

PRESS RELEASE**EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01am, 20 SEPTEMBER 2018:****Esports empowers young people and boosts their careers aspirations,
study shows***Over 2,000 students participated in Staffordshire University study*

- Study carried out to determine the effect of participation in the Digital Schoolhouse Esports Tournament 2018 on students
- 82 per cent of players (students aged 12 – 18) said they were more likely to participate in other team sports, as a result of taking part in the tournament
- 94 per cent said that taking part made them more interested in computers/computing subjects
- 88 per cent said that taking part in the tournament made them more interested in a career in the video games industry.

Thursday 20 September: A study into the educational impact of esports launches today at the annual general meeting of Ukie, the trade body for the UK games and interactive entertainment industry.

The study, conducted by Staffordshire University, examined data to determine the effect of participation in the Digital Schoolhouse Esports Tournament 2018. Over 2000 students aged 12 - 18 participated in various roles, including event management, production, tournament administration, community management, on-screen talent and players. The skills that these roles helped to develop were recognised by the Duke of York's Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (iDEA).

Key Findings of the study included an increase in transferable skills, with Communication (74 per cent) and Team Working (80 per cent) coming top. Positive effects of bonds of friendship amongst participants were also reported, with 67 per cent of respondents stating that friendship bonds grew over the course of the tournament (and 94 per cent of friendships were maintained or grew during the competition). Qualitative evidence from teachers and schools involved in the tournament further reinforced these findings, particularly regarding the effects on behaviour and engagement amongst harder to reach students. Meanwhile, almost 90 per cent of students said that the tournament had increased their interest in a career in the video games industry and that it had increased their interest in computers and computing.

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The results show that taking part not only improved skills and confidence but sparked their interest in subjects, job roles and opportunities they might not have thought were possible before.

The objective of Digital Schoolhouse's tournament was to use esports as a vehicle to provide students with an immersive careers education experience and help them realise the breadth of career opportunities available to them.

Staffordshire University's study collected data from participating students and schools and focused on two key research questions: Whether participating in esports created a positive behavioural change in young players that translated into behaviour modification in other aspects of their lives and whether participating in esports influenced the career paths and STEM interests of young players.

Shahneila Saeed, head of education at Ukie and director of Digital Schoolhouse, said: "The continued growth of technology and the digital industry means that computer science skills will not just play an integral role in the jobs of the future, but are also an essential element of the work that we do today. While the introduction of the computing curriculum has been the right way forward to help us upskill the next generations, in current real terms its effect has so far been minimal. This means we're facing a skills gap in one of the fastest growing industries in the world.

"E-sports offers a great opportunity to take a popular pastime and turn it into an enriching learning opportunity. The tournament's impact on the numbers of students interested in computing has been fantastic. A real eye opener has been the increase in other areas too; improved confidence and self-esteem, better team working and communication and strategic thinking skills too. Additionally, the transformative effects we've seen on participating schools has been phenomenal. All this combined with that magical fun factor make this one of the most effective and meaningful learning experiences we can find today."

Mark Ward at St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy said: "Getting involved in the tournament has been amazing. I can bring the pupils' world into my lessons – I can use role models that they have heard of (some I hadn't until very recently!) and talk about

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careers that they are interested in and passionate about – all whilst ‘playing games’. The most amazing thing, this is a world that is open to everybody.”

Digital Schoolhouse’s esports tournament takes place in three stages, with school heats beginning in October each year followed by regional qualifiers and the grand final, which takes place in April.

Ukie’s Digital Schoolhouse, powered by PlayStation® programme, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the Computing curriculum. Digital Schoolhouse is funded by the UK games industry with sponsors including SEGA, Ubisoft and Warwickshire County Council and was originally seed funded by the Mayor of London’s London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF). The programme reached over 15,000 students last year via its network of selected schools and their work with their local primary and secondary teachers in delivering a creative and cross-curricular computing lessons using play-based learning. Its aim is to bridge the gap between industry and education and build digital skills by inspiring the next generation.

For more information about the next e-sports Tournament, visit www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk

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