



The Future of eSports in the Edge Ecosystem

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The incredible growth of eSports worldwide, both in terms of viewership as well as revenue, has raised plenty of excitement and intrigue. Grand prizes have multiplied exponentially over the years, along with the number of participants and spectators watching in awe and cheering for their favourite teams and players – the success of which has transformed eSports into a truly vibrant sector with impressive growth in almost every region.

In terms of hard data, [Newzoo](#)'s predicts that by 2024, the CAGR for eSports will be about +7.7% in the years 2019 - 2024 while the number of enthusiasts is predicted to grow to 291.6 million, making the total audience 577.2 million.

Meanwhile, the US\$150 billion global games market, which [is larger than the film and music sectors](#) combined, will grow with a strong CAGR (2019 to 2024) of +8.7% to reach US\$218.7 billion in 2024.

eSports has found welcome in Malaysia in recent years too. Seeing the potential for creating high-quality jobs for youth as well as software developers and designers along with related opportunities, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation's (MDEC's) content industry initiatives include hosting events such as its gamified expo Malaysia Digital Creativity Festival (MYDCF) 2021, which attracted more than [10,000 eSports enthusiasts from across the country in 10 tournaments](#).

But what lies in store for the future of eSports, which has been recognised as a sport in countries such as the US, Finland, South Korea, Germany, Italy, and many others? Could the latest cutting edge technology enable further advances?

EDGE COMPUTING ENTERS THE ARENA!

We are seeing Edge computing well on the way to revolutionising many industries, such as enabling a seamless real-time remote monitoring process in the oil and gas industry, or accessing data on weather, and traffic conditions from within autonomous vehicles. Yet, what does this have to do with eSports and gaming?

Edge computing is something of a golden key, one that will both unlock an even brighter future for eSports, and also take the experience for both competitors and spectators to new levels. Allow me to elaborate.

CONNECTIVITY IS KEY!

eSports events, whether a small tournament held in a community hall or a grand slam event with an audience numbering in the hundreds of thousands, must engineer a smooth and reliable experience for both participants and viewers. There should be no issues with the functionality of the game or anything to mar producing the best gaming environment. The production quality of the tournament broadcast needs to be top notch to heighten the audience experience and engagement with the action.

This is where an Edge ecosystem provides the edge, by presenting the players with enhanced in-game performance powered by improved processing and reduced bandwidth. The best quality experience, however, will come to light when broadcasting the event. With an Edge ecosystem, resources for both running the game and streaming the event 'live' will be more optimally distributed, bolstering the quality of live streams - an essential means of support for any eSports event.



This is highly relevant for players and spectators, who will benefit and appreciate a superior experience, and is also highly desirable for investors and sponsors looking for opportunities in this burgeoning industry. Strong viewership and publicity attracts investment, increasing sponsorships and leads to more events.

In just 5 - 10 years, eSports could reach the same level as any major professional sport.

A LOOK AT THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SCENE

It is quite a common sight these days to see eSports events being held on a grand scale from all corners of the globe. Established events include the Dota International 2021, held in Bucharest, Hungary, and ESL One Rio for Counter Strike: Global Offensive in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. China is another hotbed for massive eSports events for both mainstream titles and mobile games. How does the Southeast Asian region compare to the giants in other parts of the world?

THE SEA GAMES

Southeast Asia's eSports scene has seen strong growth over the years. Last year saw Mobile Legends M3 World Championships, and now the World E-Sports and the Gaming Summit are to take place this year, both to be hosted in Singapore.

However, the largest eSports event could arguably be the inaugural SEA Games itself. The SEA Games also features an eSports tournament with many household games featured in the list of events, such as League of Legends, FIFA, and PUBG (Player Unknown's Battlegrounds), among others.

There is sufficient eSports interest to assert that the Southeast Asian region is becoming a potential cradle of success. Countries here have opportunities to organise massive eSports events, rivalling the large-scale ones in Europe and the Americas.

Given the rising wave of success in Singapore and other countries in the region, Malaysia has the potential and opportunity to host similar events on such a scale.

GROWING THE LOCAL eSPORTS SCENE

In addition to government and MDEC initiatives, major industry support will help boost Malaysia's eSports scene. The upcoming partnership between TM and Swarmio, a digital solutions company that provides a gaming and eSports-centric platform to enhance the gamer experience aims to draw the serious attention of organisers and sponsors to collaborate and help host more eSports events in the country.

With the support of TM's vast array of equipment, infrastructure, and experience, together with Swarmio's digital software solution, we believe there is an exciting potential for Malaysia to become a real hub for the pioneering implementation of Edge computing in eSports.

WHERE COULD EDGE COMPUTING REALLY BENEFIT ESPORTS?

Mainstream eSports is already on an impressive trajectory of growth even before the application of Edge computing. Perhaps a more neglected aspect of eSports, namely the fighting games scene, could prove to be the perfect testing ground for demonstrating the true capabilities and value of an Edge ecosystem in eSports. Fighting games are also a good starting point for organisers and investors new to the eSports scene to utilise Edge ecosystems in the region.

With the advent of comeback stories and sensational moments from the most popular fighting game currently, Tekken 7, the fighting games scene has attracted more attention than ever before. Tekken 7 has reached an all-time high in sales and quadrupled its share of tournament grand prizes in the past few years..



In terms of hardware, fighting games eSports tournaments traditionally held on gaming consoles which required no WiFi, can now be hosted on PCs with the support of an Edge ecosystem. PCs allow certain fighting games to run more optimally, giving competitors a better tournament experience. Broadcasting these games will demonstrate improved visual experience in live streams, with higher quality playback and reduced latency.

Team-based eSports games require more complex hosting solutions to accommodate a larger playing field of competitors, with teams sometimes featuring at least 5 players – with each player from two teams requiring a device. Fighting game tournaments, despite hosting up to a thousand competitors at a single event, will see just a single device being used once the tournament has reached the Top-16, which is where competitors take turns to play their respective matches.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!

Without a doubt, Edge computing and its ecosystems constitute the next logical step to take the eSports experience to the next level, especially with the impending advent of 5G. One day, eSports will achieve global recognition and Edge ecosystems can play a powerful role in manifesting that.

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