Are Esports a “Real” Sport?

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Genres seek to explain what is involved in determining typical characteristics of a subject. The topic of the genres is how esports come to be considered a true sport and how information can be presented to various audiences. The first genre is an image, which serves to give information visually. The image is from a reputable website’s article, a Geek Wire article. The article itself is not the main focus of the genre analysis. Though, the article is on the rise of esports and was published in April 2014. The second genre is also visual, a video published in October 2013 by HBO Real Sports. The video, in summary, attempts to explain what esports is and the life of a pro-gamer. The main question focused on in this writing is if sports can be characterized by the interest and competition surrounding the game. This is an analysis of two genres that represent information about esports and the validity or popularity of it.

**Audience and Purpose**

The informational image, the first genre, is embedded into an article at first glance though the image is widespread across the Internet. The purpose of the image is to inform people reading the article or looking at the image solely. The audience would be those that are uninformed or those that need a refreshing on the state of esports and their popularity. This genre constructs the information visually to present the information in a spread out, easy to read manner. The second genre, the HBO video, is informational though also social. The participants of the discussion on the featured show discuss their opinions throughout the show. This allows for the audience to be both really well knowing of the status of esports and to experience what life for someone in the middle of the popularity is like. This genre presents the information slowly enough to follow along with and in a social manner. The information you get is based on what you are able to interpret socially. For example, when someone scratches their head you can socially interpret that they are thinking or unsure of the topic. Due to this real-time visual presentation you have to rely on social queues as well as the content to understand the information.

Both genres serve informational purposes though there is a slight distinction on how one would come about stumbling upon each genre. In the case of the image, the image’s viewership will be greatly affected by those that do or don’t read the article it is embedded in. Also due to the nature of the website the article/image is on, it is assumed that the audience would be composed of teenagers to mid 30 year olds that have an interest in games or geek culture. For the HBO video, our second genre, we can assume that since the clip we’re concerned with occurred on the 199th episode of the segment that common viewers of the show as well as fans of more traditional sports (e.g. football, baseball, etc.) would comprise a large amount of the viewership.

Unlike in meaning, the genres differ greatly in the time it takes to digest the entire genre. An image would take as long as reading the content and relating the content to information already known. The video would take the length of the video to completely digest as well as time afterwards to reflect on what was just viewed. Each genre’s intention is the same though; to represent information about the popularity of an esport, in this case League of Legends, and what it is.

Another aspect in which the genres differ is in their vocabulary. The image is very straightforward as it states facts and there is no specialized vocabulary. For the video however there is a conflict of specialized vocabulary. As a small example, during the talk with the pro-gamer the interviewer was not able to understand what sort of effect or intention the word “smite” had. The gamers had specialized vocabulary, which was not essential to understanding the entire piece as a whole due to the bulk of the interviewers not being gamers. Very simple terms were clarified and the specialized vocabulary so often present in videogames is set to a minimum.

**Rhetorical Issues**

Both genres deliver valid information and the way the information is delivered is essential to understanding the genre properly.

**Ethos**

In the first genre, the author of the article or the image does not give any sort of source for the image. The image being hosted on a website such as Geek Wire gives the audience credibility that all the information is valid since it is a reputable news site for gamers and many other audiences. Without the backing of a reputable online news source, there would undoubtedly be questions as to the image. The second genre, a video, comes from a large corporation’s small segment called Real Sports. The video is a part of a clip of that show which is the 199th episode of the segment. Also the video contains introduced real-life people that put a lot of work into the video. When information is delivered from the mouths of reputable sports casters or news-people that gives a precedence of valid information being distributed to the audience.

**Pathos**

There is little emotion to be evoked from an image; especially an image that contains mostly text and graphs. However there is some significant emotion to be evoked in a video, the second genre. Since the video represents people arguing for the validity and success of esports we can see the internal struggle between the common person and an esports fan. This gives real-life emotion behind information. People in the audience are able to gain a sort of two-sided perspective through the presentation of information in the video.

**Logos**

Factual evidence is a great way to appeal to logic. The image genre contained solely evidence to be interpreted by the audience. The audience is meant to see this presentation of information was an argument in its own as numbers and statistics is not something to be trifled with. The second genre, the HBO clip, has less of an ability to convince the average viewer as the show may present information but the shallow discussion between the show’s participants is lacking. There is not much persuasion but a bit of stating opinions and moving on by the hosts of the show. The video is not very successful in changing the opinion of the general public.

**Structure and Delivery**

As previously stated, the first genre, the image, is embedded in an article from a reputable website. The image is in the middle of the article which helps center its importance to the piece. The delivery is appropriate and helps support the information of the genre. The structure is of a graph showing the attendance of popular sporting events with the attendance of the esports event dominating the others. The intention of showing the overwhelming popularity of esports is successful. The second genre presents the life of a pro-gamer between cuts of the interviewer reflecting on the information she is learning. The structure would seem jumbled up but is enough for the audience to follow long while watching. The placement of some fortunate shots can help steer the audience to believe certain untrue or true statements. In the video, the pro-gamer being interviewed is a bit fat and there are consistent remarks on his being a recluse when he is known for being sociable. Both sides of the audience (those for esports being a sport and those against) are able to identify with their own cause, as the video remains mostly neutral. The value is in the eye of the beholder in this case.

Conclusion

Generally, the genres were able to express the intended information in a proper manner. The first genre is definitely more factual and quick to digest for the audience while the second genre is susceptible to interpretation from the audience. The second genre also values opinions of the speakers in the video while the first genre doesn’t have the luxury of more than one person’s input in a discussion.