



GENERATION CYBER 

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The anti-cheat battle: who will be the winners in the electronic gaming world?

By Richard Appleby, Managing Security Consultant at NCC Group

Cheating is a big issue in the video gaming world – and the battle between players that cheat and anti-cheat techniques is one that is very much ongoing.

Whether it's because players want to negatively impact the experience of other players, make the game easier, or try to gain a foothold in the increasingly lucrative e-gaming industry, cheating is prevalent in the world of

gaming. We've explored the most common cheating techniques on our research [blog](#).

With Covid-19 lockdowns leading to a worldwide boost in user engagement with video games and e-sports, it's an issue that could shape the gaming industry well into the future. But how might this play out?

Evading detection

The detection of cheating is a critical part of anti-cheat processes. One key method of detection currently involves the use of signatures, which signal the use of a known cheat. However, this relies on being able to know about these cheats in advance.

Detection technology is constantly evolving. Some new tools, such as the always-on anti-cheat tool, Vanguard, can monitor for cheats as soon as the operating system starts instead of only when the game is running – meaning that cheats can be detected before they are even used.

Predictive anti-cheat technology

Machine learning has emerged in recent years as a method of preventing cheating. This involves extracting data from games played by known cheaters and using it to train a neural network to detect similar techniques.

However, these techniques often can only examine a limited number of actions taken by the player – and as cheats become more developed, it may be hard to detect them over a short space of time. They rely heavily upon the right amount of data being collected at the right time. This technology is likely to only become more advanced in the years to come.

More sophisticated cheats

In the future, it's likely that detection methods and ways of cheating will both increase in sophistication. As detection methods improve and machine learning enables developers to quickly detect cheaters, cheats could become more intuitive and even indistinguishable from top players. Neural networks

have already been developed to play simple platform games with no human input at all, and as processing power and the sophistication of algorithms increases, the complexity of the games able to be played by artificial intelligence will also increase.

Machine learning and artificial intelligence is likely to play a significant role in the fight against cheating in the future of the video gaming world – and as cheats emulate the actions of top players more and more accurately, this technology will have to rapidly evolve to keep up.

About NCC Group

NCC Group exists to make the world safer and more secure.

As global experts in cyber security and risk mitigation, NCC Group is trusted by over 14,000 customers to protect their most critical assets from the ever-changing threat landscape.

With the company's knowledge, experience, and investment in research and innovation, it is best placed to help organisations assess, develop and manage their cyber resilience posture.

With circa 2,000 colleagues in 12 countries, NCC Group has a significant market presence in North America, Europe and the UK, and a rapidly growing footprint in Asia Pacific with offices in Australia, Japan and Singapore.

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