



Potential for Singapore's gaming Industry

Singapore's gaming industry is gaining considerable momentum, deserving considerable attention.

Singaporean investors' interest have certainly been piqued during the last couple of months, with news of SEA's (previously known as Garena) and Razer's Initial Public Offering (IPO) flooding the market. The Singapore-based digital entertainment giants lead headlines with their high profiled backings – SEA by Chinese tech giant Tencent and Razer by none other than Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka Shing.

Global e-sports industry growing

There's no denying that on a global level, the gaming industry has developed considerably over the last decade. Casual single-player games aside, the organised, multiplayer video game variation (also known as e-sports) that involves competitions between professional players has been gaining much attention globally over the last few years. The industry's projected growth during 2017 is predicted to stand around USD 696 Million and reach USD 1.5 Billion by 2020 – according to industry leader Newzoo's 2017 Global E-sports Market Report released in February this year.

The local e-sports landscape

The industry in Asia has slowly but steadily gained substantial traction, especially after the announcement earlier this year by the Olympic Council of Asia that it will be officially included as a medal sport in the 2022 Asian Games. Southeast Asia has been touted as the region that will experience the most growth in terms of enthusiasts – with the number pegged at 19 Million by 2020. The 2017 figures also point to the region reaching around 51% of the world's gaming population, an astounding figure by any means.

When it comes to Singapore, the industry has gained momentum. The abovementioned IPOs of SEA and Razer, both co-founded by local entrepreneurs, only further elevating its profile. The country is now home to 200,000 enthusiasts as of January this year – making up a 5.1% share of the entire online population – trailing only Malaysia and almost tying Vietnam in this area.

Global mobile gaming industry on upward trajectory

The spike in proliferation of smartphone usage has resulted in mobile games obtaining the largest share of [revenue](#) in the global gaming market, with 32% of the total of the estimated USD 108.9 billion for 2017 so far. What may come as a surprise to many is that games on various mobile platforms surpassed console games (31%) and PC games (23%) considerably. One [example](#) of the industry's phenomenal rise to popularity can be seen in the mobile based game, Candy Crush Saga, which saw an impressive 48 percent growth in revenue from Q2 2016 to Q2 2017. Revenue from the game grew from nearly \$146 million to over \$216 million during this period.

Local revenue in this area has considerable catching-up to do, with figures for the year [projected](#) to total USD 119 Million. That being said, the industry is one that is showing signs of growth, with local companies such as Mighty Bear Games [successfully](#) obtaining funding to the tune of SGD 1 Million for their mobile Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) game.

Local industry moves forward

Although Singapore's gaming scene has gained considerable momentum over the last several years, the industry is still a way away from providing competition to the big players. One area in which we are lacking in is sponsorships – the industry heavily relies on companies that spend advertising dollars at competitions. One can draw comparisons to the game of football, where sponsors often define how much spending power teams have to recruit talent.

The gaming arena also requires support for the growing number of enthusiasts, recognising the activity as a means to attain full-time employment. The wheels are already turning with the founding of Chaos Theory, the nation's first fully professional e-sports team.

Talent in the field also needs to be honed further with more educational courses providing mentorship to avid gamers who intend to cross over from hobbyist status to professional levels. Singapore has begun to encourage this with the introduction of the E-sports Academy that [teaches](#) skills such as leadership, teamwork and communications – all vital assets to excel in the industry. Moving forward, we need to raise the bar in regards to tertiary courses that set the foundations for the future of the industry. In this aspect, countries such as South Korea are still years ahead, already [recognising](#) gaming as part of the faculty of Sports Science at university level.

There is no denying that Singapore is poised to lead Southeast Asia in the gaming industry with all the right ingredients for success. These include our proficiency in English to compete with other western countries, a fertile business environment as well as stable and fast Internet infrastructure. Couple all these with our government's [support](#) for original Intellectual Property (IP) content creation and delivery via online and mobile channels as well as the setting up of its Games Solutions Centre – and it's only a matter of time before we reach our goal of becoming a vibrant gaming hub.