

Gaming Initiatives and Future Opportunities

Gaming Initiatives in Edmonton

- Edmonton has seen success in smaller esports events offerings in 2023:
 - **KDays GDX Game Discovery Experience and TGS Esports Battle Box:** A new feature of KDays in the summer of 2023 that included both a gaming expo and live esports experiences.
 - **Alberta Esports Expo:** The inaugural Expo took place in February 2023 and drew over 3,600 registered ticket holders. Created through an \$85,000 federal Heritage Fund grant, the expo featured educational opportunities and gaming. Event organizers plan to run the event again in 2024 although location, details, and funding are still being arranged. Attachment 5 is the post event report for the inaugural 2023 expo.
- Beyond the focus on esports, other gaming initiatives take place in Edmonton, including:
 - **Alberta Games Series:** The Alberta Games Series, held in October 2023, featured representation from 43 studios, 15 industry partners, eight Post Secondary Institutes and over 160 attendees with nine national and international speakers. Supported by regional ecosystem partners, including Digital Alberta, Calgary Economic Development, Edmonton Screen Industries and Calgary Game Developers Association, the two-day conference brought together the game development community from across Alberta and provided attendees an opportunity to network with peers, learn from industry experts, showcase their games and access post event mentorship opportunities.
 - **Extra Life Edmonton (YEGExtraLife.org):** Extra Life is a Children’s Miracle Network initiative that unites thousands of gamers around the world to play games on a single day in support of their local Children’s Miracle Network Hospital. Since its inception in 2008, Extra Life has raised more than \$70 million USD for sick and injured kids.
 - In 2011, the Edmonton event started with over 50 marathon participants, raising just over \$25,000 for the Stollery Children’s Hospital. In 2023, over 800 participants joined the marathon to help Edmonton raise over \$428,000.
 - Vimy Ridge Esports Academy noted that their 26 person team alone raised \$11,000 for this year’s 2023 event.

- **GameCamp Edmonton:** GameCamp Edmonton aims to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for the local game development community to come together, network, and learn. GameCamp Edmonton also serves as the local chapter of the International Game Developers' Association (IGDA).
- **C-Tribe x Games:** Supported by the Corporations' "Meet Me Downtown" grant, the C-Tribe Game Jam (CTJam) running December 8-10, 2023, is billed as a free event where the "savviest game makers" gather for a 3 day, game-making binge. CTJam claims to attract a mix of artists, hobbyists, students, and professionals, and is holding an esports tournament as part of ongoing programming. The C-Tribe x Gaming Esports World Open is billed as a global esports tournament designed to celebrate the healthy spirit of competition and gaming culture that continues to inspire growth in esports worldwide. C-Tribe notes it is building a broadly inclusive, global brand at the intersection of gaming, experiences and entertainment.

Future Event Hosting Opportunities

Esports globally sees a wide variety of major and mega events that include the option for future host bids. These include:

- **International Esports Federation (IESF) tournaments and events:** The IESF is a global organization based in South Korea whose mission is to have esports recognized as a legitimate sport. The IESF organizes a series of tournaments and events annually and hosts the annual World Esports Championship for elite athletes from across the globe.
 - In April 2023 the IESF closed applications for hosting the 2024, 2025, and 2026 Esports World Championships.
 - The next opportunity to bid on these events would come in 2026-2027 and could be informed by learnings from working with Game Con Canada over the next three years.
- **The International Olympic Committee (IOC):** The IOC continues to explore the future of esports in the Olympic Movement, and in September 2023 announced the creation of the Esports Commission. The move follows the conclusion of the IOC's first-ever Olympic Esports Week, which was held in Singapore June 23-25, 2023, and the Olympic Esports Series, which invited both professional and amateur players from across the

world to compete in virtual sports competitions. The broad esports community does not consider the IOC approach as true esports, as none of the game titles selected are traditional to this competitive genre.

- **The Commonwealth Games (CWG):** The CWG in Birmingham included esports as a pilot event for its 2022 edition in a bid to appeal to younger audiences. Teams participated in Dota 2, eFootball and Rocket League tournaments, with both men's and women's tournaments held, and while medals were awarded it was not an official Commonwealth Games Federation medalled sport. The event featured popular esports titles but failed to attract large audiences. The Commonwealth Games Federation and Global Esports Federation are working on an inclusion pathway for esports at future events.