

LMF GENESIS

Everything began with the purchase of a Dazzle DVC 100 at Boulanger.

What needs to be understood, it's it all goes back to a time when "wanting to record what goes on the screen" was seen by anyone hearing the sentence as completely moronic. "Who could give two fucks about what you are playing?" Could have answered the Boulanger salesman from which **ADWIM** bought his Dazzle (a little capture video box). Thing is, Adwim is quite *the persistent* type of guy, (to remain polite) and nothing could have gotten his desire to create things online in the way, like his Project Zero videos.



Here's the beast.

ME, meanwhile, had stumbled on Dailymotion like one falls onto a poorly cut wood stump in an abandoned forest, and I stepped upon a *Frapstesjeux* video. It goes way back now and truth be told I cannot remember which one it was but it doesn't matter. Anyhow while searching where it came from, I stumbled upon their *Frapstesjeux website*. Which, for me, felt like it was one of the first real community that was creating video games walkthroughs. (All recorded by the Fraps app, hence the name). I have to admit, at that time *walkthroughs* were *pretty damn cool*. (Cool like Inspector Derrick once was back in the day.)



Adwim and I arrived on FTJ (quite boring to write so I'll call it FTJ from now on) *basically at the same time*, firstly motivated by creation, then by the prospect of *cocaine*, money and celebrity.

FTJ lasted a while, a time when we had a few good laughs. We made friends; we also met the future **LMF** cast (Spider, Scadur, Poon's, Poleon, Yadar) *apart from Wheesky* which I knew from high school and **Momo** *that we met later on*. But most importantly we learned a lot about video creation and this particular genre. We grasped for example that video montage software from this time were just shit for **15-year-old kids** that knows nothing about the world. We also understood that 10 bucks Logitech microphones were not so bad after all.

A few years later, we dropped out of FTJ – due to divergence of opinions and creative direction to put it like that. Adwim and I began to post **our own duets videos** (or not) but with «independence». Maybe some videos ring a few bells, like «Le dindon des Étoiles», our series a little too much borderline on Resident Evil 5, or even «**Iwo Jima**».

The video series on this godforsaken trash game that Iwo Jima is, which by the way, was the moment everything took off. The rhythm was there, songs yelled into a low-cost microphone, *the barfly humor style that roared with laughter at his own dirty jokes* - it was give or take the cornerstone of what we do today. We grew a lil' community, we had our viewers, and for those times *on Dailymotion, we had quite the views*. Surely now it sounds ludicrous, but hitting ten thousand or fifteen thousand views on an small French platform it was **quite a feat**.



Walktroll Iwo Jima : épisode -7, Le Retour.

From that moment on, *the cycle repeated itself*. I think there's always - in major cases at least - this desire to **build a little community** around the crap we manage to put out online. Like **Frapstesjeux** or the **Raelian movement**, to only mention a few exemples. It was then logical, in turn, to build our own small community on **Forumactif** (a free website everyone used during this time to quickly and easily grow a small forum). We're not going to be thorough, but you may have heard about those names

"LA PT4D", "LA PUT", "LA H8", and later on "LA FORGE".

Give me a few minutes to talk about **LA FORGE**, because I think it's relevant for what's coming next.

IT WAS A TIME OF CREATIVE EMPTINESS, in our small lives as lost countryside folks that you people probably call **the province**.

Besides, I'd like to note that there is one constant in this story: creation. As far as I can remember, we were always doing something, building, crafting, creating, assembling, whether it be communities, videos, songs, images, coding (NERD), and when creative scarcity comes, we panic, we dry up, in short, we're scared shitless.

IT WAS A TIME OF CREATIVE EMPTINESS, As i said when Scadur and I decided to relaunch an umpteenth video project on Dailymotion, **together**. Don't get too excited; it lasted only one video, **which happened to be very funny**, on Splinter Cell and the project was crumpled up and thrown in the trash shortly after.

I liked the concept of a Forge. Craft something, hit a huge piece of glowing **STEEL** until it bends to your will, it was more or less what we did with our videos. Together on an old coop game, goofing around until the video gets funny.

SUMMER 2012 (APPROXIMATELY), a particularly grueling summer. Seriously, I still remember lying on a bed **at my mom's place (where I lived at the time, obviously)** sweating like crazy, laptop on my thighs, browsing through an **internet** that had already changed a lot since the beginning of the story. **Adwim, Scadur, and I** used to spend our days chatting, brainstorming ways to become millionaires without doing jack shit, which has always been **more or less an aspiration for us**.

I was there, sweating, browsing one of the funniest websites to me at the time, **4chan**. When I heard about these guys who were playing games, like, livestreaming them. It's as if you were recording a video in front of people who could comment at the same time, which, when you think about it for two minutes, is mega cool **(and very, very rare in 2012)**.



So, they weren't the firsts, you know, far from it. But up to now, streaming wasn't really that renowned or widespread, and for me, these guys were pioneers - even more so than **Marcus**, if you want my **humble opinion**.

Those guys were called **INSOMNIAC GAMERS**, and the concept was super simple: it was a team who took turns whenever they could, **to provide a game stream like 24/7**.

Damn, **it was awesome!** Like, no matter what time you showed up on their **Justin.tv** channel (the misshapen ancestor of Twitch), you'd come across these guys streaming *Morrowind*, or *Shadow Dancer*, or even *GTA*, and they were chatting, you could talk to them, they'd respond, it was super lively.

“DAMN ADWIM, I HAVE AN IDEA”

Which was false, the idea wasn't birthed by yours truly.

From the get-go, the concept was to mimic what Insomniac Gamers were doing. **BROADCASTING STREAMS TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, ON A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT GAMES.** Back then we were either students, slackers, or both, we had a lot of free time, gotta admit. Once the idea had found its way into Adwim's thick skull, we went to ask Scadur if he was game.


«You betcha», he answered.

HE WAS GAME.

Without wasting time, we got down to business. A **JUSTIN.TV** account, a shared license of **XSPLIT** – the software we used for streaming – along with a *shitty* mic, a *lousy* laptop and it's game on, unstappable.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves, **the whole 24/7 streaming deal** didn't even last, it annoyed the hell out of us *after a week*. But the concept was still appealing to us. We'd start the stream, fire up a low-resource *Megadrive emulator*, load up an ISO file of The Lion King we found on **ThePirateBay**, throw in a trailer to drum up some excitement, and off we went. It was way livelier than just recording a video alone in front of your PC with that tiny little mic of yours, in the endless silence of a dull room, before having to cut it up, slice and dice it relentlessly in a *disastrous version of Sony Vegas* (or worse: Pinnacle Studio Cancer edition) downloaded from some Uzbek website with a **Russian** executable (Adwim sadly confirms that's all too true).

We had the chance to chat, to react live with an instant tchat (barely a minute of delay between the stream and what the viewers saw, *imagine the technology!*), it was visceral, direct, and **honestly fun**.



WE NEEDED A NAME for this little amateur videographer venture with jokes as crass as their setup. We weren't gonna just name ourselves *'Les Gamers Insomniaques'* in french, we had already jacked enough of their concept. In my head, it was actually simple : it was like **'The Forge'** – which we had founded with Scadur a few paragraphs above – but way cooler. Way freaking cooler, even.

A MEGA 'FORGE', SO TO SPEAK.



Without further ado, **Adwim** whipped us up a little website to centralize the stream, the tchat, the info sheets, the contacts, etc. It wasn't very pretty, but it was functional and practical. We even had some cool designs already that we had created with the help of **MacMillan** (now **Jass Befrold**, a super talented guy we all hug super tight without his consent), we even had some t-shirts for sale on the **little Spreadshirt shop**.

We also had the luck of always having a **small fan base** and viewers who had followed us since **the FTJ days**, who were still there, watching our streams. As a matter of fact, I even wonder how that's possible, considering that Discord didn't exist at that time, and the whole community and decisions were centralized on Skype - **yeah, no kidding**.

LA MEGAFORGE HAD BEEN BORN.

It was primitive and the quality was terrible, especially since we were streaming games that were visually quite hard to watch in low quality. It was often *Megadrive* or *SNES* games, and I still remember very well a stream of *Megaman* where we passed in front of a waterfall that made the stream completely blurry, because of the *super low bitrate** of our broadcasts at the time.

* The bitrate is the amount of visual information that can be sent in a video per second. Nowadays, we send 8000 kilobits of visual information per second of stream (at 1080p and 60 frames per second). Back then, we were sending... 400.



We absolutely had *no long-term vision* of what **LA MEGAFORGE** would become. Sometimes we did streams with just music – like *some awful radio* – and often we'd do streams without talking, just playing, with the mic muted so as not to wake up the parents *sleeping in the next room*. It seems crazy now, but it was actually quite common back then.

We also kept up with the videos on the side, now rebranded under the banner of La Megaforge. Once again, the lack of long-term vision reared its head, leading us to produce *videos of 30 seconds with a waffle falling on tiles*, videos with "random" content and screams. It was a bit like spending an evening with orcs on mescaline.

The website also continued to grow; we added browser games, slot machines, events, and occasionally, in the evenings, *we would stream movies*. Can you imagine, a big Marvel movie streamed on Twitch.tv (Justin.tv having been replaced in 2014) late at night? Twitch didn't like that at all; they *shut down our channel five or six times*, so we created Twitch channels specifically dedicated to movies, as they suspended them one by one (that's why the Twitch channel is called LaMegaforgeLIVE and not just LaMegaforge).



The streaming team was as solid as our Twitch channels. Some members would come and go, only being there for a single stream or for a short period of time. We also want to give a shoutout to **Bleachme**, **Cilendil**, or even **Florever** for their participation; we haven't forgotten about you, guys. Sometimes, they would leave on their own, or simply vanish, or occasionally, they'd get *kicked out*. Not all were as transient, though, like two fellas who joined the LMF team, *Spider and Yadar*, so young at the time, their eyes still full of hope and curiosity, which we promptly extinguished as quickly as possible. They were so young that they didn't even have a PC yet, and they had to stream from the integrated system on the PS4, so we created a Twitch channel just for them, "*LaMegaforgeConsoles*".

The team quickly grew, with Wheesky (a longtime high school friend of mine), Poléon (who was literally eleven years old when he started watching us), and Momo whom Adwim met on **SURVARIUM** (after mistaking him for another one of his buddies). We all come from different towns, we all have different opinions - for example, Spider loves P!nk - but that's what makes us all very close and enjoy spending time together.

Gradually, viewers started to tune in, discovering who we were. A bunch of dumbasses, *irreverent*, who loved to speak loudly and tell *raunchy* jokes. Some stayed, others left, while the community grew rapidly. Sure, we had a Twitter, a Facebook, a website, etc., but it was a nightmare to maintain without a real community hub.

BUT THANKFULLY, SOMEONE WAS GOING TO TAKE CARE OF IT.

LE DISCORD



The shift from *Skype* to *Discord* was a godsend for LMF. Honestly, I don't think you can fully grasp *how shitty* Skype was in comparison. This time around, we were able to bring the whole community together under one application. Even for us, as a team, we were able to centralize all our decisions *in one place*, and it was infinitely beneficial in terms of management. We had never been so close to our community, and it allowed us to nurture it through events, movie nights, multiplayer sessions, debates, **dirty joke competitions...**

On the team's side as well, we were growing closer with each passing day. Where we were just a bunch of guys who only knew each other online, *we had already been doing IRLs* (meaning we were meeting up in the real life) for a few years. A week together somewhere, drinking beers, eating pizzas, and **throwing up both**. The first one was organized at (and thanks to) Poon's, and there was even a pool.

We were able to get closer and become real bros, which seems mega important to me when it comes to maintaining a tight-knit team.

Since then, we've been growing more and more as a community, and we're *diversifying accordingly*. Sure, we've more or less stopped making videos in favor of streams because it's *boring as hell to do* and edit, but instead, we've got a bunch of stuff. **Podcasts** (sometimes), **live events**, **meet-ups**, **brief get-togethers**, **blind tests**. We even have Poon's taking care of community management on our various social media platforms, *just like real streamers*.

LA MEGA FORCE

We never aimed to become a super-community with *sponsors* and incredible **media influence**. Anyway, that's completely incompatible with the way we *express ourselves*, with our jokes that **would go nowhere else but with us**. What really matters is that someone who walks in feels like they've just stepped into a bar, where they can sit down at a table and we'll bring them a **pint of Jupiler and a sausage**. Where, at some point, three guys will sit at their table to tell them the joke about *the hooker and the cucumber*. That it's comfortable enough, and above all, that we have a good laugh.

RUFL