

TWITCH FOR MUSICIANS

PART ONE – UNDERSTANDING TWITCH

1.1 – WHAT IS LIVESTREAMING AND TWITCH?

Most video watched on the internet is recorded by a creator, uploaded to a viewing platform like Facebook or YouTube, and watched by the viewer when the viewer clicks “play.” This is called “on-demand video” and often referred to as VOD (video on-demand).

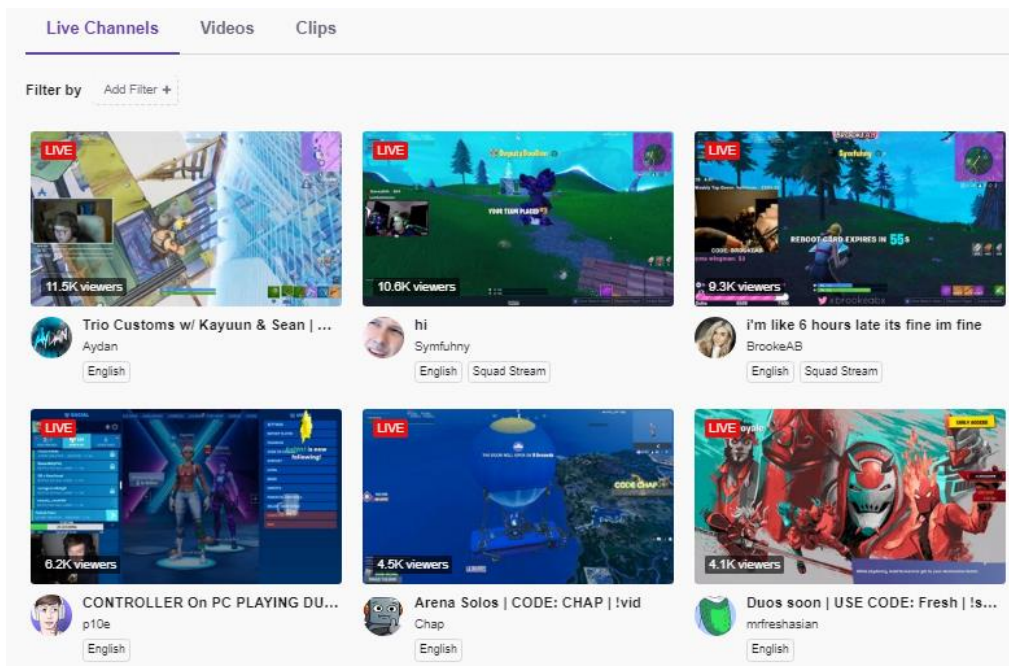
Livestreams, by contrast, are videos that are created and viewed live. The key components to livestreaming are that the video the creator appears in is being streamed in real time to the viewer, kind of like a Facetime call, and that there is interactivity happening between the creator and the viewer, usually through a chat window that the creator reads and verbally responds to as viewers post to it.

Technically, major concerts like Coachella are livestreamed on YouTube because the concert is happening as the viewers are watching it. For the sake of this conversation, we’ll refer to those as live broadcasts since there is often no interactivity from the audience and all the livestream services (Twitch, Facebook Live, Periscope, YouTube Live, etc.) have interactivity.

WHAT IS TWITCH?

Gamers on Twitch

Twitch (<https://www.twitch.tv>) is a website and mobile app (collectively called a “platform”) where gamers can create their own livestream channels to play video games live. Viewers watch the channels and comment on the game play in the channel’s chat room.



Why would anyone watch someone else play a game? Because when you like a game, you want to watch someone who is good at it so you can learn strategy and technique. Because you're not just watching that person play a game, you're chatting with a bunch of other people who also like that game, and it's fun to talk with people who have common interests. Because sometimes the gamer will play against the viewers.

Mostly, because it's fun.

Why would anyone bother to livestream their gaming? Because they love video games and want to play them for (and sometimes with) other people who love them. Because they are really good and have strategies and techniques to share. Because they are just OK but have a great personality that makes you want to watch. Because it's fun to share and talk about what you like to do with people who also like it.

Mostly, because it's fun.

You may have picked up that what's really happening here is community. It's not just the game being played, it's all the conversation around the game that makes people come back. It's the interactivity between the gamer and the viewers and between the viewers themselves that makes the viewers feel included.

The twist is that Twitch has gamified community. Much like games have virtual currency you pay real money for and virtual goods you can buy in-game with that currency, so does the Twitch platform. On Twitch, virtual currency is called Bits. You can spend Bits on virtual gifts for the streamer or donate Bits directly to the streamer as a sort of tip. The money the viewer spends is shared by Twitch with the gamer the viewer spent it on. Viewers can also pay with a credit card to subscribe to the streamer's channel, and they get perks and recognition on the stream for doing so.

Buying anything during a livestream is optional, but because the viewers are having fun and want to see the gamer play regularly, they will often pay for subscriptions and virtual goods because it supports the gamer they like.

Musicians on Twitch

Even though Twitch is almost all gamers playing games, there is a whole community of people who stream themselves doing creative arts. There are graphic artists, cosplayers, podcasters, and more. Some are also gamers, some are not.

Music has become a popular category for streamers, and it works a lot like it does for gamers. The musicians are mostly amateurs, they perform and have conversations in real time with viewers, and those viewers buy virtual goods, donate directly, and subscribe to the channels.

Why would anyone watch amateur artists and give them money? Same reason they do for gamers. It's fun to watch people create something before your eyes. It's fun to talk to them directly while they do it. And, it's fun to talk with other people with similar interests.

Mostly, it's just fun.

WHY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TWITCH

There are a lot of other platforms that also do livestreaming, like YouNow and LiveMe, and there are social media platforms that have a livestream feature, like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Then there are sites like Concert Window where you can do private livestreams for your fans.

We are only talking about Twitch, even though its creators are almost all gamers playing games. Here's why.

- ✓ Twitch has the best monetization features.
- ✓ Twitch has a huge user base from which to find new fans – specifically, 15 million unique daily visitors.
- ✓ It's not all teenagers, so a variety of artists can find an audience. Most users are male between 18 and 34. Anecdotally, there are a lot of women performing in and watching music streams.
- ✓ It's not all electronic music you'd associate with games. Most artists on Twitch are singer/songwriters playing guitar or piano.
- ✓ Music is one of the most popular non-gaming categories, but it's not oversaturated yet. With some commitment, you can get noticed even if you are unknown.
- ✓ The community of musicians on Twitch is very supportive.
- ✓ Artists are building real fanbases and making real money on Twitch. For some it's a side hustle, others have quit their day jobs entirely.