New Jersey City University School of Business

FINAL PROJECT: Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Plan

for NJCU eSports

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Marketing Communication 332

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CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP:

I certify that I am the author of this work and that any assistance I have received in its preparation is fully acknowledged and disclosed. I have also cited any sources from which I used data, ideas, or words, directly quoted or paraphrased. I prepared this work specifically for this course.

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II.   Executive Summary

New Jersey City University (NJCU) eSports offers competitive, organized video gaming for students interested in a wide variety of popular games as an official University sport within NJCU's Athletics Program.

Due to the pandemic, many things have changed for undergraduates. Students have fewer chances to interact and build connections with other students because all classes are held virtually. The majority of first-year students strive to meet new people and come to the college campus with the social need to belong to a group. NJCU eSports is using innovative ways to build a community at NJCU by providing students with various opportunities to enjoy playing games, meeting new people, and forming their own experiences. NJCU eSports is creating communication with students and assisting them in belonging to a team with other players of similar interests through different platforms such as discord, twitch, and youtube. The organization offers players social interactions between players in a virtual environment and builds connections within the NJCU community in the real world.

According to Justin Flanagan, a senior student at NJCU and head coach of NJCU eSports, "NJCU is diverse both in ethnicity and interests. This is a chance for more communities to be represented on campus and more people interested in new or unique experiences that they may not have had before. If you are a casual gamer or have never experienced eSports before, this is a good chance for you to get to know a screen full of passion and fun. If you play and are unsure if you should join, then you should join. Playing in tournaments is an experience you will not easily replicate elsewhere."

The NJCU eSports program offers a Varsity level team for competitive gamers and recently launched eSports Gamer Group (EG2) for casual gamers. EG2 provides an opportunity for casual gamers who don't have a lot of experience to gain more knowledge and understand the full screen of passion and fun. The purpose of EG2 is to establish a chain of communication between the gaming community at NJCU. To continue building the eSports community at NJCU, EG2 engages both casual and competitive gamers by hosting game nights, tournaments, and developmental days for players looking to improve. NJCU eSports currently offers a wide variety of popular

games, including Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Madden, FIFA, Super Smash Bros., Rainbow Six Siege, Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Tekken, and Fortnite. Other games are also welcome as membership grows and leaders can be identified.

NJCU eSports has 284 members between the Varsity team and EG2 combined. eSports is headquartered out of a new, customized, state-of-the-art eSports Lab located on the second floor of NJCU's Gilligan Student Union Building. The NJCU eSports Lab contains 12 Alienware desktop computers dedicated to gaming with overwatch, Rocket League, and Call of Duty already installed and featuring professional gaming chairs, mice, keyboards, and headsets.

NJCU eSports wants to become a successful program that is popular among students, most especially freshman and sophomore students. NJCU eSports, however, is currently facing a significant challenge. The organization lacks effective communication with its primary public and needs new and targeted tactics to engage with them. NJCU eSports' main concern is to improve its communication plan to reach the target audiences. The organization has already distributed various marketing outputs and has been using its website and social media platforms to communicate with its primary audience. However, a more strategic approach to communication is the key to creating a successful brand. In short, few will receive the organization's messages if it does not communicate strategically.

This Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) plan's main purpose is to provide a communication goal and measurable objectives that can be reached with strategic tactics to help guide NJCU eSports to communicate more effectively with its primary public. The plan emphasizes the importance of evaluating tactics for continual improvement and ensuring that the tactics help meet the measurable objectives. The plan's appendix showcases examples of content and tactical approaches. This IMC plan provides a strategic solution to the marketing and communication challenges that NJCU eSports is currently facing. The tactics suggested ensure that the primary public will know what NJCU eSports is while highlighting the quality of services and opportunities provided.

III.   Research

Secondary Research

Content Analysis of eSports Website:

Website Quality: Overall quality is efficient
Website design: Responsive design that optimizes images and correct spacing based on the device used
Page speed: Overall experience is B: 81%
Link: https://njcugothicknights.com/sports/eSports

The website's overall performance is good, and the design is well structured. It is easy to navigate, provides essential information, and the content has a consistent design/color palette that plays true to NJCU's branding. Apart from the speed optimization, the website is great. It lists different categories/sections that include the 2020-21 eSports Roster, the fall 2020 schedule for all the games with the overall record, and a recruitment form for anyone interested in joining eSports. Also, the website provides essential information about NJCU eSports discord and Esports gamer group (EG2). The content is compelling to students interested in joining.

Additionally, the website also shows the most recent content relating to each game, ongoing events, and a lot of user content and experience. However, the website is extremely hard to find through the NJCU main page. Visitors must make a lot of clicks before finding the eSports website. The viewer may want to come back to learn more information.

Content Analysis of NJCU eSport's Flyer

The flyer on EG2 is not informative, especially to casual gamers. It does not explain if the flyer is talking about EG2 or eSports in general. The flyer includes few social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Discord, etc. However, if students want to share the flyer with friends, the call to action is not clear because it doesn't mention the website or how they can join. It provides contact information on the flyer and below the flyer, and both contacts are different. The second contact does not explain who the contact person

is and what they have to do with EG2, especially to casual gamers who are new to eSports.

Content Analysis of eSports Social Media Platforms
1. Instagram

Name:	njcuesports
Content Quality:	needs improvement
Followers:	343
Following:	263
Post:	115
Freq. Post:	once in 4 to 5 days
Use of Hashtags:	Yes, but not strategically
Engagement:	Barely
Likes:	15-20 likes

The link tree in the bio is super convenient for students to locate all the eSport platforms, recruitment form, website, etc. NJCU eSports mentions many different acronyms like RL, LoL, SSBU, and ECAC in the bio but doesn't mention what these acronyms stand for. It is important for casual and new gamers or people who are learning more. While NJCU eSports is constantly promoting on Instagram, its content does not engage with the primary people. It is not working to pull people in to comment, click a link, visit the website, call for more information, or join. The content is not based on key messages of NJCU eSports. Also, Instagram posts do not have a set schedule, and content is being posted randomly. Most of the content has the same graphics, making it seem like the same content is simply being posted repeatedly. It does not capture the attention of gamers because gamers are used to seeing creative and unique graphics. eSports makes limited use of hashtags, and the ones that are used are repetitive. NJCU eSports content marketing needs a strategic approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, consistent content to drive the audience to join eSports.

2. Discord

Members: 293

Students engage in the general chat section among other students, where they talk about certain games and opportunities within the campus for NJCU students. Whenever students have a question or suggestion, someone is getting back to them shortly, which is an effective move. These communications need to continue to be focused on the organization's key messages and recruitment/membership benefits. NJCU eSports has gained nine new members on discord since April. NJCU eSports discord offers various text channels such as General chat for students to talk, NJCU opportunities, eSport socials, Student made, and Level up on the left side on the left side. NJCU eSports can use other platforms like Instagram to show the main purpose of why NJCU eSports is on discord and how it is best to connect with them. Many students are new to discord and don't know how everything works. Posting content for the casual gamers to familiarize them with eSports main channels.

3. Youtube

Content Quality: Concise
Subscribers: 24
Videos: 30
Engagement: No follower's engagement (15-25 views)

There's no introduction video informing visitors who NJCU eSports is or their purpose. It does not mention any benefits, opportunities, or key messages in any of the videos. The video doesn't mention how students can join. Also, there are no testimonials from NJCU gamers.

4. Twitter

Content Quality: needs improvement.
Followers: 151
Following: 180
Tweets: 234
Engagement: There's no engagement with the audience

Freq. post: Post rarely and almost same post as Instagram

Likes and retweet: 10 to 15 likes and very few retweets

The content is not recruiting the audience strategically (i.e., most of the posts are about game alerts, a recap of past matches, and overall game records). Some of the content is simply being reposted from Instagram. The content is not stating any of the key messages and the benefits and opportunities NJCU eSports offers to students. Also, there is very little engagement with its primary public.

5. Tik Tok:

Content Quality: fitting for the platform

Followers: 62

Following: 7

Overall Likes: 2044

Engagement: Barely any engagement with NJCU students and lacking in the communication of essential messaging

6. Twitch

Content Quality: Concise

Likes: 123

Overall videos streamed: 1.6K

Engagement: Very little engagements among students

The platform is used to stream, scrims, coaching sessions, and matches, and more. Compared to the other platforms, there is little engagement, and visitors can also see students' faces compared to the other platforms. There is also a schedule section that posts about the upcoming tournaments. However, the platform does not mention any key messages or have an introduction video. There is nothing listed on the "About us" page.

NJCU eSports is professional on all the platforms but needs improvement because the content is repetitive overall, especially on Instagram. All the content posted on social

media uses the same template, hardly changing the wording, making it seem like the same post is being posted repeatedly. Messages are the same on all platforms and not strategic (not related to research findings, not inclusive of key messages, not directed to primary publics' information needs). Some of the content is simply copied and pasted from one platform to another and is not using each platform's unique characteristics strategically. Tactics are recommended in the Implementation section that show what type of content. NJCU eSports needs to create to attract students' attention. Most of the content posted so far has been about updates regarding the game's record in the same design and format.

Content Analysis of Professional Campaigns

JUST 2 IT: The case was successful because it used a call to action with double-up puns designed to get the primary public to recall the key message and comprehend (and act on!) its importance. eSports can implement and use something similar to drive traffic to the social media platforms. The case demonstrates the value of strong key messages that call people to action.

Haagen-Dazs Loves Honey Bees: Let's Lick This Problem: HD conducted primary and secondary research, allowing them to find and identify the right target audience. They picked a cause close to their company's mission and essential to their primary public, which was one reason the campaign was particularly effective. NJCU eSports can do something similar with a good cause linked to gaming and the target public.

Spike & Biscuit Rebrand for the Charleston Animal Society: The case was incredibly engaging and used a creative way to indirectly spread the word to the audience without being too upfront and not using the regular guilt strategies to drive animal adoption and donations. They created a positive, humorous campaign in which the people of Charleston wanted to be part. NJCU eSports can engage its audience using similar techniques by using a positive strategy and tone. Once the campus opens up again, eSports can make public appearances by having informational booths and utilizing social media to engage with their primary public.

American Cancer Society: Creating a World with More Birthdays: The case was incredibly engaging because they used well-known advocates/influencers like Rihanna, Justin, etc. Also, the campaign used controlled media such as Facebook, Twitter, Website, video series, blogging, email, and promotion. A strategic lesson from this case that might help NJCU eSports is to conduct more research on if freshmen students know about eSports and NJCU eSports' role.

Primary Research

Interview with Justin Flanagan, Senior Student at New Jersey City University and Head Coach of eSports.

Justin Flanagan mentioned that the Athletics Department at NJCU announced in June 2020 the addition of its newest club team, eSports. eSports is headquartered out of a new, customized, state-of-the-art eSports Lab located on the second floor of NJCU's Gilligan Student Union Building. The NJCU eSport lab contains 12 desktop computers dedicated to gaming with overwatch, Rocket League, and Call of Duty already installed and featuring professional gaming chairs, mice, keyboards, and headsets.

However, when the COVID-19 outbreak occurred, the team was forced to improvise. The NJCU eSports team is now using the chat function via discord to practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-8 P.M. It has a total of 284 members on discord between the Varisty team and EG2 combined. The communication the organization already created includes a monthly calendar with all organization activities, email marketing, the scoreboard for the varsity level game, flyers sent to academic departments to recruit students, and the beginnings of an outreach program focused on middle and high school students participating in a program called Garden State Esports. The current challenge NJCU eSport is facing is communicating strategically (in alignment with research and according to the primary public's needs) and recruiting more students. Flanagan wants to raise more awareness among students and inform them of the opportunities and benefits they can receive by participating in the NJCU eSports community.

Flanagan noted that NJCU eSports has:

2 Coordinators

3 varsity team

5 EG2 reps

$10,000 Budget each year

NJCU eSports has a gaming community for:

Rocket League

Overwatch

Call of Duty

Counter-Strike Global Offensive

League of Legends

Apex Legends

Fortnite

Rainbow Six Siege

Smash

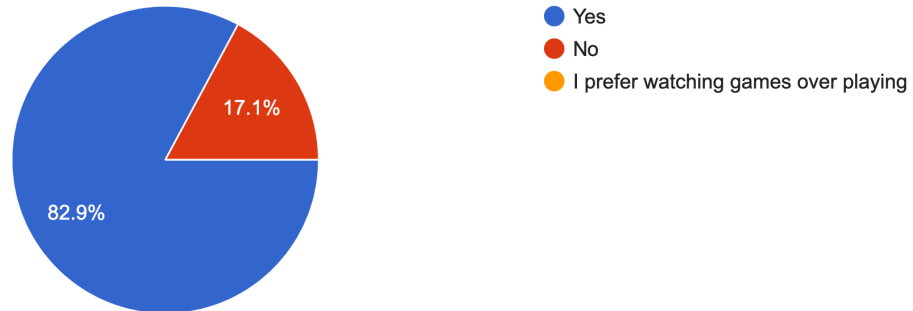Tekken

Smite

Valorant

Legends of Runeterra

Hearthstone

Survey

Several NJCU students were surveyed to determine how many know about NJCU eSports and gaming habits. Below are the results:
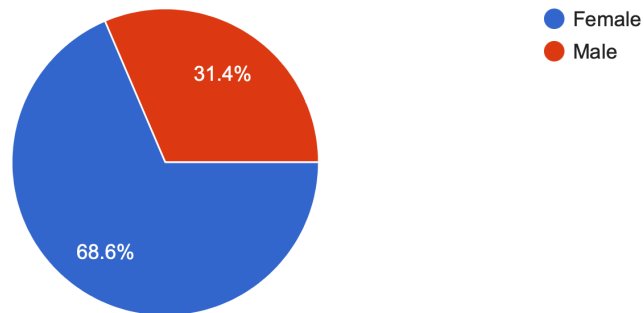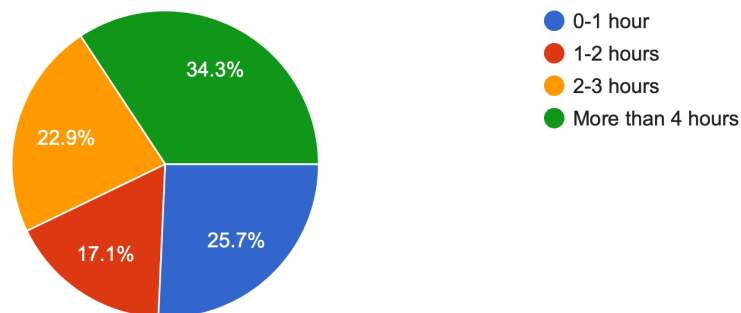
1. Do you play video games?
35 responses

- Yes
- No
- I prefer watching games over playing

17.1%

82.9%

2. Are you male or female?
35 responses

- Female
- Male

31.4%

68.6%

3. How many hours per day do you spend playing video games?
35 responses

- 0-1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- More than 4 hours

34.3%

22.9%

25.7%

17.1%

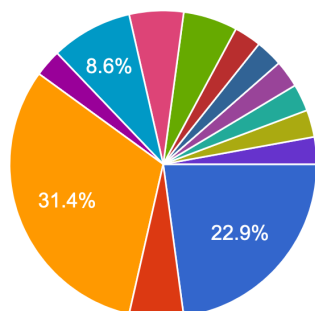## 4. Which of these games have you played before?
35 responses
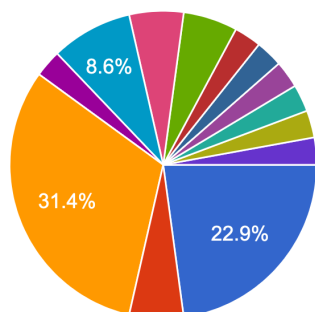
- League of Legends
- Heartstone
- Call of Duty
- Counter Strike
- Minecraft
- None
- Assassin's Creed Valhalla
- NBA 2k

△ 1/2 ▼

4. Which of these games have you played before?
35 responses

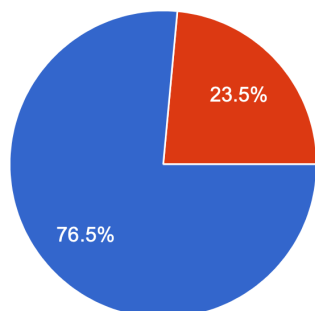- Both Minecraft & CoD along with many others
- Nba 2k, GTA
- FIFA
- Valorant and CSGO
- Rocket League
- COD, Minecraft, and many others

▲ 2/2 ▽

5. Do you play online multiplayer games?
34 responses

- Yes
- No

6. How often do you watch others playing games?

35 responses

- 🔵 Never
- 🔴 Occasionally
- 🟠 Sometimes
- 🟢 Often
- 🟣 Always

25.7% 8.6% 11.4% 45.7%
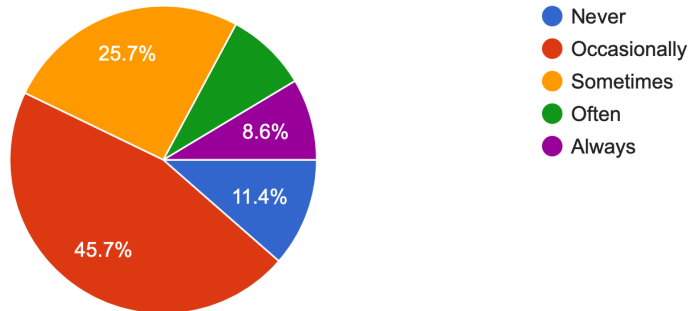
7. Which eSports live streaming services websites do you use?

35 responses

- 🔵 Youtube Gaming
- 🔴 Twitch
- 🟠 Azubu
- 🟢 None

14.3% 17.1% 68.6%
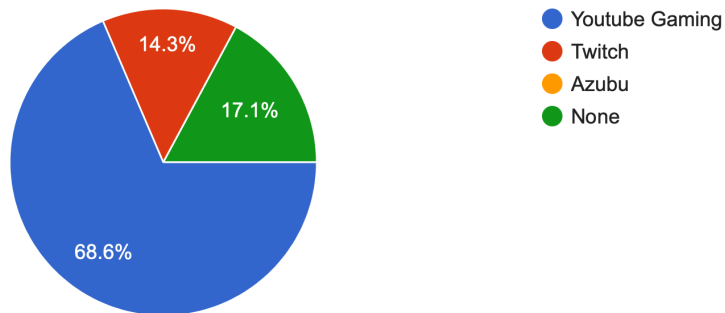
8. What kind of devices do you use to watch eSports?

35 responses

- 🔵 Smartphone
- 🔴 Tablet
- 🟠 Laptop
- 🟢 PC/Desktop
- 🟣 Console
- 🔵 Smart TV
- 🔴 None
- 🟢 Tv, Console, Laptop, Phone

25.7% 17.1% 37.1% 14.3%
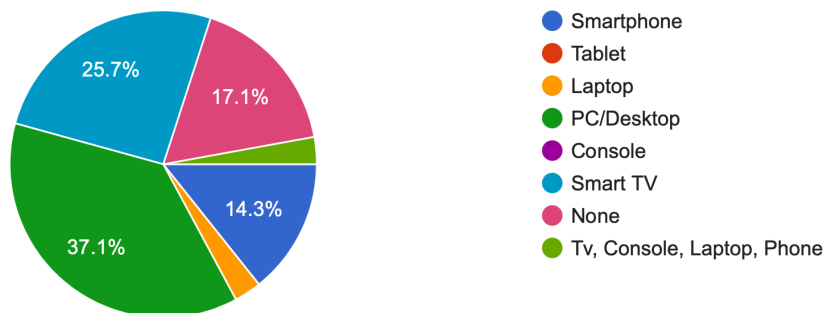
9. How do you usually check for NJCU news?

35 responses
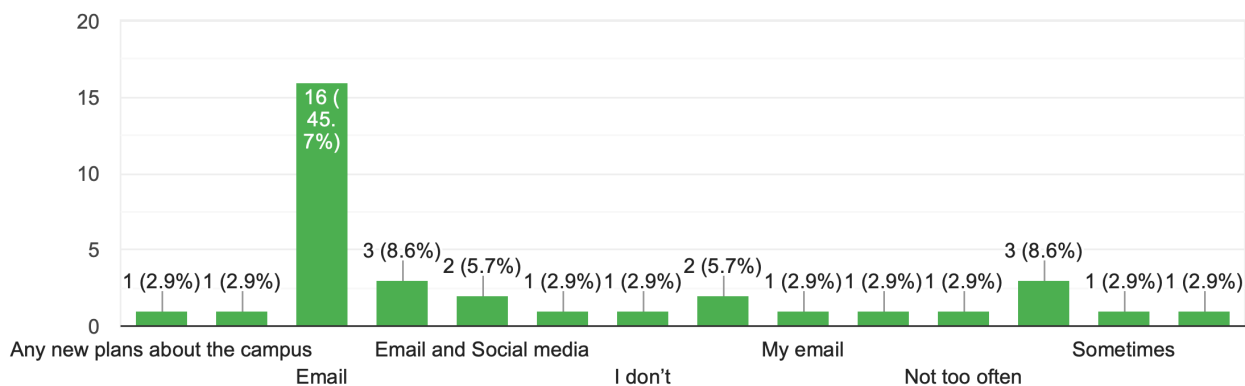
10. Do you know about eSports at NJCU?

35 responses

- Yes
- No

74.3%

25.7%
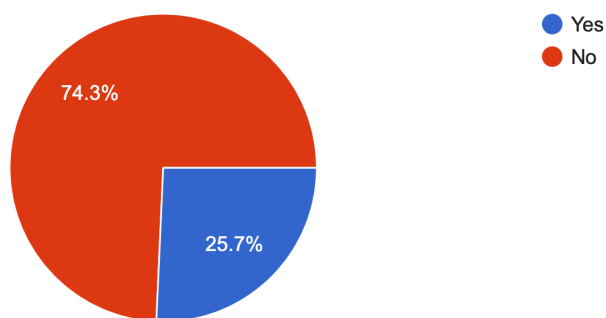
11. If you answered yes above, how/where did you hear about eSports?

9 responses
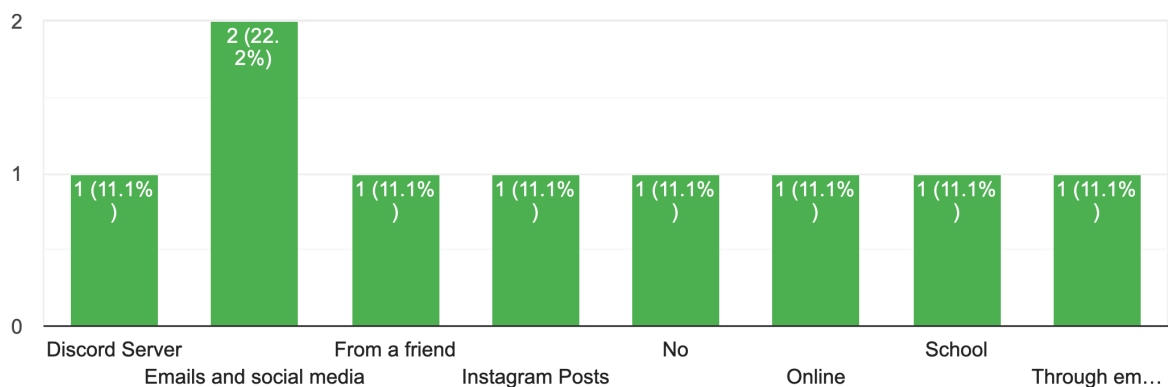
12. Would you be interested in joining NJCU eSports?
35 responses
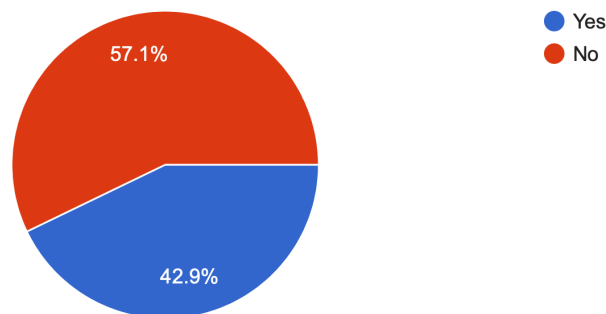
○ 82.9% of students play video games and also shows female are becoming more interested in gaming. Almost 68.6% are females.
○ 34.3% of the students play more than four hours per day.
○ 76.5% of students said they play online multiplayer games, and 45.7% occasionally watch others playing games.
○ 68.6% of students use youtube to live stream. Also, play games like Counterstrike, Minecraft, NBA 2K, CoD, CSGO, Valorant, and Assassin's Creed Valhalla.
○ 74.3% of students mentioned that they were not aware of NJCU eSports.
○ Students often use platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and sometimes emails to check the school related-news. More than 50% of the students mentioned they check emails for news.
○ Only 2% of students mentioned that they knew about eSports through social media.
○ 57.1% of students mentioned they would be interested in joining eSports.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

NJCU eSports program offers a Varsity level team for competitive gamers and recently launched eSports Gamer Group (EG2) for casual gamers. EG2 provides an opportunity for casual gamers who don't have a lot of experience to gain more knowledge and understand the full screen of passion and fun. This fact expands the primary public -- as the focus is not just expert gamers -- but anyone interested in gaming. NJCU eSports currently offers a wide variety of popular games, including Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Madden, FIFA, Super Smash Bros., Rainbow Six Siege, Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Tekken, and Fortnite. Other games are also welcome as long as leaders can be identified. This fact strengthens plan messaging. NJCU eSports has 284 members between the Varisty team and EG2 combined. Since NJCU eSports is fairly new, this organization encourages students to provide feedback and suggestions to engage with them and make it all about them. The welcoming of feedback and ideas is a communication strength and allows the organization to tweak communication and messaging continually.

Also, eSports is headquartered out of a new, customized, state-of-the-art eSports Lab located on the second floor of NJCU's Gilligan Student Union Building. When students go back to the campus, they will have a safe and cool place to feel part of the community and express their passion for games. The NJCU eSports Lab contains 12 desktop computers dedicated to gaming with overwatch, Rocket League, and Call of Duty already installed and featuring professional gaming chairs, mice, keyboards, and headsets. To engage, eSports created a monthly calendar with all the activities to keep the audience informed of all the upcoming events and help prioritize their time. NJCU eSports also uses multiple forms of communications on social media to reach the target audience and promote its brand. The platforms include discord, Twitch, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

Weaknesses:

NJCU eSports is relatively new, so the organization faces difficulty building its community and developing the structure necessary for a varsity-level eSports program to be successful. NJCU eSports sent out flyers to recruit more students. However, due to the pandemic, students are attending classes virtually. Many students did not have the chance to see the flyers or know what eSports is. While a flyer may be a good tactic, it must include important key messages. It must be just one of many integrated tactics that together send key messages about the organization. Research shows that, despite the following on Instagram, NJCU eSports often does not post any content on Instagram for five days. The visual appeal of NJCU eSports Instagram posts is also low for gaming groups used to superior graphics on a platform that is all about story-telling through video and photos. The organization has very low engagement with its target audience on all the platforms, and some of the content isn't visually compelling or engaging to the audience. A website content analysis found that it's very difficult to find the NJCU eSports website through the NJCU homepage. According to the interview with Justin Flanagan, NJCU eSports hasn't used a wide variety of tactics to engage with audiences, has not established any schedule, and is rarely consistent with its organizational emails.

Opportunities:

NJCU is the leading university for eSports in the region, so that marketing messages can stress eSports' opportunities.NJCU eSports is accepting and respecting members of the gaming community. NJCU eSports recently launched, so it is still in the process of building its community. NJCU eSports wants to expand and target potential middle schools and high schools and has been working towards reaching out to middle and high school students by participating in a program called Garden State Esports, which may increase the number of recruits. It also has low membership barriers, meaning any casual gamer can join eSports to gain more experiences, learn some other valuable skills, and make new connections. NJCU eSports can also work on the communication strategy that will allow them to expand and recruit more students. NJCU eSports can work on modifying its flyers, engaging with the audience on social platforms. Also, use email marketing for player retention, cross-promotion, and growth.

Threats:

NJCU eSports is fairly new, so it has few competitions. However, if NJCU eSports do not use strategic marketing tools, the organization might not gain more recruits. NJCU

eSports is the leading university in the region, but more universities in the area might start their gaming club like eSports in the near future. Also, there are various other groups on the NJCU campus trying to get the attention of incoming students.

IV. Planning

Business Goal

- To recruit more students to NJCU eSport, with the long-term goal for NJCU to be the leading university for eSports in the region.

Communication Goal

- To raise awareness about the opportunities and benefits NJCU students can receive by participating at the varsity or club level in the NJCU eSports community.

Target Audience

Primary public

- NJCU freshmen and sophomores interested in gaming (competitive gamers or casual gamers) and becoming respected members of the NJCU eSports community.

Secondary public

- Juniors and seniors at NJCU might be interested in casual gaming and joining the eSports community to gain valuable skills.

Communication Objectives

- To inform 35% of freshmen and sophomore students at NJCU about the competitive opportunities available through NJCU eSports, including games of Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Madden, FIFA, Super Smash Bros, Rainbow Six Siege, Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Tekken, Fortnite, and more by the end of Fall Semester.
- To persuade 30% of freshmen and sophomores at NJCU to follow NJCU eSports on discord, Instagram, Twitter, and Twitch by the end Fall semester.
- To educate 35% of freshmen and sophomore students at NJCU about the leadership and other skills and benefits (i.e., working with others, social skills, time management, strategic thinking, becoming a respected member of NJCU community/finding strong social connections) available through joining NJCU eSports by the end of Fall semester.

Strategies

1. To create direct communication with its primary public and build an engaged community on social media platforms where the gamers spend the majority of their screen time.
2. Spread NJCU eSports key messages via social media platforms continuously, build buzz, and entertain students through a fun, interactive campaign.
3. Intrigue students to seek more details online.
4. Promote eSports through bold graphics and messages appropriate to reaching gamers

Key Messages

1. Not all gamers are alike, which is why NJCU eSports welcomes competitive and casual gamers to join.
2. Discord is an active and safe environment for NJCU students to socialize with other students, learn about different opportunities, and build connections.
3. NJCU eSports offers NJCU students the opportunity to connect with other like-minded sports enthusiasts who have similar interests.

4. NJCU eSports offers leadership and other skills and benefits (i.e., working with others, social skills, time management, strategic thinking, becoming a respected member of NJCU).

5. Other gamers are available for casual gamers who aren't interested in any of the genres. Gamers of all skill levels are welcome to NJCU eSports.

V.   Implementation

Tactics

Objective 1: To inform 35% of freshmen and sophomore students at NJCU about the competitive opportunities available through NJCU eSports, including games of Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Madden, FIFA, Super Smash Bros, Rainbow Six Siege, Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Tekken, Fortnite, and more by the end of Fall Semester.

Tactics to Help Meet Objective 1:
Enhance NJCU E-Sports website:
- ○ The website needs work to optimize its images/videos and its placement on NJCU main page. The NJCU eSports website takes a bit of time to load due to the larger image. The more time the browser spends loading, the additional time students spend waiting for the page to load. (i.e., serving compressed images can help reduce image file sizes and speed up image downloads for an ultimately faster loading page.) One image size, for example, is 542KB. The website enhancements can include compressing this and other images to 293KB to have a smaller size to download faster and have imperceivable quality differences.
- ○ Also, for branding purposes, consider adding faces of NJCU eSports EG2's current leadership. Although NJCU eSports provides a social media directory, it is hard to find NJCU eSport platforms on Instagram, Twitter, etc. Highlight NJCU eSports social media platforms (i.e., Instagram, Twitter, Twitch, and discord) on the website at all times for students who come in to check the news. Also, add Testimonials from causal and Varsity members at NJCU. Below are the testimonials found while performing secondary research.

Testimonials:

The E-Sports team at NJCU, as a whole, has had a positive impact on me completely. As a player, I have improved dramatically in my skills as an individual and as a team player, and I have learned how to communicate, work with others, and have learned how to understand the game better. The team enables me to play to the best of my ability. Although there is a vast difference in skill level, they are all welcoming, friendly,

and understanding. As a student, E-Sports provided an escape from all the school work and welcoming to all people and all majors as they also offer tutoring help to those who ask. As a community member, I have created many friends, and I felt welcomed and unafraid to be myself, regardless of my skill and who I am as a person.

- **Varsity Team Member, Overwatch, Freshman (2020)**

So far, my experience with the eSports program has been pretty smooth. I have been able to improve and meet new people along the way and look forward to continuing to build more bonds. The program has also allowed me to take more responsibility as I have been managing my workload as well as my job and playing for this program.

- **Varsity Team Member, Rocket League, Freshman (2020)**

It has helped me meet people who have similar interests and goals. I can compete and improve alongside my team members interactively and mutually benefit from it.

- **Varsity Team Member, Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, Freshman (2020)**

Seeing as how I play video games for such a long period of time throughout the day, I decided to try out for the Overwatch team. I know I am not very good, but I enjoy talking to people and being a part of a team. It helps me work on my communication skills as well as teamwork.

- **Varsity Team Member, Overwatch, Sophomore (2020)**

Weekly E-Newsletter/Email Marketing
- ○ NJCU eSports can also add an e-newsletter to its website to provide news about new gaming and exclusive thoughts directly from NJCU eSports top players. Through the e-newsletter, the organization can also post content that other students might relate to (i.e., interviewing students on certain topics like if playing eSports helped students overcome their anxiety or what's going in the gaming world). Social media messages can be created to tease the content in the newsletter to get people to the website to learn more.

Frequently Asked Questions
- ○ Create a list of frequent questions that students might have and provide answers or have an option for students o submit questions.

Objective 2: To persuade 30% of freshmen and sophomores at NJCU to follow NJCU eSports on discord, Instagram, Twitter, and Twitch by the end Fall semester.

Tactics to Help Meet Objective 2:

Fortify NJCU eSports Presence on Social Media

Instagram is a relatively new form of communication where users can easily share visual content and update friends in many different ways. NJCU eSports should increase the variety of tools offered by Instagram and track engagement to determine which tools are the most effective when engaging with the primary public (i.e., Instagram stories, Q&A, polls, reels, etc.)

Pick the right platform to educate students about eSports. Instead of posting content on all platforms, focus on publishing the right content on where the students spend most of their time.

- ○ Reddit is where much of the post-match analysis happens
- ○ YouTube is used to see highlights and replays of live gaming events
- ○ Instagram is full of live gaming memes and reactions and visuals
- ○ Twitter is about conversations about live sports gaming that happens, usually news.
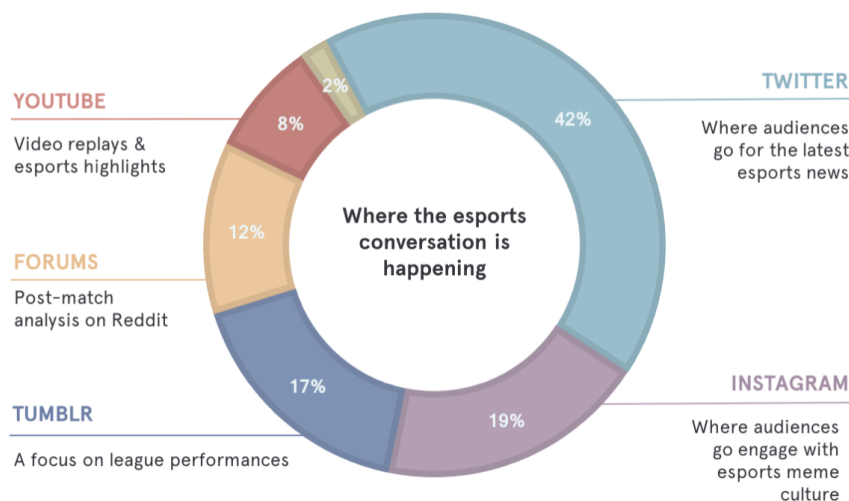
YOUTUBE
Video replays & esports highlights

8%

2%

FORUMS
Post-match analysis on Reddit

12%

TUMBLR
A focus on league performances

17%

19%

Where the esports conversation is happening

42%

TWITTER
Where audiences go for the latest esports news

INSTAGRAM
Where audiences go engage with esports meme culture

Chart by Pulsar

Instagram Posts Ideas:

Schedule for the upcoming week

Post save the date for any upcoming tournaments that are being held (Note: Do not use the same design as in previous content, create something new on Canva that will stand out.)

Shoutout to the public and engage with them

○ Make a point to shout out to the primary public when they win a tournament— harness the audience's sense of community and creativity.

For example:

○ Creating posts with NJCU students who won a contest
○ Student playing a certain game, the best player in Call of Duty/other games
○ Top students who spend the most hours in certain games
○ Link to the website for larger reviews and newsletter coverage of the same content in a longer format.

How-To's content

○ Competitive and casual gamers are all about doing certain things inside a video gamer—the best tactic is creating How-To's videos, blogs, or a series of videos showing how to do something in a video game. It is a great way to capture attention.

○ Post a sneak peek on Instagram and add youtube/twitch as an action call to see the full content.

Example:
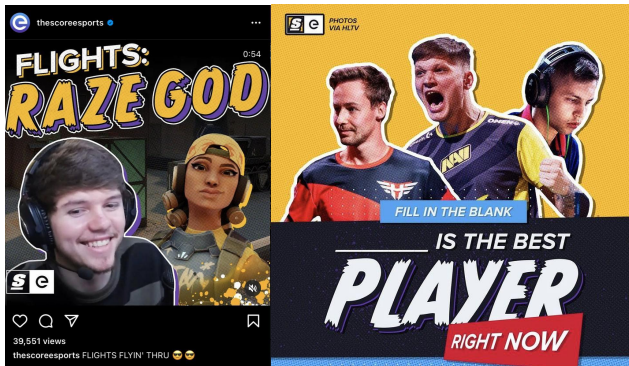
Content to engage

- ○ Create content that engages the audience by either sharing NJCU eSports posts on stories, leaving a comment, or inviting others to see it. eSports can post updates but do it in a way that's building anticipation and gets students talking.
- ○ Gamers often look for new content that will challenge them. For example, creating posts under hashtags #NJCUeSports #eSportsNews about ongoing competitions, memes to reel in viewers.
- ○ Many esports fans tend to keep up with the latest updates, using social media platforms to highlight the current events with eSports and the gaming community.
  (Note: Don't forget to implement NJCU eSports in the post. You can do mini-interviews with students by asking similar questions and posting them while asking the online audience to see if they agree.)

For example:
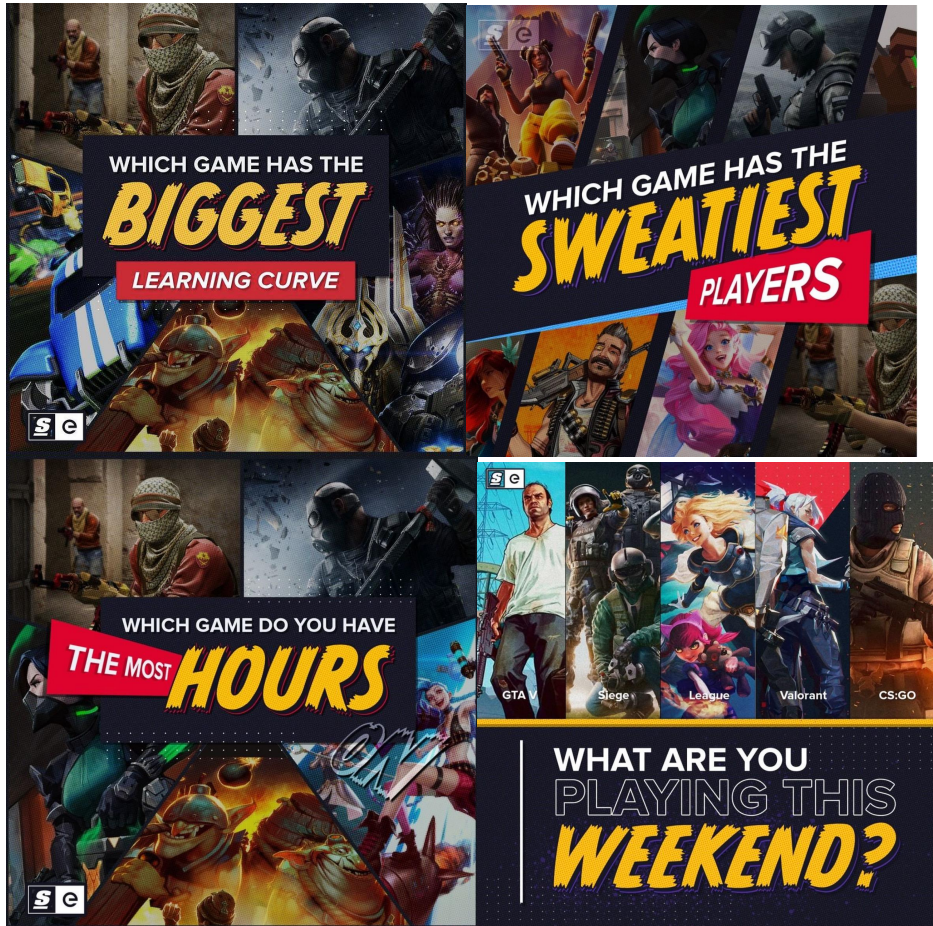
Partner with influencers on the NJCU

Live stream with a popular person on campus, a campus athlete (in popular traditional sport), a popular administrator or professor, and post the content while tagging them.

Instagram Stories:
- ○ Create gaming-related conversations on the NJCU eSports story using the Q&A.
- ○ Creating an interactive quiz (trivia, memes, etc.)
- ○ Create polls for the audience to vote on different discussion topics regarding games
- ○ Sneak peek content when students are doing live streaming), creating an interactive quiz (trivia, memes, etc.)

Hashtags:

#NJCUeSports #NewJerseyCityUniversity #NJCUStudents #gaming #gamer #ps #xbox #videogames #playstation #fortnite #twitch #pc #xboxone #gamers #youtube #pcgaming

#memes #gamergirl #follow #videogame #streamer #meme #apexlegends #art #gaminglife #pcgamer #nintendoswitch #funny #instagamer #gamingsetup #csgo #gamingpc #twitchstreamer #gamingmemes #callofduty #retrogaming #fortniteclips #gamingcommunity #fun #blackops #gameplay #instagood #twitchgaming

Fortnite Instagram Hashtags

#fortnite #fortnitememes #fortniteclips #fortnitebr #fortnitebattleroyale #fortniteleaks #fortnitecommunity #battleroyale #fortniteps #fortnitegameplay #fortnitenews #fortnitewin #fortnitesolo #fortniteduo #fortniteclip

Apex Legends Instagram Hashtags

#apexlegends #apex #battleroyale #apexlegendsmemes #apexlegendsclips #apexclips #playapex #apexlegendsxbox #apexmemes #apexlegendsgame #apexlegendsps #apexlegendscommunity #apexcaptures #apexlegendspc #apexlegend

Streaming Instagram Hashtags

#eSportsIsNowLiveStreaming #NJCU #twitch #streamer #youtube #mixer #twitchstreamer #stream #twitchtv #twitchaffiliate #streaming #twitchstream #livestream #supportsmallstreamers #youtuber #twitchgamer #twitchclips #instagaming #fortnitestreamer #steam #twitchgaming

- ○ Don't use the same tags repeatedly.
- ○ Do not use unrelated tags. If enough people report the post being spam, you will see a decline in engagement. Always try to get NJCU eSports in the tags.
- ○ Always change up the tags to see which ones work the best for NJCU eSports.
- ○ Use different variations of tags so people don't miss out on content posted NJCU eSports (i.e., eSportsIsNowStreaminglive #eSportlive #fortnitewin & #fortnitewins)

Below are the top ten posts related to eSports! Check to see what type of tags the follower usually looks at or what tags they follow. Also, the kind of content do they typically share.

#	Hashtag	Posts
1	#esportsteam	89,791
2	#esportslogo	58,754
3	#esportslife	56,161
4	#esportsindonesia	45,807
5	#esportsnews	20,834
6	#esportsfi	17,678
7	#esportsdaily	16,384
8	#esportsgaming	15,196
9	#esportstournament	11,084
10	#esportsmalaysia	10,185

Humorous brand voice

- ○ Humor goes hand in hand with social media and gamers. Add it as part of your brand strategy to make students feel like it's a safe place for them. Post content that invoices memes to appeal to the primary public that's constantly online. Creating and posting relatable memes have a high potential for likes and shares. It breaks from promotional content and engages with the audience into building a sense of community. Have a humorous brand voice that doesn't take itself too seriously. (i.e., Posting memes content that gamers can relate to). Also, game news, trends, and memes move fast in the gaming industry.

Note: Avoid an overly promotional tone because Instagram and Facebook's algorithm limits the reach on any posts that sound too much like ads.

Types of events to host on Twitch

- ○ Mini tournaments: Split the NJCU eSports team and pitching them against each other. Promote the event on social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter and encourage team members to do so. Don't post and leave. Try to get people to engage. Create aligned and longer content on the website and newsletter.
    - ○ Create NJCU eSports merchandise and host a giveaway to get more people to view the tournament.
- ○ Multistream events: Collaborate and interact with one another team regularly.
- ○ Podcasts/webinars nights: Have a weekly or bi-weekly show where NJCU eSports invite team members to share trade secrets and sporting advice with viewers.
    - ○ Post sneak previews on social media, host guests, leverage their name, and connect with their audience.
    - ○ Host a giveaway on the podcast and promote it on social media accounts.
    - ○ Use e-newsletters to preview the full episode for students who cannot attend the podcasts.

Discord Meetings:

- ○ Since discord is the safe and active space place to connect with students, host a meeting via chat to ask the audience what they like to hear in the podcasts or e-

newsletters. Students can post questions and exchange ideas to see what attracts the student most.

Objective 3: To educate 35% of freshmen and sophomore students at NJCU about the leadership and other skills and benefits (i.e., working with others, social skills, time management, strategic thinking, becoming a respected member of NJCU community/finding strong social connections) available through joining NJCU eSports by the end of Fall semester.

Tactics to Help Meet Objective 3:

Types of events to host on Youtube:

eSports can create content that isn't just about the video games but also what NJCU eSports offers the students. How it's a safe environment for students to make connections, develop lifelong skills, and play video games. Create content that has a unique angle that differentiates this program from all the others. eSports can achieve by creating content that includes:

- An introductory video that explains what eSports is
- Opportunities available for students
- Explain the role of EG2
- How students can play and win prizes
- Who students can reach out to form varsity league
- Expectations when it comes to tryouts
- What students can expect as they walk into collegiate eSports tryouts
- How can they join eSports
- Create How-to do videos for causal gamers and competitive gamers
- Student Testimonials
- Document your story of creating the NJCU eSports club

Also, keep in mind that many casual gamers don't know about multiple streaming platforms like Twitch. Create teachable content that's helped the viewers who are watching (i.e., how to live stream with the Twitch app, how to do something in a video game, etc.)

Example: https://www.youtube.com/c/GaelLEVELGaming/videos
Gael started posting regular playing video games, but slowly he leaned more into teaching his viewers, which is why the views jumped drastically.

Create an Informational packet about NJCU eSports
Create an informational packet that can be used to distribute among incoming students, informing them about the opportunities offered by NJCU eSports.

Develop a Brochure
- Informing students at NJCU about the leadership and other skills and benefits they can gain from joining eSports. Explain to the students at NJCU about the initiatives outside of competitive play. For example, the skills and benefits they can gain from joining eSports. (i.e., being able to broadcast, social media advertising and management, and organizing tournaments, etc.)
- Hand out these brochures at Freshman Orientation, Open houses, or Career day.

- ○ NJCU eSports can grab student's attention but using brochures content to make table tents in G-SUB or other buildings on campus where students spend most of their free time.
- ○ If the campus doesn't open for next semester, mail out flyers to freshmen and sophomores.

NJCU eSports Backgrounder and Fact Sheet
- ○ Create a Backgrounder that explains what NJCU eSports is and its purpose (See the appendix for an example).
- ○ Backgrounder can be used to give to other departments, counselors, chairpeople, and faculty to inform them what NJCU eSports is and what their purpose is. Students often find out about different programs and opportunities through faculty, counselors, and chairpeople.
- ○ Also, include the backgrounder in the information packet to distribute among students.
- ○ Write and design a fact sheet that includes answers to frequently asked questions from NJCU students regarding eSports. It will be beneficial, especially for incoming students. (See the appendix for example). Place it inside the information packet to distribute among students during Freshman Orientation, Open houses, or Career day, etc.

NJCU eSports E-Newsletter
- ○ Use e-newsletter to show how eSports can build academic skills, career readiness, Content creation, and entertainment. Promote on social media (newsletter keeps the website fresh – drives people to engage with the site.

Self-Development Day
- ○ Take one day out of the week as a self-development day. NJCU eSports can post content on all social platforms that focus on student's career development during this day. You can post tips on building a resume, holding a networking night's event to make connections, and Posting opportunities for students such as internships/scholarships and bringing in gamers with professional jobs to talk about how gaming made them better equipped in the job market, etc.

VI.   Evaluation

To determine if the NJCU eSports informed 35% of freshmen and sophomore about the competitive opportunities available through NJCU eSports, including games of Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Madden, FIFA, Super Smash Bros, Rainbow Six Siege, Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Tekken, Fortnite, and more by the end of Fall Semester.

1. Conduct interviews with casual and competitive gamers to see if they are aware of all the opportunities.
2. Use Google Analytics to collect data to see the insight of NJCU eSport's performance and website visitors' behavior to see how many more views the website generates. The results will help advertise and improve the campaign to generate a significant portion of the traffic.
3. Use e-newsletter analytics to see the number of recipients who reported the email as spam and the number of individuals who share or forward to others. Track the click-to-open rate and which percentage of people clicked on the link after opening the email. Track what percentage of recipients unsubscribe to the email list and the percentage of individuals who never received it.

To determine if NJCU eSports persuade 30% of freshmen and sophomores to follow NJCU eSports on discord, Instagram, Twitter, and Twitch by the end Fall semester.

1. Measure the number of new followers through social media platforms and their engagement rate.
    ○ Content data -- impressions generated, clickthrough rates, number of followers, "likes," sharing, tagging, comments, and other data on NJCU eSports content.
    ○ Ongoing monitoring that tracks the daily activity over time.
2. Track students' social media platforms to see if the students are using the #NJCUeSports hashtag over the next few months of the campaign.
4. Conduct focus group interviews among students to determine their awareness levels of NJCU eSport's work and outreach. Also, track data of how many students recognized the key messages and converted into an esports member.

To determine if NJCU eSports educated 35% of freshmen and sophomore students at NJCU about the leadership and other skills and benefits (i.e., working with others, social skills, time management, strategic thinking, becoming a respected member of NJCU community/finding strong social connections) available through joining NJCU eSports by the end of Fall semester.

1. Conduct a survey among freshmen and sophomores to determine if they are aware of NJCU eSports and compare the pre-campaign survey responses.
2. Referral data -- keep track of stats on where the students were referred from (i.e., faculty, counselors, other clubs, social media, etc.)
3. Conduct an informational survey among the new members of eSports to see where they heard about NJCU eSports and what made them join because of the opportunities provided by NJCU eSport.

VII. Appendix

New Jersey City University eSports
eSports Lab, 2nd floor
Gilligan Student Union Building

NJCU eSport Fact Sheet

Q: What is eSports at NJCU?
A: NJCU eSport is a competitive and causal organized video gaming opportunity for students interested in games. eSports is an official university sport within NJCU's Athletics program.

Q: What is EG2?
A: NJCU eSports established a new team called EG2 that represents each gaming community on campus. EG2 will work to build interest in their game to obtain varsity status for their competitive players.

Q: What games do NJCU eSports offer?
A: Currently, eSports welcome any game. They have communities for Smash, League of Legends, Rocket League, Call of Duty, Overwatch, Valorant, and Apex.

Q: How many members do eSports currently have?
A: NJCU eSports have 200 members combined from the Varisty team and EG2.

Q: How can your game join EG2, and who to contact to start the process?
A: All representative positions for the 2021-2022 academic year will be determined via a general election at the start of the Fall 2021 semester. Anyone interested in becoming a representative of a gaming community should email njcuesports@njcu.edu.

Q: Who are representative(s) of the Call of Duty community, League of Legends community, and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate community?
A: Call of Duty community representative is Muhammed Onisarotu, League of Legends community is Mario Elgueta, and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate community is Chima Ogbo. If interested, you can contact the representative at NJCU Discord, contact Muhammed Onisarotu under **saro2**, Mario Elgueta under **kpcooper,** and Chima Ogbo under **Judex0**.

Q: Who to contact if you have more questions regarding EG2?
A: For information and inquiries about the EG2, you can find Diane in the NJCU Discord under the name **ArtisanBagels**.

New Jersey City University eSports
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Backgrounder

New Jersey City University (NJCU) eSports provides competitive, organized video gaming opportunities for students interested in a wide variety of popular games as an official university sport within NJCU's Athletics Program. NJCU eSports teams compete on streaming services on the Twitch platform.

NJCU eSports offers a Varsity level team for competitive gamers and recently launched eSports Gamer Group (EG2) for casual gamers. The purpose of EG2 is to establish a chain of communication between the gaming community at NJCU. eSports program coaches, administrators, and leadership is run entirely by students.

To continue building the eSports community at NJCU, EG2 is established to engage the casual gamers and the competitive ones by hosting game nights, tournaments, and developmental days for players looking to improve.

NJCU eSports have 200 members combined from the Varisty team and EG2. eSports is headquartered out of a new, state-of-the-art eSports Lab located on the second floor of NJCU's Gilligan Student Union Building. eSport lab contains 12 desktop computers dedicated to gaming with overwatch, Rocket League, and Call of Duty already installed and featuring professional gaming chairs, mice, keyboards, and headsets. To learn more information, visit https://njcugothicknights.com/sports/esports or reach out to the person mentioned below.

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