



PC gamers find excitement, competition, community

Virtual Victories Yield Real Rewards

IT'S BEEN CALLED THE FASTEST GROWING sport in the world. Airing on ESPN, it draws more viewers globally than the World Series and awards top talent with prizes comparable to what a Fortune 500 CEO earns. It's called e-sports, and at BU, amateurs who dream of going pro train not in the gym, but on laptops.

"E-sports are computer games that are taken to the next level," says Yugina "Jennifer" Yun (CAS'16), former president of BU's PC Gaming Club. "They are competitive, real-time games, where you are not playing against a computer—you're playing against other competitors."

WEB EXTRA
Watch a video about the PC Gaming Club at bu.edu/bostonia.

The club, founded in 2011, competes against schools like Harvard and Tufts in local and national tournaments, and in the American Video Game League, which launched last year and has a regular college sports league. The club's students also face off against professionals, who practice up to 16 hours a day and grow their fan base by live-streaming themselves playing, coaching others, and competing in tournaments.

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Yun says pros can earn up to \$500,000 a year. And while the BU students aren't pulling down those kind of winnings, the PC Gaming Club's *Starcraft II* team did make it to the Collegiate Starleague playoffs, Yun says, and the *League of Legends* team won second at the Newegg Collegiate Challenge at this year's Penny Arcade eXpo.

At last spring's end-of-the-year PC Gaming Club meeting, students arrived with laptops tucked under their arm to play one another in first-person shooter (*Call of Duty*), arena-style (*League of Legends*), real-time strategy (*Starcraft*), and turn-based strategy (*Civilization*) games. Yun says 50 core members come to every meeting, but that number quadruples for larger events, when more casual members often drop by and join the team.

"There's such a community behind it," says Yun. She cites an example that's close to her heart: when her mother became very sick, her friends in the club raised money on GoFundMe to send her home to visit before her mother passed away. "People who play are so passionate, so you can really connect and make a lot of new friends." AL