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Entrepreneur: DuuL plans to win gamers with tournament software

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Who said you couldn't make money playing video games?

Last year, 7.1 million people around the globe watched eSports, worth \$194 million a year, according to a report by SuperData Research.

Phoenix-based DuuL Software is looking to capitalize on this growing market by appealing to the underdogs rather than the professionals.

Founded in October 2014, DuuL makes software that allows anyone to compete in video game tournaments for prizes, regardless of skill level.

Users participate by connecting their gaming accounts online with DuuL's website, where the software can organize tournaments by skill level and prevent cheating.

"Our goal is to make competitive gaming accessible," said CEO and co-founder Gabriel Kruse.

DuuL is focusing on eSports games such as "League of Legends," one of the top platforms for multiplayer tournaments. Kruse also expressed interest in making DuuL's software compatible with Windows, allowing gamers to compete on Xbox.

The software works by taking a gamer's win statistics and matching them up with players of similar skill, creating a relatively fair tournament. Users pay entry fees and receive the opportunity to win cash and other prizes.

DuuL intends to profit by pocketing 10 to 20 percent of the entry fees and depositing the rest into



DuuL CEO Gabe Kruse, left, and Aaron Pantoja, vice president of engineering, plan to appeal to the underdogs with video game competition software that can spot cheaters.

the prize pool.

The company recently partnered with online payments company PayPal, giving the company an efficient and popular method for fee and prize transactions. The partnership allows \$1.5 million without transaction fees.

Additionally, the company plans to partner with gaming and computer companies to provide direct access to their user bases via prizes and advertising on their websites.

Kruse said DuuL has measures in place to prevent cheating. If a player with professional skills were to play in a lower-level tournament, Kruse said his software could detect the deception based on the player's style, statistics and other abnormalities.

He said DuuL's proprietary algorithms could penalize those players and adjust their stated skill level.

"We've tested the alpha version of our software multiple times," he said. "We could have our software calibrated for a game in just a few weeks."

DuuL was part of the inaugural class at Tallwave's High Tide software incubator, where it worked on rapid prototyping, branding, user validation and go-to-market planning.

The company is awaiting news to see if it is one of the two companies to receive \$50,000 in seed funding.

When its website launches, Kruse said he wants everyone, regardless of skill, to compete.

"Our goal is to get everyone who tries DuuL to win at least one time and make their first dollar playing," he said.

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