Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Digital WPI

2019-04-19

Paycheck.exe: Optimizing the Video Game Live Stream

Alexander Holmes
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/etd-theses

Paycheck.exe: Optimizing the Video Game Live Stream

by

Alexander Holmes

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Master of Science

in

Interactive Media and Game Development

April 24, 2019

APPROVED:

Dean O'Donnell, Thesis Advisor

Jennifer deWinter, Committee

Brian Moriarty, Committee

1.0 Abstract

Multiple resources currently exist that provide tips, tricks, and hints on gaining greater success, or increasing one's chances for success, in the field of live video streaming. However, these resources often lack depth, detail, large sample size, or significant research on the topic. The purpose of this thesis is twofold: to aggregate and optimize the very best methods for live content creators to employ as they begin a streaming career, and how best to implement these methodologies for maximum success in the current streaming market. Through analysis of a set of semi-structured interviews, popular literature, and existing, ancillary research, repeating patterns will be identified to be used as the basis for a structured plan that achieves the stated objectives. Further research will serve to reinforce as well as optimize the common methodologies identified within the interview corpus.

2.0 Table of Contents

3.0 Introduction

3.1 History of the Medium

Live streaming is a term rapidly growing in popularity. It has grown in recent years from a small community of hobbyists to become a main source of entertainment for many. It now spans several competing services, such as Twitch, Mixer, Caffeine, and Facebook Gaming, all vying for users' time, all offering slightly different things. The concept of streaming content live to a viewing audience is nothing new – radio broadcasting has been around for well over a century[1], with television nearing that[2]. However, live broadcasting and its cousin cable broadcasting are under the television umbrella; a centralized information empire that choked out independent creators ages ago[3]. Live streaming is a different sort of beast, completely decentralized – allowing anyone with the proper hardware to broadcast what they choose to the world. So where did this new-age television start? What was the first live video stream broadcast to the internet? Television broadcasting, as fascinating and deep as its history goes, is not entirely the focus of this paper, so this section will focus on the history of live streaming and content creation.

Unsurprisingly, we look back at a small mecca of technology years ahead of its time: Xerox PARC[4]. PARC, or the Palo Alto Research Center Incorporated, is a research and development lab owned by the aforementioned company with a specialization in information technology, responsible for such contributions as the UI[5], laser printers, and live streaming. It was a small show at their offices in 1993 when, in another room, a handful of engineers decided to test out a new technology of broadcasting on the internet. A band happened to be playing at the event and their performance was broadcast online, becoming the first live stream in history[6]. Later, in 1995, a company named Progressive Networks, named RealNetworks in '97, broadcast a baseball game between the Seattle Mariners and the New York Yankees. Using in-house

---

[1] "Milestones:First Wireless Radio Broadcast by Reginald A. Fessenden, 1906." Engineering and Technology History Wiki. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://ethw.org/Milestones:First_Wireless_Radio_Broadcast_by_Reginald_A._Fessenden,_1906.

[2] "Early Television Stations," Early Television Foundation, accessed October 7, 2018, http://www.earlytelevision.org/w2xb.html.

[3] Tim Wu, *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013)

[4] PARC, accessed October 7, 2018, https://www.parc.com/

[5] User Interface

[6] Baynard, Rob. "Ready Take Live: The First Ever Live Stream on the Internet." Live X. Last modified November 30, 2017. https://livex.tv/ready-take-live-first-ever-live-stream-internet.

technology, they successfully streamed radio coverage of the game through SportsZone, a service offered by ESPN at the time[7]. RealNetworks went on to control a massive portion of web-based video streaming on the internet for several years (estimated 85% in 2000), despite a lengthy and controversial legal battle against Microsoft[8].

Amidst the legal battles and broadcast software, a movement had begun to form a new class of entertainer: the *streamer*. Streamers use internet broadcasting differently from our friends at Xerox and Progressive Networks; our earlier examples used streaming as a one-way live audio feed. Streamers are a unique paradigm shift in the dynamic of broadcasting. Prior to the widespread availability and low cost of entry for live streaming, enthusiasts and businesses alone were capable of purchasing, using, and maintaining the expensive and complicated equipment needed. Thus, content was at the behest of the few who were capable of wielding the tools to create and distribute it. With the drastic uptake in individuals capable of creating content, it is now the responsibility of the consumer to determine the content they wish to see, or the new role of a "curator:" an individual tasked with consuming the ocean of available content *en masse* and determining which would be best for their viewers within the context they have established. More than just as a form of broadcasting, live streaming is a form of interaction. Streamers are cut from a different cloth; they use the medium for its interactive potential. The streamer broadcasts to an audience, who have tools at their disposal to in turn interact with the streamer, creating a dynamic, live form of entertainment. However, in 1999, the tools necessary to make this happen were few and far between. At the time, the most advanced streams took advantage of three separate services simultaneously: audio streams, chatrooms, and HLTV. Services available at the time like SHOUTcast[9] allowed anyone with access to a microphone to stream their voice live to any listeners tuned in. Using IRC[10], an incredibly popular forerunner to our modern chat services, a streamer was able to chat with listeners chiming in via text. Many streams back then employed only these two services, however with the dominance of Counter-Strike over the PC gaming world at the time, a service by the name of Half Life TV

[7] Angela K. Mason, "The First Live Stream is 20 Years Old," Monitis Blog, last modified November 24, 2017, http://www.monitis.com/blog/the-first-live-stream-is-20-years-old/
[8] "History of RealNetworks, Inc," FundingUniverse, accessed October 7, 2018, http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/realnetworks-inc-history/
[9] Shoutcast – Home, accessed October 7, 2018, http://www.shoutcast.com/
[10] IRC.org – Home of IRC, accessed October 7, 2018, http://www.irc.org/

(HLTV)[11] allowed live polling of a game's action log, as well as some basic spectating tools. Kills, deaths, assists, and other game-related info are updated live, hosted on their website. Using these three services allowed the streamer to play their game and broadcast their (or a caster's) voice to listeners, while listeners could tune in, watch the game, and keep track of game stats to follow along. Several gaming communities latched on[12,13,14] to this unique combination, serving as the backbone for some community-organized competitive tournaments. Slowly but surely as technology improved, so did streamers' capabilities, so did their content. Video streaming was introduced in the early years of the new millenium, and network bandwidths increased steadily, allowing better picture quality with higher fidelity[15]. Recording services and storage improved, allowing for archives and post-production.

As the bar was raised higher and higher, a new service emerged that would sweep the medium: Justin.tv[16]. Justin Kan, the website's founder, created Justin.tv originally to stream his life; coined "lifecasting," this avant-garde form of media popped up amidst large improvements in webcam technology and broadband costs. The site originally was for his own purposes, however after continued requests from many viewers, he allowed anyone to broadcast using the site in 2007 . The site gained a rapid following over the next few years, particularly with the gaming crowd, and in June 2011 a sister site named Twitch.tv was created. Just three short years later[17], Amazon ended up purchasing Twitch in a deal $30 million short of $1 billion. Today, Twitch.tv accounts for 1.8% of all internet traffic in the United States, reaching over 55 billion minutes watched per month, and hosting over 4.4 million unique channels per month[18].

So how old is content creation? Surely the internet wasn't its inventor. That would be correct, however *content creation* is an adaption of its much older cousin *content marketing*.

---

[11] HLTV.org, accessed October 7, 2018, https://www.hltv.org/

[12] "How to Sync ShoutCast." Winamp & Shoutcast Forums. Accessed April 23, 2019. http://forums.winamp.com/showthread.php?t=169058.

[13] "Exigent Vs Terror Match Information." Unknown Worlds Forums. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://forums.unknownworlds.com/discussion/95201/exigent-vs-terror-match-information.

[14] Sarikaya, Alper. "Team Fortress Classic and the Landscape It Spawned." Medium. Last modified November 3, 2014. https://medium.com/@yelperalp/team-fortress-classic-and-the-landscape-it-spawned-cca1f74a885b.

[15] "TwitchCon 2015 – Twitch Keynote," *Twitch*, 2015, https://www.twitch.tv/videos/17714623

[16] James Cook, "Twitch Founder: We Turned A 'Terrible Idea' Into A Billion-Dollar Company," Business Insider, last modified October 20, 2014, http://www.businessinsider.com/the-story-of-video-game-streaming-site-twitch-2014-10

[17] Kim, Eugene. "Amazon Buys Twitch For $970 Million In Cash." Business Insider. Last modified August 25, 2014. http://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-buys-twitch-2014-8.

[18] "Twitch Statistics and Charts," TwitchTracker, accessed October 7, 2018, https://twitchtracker.com/statistics

First seen in 1996[19], its definition doesn't do much to defy expectations. Content marketing is the creation and distribution of content to consumers for the purpose of enhancing, building, or profiting off of a brand. Sounds pretty familiar to the term we use today, no? So how far back does content creation or marketing go? It's dependant on what you define as "content creation." Let's break it down: looking at *Dictionary.com*, the definition of *content*[20] is "something that is to be expressed through some medium, as speech, writing, or any of various arts." Then, the definition of *creation*[21] is "the act of producing or causing to exist; the act of creating; engendering." At its basest form, *content creation is the act of producing or causing to exist something that is to be expressed through some medium*. That's an incredibly loose definition that can be used to effectively encompass any single creative or scientific accomplishment of mankind, so let's narrow it down. One thing for certain is that content creation serves to satisfy, inform, entertain, or otherwise benefit the consumer, and for the most part is not to the detriment of the creator. Additionally, content creation should serve a contextual end and target a specific demographic; a publication on contemporary accounting techniques and turnip casserole recipes is not what one would call cohesive. Content creation is something to be *consumed*, not necessarily to be utilized or eaten. Lastly, content creation should be repeatable, distributable, or both. The invention of the telephone, for example, is not content creation. The usage of the telephone as a means of distributing and promoting one's music[22], however, very much is. Based on this line of reasoning, it stands that newspapers are among the first examples of content creation. Intended to inform and entertain the masses, published on a regular basis, and certainly not intended to be eaten. Based off of the above, the first example of content creation can be identified as *Acta Diurna*, or "Daily Acts:" going all the way back to around *130 B.C.*, this publication was carved in stone and put on display in social gathering places, such as the Roman Forum. Seventeen centuries later in 1605, the *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien*[23] is considered to be the first printed newspaper; founded in Germany by Johann

---

[19] Mandour, Hisham A. "The History of Content Marketing – Marketing Storm." Google Sites. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://sites.google.com/site/marketingtstorm/home/content-marketing/the-history-of-content-marketing.

[20] "The Definition of Content." Www.dictionary.com. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/content.

[21] "The Definition of Creation." Www.dictionary.com. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/creation.

[22] "Dial-A-Song." They Might Be Giants. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://dialasong.com/.

[23] Norman, Jeremy. "Johan Carolus's "Relation," the First Printed European Newspaper." HistoryofInformation.com. Accessed April 24, 2019. http://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=34.

Carolus, he acquired a printing press after the success of his previous business venture handwriting news sheets for the wealthy elite. Fast forward 85 years and we have Benjamin Harris' *Publick Occurrences, Both Forreign and Domestick*[24]; the 1690 newspaper was censored by the Boston constabulary quite literally four days[25] after its initial publication. After newspapers, what other examples of content creation can we find? The following highlights a few such examples.

The first example comes from a man almost everyone in the world will recognize. None other than the man on the $100 bill, Benjamin Franklin published the first issue of *The Poor Richard's Almanack* on December 19, 1732[26]. Using the pen name Richard Saunders, the *Almanack* was a general publication intended for common folk who couldn't afford full books. An approximation[27] of the cost of living back in these days puts a single almanac at just over an entire week's wages. Although it's difficult to parallel these kinds of costs to today's standards, if we were to use the United States Federal Minimum Wage of $7.25/hour, that gives us just about $300 for the price of a single publication; bit hefty for a farmer back in the day, huh. Published every year for 25 years, Mr. Franklin's *Almanack* contained all manner of things, from weather predictions to poetry, recipes to ruminations on the upper class, jokes and humor to tutorials and guides. It's not until over 150 years later in 1895 that the first syndicated content marketing magazine is published: John Deere's *The Furrow*[28]. Intended originally as a means of advertising the equipment the company offered, *The Furrow* gained significant popularity and following over the next 15 years, shifting from an advert-centric publication to one that focused on farming techniques, tips, tricks, habits, and more. In fact, *The Furrow* is still in publication today, purportedly reaching about two million subscribers worldwide. From here content marketing exploded, with everything from Jell-O cookbooks[29] to Michelin travel guides[30] and more. Ever heard the term "soap opera" before? Ever wonder why the word *soap* is in there?

[24] "Benjamin Harris." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-Harris#ref199198.
[25] Kuehn, Duncan. "First American Newspaper: Publick Occurrences." GenealogyBank Blog. Last modified January 13, 2015. https://blog.genealogybank.com/americas-first-newspaper-publick-occurrences-both-forreign-and-domestick-1690.html.
[26] "Poor Richard's Almanack." Benjamin Franklin Historical Society. Accessed March 27, 2019. http://www.benjamin-franklin-history.org/poor-richards-almanac/.
[27] "18th Century Cost of Living – Redcoats History." Redcoats Boston Reenactment. Accessed March 27, 2019. http://footguards.tripod.com/08HISTORY/08_costofliving.htm.
[28] Gardiner, Kate. "The Story Behind 'The Furrow', the World's Oldest Content Marketing." Contently. Last modified February 1, 2017. https://contently.com/2013/10/03/the-story-behind-the-furrow-2/.
[29] "The History of Jell-O." Jell-O Gallery. Accessed March 27, 2019. http://www.jellogallery.org/history.html.
[30] "About Us." MICHELIN Guide. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://guide.michelin.com/us/new-york/about-us.

Well it's quite literally thanks to Proctor and Gamble's sponsored radio program, brought to you by Oxydol Soap Powder[31]. This daytime serial was an effort to market to the housewife (a commonality and unfortunate social construct at the time), no doubt turning on the radio while keeping the house clean. As a result, the term "soap opera" is still used prevalently today.

So what about other forms of content creation a la Mr. Franklin? Content marketing suits the needs of the businesses or organizations that run such operations; Jell-O wasn't handing out cookbooks to prop up that rickety chair in the living room, they were given out for the explicit purpose of selling more of their product. *The Poor Richard's Almanack*, however, was put together for the benefit of the people. Sure, he was drumming up publicity for his printing press, but he wasn't even representing himself, merely a pen name. So, one place we can look for content creation is the world famous Japanese Comic Market, more recognizably called Comiket. The early 70s in Japan saw a burgeoning community of comic[32] artists, and a demand quickly rose for a place to buy and sell these materials. After a disagreement between a particular artist group[33] and a larger, more privatized Manga convention[34], the circle decided to host their own convention, boasting "we reject nobody," and thus Comiket was born. Today, the convention is held at Tokyo Big Sight, a convention center boasting nearly 2.5 million square footage of floor space[35]. It's the single largest indoor public gathering of people in Japan[36], and its main attraction is the droves of independently published artists, animators, authors, and individuals representing all other forms of Japanese pop culture media. Certainly sounds akin to live streaming, no? Anyone can get in, anyone can sell their products and make a name for themself, and not a single first-timer has a good chance to outpace the veterans. Through one's own efforts in building a following and delivering the best possible content alongside it, a full-time, profitable position can be attained. Another similar place to look at is the fanzine scene that sprang up in the '30s with the emergence of *The Comet*, an independently published magazine

---

[31] "P&G Sponsors Its First Daytime Serial." Old Time Radio. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://www.old-time.com/commercials/1930's/OOMP.htm.

[32] called "doujinshi" overseas

[33] called a "circle"

[34] Ohara, T. "Brief History of Comiket." ComiPress | Manga News and Information. Last modified August 3, 2008. https://www.comipress.com/article/2008/08/03/3636.html.

[35] YABAI Writers. "Tokyo Big Sight: Where Huge Conventions Are Held in Japan | The Modern, Vibrant Face of Japan." YABAI. Last modified May 11, 2017. http://yabai.com/p/2128.

[36] "Welcome to the Official Comic Market Site." Comiket. Accessed March 28, 2019. https://www.comiket.co.jp/index_e.html.

covering various sci-fi topics[37]. Fanzines aka Fan Magazines aka "Zines" originally focused on sci-fi content, however over time the medium grew and topics diversified. Then it all went crazy in the '70s when copy shops took hold, where previously ineffective mimeographs[38] were used that drastically hindered large scale distribution. The scene continued onwards until, similarly to many other information-based mediums, the internet came and flipped everything people knew on their heads. Zines are still around today, distributed both online and in print, focusing on the community surrounding the zine. Again we see a sect of content creation about building a community through a shared ideal, and the best content an independent publisher can put together. One last place to look is a more modern take on this older ideal, Amazon Self Publishing. Going straight to the Amazon website, the self-publishing service boasts free access for anyone to publish their eBooks on the kindle catalogue[39]. With an option for either 70% or 35% royalties, anyone and everyone can enter into this space and immediately begin monetizing off of their creations. But, as we have seen with the nature of widespread independent publishing, it results in a total inundation of complete and utter drivel[40].

Content creation didn't start with live streaming and Youtube, nor is it anywhere close to the final stop in its long journey. Over two thousand years have passed since the first notable use of content creation and two thousand more seems likely, provided we haven't all blown ourselves up by that point. In all of these examples, however, there has emerged a common thread. Newspapers, almanacs, fanzines, cookbooks, doujinshi, eBooks, even Youtube videos; all of these instances of content creation and marketing revolve around a single, central theme: make the best product for your audience, ensure your audience is talking about your product, and scale your distribution according to the demand. The core method to succeeding here has never changed this entire time, but what *has* changed is the resources that are available during the time these scenes spring up and develop through. Live streaming is no different, a streamer is here to

[37] Arnold, Chloe. "A Brief History of Zines." Mental Floss. Last modified November 19, 2016.
   http://mentalfloss.com/article/88911/brief-history-zines.
[38] A duplicating machine which produces copies from a stencil, now superseded by the photocopier.
[39] "Getting Started." Self Publishing | Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing. Accessed March 28, 2019.
   https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G200635650#faq.
[40] Kozlowski, Michael. "We Live in a Literary World of Terrible Self-Published Authors." Good E-Reader. Last modified September 7, 2017.
   https://goodereader.com/blog/e-book-news/we-live-in-a-literary-world-of-terrible-self-published-authors.

make the best product they can for their audience; this paper aims to dissect the resources live streamers must utilize to accomplish that goal this time around.

3.2 Current Platforms

A common sentiment seen in early adopters of the "live streaming as a career" ideal was the belief that it required an immense investment of time, dedication, consistency, and, strangely, sacrifice. Amongst long-standing members of the partnered Twitch community can be heard stories of relationship breakups, strained family ties, diminishing health, and even fatalities[41]. Now while this sentiment is beginning to change as more streaming platforms open up and newer streamers are given bigger and better tools to succeed, streaming operates under one simple idea: the more viewers you have, the more money you make, and therefore the more you are available, the higher the chance of increasing one's user base. When the Twitch.tv (then a spinoff of its host Justin.tv) partnership program launched in July 2011, brute-force methods like these were a standard, as well as somewhat cutthroat methods, such as monitoring a competing stream's schedule and adjusting one's own to start earlier and end later, in an effort to steal viewers[42].

Up until recently, the live streaming market has been dominated by Twitch, however the scales have finally started to even out as more services with large backings enter the fray. Amongst the race today are representatives of Warner Brothers, Facebook, and Microsoft, each with Caffeine, Facebook Gaming, and Mixer, respectively. One interesting outlier here is a now-defunct independent platform from Google: Youtube Gaming.

Youtube Gaming (YTG) got its start August 26th, 2015[43]; although slightly different in its execution as a game aggregation area of the site, it still was the preferred destination for live content on Youtube. Due to Youtube's position as the established brand for post-production content, it was relatively seamless to integrate the new service into the platform. This was also an overt statement of competition from Google, who was barred from purchasing Twitch.tv in

---

[41] Nathan Grayson, "Twitch Streamer Dies During 24-Hour Marathon Stream," Kotaku, last modified February 21, 2017, https://kotaku.com/twitch-streamer-dies-during-24-hour-marathon-stream-1792592821
[42] Omeed et al., "Work/Life Balance for Broadcasters" (presentation, PAX East, Boston, MA, April 7, 2018)
[43] Samit Sarkar, "YouTube Gaming Launches Aug. 26 with Website and Mobile Apps," Polygon, last modified August 25, 2015, https://www.polygon.com/2015/8/25/9208245/youtube-gaming-launch-date-web-android-ios

August 2014 in a deal that went to Amazon. YTG primarily benefitted existing Youtube

creators, as YTG did not possess a partner/affiliate program in full, compared to Twitch or

Mixer. For those who already have reached the requirements of partnership on youtube, YTG

offered an additional in-house revenue stream to their content, so users were not left managing

two different communities on two different platforms. As of March 2019, Youtube Gaming has

shut down, citing the inability to garner a significant enough following for the service[44]. Live

streaming is still available on Youtube, however it is now simply a part of the main site, no

longer a separate platform. With this homogenization of live and post-production content on the

website, the differences between how a successful Twitch and Youtube channel are run become

significant, and thus it is in the better interests of this paper to focus on Twitch and other live

streaming-centered platforms. It is worth noting, however, with the announcement of Google

Stadia[45], Youtube may see a boost in live content popularity in the future.

Mixer's story begins roughly a year after the launch of YTG in the fall of 2015. Starting

as a service named Beam with its first beta available around March 2016[46], the platform

presented itself as a promoter of a greater level of interaction between viewer and streamer; it

offered tools to assist developers and an interface designed to aid creators. Not three months

after their open beta announcement in May of that year, the company was purchased by

Microsoft[47] and rebranded as Mixer one year later[48]. Mixer's main advantage over Twitch is first

and foremost its FTL[49] streaming codec. By comparison, Twitch streams are expected to have

anywhere between fifteen to sixty seconds of broadcast lag between streamer and spectator,

however recent improvements to Twitch's codec have allowed for significantly lower response

times. Despite that, Mixer's codec allows for streaming gaps smaller than one second. This

allows near real-time interaction between streamer and viewer. Mixer's other draw is the

interactive capabilities of the platform; streamers can include buttons, panels, even controller

[44] Perez, Sarah. "YouTube to Shut Down Standalone Gaming App, As Gaming Gets a New Home on YouTube." TechCrunch. Last modified Sep. 18, 2018. https://techcrunch.com/2018/09/18/youtube-to-shut-down-standalone-gaming-app-as-gaming-gets-a-new-home-on-youtube/.

[45] Moor Insights and Strategy. "Google's Stadia Announcement May Be A Game Changer." Forbes. Last modified March 26, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/moorinsights/2019/03/26/googles-stadia-announcement-may-be-a-game-changer/#633609a464aa.

[46] Lucas Matney, "Beam Wants to Turn Gaming Streams Wildly Dynamic," TechCrunch, last modified May 9, 2016, https://techcrunch.com/2016/05/09/beam-wants-to-turn-gaming-streams-wildly-dynamic/

[47] Darrell Etherington, "Microsoft Acquires Beam Interactive Game Live Streaming Service," TechCrunch, last modified August 11, 2016, https://techcrunch.com/2016/08/11/microsoft-acquires-beam-interactive-game-livestreaming-service/

[48] Sarah Perez, "Microsoft's Game Streaming Service Beam Rebrands As Mixer..." TechCrunch, last modified May 25, 2017, techcrunch.com/2017/05/25/microsofts-game-streaming-service-beam-rebrands-as-mixer-adds-co-streaming-a-guide-mobile-broadcasting/

[49] Faster Than Light

interfaces to their streams, allowing viewers to see more information on-stream, influence gameplay, or even play the games themselves.

Facebook Gaming (FBG) recently announced the Facebook Creator app, a new app that contains a host of tools and resources for page owners, created in November 2017. Two months later in January the Gaming Creator Pilot program was announced[50], in response to the rising popularity of using Facebook as a gaming platform. As of the time of writing this paper, Facebook Gaming's partnership program is in its infancy and does not possess the same level of monetization options compared to the other platforms[51]. As such, until Facebook's partner program reaches a level similar to that which is available on the other services, or Facebook Gaming receives its own dedicated platform, it will not be a key part of this project.

3.3 Preliminary Platform Analysis

Using a resource called SimilarWeb we are able to get an approximation of the volume of traffic that these three services' host websites receive over several months:
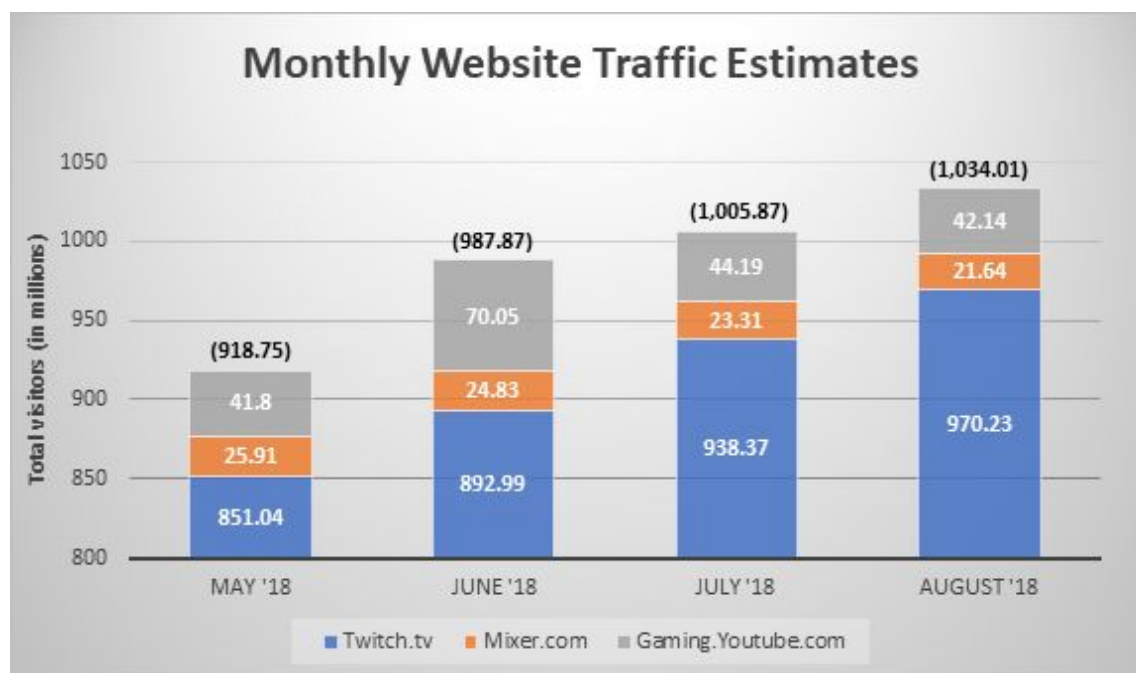
Refer to Appendix D for breakdowns of each platform's partnership programs.

---

[50] Leo Olebe, "Introducing the Gaming Creator Pilot Program," Facebook for Developers, last modified January 26, 2018, https://developers.facebook.com/blog/post/2018/01/26/gaming-creator-pilot-program/

[51] Julia Alexander, "Facebook Introducing Monetization for Gaming Streamers in New Pilot Program," Polygon, last modified January 26, 2018, https://www.polygon.com/2018/1/26/16935788/facebook-creator-program-monetization-twitch-youtube

3.4 Conclusion

So this brings us to today. We have our titan, Twitch, presiding over the live streaming medium and operating dangerously close to a monopoly, now recently joined by other up-and-coming services with a lot of cash resources providing a creator-based platform. This means there's money to be made, and streamers to make it. It is the purpose of this thesis to research, design, and optimize a set of methods for a business model to achieve the goal of obtaining a livable wage from the current live streaming platforms. How then, does one go about profiting from these platforms? In the case of Youtube, nearly every aspect of monetization comes from channel-centric advertising. More eyes viewing your content means more ads viewers are exposed to, and the larger cut of ad revenue the channel owner receives.

Twitch and Mixer operate a little differently – there exist no monetization options available to channel owners until the partnership requirements are met, after which the owner's channel receives a subscription option to viewers; viewers can pay $5 per month to gain premium benefits from the subscribed channel, and the channel owner takes a cut of these profits. In addition, donations via third party services can be utilized, however are not native to either platform. Twitch and Mixer are currently in possession of a tipping system called Bits and Embers, respectively, which is a website-wide currency purchased with real money. See section 6.1 for further details about these currencies.

3.5 Thesis Statement

This thesis paper is an attempt to aggregate a set of methods to maximize a streamer's chances of success in the preliminary stages of a live streaming career. A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted, polling existing streamers and industry workers about the methodologies they employed at the early stages of their streaming careers. Through common patterns found in the interviews coupled with research pertaining to these patterns, this set of methodologies is fleshed out, optimized, and synthesized into a five-year business plan.

3.6 Implications of & Further Research

This thesis will, at the time of its publication, likely be one of the most in-depth and detailed guides to breaking into the live content creation medium; however this project is limited to platforms and data that are currently available. Additional platforms, monetization options, or changes in platform structures or regulations after the publishing of this project may change or invalidate the research presented. However, this project will serve as a solid foundation for future research, including details of the existing platforms and methodologies present in the medium. The work done on this project can easily be extrapolated to other aspects of profit and play, be it post-production content (YouTube) or eSports. A major focus of this project will be community growth and retention, a skill set that serves well in many fields, not just those centered around game content creation.

Additionally, multiple topics are present within this paper that far exceed the scope of one year's worth of work. These topics are listed here and referred to occasionally in the paper:

- A full analysis of best social media practices
- Comprehensive coverage of startup business management
- Analysis of tax procedures and filings
- Effective life or stream crisis management
- Harassment and management of harassment of women in the gaming community
- The history of public broadcasting and the trends of centralization
- Best practices of a Youtube channel
- Facebook Gaming, Caffeine, Steam.tv, and other burgeoning live streaming platforms
- Cultural and psychological importance of live streaming
- Concrete statistics and analysis of internet advertising
- Future trends of live streaming
- Contract or partnership negotiation
- Optimal games to play and times to stream

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Initial Research

The first study to examine is a paper written by Mark R. Johnson, a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Alberta. *It's like the Gold Rush* is his work that, through a series of anonymous interviews at TwitchCon 2016, created a profile analysis of live streamers and those who aspire to that role. Johnson highlights[52] the "digital intimacy, celebrity, community, content creation, media production and consumption, and video games" found on Twitch as a good candidate for study, however most research into this community has been dedicated to the *whys* of the platform, rather than the *hows* (in the case of this paper) or the *whos* (in the case of Johnson's). Through analysis of the interviews, Johnson shows[53] three major themes were present throughout the interview process that "structured their reflections on their streaming careers." These themes reflected the past, present, and future nature of their careers with Twitch.

The past, which concerned the streamers' entry point into the field, covered several different paths that converged on Twitch. The first path, previous employed work or experiences associated with eSports (competitive gaming), contained players, spectators, casters, tournament organizers, and volunteers; Johnson states[54]:

> "This route of entry into *Twitch* represents an extension of existing eSports behaviours into a more personalized [sic] and individual form, through the growth of streamers' own eSports channels, and the application of existing digital skills into a new potentially profitable context."

The second path Johnson highlights pertains to platforms that, while containing a large gaming presence, are not dedicated to gaming as a whole. The easiest example of this is Youtube, the #1 in post-production video sharing; several of the interviewees expressed a desire for more responsive feedback to their content over Youtube's ill-famed comment section. The lesser paths Johnson presents in his paper cover community forums such as Reddit, personal and commercial blogs, and the game modding scene[55]. In some way or another every path finds its

---

[52] Mark R. Johnson and Jamie Woodcock, "'It's like the gold rush': the lives and careers of professional video game streamers on Twitch.tv,"*Information, Communication & Society*, 2017, 4, doi:10.1080/1369118x.2017.1386229
[53] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 7.
[54] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 9.
[55] Manually changing the way a game works or looks to achieve an end

way to Twitch and to live streaming through a desire for the interactivity and immediacy that the medium offers.

The next theme in the interviews consisted of the present – the act of maintaining and building one's community – particularly alongside activities external to streaming. Johnson shows[56] that streamers come from many walks of life:

> "There were streamers who had worked – or continued to if they were not streaming full-time – as a software developer, graduate teaching assistant, stay-at-home parent, IT technician, registered nurse, teacher, sales manager, freelance graphic designer, public relations employee, and casino dealer – or were previously unemployed or studying."

While it was clear that the interviewees' day jobs had an impact on their streaming experience, next to none of the skills learned at these jobs or the schools they attended had critical bearing on the skill set required for streaming. Streaming is a field that contains little concrete methodology (though this thesis aspires to remedy that problem), and most, if not all those who have seen success in the field possess a large amount of independently accrued knowledge.

Quantifying the time spent on streaming unfortunately does not paint a very good light on the activity. Many interviewees, Johnson states[57], had put as much if not more time into streaming when compared to their day jobs – or any other aspect of their lives, really. When asked about what makes a streamer successful, interviewees cited a number of qualities such as extraversion, consistency, passion, and setting targets to pursue.   An interesting quality that Johnson makes note of[58] was a confidence in the value and effectiveness of hard work; if you're on Twitch.tv long enough, consistently enough, you will eventually see success. In contrast to these strong statements about the efficacy of dedication, almost everyone interviewed in this project had concrete backup plans, denoting the unstable nature of their current jobs.

The final aspect of the interviews was about the future, both of the platform used and of the streamers' own personal view of their futures in the field. It was a widespread opinion among the interviewees[59] that they were the first generation of live streamers – they helped

---

[56] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 12.
[57] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 13.
[58] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 15.
[59] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 19.

Twitch grow to where it is now as a part of the first generation of live content creators. While correct within a certain context, credit needs be given to the pioneers of game broadcasting, the "Shoutcasters." Their work created a community that bull-rushed its way through the technology of the times, pushing the limits of what was available and diving headfirst into the next best thing in the hopes of something like Twitch popping up someday. While on the subject of credit where it's due, the porn industry is owed some thanks; the first "camgirl" on the internet – camgirl in this sense being one static image every 5 minutes – *predates Justin.tv by 10 years[60]!*

Johnson's paper is a good launching point for research, but not much more; he himself states its limitations[61]:

> "In this paper we have only begun to unpack [sic] the complexities and entanglements of such a platform, but it is clear that greater study of live streaming will offer us new insights into the distributed production of our contemporary media environment, and the lives and careers of those who labour to produce it."

The information contained in this report showcases a lot about the current state of streaming and live content creation, however its scope is narrow. The interviewees were all associated with Twitch, which in the year 2016 was by far and away the sole live streaming platform available to those who wished to participate (and especially make money) in the medium; further study into this area should at the very least cover Mixer as well as Twitch. In addition, this is an examination of the *people* who use Twitch, as opposed to the subject of live streaming itself. Johnson's analysis of the interviews was well done, concise, and opened up further research; beyond a surface level overview, however, his research into the methodologies of streamers is lacking.

Another study done by Eun Yu, Chanyong Jung, Hyungjin Kim, and Jaemin Jung analyzed the correlation between viewer engagement and gift giving, written earlier in 2018. Their paper focused on a website called Afreecatv, a South Korean live streaming service a la Twitch. The study monitored users on the website over a period of three months, following who

---

[60] Krotoski, Aleks. "The First Woman to Stream Her Life." BBC News. Last modified October 18, 2016. https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37681006.

[61] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 23.

and how often they watched, what genre of stream, quantity of gift purchases, and other statistics. Through their analysis they proved a positive correlation between audience engagement and gift giving; in this particular example the gift was a *Star Balloon,* the Afreecatv equivalent of Twitch's *Bits*. Yu et al.[62] show that those channels which focused on more interactive genres (cooking, discussion, games) received a higher average of Star Balloons compared to less interactive, more traditional formats (sports, news, finance).

      Yu et al.'s study gives a very promising observation towards the goal of this thesis: a clear pattern reinforcing the idea that the greater the level of audience engagement, the greater the likelihood of gift giving. The study gives this paper clear guidance toward audience engagement, however there is more to be learned from the research. While Yu et al. showcase a clear positive trend, the act of engagement itself was not researched. Engagement was simply used as a metric; genres such as social eating, discussion, or gaming streams feature objectively more interactivity compared to news, sports, or finance streams; however the specific methods used toward engagement were omitted. Within this sphere of interactivity there can be more research done to determine what types of engagement are more effective than others within a live content creation environment.

      A recent article published on The Verge, an on-line daily publication, showcases a unique group of people underrepresented in research on this platform. Titled *The Twitch Streamers Who Spend Years Broadcasting to No One,* its author Patricia Hernandez shows that some streamers simply *don't* make it. The article describes interviews from a number of streamers – as well as comments cited on Reddit – to gauge reactions of those whose careers in streaming unfortunately never really took off. So why do these streamers keep at it? What motivates someone to perform for an audience of zero for up to years at a time? Hernandez[63] brings up several different reasons:

- **Boredom:** *"It's better than sitting in a dark room by myself in silence."*
- **Improvement:** *"Streaming has made me more interesting, more quick witted, more outgoing and extraverted...it has helped make me feel more comfortable*

---

[62] Eun Yu et al., "Impact of viewer engagement on gift-giving in live video streaming," *Telematics and Informatics* 35, no. 5 (2018): xx, doi:10.1016/j.tele.2018.03.014.

[63] Patricia Hernandez, "The Twitch Streamers Who Spend Years Broadcasting to No One," The Verge, last modified July 16, 2018, https://www.theverge.com/2018/7/16/17569520/twitch-streamers-zero-viewers-motivation-community

being myself, and by virtue of that has made me be more myself, more often,
even outside of the stream."

- **Socializing:** *"The reason I started streaming was that I was kind of looking*
  for human connections...[I stream to] escape loneliness and depression"

Multiple reasons were cited for streamers' continued efforts despite a lack of any growth or progress, however the article goes no further into the issue. It serves as a great informative piece on this otherwise unseen group, however this is a surface-level popular media article, and lacks any depth in its findings; more dedicated research could provide strategies that may help those struggling in this way. The paper did however provide a reference to a website named *lonelystreams.com*, a website that specifically hosts Twitch streams with no active viewers.

Another paper covering Twitch written by Muesch et. al[64] – WPI students, no less – analyzed the platform using different resources over a period of seventeen days. Their findings include several observations relating to game popularity over time, platform popularity by age, and common resolution settings between channels, among other results. Identifying patterns like this is very helpful to this project; the more similarities found – particularly those found in quantifiable data – the more concise and elaborate the set of methodologies will be.

Another study of Twitch delves into the relationship between content type and viewer gratification. Sjöblom et. al[65] delve into an analysis of the platform, focusing on its spectators. Through data collected via questionnaire, the correlation between type of content, genre of game, and viewer motivations was examined. By delving into the motivation of spectators to consume content on Twitch, a clearer picture can be painted about how best to tailor one's content to maximize audience size, and which methodologies that can be used in order to keep that audience engaged and gratified.

---

[64] Muesch, Nicholas Matthew, Farrington, Daniel Jeffery, and Claypool, Mark. *Analysis of the Characteristics and Content of Twitch Live-Streaming*. Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2015.
[65] Max Sjöblom et al., "Content structure is king: An empirical study on gratifications, game genres and content type on Twitch,"*Computers in Human Behavior* 73 (2017): xx, doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.036.

4.2 Problem Statement

In order to better constrain the bounds of this project, clearly-defined problem and goal statements have been established. This will help to guide research towards what information is most relevant to this study.

Within live streaming, the vast majority of viewership is controlled by the vast minority of top channel owners. The lower levels of the medium are hyper-saturated and thus the medium is very difficult to break into in a meaningful way. Additionally, there exists a lack of in-depth resources for instructing new streamers how to effectively overcome this hurdle. By examining those who have already succeeded, commonalities may be identified that can be triangulated with existing data to form a solid framework for one to operate their channel by to maximize profit and growth.

Let's examine the largest current predominantly English-speaking live streaming platform, Twitch.tv. Looking at the top ten most-watched games at the current time (2018-9-30T13:30:00) we can see viewer distribution between the top ten streams in each game and every other related stream combined.
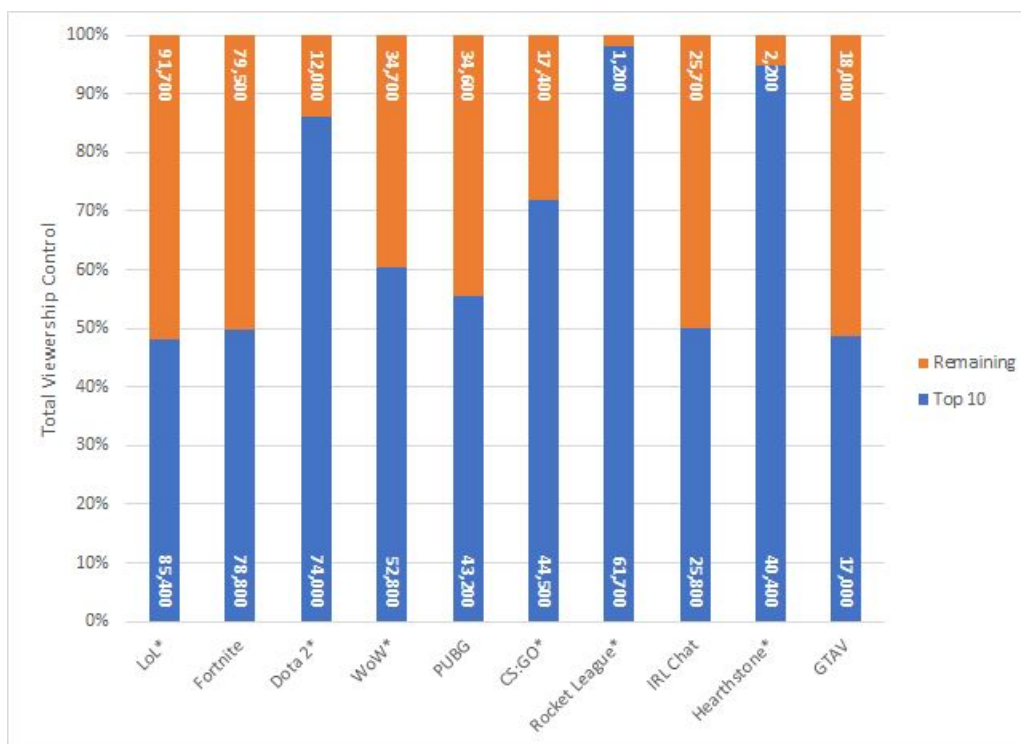
Viewership numbers were rounded to the 100s place, and an asterisk next to the game title indicates an active tournament in progress. Calculating some of the averages based off of this data gives us:

- Top Ten Stream Viewership Control (Avg) – **66.34%**
- Tournament-only Viewership Control (Avg) – **76.57%**
- Non-tournament Viewership Control (Avg) – **50.99%**
- Highest Viewership Control – **98.11%**
- Lowest Viewership Control – **48.22%**

Even if we discount games where there are active tournaments in progress, the top streams control, on average, over 50% of the total viewership of a game. As such, at the entry point of live streaming new users are denied access to over half of the available traffic for the game of their choice. This puts new streamers at an incredible disadvantage, further so due to the fact that existing viewers do not have any reason to view these new creators. How then, does a streamer find the necessary viewers to build a brand, a community, and a sustainable audience from which to profit?

In addition, a widespread attitude among the community attributes a large portion of success to luck. Luck, while neither irrelevant nor absent within the medium, is not the single defining factor to succeeding within live streaming. An ancient Roman and an early U.S. President each have been credited with a critical view of luck; one attributed to the philosopher Seneca: "Luck is where preparation meets opportunity,"[66] and another is claimed to be from Thomas Jefferson: "I am a great believer of luck, and I find that the harder I work, the more of it I have."[67] The true origins of these phrases are still under dispute, however they convey a clear message. Luck is not something distributed randomly without providence or favoritism, luck is the opportunities that pass us by, and the more we prepare for any kind of opportunity, the more opportunities will present themselves, and the more we are able to take advantage once it comes

---

[66] Pinola, Melanie. "'Luck Is What Happens When Preparation Meets Opportunity'." Lifehacker. Last modified July 19, 2013. https://lifehacker.com/luck-is-what-happens-when-preparation-meets-opportunit-821189862.

[67] "I Am a Great Believer in Luck...(Spurious Quotation)." Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. Accessed November 2, 2018. https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/i-am-great-believer-luckspurious-quotation#footnote1_ekb9ao2.

along. The aim of this project is to assemble a set of methodologies that can subvert the dependence on luck.

4.3 Goal Statement

To make $50,000 per year by year five.

The primary means of making revenue on these platforms is in the form of subscriptions, or "subs." When a streamer reaches partner or affiliate status – depending on the platform – they are given access to a button on their channel allowing viewers to subscribe should they so choose. Subscriptions on Twitch are organized in three tiers at $5|$10|$25/month, or one can subscribe to one channel for free each month with a linked Amazon Prime account. Provided all tax forms are properly handled, the average Twitch.tv sub generates $2.49 USD to the user, and $2.50 to the platform; in the case of mismanaged red tape, this ratio can swing against the streamer, earning them less money per sub. Subs are handled on a monthly basis, so if one were to attain the revenue goal solely from Twitch subscribers, 1,674 subscribers would be needed, which is an astonishingly high number by newcomer standards. However, this number can be reduced significantly by the diversification of monetization methods. If revenue streams are balanced between ads, subscriptions, tips, donations, and additional third party platforms, revenue is easier to obtain and grow, and provides more stability.

4.4 Research Questions

Based off of the research conducted during the proposal stage of the project, the goal of making a reasonable living from live streaming was examined. Several questions have been raised as to the nature of attaining that goal that has helped guide further research into the subject. Those questions that have been underlined are examined in further detail in the following subsections, while italicized questions were eventually used in the interview questionnaire. Strikethrough questions were concluded to not necessarily have objective answers, and are more dependant on the streamer than by any empirical statistics.

- How does a streamer build a community/make a name for themselves?
    - ~~How should that community be managed to promote growth?~~
    - Is variety content a worthwhile pursuit during the initial stages?
    - How can one provide motivation to view one's content?
        - How does one attract viewers to their stream?
            - *How does one effectively manage social media?*
    - *What are the necessary hurdles to overcome before legitimacy?*
    - What is the best format to deliver content to viewers?
        - ~~What types of content should one make?~~
        - ~~What times of day is website/internet traffic the highest?~~
- ~~How does one retain an audience?~~
- *How does one mitigate or manage risk in this field?*
- ~~What are the most underserved markets within the medium?~~

4.4.1 How does one build a community/make a name for themself?

   In a 2017 case study[68], Professor Greg Bennett of Texas A&M University analyzed a website called TexAgs.com. TexAgs is a privately owned website for community participation in the aforementioned school's athletics department. The website has seen major success in recent years, taking the #7 slot on the top fifteen highest traffic to football-related websites, as per an April 2016 metric[69]. In Bennett's analysis he first points out four major *internal* factors that contributed to the website's success:

- They were a trustworthy source
- The owners were committed to an excellent product
- The depth, volume, and quality of content were superior to competitors
- The reinvestment of resources led to growth and diversity of the platform[70]

So let's extrapolate and apply these concepts to streaming, starting with *trust*. Trustworthiness is a rather human trait, so taking the step down from corporate entity to streamer highlights this

---

[68] Bennett, Gregg. 2017. "Building a Strong New Media Brand: The Case of TexAgs.Com." Sport Marketing Quarterly 26 (3): 153–67. http://ezproxy.wpi.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsh&AN=126602840&site=ehost-live.

[69] Bennett, "TexAgs.com," 155

[70] Bennett, "TexAgs.com," 158

point further. Asserting oneself as someone who can be trusted on a human level can go leaps and bounds to create a solid relationship between creator and community. Should a major rumor or story come out that takes a significant stab at a creator's integrity or trustworthiness and go unanswered or unresolved by said creator, their following would surely suffer. For example, if a speedrunner[71] were caught stitching runs – cutting and pasting individual segments of gameplay and asserting it as a single, continuous run – their reputation within the speedrunning community would be irreparably damaged. Maintaining a level of trust is essential to discourse among members of the community; rumors spread fast, and scandals spread like the plague. Inversely, having an existing reputation for untrustworthiness begets inconsistency in both content and community. Perchance there are content creators out there that make a living off of lying: Dr. Disrespect[72], in his own way, lies to his audience in the form of a fictional persona. There may be merit in exploring those who have succeeded via deception in such or similar manners, however, if the content they create for their audience is lackluster, profits will never accrue. That said, genuineness is the gold standard in live streaming. Viewers want to watch a creator they feel is *real* as opposed to one that is putting on a face, especially if that face exists for the purposes of making money, not entertaining.

Being committed to an excellent product applies as well – the streamer's gear, internet connection, webcam setting, stream presentation; any and all other aspects of the stream are incredibly important. The more that these individual aspects are bolstered, the better things will look for viewers. However, as individual aspects are downplayed or ignored, there is then pressure on the remaining aspects to meet the same standard with less resources, if indeed the standards can be met. If no stream overlay exists, and the streamer merely has a game feed with a webcam in the corner, pressure is on the streamer to provide an experience good enough to make up for this lack of polish or quality. Inversely, even if a streamer were to have a stellar setup between A/V equipment, computer hardware, and stream presentation, if the streamer themself remains silent, unanimated, and unresponsive, these high-quality aspects of the stream fall flat. Thus, the onus is on the streamer to create the best content possible – as per the current

---

[71] The act of trying to finish a game as fast as possible. Players within individual game scenes compete for world record times.
[72] "Dr. Disrespect." Twitch. Accessed October 9, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/drdisrespectlive

definition of "best" – and present it in the best manner they can. Sounds similar to our coverage of previous types of content creation, no?

As for providing content that is superior to competitors, this would seem to be an aspect that requires prior and active research or monitoring of other streamers within the space one occupies. If you stream Fortnite, are you delivering something superior to Ninja[73], the #1 streamer on Twitch? Are you more skilled? Do you offer higher production quality? Do you stream for longer periods, or on later hours? Do you interact with your chat more? Do you hold any special events? What do you do (differently or otherwise) that will motivate an audience member to view your content over the creators they have already ascribed to? What reasons do you have for that audience to *stay*? Bennett's findings[74] show that TexAgs.com simply held itself to a higher standard than its competitors in nearly every aspect. Now one can look at the competition and ask "*How can I do this better?*" But in reality, a better question to ask is "*What aren't they doing well **enough**?*" To pinpoint where the competition is *lacking* is far easier than finding a way to outdo their strengths. These improvable aspects begin to form a list, which, if executed on, can draw attention.

Lastly, the reinvestment of resources; this is a no-brainer, and particularly to early streamers, there should be an incentive to finance one's channel through existing incomes – having a day job to afford the high-end gaming rig and quality of production enhancements goes a long way to show commitment and boost quality of deliverables. Having a source of income will finance the first stages of one's channel, however there are non-monetary resources to evaluate. Using the community's voluntary efforts to reinforce one's channel is also a reinvestment. For example, creating a fan art appreciation handle on Twitter can incentivize artists to participate more in the community; the subsequent fanart can then be used as promotional materials for the channel (provided permission is gained from and credit is given to the artist).

Bennett then also identifies four major *external* themes that affected the brand:
- The corporate aspect is played down
- The corporate and community aspects harmonize with each other

---

[73] "Ninja." Twitch. Accessed October 9, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/ninja.

[74] Bennett, "TexAgs.com," 159

- The aforementioned relationship is effectively balanced.
- The aforementioned relationship is often conflated as a single entity.[75]

TexAgs.com is a resource linked to the athletics department of Texas A&M University. As a result, the team that ran the website formed a unique relationship between itself, the community, and the school, all the while maintaining a delicate balancing act to ensure that all parties remained pleased. In some ways, this relationship can be extracted to the streamer and their own community. The streamer surely has an intention (or at least a desire) to make money on the platform of their choice, however they also have a responsibility to their community; the people sign the paycheck, as it were. To display an overt and methodical approach to monetization without holding the community in high regard will lead to viewers feeling unappreciated or even panhandled. To look at all four points simultaneously, a creator should seek to essentially incentivize their community into monetary action, making said community believe that doing so benefits them as much as, if not more than the creator. Viewers should not see monetary gain as a primary motivator for the creator; put differently, the observable motivations for profit should not eclipse the perceived importance of the community. The creator, thus, should take conscious steps to balance attitudes towards monetization and community interaction – too high a focus on making money and community members may cry *sellout*, too low a focus and the profits may start to dwindle. Moreover, as per the fourth external theme, if one can assert an attitude that monetary contribution and community involvement are linked, such as premium content, exclusive privileges, or financially-incentivized community events, the creator's chances of profit can soar.

4.4.2 What is the best format to deliver content to viewers?

What is the best stream configuration? What video resolution, framerate, or audio quality are best? What do viewers expect of a stream rig, a webcam, a background environment? A study done by WPI students Farrington and Muesch[76] analyzed all active streams over a period of about three weeks to gather data on the most common forms of delivery. While a few years

---

[75] Bennett, "TexAgs.com," 161
[76] Muesch, Nicholas Matthew, Farrington, Daniel Jeffery, and Claypool, Mark. *Analysis of the Characteristics and Content of Twitch Live-Streaming*. Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2015.

outdated, the information presented shows a well-analyzed snapshot of the platform at the time. By theoretically weighing these results towards more advanced and high-tech formats, we can get a rough intimation of the current stats of the platform. Of the data analyzed:

- The vast majority of stream resolutions were split between 720p and 1080p[77]
- Audio formats outside of 44.1KHz AAC account for less than 1% of the platform[78]
- Stream bitrate increases alongside stream resolution[79]
- Stream framerate is also closely split between 30 and 60 FPS[80]

We can get a sense for the popular settings that the majority of streams employ. Today one can expect a larger portion of streams to be running 1080p60 as technology and networks improve. It is worth noting, however, that not every viewer has an internet connection that can support high quality video streams over an extended period of time. Coupled with the fact that an unpartnered stream does not have viewer-adjustable quality settings, it very well may be a good idea to opt to stream at a lower quality, so as not to inadvertently exclude viewers with lower quality internet connections.

An interesting observation that came out of this study is a very marked decline in activity on Twitch as age progressed. By the time viewers aged past 27, only a small fraction – ten percent of the age group – still continued to watch streams on Twitch, compared to a whopping sixty percent of those aged 18-22[81].

4.4.3 How can one provide motivation to view one's content?

Let's examine Max Sjöblom's paper[82] looking into the gratifications of viewing live streamed content. This paper offers some handy insight into the underlying motivations of Twitch viewers, attempting to understand why viewers watch what they do. Sjöblom breaks his analysis into three overarching categories applied to one set of game genres and one set of stream types; the first of these categories is *affective motivations and tension release*. Put more simply as enjoyment and stress relief, the former was found to have a high correlation with casual

---

[77] Muesch, "Characteristics and Content," 25.
[78] Muesch, "Characteristics and Content," 22.
[79] Muesch, "Characteristics and Content," 26.
[80] Muesch, "Characteristics and Content," 29.
[81] Muesch, "Characteristics and Content," 40-41.
[82] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 161

streams, while the latter with competitive/eSports streams[83]. An interesting point the author makes is in reference to streaming RTS games, which showed a marked lack of affective motivations, signaling that the RTS genre doesn't make for good casual content[84]; however, this does not exclude the genre from competitive streams, as can be seen by the overwhelming popularity of *Starcraft*. Building somewhat off of that idea, Sjöblom makes the assertion that the structure of one's stream does far more to decide which games are played than the other way around[85]. This rings true on Twitch; for those engaged in an eSports-esque stream, single-player games like *Horizon Zero Dawn* or *Amnesia: The Dark Descent* are less attractive. In asserting an overarching theme or structure to one's stream and/or content, a creator instills a kind of standard in their audience; keep with the advertised theme and your user base will remain relatively consistent, or stray and risk upsetting viewers or garnering less attention.

Moving the focus to tension release, Sjöblom makes a noteworthy statement about the type of attention required for streaming: the difference between *distraction* and *escapism*. The two terms may seem overly similar at face value, however their key difference lies in the effort required on part of the viewer to understand what is going on. A *distracting* stream would be more relaxed, casual, and serving more as "virtual company"[86] to the viewer, where other things can be accomplished whilst displaying the stream on one's phone or a second monitor. On the other hand, an *escapist* stream would be more attuned to eSports, where the viewer's active and persistent attention is required to get an adequate experience from the broadcast. One last point Sjöblom points out about tension release is a motivation behind watching competitive streams – competitive gaming (covering more than just eSports) is a high-stress, high mentally-taxing activity, so in watching a competitive stream, viewers can consume content from their favorite game without the added stress of their own performance to worry about. Moreso, the overwhelming majority of eSports spectators are nowhere near the performance level of those who are being featured on stream, so not only the consumption of preferred content is there but also the consumption of high level, high quality play.

---

[83] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 164
[84] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 164
[85] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 164
[86] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 165

The next category relates to *information seeking* and *learning to play*. Once again similar terms with non-insignificant differences – a viewer may tune in to a stream of the latest *Call of Duty* game in an effort to discern whether they themselves would like to purchase the game. This player most likely has a good understanding of the FPS genre already, as well as the common tropes present in *Call of Duty*, however is seeking information specific to the title. The streams most associated with these motivators are largely *let's play* and *review* channels[87]. These channels are designed to convey cognitive information about whichever game is being played, with review streams existing solely for the dissemination of information about a particular game. These stream types benefit greatly from casual or loose structure – the relaxed atmosphere somewhat emulates a couch setting, evoking nostalgia and some degree of trustworthiness in the streamer, thus promoting discussion and queries[88]. Contained within these streams was a noted correlation between *information seeking* and action games; the author postulates this positive relationship lending itself to most modern AAA games being within the action genre, and thus attracting consumers curious for more information on the new title[89]. *Learning to play*, however, has more roots in competitive streams[90]; as a player and competitor, one of the best ways of learning is observing the actions of players better than oneself. By analyzing games, strategies, and techniques used by professional competitors, a player can see a notable increase in their skill level, making eSports streams incredibly popular among this group.

The final category Sjöblom talks about is *personal integrative* and *social integrative*. The difference here is more simple to identify; *personal integrative* motivations are motivations by a viewer to interact with the streamer (and hopefully vice versa), while *social integrative* motivations are in regards to participating in the community surrounding a channel. The study showed that sandbox games displayed a high correlation to personal integrative motivations – the slow-paced nature of the game allows the streamer to dedicate more time to interacting with chat, thus incentivizing chat to interact more with the streamer[91]. By extension of this, casual, relaxed streams also facilitate viewer/streamer interaction, as well as the *information-seeking*

[87] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 165
[88] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 165
[89] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 166
[90] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 166
[91] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 166

motivations towards action games. Moving to *social integrative* motivations, a high correlation was observed on rhythm and sandbox games, but surprisingly not competitive streams[92]. These, along with casual streams, have a tendency to be smaller in size, and thus have more dedicated, tight-knit communities. Esports is a unique beast, having a slight correlation with *social integrative* motivations, however this lesser correlation is due to the fact that most eSports viewers are consumers of a particular game, and have less tendency to latch onto an individual streamer[93].

Sjöblom's paper possesses some astounding insight into *why* viewers watch what they do, and there is significant information contained within this study to help guide the kind of content one wants to produce. Is the community interaction your favorite part of streaming? Look to sandbox games, new releases, or rhythm games. Be warned that these are not great indicators of large community growth, however the community you *do* assemble will be there for the long run. Perhaps interaction with the audience isn't your thing. In that case, start practicing; your skills will need to eclipse your sociability. While this is a fantastic study, it has its limitations. Some very important variables and motivators were examined, however their reach only goes so far. Casual streams promote audience interaction and can lead into close community circles, but how do you attract those audiences in the first place? There are many ways that this paper points out of how to *motivate* viewers, but unless they actually see your channel, your viewer count will remain at zero. Information-seeking motivations can definitely bring in viewers, but how does one make them stay? How does one retain persistent viewership?

4.4.4 Is variety content a worthwhile pursuit during the initial stages?

Variety content is a marked point of contention in content creation circles; the base concept is that the creator has little or no loyalty to any particular game, genre, release date, or platform. The creator simply chooses whichever games they want to play, sometimes not even making a decision until the day they stream. This format affords them the opportunity to play whichever games they enjoy playing, and allows their personality to shine through over the gameplay or genre. Assembled communities around this format tend to be much more tight-knit

---

[92] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 166
[93] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King," 167

and loyal than that of singular content, due to viewer motivations centered around the individual rather than the game. However, a major criticism of variety content is that it lacks the audience-building potential of other formats, such as eSports or singular streams. Community building is slow, viewer retention is weak, and less money is earned. Further supporting this, there are two common patterns that occur among successful variety content creators that discourage the idea of using it as a launch structure for one's channel: *star power* and *content transition*. Star Power is as the name implies – using the existing clout of an e-celebrity to carry the success and audience generation for a channel. These channels often spring up suddenly and gain a large following in the immediate aftermath of channel creation. Some notable examples include:

- Ray "BrownMan" Narvaez Jr.[94]
  - Former member of Rooster Teeth
- VoiceOverPete[95]
  - Former Fiverr influencer turned President of the Internet[96]
- Game Grumps[97]
  - Egoraptor (long-time 2D animator) & Jontron (pre-established youtuber)
- Ninja[98]
  - The famous Drake session

All of the listed creators have a significant level of clout acquired previously to bolster their success and growth on the platform of their choice at the point of entry. Ninja is a slight anomaly insofar as he himself is not famous, however he was *made* famous through Star Power during a famous stream where he played a session of Fortnite with Drake, famed rapper and hip-hop artist, among other celebrities. Any information related to community building and channel growth matter significantly less to these individuals due to their own reputation which carries significant weight in attracting viewers.

---

[94] "BrownMan." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/brownman
[95] "VoiceOverPete." Twitch. Accessed April 11, 2019. https://www.twitch.tv/voiceoverpete.
[96] This position was created and subsequently filled by Pete himself.
[97] "Game Grumps." YouTube. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9CuvdOVfMPvKCiwdGKL3cQ
[98] "Ninja." Twitch. Accessed October 9, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/ninja.

The second methodology found in successful variety content streams is *content transition*. This is the concept of ascribing to a particular game, genre, or theme during the initial stages of channel and audience growth, and, after a significant enough following is gained within their circle of choice, transitioning into variety content. This method is similar to Star Power, however the process of building clout and reputation is bundled within one's content creation career. Some notable examples of transitioned creators are:

- Alpharad[99]
  - Started with *Smash Bros* content
- ScottFalco[100]
  - Started with *Overwatch* animations
- Mang0[101]
  - Started with competitive *Super Smash Bros. Melee*
- Jerma985[102]
  - Started with *Team Fortress 2* content

Again, all of the listed creators were originally only known within the game or genre of their choice. However, after their following had reached a certain point, they either broke away from the content they originally produced in pursuit of variety content, or diversified their content into the genre. Mang0 in this case is a unique example, as he was a professional player long before he started streaming, but due to the grassroots and small-scale nature of professional *Melee* at the time, his existing clout was not enough to carry full variety content for his channel. Competitive *Melee* has been experiencing a significant growth spurt over the past five years, something that Mang0 and other *Melee* players have been taking good advantage of, however Mang0 sticks out as the most popular streamer within the scene.

So we have multiple examples reinforcing the concept that variety content is not a viable choice for those just starting their channel. The nature of variety content means that the game being played is far less as important as the person playing the game. So without any clout to carry a new streamer, beginner variety streamers will be gaining audiences on a game-by-game

---

[99] "Alpharad." YouTube. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBODyKF0JMbUd6D9Bklyzbw.
[100] "ScottFalco." YouTube. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/user/ScottFalco.
[101] "Mang0." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/mang0.
[102] "Jerma985." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/jerma985.

basis, due to the little clout they possess. Does this mean that variety content is not viable at the early stages of a content creation career? This seems to be so to some degree in the case of true variety content, where the creator plays the games they choose with no restrictions. By attaching oneself to a single community, the creator has access to a much larger group of dedicated fans, and can build a community far easier than by spreading oneself too thin, so to speak. There is, however, an avenue variety content creators can pursue that can potentially bring in similar viewership when compared to singular game content. This avenue is *guided variety content* – while there exists a small selection of games that continually dominate the top viewership of Twitch and similar platforms, a particular type of game consistently breaks into the top viewership: new releases. New games have a large influx of viewership at the point of and for a duration after release; should a creator "ride" the new release wave as titles come out, they can achieve semi-variety content amidst a consistent group of game consumers. *Call of Duty: Black Ops 4* was examined to support this theory. As of obtaining this viewership snapshot, the game has been released for one week. A screenshot of the front page of Twitch shows us:
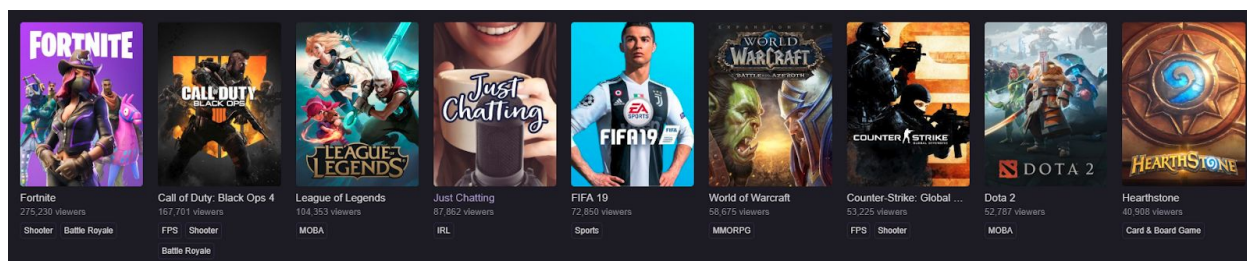
Call of Duty has cemented itself as the #2 most watched game on Twitch, commanding 18% viewership of the top ten games at the time. Doing a top ten stream breakdown similar to before, we get the following metric:

Call of Duty Black Ops 4 (2018-10-19T16:00:00)

Top 10 Viewership: 109,000
Remaining Viewership: 58,700
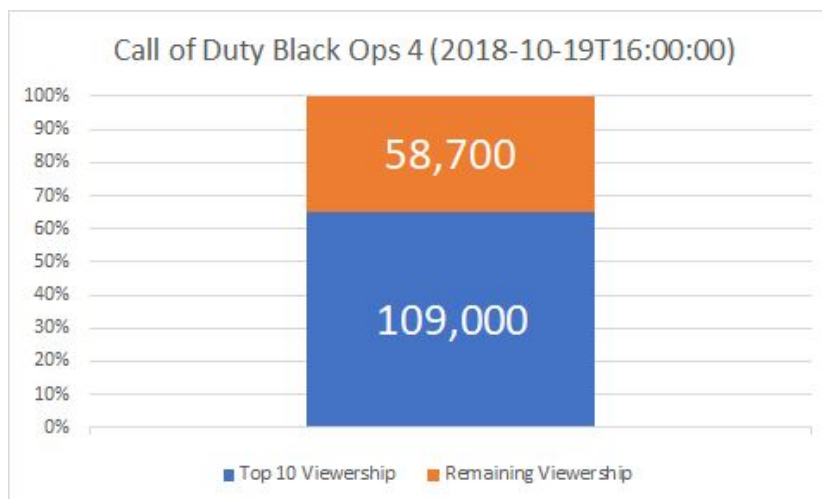
The top ten streams commanded a significant majority of about 65% compared to the previous snapshot where the average was roughly 50%. However, the quantity of remaining viewers was still in the top three when compared to the previous snapshot. Were one to be streaming *Black Ops* (or any newly released game) during the initial wave of hype, the creator would likely see a much higher amount of available viewers as compared to playing whichever game suited their fancy at the time. This correlates with Sjöblom's research on content types and formats; *information-seeking* motivations propel curious potential consumers to watch content related to a new release in an effort to guide their decision on whether or not to buy. By staying within this space of new releases, particularly action-oriented new releases, there is the potential for one to build a reputation off of semi-variety content. This also affords longer downtimes between major releases, allowing the creator to play games of their choice or games relevant to upcoming titles.

4.4.5 How does one attract viewers to their stream?

We've observed many techniques, recommendations, and methods for increasing the quality and consistency of one's content, as well as ways to motivate viewers to watch said content. However, these resources are powered by one very difficult-to-manage resource: people. Live streaming is a different sort of beast; it's a medium powered mostly by passion, not profit. As a result, the methods of advertising that for-profit companies have optimized over the decades may be far less effective within this medium. Physical advertising is automatically

limited to the region it is placed within, and mostly ineffective at bolstering the brand of an internet-based company or group. Even then, digital advertising is something largely frowned upon, as can be seen by the tens of millions of downloads on web browser ad blockers. How then can one advertise to people that don't want to see advertisements? One of the answers to this is, well, hitting the digital pavement, as it were. If fame will bring viewers to the stream, then by all means go out and meet your audience. Of the excessive amount of popular media articles available[103, 104, 105], most point to a set of effective methods when expanding one's brand and working on exposure.

First and foremost is social media. Deemed by most articles as an absolute necessity, casting one's net across multiple accounts such as Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, and Youtube is a direct way of reaching out toward audiences and trying to grab their attention. In this regard, it's very much a numbers game; the more accounts you manage, the more potential eyes can be reached – the more you participate *on* those accounts, the more content there is for people to find and share with others.

In addition to external social media, socializing and networking on the platform of one's choice is also a recommended step. By going to other streams and conversing with other users and streamers, one achieves a form of for-passion advertising. Making the effort to go to other streams, particularly those within shared fan groups, genres, or stream formats, shows a vested interest in the shared group, and may incur reciprocation or promotion. Going even further, one can utilize their stream assets to the benefit of others, in multiple ways. Hosting or raiding a fellow stream – the act of using one's own viewership to boost that of another channel – is an effective act of goodwill. These hosts can be planned around one's stream schedule – host other streamers who have scripted hours during your downtime to create habits between you and other streamers. Then, provided *you* are streaming during *their* downtime, they may be inclined to return the favor, thus sending their existing user base directly to your stream. Raiding is slightly different; where hosting is "re-streaming" another creator's content on your channel, raiding is

---

[103] "How to Grow – Part 1." Game Streaming Central. Accessed October 22, 2018. http://gamestreamingcentral.com/guides/how-to-grow-part1/.

[104] Clarke, Oliver. "How To Get More Views On Twitch – Building An Audience." 101Geek.com. Last modified November 10, 2016. https://101geek.com/how-to-get-more-views-on-twitch/.

[105] Orliesaurus. "40+ Tips for Streamers to Acquire and Retain Viewers." Medium. Last modified December 30, 2017. https://medium.com/@orliesaurus/40-tips-for-streamers-to-acquire-and-retain-viewers-12906065e195.

taking your community and flooding it into the raid target's channel. This tactic has a tendency to be disruptive or even harassing, however the positive benefits are just as potent. For example, one may raid another channel for the purposes of dropping a large donation on the creator, allowing both communities to participate in the event. Co-hosting, or streaming with another channel simultaneously, is a good move for both channels, as both users benefit off of the exposure to the other's user base. This, however, is not something that every streamer is willing to participate in, especially in cases of disproportionate community sizes. It's not a good idea to ask someone with 50,000 followers to co-stream with you when you have less than 200. The benefits you receive as a result far outweigh anything the other channel can gain from such a co-stream. As a result, co-streaming should be done with those either highly connected to you within the genre, game, or platform of choice, or those with a similarly-sized community. Finally, there are community conglomerates that one can join; these groups are comprised of multiple channels working together under a large umbrella with the intentions of helping one another out. By getting involved with these groups one can join a support group of users and channel owners who, provided one proves they are worth the time to help, will be more than happy to contribute to the success of one's channel.

Another major factor that these guides point to brings us back to our earlier articles of Bennett and Sjöblom. More important than social media, more important than working with fellow streamers, there is the importance of one's own stream. All of the time spent on social media platforms and collaborating with other channels and users is wasted if the attention one attracts leads to a sub-par product. By maintaining a consistent schedule, ensuring one's stream is set up properly and set up *well*, playing relevant games to your ascribed communities, and simply being entertaining on stream, numbers and exposure will increase. Of the methods listed, the most important that is identified amongst them is schedule consistency.

Another study done by Mitchell J. Lovett (University of Rochester) and Richard Staelin (Duke University) describes various forms of exposure and their effectiveness in gaining attention; it does this by separating media into three forms: owned, earned, and paid.[106] Owned media covers items under explicit ownership and management of the brand, such as websites or

---

[106] Lovett, Mitchell J., and Richard Staelin. "The Role of Paid, Earned, and Owned Media in Building Entertainment Brands: Reminding, Informing, and Enhancing Enjoyment." Marketing Science 35, no. 1 (2016), 142-157. doi:10.1287/mksc.2015.0961.

physical media. Earned media is in the form of word of mouth and social media engagement, while paid media simply covers advertising. These three traits were then paired with three goals or outcomes: reminding (calling attention to the product), informing (giving data about the product), and enhancing enjoyment (making the product more attractive). The conclusions of the paper assert several relationships between the three medias and outcomes; first, owned media's impact lacked significance compared to the other two media sources. Paid media serves predominantly to remind, and earned media to enhance enjoyment. Lovett also goes into detail about earned vs paid media – earned media gets more engagement per exposure, however on the whole paid media gets more exposures. By utilizing the two, and focusing on memorable, rather than informative ads, audience engagement, exposure, and retention are positively impacted[107].

So what does this mean for streaming? Advertising is not a very explored space within live streaming, at least not in the traditional sense. Streamers are very familiar with *earned media* – word of mouth is the lifeblood of many content creators. It also isn't much of a stretch to say that a streamer's channel is the equivalent of *owned media* – which even lines up with the assertion that owned media lacks significant effectiveness. The channel itself isn't likely to generate audiences; the product (the content, rather than the channel), social media engagement, and word passing between the community do a far better job of attracting viewers and keeping them there. So what about paid advertising? Being an unexplored space, there is a high level of merit in investigating this concept further.

More on the topic of advertising, a study done by Anindya Ghose et al. from the Leonard N. Stern School of Business in New York University took a look at the effects of advertising on consumer behaviors, taking a particular interest in the duration of exposure to ads.[108] The paper looked at the effects of advertising on viewers' usage of *active* and *passive searching*. The former involves a concerted, conscious effort to find more information about a brand, while the latter concerns information gathered from sources that seek out the viewer, not the other way around. The study found that mere exposure to display advertising led to both of these activities, and the longer one was exposed to relevant ads, the higher chance of engaging in those searches,

---

[107] Lovett, "Paid, Earned, and Owned Media," 155-156
[108] Ghose, Anindya, and Vilma Todri-Adamopoulos. "Towards a Digital Attribution Model: Measuring the Impact of Display Advertising on Online Consumer Behavior." SSRN Electronic Journal 40, no. 4 (December 2016), 889-A30. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2672090.

particularly in *active searching*. While the impact on *passive searching* was not as significant, exposure to advertisement still increased the likelihood of users engaging with future advertisements[109].

This paper compliments the previous one; show ads to users, they'll come to you. The paper cited that "exogenous" information, or information that the user does not specifically seek out, can lead to active or passive searching. The paper also specifies *display* advertising – meaning, ads that the user does not need to engage with. This is a good factor, as a lower level of engagement with advertising can still lead users towards a product, even if they simply view the ad in passing while actively searching for something else, possibly completely irrelevant to the display ad. Sending out a wide, low-interaction net of advertising may not necessarily bring people right to your door, but it will at least plant the idea in their heads, and over time, some may come to search out the name they keep seeing everywhere. Corroborating with the previous post, a more in-depth analysis on the effects of paid advertising explicitly to advertise live streaming and live stream*ers* could be very beneficial.

Yet *another* study, this time done by Anup Krishnamurthy (St. Joseph's Institute of Management) and S. Ramesh Kumar (Indian Institute of Management Bangalore) examined something they call EWOM – <u>E</u>lectronic <u>W</u>ord <u>O</u>f <u>M</u>outh[110]. EWOM is a measurement of a consumer's perceptions of a brand, and this study worked in an attempt to influence and manage EWOM to shape consumer expectations of a brand in a positive direction. EWOM can take on several forms – user reviews, top 10 lists, video analyses, and more – in essence, effort exerted on behalf of the customer with the intent of informing *other* consumers. This form of information is highly effective at swaying consumer opinion, as consumers are much more likely to trust a third party's opinions of a product rather than the first party's own words or advertisements. The latter is financially motivated to sell you the product, the former (with the exception of paid or incentivized reviews) is not. According to a sourced article from 2015, EWOM accounts for at least 25% of search results for the world-leading brands[111].

---

[109] Ghose, "Impact of Display Advertising," 907-908

[110] Krishnamurthy, Anup, and S. Ramesh Kumar. "Electronic word-of-mouth and the brand image: Exploring the moderating role of involvement through a consumer expectations lens." Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services 43 (July 2018), 149-156. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.03.010.

[111] Krishnamurthy, "Electronic word-of-mouth," 149

The study split consumers between two major groups: high-involvement and low-involvement, in reference to the amount of EWOM that these consumers read through and browsed. High-involvement users, by nature of consuming more EWOM related to the specified brand, had a more comprehensive understanding of said brand than low-involvement users. Obviously; the more one reads up about a particular product, the more one knows. Inversely, high-involvement users had higher expectations of the brand than low-involvement – while they may be more informed, they are more likely to be disappointed by a product that does not meet their standards[112].

According to another sourced article from 2005, word of mouth, and by extension EWOM, is one of the major contributors to a brand's success[113]. We can see examples of this in the modern day, even at incredibly cursory, surface level engagement; if you're buying a product from Amazon, which are you more likely to buy, the product with 2 reviews or 2,000? Something as simple as a number of people who have reviewed a product, completely disregarding whatever they may have to say about the product, is a more reassuring factor of a product's effectiveness and success. The product with 2,000 reviews is going to be purchased far more often, further increasing the sales gap between products.

The takeaway from this article is very simple, and very clear. Get people talking about you, and get them to say good things. A positive-leaning review and discussion base will do wonders for your brand, and thus your stream. Focus heavily on what people are saying about you – if it's positive, do what is in your power to spread and feature those messages as closely as you can to your content. If it's negative, ascertain what the criticism is, and as before, do what is in your power to nullify the statements made. If a significant amount of viewers don't like you wearing red hats, the red hats have to go. If they all love the green hats, let future customers know how much your green hats are appreciated. Get bigger, greener hats. Amplify your strengths and squash what doesn't want to be seen – the more you bolster the discussion around your channel, the more likely new users will come to it. Pursue the 2,000 reviews, and preach their words.

---

[112] Krishnamurthy, "Electronic word-of-mouth," 153
[113] Krishnamurthy, "Electronic word-of-mouth," 153

5.0 Methodology

The beginning stages of this project covered in the initial proposal served as a proof of concept; an initial investigation into the literature currently available on the explicit topics presented in this paper showed that while public and enthusiast interest is very high in this community, in-depth resources and information are not quite as widespread. Those resources that are available focus primarily on the cultural impact and social psychological aspects of these platforms, rather than how one may go about making money. Of the resources that do focus on making a profit, the information presented within is a selection from a highly common data set that can be seen recurring throughout most articles and resources focused on this topic. There certainly wasn't a master's thesis covering these specific subjects. Thus, the purpose of this paper was to put together a holistic resource intended to dissect the methodologies currently employed by those currently (and successfully) working within the space. It aimed to go into a level of detail one would not be able to find in the more widespread popular media articles covering the techniques and tips one can follow to gain success in the field.

The intended method of this project was to solicit interviews from full-time live streamers on the popular platforms currently being utilized by said group. Initially, the target was 50 interviews, however after conducting the first interview it was determined that in the best interests of everyone involved in this project in any capacity and in the interest of completing this project within six years, the target was lowered to 15. In order to determine what questions should be asked of interviewees, however, a more thorough literature review was conducted. By taking a step outwards and focusing on brand management, online startups, community engagement, and marketing strategies, a solid framework of the essential components of what makes a successful live stream was put together. This research is summarized in Section 4 and was synthesized into the questionnaire found in Appendix B.

After the initial literature review was conducted, the next leg of the project was to reach out to the individuals currently operating within the industry and interview them, with the researched questionnaire serving as a solid, but not explicit, framework. The interviews were semi-structured, and varied in length anywhere from 41:50 to 1:09:34, and the interview questionnaire went through several revisions over the course of the interview process. The

original goal was to target full-time live streamers, however some part-time streamers were interviewed, as well as individuals working within the industry but not directly live streaming themselves. Using the service Otter.ai[114] as well as a few extra helping hands[115], the audio files were fed into the automated transcription service and edited for grammar and consistency. After that point, the data was separated out according to subject matter and synthesized together in the form of Section 6. Using a selection of direct quotes as well as identified commonalities in the responses, the idea presented in each subsection are substantially fleshed out; where applicable, the research conducted during the initial review is cited to reinforce the points made based off of the interview data. The final conclusions section is a five-year business plan that provides a comprehensive overview of the company I will be launching on Twitch, our objectives, our goals, and the applied knowledge gained from the completion of this paper.

---

[114] Otter Voice Notes. Accessed April 8, 2019. https://otter.ai.
[115] Transcribers and Proofreaders: Diane Holmes, Nan Holmes, Tim Olson, Kerry Saltvick

6.0 Data and Analysis

6.1 Methods of Monetization

Earlier in the paper we estimated the number of Twitch subscribers needed to reach our monetary goal: 1,673 * $2.49 (per sub) = $4,168.26/mo = $50,019.12/yr; Mixer's subscriptions are $5.99 apiece, which if we plugged it through would be roughly 1,389 subscribers to reach our goal. Now, 1,500+ subscribers is no small feat, let alone 1,500+ followers, especially to those who are new to the platform. Indeed, there is more than one way of monetizing one's content, and an effective diversification of these methods can lead to more money earlier on, and thus our $50,000/yr goal can be reached earlier and easier. So what are the options available to creators? Besides subscriptions, what else can be done? In no particular order, below can be found a list of some of the most common methods of stream monetization:

1. **Subscriptions** – Already mentioned, subscriptions (abbreviated "subs") are available to creators after they have reached affiliate or partnership status (more info in Appendix D) with the platform of their choosing. Viewers can "subscribe" to their favorite creators for a monthly fee – in most cases, the platform keeps half, and the rest goes to the creator. Subscriptions are the most stable form of income available on these platforms, and high sub counts can net creators upwards of six figure salaries. Additionally Twitch, being owned by Amazon, allows viewers with Amazon prime one free subscription per month, of which the creator receives the standard benefit from.

2. **Bits/Embers/Tips** – Twitch, Mixer, and some other platforms have a proprietary currency exclusive to their platform that can be used to give to streamers as a means of support. These currencies are equitable to very small amounts of money for each – Twitch's Bits cost $1.40 for 100 units, and Mixer's Embers are $0.99 for 55. Viewers can give bits out at any time to creators, and creators can set up special circumstances when certain thresholds are exceeded or values are met.

3. **Advertisements** – Partnered creators can choose to run video ads on their channels and earn revenue based off of the exposure those advertisements receive. Unfortunately, details of revenue splits and rates are protected under an NDA in the partnership agreement.

4. **Corporate Sponsorships** – Many corporations are willing to and have been dipping in the live streaming space; anything from soda brands to health supplements to computer accessories to luxury underwear, creators can sign on to be sponsored by these companies and receive larger amounts of income based off of terms negotiated via contract.

5. **Esports/Content Labels** – Similar to corporate sponsorships, these are syndicated groups of professional athletes and creators who can receive considerable benefits, including a larger cut of revenue from subscriptions, coverage of travel fare, and new equipment. Many of these labels are highly prestigious and incredibly selective within their respective circles, with many creators out there eagerly looking to sign on to a willing team.

6. **Donations** – Rather straightforward; many third party monetary donation services exist and are a common feature in most channels. There are a couple different types, such as "tip jars," flat rate donations; crowdfunding, most commonly seen with Patreon; and other more specialized donations, such as a service that allows viewers to order food for delivery to creators.

7. **Custom Plugins** – Many features, such as donation goals, tip currency minigames, and Amazon referral links are custom elements creators can implement on their stream overlay or channel page as additional monetary incentives. The breadth of these plugins is large, and streaming platforms often provide many of these resources to creators for free.

8. **Merchandise** – T-Shirts, hats, accessories, and other products (most likely featuring the creator's specific brand) are a potential monetization option, however a pre-existing community is needed to justify buy-in costs and ensure sales are possible.

6.2 Interview Analysis

Appendix B provides a solid outline of the interview format and targets given to the interviewees. The questions on the interview sheet were improved over time, so some questions were only answered by a portion of those interviewed. By analyzing the bulk of responses from the interviewees, we can determine what conclusions to draw, which can be presented as-is, and which can be used as the basis for further research. Of the fifteen people interviewed, thirteen were streamers actively participating on the platform, with the other two working adjacent to the industry. Of the streamers, nine made their primary source of income from livestreaming, while the other four were either working towards a full-time position, or considered the income from their stream as a secondary source.

6.2.1 Introduce Yourself to the Class

Live streamers come from all walks of life for all manner of reasons. Some approach the platform as a way of improving social anxiety, some go in seeking additional social circles to participate in, some simply find it a novel idea and want in. However, when all these individual stories are looked at, some similarities start to emerge. The initial motivations of the interviewees were covered, looking at how they got started, what introduced them to streaming, or why they committed to the platform.

Of the fifteen candidates interviewed, seven interviewees started as viewers on Twitch, four interviewees cited eSports as an introductory factor to the platform, three dove straight into streaming, and one transitioned from a previous platform. Introductory statistics are fine and good, but one particular motivator was highlighted during this segment of the interviews: were the interviewees motivated by, or did they consider money and profit as a factor when they first signed on to the platform? Only 4/13 streamers said yes, with the other two interviewees (a postdoctoral researcher & community talent manager) entering from a more career-oriented track, thus implicitly having monetary interest. Does this difference in motivation make an impact? If we calculate the average followers of those streamers motivated vs. unmotivated by money, the "for profit" streamers, as they were, have over a 2:1 ratio of followers! Now there's

all number of reasons why this statistic is inaccurate, such as sample size mismatch or singling individual factors out of a multivariate analysis, but it is a statistic that points in the right direction and makes some sense – those motivated by profit understand more followers means more exposure means more money. Subsequently, there are actions and habits that one can do to bolster viewership and engagement with one's channel, but unless one is expressly motivated to make more money, these options and habits may not seem worthwhile to the "for hobby" crowd. With that said, 7/9 interviewees that did not have initial monetary interest made note that their attitudes changed after realizing the career potential on the platform. Would things be different had they followed a more structured regiment from the start? Would they have reached partnership or full-time status sooner?

6.2.2 Hey Ma, Look at Me!

Starting out as a live streamer is the most difficult hurdle in the industry to overcome – on a platform that has very little native features for gaining exposure, how does one get noticed? The simple answer to the question is "be unique." The more one does to set themselves apart from the competition, the higher their chances of being noticed by a wider audience. This certainly makes sense, but that's not such a good answer anymore now that over 4,000,000 people are actively streaming on the platform. More than just being unique, one should be actively engaged in expanding their brand, networking with other creators, and taking advantage of other platforms used within the space. So what all comes together to create something "unique?" What else can be done to gain exposure? How should one manage their channel and their content to best facilitate this?

While reasons for starting out or coming to the platform can be boiled down to a small list of relatively similar explanations, how one goes about managing one's channel is incredibly diverse. The total hours per week/month invested, whether or not a schedule was managed, one's social media presence, what games or communities one participates in, the services one offers, and all the more paint a picture of who you are and what your channel is, with one of the single most valuable and effective traits of a channel being how unique you are. What do you offer to this platform that is different from what is already here? If you offer something that can

be obtained in a nearly identical capacity from a creator that already has an established community and a reliable framework for running their content, what is the motivation for anyone to seek you out? A perfect place to look is Bennett's paper covering TexAgs. The paper covered an identified set of internal factors that contributed to the website's success:

- They were a trustworthy source
- The owners were committed to an excellent product
- The depth, volume, quality of content was superior to competitors
- The reinvestment of resources led to growth and diversity of the platform[116]

More info on the study can be found in Section 4.4.1, but these base four factors already go a long way in framing the qualities that set a person, business, organization or other should seek out to gain notoriety, and as a result uniqueness. The pursuit of integrity, excellence, competitiveness, and upscaling should be at the forefront of any creator's mind.

Twitter's bite-size format for text, video, and just *attention* in general (coupled with the "clip" function of streaming platforms – short video clips users can make no longer than 60 seconds) has presented an attitude of instant gratification, of getting the information you're looking for in a short amount of time. A controversial study[117,118] conducted by Microsoft Canada presents the statistic that the average attention span of a human being in 2013 was eight seconds. Another article[119] from way back in 2010 presents the statistic that over 50% of audiences tune out after the 60 second mark on a product-related video. Even though the empirical accuracy of measuring human attention span is under debate, these articles present a similar idea: viewers aren't going to sit there forever; a creator doesn't have all day to convince new viewers to follow, subscribe, or be interested in their channel or content. In his interview, Zizaran makes a comment about this:

> "So something I sort of pride myself in, and something I say [sic] a lot as well in my stream, is that if you can't tell people why they should be watching your channel, they probably shouldn't. Like, you need to be a little confident, a little

[116] Bennett, "TexAgs.com," 158

[117] Maybin, Simon. "Busting the Attention Span Myth." BBC News. Last modified March 10, 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/health-38896790.

[118] Microsoft Canada, Consumer Insights. Microsoft Attention Spans Research Report. Microsoft Canada, 2015. Accessed March 5, 2019. https://www.scribd.com/document/265348695/Microsoft-Attention-Spans-Research-Report

[119] Admin. "At 60 Seconds More Than Half Your Audience is Gone." Treepodia – Personalized Video Marketing Solutions. Last modified March 14, 2010. http://blog.treepodia.com/2010/03/at-60-seconds-more-than-half-your-audience-is-gone/.

cocky, and give people a reason to watch. There is thousands, hundreds of thousands of people streaming on Twitch, most of them with zero viewers, and you need to be able to set yourself apart from the crowd."

When a viewer comes to a stream, what do they see? What have they seen after ten seconds, twenty, thirty? Are they being provided something they've never seen before, or will that viewer quickly draw comparisons of what they see to another creator they are already familiar with? What motivates them to stay? What could possibly motivate them to leave? Interviewee responses covered a wide range of "unique" calling cards like charity work, multilingual support, level or diversity of skillset, branding, and event management. The more unique you make your channel and your content, the more likely you are to stand out amidst the ocean of others competing for the top spots, the more likely you are going to gain a bigger following faster than your competitors. Here's the thing though – are you truly unique amidst a sea of millions of others? The sheer amount of individuals on these platforms all but eliminates the possibility of doing something that no other user has thought of or done before. Does this mean unique content is impossible? Surely no, there's only one of you, and while there may be few truly inventive ideas left to try, the number of unique permutations – between channel management, social media, art direction, content, and everything else that goes into being a broadcaster – is not only barely covered, but also expanding ad infinitum as more unique and creative ways to participate in this medium are born. So no, you're not going to be the first ever charity speedrunner, nor the first variety streamer with a singing voice, on and on and on. But maybe, you could be the first charity speedrunner for a disease or foundation that goes wholly unrepresented on this platform. Maybe you could be the first variety streamer who can recite multiple full musicals from memory. Just like lego blocks – at some point, we figured out all the different ways to put three lego pieces together. We have not, can not, and will not figure out all the ways you can put ten blocks together, twenty, fifty. There's no limit to the amount that one can diversify themself and their content, and long as they keep striving to do different, unique, and creative things, sooner or later people will start saying "you're unlike anyone I've seen on this website." Look not to Twitch as a whole, but to the communities you want to associate yourself with. A *Hearthstone* streamer is going to want to look at other *Hearthstone* streamers to

see what other people are doing in this space, not *CS:GO* or *League of Legends*. Variety streamers should look at others that follow that same label, not syndicated eSports professionals. The more comprehensive your understanding of the space you intend to occupy is, the more likely you will be able to identify the underserved or completely neglected markets.

Making yourself different from everyone certainly will benefit you, but even the most generic, repetitive content can look unique with a high enough production value. Eight of the thirteen interviewed streamers mentioned, in some fashion, the importance of high production quality or their efforts in pursuit of higher production quality. Looking at the top streams on any platform and comparing them to the mass of streams with under 10 viewers, one of the most striking differences present is the production quality. The people with 10,000 subscribers don't use laptop webcams or $20 wireless mice, they have well developed stream overlays and channel pages, viewer action alerts, green screens, lighting rigs, recording setups. Look to Muesch's paper[120] as well; although dated, this paper shows at-large the homogenization of quality and broadcast settings across the spectrum of creators: if a creator is deviating outside of these norms, is there a specific reason for it? Is the creator ensuring the largest amount of people can view their content, and adjusting video settings in pursuit of that goal? Are these things mandatory to be a successful streamer? No, decidedly no; Twitch's Creator Camp mentions[121] in their startup tutorial "You need nothing more than a game console and a microphone; that's it." This statement is not false, however, the more sophisticated and advanced your streaming setup is, the more that your content will shine, the more unique you and your channel will be. For those who are merely interested in this platform as a hobby, then yes, check off those two boxes and they're good to go, but this will be insufficient for those looking to grow and succeed on the platform.

What else can be used to grow? One of the questions the interviewees were asked circled around paid advertising – promoted tweets or Facebook posts, banner ads, pre- or mid-roll advertisements; this is a practice very commonly seen in the large business world. In fact, popular media analyst Tim Wu has done a great job of chronicling[122] the vast history of the

---

[120] Muesch, "Characteristics and Content."

[121] "Creator Camp – Twitch 101." Twitch. Accessed March 23, 2019. https://www.twitch.tv/creatorcamp/en/learn-the-basics/twitch-101/.

[122] Wu, Tim. *The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads*. New York, NY: Vintage, 2017.

relationship between businesses and advertising, and what a history it is. Advertising is such a core aspect of running a large-scale consumer-based business, yet ironically, the internet at large has had a long-standing hatred of advertisements. A quick look[123,124,125] at Google Chrome's Extensions catalog shows three different adblock extensions with over 10 million installs *each*. Many music streaming services even offer premium subscriptions to remove advertisements. The internet is no stranger to the inundation of advertisements that flood almost every single webpage we visit, and most certainly bears no good will towards the advertising corporations trading our personal data back and forth like *Pokemon* cards at the middle school swingset. One would then expect that the creators on these platforms would share similar ideals...one would expect, at least. Here's the breakdown:
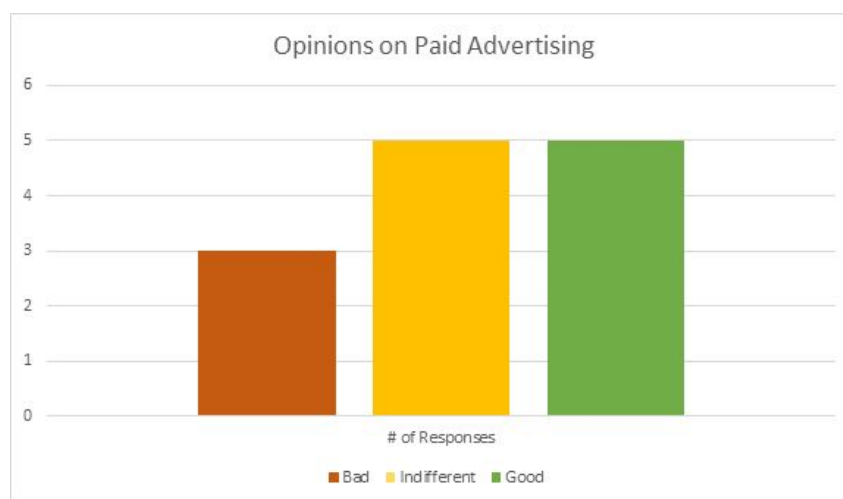
Negative opinions regarding paid advertising are wholly in the minority. Moreover, more interviewees indicated they simply didn't care or believed it wasn't for them rather than speak against the practice. But as the data shows, a large portion of interviewees supported the practice either for themselves or other creators. So what are both sides saying? NFreak spoke against the practice, saying the creators that *can* afford advertising already have the outreach and success, and don't necessarily need the benefits advertising offers. When asked to clarify about smaller streamers, he had this to say:

---

[123] "Adblock Plus – Free Ad Blocker." Google Chrome Extensions. Accessed March 23, 2019.
https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/adblock-plus-free-ad-bloc/cfhdojbkjhnklbpkdaibdccddilifddb?hl=en.
[124] "AdBlock." Google Chrome Extensions. Accessed March 23, 2019.
https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/adblock/gighmmpiobklfepjocnamgkkbiglidom?hl=en.
[125] "UBlock Origin." Google Chrome Extensions. Accessed March 23, 2019.
https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/ublock-origin/cjpalhdlnbpafiamejdnhcphjbkeiagm?hl=en.

"I think it's…it's gonna sound bad, but I think that's almost actually a lot worse, because it shows to me that you're not looking to build a community, but just to inflate your numbers, if that makes sense...like it's not really organic."

So paid advertisement comes off as illegitimate, as simply looking to boost one's viewership without showing investment in those that are already there. Are those mutually exclusive though? Judging solely by the responses it certainly doesn't seem the case. Looking to the opposite end of the spectrum, Driggsy gives a different opinion on the matter, saying:

"I would say why not? Especially in this world, it's 2019, so many people are trying to become content creators. It's actually pretty crazy, dude, and it's going to get even more flooded with more people as time goes on……So if you have the money to be able to try to bring more viewers to your name, I would say might as well try, might as well give it a shot."

A creator looking to succeed doesn't necessarily have the luxury of turning their nose up at something that has the potential to boost their numbers. They absolutely have the luxury of looking into it and deciding the ROI isn't efficient enough, or a lack of resources prevents being able to fully commit, but options like paid advertising deserve to be explored. A detail mentioned by James Davidson backs this claim up in some sense when he was talking about underutilized tactics on the platform:

"We've seen case studies that show that folks that utilize those new newly launched features [on Twitch] see a 10% increase in paid subscribers and an almost 50% increase in viewership when they're using those features. Now we don't know if that's because [it] elevates those users that are utilizing them or if it's just a natural affinity for the audience. So we know that is a great strategy for the creators that is under utilized, [and] I would happily provide that information to anybody; use new features, use the new things that Twitch is testing."

Early adopters of new features, or rather adopters of underused features can likely reap the benefits while their peers stand by and say "that's not for me." Earlier in the paper we looked at Lovett's examination[126] of the various forms of media associated with a brand; his study directly

---

[126] Lovett, "Paid, Earned, and Owned Media."

mentions that paid media, commonly seen as advertisements, earns more exposure on the whole when compared to earned media, or word of mouth. If the objective is simply to get one's name out there, paid advertisement has been proven over the past century as being one of the most effective means of implanting an idea in the minds of those who view them. The inception of a creator's name, image, or brand can go a long way in maintaining a level of mental presence when a viewer arrives at the website of their choosing. This very presence will serve to call attention to the channel, should it appear during a browsing session. Should it get large enough, that presence may even lead a viewer to actively seek out the channel in question. Ghose et al.[127] further cement this idea: the longer one has been exposed to an advertisement or particular idea associated with it, the more likely they are to explicitly seek that idea out. Paid advertising is a unique tactic that seems relatively underused within the live streaming space, and as per both the research and the mouths of the streamers themselves, there is little doubt in its efficacy.

Lastly we come to a word everyone knows about but everyone struggles with: *networking*. Networking comes in all shapes and sizes, and all of it is important for those looking to grow. So where do we network in this space? Face to face networking looks to happen the most at conventions, which makes sense seeing as how these are gatherings of large amounts of individuals in one place for the same reason. By that principle, conventions such as PAX, E3, and particularly TwitchCon serve as amazing gathering points for any and all kinds of individuals associated with the space. For those engaged in the eSports scene, the tournament circuit serves not only the same but a specialized purpose – attendees at a *Tekken 7* tournament have a lot more in common than attendees of Comic-Con, for example. Networking can also occur on social media, however that will be expanded upon more fully in a later section. How important is it for a creator to make it out to these events? Looking at the interviews we can see what the people are saying:

---

[127] Ghose, "Impact of Display Advertising."
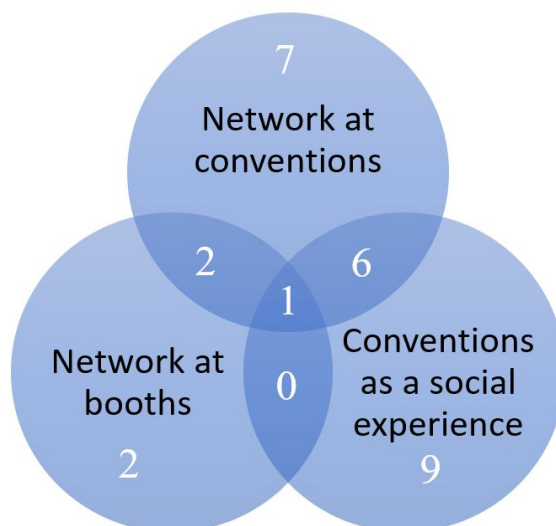
It seems the general consensus is that going to cons is good, right? Mylixia offers a counterpoint:

> "Would I rather go to TwitchCon, or would I rather stream games during TwitchCon when everybody else is at TwitchCon, and I have the real possibility of being discovered for once. I can create the absolute best content possible during that period of time, and not spend $2,000 going to a convention, getting a hotel, and hanging around; because what are you really going to do there? You're going to sit in the Twitch booth, shake hands with a few partnership managers, and do what, talk shop? Hang out, go out to dinners that are too expensive? Meet people that you're not going to actually engage with later on?"

The opportunities present on Twitch are big when we consider how many streamers will simply be absent from the platform, their content at a standstill. Also brought up is the monetary expenditure of attending a con: the tickets, hotel fare, meals every day, and the inevitable merch impulse buys that will occupy a bedroom corner for the next four years. So not only is a creator actively not creating any content for the span of an entire weekend, they're also expending a fair amount of money in the process, especially when considering that many of these cons are hosted in high CoL[128] cities and states. With that said, a creator may very well choose to live stream their attendance at the event, however while this is still content, it's not the content one's viewers

---

[128] Cost of Living

are there for and will garner lower viewership than regularly scheduled content. Zizaran makes a point to support this:

> "I say a lot of people on the Twitch subreddit will say like, "Take as many days off as you need, your health comes first," but you're going to struggle massively. This is very similar to setting up your own business, and if you ask a lot of business owners, even just people who are doing brick and mortar shops, they're going to have very, very little time off in the first two years, and you need to approach Twitch the same way."

A Twitch channel bears very little major differences between a startup business venture. As a startup business, is it the best idea to spend all this money and *not* work? Using conventions as a means of making business connections can be a justifiable expenditure – attending with a plan of action in mind and resources prepared beforehand may well do a good job at making said connections, and getting a foot in the door with others. Not only that, but that activity can easily be written off as a business expense and be tax-deductible. However, if one is to go to a convention purely for the fun of it, they must understand that this comes at a detriment to their channel and their level of growth. Staying home during these events and hyperfocusing on delivering the highest caliber content can pay large dividends. ImSiccWidIt also expands on this idea:

> "So, [attending events] is really cool, but, I feel at the end of the day that physical networking is a lot more difficult. I spend two hours a day on Twitch going through channels I do follow or looking for new channels, and it always is more beneficial networking directly through Twitch than I feel it is at conventions. You can make great friends and you can definitely, definitely build some relationships, but I feel physical networking just isn't up to par with actually networking through Twitch."

Five interviewees mentioned working or collaborating with other creators in the same space as a means of networking; Twitch's Creator Camp even has an entire page dedicated to networking with other creators[129]. Whether these connections be made at a convention, on Twitch, or on

---

[129] "Say 'Hi' to the Neighbors." Twitch Creator Camp. Accessed March 24, 2019.
https://www.twitch.tv/creatorcamp/en/connect-and-engage/say-hi-to-the-neighbors/.

Twitch while everyone else is at a convention, the other creators present in the communities a streamer aligns with can go an incredibly long way to help bolster both channels and communities. Lovett's paper[130] reinforces this, asserting that *earned media* (word of mouth) has a higher engagement rate than *paid media* (advertising), covered earlier in this section. Coupled with *earned media's* trend of enhancing enjoyment, there's a conclusion that can be drawn: engage with other creators, and the more the two of you and your communities talk, the more likely all groups will return that engagement. Furthermore, this feeds into Krishnamurthy's paper[131] talking about Electronic Word Of Mouth. EWOM is a far more powerful motivator in engagement than from the mouth of the brand or corporate representative. Outsource the conversation to other communities, and it will drastically increase chances of effective ROI. However, as Creator Camp and many others will say, it's nowhere near as simple as tagging the top streamers on Twitter and asking everyone for collab work. In fact, four interviewees explicitly mentioned (and many, many more will agree) that unwarranted self-promotion is a disastrous move. Let's go back to the small business analogy. Small business owners aren't going around to the biggest hitters in their trade asking for contracts, partnerships, or trade deals. What reason do those large companies have to work with this business, especially one that has just entered the field? It makes far more sense for the small business owner to seek out other similar-sized businesses in the area/trade and seek to make connections there. Setting up an exchange of goods and services between these businesses helps both of them to grow and helps the new business gain exposure. These same concepts go directly to live streaming. Not only is it a large waste of resources for a streamer with 10,000 subscribers to help one with 15, but to the larger of the two communities this is considered in the space to be largely disrespectful. Unless there is a concrete and advertised reason why such a mismatch of creators are collaborating, this situation will always look poorly on the smaller creator, as that creator is showing at a glance they're simply looking to boost their numbers, nothing more. Collaborating must be seen as a beneficial venture for both parties, and as such the closer creators' community sizes are, the more likely both sides will see this as such.

---

[130] Lovett, "Paid, Earned, and Owned Media."
[131] Krishnamurthy, "Electronic word-of-mouth."

What makes you unique? What is the level of quality present in your content? What are you doing to gain exposure? Who are you collaborating with? These are all questions a creator needs to ask themself and be able to answer. Future studies have more than plenty of material to cover in terms of what one can do to get their name out, how to go about doing it, and how long to do it for. For the purposes of this project, these basics cover a large portion of the foundations that one creates a channel on, as well as some of the strategies one can employ to increase their chances of growth and exposure. When considering following any course of action, ask: "To what extent does this benefit my channel?" Examine the possibilities of both sides of the decision. Just how much would that day off cost? The weekend at the con or the day trip to a local tournament? If staying at home and focusing on the channel has become insufferable, what can be done on-site to build the channel up and keep the numbers growing? Every single day is an opportunity to grow and be noticed more than yesterday; what is being done to ensure that?

6.2.3 The V-Word

With game-oriented creators, the entirety of them fall somewhere on the following spectrum:

Singular Content   Variety Content

These points are known to most, but singular focuses on creating content for a single game, while variety focuses on creating content for a large number of games and genres, none of which need to have connections to one another. The large majority, as is typically the case with spectrum analysis, fall somewhere between these two points, however true singular/variety content creators do exist.   Looking at the interviewees (obviously only those that are streamers), we see:

- True singular; little to no exceptions: **3/13**
- Mixed; both recurring and changing sets of games: **10/13**
- True variety; no consistently targeted communities: **0/13**

Most of the interviewees mentioned some "staple" game or set of games they regularly gravitate toward in addition to an ever-changing list of games they're slowly working their way through. All three of the singular creators are notable members within their respective communities, as either competitors or casters. Notably, not a single interviewee ran *true* variety content – every single one of them anchored themselves to a particular community, creating regular content within that space, be it speedrunning, eSports, non-gaming content, or otherwise. Looking to the interviewees again, we can see more of their attitudes on singular vs. variety content. In some form or another, the interviewees (now including non-streamers) mentioned:

- Variety content is a better strategy (long term, avoiding burnout): **8/15**
- Variety content is more difficult or less consistent than singular content: **13/15**
- Singular content is more consistent or better for community building: **9/15**

A striking number of interviewees recognize that variety content is much more difficult to build a community around, and that when switching to variety from singular content, you're all but guaranteed a significant drop in viewership. Supporting that is another assertion that singular content is a better choice for building a viewer base, and provides higher consistency. However, a near equal number of them mentioned that variety content is a better strategy in the long term. So what conclusions can we draw?

Where a streamer places themselves on the above spectrum is one of the single most defining characteristics of that creator's identity, as this dictates a large amount of the type of content that one's viewers expect from them. It is worth looking back at Section 4.4.3 and Sjöblom's paper[132], as that entire section covers the reasons viewers watch the content they choose and the expectations they have when viewing said content. Placing yourself on the spectrum not only creates a framework for the content one will create, but also a rough psychological profile of what viewers will come and what they will expect, and so tailoring *what* the content is as well as *how* it is presented is incredibly important. Let's break down some of these expectations:

---

[132] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King."

Expectations/Objectives	Singular Content	Variety Content
Primary content focus	Skill/Performance	Entertainment/Personality
Viewer loyalty	To the game itself	To the streamer themself
Community building and viewership retention	Easy	Difficult
Burnout	Inevitable without proper coping mechanisms in place	Possible but unlikely
Longevity of the channel	Directly linked to game's popularity	Directly linked to streamer's popularity
Transitioning to other end of the spectrum	Reduction in viewership, viewers will demand a return to form	Just another day at the office
Chat interaction	Low priority	High priority
Attention focus*	Escapism	Distraction
Educative focus*	Learning to play	Information seeking
Emotional focus*	Tension release	Affective motivation
Growth potential	Limited to the size of the game's community	Limited to the size of the platform's community

*See section 4.4.3 for a thorough breakdown of these foci.

While the above table does not cover every comprehensive difference between singular and variety content, many of the core objectives are represented. Singular creators achieve much faster growth compared to content creators as a result of inserting themselves into a pre-established community and providing the type of content that community already seeks out. The most diversifying trait available to singular creators is skill; the better you are at the game of your choice, the more people will know who you are, the more people will pay attention, and the more likely you are to be approached by eSports labels for partnerships. This is not to say that personality has no impact on this space; Mang0 is considered the most successful live streamer present in the *Super Smash Bros. Melee* scene, famous within the community for his widely attractive personality, despite being ranked #5 globally for the year 2018. The other competitors ranked higher than him are all active streamers within the community, but cannot boast as magnetic a personality. Thus, the combination of skill and personality has propelled Mang0 and his channel to the top of the proverbial *Melee* live streaming bracket, despite his infamous difficulties in reaching the top of tournament brackets in recent years. This has also allowed

Mang0 to diversify his content to great success; personality is the most easily transferable skillset present on these platforms, while skill/performance is the most potent. So what does this mean?

If two creators join the same platform of their choice on the same day, at the same time, the more skilled player of the two will gain a following faster than the streamer with the more attractive personality. On a long enough timeline, however, the more attractive personality will see a higher level of success due to a higher growth potential. Singular creators have a glass ceiling to deal with in the form of the size of the community with which they insert themselves into; a singular creator in a community of 100,000 cannot easily grow their following much higher than that number. Certainly their presence may attract viewers outside of the community, however that following represents a significant minority. Variety creators have access to the entire community present on the platform of their choice, however they lack significant differentiation from other creators on the platform – playing different games every day isn't unique, but being #37 in the world for the particular game one plays *is*. So while the skilled competitor can gain a following much faster, their success is limited. Should they begin playing different games on their channel, they will undoubtedly see a drastic reduction in viewership as a result of the loyalties they have built with their fanbase. The majority of the competitor's viewers aren't interested in seeing them try different games, they're watching to see the skill and performance they display in the game of their choice. Many of them have absolutely no interest in this creator as a person, they simply tune in to watch a professional play their favorite game. If their preferred player is not playing said game, they will move on down the line to the next professional they can watch, or even demand the player return to said game.

With the major focus being on oneself and the personality bundled with it, variety creators have the luxury of picking and choosing the games they play, bringing their community along with them. Due to this, the variety creator has a drastically lower chance of experiencing *burnout*, the complete loss of drive or enthusiasm for a particular activity or game. Singular creators need both coping mechanisms as well as backup plans; coping mechanisms to slow or prevent the onset of burnout, and backup plans in case burnout does set in, or worse, their game of choice falls out of popularity. Singular creators are not in complete control of the longevity of their channel, while variety creators are.

At the end of it all, we're left with two major points. Variety creators have higher stability, longevity, and growth potential, while singular creators have a much easier time building a viewer base at a much faster rate. The conclusion to be made here is a conclusion that many of the interviewees came to; for best results, do both. Singular creators should play different games to avoid burnout, help highlight their personality, and increase the stability of their channel. Variety creators should anchor themselves to individual communities alongside their non-singular content to drastically assist in building an initial following. Where one draws the line between singular and variety is entirely up to the creator, but a healthy balance of both is needed, no matter who you are, to achieve the highest potential for success.

6.2.4 I Got More Impressions on my Last Tweet…

Live streaming and social media are completely inseparable, period. Since these platforms have next to no tools for lower-level creators to gain exposure, the onus falls upon the creator themself to gain it. As fate would have it, there happen to be these handy dandy websites and services whose sole purpose is gaining exposure and networking with other like-minded individuals. As a result, a creator's efforts on these websites is one of the largest factors for growth available to them. But there are so many social media platforms out there, which are the most important? How does one determine which platforms to join, and how to split their time between them to maximum effect? As a starting point, the entirety of the interview transcriptions were checked to see the frequency with which people mentioned each of the major social media platforms:

Avg. Word Occurrence per Interview

Legend: Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Discord, Reddit, Snapchat

Values shown: 9.53, 6.67, 2.73, 2.13, 1.27, 1.07, 0.27
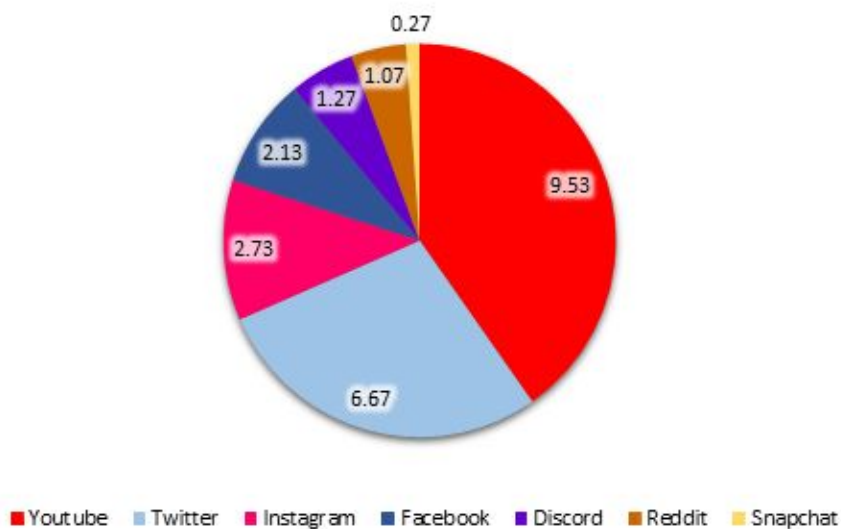
That does a reasonable job of putting things in perspective, doesn't it? Youtube and Twitter are overwhelmingly the two major target platforms, covering 68% of the represented spectrum. Indeed, speak to any broadcaster and they will almost unanimously name the same top two platforms, and this section will cover them.

A study conducted in 2018 by Sandvine[133] showed that 11.4% of global internet traffic belongs entirely to Youtube, with another study[134] in 2019 indicating Youtube controls 35% of all mobile traffic. Safe to say, there's a lot of eyes on Youtube, far more than Twitch can hope to reach at this current time. Seven interviewees directly mentioned the benefits Youtube has on their channel and the growth associated with it. No surprise there; despite Youtube's less than stellar reputation for its treatment of creators on the site (small creators in particular), the platform still boasts a vastly more robust feature set for creators to gain exposure when compared to live streaming platforms. Any and all live streamers looking to grow should have and subsequently be active on a Youtube account. What makes this process even easier is the only resource needed to reap the rewards this platform offers is time. A live streamer's primary source of content not only originates on another platform, but also lends itself to a large amount of content that passes through several hurdles of Youtube content easily. Youtube is a

---

[133] Marvin, Rob. "Netflix and YouTube Make Up Over a Quarter of Global Internet Traffic." PCMAG. Last modified October 15, 2018. https://www.pcmag.com/news/364353/netflix-and-youtube-make-up-over-a-quarter-of-global-interne.
[134] "2019 Mobile Internet Phenomena Report." Sandvine. Accessed March 18, 2019. https://sandvine.wistia.com/medias/tb4dn12o81.

post-production platform; the overwhelming majority of content published on the website, with the exception of its own emerging live streaming section, is all recorded, processed, and edited before the public sees so much as a single frame of it. The content itself and the editing pipeline are mostly separate. Live streaming, however, merges much of the content and editing pipeline simultaneously, provided your stream's production value is up to snuff. Simply cutting and pasting stream highlights and posting them to Youtube does a lot of good for several reasons. First, you're taking advantage of Youtube's algorithm, which is objectively more exposure than if you weren't posting on the website. Next, you're presenting the best of what you have to offer to potential viewers. By boiling down all the top moments and clips from a large amount of content into one video, this gives the best first impression you can make, far better than if a viewer were to pop into the stream to see dead air or any other less than titillating content. Lastly, you or whomever is designated to run the channel has the opportunity of analyzing and critiquing large sections of VODs, something two interviewees mentioned is one of the best possible things one can do to improve their content.

Nine interviewees mentioned regular or higher levels of activity on Twitter, with only two indicating Twitter was not their primary focus. Four interviewees from both camps said an increase in Twitter activity was due or would be beneficial, with most of them citing they simply didn't have the time for it. So what should Twitter be used for? Twitter has more uses and functions than this one section is capable of covering, but in explicit regards to live streamers, Twitter accounts serve two main purposes: a news feed and a personal blog. The former utilizes a Twitter account as a means of keeping one's audience informed about broadcast times, special videos or clips, and other news and updates relevant to the creator and their content. The latter is a means of connecting with one's audience as an additional avenue of communication between viewer and streamer. Six interviewees use their twitter account primarily as a means of notifying their viewers, while five indicated they took a more personal approach to the platform. Of those groups, only two interviewees placed themselves in both categories. Identically to the type of content one produces, we see a two-point spectrum emerge of how one runs their Twitter account; identically still is the conclusion that the best results are going to be achieved somewhere in the middle. Twitter is built to be far more than just a bulletin board your audience

can look at every once in a while to see if anything changes. Additionally, an update of when you're going live does nothing to promote your content. Comically, Stephen Crane's famous poem[135] is highly applicable here:

> A man said to the universe:
>
> "Sir, I exist!"
>
> "However," replied the universe,
>
> "The fact has not created in me
>
> A sense of obligation."

As Zizaran's quote was used to point out earlier, simply being on these platforms is in no way a reason for viewers to flock to your channel. If you're looking to gain viewership and *keep* it, a reason needs to be provided to your viewers for *why* they should watch your content, otherwise they'll scroll past your tweet and tune in to the creators they've already invested themselves in. So how are any of us supposed to know what we should post on social media? What do we even say, let alone *how* we say it. The answer to that is simple: just do what you're already doing. Sjöblom's paper[136] outlines many of the expectations that come with the types of content one creates; ensuring these expectations are met will foster consistency and satisfy viewers. Additionally, three interviewees cited that consistency is king on social media; if you're predominantly a *Hearthstone* streamer, but your Twitter feed is filled with cat videos, Brexit memes, and obscure tweets about the current status of your relationship that only those directly related to you can even begin to decipher, there's a reasonably significant disconnect between the content you're broadcasting to your audience and the content you're providing them when off camera. As a live streamer, everything you do online should have a similar *flavor*, a similar *energy* to it. So keep the cat videos, everyone loves cat videos; but if you can manage to adequately portray the socioeconomic upheaval present in the EU or the fact that you really don't like how your partner doesn't use coasters using *Hearthstone* cards, then that's a great step in the right direction. Maintaining a level of consistency across all of the platforms one participates in is very important for a creator and their brand; homogenizing the usernames, tags, and personal

---

[135] Crane, Stephen. "A Man Said to the Universe." Poetry Foundation. Accessed March 17, 2019.
    https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44049/a-man-said-to-the-universe.
[136] Sjöblom, "Content Structure is King."

avatars one uses on these platforms is pivotal in keeping to this ideal. The person a viewer sees on Twitter should match what they see on Discord, on Instagram, or on camera. No matter where a viewer finds you, it should be the same *you* everywhere.

So what tweets are going to get the highest impressions, the most likes? The answer to that question is something people have been researching since the day these platforms started. In reality, the "perfect tweet" just doesn't exist. What does exist, however, is the "average tweet," and anything and everything that goes above and below that mark. Active Twitter users will probably have a good idea of the standard level of impressions they expect from their tweets, and everyone active on the platform seeking growth *should* keep track of this number. Ensuring that this line for an "average tweet" keeps moving higher over time is the prime directive of a Twitter *power user*, and making the changes or adjustments necessary to continue the trend are crucial. Whenever you tweet out something and it lines up with or comes close to that number, things are good, tweet successful. However, the most important data one can go off of is when a tweet goes far outside these standard bounds. Did a tweet get far below or above the average number of impressions? What could have led to that? Was it the time the tweet was released? The content, the tone of voice, the implications? Was this the expected result? What can be done for this to or to not reoccur? Keep this data; over time a profile will be built of what is causing tweets to be successful, and what causes them to fail. This will serve as a powerful guideline to keep your content and engagement on a consistent level, growing consistently.

Social media is an absolute imperative for those looking to boost their numbers on these platforms. Frankly, it's an imperative for *anyone* looking to grow in just about every community-oriented industry. By staying active on these platforms, a creator puts forth the idea that there's more to them besides what their viewers see on camera. It's an opportunity to further connect with one's audience while simultaneously reaching out and attracting others to join in. A semi-regular upload schedule on Youtube will potentially allow its algorithm to automatically distribute one's brand and content to viewers in a distilled, easily consumable, and high-quality format. Maintaining consistency across all platforms ensures that no matter where a viewer finds you, they find the same person, the same creator, the same presence. There are several more platforms one should be active on considering the above spectrum, however outside of the core

three – the streaming platform of choice, Twitter, and Youtube – these have diminished returns. Not to say effort is wasted by investing time and resources into them, but should one be restricted in the time they can commit to their brand, these top three should take absolute precedence.

6.2.5 Nobody Said it Would be Easy

You'll find there's not much in life that is both meaningful and easy to acquire; nothing is without its challenges. In fact, most people would consider life itself to be a challenge. Within the live streaming space are many challenges shared throughout, and understanding these challenges is a strong first step at overcoming them. When asked about the challenges they have faced, here's what the interviewees had to say (bracketed value indicates number of matching responses):

CHALLENGE: Standing out | Working against the competition [4] – Any new streamer, no matter who, when, where, or why, will have to struggle with the fact that most of the people watching the game they're playing have their eyes focused on the streamers that are already popular. Just looking to the snapshot taken earlier in the paper, the numbers show an average of 66% of the total viewership for any game belonging to the top ten streamers of that game. Standing out amidst the sea of other creators at the bottom combined with the command the top creators have over viewership is considered the most difficult hurdle to overcome in this medium.

METHOD: Build yourself up | Understand your competition – an earlier section in this paper goes into great detail of efforts that can be exerted towards building one's brand, getting their name out there, and growing the channel. However, earning that spot next to the other top streamers is no easy feat, and is impossible from the onset; the simple act of a larger streamer going live will sap viewers from a newer creator's channel. While there may not be a quick and easy method for combatting this obstacle, learning everything possible about other streamers in the same community or genre is vital to maximize one's content and chances of success. Learn the competition's stream schedule, what games they play, who they play with, what the rules of

their community are, the list can drag on. The more information one has about the space they operate in, the drastically more easily they can identify the most unserved groups within that space. When an unserved or underserved audience has been identified, targeting that audience can work to great benefits.

CHALLENGE: Work/Life balance [6] – The amount of work live streaming requires is no stranger to many. Plenty of creators have allowed their lives to be completely consumed by the practice[137], sacrificing personal, familial, and financial relationships and resources all in pursuit of the dream of a full-time streaming career. The cynical mind may see this and remark "it's just a video game," and while it is in fact video games, we're specifically dealing with the professionalization of video games. You can very easily cancel that Friday night game session with the lads if you've been invited out to the pub by an old friend. Now if we say that's a Friday night *stream* instead, it becomes a much different story. Streams operate on a schedule, casual gaming doesn't; there's commitment to a stream, far more than the 2AM *Fortnite* solo queue. This sheer level of sacrifice is honorable, yet when considering all that sacrifice is in pursuit of an unstable job sitting in front of a computer all day entertaining complete strangers on a platform in its complete infancy that by any current metric of the internet will not be around inside of the next ten years, is this really worth it? Fifteen or more hours per day, every single day of the week, for years? When one thinks of a 100 hour work week, is the first thing that comes to mind "live streamer?" Or is it doctor, investment banker, lawyer, sociopath? The ROI of such demonically arduous hours here simply doesn't match up.

METHOD: Come up with a plan – The creator is in control of their content. If they think 100 hours per week is feasible, manageable, and repeatable, then by all means go right ahead. However, an ugly beast by the name of *burnout* may rear its ugly head, and the less time one gives to themself, the faster this beast approaches. Human beings aren't machines, they need rest, food, water, sunshine, cat videos, you name it. A 100 hour week is under no circumstances the only means of achieving success, although as one can imagine it's a potentially faster way of going about it. It is the creator's responsibility to understand what they need to maintain a

---

[137] Bowman, Ben. "How Twitch is Turning 'always Be Streaming? into a Career with Zero Balance." Polygon. Last modified January 16, 2017. https://www.polygon.com/2017/1/16/14240224/twitch-irl-risks-dangers.

healthy lifestyle; breaking up with a partner, cutting ties with family and friends, and sequestering oneself to the basement wouldn't be called healthy by anyone's definition of the term. Take the days off that are needed. Allot for the personal time that is necessary. Identify what can cause burnout, and plan a coping strategy. There's no deadline here, no goal post that *needs* to be crossed in time; be patient, be smart, be healthy, and the success *will* come eventually.

CHALLENGE: Improvement [4] – Sometimes the numbers have stagnated. Nothing has changed, same streams, same times, same days. A creator can very easily be disheartened by this, especially so the longer this "slump" goes on for. This is just the beginning of the spiral; the numbers stop growing, the enthusiasm and optimism fade, the content worsens, the numbers start dropping, disheartenment breaks way to anger/shame/sadness/possibly worse, the content drops even further, and god forbid the creator makes the mistake of admitting on camera "the numbers just aren't there anymore." The spiral continues downward, on top of the people that *have* stuck around feeling unappreciated. How does one catch themselves at the beginning of this descent? How can they prevent it from happening, or escape it if it has already begun?

METHOD: Be your own critic and change – If a creator's channel has stagnated and they have not changed some aspect of their channel in response, they are either insane, stubborn, or incredibly dedicated. Monitoring one's analytics on a consistent basis will give the information needed to determine what's working and what isn't. Krishnamurthy's paper[138] reinforces this as well: look more than just internally, look to your audience and listen to the criticisms they offer. Good favor with your existing viewers will drastically increase the chances of new viewers coming in. To those looking for success on this platform, a willingness to adapt and change what isn't working is necessary, be it replace, revise, or remove. Staying bull-headed and "hoping things will get better" is not how viewership is improved, not nearly as effectively as looking at what can be changed or refined and executing on it. Watch previous VODs, critique them and learn from them; three interviewees advocated for this practice. "I don't like the sound of my voice" or "I don't feel like it" are baseless excuses keeping a creator away from one of the

---

[138] Krishnamurthy, "Electronic word-of-mouth."

most valuable learning tools at their disposal. In eSports, competitors watch previous matches to learn from themselves and others, and is often considered one of the best ways to improve one's skills – why refuse to utilize such an important resource?

CHALLENGE: The language barrier [4] – What of our non-english speaking friends? These platforms present a significant challenge to those who don't speak the language. Much the same, the majority of english speakers would have a similar if not worse time by heading over to AfreecaTV or Huya, popular streaming platforms in South Korea and China, respectively. Surprisingly, one of the interviewees for this project, MembTV, picked up the english language entirely from his time as a Twitch streamer:

> "Yeah, well, for me not being native has been a big wall because now you might understand me. I've checked the videos back in the days and I was trying to stream in English. I'm Spanish. English is not my native language. I'm always speaking English in the stream. I don't use English immediately, ever......I have learned on my own basically – English. Not getting anyone to talk like I'm doing with you right now. So if you check those videos back in the days and you check now you might see how much the improvement is. That's has been a real big obstacle for sure."

What if someone comes into the chat speaking an entirely unfamiliar language? The messages they type could be just as cryptic and unintelligible as the person they're listening to. These users haven't done anything wrong (although they could be slinging absolutely horrendous epithets towards the streamer and they'd never know), and they have very little way of actually connecting with the streamer. Surely the solution isn't to exclude them, is it?

METHOD: A little effort goes a long way – Let's consider the relationship between a creator and a viewer who don't speak the same language. It goes without saying that neither party should necessarily be expected to learn the other's language, certainly not enough to hold a conversation. However, Zizaran talks about a little trick he picked up that has been doing well for him:

> "Something I'm trying to do as well to like diversify a little bit, I'm trying to learn how to say "welcome to my channel" in every language. So I know Finnish, Russian, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and like a couple more as well... Spanish. So I'm learning a couple of things in different languages at a time. I'm also, especially for Russian I started learning things like "Пожалуйста, говорите по-английски" which is, "Please speak English in my channel," and then I'll say like "Я не говорю по русски," "because I don't speak Russian." and then a lot of people instead of being disrespectful they'll be like, "Oh wow, he took some time to learn some Russian, that's badass."

All it takes is memorizing a couple phrases here and there, and it will go an incredibly long way to show an appreciation for your international audience. Reinessa and Nili also mentioned efforts they have put forth towards the international crowd, with Reinessa participating and putting a spotlight on the South American *DOTA 2* scene, and Nili using his bilingual skills to host one stream per week entirely in German. The famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein has a rather famous quote[139] saying "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world;" anyone, no matter who, no matter where, can learn a thing or two and really show they care by picking up a little language here and there.

CHALLENGE: Inactivity [2] – Life has a very consistent tendency to happen whether you're prepared for it or not. The list of major life events that can throw a wrench into someone's schedule is truly beyond the scope of this paper, but it's a part of every single person's life, and it acts indiscriminately; live streamer, fire fighter, school teacher, black, white, man, woman, child, adult, it doesn't matter. When an event like this occurs, the immediate world around someone seems to stop, while they watch the rest of it continue to move forward. For live streamers, important personal, business, or family matters that take time away from the stream are ostensibly a major detriment to their following. As Zizaran said earlier in the paper, taking time off is a luxury, not to be done freely. Can anything be done to prepare for these events, or to minimize the effects they may have on one's channel?

---

[139] "Great Philosophers: Wittgenstein." Oregon State University. Accessed March 25, 2019.
https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Wittgenstein/wittgenstein.html.

METHOD: Capital Reserve – Emergency funds, a nest egg, a backup plan, whatever it may be called, having a reserve of content on hand in case of dire and unexpected situations can help staunch the negative effects that are incurred through a leave of absence. This can include premade Youtube content, unpublished VODs, or even just a really big Twitlonger. Keeping a small amount of publishable content in one's back pocket is a reasonable idea to alleviate the stress one may encounter when faced with high priority, time-consuming responsibilities.

6.2.6 Keep it Domestic

Chat is the backbone of live streaming, supporting the very core of the medium. Without chat, Twitch is merely a glorified online cable television service. The ability to interact directly with your favorite creators in real-time whenever you want is something scarcely any other entertainment medium has managed to implement effectively to this degree, and the creators on these platforms are perpetually pushing the art of chat interaction and management. To new streamers, an active chat is a blessing; to full-timers, it's just another day in the office. By this ideal, new streamers are unlikely to know all the ins, outs, dos, and don'ts of chat interaction, and need to either pick these skills up over time as their own chat slowly starts filling up, or emulate others already successful in the space. Is there a "best" method for interacting with chat? What should be focused on, what should be avoided?

Let's call back to the previous section; where you place yourself on the content spectrum largely determines the level of chat interaction you have. Compare Reinessa's response here:

> "Dota 2 is a very different game to stream than the majority of what you see streamed on Twitch in that chat interaction is not actually expected. Playing Dota takes [such] a huge amount of focus that you can really only read and interact with chat when you're dead, and if you try to pay attention to it, you can end up dying and losing. So that's one of the reasons I think there is little chat because people know that it won't necessarily be read or instantly interacted with, and that's okay for the aesthetic of my stream."

To Driggsy's:

"If you're a community streamer, and you're not looking at the chat, and you're not responding to literally every message as best as you can, you're doing it wrong, in my opinion, because those people are there to support you."

Based off of these two responses it's easy to tell the importance of chat interaction based off of the type of content you're producing. If you're focused on a more competitive-oriented high skill game, then as Reinessa stated it's a major hazard to shift your focus away from the game to interact with chat. As a competitor, the more you interact with chat, the worse you will perform as a result of splitting your attention, the worse your content will be as a result. Singular creators focused on skill *should* have lower engagement rates with their community following this principle. Does this mean that competitive streamers inherently have a harder time connecting with their audience? Not necessarily, no; the methods of interacting with your community are not solely relegated to chat interaction during gameplay sequences. Taking a look at BeastTrollMC (currently ranked #33 on the global Osu! leaderboards), he states:

"I always have an entire hour at the start of my streams dedicated just for chatting with my viewers. I feel like that's really beneficial because it establishes that bond between the streamer and the viewer. That viewers who are early to the channel and viewers who are there at the start are able to really connect with the streamer, connect with the chat."

Inversely, the variety creator has no worries of this phenomenon, as they have built their viewerbase around their personality; their viewers have a drastically lower interest in the game being played compared to the person playing it. The onus is thus on variety creators to connect with their audiences and have higher engagement rates. The more you and your community seem relatable and approachable to outside audiences, the more easily those audiences will hop along for the ride, increasing your viewership in turn. Connecting with your community has little to no downsides, however one needs to determine the best methods for *how* to interact with their audience based off of the content they're producing. Dedicating full segments of content merely to interact and engage with your audience is a great solution for those who cannot spare the attention while playing. Another idea can be asking a friend to "host" the chat. Be it a VOIP call or sitting next to you, an extra set of eyes to manage and moderate, pass relevant questions

on (at appropriate times of course), and list off incoming followers, donations, or subs can be to one's great benefit. The streamer gains the ability to fully focus on the game, regardless of whether or not that game demands tuned-in attention, and thus can provide more consistent gameplay. The additional vocal presence on stream can do wonders to reduce dead air, especially should the streamer have a good dynamic with the added guest.

Are there downsides to chat interaction? What should be avoided? There's the obvious answers: don't feed the trolls, don't get into arguments with viewers, avoid interactions that may alter the atmosphere for the worse or more awkward. Opinions aren't all the same when it comes to discussing politics, religion, and other divisive topics. Of the interviewees, seven made explicit statements about avoiding politics and other controversial content, while only one purposefully allowed such discussion on their channel. That said, four interviewees stated that controversial content has the effect of garnering viewership; "no press is bad press," as it were. Ultimately these kinds of topics should follow a standard rule: if discussion of this topic were to cause audience division, a breakdown of civility, or a hostile chat/stream atmosphere, it stands to reason it most likely should be avoided. Many creators exist on the platform that promote these kinds of conversations in a civil and mature manner to no detriment of their content or community, however one must be prepared to manage the hazard users that can come with such discussion topics. The safest option is avoidance, however the power is in the creator's hand to judge whether or not their audience is capable of discussing controversial subjects with a clear head and an open mind, and whether or not it is a good decision overall for the brand.

One less-discussed pitfall that creators fall to is the dependence on chat to alleviate or prevent silence. Mylixia states in his interview:

> "...interacting with chat is almost universally bad, right? If you're a large streamer, and you catch an occasional comment, it's okay. But there's two problems that small broadcasters make, one is that they use chat to create content. People are not here to see what, you know, "SevenFleeterFred" said; they're here to see what kind of content you're creating. So if you answer questions from chat constantly, that's less interesting to a viewer than the content that you'd actually be otherwise creating by playing a game, cracking a joke, providing something outwardly."

There is a point to be made here but it's presented in a rather blunt manner. It is not necessarily true that interacting with chat is a universal detriment: should one of your main selling points be high levels of community interaction, obviously one should pursue that. The mistake being presented here is using chat interaction as the majority of the content you create. When directly interacting with a user in chat, ask the question "how would the other viewers think of/benefit from my response?" If a viewer asks a question highly relevant to the game you're playing, or is seeking elaboration on a particular aspect of the stream, it benefits everyone to provide a well-thought-out response. On the other hand, if *SevenFleeterFred* is in chat talking about his lifelong passion found in racquetball, diving into a full blown conversation about the sport doesn't seem the most wide-reaching topic of discussion.

Another pitfall that can be talked more about is a phrase that has come up many times in interviews in various forms: *your community is a representation of your content.* In his interview, BackgroundGuy mentions:

> "Something that really applies here is something that a lot of people have said, which is – chat is reflection of the streamer, and yeah, when somebody says something like "sellout", [my] chat will jump to the defense and be like 'look, nobody's holding the gun to our heads.'"

This is an incredibly important principle to understand and be conscious of, as it can have amazingly positive or disastrously negative consequences. Twitch and live streaming operates under similar conditions and ideals to Hollywood – "e-celebrities" is the term coined to apply to those streamers and content creators who have risen to prolific status on the platforms of their choice: Ninja, PewDiePie, TimTheTatman, and Markiplier are some examples. As a result of this emulation of celebrity culture, these creators are forced to take on the responsibility of setting an example for their audiences. The behaviors one exhibits or normalizes, the attitudes one presents or promotes, and the atmosphere one builds within their stream or community shapes the behavior that community adheres to. If you're a family-friendly streamer who plays exclusively E-rated games, your community is going to look vastly different than an M-rated streamer who allows and facilitates mature and possibly divisive topics of conversation. Above all, the temperment of the streamer is paramount. In the latter case, if said streamer could

commonly be found cursing and displaying toxic or unpleasant mannerisms, that can reflect on your community in a highly hazardous way. When asked about extreme problem users, Mylixia had this to say:

> "Certain types of communities create that kind of viewer. This is not an answer a lot of people going to like, but I actually believe that the streamer most often brings those kind of people upon themselves, by giving them attention, and by giving them the sort of emotional fuel to drive towards you……when it comes to actual harm, well, if you get large enough, you're going to have that kind of concern, of course, but to the extent that you create it."

By presenting you and your content as inclusive, supportive, or "all about the good vibes man," you set an attitude in your community that extreme problem users will have a harder time building off of. Avoiding interacting with these members in chat can go a long way in reducing the potential for harm or bad circumstances. Beyond this, there are multiple steps one can take to combat these users or reduce these kinds of risks. A blacklist – a set list of words, phrases, or emojis that will automatically be removed before a message is sent in chat – is a must for any and all streamers. Clearly defining the bounds of the language you want to see on the channel and passing that off to an automated service alleviates a large amount of pressure from chat moderators on keeping things clean. Speaking of which, having chat moderators is a good idea at any step of a streaming career, be it a friend of yours when you're just starting, the first real regulars in your community as things grow, or an entire platoon of modstaff once your chat starts overflowing. Much like chat interaction itself, taking that responsibility off of the streamer's shoulders allows for more consistent and higher quality content to be made. In her interview, K4iley had this suggestion to offer:

> "If you have very good mods that you're close with, be like hey, I trust you enough to let you know, this is my last name, this is the town I live in, if you see anything like that in chat, instantly ban it, stuff like that."

Chat is an incredibly powerful tool that exists at the very foundation of live streaming. Understanding when to interact with chat, what interactions provide the best content for you and your channel, how to properly leverage your content to reduce the possibility of toxic community

members, and what words or phrases to blacklist to better mitigate this toxicity is key to building the community that you want to see, and the community you'll be proud of.

Chat is integral to the success of any creator; this platform exists *because* viewers are looking to interact with their favorite creators. Non-interaction with chat during a stream is no different than Youtube, is it? Interactivity is the single major difference between these two content types, and it would be foolish to not take the fullest advantage of this feature. The trick here is determining *when* it is best to interact with your audience, *what* engagements will help your content the most, and *how* to control your chat and community to facilitate – or even automate – this process. Looking back to Yu et al.'s study[140] that found a positive link between viewer engagement and monetary gifts:

> "...genres that have not primarily broadcast in traditional media, such as talks and eating/cooking, are more profitable. Meanwhile, genres that are available in conventional television, such as sports, news, finance, and life are less profitable. This is due to the differences in the interactivity levels of the genres. Thus, platform operators and streamers should think about how to encourage their viewers to get more involved in their streams by considering live interactivity as the most distinguishing characteristic of live video streaming. In addition, the game genre has the highest viewership in the percentage of viewers and has been a major revenue source, but it has relatively low profitability, when compared with talks and eating/cooking genres. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance viewer interaction and engagement during broadcasting, by making changes in the content."

A creator serves to do nothing but gain benefits as a result of interacting with chat. The community will feel more involved, more important, and more motivated to give back and show support. Be wary, however, as you lie in the bed you make; the community a creator fosters and develops is largely as a result of their own actions. Foster an attitude of VIP rewards, that may become an expectation. Foster a community of frustration, anger, or toxicity, that will inevitably

---

[140] Eun Yu et al., "Gift-giving," 11.

come back and bite. Foster a positive, supportive, kind community, and the dividends will pay themselves.

6.2.7 The Fattest Stacks You Ever Did See

Monetizing one's content effectively is imperative to success in the medium, and insufficient methods can not only fail to help, but actively hinder one's progress. Content creators are at a significant risk by attaching themselves to these platforms, having a large amount of dependency on the income they provide. Should catastrophe occur and one of these platforms go under, many people will be left searching desperately for a new source of revenue. Moreover, the base monetization options present on Twitch seem to be largely inefficient; a total of ten interviewees mentioned utilizing additional monetization options through third-party websites, services, or partnerships. On that point, it is important to diversify one's investments, so as to create stability through redundancy. So what is the "right" way to monetize? When does one begin monetizing? Can monetization really go too far?

Ineffective implementation of monetization options is a massive detriment to a creator. To make matters even more difficult, the content creation community has had a well-known predisposition against monetization for quite some time, with the term "sellout" being unfamiliar to very few successful creators. Zizaran sums up the situation quite well:

> "People are generally okay with you making money; for a lot of people, it's our livelihood. So yeah, feel free to make money but once you start pushing "Oh hey, we're doing a sponsorship today, tomorrow, the day after, and click these links to give me some money," then it's starting to be a little bit more about the money and less about the content. There is definitely a healthy balance."

A creator's content is priority, it is paramount, it is primary. Viewers who come to any stream are not looking to be treated as a profit margin; they're looking for quality content to watch, and if they feel pressured to give support, or feel the content is suffering as a result of a creator's choice of monetization, that viewer is drastically unlikely to provide support. If the viewer sees no value in their investment, they will not do so. In order for a viewer to support a creator they must deem that creator *worth* supporting. Take, for example, a donation goal. Obviously,

setting a $50,000 donation goal for a new Mercedes is completely ridiculous; you can count on one hand the number of live streamers who could realistically achieve such a goal. On the opposite end, setting a donation goal of $10 to order pizza for the night may have some clever novelty to it the first few times, but will very quickly become repetitive after subsequent uses. Let's examine a less on-the-nose situation. A live streamer broadcasting late nights is reaching the point where their numbers are growing, and they feel comfortable implementing a donation goal at this stage of their channel. Wanting to show support for the viewers, they use a donation goal as an opportunity to purchase better gear and accessories to boost the quality of the broadcast. They settle on a $250 donation goal to cover the bulk of the costs of a gaming chair. To the streamer, this is a worthwhile purchase since their current chair is doing their lower back no favors. The next day, a viewer appears in chat complaining to them about panhandling. Why? There are plenty of good reasons for the purchase. Problem is, these reasons are localized to the creator, not the viewer. The viewer receives almost no benefits from the creator's acquisition of the chair. It was mentioned the streamer does late nights; that may very well mean a less-than-optimal lighting setup. Were the donation goal set to $100 for a full kit of green screen + soft bake lights, the viewer would immediately see the value of their donation and a return on their investment, as opposed to the chair, which the viewers would mostly be donating out of support for the creator, not support for the stream. When considering donation goals and other support incentives, the return value to the viewer should be put under consideration; what upgrade or addition would provide the most benefit to the viewers? When those aspects of the stream have been cleared, the space is wide open for a creator to set the goals they so wish.

This medium is largely based off of the concept of charity support; yes, one is providing a service to a willing audience, but so are thousands of others, many of which simply don't care about making money. Six interviewees identified a line either they themselves drew for their own channel or one that meant a sort of "saturation point," where if one were to cross this line, their quality of content and level of success would be lowered, and viewers may likely classify them with the infamous moniker. Is there truly a saturation point, this line that should not be crossed? In his interview, Mylixia presents a clarified idea of the line:

"Every single time that somebody is being called a sellout, or doing something
where they are charging the end user – whether it be the viewer, or the client, or
the customer – for something and the customer is firing back, it's because they are
not actually providing value through that methodology, okay?"

A "saturation point" only exists to the extent that a creator is able to effectively manage the
monetization options they have. Looking again to Bennett's paper on TexAgs, he identifies four
external themes that contributed to the brand's success:

- The corporate aspect is played down

- The corporate and community aspects harmonize with each other

- The aforementioned relationship is effectively balanced.

- The aforementioned relationship is often conflated as a single entity.[141]

If the motivations of additional revenue streams are easily ascertained to be primarily for the
sake of money and not for the sake of viewers, complaints may very well ensue. Making sure
that one's customers aren't seen as a number is pivotal at promoting further viewer engagement
and activity. So long as the implementation of monetization strategies are natural, intuitive, and
not to the impairment of one's content, viewers will have no reason to cry foul. In fact, five
interviewees talked about various practices they had implemented on their channels for the sole
purpose of monetization, such as giveaways, song/game requests, or sponsored games. Six of
the interviewees also mentioned a creative usage of pre-existing monetization options as a means
of beefing up what was already integrated to Twitch. These features are purely cosmetic for a
channel, and exist as an additional means of garnering support from their viewers, however they
are implemented in such a way that the viewer sees value in their investment. Fatality in
particular talked in his interview of his approach to combating the "adblocker" type of viewer
when he took breaks on his stream:

"They're not necessarily missing anything, but at the same time, I try to make my
returns to the stream entertaining and interesting as well, so that people won't
necessarily turn off their browser and then come back a little bit later. I'm trying
to encourage them to sit through the ad breaks so that I get that extra little bit of

---

[141] Bennett, "TexAgs.com," 161

money, so that when I get back, they feel like it was worth their time to do so rather than just to turn it off, because then you don't make as much."

So long as a creator's means of making money do not interfere with a viewer's means of enjoying they content they wish to see, very few problems will arise. However, as it has been stated several times, *your community is a reflection of your content*. While one may very well be gung-ho about implementing means of profiting from their audience, and can be proficient enough to implement these options very effectively, this still presents a hazard that Reinessa touches upon in her interview:

"...That sort of cycles back to entitlement. So my main regulars, they're not entitled, they want to support me, and it's great, and they're the people I want to do things for. But unfortunately, when you start doing things, people who want things start showing up, and then the environment becomes a little more toxic."

So long as a creator is prepared to handle these individuals, few problems should arise, however Reinessa pointed out that she deliberately dialed back her monetization options due to this influx of particular viewers, and is pleased with the lower level of stress as a result of the decision. These decisions are largely left up to the creator of whether or not they wish to admonish, disregard, or placate this type of audience member.

Monetizing one's content is all about value. Whether or not a viewer sees value in supporting a creator is a key factor in their decision to click the "donate" button. This value must be seen in the quality of content as much as it should be seen in the ROIs of support incentives. An overabundance of poorly-managed methods will quickly earn the derision of one's viewerbase, while at the same time a creator may not have hit their glass ceiling, and has the opportunity to diversify their profits. The viewer is the reason a creator is on these platforms, it's the reason they have a job, it's the group of people that collectively sign their checks, so keeping their best interests in mind will go a long way to ensure they stay happy and the dosh continues to roll in.

6.2.8 This One Goes Out to the Ladies

It comes as a surprise to no one that Twitch and the gaming space at large is a male dominated community; a 2017 report[142] by comScore indicated that Twitch is 81.5% male. It should also come as no surprise that women have historically had difficulties participating in this space and other male majority spaces. Three women were interviewed for this project and were asked their thoughts about the community, the issues they have faced or seen others face, and what changes they could see impacting the platform for the better. To go into full details of the origins, impact, and solutions of these problems is far beyond the scope of this paper, however to complete a project such as this without representing these individuals would be in grave error. Also in error would be to use scope as a means of glossing over the importance[143] of dealing with these issues; the footnotes[144] in this sentence point to multiple resources[145] for getting help.

Two interviewees identified a common "heckle" – given by those viewers in possession of a level of tact that fails to meet the minimum requirement – that female streamers are simply on these platforms for the attention. The very existence of this complaint is rather puzzling, as the objective metric for success on these platforms is the level of attention one draws to their stream. How could such a core objective be negative for one group but not another? Well, aside from there being absolutely zero reason for it to be that way, K4iley mentions this in her interview:

> "It's usually just the typical troll that will come into chat and be like, 'Take your top off, why are you playing games, you're not even good at games, why are you here, why are you streaming like you're not even here to play games, like you're just here for the attention…' which is kind of the whole point of Twitch? I've never really understood that, like…'You're just doing it for attention,' like, yeah, I'm live streaming on the internet, that's kind of the whole point."

Reinessa echoes:

[142] "Audience | Twitch Advertising." Twitch Interactive. Accessed March 16, 2019. https://twitchadvertising.tv/audience/.

[143] "Global Mental Health Resources." CheckPoint. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://checkpointorg.com/global/.

[144] "Workplace Resources: Sexual Harassment and Assault." Women In Research. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://www.womeninresearch.org/sexual-harassment-workplace-resources/.

[145] "Harassment." Twitch.tv. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://www.twitch.tv/p/legal/community-guidelines/harassment/.

"...when you are a woman who is streaming Dota 2, a lot of people assume it is for attention. And I don't think that's an unfair assumption. Because if you stream you probably are looking for some form of attention. [Laughter] That's fair. The difference is how people classify it. So when you see a woman streaming, you associate it negatively with attention. When you see a man streaming you don't think about attention as a negative thing. You don't even think about maybe that they want attention."

If nobody on these platforms wanted attention, they'd shut their stream down once viewership started picking up. We wouldn't be on Twitter, checking our impressions every five minutes; we wouldn't be on Reddit trying to boost our Karma; we wouldn't be on Facebook counting our likes. The very existence of social media is a means of garnering attention, and according to Tim Wu[146], attention is "the ultimate commodity" in an age where our access to information is so vast to be considered unlimited. So in a sense, calling out a streamer for being attention-seeking has absolutely nothing to do with gender or even the streamer themselves, rather it is a biting self-criticism; the very act of pressing enter on that message proves you have fallen victim to the sinister machine that controls this platform. *Your* attention has been captured, and you have fallen right into their trap. Now, continuing the trend of this section in presenting facts that really aren't surprising, attention can be both good or bad, and understanding both the difference between the two and what behavior attracts each is key.

Present on these platforms is a type of content creator called "eye candy" streamers. Both male and female streamers can fall into this category, however a male-dominant bias exists on the platform that ties this label to female creators. These individuals have obtained their success through monetizing the sexualization of their image, content, or brand, gaining benefits from the gender split and main demographics of the platform. This in turn generates a large amount of harassment and criticism directed towards them, such as seen above. But has live streaming as a medium not fostered such methods as this? Twitch is a platform that, from its very inception, has rewarded those who work the hardest and do whatever it takes to be successful. In his interview, Mark Johnson talked about some of the more drastic measures

---

[146] Wu, Tim. *The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads*. New York, NY: Vintage, 2017.

creators have taken:

> "...we do see streamers doing extreme things to stand out by streaming for two days, or three days, non stop, and this type of stuff. We do see this, and you know, there's a streamer who became well known for streaming 24-hour streams and 48-hour streams and 72-hour streams, and it became apparent that the only way he could do this, as he confessed this, was that he was basically high on speed every time he streamed, and that was the only way he could stay awake for so long and stream for such long blocks of time."

People have gone to such lengths, not to mention that some unfortunate creators have passed away during live streams, cited earlier in this paper. All this time there's been an attitude of "do whatever it takes," so a woman following that line of logic can easily arrive at the conclusion that their body is an incredibly effective asset in achieving success in such a male-dominated space (a younger male-dominated space no less). If the community "respects the hustle" and celebrates those creators that go to such desperate lengths to achieve success on these platforms, then there is no justification for criticising these women and their efforts. Kuriie makes a comment on this in her interview:

> "I can count on both hands how many times I've seen this happen, where these streamers who are really, really great and don't get the attention they might necessarily deserve for one reason or another, just because it's so competitive, will do the selfie thing.[147] Okay, selfie thing worked, I got a boost. What else can I do? Then a Patreon will be made, [they] will take lewd photos for this tier and higher, and not necessarily nude; like Cosplay, when they never did Cosplay before, lewd cosplay, and stuff like that. So that as the tiers get higher, it's almost like they're getting to a point of desperation."

The incredulously competitive atmosphere on these platforms can and will push anyone to go to the lengths that they must to reach their goals. If this mentality continues to be supported, then such harassment has no base other than purely out of sexism. Women are free to pursue

---

[147] The overabundant usage of selfies in promotional tweets, posts, videos, etc.

whatever methods they feel are necessary to succeed on these platforms all the same as men. But when we look at these creators who go to such lengths, to what end are they struggling for?

Taking a short walk just a few pages up we come back once again to the assertion that *your community is a reflection of your content*. The behaviors and practices one exhibits and normalizes can have profound impacts on how your community acts and responds. Toxic behavior begets a toxic community, sexualized behavior begets a sexualized community. This in no way is meant to stigmatize the practices of these creators nor to place blame, instead to point out that asserting and normalizing these expectations is going to attract an audience that seeks those practices. From there, it is the creator's responsibility to moderate this audience, and both create and enforce a set of rules to follow in order to participate in the community. When asked about this particular type of creator, Reinessa offers this in her interview:

> "...ultimately do whatever you want, but think about what that does for other people in the space. So if you are specifically marketing yourself as a sex symbol, don't let people treat you like crap, because they're going to think they can do that to every single person. Everybody deserves to be treated with respect, it doesn't matter what you look like, or what you dress like. It's ridiculous that you get judged for that."

The reasons you come to this platform or the content you create should carry no weight over the respect you demand. If you're hustling just like everyone else, putting in the hours, and getting the work done, there's nothing anyone can say to you to discredit that. Furthermore, it's your responsibility to speak out that those kinds of comments are not acceptable within your community, otherwise the situation remains the same. Reinessa had an additional comment about this:

> "...people say, Oh, it's Twitch chat, that's just what they're like; and I think that's only what they're like because it's been allowed to happen. If you do nothing, nothing changes, and so what I'd like to see is everybody doing something, anytime someone says, 'oh, that's just Twitch chat,' 'that's just Reddit,' 'that's just the game or the platform;' it's not. You can always do something, even if you

change one person's mind, you did something and I just want to see people take more accountability."

There is a responsibility on both sides to work together to improve these situations for the better. To those on the receiving end, speaking out and silencing these voices is pivotal in preventing the normalization of these practices. Those giving out such comments need to recognize that dignity and accountability are more worthwhile pursuits than the "try and stop me" attitude. Finally, to those that simply believe this is a part of the norm, inaction is not a net zero; failure to speak out against these issues allows the situation to worsen.

So what responsibility do the owners of these platforms have? What can be done from "up high," so to speak, to improve the problems women face on these platforms? Twitch has an in-depth guide for effectively dealing with harassment[148], however harassment is still a major problem on this platform, so these methods can't be described as perfect. All three interviewees talked in some way about accountability. One mentioned that similar infractions or violations should receive similar punishments and sanctions, in an effort to reduce bias and exclusionary attitudes. Another suggested that the dress code and age ratings should be adjusted to better separate appropriate audiences from inappropriate content. One simply stated that the users themselves need to step their game up, seen above. There is much that can be improved, more than this paper or these interviews can identify, but it would be remiss to not highlight the efforts already being done on part of Twitch. K4iley says in her interview:

"I think we've definitely made quite a bit of progress in terms of being more diverse in this community, and talking about problems that need to be talked about. For example, Twitch doing the Black History Month, where they promoted people of color on the Twitch front page, that was really cool, and they're also doing Women's Appreciation Month, where they're featuring a bunch of female creators on the front page; I think that is a very important step to take."

Increasing efforts towards inclusivity and representation is an endeavour all but the cynical can support. Ensuring that everyone regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or

---

[148] "How to Manage Harassment in Chat." Twitch Customer Support. Accessed April 23, 2019.
https://help.twitch.tv/s/article/how-to-manage-harassment-in-chat?language=en_US.

religious beliefs feels welcome *and* represented within the community is an ideal that not only Twitch, but every user on the platform should be working towards.

6.2.9 That One Piece of Advice

Live streaming as a whole is this difficult beast to tame, as a result of widely spread attitudes and expectations of what these platforms are and how they are handled. More specifically, live streaming is considered by many to be a hobby; there is certainly nothing wrong with this attitude, however this attitude begins encroaching on the concept of live streaming as a career option. A common sentiment found amongst many individuals on the platform is that should you enter into this space with anything other than the attitude of this being a hobby, you are doomed to give up after seeing a lack of results over time. This attitude asserts that should one approach this platform with the *expectation* that there is money to be made and they are one to be making it, that expectation in and of itself will worsen the quality of their content, and will lead to the aforementioned downfall. Again, there is truth to these words, but only to a certain degree. Yes, entering into a majority-passion-based industry with the mindset and assumption of profit will likely not mesh well with the attitudes and communities present, but what is the lose condition here? At what point have you "failed" as a streamer? Let's say you start up a channel purely for profit. You go through the motions, you get the recommended hardware, you set up the proper schedule, and as time goes on, the numbers aren't showing up. The growth you expected isn't there, and no money is coming in. Is this the loss condition? If so, why? Unless you are expressly banned from the website, what is stopping you from continuing on, analyzing your metrics, reviewing your past broadcasts, and making changes where they need to be made? You learn what isn't working, you look to other creators to see what they're doing and have done, you implement those changes to your own content and you move forward ad infinitum until you are running a successful broadcast, making the money you set out to from the start. How does this "for profit" stigma remain so prevalent in the face of patience, adaptation, and dedication?

If this stigma assumes the "for profit" streamer is there to make a quick buck and is not interested in the hundreds and thousands of hours of work required to reach a stable, viable

source of income, then that is not unique to Twitch, it's not unique anywhere. Entering into a field and looking to make money, but not looking to do any of the work involved is a recipe for disaster just about anywhere in life, unless you're trying to win the lottery or be a primary shareholder, and in both of those instances you're spending a lot of money in order to talk to people you really rather wouldn't. Effort is required in just about any meaningful aspect of life, and looking to skip the journey and beeline it right to the destination is folly, no matter who you are or what you do. Seemingly, one of the major assumptions of this anti-profit sentiment is that if one is primarily focused on making money and profiting, then they are *not* primarily motivated by passion, by enjoyment, by fun, by satisfaction; if you're here to make money, surely you can't have a significant interest in the community, nor can you have significant enough of an emotional investment to put in the hours necessary. Who's to say someone motivated by profit doesn't understand the work required, or is prepared to go that distance? That this individual genuinely cares about content creation and live streaming, but is not interested in pursuing such a hobby on a platform that presents an insignificant level of monetization options?

The truth can be found by examining what these individuals are really saying. Eight of the interviewees, when asked if there was one major piece of advice they could give to a new streamer who's just starting out, talked about putting in the hard work, not focusing on money, or both. By all rights, these statements are true. Do it because you love it and you'll never get burned out, put in the extra hours and you'll get there eventually. But something doesn't match up here. Two pieces does not a puzzle make; there's more to look at here that begins to shed light on the real meaning behind this phrase. First, the grind culture present on these platforms. When Twitch.tv was leading the charge in live content creation back in the early '10s, the platform had a lack of comprehensive monetization options, to name one of the many issues with the site back in those days. If you wanted to be successful on Twitch in 2013, you needed to throw an exorbitant amount of time at it, 12+ hours per day, seven days a week, for years. Talk to any large streamer who caught their big break 4-5 years ago, you'll hear a lot of people saying the same thing. So as the platform grew in popularity, larger and larger crowds began gathering, more effective monetization options became available, but the grind culture persisted. Logical;

increased competition means even more effort required to reach the upper elite. With this grind culture still in effect as droves of new eyes entered into the site, we look to a statement made by Mylixia:

> "It's full...dummy, to run a 10 hour broadcast to however many viewers, because what ends up happening is you are never going to get discovery that way, and you're literally burning your time uselessly. But the truth of the matter is that streamers don't really want to do hard work. Streamers are streamers because they are gamers who found a way to make money doing the thing they'd be doing offline anyway."

As little surprise to many, the demographic for individuals who spend large amounts of time playing and watching video games aren't the go-getters in civilization. Using US Census data, the Chicago Tribune reported:

> "Young men without college degrees have replaced 75 percent of the time they used to spend working with time on the computer, mostly playing video games, according to the study, which is based on the Census Bureau's time-use surveys. Before the recession, from 2004 to 2007, young, unemployed men without college degrees were spending 3.4 hours per week playing video games. By 2011 to 2014, that time had shot up to 8.6 hours per week on average."[149]

So the gaming community spends more time playing, less time working. Talk to any of us, we'll quickly be able to tell you which we find more enjoyable. Next, we look to Statista, where a survey[150] polled over 1000 self-identified "gamers" who spend 5+ hours playing per week; over 50% of respondents indicated they earned less than $30,000 per year. Even after that we look to Erik Hurst et al., who have published three separate papers[151,152,153] about the relationship between socioeconomic status and leisure time, asserting that lower income/education

[149] Swanson, Ana. "Study Finds Young Men Are Playing Video Games Instead of Getting Jobs." Chicagotribune.com. Last modified September 23, 2016. https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-video-games-jobs-emploment-20160923-story.html.

[150] "U.S. Video Gamers by Income 2018 | Statistic." Statista. Last modified January 2018. https://www.statista.com/statistics/499713/share-consumers-ever-play-video-games-by-income-usa/.

[151] Aguiar, Mark, and Erik Hurst. "The Increase in Leisure Inequality." The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 2009. Accessed March 8, 2019. doi:10.3386/w13837.

[152] Aguiar, Mark, and Erik Hurst. "Measuring Trends in Leisure: The Allocation of Time Over Five Decades." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 2007, 969-1006. Accessed March 8, 2019. doi:10.3386/w12082.

[153] Attanasio, Orazio, Erik Hurst, and Luigi Pistaferri. "The Evolution of Income, Consumption, and Leisure Inequality in The US, 1980-2010." *Improving Measurement of Consumer Expenditures*, April 2012. Accessed March 8, 2019. doi:10.3386/w17982.

individuals have been allocating more leisure time compared to higher income/education in the past few decades. So here's a whole lot of data that doesn't seem to paint a good picture, but a picture it paints nonetheless. The data shows that the people who spend the most time playing video games are likely unemployed, lower income, or lower educated individuals. The more video games you play, the less likely you are to be in a well paying job that demands you utilize your free time differently. This is not intended to label all who fall in this category, simply to indicate that the data trends toward this. Those who are more productive, dedicated, and hard-working don't seem likely to invest so much time and effort into a precarious industry such as live broadcasting. Those who spend a large amount of time playing video games are drastically more likely to be exposed to and idealize a job as a streamer, while at the same time this demographic of individuals is less disposed to hard work.

So what does this mean? An expectation of hellishly repetitive and hard work, a massive community of millions of individuals predisposed to lower levels of productivity, an industry with little to no barrier for entry, and those who have succeeded in said industry advocating hard work while admonishing monetary incentives. One thing doesn't match up in all of this, and as stated earlier, it's in what the people are saying. Being motivated by money doesn't disqualify one from being prepared for the work required. If anything, the promise of eventual monetary gain can be a powerful motivator to keep working. This idea that you shouldn't focus on money isn't about the money, it's about expectations. It's a warning against the idealistic, who look at Ninja, at Dr. Disrespect, at Lirik, at any of the popular streamers in these communities and tell themselves "I can do that too." It's a phrase that has come out of the millions of individuals flooding this space, many with stars in their eyes, many, many more unwilling to work hard enough for it. This attitude is so widespread because of the overwhelming amount of individuals looking to make a quick buck and quitting when the going gets tough. The solution? Assert that focusing on money is a mistake. It's effective, no? It wards away wannabes while encouraging those that care. Truthful yes, accurate no. Nothing is stopping you from live streaming with the intention of making a profit, nor preventing you from reaching the level of success that these other individuals have; what is not stopping you but *is* in your way, however, is the effort, dedication, and care that this space demands of those who would succeed within it. So, don't

care about the money, as they say. Care about the two primary objectives that are required for you to succeed in this field: proving that you care, and proving that you are worth it.

If you start streaming from a hobbyist standpoint, you already care, you just need to prove to your viewers that you're worth it. If you're running off Unregistered Hypercam 03, a trackball mouse, and an earbud microphone...unless such a setup is a selling point of your content, you can love live streaming with every ounce of your soul, but if you're not interested in upgrading your equipment or improving your broadcasts, support will be unlikely, as you've shown you're not worth investing money in. If you start streaming from a monetary standpoint, you need to prove to your viewers that you care, and you damn well better have a plan at the start to prove you're worth it. This is the crux of the statement "It's not about the money." It's about the work, and if you're here to make money without a concrete plan in mind, then yes, you are doomed to "fail" just like all the others. Eight interviewees made explicit statements about the difficulty, level of commitment, or hard work required to become a successful streamer. Even looking back at Dr. Johnson's paper[154], it's clear that the live streamers themselves hold hard work in high regard:

> "...streamers argued that hard work, in streaming, is automatically rewarded. For example, 'it's basically the hard work you're willing to put in' (P18); 'in the end it's all about you and it's all about you working your hardest' (P15); 'there's no shortcuts of this platform or any kind of content creation but it's absolutely worth the time you put in' (P7); and 'basically the end of the day we're entrepreneurs in this environment because we are our own bosses' (P9)."

A fast food restaurant doesn't open up a new location without a menu, floor plan, initial staff, or the money to support said venture; they have a plan in mind thought out well in advance, as should anyone looking to enter into a field and earn money. The hobbyists don't need to prove that they care, nor do the businessmen need to prove that they're worth it. You need both if you want to truly succeed, but above all else, you need to be willing to put in the time. You want to make a ton of money playing video games? Sure you can, get to work.

---

[154] Johnson and Woodcock, "Gold Rush," 14.

7.0 Business Plan

Upon completing my master's degree, I will be utilizing this research to launch a live streaming company on Twitch. This section, in place of a standard conclusions section, will detail a five-year business plan for my company to follow as best as we are able.

7.1 Executive Summary: The Pubbers

We are a group of six friends who have been playing games together for the past seven years; one year ago, we decided we have what it takes to be successful on Twitch. The six members of the team are comprised of a lead content creator, a social media manager and business consultant, two video editors, an artist, and an extra set of hands to help out. Currently, Twitch is a space largely populated by people making up the rules as they go along; this company along with this thesis paper serve to showcase that a formulaic approach to live broadcasting is feasible, while working to share this information with all members currently on the platform. We aim to make it big and help anyone and everyone in achieving similar goals or improving the level of performance they have already achieved for themselves. Our target audience is those viewers on Twitch who do not exclusively ascribe to a singular type of content, or those who are seeing a channel focused on wholesome-centric variety content, community building, relaxation and education. Through the effective implementation of a large number of individuals working towards the same goal, we look to outpace smaller-scale content creators by offering content at a level they are incapable of delivering. Upon the completion of my Master's program and the finalization of startup logistics, we will be launching our broadcasting company summer 2019.

7.2 External Analysis

The TAM[155] of this business plan is very easy to identify. Any and all visitors to Twitch.tv and any associated websites, services, or networking events are the target individuals. Looking at the statistics presented on Twitch's advertisement page, more than 15 million unique users visit the site *each day*, with each of them averaging 95 minutes of content watched in that

---

[155] Total Addressable Market

time period. These platforms are additionally growing at an astonishing rate and showing no signs of slowing down. Those that enter and succeed in this space will no doubt be grandfathered in for each and every subsequent major change, shift, or improvement this community experiences. But *all* of the viewership isn't the primary demographic, is it? There exist viewers that are only interested in very specific types of content, with little to no reason to go outside that bubble. A designer jeans retail outlet isn't looking to target everyone "because everyone needs pants." Much the same we shouldn't be targeting everyone on the platform.

7.2.1 Competition Within Industry

On Twitch, it's a dog-eat-dog world. The competition is absolutely voracious for any and all chances they can get their hands on for success, and many are completely indifferent about whatever insidious means can be used to achieve that goal. The starting point for any and all content creators is a rather crushing one: you are not special, not unique, and in no way shape or form deserving of success. You're amidst an unfathomable ocean of other people trying to make it, and the second you start on this platform you arrive with the understanding that *literally everyone else has been doing it longer than you have.* The very moment you sign up and start your stream you're at the absolute bottom of the totem pole. What's worse, there's no trick, no secret, no special something you can have that's going to boost your numbers more than the next guy. The thing is, when there is "no secret, no tricks of the trade, no insider knowledge," that really spells out the fact that all of those things do exist, but either nobody is privy to sharing, or a formulaic model has yet to be discovered. This plan seeks to remedy that. It's by no means universal; not everyone is a group of six individuals with a diverse and applicable skillset willing to work together under a single banner endeavoring to attain the dream job that over a million others are vying for. But nearly everyone will be able to draw inspiration from this plan, something they haven't thought of, priorities they haven't gotten in the right order, or goals they haven't sought to plan for themselves. In this industry there is a grievously lacking amount of highly technical knowledge geared towards succeeding on these platforms. Most of these resources are cursory at best, all offering a subset of the same tips and tricks that have been going around for years. This business plan along with the paper accompanying it aims to set as

concrete a framework as possible for how one should operate in these spaces. It will serve as a major reference point for any and all creators of these platforms, as well as all content creation platforms to some extent. These practices include, but are not limited to: consistent activity on Youtube and social media, utilizing chat to bolster content, maintaining consistency above all, and diversifying revenue streams. It is not the purpose of this business plan to assert that this is objectively the best methodology to follow, and that disagreement should surely result in detrimental results. Far from it, this business plan serves as supplement to all the knowledge that is currently out there, and aims to provide inspiration and guidance to any and all that can find it contained within these pages.

7.2.2 Target Market

Our SAM[156] is any and all viewers who are not attached to a single form of content; we are looking to reach out to viewers who are interested in video game-centered variety content, multiplayer content, and community-oriented content. Our SOM[157] is difficult to empirically quantify. Earlier in the paper we identified a snapshot of the market; the top ten streams of any given game average out at about 50% control over total viewership for that game, with organized tournaments being excluded as part of that metric. So the SOM of our company would be to enter into this space of viewership control, and to be able to maintain that position. The ideal customer is the "perfect candidate" we're looking for to enter into the community and support us. It's a hypothetical profile of individual that, should our community exist entirely of these individuals, our success and profitability will be maximized. The ideal age range would be between the ages of 18 and 40; this individual is middle class with a job that provides both a reasonable amount of expendable income and allows for a life outside of it, preferably one that lines up with the hours we regularly broadcast. This individual enjoys live streaming as a form of entertainment, education, and relaxation, and is seeking a supportive and tight-knit community to involve themselves in. They dislike the concept of controversy, toxicity, hatred, derision, or disruption, with the ability to handle these issues civilly should they arise. Key customers are VIPs who can provide drastically more assistance and growth when compared to an ideal

---

[156] Segmented Addressable Market
[157] Share Of Market

customer. Other creators within the communities we align ourselves with automatically fall in this category. As a starting streamer, those top ten creators that control half of the viewership are key customers that absolutely should be sought after and networked with. Additional key customers are individuals with large amounts of expendable income and free time, who align to the same likes and dislikes of the ideal customer.

7.3 Internal Analysis

So we're not the only people in this space; our channel will be one of over a million other active broadcasters on the website, and we'll need a way to differentiate ourselves from them. What do we do different? Well, we are a six person team working on a single channel. Our skillset is divided up into two video editors, an auxiliary helping hand, an artist, a social media manager, and myself as lead content creator.

7.3.1 Ownership & Management

Our company is comprised of six individuals, each with their own skillset that provides a benefit to our company.

- **Alex "Arcanus" Holmes** | *Co-Founder* | *M.S. in Interactive Media and Game Design*
    - I've studied game design for the past seven years, and I've been developing the skills needed to succeed in this space over the past year via my Master's Thesis.
- **Matthew "DADMASTER" Marin** | *Co-Founder* | *Bachelor of Business Administration with a second major in Media Management*
    - "Dad" is our social media manager and business backbone of the company. He serves to keep the company in line with our best business interests in mind.
- **Isaac "Baller" Berkau** | *Shareholder* | *Associate's in Information Technology*
    - Baller is one of two video editors for the team; brother to Audrey.
- **Audrey "Sockette" Berkau** | *Shareholder* | *Earning a Bachelor's in Game Art*
    - Sockette is studying game art and is our in-house artist; sister to Isaac.
- **Matthew "Tengu" Sharkey** | *Shareholder* | *Earning a Certification in Internet Security*
    - Tengu is the second editor for the team, and has several years of video editing under his belt.
- **Dylan "Psycokitty" Chaulk** | *Auxiliary Helper*
    - Psycokitty has been a part of the group for many years, and has offered his assistance to the company.

7.3.2 Company Overview

       Inherently we have the potential for sextuple the available work-hours when compared to an individual creator working on a single channel. In addition, due to the diverse and highly applicable skillset present within the members of this company, we have domestic access to highly desirable resources that many singular creators must outsource and pay for. Issues such as an audience of 0 viewers, dead chat, a lack of chat moderation, co-hosting, and low content activity and engagement are heavily circumvented by the fact that a team of individuals will be consistently available during broadcast hours. This ability to put out content on a level akin to full time within the first six months of launch will be incredibly effective at differentiating ourselves from the competition and promoting positive growth. Furthermore, our art direction of classic americana comics can appeal to a wide audience and age range. Lastly, the very existence of *Paycheck.exe* is a largely unique factor; this alone can be used to leverage additional exposure and corporate negotiations, as content creators with a Master's in content creation are understandably hard to find. Building on that, the connections already established with the creators and individuals interviewed, while much more than simply assets or bargaining chips to be utilized, are an incredibly effective foot in the door to assert our presence within the space.

7.3.3 Marketing and Sales Plan

       <u>Positioning Statement</u> – For our target viewers who are looking for a variety, educative, community-oriented, or relaxed channel, our company will provide the best possible content we can to fill that need. Unlike other creators in that defined space, we are a multi-person team working on a singular goal that allows us to provide a level of production quality that far exceeds what most smaller-scale channels can offer, and competes with larger-scale channels' content.

       In the above segment I outlined what our company brings to the table that overcomes many of the common hurdles other solo creators are forced to face and overcome, allowing us to hit our stride far earlier and see communal gains far sooner. There are several aspects our company will be invested in to grow our channel and increase our outreach, exposure, and engagement:

- Advertising: A conclusion made in this paper shows that paid advertising is a drastically underutilized marketing strategy within this space: sponsoring podcasts, promoting tweets and facebook posts, banner and pre/mid-roll ads on Youtube, etc.

- Social Media: The co-founder of our company is a business administration major, and will be tasked with management of our social media accounts. We intend to have an active presence on Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram at the least.

- Content Marketing: The very core of our company. Content is our identity, it is what we do, and we plan on doing it better than just about anyone else. We plan on delivering a wealth of different types of content, with our signature being the level of quality and variety of personalities present.

- Public Relations: Networking with other creators in the spaces we occupy and reaching out to corporate sponsors, partners, labels, or advertisers.

7.3.4 Operations

There is an understanding present within members of the team that this company *will* operate at a loss for a substantial time before consistent profitability is reached. This understanding solves many hurdles that individual creators face. With the available team we will have the resources to run a "content mill:" constantly pumping out new and improved art assets, managing our social media accounts, and maintaining a (hopefully) consistent upload schedule to Youtube. We plan on broadcasting for a minimum of four days per week, minimum four hours per stream, with regular activity on Youtube, Twitter, and Instagram. During the streams we plan on having one member running exclusively content creation, with another member running production on the side, and as many other members as possible maintain a minimum level of activity and streamer/viewer engagement in addition to moderating chat. The intent is to create an environment where the active creator has as few interruptions, problems, delays or otherwise as possible, while these problems are handled by the production assistant. Should all of this run smoothly, we will be able to create content to a point that almost no other entry-level creator is capable of producing on their own. In pursuit of this goal, highly involved observation of channel analytics is required. At the end of every broadcast, Twitch organizes a host of

information in a full analytics page that is sent to the broadcaster. A streamer offered to provide examples of some of these metrics, shown here:
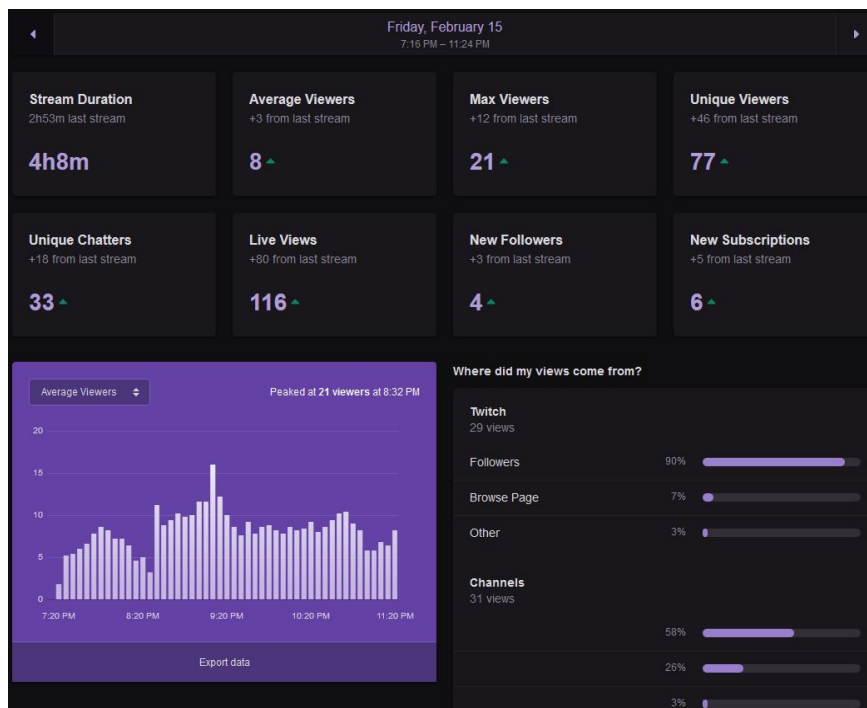
Additionally, the chart pictured can be exported to an excel file showing a full analysis of stream performance broken down into 5 minute increments. A section of this table is shown below.

Time	Viewers	Live Views	New Followers	Chatters	Chat Messages	Subs
7:20 PM	1.8	5	0	5	10	0
7:25 PM	5.25	13	0	2	4	1
7:30 PM	5.4	1	0	1	3	0
7:35 PM	6	1	0	4	13	0
7:40 PM	6.6	2	0	3	5	0
7:45 PM	7.8	2	0	1	3	0
7:50 PM	8.6	2	0	3	16	0
7:55 PM	8.2	0	0	3	9	0
8:00 PM	7.2	1	0	2	7	0
8:05 PM	7.2	3	0	1	2	0
8:10 PM	6.4	1	0	1	4	0
8:15 PM	4.6	2	0	1	1	0
8:20 PM	5	1	0	1	3	0

7.3.5 Milestones

This segment of the plan outlines the expected dates of completion for significant milestones, as well as the actions that will be taken once they have been met.

- *Final Startup Equipment Purchased:* **June 2019**
  - Mixer/compressor, lighting setup, green screen, and acoustic foam
- *Initial Living Space Obtained:* **July 2019**
  - Lead Content & Helping Hand to move in together
  - Initial channel art assets to be finalized by this point
- *Official Channel Launch:* **August 2019**
  - Four streams per week, five hours per stream, one biweekly Youtube stream highlights video, clips to Instagram and Twitter regularly.
- *Affiliate Status Earned:* **January 2020**
  - Initial payments will prioritize our artist, as they are responsible for a large amount of work done to get our channel up and running in the initial stages.
  - *Outreach to Corporate Sponsors:* **December 2019**
    - Begin reaching out to advertisers to market their products on our channel.
  - *Patreon Launched, Podcast Production Begins:* **February 2020**
    - Podcast will be paywalled and feature unrated content from the group.
  - *Sponsorship of Third-Party Podcasts:* **May 2020**
    - Sponsorship of other podcasts to increase exposure for the channel.
  - *Open Dialogue with Content Partnership Labels:* **July 2020**
    - Should they be interested in a partnership, we shall pursue that course of action as soon as is secure to do so.
- *Partner Status Earned:* **May 2021**
  - Five streams per week, six hours per stream, weekly Youtube highlight videos.
  - *Application to Content Partnership Labels:* **June 2021**
    - Should a partnership not yet be acquired, efforts will be redoubled.
- *Single-Member Full Time Status Earned:* **June 2022**
  - Six streams per week, 6+ hours per stream, semi-weekly Youtube highlights.
- *Two Members Full Time:* **January 2023**
  - Video editors will be prioritized, four youtube videos per week.
- *Three Members Full Time:* **April 2023**
  - Co-founder to go full-time, seven streams per week, multiple stream blocks per day with differing hosts.
  - *Initial Communal Housing Situation Resolved:* **June 2023**
    - To drastically reduce cost of living, a communal space will be looked into.
  - *Office Space Acquired:* **July 2023**
    - Provided finances can support it, a remote office will be leased.
- *Four Members Full Time:* **August 2023**
  - Choice to make:
    - Artist to go full-time: art asset production drastically increased

- ■ Second Editor to co full-time: daily Youtube content
- ● *All Members Full Time:* **December 2023**
    - ○ Full-time status of auxiliary member to be negotiated, open dialogue about having additional members being added to the team. Multiple stream slots seven days per week with schedule management allowing time off for team members.
    - ○ *Final Housing Situation Resolved:* **April 2024**
        - ■ Larger communal or proximal remote living situation to be resolved.
    - ○ *True Variety Stability Attained:* **July 2024**
        - ■ Recruitment of new members, open dialogue about future opportunities.

7.3.6 Key Assumptions and Risks

Risk is frankly synonymous with this entire field. There is ever looming the possibility that numbers just don't grow, that whatever it is we offer is not what people are looking for. Ironically this paper asserts that risk is entirely negligible, but it is still one that needs be considered. There may be a point where we have missed enough milestones and are behind the curve to such a degree that continuing is financially irresponsible, but such a scenario seems unlikely. Another risk present here is the fact that this is entering into a celebrity-culture-esque space; we will not be able to avoid being placed on a pedestal by our fans, and should we be involved with anything that goes against those expectations, the results can be disastrous. Additionally, the female member of our team may attract less-than-respectful individuals that will need to be dealt with. Other risks include swatting, doxxing, and other extreme problem users going above and beyond the call of duty to present an unignorable hazard to our personal safety. There's the assumption that we can and will work effectively as a team, and that personal issues will not interfere with the overall quality of the content we produce. We also assume that the strength of our team will in fact thrive in the Twitch environment, and that our success is reasonably assured through the effective monitoring of our analytics.

Bibliography

"18th Century Cost of Living – Redcoats History." Redcoats Boston Reenactment. Accessed
March 27, 2019. http://footguards.tripod.com/08HISTORY/08_costofliving.htm.

"2019 Mobile Internet Phenomena Report." Sandvine. Accessed March 18, 2019.
https://sandvine.wistia.com/medias/tb4dn12o81.

"About Us." MICHELIN Guide. Accessed March 27, 2019.
https://guide.michelin.com/us/new-york/about-us.

"AdBlock." Google Chrome Extensions. Accessed March 23, 2019.
https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/adblock/gighmmpiobklfepjocnamgkkbiglido
m?hl=en.

"Adblock Plus – Free Ad Blocker." Google Chrome Extensions. Accessed March 23, 2019.
https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/adblock-plus-free-ad-bloc/cfhdojbkjhnklbpkd
aibdccddilifddb?hl=en.

Admin. "At 60 Seconds More Than Half Your Audience is Gone." Treepodia – Personalized
Video Marketing Solutions. Last modified March 14, 2010.
http://blog.treepodia.com/2010/03/at-60-seconds-more-than-half-your-audience-is-gone/.

Aguiar, Mark, and Erik Hurst. "The Increase in Leisure Inequality." The American Enterprise
Institute for Public Policy Research, 2009. Accessed March 8, 2019.
doi:10.3386/w13837.

Aguiar, Mark, and Erik Hurst. "Measuring Trends in Leisure: The Allocation of Time Over Five Decades." Quarterly Journal of Economics, August 2007, 969-1006. Accessed March 8, 2019. doi:10.3386/w12082.

Alexander, Julia. "Facebook Introducing Monetization for Gaming Streamers in New Pilot Program." Polygon. Last modified January 26, 2018. https://www.polygon.com/2018/1/26/16935788/facebook-creator-program-monetization-twitch-youtube.

"Alpharad." YouTube. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBODyKF0JMbUd6D9Bklyzbw.

Arnold, Chloe. "A Brief History of Zines." Mental Floss. Last modified November 19, 2016. http://mentalfloss.com/article/88911/brief-history-zines.

Attanasio, Orazio, Erik Hurst, and Luigi Pistaferri. "The Evolution of Income, Consumption, and Leisure Inequality in The US, 1980-2010." Improving Measurement of Consumer Expenditures, April 2012. Accessed March 8, 2019. doi:10.3386/w17982.

"Audience | Twitch Advertising." Twitch Interactive. Accessed March 16, 2019. https://twitchadvertising.tv/audience/.

Baynard, Rob. "Ready Take Live: The First Ever Live Stream on the Internet." Live X. Last modified November 30, 2017. https://livex.tv/ready-take-live-first-ever-live-stream-internet.

"Become a Channel Member on the Main YouTube App and Site – Computer Help." Google Help. Accessed October 7, 2018.

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6304294?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en.

"Benjamin Harris." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 24, 2019.
https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-Harris#ref199198.

Bennett, Gregg. 2017. "Building a Strong New Media Brand: The Case of TexAgs.Com." Sport Marketing Quarterly 26 (3): 153–67.
http://ezproxy.wpi.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsh&AN=126602840&site=ehost-live.

Bowman, Ben. "How Twitch is Turning 'always Be Streaming? into a Career with Zero Balance." Polygon. Last modified January 16, 2017.
https://www.polygon.com/2017/1/16/14240224/twitch-irl-risks-dangers.

"BrownMan." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/brownman.

Clarke, Oliver. "How To Get More Views On Twitch – Building An Audiance." 101Geek.com. Last modified November 10, 2016.
https://101geek.com/how-to-get-more-views-on-twitch/.

Cook, James. "Twitch Founder: We Turned A 'Terrible Idea' Into A Billion-Dollar Company." Business Insider. Last modified October 20, 2014.
http://www.businessinsider.com/the-story-of-video-game-streaming-site-twitch-2014-10.

Crane, Stephen. "A Man Said to the Universe." Poetry Foundation. Accessed March 17, 2019.
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44049/a-man-said-to-the-universe.

"Creator Camp – Twitch 101." Twitch. Accessed March 23, 2019.
https://www.twitch.tv/creatorcamp/en/learn-the-basics/twitch-101/.

"The Definition of Content." Www.dictionary.com. Accessed April 24, 2019.
https://www.dictionary.com/browse/content.

"The Definition of Creation." Www.dictionary.com. Accessed April 24, 2019.
https://www.dictionary.com/browse/creation.

DHWTY. "Acta Diurna: The Telegraph of Ancient Rome, Bringing You All the Latest Gladiator
Combat News." Ancient Origins | Reconstructing the Story of Humanity's Past. Last
modified December 23, 2017.
https://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-ancient-writings/acta-diurna-telegraph-ancient-r
ome-bringing-you-all-latest-gladiator-021770.

"Dial-A-Song." They Might Be Giants. Accessed April 24, 2019. https://dialasong.com/.

Dipietro, M. J. "Behold! TwitchTV is Alive in Open Beta « Twitch.TV Official Blog." Wayback
Machine. Last modified June 6, 2011.
https://web.archive.org/web/20110715202234/blog.twitch.tv/2011/06/06/behold-twitchtv
-is-alive-in-open-beta/.

"Dr. Disrespect." Twitch. Accessed October 9, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/drdisrespectlive

"Early Television Stations." Early Television Foundation. Accessed October 7, 2018.
http://www.earlytelevision.org/w2xb.html.

Etherington, Darrell. "Microsoft Acquires Beam Interactive Game Live Streaming Service."
TechCrunch. Last modified August 11, 2016.

https://techcrunch.com/2016/08/11/microsoft-acquires-beam-interactive-game-livestreaming-service/.

"Exigent Vs Terror Match Information." Unknown Worlds Forums. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://forums.unknownworlds.com/discussion/95201/exigent-vs-terror-match-information.

Gaille, Brandon. "17 Average Attention Span Statistics and Trends." BrandonGaille.com. Last modified May 20, 2017. https://brandongaille.com/average-attention-span-statistics-and-trends/.

"Game Grumps." YouTube. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9CuvdOVfMPvKCiwdGKL3cQ.

Gardiner, Kate. "The Story Behind 'The Furrow', the World's Oldest Content Marketing." Contently. Last modified February 1, 2017. https://contently.com/2013/10/03/the-story-behind-the-furrow-2/.

"Getting Started." Self Publishing | Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing. Accessed March 28, 2019. https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G200635650#faq.

Ghose, Anindya, and Vilma Todri-Adamopoulos. "Towards a Digital Attribution Model: Measuring the Impact of Display Advertising on Online Consumer Behavior." SSRN Electronic Journal 40, no. 4 (December 2016), 889-A30. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2672090.

"Global Mental Health Resources." CheckPoint. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://checkpointorg.com/global/.

Grayson, Nathan. "Twitch Streamer Dies During 24-Hour Marathon Stream." Kotaku. Last
modified February 21, 2017.
https://kotaku.com/twitch-streamer-dies-during-24-hour-marathon-stream-1792592821.

"Great Philosophers: Wittgenstein." Oregon State University. Accessed March 25, 2019.
https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Wittgenstein/wittgenstein.h
tml.

Grossman, David. "YouTube Live: a Disastrous Spectacle Google Would Like You to Forget."
The Verge. Last modified November 1, 2013.
https://www.theverge.com/2013/11/1/5052440/youtube-live-a-disastrous-spectacle-googl
e-would-like-you-to-forget.

"Harassment." Twitch.tv. Accessed April 23, 2019.
https://www.twitch.tv/p/legal/community-guidelines/harassment/.

Hatfield, Chris. "Announcing New Tools for the Creator Community." Facebook Newsroom.
Last modified November 16, 2017.
https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/11/announcing-new-tools-for-the-creator-communit
y/.

Hernandez, Patricia. "The Twitch Streamers Who Spend Years Broadcasting to No One." The
Verge. Last modified July 16, 2018.
https://www.theverge.com/2018/7/16/17569520/twitch-streamers-zero-viewers-motivatio
n-community.

"The History of Jell-O." Jell-O Gallery. Accessed March 27, 2019.
http://www.jellogallery.org/history.html.

"History of RealNetworks, Inc." FundingUniverse. Accessed October 7, 2018.
http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/realnetworks-inc-history/.

HLTV.org. Accessed October 7, 2018. https://www.hltv.org/.

"How Do I Become a Partner? (Partnership Requirements)." Mixer. Accessed October 7, 2018.
https://watchbeam.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/210159253-How-do-I-become-a-partne
r-Partnership-Requirements-.

"How to Grow – Part 1." Game Streaming Central. Accessed October 22, 2018.
http://gamestreamingcentral.com/guides/how-to-grow-part1/.

"How to Manage Harassment in Chat." Twitch Customer Support. Accessed April 23, 2019.
https://help.twitch.tv/s/article/how-to-manage-harassment-in-chat?language=en_US.

"How to Sync ShoutCast." Winamp & Shoutcast Forums. Accessed April 23, 2019.
http://forums.winamp.com/showthread.php?t=169058.

"I Am a Great Believer in Luck...(Spurious Quotation)." Thomas Jefferson's Monticello.
Accessed November 2, 2018.
https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/i-am-great-believer-luckspuriou
s-quotation#footnote1_ekb9ao2.

IRC.org – Home of IRC. Accessed October 7, 2018. http://www.irc.org/.

"Jerma985." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/jerma985.

Johnson, Mark R., and Jamie Woodcock. "'It's like the gold rush': the lives and careers of professional video game streamers on Twitch.tv." Information, Communication & Society, 2017, 1-16. doi:10.1080/1369118x.2017.1386229.

Kaytoue, Mehdi, Arlei Silva, Loïc Cerf, Wagner Meira, and Chedy Raïssi. "Watch me playing, I am a professional." Proceedings of the 21st international conference companion on World Wide Web – WWW '12 Companion, 2012. doi:10.1145/2187980.2188259.

Kim, Eugene. "Amazon Buys Twitch For $970 Million In Cash." Business Insider. Last modified August 25, 2014. http://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-buys-twitch-2014-8.

Kismet. "Becoming a Twitch Affiliate and Partner Guide." StreamElements – Legendary Live Streaming. Last modified September 28, 2017. https://blog.streamelements.com/becoming-a-twitch-affiliate-and-partner-guide-8990d7fe 25ac.

Krishnamurthy, Anup, and S. Ramesh Kumar. "Electronic word-of-mouth and the brand image: Exploring the moderating role of involvement through a consumer expectations lens." Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services 43 (July 2018), 149-156. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.03.010.

Krotoski, Aleks. "The First Woman to Stream Her Life." BBC News. Last modified October 18, 2016. https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37681006.

Kuehn, Duncan. "First American Newspaper: Publick Occurrences." GenealogyBank Blog. Last modified January 13, 2015. https://blog.genealogybank.com/americas-first-newspaper-publick-occurrences-both-forr eign-and-domestick-1690.html.

Lonelystreams.com | Watch Streams Nobody else is Watching. Accessed October 7, 2018.
https://lonelystreams.com/.

Lovett, Mitchell J., and Richard Staelin. "The Role of Paid, Earned, and Owned Media in
Building Entertainment Brands: Reminding, Informing, and Enhancing Enjoyment."
Marketing Science 35, no. 1 (2016), 142-157. doi:10.1287/mksc.2015.0961.

Lynley, Matthew. "Justin.tv Launches Partner Program for Pro-gaming Broadcasters."
VentureBeat. Last modified July 27, 2011.
https://venturebeat.com/2011/07/27/justin-tv-pro-gamer-partner/.

Mandour, Hisham A. "The History of Content Marketing – Marketing Storm." Google Sites.
Accessed March 27, 2019.
https://sites.google.com/site/marketingtstorm/home/content-marketing/the-history-of-content-marketing.

"Mang0." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/mang0.

Marvin, Rob. "Netflix and YouTube Make Up Over a Quarter of Global Internet Traffic."
PCMAG. Last modified October 15, 2018.
https://www.pcmag.com/news/364353/netflix-and-youtube-make-up-over-a-quarter-of-global-interne.

Mason, Angela K. "The First Live Stream is 20 Years Old." Monitis Blog. Last modified
November 24, 2017. http://www.monitis.com/blog/the-first-live-stream-is-20-years-old/.

Matney, Lucas. "Beam Wants to Turn Gaming Streams Wildly Dynamic." TechCrunch. Last
modified May 9, 2016.
https://techcrunch.com/2016/05/09/beam-wants-to-turn-gaming-streams-wildly-dynamic/

Maybin, Simon. "Busting the Attention Span Myth." BBC News. Last modified March 10, 2017.

    https://www.bbc.com/news/health-38896790.

Microsoft Canada, Consumer Insights. Microsoft Attention Spans Research Report. Microsoft

    Canada, 2015. Accessed March 5, 2019.

    https://www.scribd.com/document/265348695/Microsoft-Attention-Spans-Research-Rep

    ort.

"Milestones:First Wireless Radio Broadcast by Reginald A. Fessenden, 1906." Engineering and

    Technology History Wiki. Accessed April 24, 2019.

    https://ethw.org/Milestones:First_Wireless_Radio_Broadcast_by_Reginald_A._Fessende

    n,_1906.

Moor Insights and Strategy. "Google's Stadia Announcement May Be A Game Changer."

    Forbes. Last modified March 26, 2019.

    https://www.forbes.com/sites/moorinsights/2019/03/26/googles-stadia-announcement-ma

    y-be-a-game-changer/#633609a464aa.

Muesch, Nicholas Matthew, Farrington, Daniel Jeffery, and Claypool, Mark. Analysis of the

    Characteristics and Content of Twitch Live-Streaming. Worcester, MA: Worcester

    Polytechnic Institute, 2015.

"Ninja." Twitch. Accessed October 9, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/ninja

Norman, Jeremy. "Johan Carolus's "Relation," the First Printed European Newspaper."

    HistoryofInformation.com. Accessed April 24, 2019.

    http://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=34.

Ohara, T. "Brief History of Comiket." ComiPress | Manga News and Information. Last modified August 3, 2008. https://www.comipress.com/article/2008/08/03/3636.html.

Olebe, Leo. "Introducing the Gaming Creator Pilot Program." Facebook for Developers. Last modified January 26, 2018. https://developers.facebook.com/blog/post/2018/01/26/gaming-creator-pilot-program/.

Omeed, ProfessorBroman, Lowco, and Dmbrandon. "Work/Life Balance for Broadcasters." Presentation, PAX East, Boston, MA, April 7, 2018.

Orliesaurus. "40+ Tips for Streamers to Acquire and Retain Viewers." Medium. Last modified December 30, 2017. https://medium.com/@orliesaurus/40-tips-for-streamers-to-acquire-and-retain-viewers-12906065e195.

Otter Voice Notes. Accessed April 8, 2019. https://otter.ai.

"P&G Sponsors Its First Daytime Serial." Old Time Radio. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://www.old-time.com/commercials/1930's/OOMP.htm.

PARC. Accessed October 7, 2018. https://www.parc.com/.

Perez, Sarah. "Microsoft's Game Streaming Service Beam Rebrands As Mixer, Adds Co-streaming, a Guide & Mobile Broadcasting." TechCrunch. Last modified May 25, 2017. https://techcrunch.com/2017/05/25/microsofts-game-streaming-service-beam-rebrands-as-mixer-adds-co-streaming-a-guide-mobile-broadcasting/.

Pinola, Melanie. "'Luck Is What Happens When Preparation Meets Opportunity'." Lifehacker.

    Last modified July 19, 2013.

    https://lifehacker.com/luck-is-what-happens-when-preparation-meets-opportunit-821189

    862.

"Poor Richard's Almanack." Benjamin Franklin Historical Society. Accessed March 27, 2019.

    http://www.benjamin-franklin-history.org/poor-richards-almanac/.

Sarkar, Samit. "YouTube Gaming Launches Aug. 26 with Website and Mobile Apps." Polygon.

    Last modified August 25, 2015.

    https://www.polygon.com/2015/8/25/9208245/youtube-gaming-launch-date-web-android

    -ios.

Sarikaya, Alper. "Team Fortress Classic and the Landscape It Spawned." Medium. Last modified

    November 3, 2014.

    https://medium.com/@yelperalp/team-fortress-classic-and-the-landscape-it-spawned-cca1

    f74a885b.

"Say 'Hi' to the Neighbors." Twitch Creator Camp. Accessed March 24, 2019.

    https://www.twitch.tv/creatorcamp/en/connect-and-engage/say-hi-to-the-neighbors/.

"ScottFalco." YouTube. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/user/ScottFalco.

Shoutcast – Home. Accessed October 7, 2018. http://www.shoutcast.com/.

"Shroud." Twitch. Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.twitch.tv/shroud.

SimilarWeb.com. Accessed October 7, 2018. https://www.similarweb.com.

Sjöblom, Max, Maria Törhönen, Juho Hamari, and Joseph Macey. "Content structure is king: An empirical study on gratifications, game genres and content type on Twitch." Computers in Human Behavior 73 (2017), 161-171. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.036.

Swanson, Ana. "Study Finds Young Men Are Playing Video Games Instead of Getting Jobs." Chicagotribune.com. Last modified September 23, 2016. https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-video-games-jobs-emploment-20160923-story.html.

Twitch.tv. "Joining the Affiliate Program." Twitch. Last modified January 29, 2019. https://help.twitch.tv/customer/portal/articles/2785927-joining-the-affiliate-program.

"TwitchCon 2015 – Twitch Keynote." Twitch. 2015. https://www.twitch.tv/videos/17714623.

"Twitch Statistics and Charts." TwitchTracker. Accessed October 7, 2018. https://twitchtracker.com/statistics.

"UBlock Origin." Google Chrome Extensions. Accessed March 23, 2019. https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/ublock-origin/cjpalhdlnbpafiamejdnhcphjbkeiagm?hl=en.

"U.S. Video Gamers by Income 2018 | Statistic." Statista. Last modified January 2018. https://www.statista.com/statistics/499713/share-consumers-ever-play-video-games-by-income-usa/.

"VoiceOverPete." Twitch. Accessed April 11, 2019. https://www.twitch.tv/voiceoverpete.

"Welcome to the Official Comic Market Site." Comiket. Accessed March 28, 2019. https://www.comiket.co.jp/index_e.html.

"Workplace Resources: Sexual Harassment and Assault." Women In Research. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://www.womeninresearch.org/sexual-harassment-workplace-resources/.

Wu, Tim. The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads. New York, NY: Vintage, 2017.

Wu, Tim. The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires. New York: Vintage Books, 2013.

YABAI Writers. "Tokyo Big Sight: Where Huge Conventions Are Held in Japan | The Modern, Vibrant Face of Japan." YABAI. Last modified May 11, 2017. http://yabai.com/p/2128.

Yu, Eun, Chanyong Jung, Hyungjin Kim, and Jaemin Jung. "Impact of viewer engagement on gift-giving in live video streaming." Telematics and Informatics 35, no. 5 (2018), 1450-1460. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2018.03.014.

Zambelli, Alex. "A History of Media Streaming and the Future of Connected TV." The Guardian. Last modified March 1, 2013. https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2013/mar/01/history-streaming-future-connected-tv.

Zhang, Cong, and Jiangchuan Liu. "On crowdsourced interactive live streaming." Proceedings of the 25th ACM Workshop on Network and Operating Systems Support for Digital Audio and Video – NOSSDAV '15, 2015. doi:10.1145/2736084.2736091.

Appendix A Tentative Timeline

A.1 First Semester

- *September 3rd* – Penultimate proposal draft sent to Advisor.
- *September 10th* – Final proposal draft sent to readers.
- *September 19th* – Thesis proposal presentation day.
- *September 28th* – Literature Review stage begins.
    - Active drafting of survey/interview materials.
- *November 7th* – Interview period begins.
    - Active transcription of interviews.
- *December 1st* – Current draft sent to advisor.
    - Literature Review period ends.
    - IRB Application to be submitted before this date.
    - Survey period begins.
- *December 7th* – Revised draft sent to readers.
- *December 14th* – Holiday Break
    - Potential revisions or additional surveys complete, active redistribution.

A.2 Second Semester

- *January 7th* – Survey period complete.
    - Data aggregation and analysis on surveys begins.
- *January 14th* – Hard cutoff date for Interviews.
    - Final transcriptions to be finished before February 1st.
    - Optimization stage underway.
- *February 20-23* – Present at SWPCA.
    - Optimization stage complete by this date.
    - Final thesis draft underway.
- *March 1st* – 1st set interview transcriptions complete.
- *March 2nd* – Crunch week begins.
- *March 9th* – Crunch week ends.
- *March 14th* – 2nd set interviews conducted and transcribed.
- *March 21st* – Final draft sent to advisor.
- *April 1st* – Final draft of report submitted to readers.
- *April 19th* – Project presentation day.
- *April 25th* – Report complete and submitted.

Appendix B Interview Questionnaire

1. **Let's go back to Day 0. What made you pick streaming?**

    a. *Did you have money in mind at the time? Did that affect your initial strategy?*

2. **Okay, so Day 1 – I'll use Day 1 to essentially mean the first few months up to a year of streaming. What was an average week like during that time?**

    a. *What did you do in an initial attempt to pull viewers to your channel?*

        i. Were there any events/streams that were more effective at doing this?

    b. *What was viewer retention like? How did you keep people coming back to your stream?*

    c. *Is there anything you know now that you wish you had/had not employed during this time period?*

3. **What kind of major hurdles or challenges have you faced in your time as a streamer?**

4. **What was/is your channel about? What kind of content did/do you create and advertise?**

    a. *If you had to specify, is there an ideal viewer you are looking to attract to the stream?*

    b. *Has the content of your channel changed since you started? If so, why?*

5. **What, if any, do you feel makes your channel unique?**

6. **How do you manage chat? Do you put forth an effort to interact or promote chat activity?**

    a. *What about dead air? Do you have any tricks to fill in those empty spaces?*

7. **Let's list all sources of monetization. I don't need to know how much you make, just how many different ways you make it. Do you do anything unique with the standard set of monetization options Twitch provides?**

    a. *What kind of 3rd party revenue streams do you employ?*

    b. *Do you feel as though there is a "saturation point" where additional monetization methods will drag the channel as a whole down?*

8. **What's your social media presence like? How many different platforms are you on?**

    a. *Looking at Day 1 vs now, how has that changed?*

    b. *What are some big dos and don'ts of social media?*

9. **Taking a step back from that, what does your networking look like *outside* of social media?**

    a. *Looking at Day 1 vs now, how has that changed?*

10. **What works right now? What are you doing that's keeping everything held together and growing?**

    a. *Are there specific short-term or long-term methodologies you are using?*

    b. *What makes you the most money? What is the most fun for you? Are those two different? Should they be?*

11. **Going back to an earlier question to flesh it out a little bit more, are there any methodologies that you do *not* recommend for other streamers?**

12. **A tricker flip of the previous question – what is something you think other streamers should be doing more of?**

13. **So there are a few extraneous topics that I'm looking to get your thoughts on – these are specific focus subjects that I'm looking to explore further.**

    a. *What's your take on variety content – playing whatever you feel like at the time?*

    b. *Let's talk a little about risk and risk management here. Let's say the worst has happened and there's some significant community backlash to deal with. How would you go about handling this?*

    c. *How about paid advertising? Are there any services or people you have in mind? How effective do you think it would be?*

    d. *What about extreme problem users? Ban dodgers, doxxers, fanatics, or even swatters?*

14. **What's next? What sort of plans did you have in mind if/once you retire from streaming?**

15. **So for this last question, do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, or advice for newer streamers to help get them off their feet or to give them encouragement?**

Appendix C Persons of Interest

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BgGEABHZaoQAuiQKF_3DDIwKM6VWYv_hDE-NAc41Xlk/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix D Partnership Features & Requirements

D.1 Twitch

D.1.1 Partnership Features

Affiliate – Entry-level monetization options and channel features.
Partner – Full spectrum benefits, features, and support.

Feature	All Streamers	Twitch Affiliate	Twitch Partner
MONETIZATION TOOLS			
Cheering with Bits	No	Yes, No Custom Cheermotes or Bits Badges	Yes, with Custom Cheermotes or Bits Badges
Subscriptions	No	Yes, 1 Sub Emote	Yes, Can Unlock up to 50
Game Sales	No	Yes	Yes, Premium Features TBA
Ads	No	Coming Soon	Yes, Premium Features TBA
VIDEO TOOLS			
Transcode	As Available	As Available w/ priority access	Full access to Transcode
VOD Storage	14 Days	14 Days	60 Days
Stream Delay	No stream delay option	No stream delay option	Stream delay up to 15 minutes
Re-runs and Premieres	No	Yes	Yes
PAYMENT TERMS			
Chargeback Protection	N/A	Yes	Yes
Payout Time frame	N/A	45 Days	45 Days
Payout Fees	N/A	Covered by Affiliates	Covered by Twitch
OTHER FEATURES			
Stream Team Creations	No	No	Yes
Access to Self-Service Emote Tool	N/A	No	Yes
Customer Service	Standard Support Queue	Standard Support Queue	Priority Partner Support, Access to Partnership Team
Verified Channel Badge	No	No	Yes

Taken from: https://help.twitch.tv/customer/portal/articles/2785927-joining-the-affiliate-program

D.1.2 Partnership Requirements

These requirements do not complete the process of gaining the respective user tier, nor do they guarantee a user shall receive said tier – these are the minimum requirements that must be

met before applying for the respective tier, and it is assumed the user is capable of meeting these requirements on a monthly basis if they are to keep said tier.

User Tier	Affiliate	Partner
Followers	50	n/a
Stream Time per Month	500+ Minutes	25+ Hours
Unique Stream Days per Month	7 Days	12 Days
Average Concurrent Viewers*	3 Viewers	75 Viewers

* Twitch's analytics take snapshots of your stream every 5 minutes – concurrent viewers is calculated using the average of all snapshots per stream of all streams per month.

D.2 Mixer

D.2.1 Partnership Requirements

Mixer does not have an intermediary user tier on the road to partnership, simply one *Partner* tier.

Account Age	2+ Months
Followers	2000+
Unique Stream Days per Month	12+ Days
Stream Time per Month	25+ Hours

Appendix E Interview Release Form

I agree to participate in the study conducted and recorded by Alex Holmes in relation to *Paycheck.exe*.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the recording by Alex Holmes in relation to *Paycheck.exe*. I understand that the information and recording is for research purposes only and that my name and image will not be used for any other purpose. I relinquish any rights to the recording and understand the recording may be copied and used by Alex Holmes in relation to *Paycheck.exe* without further permission.

I understand that participation in this usability study is voluntary and I agree to immediately raise any concerns or areas of discomfort during the session with the study administrator.

Please provide a digital signature and date below to indicate that you have read and you understand the information on this form and that any questions you might have about the session have been answered.

Appendix F Interview Transcriptions

Interviewees:

1. <u>Fatality Falcon</u> – Super Smash Bros (Ultimate) Competitor – **~1 Year**

2. <u>NFreak</u> – Smash Community controller guru + Variety Creator – **2 Years**

3. <u>James Davidson</u> – Talent Manager for Ader Esports – **3 Years**

4. <u>Mark Johnson</u> – Postdoctoral Twitch Researcher – **3.5+ Years**

5. <u>MembTV</u> – Spanish Age of Empires 2 caster – **6+ Years**

6. <u>Zizaran</u> – Top Path of Exile streamer & Variety Creator – **2+ Years**

7. <u>Backgroundguy</u> – Speedrunner & Variety Creator – **3.5+ Years**

8. <u>BeastTrollMC</u> – Top Osu! Competitor – **3+ Years**

9. <u>Mylixia</u> – Former CEO of Counter Logic Gaming & Variety Creator – **7+ Years**

10. <u>Driggsy</u> – Mixer Rising Star – **2+ Years**

11. <u>Imsiccwidit</u> – Variety Creator – **3.5+ Years**

12. <u>Nili_AoE</u> – Top Age of Empires player/caster – **7+ Years**

13. <u>Kuriie</u> – Family Friendly Variety-oriented Creator – **3.5+ Years**

14. <u>Reinessa</u> – Dota 2 Community Figure – **6+ Years**

15. <u>K4iley</u> – Variety Creator – **4.5+ Years**

Full interview transcriptions may be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11zWpcS-By7Z1CHrIBx2mNaNBDR6PSpaovgTUW9IrLu g/edit?usp=sharing