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## E-sports matchmaker FaceIt raises \$15 million and opens a Santa Monica office



In early January, eSports company FaceIt partnered with Turner Sports and talent agency WME | IMG to put on a video game competition at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. (FaceIt)



By Paresh Dave · Contact Reporter

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**W**ant to become a professional video game player? For many, the journey starts at FaceIt.

About 3.5 million people have turned to [FaceIt's website](#) to find teammates and opponents in computer games such as "Counter-Strike" and "Dota 2." FaceIt guides virtual matchmaking, steers people to appropriate competitions and leads them up the ranks.

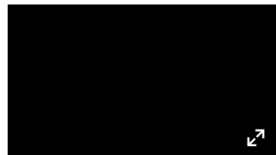


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It beats playing the same neighborhood kids and school buddies every day. The company's research shows that people play 30% more matches after coming through FaceIt, a welcome statistic for gamemakers.

The e-sports industry, or video games as a spectator contest, is as unsettled as it is fast growing. But FaceIt's momentum has been strong enough for the start-up to secure \$15 million from venture capitalists at Anthos Capital, Index Ventures and United Ventures, London-based FaceIt announced Tuesday. Chief Executive Niccolo Maisto also said a Santa Monica office opened this month, with plans for a dozen people by the end of the year.

The cash is meant to grow FaceIt into a bigger hub for players, gamemakers and advertisers. FaceIt's basic team management tools are free to maximize the number of users. It costs about \$3 a month to join higher-caliber matches or get fancier statistics.



Niccolo Maisto is chief executive of FaceIt, an online service to help organize e-sports. (FaceIt)

FaceIt offers virtual coins for actions on the service to encourage people to play more often. The coins can be redeemed for computers, accessories, merchandise and an assortment of perks.

The more users, the greater expected interest from gamemakers, who see FaceIt as a way to attract players.

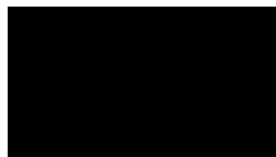
Games must install FaceIt software to sync teams and matches with their own services, but it's free to do so. Game companies have been willing to partner with FaceIt because players tend to talk more on social media about games as they get more feisty over them, Maisto said.

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The company generates millions of dollars in monthly revenue, growing at 15% to 20% one month to the next, Maisto said.

It gets the bulk of its revenue from selling ad sponsorships for competitions. The company hosts some tournaments, but welcomes others to leverage its tools to run their own.

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