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Activision Blizzard Media Networks Announces Record Esports Viewership

Audiences Set New CS:GO Major Records With 45 Million Hours Watched and Record-Breaking Concurrent Viewership

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Activision Blizzard Media Networks, a division of Activision Blizzard, Inc. (Nasdaq: ATVI), today announced that Major League Gaming's Counter-Strike: Global Offensive Major Championship (CS:GO Major) set new viewership records during its March 30 - April 3 broadcast from Columbus, Ohio. Audiences generated 71 million video views,¹ watched a record-breaking 45 million hours of live broadcast² and set a new record of 1.6 million concurrent viewers³ across OTT, web, mobile and in-game streaming during this year's event.

This breaks the previously-reported CS:GO Major record of 34 million hours viewed and 1.3 million concurrent viewers set at the 2015 CS:GO Major in Cologne, Germany.⁴

"Last year, more than 225 million people watched competitive gaming, and the passion, engagement and size of this audience only continues to grow," said Mike Sepso, Senior Vice President of Activision Blizzard Media Networks and Major League Gaming (MLG) co-founder. "As this year's CS:GO Major numbers show, Activision Blizzard Media Networks' commitment to broadcasting premium content and creating incredible events is resonating with players and fans around the world."

With the goal of building on its competitive gaming leadership and becoming the ESPN of esports, Activision Blizzard announced its Media Networks Division in October 2015, and recruited former ESPN CEO Steve Bornstein and MLG co-founder Mike Sepso to serve as the division's Chairman and Senior Vice President, respectively. Activision Blizzard acquired the business of MLG in December 2015 to further its ability to deliver best-in-class fan experiences and premium broadcast content across games, platforms and geographies.

This year's CS:GO Major was the first held in North America, with the world's best CS:GO teams competing for a \$1 million prize pool. The historic competition, held at the Nationwide Arena in Columbus, drew a sold-out crowd of over 10,000⁵ fans for each of the three final days of live competition. The Columbus event concluded on April 3 and peaked with a record 1.6 million concurrent viewers⁶ as the Luminosity Gaming team claimed top honors and the majority of the prize pool. Overall, MLG produced 68 hours of premium content broadcast in 15 languages during the event.

Counter-Strike competitions have been held globally for the past 16 years, with game developer Valve instituting a CS:GO Major system in 2014. The Columbus championship is the eighth CS:GO Major event held since 2013, and the first produced by MLG.

With over 225 million unique viewers, the esports audience is estimated to be bigger than audiences for many professional sports leagues. Creating premium content for these audiences will provide significant opportunities in ticket sales, advertising, sponsorships, licensing and merchandising. By 2017, esports is projected to have over 300 million viewers.⁷

About Activision Blizzard

Activision Blizzard, Inc., a member of the S&P 500, is the world's most successful standalone interactive entertainment company. We delight over 500 million monthly active users around the world through franchises including Activision's *Call of Duty*®, *Destiny* and *Skylanders*®, Blizzard Entertainment's *World of Warcraft*®, *StarCraft*®, *Diablo*® and *Hearthstone*®: *Heroes of Warcraft*™, and King's *Candy Crush*®, *Pet Rescue*® and *Farm Heroes*®. The company is one of the Fortune "100 Best Companies To Work For®". Headquartered in Santa Monica, California, Activision Blizzard has operations throughout the world, and its games are played in 196 countries. More information about Activision Blizzard and its products can be found on the company's website, www.activisionblizzard.com.

¹ Data provided by MLG.tv, Twitch and GOTV

² Data provided by MLG.tv, Mars.tv, Twitch and GOTV

³ Data provided by MLG.tv, Twitch and GOTV

⁴ [ESL Press Release](#)

⁵ Ticketmaster

⁶ Data provided by MLG.tv, Twitch, and GOTV

⁷ NewZoo

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