context-aware Layered Depth In painting

Meng-Li Shih, Shih-Yang Su, Johannes Kopf, and Jia-Bin Huang

In IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR), 2020.

Prerequisites:

- Linux (tested on Ubuntu 18.04.4 LTS)
- Anaconda
- Python 3.7 (tested on 3.7.4)
- PyTorch 1.4.0 (tested on 1.4.0 for execution)

To get started, run the following commands:

- ```
  conda create -n 3DP python=3.7 anaconda
  ```

- ```
  conda activate 3DP
  ```

- ```
  pip install -r requirements.txt
  conda install pytorch==1.4.0 torchvision==0.5.0
  cudatoolkit==10.1.243 -c pytorch
  ```

- Next, download the model weight using the following command:

- ```
  chmod +x download.sh
  ./download.sh
  ```

How to Execute:

1. Put a `.jpg` files (e.g., test.jpg) into the `image` folder.
   - E.g., `image/moon.jpg`
2. Run the following command

   ```
   python main.py --config argument.yml
   ```

   - Note: The 3D photo generation process usually takes about 2-3 minutes depending on the available computing resources.
   - That's it! Videos are available in the "Video" Folder
   - Check https://github.com/vt-vl-lab/3d-photo-inpainting for more info/tutorial