



Mohd Nazifuddin (centre) at the launch of the book written by Cheong (second from left). — Bernama

Esports throws lifeline to hypecaster

Lecturer shares how genre helped him rise above income loss and depression

DEBTS, job loss and ensuing depression can overwhelm.

Andrew Cheong, 38, found himself entangled in debt as early as in his college days.

Although his parents bailed him out, life threw him another curve ball when the Covid-19 pandemic saw him laid off at the peak of his corporate career.

Cheong told Bernama of how this second fall caused him to become depressed and how he used to occupy himself with esports to ward off dark thoughts.

Esports is a genre of video games that are played in an organised, competitive environment.

Little did he know that his fondness for online games would enable him to overcome depression and earn a living.

Life has improved for Cheong, who became better known by his esports moniker Sir Cloud and his abilities as a hypecaster – a

live commentator of competitive video games.

“These days, I’m an esports commentator, analyst and content creator,” he said.

“I also teach esports at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology,” added Cheong, who has a degree in communications and Masters in human resource management, and is pursuing a PhD in psychology.

Cheong’s involvement in the world of competitive online gaming goes back to 2000.

“I pursued online gaming as a serious weekend hobby,” he said.

Feeling welcomed by the gaming community, he would try to fill his weekends with tournaments.

“Eventually, organisers started to pay me for giving commentaries.

“Initially, payments were as little as RM5 or they treated me to a teh tarik,” he added.

He said the low payments seemed “fine at that time” but, for the good of hypecasters, he hopes this will not become accepted practice.

Cheong now has his own website and a YouTube channel with several thousand subscribers.

He also managed the national esports team at the 2023 SEA Games in Cambodia.

His efforts have also been acknowledged, with Cheong getting the Creative Talent award at Golden Bullet Awards 2021 and winning Caster of the Year (English) at Malaysia Esports Awards 2023.

Cheong was also a nominee for Popular Sports Commentator at the Sportswriters Association of Malaysia-100PLUS 2024 Awards.

He has also shared his story in the book *Esports Selamatkan Hidup Aku* (Esports Saved My Life), launched by Malaysian Olympic Council secretary-general Datuk Mohd Nazifuddin Najib.