

Is Twitch the Future of Streaming?

By Colton Stephens

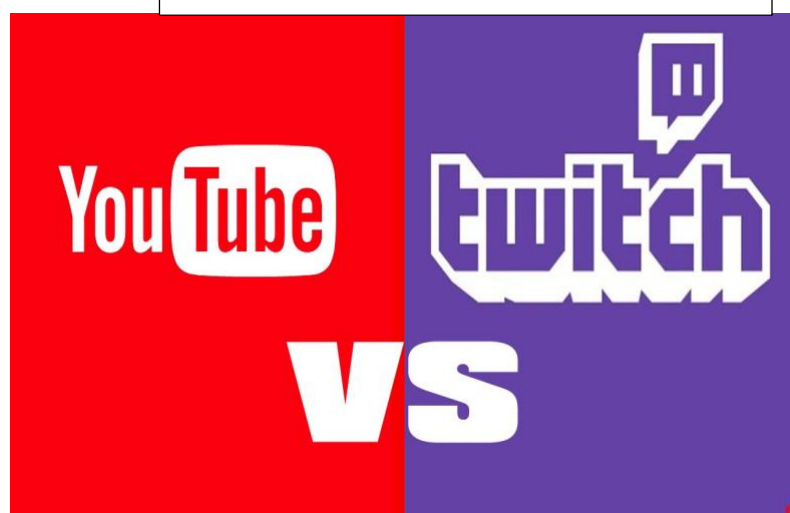
When I think of the Amazon owned streaming application, [Twitch](#), I think of video games and online gaming celebrities like Ninja and Tim the Tat Man. However, after spending a month studying the ins and outs of the application, I've realized it's so much more than just streaming video games.

According to Twitch's 'About' page, "Twitch is where millions of people come together live every day to chat, interact, and make their own entertainment together." Something that was obvious to me is that Twitch considers themselves a community; I guess that's subjective to how the user interacts with the application. To me, I believe it is every bit of community. The groundworks of a community are there: socialization, diversity, friendship, blah blah blah you get it. Twitch streams range from video games, to music, to talk shows, to sports, to travel & outdoors, to food and drink, and the list goes on and on.

Now that we understand what Twitch *is*, let's talk about how users can interact within the app. Perhaps the most obvious way a user interacts in the application is by subscribing to or following their favorite entertainers. Woah, did he just say subscribe to OR follow your favorite streamers? But Colton, what's the difference between subscribing and following, I thought they were the same thing? Excellent question (me). Users who follow a streamer are able to follow their favorites free of cost. Users who subscribe to a streamer support them financially by paying a monthly fee. Subscribing to a streamer almost always has additional perks like ad free streaming, exclusive content, and custom emotes that can be used across the application.

There is only one threat when it comes to Twitch having a competitor. YouTube, the social media giant owned by Google. Perhaps the biggest comparison is that Twitch caters to a live audience. They're in the now if you will, much like live TV. Whereas, YouTube, users aren't stuck to watching livestreams. It's important to note, however, that YouTube and Twitch know they're competitors so they keep a close eye on each other and will often mimic new features that come out on each other's platforms. For example, Twitch began catering users feeds with things that an

YouTube vs Twitch image from SpongeGaming.



algorithm believes the user will enjoy, classic YouTube functionality. YouTube has a larger audience and has more creators which isn't a small thing to consider. Both applications pay their creators, and there isn't much data when it comes to seeing who pays more. The fact that users can tip creators in Twitch makes it exceptionally hard to track monetization. I assume the battle for livestream airwaves will continue to take place, and who knows, maybe there's enough room for both platforms to thrive.

Twitch's intended audience is... perhaps everyone? Initially, it was founded for video game streaming by Emmitt Shear and Justin Kan; however, whenever Twitch got sold to Amazon for \$970 million, Twitch began to expand their horizons and allowed music streaming, food content, travel content, and the other things I mentioned earlier. So, I think it's safe to say their intended audience is anyone who is capable of logging into Twitch on the computer or on their phones (sorry boomers). It is important to mention that Twitch doesn't have parental controls, so maybe parents would need to pay close attention to what their children are streaming. There are educational options for streams on Twitch as well, however.

Let's talk positives and negatives. Positives include things like, providing quality entertainment; not only that, but the ability to pigeonhole your entertainment to things you *really* want to watch. Diversity is another positive. There are streamers from all walks of life on Twitch; PoC streamers, disabled streamers, tall streamers, small streamers, red streamers, blue streamers. Okay, the last two are obviously a joke (Dr. Suess taught me that), but you get the point. As I briefly mentioned before, Twitch can also be educational, which is a huge positive. I learned how to make a flux capacitor on Twitch. Okay, I lied again, but that's the last time I promise. In all seriousness, Bill Nye is even on Twitch. Enough positives, though. Let's talk negatives. The most monumental negative about Twitch is missing a stream and not being able to watch it later. The streamer has the option to archive the livestream and post it on something like YouTube (this is common), but if they don't, you could've missed something really cool from your favorite live streamer. Other than that, the most talked about negative would be the chat feature. If there are thousands of people watching a stream the chat can be very chaotic and hard to navigate.

Picture taken from Twitch's official blog.



Here's the bottom line. Twitch is a very fun and entertaining application that has something for everyone. If you want to live stream, you're able to do so easily, if you want to watch other people live stream, that's even easier. Twitch and owner, Amazon, are absolutely obsessed with the user interface systems being easy to navigate, so you won't have to worry about that. I almost forgot to mention that the application doesn't take up much storage on your phone due to the content being

a livestream (you will need good Wi-Fi or cell reception to watch and definitely to livestream for yourself). Like I mentioned earlier, Twitch has a little something for everyone, no matter what you're in to. Give Twitch a try for yourself, I enjoy it, and I think you will to.

About the Author

Colton Stephens is a Senior at Tarleton State University (online). He also performs regularly at the Second City in Chicago and makes Tik Toks. Follow his Tik Tok @cpolly7 for funny and relatable content.

Keywords

Twitch, Stream, Gaming, Entertainment, Livestream

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