

Alex - 0:00

So let's start by going to...well, actually, you are a unique case, not just day zero, on between eSports and competitive Smash and streaming, which was the avenue that you pursued first?

Fatality - 0:18

Well, it was by far just competition itself. I know that when I was younger, for instance, and I first became aware of competitive Smash, it was through learning about the old Melee days. Isaiah was and still is my hero. Like, Isaiah was [the Melee] Falcon. That was everything. The reason I play Blood Falcon, for instance, is that back in the old Melee days there was a prominent top Melee Falcon for all the different colors except for Blood Falcon. There is Isaiah for default, there's Darkrain for the grey one, SilectSpectre for green, Hax\$ (rest in peace) for the pink one, but there wasn't one for Blood Falcon at the time. So I wanted to be that guy. That didn't actually end up happening, but that became the foundation for a lot of things I do actually - Isaiah, and I just wanted to rep that particular color.

Alex - 1:24

Okay. So pursuing competition, where did you decide to put streaming into the mix?

Fatality - 1:34

Honestly, that only happened about a year ago. So it's a very late addition to the party. I'm kind of behind in the arms race, relatively speaking in a lot of ways, but I've been catching up because of that. I feel like the more you've grown, the less room you have to grow, so to speak. Because of that, all these other streams that have been huge way before I even started streaming, I'm finally starting to get just a little headway. It's kind of nice.

Alex - 2:02

Okay. So just a year ago is when you first started this stream, how much of the eSports clout carried into it? Or how much of a head start did you have, as a result of that?

Fatality - 2:19

Oh, an enormous head start. I know that for some people becoming a Twitch partner takes months, years, who knows? For me, it took about one week, which is pretty fast. It helps that, thank you D1, by the way, since he works at Twitch, when he heard I was going to finally start streaming, he said “Just let me know when you send an application and I'll make sure that you get in ASAP.” and he kept his word. Thank you, D1.

Alex - 2:53

Okay. When you did pick up streaming, what were the motivators for it? Was it just something to do in your downtime? Was it money motivated? Did you actually want to bring up an additional revenue source for yourself? You know, how did your reasoning affect your launching point?

Fatality - 3:16

Well, at first, it was just an entirely financial decision. I wanted to be able to make more money doing this, especially in the downtime leading up to Smash Ultimate, because when the new game comes out, I might not necessarily stream as much because I might focus more on the competitive aspect. But it was originally just a financial decision, and I didn't necessarily think it suited me that much, and then the more I did it, the more and more that changed and actually developed a real love for it. So now I will stream things that I don't necessarily think I will get that many viewers or other things or whatever, just because I love doing it. I love my little community, my stream people. I've made so many friends. I've gotten to know a lot of great people, and it's become something that I can do. Maybe if I've had a bad day, I'll just come home and stream and feel better. It's kind of become a nice little part of my life that I didn't really expect to become a part of it that way, but it's been nice, and to those of you who are a part of my stream community, you know who you are, I appreciate you and thank you.

Alex - 4:30

Okay. So you said that you managed to get partnered in a single week. Within those first couple of months, what was a standard week like for you on the stream?

Fatality - 4:44

Well, first things first, my production quality was pretty terrible. So it definitely wasn't necessarily that great, but I was able to get not inconsequential amounts of viewers, like 20 to 30 or whatever, which is not the worst for a start, but not the best either. But, still, didn't really make much money at first, but I still have, especially in the last few months, been very steadily growing the quality of my stream, and I'm pretty happy where I've found it recently. The quality has, thanks to my new sponsor, Recursion and ESC, absolutely skyrocketed.

Alex - 5:32

Awesome to hear, awesome to hear.

Fatality - 5:35

I feel like the actual, like visual quality production values and everything else are on par with the absolute best in Smash right now. So I'm happy with that.

Alex - 5:47

Okay, so building off of that, how important do you think those visual aspects are for a stream, not just in Smash, but for live streaming as a whole?

Fatality - 6:00

I would say quite important, because you have to remember that as much as Twitch has really caught on as a financial platform, or I mean, eSports is a multi billion dollar industry net right now, that's gaining headway on ESPN and everywhere else. So because of that the competition is fiercer than ever, which means every little thing you can do to differentiate yourself from the bulk, if you will, is monumental. Whether that's having a particularly evocative and fun personality, whether it's the ways in which you interact with your community, which is mostly what I focus on, whether it's how it looks, different things like that, those are all important. For my stream, for instance, I break the mold in a lot of ways, but I feel like a lot of top streams

focus on being almost a TV show, if you will, where they're basically putting on a performance for you, the viewers and viewer interaction is relatively small, for the most part. My stream is like the polar opposite of that, where I talk to almost every single person in my stream, and that's not an exaggeration. I keep up with their lives, we talk about just about everything, I respond to almost every question, I respond to everything of every part of the chat, which can be kind of tiring, but I love it and I've made a lot of friends that way, and because of that, I've drawn a very different crowd. Because if you wanted to watch a show, you might go to another Smasher's stream, but if you want, like an interactive social hangout, you come to mine, you know?

Alex - 7:40

Okay. So again, building off of that, when you were first starting your stream, you mentioned that you really put in a lot of effort towards interacting with the stream, and in communicating with chat, are there any other things that you did during that time to bring in viewers and to keep viewers?

Fatality - 8:00

The most I've done, really, is just try to be more true to myself in ways that have nothing to do with Smash, which has brought in a lot of people who have significantly less to do with Smash than, well, you might expect for someone who is primarily a Smash streamer. For instance, I have a background in a few different sciences, I do martial arts, and then I also have- I'm developing a music background. So those are things that don't really have anything to do with Smash, but because of that, I've been getting a lot of viewers and interactions that you wouldn't necessarily expect because of that; sometimes things like philosophy, science, psychology, music theory, and all these other completely random things that have nothing to do with Smash can occasionally spotlight on my stream with regards to conversation. The kinds of people that come in, it's a very different environment, but it's one that I feel is particularly fitting to me because I have a background to some degree in all of those things. So it's enriching to find more like-minded people through an avenue you wouldn't necessarily expect, you know?

Alex - 9:17

Right, right. I think it was- didn't it say on your Twitter bio that you are an aspiring astrophysicist?

Fatality - 9:24

Mhmm! That's what I meant by "part of my science background."

Alex - 9:28

Right! That's really interesting...

Fatality - 9:32

For better or worse, I'm busy with a lot of things that have nothing to do with Smash, and then I'm also very busy with Smash. This leads to me having basically no free time, but at the same time, I'm always doing things I love. So I'm pretty happy, and I feel, like, pretty balanced. So I feel happy and healthy for the most part, recently.

Alex - 9:53

Awesome, awesome. So I think one last thing about the initial few stages. Is there anything that you wish you had done during this time? And, inversely, is there anything that you wish you hadn't done?

Fatality - 10:12

Um, there's- I can't really think of anything I wish I hadn't done other than to perhaps make the stream family friendly a little earlier on. Like, I'm not going to- I'm going to be honest, I do love my swear words...but at the same time, I made the move a few months ago to try and make my stream family friendly, so I cut back on that.

Alex - 10:38

So how did that work out?

Fatality - 10:40

I have more kids tuning in, and my content has become more ad friendly. So I necessarily had advertisers tell me “Hey, we don't want to be advertising on your content, because it doesn't line up with our brand” or whatever. So there's a sort of versatility and what I can be represented with, because I've decided to make things family friendly. I think that's the same reason why Ninja decided to make that move as well, so he could have the widest possible audience. Of course, I'm going to lose out on some people who want maybe a more raucous environment, if you will. But, you take some, you lose some...it is what it is.

Alex - 11:25

Okay. With the stream being family friendly, and you attracting younger audiences, do you find that there is an increase of problem users like problem, younger users that are just there to be obnoxious and troll in chat and do that kind of stuff?

Fatality - 11:43

For the most part, not really, I feel like I have a very positive stream community. And if someone really obnoxious comes in, they usually just eat the ban hammer really quickly and then that's it. We don't necessarily have repeat offenders, because for the most part, if someone comes in and they cause trouble, they're gone. Bam. That's it. I don't have to worry about that. And I also have quite a lot of mods, which might seem like a bit of a concern if you hire the wrong people. What I do is I just have random people I like and trust and if I think they have good judgment, maybe I'll just upgrade them to mod status, because why not? And because of that I have maybe a disproportionately large amount of them in my stream community. But because of that, very few things really slip through the cracks, or if they do, they don't stay there for long and it becomes an environment that can be friendly to a large variety of people, in addition to the fact that, like I mentioned earlier, conversation topics aren't necessarily delegated to just Smash or like, maybe what you might think of as traditional topics that you would talk about around Smashers, because

a whole lot of things that have absolutely nothing to do with that get in there as well. So that draws a lot of people as well.

Alex - 13:08

So, like you said, you mentioned going family friendly a few months ago. Are there any other hurdles that you have had to take on since you started streaming?

Fatality - 13:21

This is going to sound funny, but it's brutally honest: the very existence of ZeRo and Nairo's streams. Like they have such a strong hold on the market that trying to break through hasn't exactly been the easiest, but I'm doing what I can. Like, they get so much more viewers, subs, and everything else than literally everyone else, it's not even funny. So breaking into that hasn't exactly been the easiest thing, but I'm doing what I can day by day.

Alex - 13:52

Okay, okay.

Fatality - 13:55

Just being honest here!

Alex - 13:57

No, no, that's good! That's good. I spoke with somebody else about live streaming and they kind of made the point that, you know, they made the parallel to Ninja where if you're streaming Fortnite, you need Ninja because Ninja is going to be bringing more new people to the platform than you, and then it's your job to try to- not necessarily take away those viewers, but to incentivize them to look at both. You don't want to take people from your competition, you want your viewership to be shared as best as it can.

Fatality - 14:33

Right. I feel like the Fortnite example is an absurdly more polarized version of what I'm dealing with. Like, I'm having some difficulties with it and so is literally everyone that's not ZeRo and Nairo. Ninja's monopoly is so far above and beyond that.

Alex - 14:56

Oh, absolutely. I remember I was looking up stats for his channel, and the spread of the different kinds of subs like tier one, tier two, tier three. The amount of prime subs that ninja has, even compared to, you know, number two on Twitch, number three on Twitch, it's astronomical. So he is doing something to get everybody's prime subs.

Fatality - 15:24

Yeah, absolutely. Like I don't necessarily have the largest amount of subs right now, I think part of that is because I came into the scene late, and part of that's because I also haven't been traveling and competing the last few months, so I don't necessarily have the constantly renewed public interest of doing well at a national, getting Top 8's, getting wins or whatever. I've kind of been out of the public eye for a little while, and so I haven't necessarily grown that much, specifically because of that recently, but I'm expecting my stream to skyrocket when Ultimate comes out, because I fully intend to be making a lot of waves in that game. I'll probably be able to get significantly larger numbers streaming as much, if not less than I do now, just because of the new game, and likely my successor. Obviously it's a new game, new world, and I can't necessarily assure anything, but I've been putting in quite a lot of work to prepare and...I wouldn't say that I'm guaranteed to be at the top, but I'm certainly doing everything I can and I believe in myself. So...I think I can do it. This game, for the most part, seems like it's going to favor people of my leaning anyway. So this is doing so much more to reward more aggressive players, so that's great news for me, Nairo, ESAM. So that's good news for us.

Alex - 16:50

Absolutely. I'm digging it. The shield nerfs and the repeated spot dodge nerfs are just- I'm so excited for that kind of stuff.

Fatality - 17:03

Plus, literally anything out of runs.

Alex - 17:06

Oh my God! I can't wait!

Fatality - 17:08

Literally anything. You can do, like running pivot, turn around jabs. And like running down tilts, running up tilts, like your imagination.

Alex - 17:22

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. On top of the fact that I'm going to be getting my hands on a Smash Stick in the near future. So that's just- the tech skill is going to be off the goddamn walls.

Fatality - 17:31

Oh, are you going to get like what Hax has?

Alex - 17:36

Hax has the B 0 X X. I'm putting my support behind something called the Smash Stick. It's a box controller with a custom analog stick, not buttons.

Fatality - 17:46

Oh, okay!

Alex - 17:47

Yeah, it's pretty sick.

Fatality - 17:49

AO like, is it like an arcade joystick? Or is it like...

Alex - 17:53

They're actually- I've been talking to the CEO of the company. It's the first arcade stick that works for both Smash and fighting games. You can plug it into your computer and play like DBZ. It's absolutely nuts, I'm super excited for it. So back to the interview, you mentioned that you have kind of dipped out of the public eye, or at least in terms of competition. One of the more hot button topics that's discussed a lot by the top players, especially in Smash, is whether or not to go out to the local, or to stay at home and work on your stream, or even just go out to the major that's, you know, all the way across the other side of the country, or stay at home and work on your stream. How have you managed that?

Fatality - 18:46

Well, my personal decision has always been to focus on competition. As much as I've developed an enjoyment for streaming, I love competition even more, especially the traveling aspect. I've made so many wonderful friends traveling around the world. I like meeting new people, feeling the different cultures of all these different parts of the world. And there's just- you can't really replicate that just staying at home. So at the end of the day, I'm always going to be focused on the in-person Major experience. And I'm still going to be attending a lot of locals, because I want to do my part and raising the next generation of local players, locally. So I'm probably going to switch my stream to being more focused on streaming during the day, for a few different reasons. One, because almost all of our locals are at night, which means I'll be able to stream during the day and then compete during the night when I'm not traveling, so then I'll be able to be...just making more money than ever, working more than ever, and just grinding more than ever across the board. And then, in addition to that, like I mentioned earlier, ZeRo and Nairo mostly stream during the late evening and night, so I won't have to compete with them directly as much. Less direct competition, and I still get to go to my locals and make money there, too. It's kind of just win-win across the board.

Alex - 20:14

Super, super. Actually, one of the- there was a panel that I attended, where they talked about sniping hours where the streamer- he would look at the competition, figure out their stream schedule, start an hour earlier, and then stream an hour later. And that was how he built up his fanbase.

Fatality - 20:34

Yeah because, a lot of times- funnily enough, when I stream games that have nothing to do with Smash, I usually stream them around the same times that ZeRo and Nairo play Smash, because usually they'll start with Smash for a few hours, and then play something else. So I usually do it the other way around, so that when I start playing Smash, they're about to start leaving, so their viewers will congregate on my stream. Then when I'm streaming other games, I'm not competing with them necessarily either. So a lot of people who like Smash personalities, but also want to watch other stuff are going to be watching my streams at times they're not going to be watching theirs, and vice versa. In a lot of ways, a lot of my stream schedule has been specifically designed to not necessarily counter them, but just avoid them as much as possible, while still being able to stream during similar time periods.

Alex - 21:29

I think it's not necessarily avoiding them, but I think it's a really clever management of your time around their schedules.

Fatality - 21:40

Yeah, because at the end of the day, their monopolies make it to where you have to play by their rules, whether you like it or not. You can either accept that they're just- they have a significantly larger group than you, and just directly compete with it, or you can do something more along the lines of what I'm doing, and try and circumvent it as much as possible.

Alex - 22:02

Exactly, exactly. So here's a question that I want to talk about: monetization, specifically, monetization of the stream. Obviously, you have sources of income, you know, from your sponsorship, from tournaments, coming from, you know, the eSports and competition side of it. But, my project is really about railing into the live streaming. So how- and I don't need to know how much money you make, but I want to know: how many different forms of monetization do you have? You know, between the bits, between subs, between donations, anything along those lines?

Fatality - 22:44

Well, the thing is, I've actually worked with my one of my sponsors, Recursion, with specifically retooling how Streamlabs actually is programmed on that level. They actually reprogramed that part of Streamlabs for me to work to where bits and donations are effectively counted as a singular unit now, to where now they're just donations, but it's simply two different kinds. So as far as I'm concerned, there's subs, there's donations, and then there's ad revenue, which I get by maintaining viewers, by getting them to stick through watching my stream. And then running ad breaks roughly every hour and 40 minutes, because I tend to stream for five hours in any given stream period, and then I'll do that five times a week for total of 25 hours. And then, because of these protein drinks that I've been drinking alongside my working out in martial arts, I kind of have to go to the bathroom a little more often than I'd like, and so I made it to where my stream schedule works with that. And during my streams where I'm doing that, I'll go to the bathroom roughly every hour and 40 minutes, and then I'll run those ad breaks at the same time so that they're not actually missing any content, I'm basically just making passive money. The ad breaks are running while I'm just doing my normal bathroom breaks, and like refilling my cup of water, or whatever. Then, I don't do very many of them, I just do three of them once every hour and 40 minutes, which is not bad. And 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 money. And so that when I get back, they feel like it was worth their time to do so rather than just to like, turn it off or

whatever, because then you don't make as much. That way you can maximize your ad revenue, and at the same time, keep people there.

Alex - 25:03

That is just really, really smart.

Fatality - 25:06

It's important to do that because, especially if you're more of an up and coming streamer and you're competing with all these larger, monopolized streamers and industries, you have to remember, a lot of what will keep people coming to you specifically, is to make sure that you have lots of little specific things that are unique to you. And in addition to that, consistent and active. Like if someone tunes into your stream at some random point and no one's talking, nothing's happening, they aren't necessarily going to stay. But if you can ensure a constant stream of activity, keeping your viewers engaged, and making sure that like even something as simple as the chat is just active, all go so far in keeping that stream activity consistent, so that people won't necessarily just tune in, think "Nothing is going on," and then go somewhere else instead. You want to make sure that when they randomly tune in to you that they feel "Hmm, maybe I should stay a little bit longer see what this is about," you catch their interest. And you want to do little things like that. And of course, like I mentioned before, where I branched out, the vast majority of the Smash 4 streamers kind of are all in the exact same market where they're all like hardcore Smash players. For the most part, conversation doesn't necessarily delve into things outside of smash, except for Shonen anime, funnily enough. I mean, to be completely honest, Smash and Shonen anime is like 90% of the conversation topics in a lot of these streams, which isn't necessarily- there's nothing wrong with that, but, if you're going to compete with that, you have to realize you're in direct competition with all the other streams that are basically doing the exact same thing. And so by delving into things that, well, aren't that, I bring other people and I compete with them less directly.

Alex - 27:14

So what you're saying is...I should watch My Hero Academia.

Fatality - 27:20

Sure. I haven't, but I've heard it's good. Like, I'm by no means that weeb, simply by virtue of being in the Smash community, I know entire arcs of shows I'll probably never watch, just because I'm around these people all the time. Like, I'm not opposed to watching anime or anything, but I'm just, you know...

Alex - 27:46

Right, right. Let's talk about social media. What kind of platforms are you on? Obviously, Twitter. That's how I was able to find you. What kind of other social media platforms do you operate on? What kind of engagement is there on those social media platforms? For example, do you have an Instagram? If you do, do you run the Instagram any differently than you run your Twitter, etc?

Fatality - 28:17

Well, the way I've been focusing on doing things, my Youtube channel is mostly not run by me anymore. I hired an editor recently. He's fantastic. He works in the Mountain West. And he's been doing 99% of my YouTube work recently, basically, he's just been converting my stream content into highlight reels and convert- he'll take direct, entire conversations from my chat and my direct conversations with the chat and he'll literally implement it into the videos to where you can see them talking to me and me talking back. They get this idea of a very...of these back and forth conversations and about not just Smash, but like I mentioned earlier, where I'll talk about other things too in my stream. He's kind of brought that part of my stream to life, to where other people see it, and very quickly realize that there's something different going on here, which will draw in other people, like I mentioned before. And because of that, I mean, I'm a very busy man, as I told you before, I kind of delve into a lot of things and because of that, having someone who can basically run my YouTube channel for me is monumental because I don't have the time to do literally all of these things. I don't have the time to run YouTube, stream, compete, do science

stuff, do music stuff, train in martial arts, and spend time with my family and friends all at the exact same time. Like, I have a big plate, and anything I can do to kind of alleviate some of the stress in workload, I'm obviously going to try and do. Because of that, my social media is honestly not that interesting, other than maybe my YouTube and Twitch. I mostly just use my Twitter to advertise when a new video is out, when I'm about to stream or whatever. And that's mostly it. I know a lot of people who don't necessarily have the same workload as I do, outside of Smash, will focus on having more of a Twitter personality, or if you will..... I don't necessarily focus on that, because I feel a lot of the things I do don't necessarily translate that effectively to Twitter. I just focus on trying to win people over purely through my content creation and just try to make sure people know of it, so they can get to it as quickly as possible. My Twitter strategy is mostly focused on business, honestly. I do not use Instagram, I mostly just use Twitter, YouTube, and Twitch, and I don't necessarily use Facebook for business or any other social media either. My Twitter is basically just the middleman between my actual content. That's how I view it, anyway.

Alex - 31:10

Alright, so taking a step back from there, let's look at social networking outside of social media. So, are you doing any kind of networking specifically for your stream at tournaments? Or is that not something that you really focus on while you're there?

Fatality - 31:30

Well, by networking...I'm not entirely sure what exactly you're referring to, but I know what kind of networking I specifically do. Would you like me to go over that?

Alex - 31:40

Yeah, absolutely!

Fatality - 31:43

Okay. So what I will do is, since I'm technically sponsored by two different companies, which is kind of rare for a smash player, I'm sponsored by eSports Ecosystem, which they're pretty up-and-coming. If you've been keeping up with Smash, you've probably seen their name around a lot recently. And I also am sponsored by Recursion, which is mostly a stream organization and TO coalition in the southeast, primarily located in Atlanta. I work with both of them. Because of that, what I do when I network is I usually try and find new business partners for either my teams, or sometimes just directly myself, for instance, funnily enough, I'm not privy to say who, but there's a certain fast food company that I'm trying to make a business partner of my stream right now. Like, I'm trying to get endorsed by them. So I've been working on that, I've been trying to talk with potential investors and both of our different teams so that we can focus on developing more revenue and just branching out and things like that. So usually, when I'm traveling, I like to talk to important TO's, figure out who they know. And for the most part, I just try and make friends with as many different people as I can, so that I just have a broader network. Because at the end of the day, as some people like to say, it's not what you do, it's who you know, sometimes simply knowing the right person who knows the right person is all you need to get the ball rolling on all these different things. And so by traveling to all these different places, making all these friends and developing all these connections, I end up finding all these business opportunities that you would probably never expect, and honestly, I never expected, but they ended up becoming a thing anyway, just because I put myself out there, I hustled and I made friends, I didn't necessarily think of it as a transaction, but just making friends for its own sake led to all these other things too, you know? Just being social and making all these friends, and just making friends with their friends. And just traveling everywhere and doing that has led to so many opportunities I never would've expected. And hopefully many more as well, so...if you're going to focus purely on business networking, you obviously aren't necessarily going to try and focus as much on just befriending completely random people as you are like people with some amount of relevance in that particular business world you're trying to venture in. So you can obviously focus more on that if you're thinking of it purely as business, which I would recommend if you're just focused on the business aspect of it. I'm not necessarily doing that so much as I've kind of just accidentally found myself in so many of these opportunities. Like,

sometimes I'll very specifically be business networking, but a lot of times, I'm just randomly socializing and then lo and behold, things happen.

Alex - 35:03

Right. So kind of building off of that, you know, I had this question about what kind of methodologies are you implementing, both in the short term and the long term that you think are benefitting you, and this whole, you know, befriending people and socializing and expanding your network like that, to not necessarily make rise to, but to allow for opportunities to come your way? Are there any other things that you're doing along those lines towards giving yourself opportunities for advancement or success?

Fatality - 35:40

To be quite honest, absolutely nothing. Like, I network at tournaments, I talk to my teams, and sometimes I randomly try to get in, if I think there's a potential chance for me to get endorsed by someone and basically bring them on board with the eSports type train, I'll do that, but that's kind of it, honestly! I'm not necessarily doing it in other ways. I have more or less outlined all the ways in which I do that already.

Alex - 36:10

Okay, okay. So here is a bit of a trickier question that you might not have an answer to. What is something that you are doing that either nobody is doing, or you think more people should be doing?

Fatality - 36:32

The only thing I can really think of is just to maybe branch out with how you market yourself. Like I mentioned earlier, how a lot of top Smash 4 streamers are kind of doing the exact same thing, just a different person. I think if some of them just tried to focus more on unique parts of themselves, that are different from these other players, and just tried to kind of make that part of their marketability, they could perhaps become more successful. And I'm not necessarily more

successful than them or anything, but at the same time, I think I could be one day purely for that particular avenue. And I'm hoping by pushing myself, I will eventually do just that. Of course, maybe I'm actually the one making the mistake here by not cultivating a vast majority. But I don't know...because at the same time, even if you're doing something that is pretty similar to the other brands, if you will, if the vast majority of consumers are just looking for that, then that's not necessarily a bad thing, you know? I could be completely wrong on this, but it's just the approach I'm specifically trying to make work. And I think if you're trying to make headway, logically speaking, it might be a more natural way of doing so. If you're already a top player, you can probably get away with basically having a very similar brand, but if you're not, I feel like you specifically have to. If you're not a top player, your brand lives and dies by the things you do different. Because if you're a top player, that can carry you through a lot. You don't necessarily need to have the most, like, interesting or engaging stream, you can just put up an overlay and play people on Wi-Fi and call it a day and probably get a pretty solid amount of viewers. But if you want to really push it to the next level, you probably have to do all those other things.

Alex - 38:40

Okay, okay. So one of the focuses of my project, a particular thing that I've kind of bee-lined in on to try and figure this out is variety content. You know, I did a bit of a look over your channel, you do- and you already mentioned this yourself, you play things out other than Smash. So do ZeRo, so does Nairo. What is your take on variety content, on just picking a game and streaming it? You know, how do you think that impacts viewers for you? How do you think that works with viewer retention? How do you think that that is benefiting your stream?

Fatality - 39:24

Well, first and foremost, my streams of other games tend to be a bit smaller than my streams because obviously, I'm still developing that base. And even though I haven't been streaming that long, I also haven't been playing other games that long. I only played Smash for the longest time on my stream. And I've only recently really branched out, but I tend to choose games that I feel are very fondly looked upon, but aren't necessarily super popular on Twitch right now. So that I

don't necessarily have to compete with all these other people. Like, if I were to try and stream Fortnite, for instance, well, you know...

Alex - 40:03

Good luck with that!

Fatality - 40:06

Like recently, I had a pretty successful Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door stream where I played that game...like, I'll take games that people love and look fondly upon, but aren't necessarily pulling in huge numbers, and I give love to them for the most part. And I also try to play games that I can give viewers ways of directly interacting with that the actual outcome of the game itself. Like, I pioneered something which I called a democracy run for RPGs where the chat literally decides all non combat and non movement decisions. Literally, v all of them. If I level up a stat: What stat? The chat literally votes on my dialogue decisions, what badges I equip in Paper Mario what stats I level up, and dialogue of choice.

Alex - 41:02

Did you get any inspiration from Twitch Plays Pokemon for that?

Fatality - 41:07

Funnily enough, yes. This is kind of like a person-involved version of that...where it took around nine-and-a-half hours to clear the final battle in that game because of the excruciating torture that my viewers put me through and refused to relent on. So...that was, that was something. They had me hilariously under leveled, they had me exclusively equip badges that were very detrimental to gameplay. They had me throw away all my items before going to the boss...like you can get an idea of what it was like. So part of it is like a masochistic thing, but it also pulls in the viewers, and on some sick level I enjoy it, so... Like, there's something kind of fun about somehow prevailing through all of that torture. There's a level of satisfaction that you might not get playing the game normally. And I try and do things like that for a lot of my games, where I

try and make them significantly harder than they need to be. Like I cleared Majoras Mask where I didn't really use the shield. I wouldn't do all these other things. I would only be at three hearts the whole game. I played Super Mario Sunshine without being allowed to refill my water, or use the hover nozzle the entire game...just stuff like that. That's kind of my brand, is when I play other games...I just do really absurd things that like that.

Alex - 43:00

Wait till you get your hands on Dark Souls! But, oh my Lord...

Fatality - 43:04

Funnily enough, that's one of the games I was thinking of playing next. And we're probably going to add additional challenges on top of everything else.

Alex - 43:12

I would expect you to, based off of what you've been describing.

Fatality - 43:20

Corona Mountain took me like five hours to reach Bowser. And my viewer base is consistent here. Like, "Is this the run, is this it?" for like 5 straight hours. And they kept trying to help me, some were trying to vote to have me turn the hover nozzle on just once, but by popular vote, it never once happened. And so the torture just never relented.

Alex - 43:51

Alright, so let me just look over this here... We covered a lot...

Fatality - 43:59

You don't need to hurry, but at the same time, I am going to have to start thinking about getting ready to set up my stream and eat dinner.

Alex - 44:07

Okay, absolutely. I only have a couple of questions left. So...

Fatality - 44:12

Sure thing.

Alex - 44:15

Oh, this is actually a good question! And this is even more applicable because you're a competitor. I want to talk about risk management and risk mitigation. So let's throw a hypothetical your way. Let's say, you know, you've been involved in some major drama like, you know, Hyuga kind of drama, where you are currently facing some major community backlash. How are you going to handle that?

Fatality - 44:48

Well, if something like that happened, assuming I had a way of honestly clearing my name, I would. And if I didn't, I would step away and focus on my other things. That's not going to happen, but I suppose hypothetically I did something completely atrocious, that would be the case, because I think the right- I view attending tournaments as a privilege rather than a right. I think most people can agree that these things are bad or whatever. But most the time when people decide if someone should be able to come back to the community or not, it's because most of the time the argument differences that happen just come from people disagreeing whether it should be viewed as a right, where obviously, you serve your sentence, you're good to go, or if it's a privilege where three strikes, you're out. And that's it, you know? And I view attending tournaments as a privilege, and so because of that, suppose hypothetically I did something like that, I would just bow out and focus on my other potential careers. Like, I want to focus on a music career eventually. And obviously the whole astrophysics thing, I plan to do stuff with that, although I'm becoming focused on Smash right now, I plan to do things with that eventually. So hypothetically, if something like that were to happen, I would just bow out and

focus on my other things. I'd be sad about it, but I mean, the right thing to do is still the right thing to do, you know?

Alex - 46:17

That's a good answer. So one thing that you mentioned, actually makes me a little bit more curious about this, you've mentioned multiple times throughout this interview that you've got these other really big interests of yours in science, in music, in martial arts. Obviously, you're going to be running the Smash gig for as long as it gives you a paycheck. What happens when that paycheck runs out? You know, which do you think you're going to jump on first? And how do you think you're going to go about it?

Fatality - 46:51

To be honest, I'm not entirely sure which one I'm going to do first. I've been kind of passively doing steps to grow in all of them simultaneously. I'm actually not really worried about my paychecks running out, because I've developed a plan for the future where I'm mostly going to—I'm going to build my own house, for instance, it's going to mostly be off the grid and be mostly self-sustainable. And my financial plans are mostly self-sustaining once I reach a certain threshold, and I'm really not that far from it right now. So because of that one side, develop some success in Ultimate, which I'm pretty confident I will, after maybe doing that for a year or so I'm probably going to be mostly set, honestly...to where I'll be able to pretty easily maintain the amount of revenue I need, which doesn't even need to be that much because I think when it comes to life standards, I have...a very humble kind of approach to life where I don't need much, I don't want much, don't exactly live a ritzy lifestyle. I'm just happy with the basics and not much else. I'm just going to have my nice small little house that is powered by green energy, I'm going to have almost non-existent bills. My cost of living is not really going to be that much. I'm not necessarily going to need, like a crazy amount of revenue to not only stay afloat, but stay happy and be able to do the things I want. So, it'll be easy to just funnel my energy towards whatever I think is best at the time, you know? Whether that's my science career, whether that's through the solo band project I plan to start down the road, whether it's any of the other stuff I've been

working with. I'm really not too worried about it, honestly, because a low cost of living does so much to ease the soul, you know? I'm really not going to have to worry about it too much, because I don't have to maintain much. And I don't plan on having kids. I don't- I came to realize very early that that's not my thing, which I think is for the best, because if it's not your thing and you have kids anyway, you're probably going to be a bad parent, which those kids don't deserve. And I don't think I'd be a bad parent, but I think it's just not for me, so...I'd rather just focus on my personal pursuits, and because of that my cost of living goes down exponentially.

Alex - 49:31

Yeah. Holy cow.

Fatality - 49:33

So if I don't have to worry about that, and I mostly have renewable resources, I really don't have to worry about that much. Which means that I could- even if I'm like, suppose hypothetically, the Smash thing dies down. And maybe I'm just streaming like a decent bid, and not necessarily making much, that'd probably still be more than enough, honestly, especially with the fact that I've mostly just focused on saving money and not necessarily spending it like...I'm just saving! I'm not really doing anything with it. I'm just making sure I'm comfortable and set, and that's about it!

Alex - 50:12

That's really good to hear. That's really good to hear. I have just one more question, and then we can wrap this up. Do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, or anything that you can offer to new and incoming streamers to help get them started, get them off their feet, or give them encouragement?

Fatality - 50:34

All right. Well, the main thing I can think of off the bat is, like I mentioned earlier, where you want to try and have an active base, the more you can do to make people want...this is more

important for newer streamers than I think it is for more established ones. Like for a more established one, you don't necessarily have to interact with the audience if you're confident enough in your product, if you will. Because I mean, if you're watching a movie, for instance, the movie's not interacting with you, the movie is just entertaining enough by itself, where a more established streamer might have an approach more akin to that. But if you're a newer streamer, you probably want to focus on trying to find people that will tune in and just specifically do everything you can to make them want to stay, so that you have consistency. Another thing is to try and have a consistent schedule and stick to it as much as possible. That way people know when to tune in the way they would a TV show. After all, how hard would it have been to get into your new- the new show you've been bingeing if it came on a different time every day? It's a lot easier to set aside some time in your schedule to enjoy something if it's always at the same time on any given day, for instance. So just developing a schedule so that people know when to tune in does wonders and...suppose you have a few friends that like to tune in, but they don't necessarily chat much, maybe try to encourage them to chat more, like ask them questions about their day, ask them what you could...like, ask them just anything you can think of that might be relevant to your particular stream product. Like maybe you're like brainstorming ideas on a new concept in a game you're playing that's maybe at least new to you, for instance. Maybe you're just socializing and doing other things. Maybe you're just doing all these other things, doing what you can to make sure you have consistent viewers changes everything. I'm probably sounding like a broken record, but I feel like that's truly everything for starting.

Alex - 52:50

Let me tell you, sounding like a broken record is the single best thing for my research because that means a lot of people are saying the same things.

Fatality - 53:00

Excellent!

Alex - 53:02

So is there anything else that you want to add?

Fatality - 53:05

Not really, honestly. I think I think we're good!

Alex - 53:09

Awesome! Griffin, thank you very much for your time. This has been really enjoyable, I've gotten some really good information from this. Let me just stop the recording.

Alex - 0:01

Okey doke. So to get things started off, let's go to day zero. What made you choose streaming?

NFreak - 0:12

Oh, that goes way back. I think I've actually been streaming for about two years now and the numbers don't really show it but the biggest draw of the time was when I was getting really big into Gamecube controller modding. I think Typo started streaming himself around the time just showing his controller work, so I jumped in doing that and there's actually an old clip from right around the time of me and my friend taking apart a Switch. Basically I just wanted to show up out of the hands on projects and it...that took off a little, it was pretty well received and from there I just started slowly but surely branching over into like streaming Melee and then doing other games and such...that was a little tangent, but that kind give you an idea.

Alex - 1:04

Okay. Okay. Did you have any monetary motivations to start streaming? Were you thinking about money when you started?

NFreak - 1:12

None whatsoever. I thought it would be a fun new hobby to pick up.

Alex - 1:17

Has that attitude changed over time?

NFreak - 1:20

A little bit. I mean, I'm still doing this on the side of a full-time software engineering job. It's not really something I think about but, admittedly the monetary gain does help fund a lot of the equipment and it helps keep me motivated to keep going. Does that make sense? But it's not the primary reason.

Alex - 1:50

Alright, so moving past day zero. Let's go to day one. I'll use day one throughout this interview to essentially mean the first few months up to a year of streaming. Tell me about an average week during that time period.

NFreak - 2:07

I think I was probably doing two-three nights each week at most, at the time, and I've had a few weeks where I was literally just streaming myself sanding down controller shells to paint later, and it was nice to have one or two people in the chat to talk to. That's probably one or two nights of the week, then I would just do Melee on netplay for a bit, on the off days, because I like alternating here and there. Rarely, every now and then, I would pick up something else and that will go into what I'm doing today, like other games and such. Let's see, I think that's about the typical day there. It's always evenings because I've always been doing this on the side of the same job. So that schedule hasn't changed.

Alex - 3:09

Was there anything special that you did during that time to pull in viewers or is it just throw the stream up and see who comes?

NFreak - 3:17

More of the latter, I put up a tweet now and then. I still have a much bigger Twitter following than I do on Twitch right now but that was more or less it. I just go for it.

Alex - 3:31

Is there anything that you wish you hadn't done during this time period?

NFreak - 3:40

Probably. I think that comes down to...so, I definitely made one of the big mistakes a lot of first-time streamers do. If you hang around in friends chat, you never say "I'm going to stream

myself now. Bye. See you later.” I definitely did that way too often. Wish I had never done that...it feels grimy. But other than that, I wish I had spent more time on presentation, like my overlays, sound effects and such, figuring out the tech before jumping into it and actually prepping ahead of time before pressing the button. I'm trying to think of the little things that add up.

Alex - 4:29

Absolutely. Absolutely. What kind of hurdles have you had to overcome as a result of streaming? Were there any obstacles that you faced over the past two years since you've been streaming?

NFreak - 4:43

Aside from the never-ending grind, one anecdote is I spent six weeks last fall in Poland, so maybe about a year, maybe six months...that's probably six to eight months after I started streaming, something like that. I forget the exact day I started. I was going to be on a very different schedule but I did not want to lose the following I'd been building up around that time, so I really had to work on this European schedule out of little hotels to even make it work. Somehow the network in the hotel is actually good enough for what I was doing, so I'd do Melee netplay with some European players here and there. Like some big names like Kadano, he was actually...

Alex - 5:33

Well, apparently European internet infrastructure is leagues ahead of American.

NFreak - 5:38

Right? A little hotel Wifi was fully functional for what I was doing. Yeah, so that whole six weeks aside from that whole schedule thing...this is going to get a little personal now but right near the end of the trip, and this goes into big hurdle number two, when my grandfather passed away.

Alex - 6:00

My condolences.

NFreak - 6:01

And um...yeah, it was a rough time, but also, less than a week later my girlfriend of 6 years actually broke up with me, and it was pretty messy I'll say that much. I was pretty much a wreck for the next two months...definitely losing some of my following in the meantime, and just trying to get back into it. You have to get motivated to do anything after work, especially getting back into the stream without losing everything was probably one of the most difficult things I've ever had to convince myself to do. Because you need to put on a different face. No one wants to see this sad sack of garbage in front of the camera. I think, honestly though, and this might actually answer a later question, I don't know, but all the actual supportive viewers actually motivated me to get back into it, and really helped me feel better about the whole situation in general.

Alex - 7:09

That's awesome to hear. I was I was actually just about to ask the question, was there anything that that you felt helped you get back into things after such a difficult time, but the aside from the support of the viewers, were there any other factors that helped?

NFreak - 7:27

A lot of it was just time getting over it personally. But a lot of my really dedicated viewers I consider some of my best friends and all the stream hours chatting with them all the time was a massive help and I met most of them through doing this.

Alex - 7:52

Okay, so just so that we have something like this on the record, what is your channel about? What content do you create? What kind of content do you advertise? And more specifically, what kind of viewers are you looking to attract to your stream?

NFreak - 8:10

So, this has been changing a bit like every few months or so. I've tried to advertise myself as more of a variety streamer. I've done Melee for a year or so but I no longer play that, and now I'm trying to speedrun Hollow Knight, I'm playing a lot of Smash Ultimate, a lot of fighting games, just a general variety of stuff. But now I'm thinking, and I say this now but we'll see if I stick to it, but I'm trying to dedicate myself to being a Hollow Knight speedrunner and Smash Ultimate streamer. So...I'm sorry, there's a second part of the question, right?

Alex - 8:52

What kind of viewers are you looking to attract to the stream?

NFreak - 8:56

So really just anyone who...I don't want to put a label on people, just don't be a terrible person and like they're good to go. Like some of the few little rules I keep around the community are be a good person, don't be racist all the fun stuff.

Alex - 9:22

The basics.

NFreak - 9:23

Yeah, the basics! But I think, demographic wise, mostly people of the same ages, honestly it could range anywhere from 17 to 27. But usually just a bunch of gamer nerds. That's what you get on Twitch.

Alex - 9:45

Right, right. Good info, good info. I'm not looking to get any kind of number from you, but I'm going to ask you a few questions about monetization and making money off of the stream. If

there's anything that you don't wish to share with me feel free to let me know and I'll go on to the next question. So, first question: do you make money off of the stream?

NFreak - 10:13

A little bit here and there. Some days better than others.

Alex - 10:21

All right. All right. What are some of the monetization methods that you use? Are you just using the standard set, you know, subscribers, bits, donations? Is there anything special that you're using aside from, you know, the standard kit, so to speak?

NFreak - 10:36

Not really a whole lot. I actually don't accept viewer donations. I only take subs and bits, only because I've seen one too many PayPal scammers where they chargeback a week later, it's terrifying. But other than that, I use the standard stuff. I do have a little merch shop through Streamlabs, which means that one person buys a shirt every month or so. But that's about it.

Alex - 11:10

Let's see if you can answer this question: Are there a...hmm, how do I word this? Do you think that you will reach the point where you're going to want to add more monetization methods to your stream? And if you believe something like that, what options do you have in mind? You said that you weren't really a big fan of PayPal and direct donations because of the mean-spirited folks who can participate in that kind of thing. Are there any other sources of monetization that you are looking at or considering?

NFreak - 11:48

I mean, honestly, I can't really think of any more to add to it. I'm kind of just using basically what Twitch gives and that's what I feel safest using. Yeah, like I don't really have any further ideas. There is, I can't say much about it at the moment, but there is a possibility that I might actually

start bringing in like a percentage of some sales for one product in the future. I won't say much more than that at the moment. Personally, you could probably guess what it is.

Alex - 12:25

Yeah, I bet I can guess what it is!

NFreak - 12:30

We're still on talks about that one!

Alex - 12:34

Okay. Okay. That's cool.

NFreak - 12:36

Yeah, there is a legit sponsorship along the way. So I think that's the direction.

Alex - 12:40

Wow, I like that. Okay, so moving on. We have social media, I know that you in particular are rather notable on social media...

NFreak - 12:56

That's a word we use.

Alex - 13:00

Particularly for a second account that belongs to you that I am aware of. So let's talk about your social media presence. How do you approach social media? How do you manage it?

NFreak - 13:16

I'm probably spending time...probably around like 50-50 between Twitter and Discord and I don't really use much else. I do put things up on Snapchat and Instagram...or I'm trying to doing

that, but I keep those pretty personal. Basically, even if it is for my stream, I do tend to keep my Twitter as a personal account. I try not to get too personal on that. I do have an alternate account for that, but on the main account it's mostly just my opinions on certain games and stuff. Always post stream alerts, that's a given. Every time we go live, it's posted right there. Maybe if it was really long stream I'll probably mention it again two or three hours in. I'll say "Hey, still live, check it out!" But throughout the day, and any other day when I'm offline I just say whatever I'm feeling, just throw stuff up there and it just works. People especially like the controller stuff. Even though I don't play Melee anymore, I think like 60% my following comes from Melee.

Alex - 14:50

Comparing the way that you currently handle your social media versus the day-one period, has anything changed?

NFreak - 15:08

It's hard to say. It's almost more about how I changed as a person rather than how I use the account; how I present myself. I do try to limit a lot of the personal stuff, the nonsense. Every now and then you'll see a political Tweet go up because it's some really important stuff, but in the past it was every day constantly just garbage and interacting with people that I shouldn't even be talking to. I definitely learned how I can put myself out there better, if that makes any sense.

Alex - 15:43

No, no! Perfect sense, perfect sense. So kind of branching off of that little political comment, what are, in your book, the do's and don'ts of social media? More specifically the don'ts.

NFreak - 16:04

If something's really important, and most of my following is left leaning because we're all like 20-year-olds at this point.

Alex - 16:12

20-somethings playing video games.

NFreak - 16:17

Yeah, so, again just don't go overboard. Don't go overboard with content that's not relevant to what you do. I'll post some memes and I'll post weird controller stuff here and there, but most people are following me for the games and for the stream more than anything else. But yeah, it's really just trying to stay focused on what we are there for, but also not getting so focused on it that it feels too personal. I think honestly, I know you see a lot of big names, a lot of eSports players top streamers and such, and it feels really fake to me. It's a lot of pushing promotions and such. I know a lot of people don't really feel that way since that's how they got to where they are and that's awesome for them, but I think you need to, this is going to sound cheesy as hell, but keep it real, actually be yourself on there. Limit yourselves as much as you need to but don't be completely fake.

Alex - 17:40

Totally! So taking a step back from social media, but still staying within the networking space, how do you manage networking outside of Twitter and Discord. You know, you run Mute City customs which you know, for the listeners.

NFreak - 18:00

Used to.

Alex - 18:01

Used to? Interesting.

NFreak - 18:03

Yeah, we actually stopped back at the very beginning of the year.

Alex - 18:05

Son of a gun! Didn't even know that. Wow.

NFreak - 18:14

Yeah, honestly it was just that we were a little stressed out from all the business side of things but also just kind of bored of it.

Alex - 18:26

Okay, okay. I go back to the question, sorry for the little tangent...is there any networking that you do outside of social media, any kind of IRL networking or other networking services

NFreak - 18:38

Honestly, not nearly as much I should be. I do try to make it a point to attend at least a couple gaming tournaments a year, but of course when I go, I usually spend time with friends, more than anything else. But I mean, even through events, I've definitely met at least one or two new people at every tournament I've been to. I also trying to make it a point to go to PAX every year possible, though I might skip this year, we'll see. It's expensive. I got a Twitch partner through a team that was originally sponsoring Mute City for a while, we had a little hookup there. I have access to the Twitch partner stuff at PAX. I did not really take advantage of that this year. But if I do end up going next year, I'm going to start making it a point to hang around those areas more. It basically starts with friends of friends. Also, because I'm ridiculously socially anxious. These huge events, even the tournaments that are full of friends of mine, I get so stressed out after just a little bit of time there, and meeting the people that are there is really difficult for me, so this has been helping me to overcome it. It's given me a reason to.

Alex - 20:05

Does the stream itself cause you any kind of social anxiety in the way that an IRL tournament would?

NFreak - 20:16

Not in the same way. There definitely is the stress of making sure everything goes well and I feel bad if I have to skip a day and such, but I've honestly found it to be a massive help more than anything else. A lot of it stems from my terrible speech patterns, which I'm fully aware of, but I think it gives me a reason to really work on them.

Alex - 20:45

That's awesome. That's awesome to hear. That really is. Okay next question. What works right now? What are you doing that is keeping everything held together and growing?

NFreak - 21:01

One, and this is one of the biggest things for me in general that everyone says I've been focusing much more on actually sticking to a schedule. Around the holidays is a little tricky, but I just found that being consistent has been a massive help...there was something else I was about to say...I just lost it, one second.

Alex - 21:30

Hey, you were going to say it, not me!

NFreak - 21:37

Oh, before I was also really just jumping around whatever games I was feeling like, but getting established explicitly as a variety streamer is really goddamn hard.

Alex - 21:48

Yep, I'm researching that! And is it hard as anything!

NFreak - 21:55

That's going on the record!

Alex - 21:59

These interviews are being transcribed, that's the problem!

NFreak - 22:04

Well good luck with that one! But yeah, I've only been playing Hollow Knight for maybe two months now, but I streamed my first casual run of that game and I was instantly hooked, enough so that I basically streamed my entire casual run of the game, which is like 50-60 hours and I was going for 100% and all that. So just doing that got a lot of my dedicated followers interested in the game. And I've been wanting to pick up speed running for a long time, but I never really got around to it, and this game just clicked with me and as soon as I finished this casual run, I was on it. I was studying the world record videos every single night, like figuring out exactly what works in this category and what I need to do. And I've been speed running this game for maybe a month now, and a little humble brag but I'm already top 30 on the leaderboard out of 200 people.

Alex - 23:08

That's sick! What category are you running?

NFreak - 23:10

I'm only doing any%. But I think once I hit sub-40 I'm going to pick up a few other categories. The tech is all similar.

Alex - 23:21

All right. What's the world record in any percent?

NFreak - 23:24

We actually just set it like a week and a half ago. It is 34:11...I want to say. We don't count loads in this community, but everyone's PCs different and the game is coded horribly. If we bring it back to the stream, I'm getting involved in this game, not only got my main following interested in it, but I also got really involved in the Hollow Knight speed-running community. And I hang around the top runners streams for a long time, I make myself known to their scene. They're

seeing the improvement, they like having me around and even just having them as regular followers and viewers now. Getting hosts from the top runners is huge. I think that's a big part one I'm just consistently streaming a single game. Part two is an extension of that, and I'm really surprised to hear this but there's actually a huge overlap between like the Smash community in general and the Hollow Knight community and like everyone has a casual interest and either Melee or Smash 4, now Ultimate. Because of the mystery sponsorship I mentioned earlier, I'm basically splitting my stream like 45-45-10 between Hollow Knight, Ultimate, and weekend fun time stuff. So that kind of brings back a lot of the viewers who were kind of alienated by when I went toward Hollow Knight. Because obviously the people are not all going to be interested in the game and if you're not interested in the game and even if they're a fan of this person, they're going to get bored, if it wasn't their thing. I'm kind of hitting two scenes at once with a big overlap, and it's been helping a ton.

Alex - 25:33

Yeah that sounds really helpful. So building off of that, are there any specific short or long term methodologies that you're using, I know that you are talking with that mystery sponsor that potentially can mean something good down the line, is there anything else that you have set up that might benefit you later down the line that you're working on now?

NFreak - 25:57

Aside from just like grinding Ultimate, I think like I'm mostly focused on just kind of doing what I'm doing and getting that sponsorship worked out. Like we're trying to fine tune the details, like they're actually in it for both sides of this, so both the speed running and the Smash stuff.

Alex - 26:23

Interesting, interesting. Okay so two questions. First one, what is the most fun thing to do on the stream?

NFreak - 26:37

So it's in two things. It doesn't come often, at all, but getting any new Personal Best in Hollow Knight is always amazing. Watching everyone freak out in the chat is always great. Even if people have already beaten the record. Everybody enjoys seeing someone feeling really good about what they've just done. But the other one, which I really haven't done in a while but I really like doing, is random fun games with subs and such. We've done Jack Box a while ago. Next time I do it, it's going to be subs only because doing public viewers was a disaster and I'm not going to take a chance and get my channel banned for that one. I tried to do Ultimate Chicken Horse once since the only person I want to play with is my brother, but it's still fun getting the viewers involved instead of just being there talking away, but that's always here too. But it's a lot more fun when there's direct involvement.

Alex - 27:50

Ok, ok. So the second question, what makes the most money?

NFreak - 28:00

Honestly, it's just the monthly subs. It hasn't happened in a while, but...I hate the term that they use for mobile gaming, they call them whales. I hate the term, but every now and then there are a few people doing bit wars, and let's just say that one of those basically bought me a new green screen and a new light.

Alex - 28:36

Wow! That's awesome!

NFreak - 28:38

But most of it comes from the monthly subs. Everyone that sticks around and the new people coming in.

Alex - 28:46

So there was an earlier question that I talked about...that question was more within the sphere of the day-one period. I want to kind of expand upon it and go towards like streaming as a whole. What are some methodologies that you do not recommend to other streamers?

NFreak - 29:11

Number one is a little thing, but hanging around in other streamers chats and actually getting to know them, making yourself known, that's really good, but don't go overboard with it and don't advertise your own stream whatsoever. That's a big, big rookie mistake, everyone does that when they first start out. So everyone gets it, not a big deal, but at the same time, watch yourself. Make yourself known, but don't make yourself known as that guy. Yeah, don't be that guy. Let's see...I think presentation, and to the best of your ability is important. It's like, if you're not good at graphic design, don't try. I hate how this sounds, but you can try but I don't put your name in an MS Paint overlay and just use that. Like just work on it, but make sure whatever you're showing to the world looks pseudo-professional.

Alex - 30:26

Yeah, I actually really like how Streamlabs has the built in overlays. That was super handy.

NFreak - 30:32

Yeah we started with those until about a year after. It's cool to see. You can tell when somebody is using one of those, but, I mean it works!

Alex - 30:42

It's still better than MS Paint, you know!

NFreak - 30:44

I should pull up that clip of my old one, it's god awful. Like, I love comparing that to what I have today. But I think another big one is ...I don't know how to word this...just don't fall into sponsorship traps. So, I won't mention the name in here, but I think you're probably aware that

there was a team that sponsored Mute City customs a while ago, and they actually wanted us to push the stream configuration and such. I'm thankful that I got partnered, but the direction they were trying to push me, push my business partner and push the little company we were running, because that was actually a big thing, but push both our streams and the company were not the direction we wanted to go in. We kind of accepted it because hey, sponsored!

Alex - 31:36

Right, right. There was a similar precaution that I saw, floating around, related to players and sponsorships, you know, don't rush into a sponsorship, just to have the tag next to your name. Understand the organization that you're going to be getting a part of, learn what they do, learn who else is under the umbrella and make an educated decision.

NFreak - 32:14

Right, exactly.

Alex - 32:16

Okay. Okay. So here is a trickier question that I don't necessarily expect an answer from you. What is something that you think everyone should be doing, but nobody is? Or, what is something that not enough people are doing that you have observed?

NFreak - 32:40

That is a tricky one. I guess the only thing I can think of at the moment is...which I guess is weird because it clearly brings huge success in terms of numbers and recognition, and it goes back to what I said earlier. I really don't like the clean manufactured eSports approach a lot of streamers are trying to take. It works for the big names because they're pretty well established, and they have massive communities. But say, Ninja and Doc and such, it works for them. But then you see people starting out and trying to jump right into that. I have a few mutual followers, really small names that are jumping up and doing that. But like, you can't force it. You really just

can't force that and tagging in the retweet box is not going to help either. So just be yourself. That's as cliché as it gets, but it's true.

Alex - 34:00

Alright. So next up, this is going to be kind of a little bit of a rapid-fire segment. I'm still working on the segment. Right now, it's just got three topics, but I want to dig into each individual topic to get your take on it and how you feel about it. So the first question is a "Gimme." Your take on variety content?

NFreak - 34:27

So it's good in theory, but not great or practical for building a community unless you're already pretty well established. And again, like I mentioned earlier, it's very easy to alienate viewers who followed you for one particular thing and then when you start doing something new.

Alex - 34:42

Do you think that there's anything that you can do to help carry viewers between games?

NFreak - 34:55

If I had any ideas, I would have done them. I'm going to say do a gradual transition, like don't just do a 180 and say "Hey, I'm done with this. Now we are doing this one!" and now I'm good. When I when I quit Melee, for the most part...it was like a gradual switch. I didn't just decide one day I was done. I was still mixing in other games with that. I got into PUBG for a while until that game killed itself...stuff like that. So you might have a following from one game you play, and maybe do something different one night a week. That's even kind of what I'm doing now with the Hollow Knight and Ultimate approach. I'm going to dedicate weekends to Pokemon and stuff.

Alex - 35:46

Alright, so next subject is...this is an interesting one, I want to talk about risk management. So I'll throw a hypothetical situation at you. Let's say...something awful has happened and you are now facing a significant amount of community backlash. You know, something like the Mafia situation, something crazy! Yeah! What is your plan of action to manage this controversy?

NFreak - 36:20

Well it's obviously very dependent on what it is. Wow. I mean, if it's something that, like the best thing to do is-

Alex - 36:30

Obviously, the Mafia situation is a bit of an extreme. But just, you know, the concept of: the internet's angry at you, what do you do?

NFreak - 36:42

Don't say the N word.

Alex - 36:44

Solid advice.

NFreak - 36:46

Always good advice. But obviously, like, it's best to lay low for a while, maybe keep a small social media presence or at least give it a few days for it to start blowing over, then make sure whatever apology comes in a few days is actually genuine and not and doesn't come across as manufactured. Because if you're not genuine about it and you don't think you did anything wrong, then they're not coming back. They're not coming back. It's something you need to actually show that you're learning from it, you understand what you did wrong and actually take the steps to make sure it doesn't happen again. I know it's an ideal world scenario because a lot of people...they'll take their side and then they're done. Cancelled. For some situations, that's entirely valid, like I'm never going to speak to Mafia again, for example. But what I mean, Ninja

is still doing just fine after his couple little incidents. Yeah, and just...good PR. Like, be genuine, but be public.

Alex - 38:17

Okay, okay. So for the last little topic, paid advertising! Is that something that you would consider doing? What's your attitude on it, how would you react if you were on YouTube or something and you saw a paid advertisement for Ninja, or for you know "insert streamer here?" Do you think that that is something that could be effective? You think that that's something that you would participate in?

NFreak - 38:49

No. Honestly, even for the big names, I don't think it's effective for streaming whatsoever. Well especially with those big names, they already have their YouTube content, and it shows up as related videos and such. So it's like they don't really need it at that point. And I'm also the kind of person who as I scroll through Twitter I will block every promoted tweet account I see. I have a pretty strong stance on advertising in general.

Alex - 39:19

Yeah! Interesting, interesting. So what about something from a smaller streamer? Somebody like you? You know, if its other than Ninja, somebody who doesn't necessarily need the boost from the extra exposure be it advertising versus, an amateur streamer who is trying to make a living off of this, who needs that exposure?

NFreak - 39:44

I think it's going to 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. Like if that makes sense, it's not really organic.

Alex - 40:11

Organic. That's a good word! I like that.

NFreak - 40:15

Yeah! And, I guess, the idea of paying to advertise a stream channel in general feels really weird to me. Maybe when the big names it kind of make sense because they actually have like a brand and they actually sell merchandise and stuff, but it doesn't sit well with me at all.

Alex - 40:47

Okay! That's good info, that's good info. Almost to the end! So what is next for you? Do you have any plans in mind for where you want your stream career to go? Do you have any ideas of where you want to be after streaming? Do you see yourself stopping?

NFreak - 41:10

Realistically, I mean, ideally, I really would like to get to a point where I may potentially be able to do this full-time. But with how I numbers are right now, that would easily have to be another three or four years of this. And by then I'll be like 30 years old. So, I don't know, we'll see where that goes. But I mean, for the time being, even with the monetary stuff, it's still really just an after-work hobby.

Alex - 41:44

I mean, you do definitely have the cushy job with being a software engineer! That's a nice paycheck that Twitching ain't giving you!

NFreak - 41:54

I mean, going off of that, I got a little tangent, and I don't think I mentioned this at all for anything else, like it can be really difficult to actually come home from that and jump right into this with maybe only an hour or two to myself, especially after like a really stressful day like... these past three weeks of work have been pretty awful.

Alex - 42:19

What convinces you to start streaming?

NFreak - 43:34 (Delay due to audio interference)

I don't want to like sit around at home or not doing anything productive. Even if I could find something else to do, I still do controller work now and then, stuff like that. It's weird to consider this social, but I really do consider this as more of a social thing.

Alex - 44:00

Oh, it's absolutely a social activity.

NFreak - 44:02

It really helps my mental state.

Alex - 44:11

That's awesome.

NFreak - 44:14

I guess it can feel like a lot of work, coming home from work and then going right into this. Once I press the button, things are going, like I just went in.

Alex - 44:30

Okay, okay. So the last question! Do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, or advice for newer streamers to help get them off of their feet or give them encouragement?

NFreak - 44:44

So I said before, and it is cliché as all hell, but just be yourself and grow your scene organically. Don't be tagging those retweet bots and stuff like that. It looks really fake, it looks like you just care about the numbers. Make friends, make a network, and present yourself well. I'm not saying

go out there and buy all the equipment you can afford and commission this fancy overlay or anything...just, you can literally have an effective stream with just the game capture and a webcam in the corner. People do it and have hundreds of viewers. But don't be fake about it. Just let it grow naturally, it will take a while, and it will be a grind. Stick to a schedule, keep up a social media presence, up and running. Like, Twitter, Discord, Instagram, Snapchat, everything. All those are huge helps. Facebook is for grandparents at this point, so maybe not quite there. But yeah, I think that about covers that tangent over the place.

Alex - 46:11

Awesome! Well, thank you very much for the interview, Tyler! This was enjoyable!

Alex - 0:00

So in our e-mail correspondence, you mentioned that you oversee about 20 or so content creators. Can you expound upon that a little bit more and give a little more detail about your position and what you do for the company.

James - 0:19

Sure. So, I wear a couple hats for Ader, but in this regard I handle the correspondence, the negotiating, the business, signing for, we do the tax work, invoicing, we handle on-site activation. So if they're going somewhere and they'd like onsite support, we'll go to an event with these folks. We handle administrative tasks, so if there's an issue, say with a YouTube channel or maybe just "hey can you log into my Twitter and deal with this issue," we handle that kind of stuff when necessary. Essentially it's a classic talent-and-management relationship, just under the purview of the fact that we mostly handle business requests for these guys, because in today's landscape, as far as management goes, these guys aren't like musicians or actors or actresses in the classical sense, they do most of their work from home. They don't need the same type of support that I've classically done for my other clients. So, yes, we have about 20 to 25 in-house talents and those we represent exclusively, essentially under one branch of the company. We also work with external talent, filling deals and executing marketing campaigns in the other branch of the company.

Alex - 1:42

Okay, okay, and how long have you been working for this company?

James - 1:46

I've been at Ader about four months. Before that, I was at Warner Brothers digital networks doing pretty much the same thing for two and a half years. I also run an artist management company that represents musicians.

Alex - 2:00

Okay, okay. It's interesting, because, you know, I had- my whole questionnaire setup is really stream focused, and taking a step back to go to the management side of things, it's interesting. So I do kind of apologize if the flow of the interview and these questions is a little stilted, because I've kind of had to cut out some of the parts that are more pertinent to live streaming, you know?

James - 2:30

Sure! And if I, you know, if I don't know something, I'm happy to just, you know, to tell the truth and say "Hey, I'm not sure." But, you know, I'm here to help you. And I'm happy to make myself available. So whatever information you need, I'm happy to provide.

Alex - 2:42

Okay. So what made you choose this position and what got you into live streaming and content creation?

James - 2:50

So I'm passionate, obviously, about gaming. And as well about music. As far as how I got involved specifically, with gaming, I think, like most people at my company, I was involved in kind of the- at the infancy of this scene, I played competitive Halo for, you know, three to four years back when there was absolutely no money in it. And there was no focus on it as a potential career path. Then as I worked my way through the music industry, I'm sure as you're aware, there's not a lot of money left in the music industry, it's just fundamentally changing, I decided to pivot into a secondary interest in the gaming space where there is a lot of money, and I ended up at a company that was bought out by Warner Brothers, and, you know, the rest was history.

Alex - 3:40

Okay, okay. So run me through an average week of how you handle things at Ader.

James - 3:51

You know, every week is different. There's going to be a slate of activations for both in-house and external talent. We all touch base on what that looks like on Monday. There's essentially two types of deal flow that we handle, which are (1) direct to talent; and external. Like I said, there's essentially two branches of our company, and one is representing talent; the other is servicing external clients. If you're speaking about servicing external clients, there's folks that come to us and say, we'd like to advertise across a variety of digital landscapes, whether it be Twitch, YouTube, social media platforms, sometimes there's a couple different gray areas in there like Mixer and Caffeine, which are other services that we do some work on, but not a lot. If it's more on the one path, which is the client-facing paths, we're more client focused, we have account managers here that will handle accounts and actively aid them between either external agencies or talent direct. And then, from my side of the line, which is the talent side, I'll handle direct deals to talent that usually don't involve external clients. Someone will come to us and say, I want to work with one specific talent, I'll handle that deal. If someone comes to us and says "We have a \$100,000 budget, we want to work with 20 different talents," then that's kind of a different path that's handled more by the accountants of our team. The average week is, generally speaking, checking in with clients, handling incoming deal flow, handling anything that they're on specifically, if we are boots on the ground in an activation or in events, obviously, planning accordingly. And folks heading out of the office do that. I'd say probably anywhere in the neighborhood of 20 to 100 calls, vetting different potential clients, or vetting different companies, agencies, anybody that resets record talent, vetting those kind of folks. And then there's a whole other aspect of this job, which is what we just call quality of life kind of stuff, which is deals that aren't necessarily going to make us any money, or, handling phone calls for things that involve talent, maybe taking equity in a company, or things like this, you know, just like an interview, or just a fan request. We do a lot of, I don't wanna say..... pro-bono, but cause-based kind of efforts; handling Make-A-Wish requests or fans who want talent to just pop in on their stream, or do something cool, or tweet at them, getting that stuff scheduled. There's a lot of scheduling, direct with talent, understanding what their availabilities are, for what we can sell against. Then there's also just, kind of being what I call just the kind of "being a friend" kind of quotient, which is some of these guys just want to talk about their personal lives, what's going

on, and then handling expectations around campaigns is probably another significant portion of what we do. If they're involved in a campaign where they're getting paid X-Y-Z amount of dollars to deliver X-Y-Z different deliverables, then handling the scheduling of that, the execution of that quality control of that. Then the other half of the job, which is just strictly contracts, making sure everything is papered properly, finances are accounted for accordingly, invoiced for, that type of thing. That's essentially a large portion of our business, because a lot of these guys, don't have a lawyer that they retain full-time whereas we have a legal department, they don't have an understanding of how to contract for these things or properly disclose the nature of relationships, you know, along FTC guidelines, things like that. That's kind of where we handle all that deal flow too.

Alex - 7:30

Okay, okay. You mentioned that sometimes you or other members of the team do boots on the ground. How often are you personally involved in that?

James - 7:43

Me personally, once or twice a month, I would say, so at least 10-plus times a year. Then, because there's two types events: there's activations, or events that talent meet us at, because they're there, they're too busy to do the whole responsibility; and then there's industry events like Twitch Con, E3, PAX, those type of things, which we go to just to stay active in the culture.

Alex - 8:08

Okay. Okay. To what level do you manage the talent within the industry? I would imagine that you leave a lot of management of their own channels and how they handle that kind of stuff and their own social media channels. To what extent do you participate with these streamers in their own activities?

James - 8:40

It depends, I would say, on the talent, but to try to be more granular for you, there are talents where we're literally logged into their social media accounts to help if they say "Hey, can you just take this post down?" or "There's a draft in there, can you post it?" There are a few talents that actually ask us to do that. And there are some where we have absolutely no purview over that, it's simply a business management relationship with direct day-to-day support. And then there's some talent where they're still strictly reach-out-when-they-need-something, they're just a lot less active, maybe in the scene. So, it's different for everyone. I could tell you for some agencies are a lot more hands on than we are. Then there's some agencies that are far less hands on and essentially are barely even there, so it really depends on the maturity of the agency, and essentially the nature of the relationship between the two. Our clients don't have other managers, - well, except one has a secondary manager, but that is a weird relationship. Our other talent has no other management. We're essentially handling everything for them, all in an inward and outbound correspondence, all scheduling, all day-to-day. And some, like I said, they just kind of check in when they want something. The majority of our relationships with these talent is business relationships, bringing them money, handling their scheduling around earnings, and then all the legal and financial kind of tracking that goes with, that's another whole portion of it as well.

Alex - 10:26

And at what point in a streaming career, would you consider taking on additional talent?

Obviously, I wouldn't imagine that you would take somebody with 10 followers who just started their Twitch account two days ago. What are some of the landmarks that you look for when signing on a client?

James - 10:50

Well, a few things, we primarily try to work with personalities. So in the space, you'll encounter people that wear a few different hats, right? Some I would call strictly content creators. They don't build their brand around their personality, they just put out videos around things that they're interested in, and their channel kind of serves as a TV station essentially. We don't do a lot of

work with those guys. We're looking at bringing on one guy that kind of does that, a larger size that kind of warrants it. But generally speaking, we're looking for personalities. And we try, as far as exclusives go, we try to represent a range around that. So it's different. There's not something specifically we look for. If we, as an agency, feel like we have a greater need for mid-sized content creators, because we're getting a lot of deals that these guys can service, then we'll go out and find those guys. Then there's obviously blue-chip people that are very large or experts in their scene where they've either come- you could benefit from management, there's those guys. There's not necessarily a specific type of creator we look for, it really depends on the type of deals that we're getting solicited for and the talent that we feel can execute those. Then the second hand, which is guys that are leaders in the space that we know, we could help. So those are the two types of folks we're actively looking for. There's another kind of under-the-covers type of thing that, all I can really say about it is that, we're in the business of also developing talent, but that's pretty much all I can say about that. We also do seek out very small talent that we feel could be larger given the proper support.

Alex - 12:56

Okay, okay. You said that you handle a lot of the legalese and the tax forms, but to what extent do you handle more direct management of monetization and profiting their content? Do you leave that to the streamers themselves, including managing their subscriptions and bits and donations, and such? Is that something that gets loaded onto your organization?

James - 13:28

There are a couple people that have asked for help with that, and we do that, just strictly record keeping and the legal around that and their finances around that. But I would say, generally, almost all of these guys handle that themselves. Because, I can't technically speak to the legal relationships that we have with these guys, as far as payments go, but generally speaking, we don't take a cut of their streaming revenue. We only take a cut of inbound business that we service and that we've had.

Alex - 14:02

All right. This question will be a little bit out of left field, but it might be something you have some insight on. What are some do's and don'ts that you look for in content creators and live streamers?

James - 14:21

I can definitely give you some insight on that. Like I said, part of what we do is talent development, again, trying to be as vague about it as possible. That's a part of the industry that we're interested in. And specifically, I handle responsibilities for it here. So...it's a little bit of a difficult question to answer, because essentially, this is a business where brands are footing the bill, right? These content creators, essentially, we're doing this as a passion and they've come into careers because brands have gotten involved in this space, whether that be directly them reaching out, saying we want you to work on this campaign promoting X-Y-Z product, or whether that be the fact that these guys buy ad space to get serviced against these live streaming channels, right? So essentially, these guys are all looking for our help in terms of client relationships and brand relationships. I would say the 'dos' are to generally be brand friendly, that doesn't mean not cursing, you can absolutely curse and swear and be whoever you want to be, because people are interested in personalities, whether they're derisive or exciting, or whoever people present themselves, but I would say do be brand friendly. So that means don't go on stream and disparage brands. And don't disparage groups and people's backgrounds and things like that...the obvious stuff. But at the same time, brands don't shy away from controversy. If there's a content creator who has great viewership, and he likes to give his opinion on politics, or give his opinion on other content creators, or, as we call it, create, in air quotes 'Twitch- or Twitter-beef' brands don't necessarily shy away from that, because that generates viewership and conversation. And at the end of the day, that's what they're looking to buy. It's more the common sense around "Don't be inflammatory." But if your brand is "Hey, I'm the guy that gives my opinion on things!" there are still brands out there that want to advertise with you. There's a bit of a twofold path there as well, but outside of that, the do's and don'ts are: do be original do try to work off of best practices. A little bit of research for a content creator will yield the fact that there are best practices in the

Twitch and the YouTube space, staying on a content schedule, engaging with your audience, developing a consistent brand, as if you were a company treating your channel like your company, like you're an entertainment station, essentially. The 'dos' are going to be all of the things that everyone will tell you about Twitch; the 'don'ts' are a little more easily defined, don't disparage, don't go out there and be overly inflammatory. On top of that, I tell everybody these days, because everybody thinks they can start a twitch channel, if you're going to do this, you have to understand that the people that you're competing against in this space for viewership are full time creators, they do this full time, and that's not necessarily easy to do for everybody else. The existential question is, what can you do to get yourself to be a full-time content creator on a part-time schedule? That question, I don't necessarily have an answer for. If you're asking me, content creators that go full-time early on are the ones that are going to be successful. Then at the end of the day, there's tools out there that certain content creators can utilize to grow an audience if they don't have that time. Do stick to the best practices and don't disparage would be my top two.

Alex - 18:15

Okay, okay, here's a slightly trickier question. What is something that you think everyone should be doing, but nobody is, or what is something you think not enough people are doing?

James - 18:34

Let me think for a second..., it's constantly introducing new features. I read a case study recently that said that utilizing Twitch's new features like Twitch Rivals or Twitch things, you know, some of the other stuff that they've added on their Snapchat actually, and Twitch just announced a partnership to have Snapchat filters available on Twitch. That's a new feature that's going to launch. I would say that a lot of folks are late adopters on the features. We've seen case studies that show folks that utilize those newly launched features see a 10% increase in paid subscribers and an almost 50% increase in viewership when using those features. Now we don't know if that's because those types elevate those users that are utilizing them or if it's just a natural affinity for the audience. We know for sure that is a great strategy for the creators that is under-utilized,

so I would happily provide that information to anybody; use new features; use the new things that Twitch is testing. Twitch is going to be excited about it, and viewers are going to want to know, so that's a great little factoid for folks that aren't aware of that. And there's quantitative data to back that up. Then the other thing is, I don't want to say we, but I think it's fairly well known in the industry that being the guy that's playing a lesser known game is sometimes the best path to success. We've seen creators that play small little indie titles, and then that indie title happens to blow up in the social space. And hand-in-hand, they also happen to blow up along with that title. I would also say while you want to play triple A titles that you're going to enjoy, and that your audiences at large are going to enjoy, sometimes taking a risk and developing a great relationship with the publisher and growing with that publisher in that title is a lesser known strategy that some of these guys aren't doing. Some folks might download a Steam game, and really enjoy it and play it, and maybe go from 25 to 100 concurrence, because a game might have fans, but then proactively reaching out to that publisher and saying “Hey, I really loved your title, I would love to be included on outreach, when you're adding features, where there's opportunities around campaigns, I would love to be that guy, I'm supporting your title too.” People don't really realize that's part of how Ninja got to where he was, you know, sticking with Luminosity's group, because they believed in him, and he believes in them; developing those brand relationships on your own, being proactive about it around titles that you really enjoy. Their smaller titles, is also another great strategy that some people might not be aware of.

Alex - 21:15

Awesome. That was actually some really good information.

Alex - 21:35

Okay. Talking about the clients and the talent that you have in the company, how much of a hand do you have in guiding them and orienting them towards what you mentioned earlier, these, quote unquote, best practices? Do you advise your content creators like “Hey, you should be doing this, hey, you should do this,” you know, “maybe don't do that focus on this instead,” do you have a hand in that?

James - 22:02

Yes. Yes, absolutely. We will even go so far as to buy or provide them with things that we think, you know, might help them grow their career. So, if we have a creator who tells us they're not interested on creating on a specific platform, but we're obviously kind of looking to the future, you know, using either company information, or just public information, know that certain games are going to be popular on that platform in and create viewership, we might proactively go out, like I just did last week, and buy them that platform and just say "Hey, like, I know you said you don't want to do this, but we're going to buy you a Nintendo Switch, so that you will at least try these games out. And if you hate it, then you hate it. And at the end of the day, we have management for us to help improve both your business and your quality of life," right? So, we will actively encourage these things. At the end of the day, you can't twist somebody's arm, you know what I mean? If somebody really doesn't want to do something, and they push back, we're going to let it be, but we will, a hundred and ten percent advise and say "Hey, we really think your channel would do well if you play this title or what have you," whatever it might be. You know, there's a lot of different circumstances, honestly, we encourage people sometimes "Hey, maybe you can try out a new camera, we checked out this one, we really like it, we've done deals with them, they're a great company," we've done that. We might encourage folks to....., you know....., I watch all my content creators. My partner, Barb, who also does talent here, she watches all her content creators; we stay active in what these guys are doing. And if we see a drop off in performance or engagement with their crowd, or they haven't done the same amount of our streaming, we might just check in and say "Hey, man, is everything okay? Do you need some help, kind of getting some stuff off your schedule," that sort of thing. Even though we aren't necessarily involved in that as a revenue stream, at the end of the day, the better our creators are at their job, the better...I don't want to say better- the easier...no, the better, we can do our job, that would be accurate. Because if this guy is really at the top, in the forefront of the conversation in space, we're going to be able to make them more money. We're going to make more money. We're going to be able to position them better in the future as we enter different brands spaces that are more, I don't want to say elite, but the higher paying brand spaces, we

want our guys to be on the tip of everybody's tongue. So we are actively engaged in trying to improve their careers, yes. And I think- honestly, I think that's the job of any good manager, is to be both a fan and a critic of their talents' work. We do that, yes.

Alex - 24:35

Awesome, awesome. The next little segment....., I got a few different topics that I kind of want to get your personal take on including how you think the company would handle something like this. What is your take on variety content, just playing whatever games at any time, not necessarily dedicating yourself to a specific group or genre?

James - 25:03

Personally, speaking as a fan, the company is a fan, we actively look for variety streamers, for transparency, I think. I don't necessarily have quantitative evidence on this, but I think that variety streamers, at least here, and maybe other companies have higher earning potential because of the fact that they aren't necessarily tied to one game. Whereas, we might see a guy that maybe is very big in the League of Legends space, he'll get less frequent but larger paydays. These guys that are more in the variety space have more things coming to them from different directions, so there's just more opportunities. Mercedes-Benz might want to advertise with someone. If you're just doing one type of content, that might not match up with what they're looking for, versus if you're a variety streamer, and you have a historical record of the fact that you can cover a lot of different things with success. Speaking about it that way, it seems very, clear cut and straightforward. I would say the challenges of variety streaming are very personality-based. Most of the time, if you're a variety streamer, I would say people are tuning in because they like you, you're going to get fluctuations in your viewership based on what you're playing, obviously. If you jumped onto Pokemon Go two weeks ago, and you were a popular variety streamer, you probably saw a big boost because a lot of people were looking to see what that game was like, versus a guy who just does League of Legends, he might keep a very steady concurrence every time he goes live, and that's great. He is going to get a steady paycheck, but he's not going to be able to capitalize on opportunities as easily. We love variety streamers, it

makes our job easier the more we have, but at the same time, there are challenges to it. It goes hand-in-hand, but we're a fan of variety. Variety is great.

Alex - 26:54

I am particularly interested when you talk told me about how you manage the 20 or so streamers, this was like the first question that came to mind. I want to talk about risk management and risk mitigation. I'll throw a hypothetical situation, let's say one of your content creators is involved with some drama, and they're now dealing with a reasonably significant amount of community backlash. What would you and your company do to help handle this?

James - 27:29

So, oddly enough, there are tools out there to measure sentiment in a chat, right? In the past, when we have issues with this, we will actually try to quantify some of the issues around what's going on. You can actually use these tools to say, what are the recurring keywords that we're seeing here, and you can quantify an issue. it's actually kind of interesting, because Twitch is fairly open about the data that they're willing to provide to third party companies. In situations like that, we've actually taken a kind of a technical look at what might be going on. But at the end of the day, we're comfortable with these creators being an arbiter of their own brand, because we've signed them based off of that brand. If there's a bit of backlash around a stream or a particular issue, we're not overly concerned unless it gets out of hand. We've actually had creators in the past we've had to either let them go amicably or just say "Hey, you know, there's not a lot we can help you with anymore because of the some of the changes you've made, or because of some of the choices you made." And that usually is, like I said, it's usually amicable. It's just like hey, yeah, "I'm kind of taking my career in a different direction." So generally speaking, I would say we've been a relatively drama-free company. Most folks that are signed to management agencies are relatively drama-free in general, because they have management that's proactive about hey, "please don't do this," or "please don't do that." We know that this is something that can negatively affect how people look at you in the space, and the folks that are a little more loose with the keyboard, they generally stay independent just because it's better for

everybody, better for the company, better for them, but our content creators...we work with them because they are the best of the best in terms of professionalism and response time and execution. There's not a lot that I have to handle around risk mitigation outside of liaising with a brand, so where the risks become involved is when there's a contract sign for promotion of something. And we've discussed like "Hey, don't talk about competition, don't go live in anything questionable, don't talk about these things during the sponsor stream." That's really the risk that we mostly deal with. If it happens on their own time, we'll obviously give our opinion on it, but we trust that they understand their brand best. It's not necessarily something we have to get involved in.

Alex - 30:02

Okay. I'm actually quite curious about your take on paid advertising and investing money in spreading advertising around the web, say, like a paid advertisement on a YouTube video specifically for Ninja, not necessarily about anything that Ninja's endorsing, just an advertisement for that channel. What is your take on using paid advertising in the content creation space? And is that something that the company has done before or does?

James - 30:40

So essentially promoting an influencers brand with advertising? Is that what you're asking?

Alex - 30:44

Basically, yes.

James - 30:47

We haven't done any of that. I would say mostly because the majority of our creators are pretty well established or leaders in their fragment of the industry, so we haven't specifically done any of that. Personally, I have no problem with it, you know, exposure- getting exposure is a very imprecise science and however folks go about doing that, as long as it's ethical, I have no problems with it because, if you can afford, for example, to buy advertisements on a another

influencers channel to advertise for yourself, then more power to you, you know what I mean? I would say, it's not a practice I see too much. I mean, obviously, Ninja does it because he's Ninja, and he's more of a, like a company at this point than anything else. But I have no problem with it. We don't necessarily engage in it. None of our creators really do, to my knowledge. Most of the exposure that they get us through either eSports or on-site activations or through brands. That all pays for itself, or is paid for by a third party promoting the influencer being active campaign. So not really something we do, not something we're too familiar with. We know it happens, but not something we touch a lot.

Alex - 32:06

That's interesting! I know that you said you have a 4:30 to get to, so I don't want to take up too much of your time. This will be the last question for you. Do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, anything for any new content creators or anybody to help get them off of their feet? Or to give them encouragement?

James - 32:30

Yeah! The thing I tell everybody is that what people are not understanding about this space right now is that it's the Wild West. Everybody thinks this is a mature industry. And this industry will look drastically different in one year, let alone 10 years, right? Like Twitch is, essentially, on maybe year 4 of like being in the public conversation, right? So honestly, probably less than that, I'm a bit of a nerd, so I've known about it forever. But what the common public is aware of, this is probably a really, really new thing. Every time I talk about what I do, people's minds are blown. They don't know that this is a thing, right?

Alex - 33:18

I've been talking with some of the professors in my own department, which is the game design department, and they're still flabbergasted by what's going on in the space.

James - 33:26

When I tell people the amount of money that's available in this space, it drops their jaw, you know, because people aren't aware of the fact that gaming is the only entertainment industry that's growing right now. All of the other ones are shrinking or staying steady. Gaming's up 18% year over year. I think I saw something like movies are down like 6%, you know, so this industry is one of the few that are growing. If anybody's a new content creator, get in now, because you might think that you're late to the game, but we're experiencing our first superstar. Ninja is the first superstar in the space. How many superstars have there been in movies? Millions...well, not nearly that many- thousands of superstars in movies over the course of the history of movies. We're still looking for our second superstar, so get in now. Understand that it is a bit of a Wild West, and all the expertise that you gain today, tomorrow, and for the rest of your life in this industry will only gain value as time goes on, so get in now. Understand that it is a professional space that the best creators handle it professionally. And the sooner that you learn to treat your channel like a business and a TV station, the better off you'll be. Understand that you're competing against people that are really great at this, and there's no problem with emulating those people because most people don't even know who's out there. Take examples from best practice and run with them. Then also, try to be unique because people that have done unique things in the space have made careers, right? If you're going to ask me "Hey, what's unique in the space?" I don't know, that's up to the creator to think about. I see things, I recognize them as unique, I say "Wow, that's great, this is a really cool thing someone's doing," I can appreciate that. But I don't know it till I see it. And at large, the space doesn't know till they see it, right? We look at the top five creators, most of them are just straightforward personalities, the Tifus, the Ninjas, the Shrouds, they just are who they are. But then you get a dark horse in the top 10, like a Dr. Disrespect who's a full-blown character, right? I don't know how he made that work, but that was an original idea and he ran with it. There is room in the space for growth. Music is widely underrepresented on Twitch; IRL type activations, widely underrepresented. Gaming is the most widely represented activation, so trying to find crossover between genres is important. Trying to be proactive with brands, trying to be proactive with the Twitch community, building your own community around Discord and around your Twitch channel of people that support you and interact, and other creators of your size that want to participate in what you're doing is really

important. A lot of people are growing their communities just around fan interaction and around Discord servers, so trying to utilize the tools that are there now, trying to be, what I like to call an early adopter on certain things, taking risks, all of these things are very important because I hammer home the idea that this is a nascent industry, is it as baby as baby can be, so if people are like looking around and they're investors or something, we talk to them, it's like "What's the hottest new thing?" and I say "You're in it, you're looking at the hottest new thing in the entire planet," Twitch is the hottest industry on the planet right now. Getting involved now, dedicating time now, even if you can't be a full-time streamer, it's important because I honestly think that there will come a day where every single person and every single square of the planet has a Twitch channel and your mom can tune in to see what you're doing. I think that there will come a day that celebrities all have Twitch channels, they live stream whatever they want, and then Instagram will aggregate up to Twitch, or vice versa. I think there's a homogenization of this kind of live aspect of life that's coming, and Twitch is just the first wave of it. Finding out where your place is, if you're interested in this, now is only to your advantage. So that's what I tell everyone, it's kind of like the podcasting. Everybody should have a podcast, everybody should have a Twitch channel, every- you know, this is a very healthy industry in terms of financial robustness, but also in terms of what you can give back to the community. You know, some people are obviously playing video games on the platform, and that's great. There never was a platform for people that were interested in gaming before, it was a very closeted interest, you know? That's why everybody looks at the space, sometimes with a negative light, I look at it with a very positive light. It gave lots of people an outlet for creativity that that was really a closeted interest before. If you're interested in anything, if you're a chess player, livestream yourself playing chess, if you're a guitarist, livestream yourself playing guitar, it's only good for the industry, it's only good for the space, it's only good for you. That's what I tell everybody; this is a very healthy, positive thing people are doing.

Alex - 38:05

Wow.

James - 38:06

I mean, this is one of my passions in life, this industry, because it is so new and so exciting. And the fact that you wanted to talk about it was the reason that I took time to do it, because I want people to know about this, I want people to know about what our company is doing, and how exciting it is to be in the space. We have a 23-year old CEO, he's 23 years old and he's on Forbes 30 under 30 because of how well he created this company, and the foresight that he had to see all this coming. He got involved as soon as you saw this. And I encourage everyone who has an interest in it to also do the same thing, because you could be on the Forbes 30 under 30 if you react fast enough. That's the truth of it.

Alex - 38:44

Wow. It's funny that you made that last comment, I was just about to say, I have loved the energy from you this whole interview. It's very clear that you care about this industry, you care about these platforms, you care about the company, and it shows.

James - 39:03

We do. Everyone here shares the same thing, we hire people, this company, this passion. My two passions in life are music and gaming. I tell everybody what I'm looking for are opportunities to have music and gaming intersect more because I think they should be best friends. That's really what my passion, and professionally what my passion is.

Alex - 39:21

Yeah. And that passion is mirrored in this project. That is why I am doing this project. This is a Master's thesis with the intention of aggregating the best methodologies for live streaming. So that anybody and everybody can look at this resource and know and have a better idea of what you should be doing in this space to make money.

James - 39:48

People should understand that this is actually one of the most viable career paths on the planet right now. There are countless industries that are dying and will not exist in our lifetimes. Music, for example, I tell everybody, music is no longer an industry, it is a hobby. It is one of the most popular hobbies on the planet, because anyone can make music now. And right now, anyone can start a Twitch channel and there's actually a professional path you can take. When I tell people that I deal with people that wake up in their nine-to-five, if they sign on and played video games from nine to five, they cannot believe that that is what it is. And then, when I tell them that most of the people that we work with make more than a doctor makes, that's blows their mind. So this is a 100% viable career path and our company goes out into high schools, into the community, and we try to educate people- youngsters, because what we see is we see young people who aren't necessarily interested in going to sports and aren't necessarily interested in a technical trade and aren't necessarily interested in, you know, working in your everyday career path, and we want to let them know that they're the future of this industry, whatever they come up with in their bedroom can be their careers. We find that very empowering as opposed to what I think maybe five to ten years ago, parents didn't want their kids doing this, they didn't want their kids sitting in their basement playing video games all day. My mom, my mother, my parents included, and had I known this was coming, I would have played video games the whole life every day, all the time. It's what I love to do, for better or worse, you know, but there are healthy- this is a healthy industry, this is a healthy, viable career path for kids that don't know what to do with their time or are passionate about something that they might feel is niche. I knew friends growing up that played Magic the Gathering, and they were like "Man, this is all I want to do," and I was like "Yeah, well, too bad. It's a game, that's not going to happen." But we just did an activation for Magic the Gathering that paid more money than, you know, we could even admit to people, to play a game. It's so exciting to be on the edge of something that is brand new. And when I go to music events, and I go to represent my artists that are musicians, I end up talking about this, because people are wondering "Hey, what's up with that, like, how are people making money? How is this happening? Who are the folks that are on the ground floor?" And I tell them "the entire industry is 20 and 30 somethings that are making up the rules as they go along. And you should be part of it." It's exciting, and it's easy to talk about, and again, the reason I wanted to get

on the phone with you and took the time was because I find it amazing that this is- you can write a Master's thesis about this. I find it great that some colleges offer classes in this. It's exciting because my whole life, when I said "I love to play video games," everybody's said "You're a weirdo, you're a loser," you know? And now when I say I work in video games, everybody's like "Oh, I wish I had that job," you know? Like, oh, how the turntables have turned, you know?

Alex - 42:53

All right. Well, I think that about wraps it up. I will stop the recording. Thank you very much, James. This has been great.

James - 43:02

Happy to talk to you.

Alex - 0:00

I remember when I first found you and your research it was the Gold Rush paper where you went to TwitchCon. You interviewed a handful of streamers about what their lives are like about their daily routines, about what it's like being a quote unquote "pro streamer" and then looking more into your academic profile. There was a particular line that I remember: you're particularly interested about "the correlation between profit and play" and you worded that specifically; so what came first? Was it the profit or the play that you found interest in first?

Mark - 0:43

Hmm, that's a good question, let me think about it...

Alex - 0:46

Rather was it at the same time? Where did you first find interest in this field?

Mark - 0:57

I think I definitely found interest in Twitch first on the profit side, in that although I watched it for leisure when I was at the final parts of my PhD, I on one level, observing other people playing games is quite an old thing in games culture, like we watch people in arcades and this type of stuff, and we watch friends at home and so on. And so the player aspect - and I've been playing games since I left the womb so I know games well and I know viewing games well - and so the play aspect, I mean it was neat and different and new and fresh to watch someone doing that from home and not being physically present in the same spaces and when they play. But definitely the profit side struck me; I remember in my PhD I watched mostly speed runners back then, and I remember one guy who was...ah hmm, might still be, a speed runner [of] the Mega Man games. I remember one day, I was just working and had Twitch on in the background, and someone donated to this guy \$1,234; I thought "WHAT on earth has just happened!?" And I thought it was some kind of prank or troll or meme or something, but of course it wasn't. And then about sort of 10 minutes later, someone else donated \$1,235 because they couldn't bear the other person to be listed as that day's top donor. And when I'd kind of seen, you know, the best

part of a month's wage, let's say being donated in the space of 10 minutes for what is an entirely free viewing service, that kind of made me sit up and go, huh, okay, that's interesting. What is that encourages people to give this much money for a free service, and sort of how is this...how is the fact that this exists as this kind of latent possibility affecting how people think of their streaming activities?

Alex - 3:18

Interesting. So you became fascinated and how people can make such huge amounts of money on Twitch, and it was sparked by such a unique occurrence. Where did it go from there? How did it turn from something you're interested in to something that you're now doing postdoctoral research on?

Mark - 3:38

Sure. So, um, I started doing some research on eSports when I started watching Twitch, and most...a lot of what I watched on Twitch was eSports stuff, especially Melee and CS:GO and I was doing some work with the ESL, the Electronic Sports League, I seem to remember what happened was that Twitch saw some of my research on eSports. I hadn't thought about doing Twitch research; at that point, at least more than now, Twitch felt very much like a vehicle for broadcasting eSports, and to a lesser extent it was just broadcasting the average person in their home doing game stuff. And so in the process of studying eSports, I was kind of studying Twitch as well on some level, but then Twitch themselves saw my eSports research, and I got talking with the company, and there was a real kind of shared interest in researching Twitch. Clearly I wanted to do academic research, but if it could have some impact on the company, and there could be some kind of academic industrial partnership here, then that sounded great, and so we talked this through, and this happened in the end. And then from that point on, Twitch very kindly gave a lot of access at things like TwitchCon and access to speaking with staff and so on. And then at that point, he just kind of became clear that Twitch that point had turned into this huge sort of amateur content production platform as well as this eSports broadcast platform. And they weren't really many people researching Twitch, and those who were tended to be in

disciplines like HCI or CompSci who were looking at aspects of Twitch which were not the aspects I wanted to look at, and just kind of snowballed from there and became this big source of data, became a space where, it seemed that I had a lot to say that maybe other people probably didn't in the Twitch space. And just a kind of area where, I could mark out a big part of my academic career in an area which was getting bigger and bigger and bigger, but few people were actually publishing in.

Alex - 6:11

Interesting. So the Gold Rush paper did that happen after you had been in talks with Twitch?

Mark - 6:19

It did, yeah. Yeah, they facilitated the 50 or so people who we talked to the first TwitchCon, and they were very intrigued by the kinds of people making jobs on Twitch. Yeah, and so that one came first, followed by the "Disability" paper which you might have seen and the "How is Twitch Affecting the Games Sector" paper, which only came out about two weeks ago, I think. And then there's two others, which I can send your way if I've not sent you, I'm not sure if I have or not. And I'm working on a book now as well, and this all kind of happened in no small part on the back of that, but lots of the data which I/we've drawn for lots of the papers also just comes from watching a lot of Twitch, as I've watched probably about two or three hundred channels now for a couple hours each, or longer, if there's something really kind of distinct or striking about a certain channel.

Alex - 7:23

That's crazy, that's interesting. Yeah, I almost echo that statement about how you mentioned you felt as though Twitch was this unexplored research space, and those were exploring the research space weren't necessarily in the same field outside of your "Gold Rush" paper, I struggled to find research on Twitch expressly about making money and profiting off of these platforms. I'm telling myself there it is - the topic of this research. There's so much potential here - there's so much that can be worked on. There was something else that I wanted to say. In some way I'm

almost starstruck to be talking with you right now. You've just been this...

Mark - 8:18

That's very kind of you!

Alex - 8:19

...this figure that's been involved with me and my work for so long that I'm almost at a loss for words sometimes but I'll give it my best shot.

Mark - 8:30

That's very kind of you, I'm glad to be of some help!

Alex - 8:34

That's what I was going to say! I'm glad that you that you're being so willing to help. So the other thing that I wanted to say was from what I've been seeing. Nowadays it's less about the HCI and the CompSci people recently and it's way more about the humanitarian people and everybody's examining the culture of Twitch and the psychology of the viewer and I you know the motivations of people who watch Twitch and, that's like it's interesting but at the same time I'm looking around and the only thing that you see is a Vice article saying "Here are the top five tips for making money on Twitch" and it's the same five things that every other goddamned article that's ever been published is saying.

Mark - 9:26

Very true. Yeah, there's definitely a lot of sort of popular interest in Twitch now as well like there was a piece in The New York Times while back, a piece on the BB, a piece on Vice I'm sure like you say. Yeah, and that's really grown in the last few years, and I would agree that a lot of that is focused on this kind of, how do you make it, what are the top five tips type of thing, and it's interesting to contrast that against all the few streamers who've gone public about kind of the stresses and strains of the job right. Like there was a guy called Ben Bowman? Who published a

piece on where was his piece, was it on Medium or Polygon maybe on Medium I think, where he's been a pro streamer for three or four years now I think. I in fact, used watch him a little bit back in the day, and he published a piece about sort of how, how many hours he works and the toll it's taken on on his health and his family and his partner and this type of stuff. But those pieces don't seem to do anything to reduce the flood of "How to make it as a pro streamer!" pieces, right, which is interesting. And like in the Gold Rush paper, I think we talked a bit about sort of how, how positively streamers talk about their careers, even while talking about the labour of love that they require. And I think that allows the public on some level to overlook the downsides and focus on the positive sides, and also, I think a lot of people who are not pro streamers, but who aspire to be so, they see the good sides and they see the downsides, and they say to themselves, well, all those downsides...that won't happen for me. Yeah, it'll just be the good sides.

Alex - 11:25

It's just going to be great every day. Oh, yeah.

Mark - 11:29

Yeah, and there's nothing wrong with being optimistic, but I think that is a little bit naive, especially if you want to do this as your job - as in the only people who can make a living on Twitch and do very little of the tedious grind are those who are so successful, they can either just not do the tedious grind, and still have enough viewers to make money, or they're so successful they can pay other people to do all the tedious grindy rubbish - and so the idea of going from nowhere to full time living without doing like, many, many hours of offline grind every day or at least most days, I think that's I don't want to say it's impossible, as there will always be outliers, but it's extremely, extremely unlikely.

Alex - 12:20

Absolutely agree. Yeah. Even recently there have been a lot of just YouTubers and content creators. I know that even Ninja himself has said that the job is absolutely horrendous. I know

that a handful of bigger YouTubers are just absolutely breaking down. There was a panel that I attended at PAX East and they were talking about maintaining. It literally was a whole panel about maintaining a healthy lifestyle while you are pursuing something like this. They were talking about people have died on stream and people have gone up in smoke and had a heart attack while they were out there. There's news articles about that and I'm saying I've seen YouTube videos of people saying Twitch ruined my life. Twitch completely separated me and alienated me from my entire family, and I lost every single personal relationship that I had and I lost my job, I lost my house, I lost XYZ, it's absolutely bonkers. Even in your "Gold Rush" paper you mentioned that almost every single person you interviewed you use the term "precariat;" they all understood that their position was incredibly precarious. It was not permanent. It was a high risk, low duration job, but they love the ever loving Dickens out of it.

Mark - 13:52

Yeah, yeah, definitely. Yeah, it is a weird combo, I mean, I think we talked about this in the paper, but in an era where there's fewer and fewer jobs for young people, where young people have been disproportionately harmed by the financial crisis, where most young people irrespective of sex, race, class nation, etc. play games, it's not an clearly it's not hard to see why playing games as your job sounds amazing, of course. And on one level, to think back to when I played poker, there's a lot of commonalities between that and streaming in that it's kind of a self-driven job, it's to do with how many hours that you put in, there's no security, there's no trade union of course, or things of this sort. And yet, I definitely found that the excitement and pleasure and kind of gratification, and what's the other word I'm looking for...and the sort of self-determination of playing a game as your job is very compelling, and is very, I'm trying not to say intoxicating, but it's something close to that I think, especially as, kind of, when one's immersed in games culture, and when success - however defined - in games is culturally considered to be a positive thing in the games world, of course; to have reached so much success that you can make a job from, it is an incredibly sort of, almost emancipating thing. And so I do see why folks still do this in spite of the somewhat strong downsides of Twitch and yet again, like we say in the paper, a lot of people are basically saying, "Yes, I will stream on Twitch until I

can no longer take it, or when Twitch shuts down, or until some other job comes up, and then I will leave.”

Alex - 16:11

Right. I've seen a couple of news articles and people talking about how kids these days - the new generation, and the Gen Z. They don't want to be astronaut. They don't want to be the president. They want to be Youtubers. They want to be streamers. They want to be a part of this culture and I think the onus is on the academia now to kind of challenge this grind culture that is present. There was one of the other panels that I attended at PAX East it was the same panel. I've attended so many panels about streaming.

Mark - 17:01

Tell me about it.

Alex - 17:04

They were talking about that the grind culture and how the grind culture at least on Twitch was something that was mandatory in 2013 and 2014 when the platform was first starting out. You needed to prove that there was nobody else on the platform worth watching other than yourself however it seems like that standard is starting to change. I think that the grind culture especially with all the people that are coming out saying they're burnt out, and they can't stand this anymore, and there are more optimized methods of getting this job done, and more, more advertising revenue more, larger companies sticking their fingers into the pie. I think it's going to start being less about, “can you edit videos, and can you talk on social media”. Now it can you do actual marketing, can you do finances, can you actually market yourself as a product as opposed to just throwing passion hours at it until something happens. That's kind of the effort that I want to do with this master's thesis. I want to break that luck down. I think that's one of the core elements of my purpose statement is I think everybody that says, you need luck to succeed on Twitch, and you need luck to succeed in content creation. I think that's bullshit. I think it's an absolute lot of hogwash and that there's so much that you can do to drastically

increase your chances.

Mark - 19:24

Can I just quickly comment on the luck point? I guess for me, it depends on how you define luck in that there are streamers who started from nowhere and they made it to pro without these sorts of things taking place, but there are some who would start to start to stream, had 10 viewers, and then a big name streamer finds them shares them on Twitter and suddenly they shoot up to 1000 views within a day. That is definitely a luck thing, like 99 percent luck. I guess the question is, how much does that determine the outcome versus how much does that accelerate the outcome?

Alex - 20:14

Exactly.

Mark - 20:16

So, and I think it's very hard to say that because the sample size that one has for this type of stuff is quite small. Lots of streamers don't want to talk about when they "got lucky" in air quotes, if they did, and on some level, again we could maybe view the luck as more like variance than as luck in that things can speed up your development on Twitch or slow them down, but do they completely determine the outcome? It's tricky to say, I think if you decided to only stream for one month, and then if you don't get lucky, by the end of it, you quit, if you do get lucky, then you keep going, then, I guess in that sense, the luck does shape the outcome of your time on Twitch. But that's only luck affecting things kind of within a particular sort of expectation of your labor and your time, and so on. So I think it's tricky. But personally, I wouldn't like to completely reject the good fortune argument. I think it just needs to be framed within: what are the social expectations of the platform, and how does the culture of Twitch work to make certain people visible and certain people not?

Alex - 21:31

Right. I think you worded it well and it's been a while since I've talked about the influence of

luck and this section of my paper, and it reminded me of a caveat to it. I think that luck as the sole factor of success on these platforms is hogwash. But yes, there's absolutely you can get a phone call or a tweet from Drake saying, hey, let's play Fortnite and then definitely you're the richest man on the internet.

Mark - 22:04

Always helps, from my experience having calls from Drake, yes, definitely.

Alex - 22:10

So talk to me about your perceptions of the platform right now. Where do you see Twitch right now? Where do you see it headed? What's the big thing on Twitch?

Mark - 22:22

Sure. Well, I think it's interesting that Twitch is trying to expand outside of games of course, with Twitch Creative and Twitch IRL and stuff like this. I think those are those are definitely interesting developments. So where's the platform now... I think it's interesting that they're trying to expand beyond games like Twitch Creative and Twitch IRL, they're only a tiny part of the platform right now, of course, less than 1% of what viewed on Twitch and from what I found there's quite a big culture gap between gaming streamers, which is, which is 99.X% of Twitch and non-game streamers. There's a big culture gap as Creator streamers see themselves and their communities as far more inclusive and friendly and laid back and open, I guess, compared to game streams, and IRL don't really seem to have much interest in the rest of Twitch, they seem to be doing what they would be doing anyway on Facebook, or YouTube or Twitter, but they just happen to be doing to doing it on Twitch. So I think that the rise of these two little kind of distinctive non-gaming cultures on Twitch is that is pretty interesting. They're very slow, I don't know for sure if they will grow if they do grow, I think we will see some kind of tension over what is the purpose of Twitch, what is the goal of Twitch, and even when IRL and Creative came out first we did see a lot of games streamers, I wouldn't say complaining but at least kind of voicing uncertainty over the direction of Twitch over the centrality of Twitch to games, over the

centrality of games to Twitch, and so I think that's something to watch out for. I think also we always need to keep it mind that Twitch compared to a platform like Douyu in China in terms of pure numbers Twitch is way smaller, although Twitch dominates the live streaming space outside of China, in pure numbers, it is the second biggest stream site on Earth, not the biggest, of course. And so lots of which has done has been inspired by what Douyu did first, although some stuff that Douyu's done was inspired by Twitch as far as I know. So I think it's also worth keeping in mind the wider live streaming ecosystem, so in terms of where Twitch is going... well, I've argued this in my papers, and not just because Twitch are central to my research career: I think Twitch is, I mean a really central part of the games ecosystem now; it changes how games are consumed, how we think about game cultures, it changes how games are advertised, it changes who has access to game development expertise, because you can go on and watch game dev streams, it changes how long games last for, like we've seen lots of indie games gain kind of second lives on Twitch. It changes also sort of how we decide what games to purchase. In the old days we would watch a video review, or read a textual review or someone talking about a game, and now we can just tune in on Twitch and watch someone playing a game which we might be thinking of buying. And that's a pretty big shift, actually now [that] Twitch was bought by Amazon and you can you can buy games directly through Twitch, I wouldn't be surprised if Twitch - and just to stress (seeing as I work with Twitch) I have no internal knowledge that this is the case at all - will look to challenge Steam in the next x years, as a platform for the consumption of games and for and for keeping track of achievements in games, who play what games, and gaming hours, and this type of stuff in the same way that Steam metricizes a lot of game activity. I wouldn't be surprised if we saw that shift, and also wouldn't be too shocked if we see Steam open up some kind of live streaming model as well, specifically to compete with Twitch. Steam has the monopoly on most of the things that Twitch doesn't have, but I feel like Twitch is more of a central path for games culture now than Steam is, without a doubt actually, and it will be interesting to see where that goes. Did that answer your question? I feel like I just gave a huge ramble about the political economy of Twitch and ecosystem.

Alex - 27:53

Rambling is what I live for.

Mark - 27:56

Fantastic.

Alex - 27:59

It's funny you say that. Have you heard about steam.tv?

Mark - 28:03

I actually haven't, no.

Alex - 28:05

Yeah! They did exactly what you just were talking about. Steam opened up, at least right now, they opened up a streaming service.

Mark - 28:16

So they have, huh.

Alex - 28:19

I don't know much about it and I don't know how far it's gone since it was debuted, but I believe was set up to stream The International. So I can see Steam probably delving more into Steam broadcasting, but that hit the shitter real quick.

Mark - 28:48

Well steam.tv is a new one on me, thank you for bringing my attention to that I completely missed [it] actually.

Alex - 28:56

So one of the reputations that you know, one of the other content creator websites YouTube has,

is that YouTube being owned by Google is just slowly and surely becoming more and more beholden to their stockholders and to the advertisers, and becoming less and less of an intuitive website for its content creators. Do you see Twitch following a similar trend now that big daddy Bezos is running the show?

Mark - 29:40

It's interesting. I mean, clearly, it's very hard to know Amazon's strategic decision making process as a company, right, they are very opaque, of course, and if I had to get a sense of what they're thinking, what they're doing, and prior to the purchase, my sense was that there wasn't a huge sort of amount of rumors or expectations about this. And now they own Twitch, for the last couple years. Since they've owned Twitch, whoever's in charge of Amazon's impact on Twitch has been very clever and very savvy about it. As if they recognize that gamers tend to be very against corporate culture, and corporate takeovers and this type of stuff. And the only real effects Amazon has had on Twitch that are directly visible to the viewer is that you can pay for subs using your Amazon Prime thing, which all that does is make things slicker and faster because everyone on the planet has an Amazon account. And also Amazon have lent the support of things like Amazon Web Services and so on to Twitch, which I think has helped with the back end. And you can buy games, which you see on Twitch through Amazon. So from the point of view of the Twitch viewer, they haven't seen a lot of Amazon corporate stuff up here on the platform; all they're seeing is, hey, it's now easier to subscribe, it's easier to buy games that you see on Twitch and so on. And so the Twitch public response to Amazon that I've seen has ranged from neutral to positive. I'd say I haven't really seen much in the way of negative feedback. As for the Twitch streamers, I think they've been overwhelmingly positive with it. It brings new ways for them to make money, new ways for them to encourage lock-in for viewers who become locked into their particular channels, through subscribing and things like this. I think a big question is, will Amazon go further? Will they...try to further corporatize the face of Twitch that the average viewer sees. If they're smart, they won't, in my view. I think that will be a big mistake, especially for a platform, and for a website which subsists on its on its sub-cultural aspects, on its sense of game identity, on its sense of inclusion, on its sense of being a space

where you are genuinely forming communities with fellow gamers and like-minded people, I think it would be a big mistake for Amazon to put any more of their stamp on the platform. On the other hand, Amazon owns Amazon video, which has been nowhere near successful something like Netflix, and yet, Amazon do clearly have a big interest in video content and video production. So I think it'll be interesting to see whether they see Twitch as something that they can use to do stuff which Twitch doesn't currently do. I think that could potentially have some big impacts on Twitch.

Alex - 33:56

Yeah, yeah, I can absolutely see that. Yeah, I remember there was somebody saying that Twitch, the Twitch prime sub was the single greatest gift in the history of content creation. So one of the questions on my interview sheet is and you probably have some insight on this, what do you think are the biggest hurdles on the platform right now? Obviously we all know that Twitch is one of the most top heavy content creation platforms out there. There is an absolute ocean of people with less than 10 concurrent viewers, and then I remember measuring this statistic. I think it's the top 10 streamers of any game control about 50% of all viewership for that game. So aside from the overwhelming competition that you face upon entering the field, what are some of the other hurdles that you see?

Mark - 35:50

From of the point of view of someone wanting to make a living on twitch?

Alex - 35:53

Yes.

Mark - 35:57

So clearly, we talked about the time it takes, we've talked about elements of luck, which can accelerate things. I guess the biggest challenge, of course, is trying to stand out on a platform of 2 million people who stream. I think it's increasingly hard to stand out on the platform without

just being someone who frames themselves, as "I'm just going to stream every day for the next two years, and that's the kind of the core offering of my platform, is streaming every day for two years," which people do of course, and that works well, but I think the big challenges are to try and find some way to stand out work life balance, maintaining what you what you need to do off stream as well as on stream. But also, I don't think that there's a finite number of gimmicks you can use to do well on Twitch, but I do feel that a lot of people have monopolized certain areas of the platform already, with particularly good usernames, with unique personas, things like that. I recall, at one point we talked to this guy who thinks himself as the Twitch pirate, who basically streams in a pirate accent when he seems on Twitch...

Alex - 37:29

I know who you're talking about.

Mark - 37:35

And he almost always stays in character, and when we asked him "so why precisely do seen as a pirate?" He said "Well, because no one else was doing so." As though that just explains it, and on some level it actually does, because he found a framing of himself and his content that no one else had ever used, that made him stand out, etc. And, you know, I'm not sure how many truly, distinctive ways there are to stand out on Twitch...and I think it would be good to study now people who are right now coming on to Twitch and trying to make a living. And as you say, when the platform is very top heavy, and when we see the income of the most successful streamers going up with every year, that doesn't necessarily mean the number of streamers who can make a living is going up. So I think the real challenge is, just how do I stand out on what is undoubtedly at this point a saturated platform. And, like 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 at a 48-hour streams and 72-hour streams and it became apparent that the only way he could do this, as he 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. And of course, Twitch does not endorse that and does not say that people should do this, of course, but the fact that these sort of...entrepreneurial minded people have discovered that you might have to do stuff like this if you want to do well on well on Twitch is pretty striking thing, and definitely big challenge for people who are getting to the platform now, with the intention of trying to make a living.

Alex - 40:49

That's absolutely crazy. I'd never heard of that one before. I'm spreading that story around. That's hilarious. So here is something that I ask the streamers themselves. Is there anything that you think isn't being done enough on the platform; something that in the sample size that it has is proven or has been shown to be effective, but it's not necessarily prevalent?

Mark - 41:30

So again, so people trying to make a living.

Alex - 41:33

Yeah, that's the whole perspective of this interview.

Mark - 41:35

Well, I'm not sure that there is honestly. I think Twitch offers a lot of good tools to aspiring streamers. But I guess one thing is the platform, although a lot of platforms have this, the platform definitely has a discoverability issue for new streamers. One, everyone who's on the front page is always a big name, and when you click on a game, it sorts streamers by how many people are viewing them at that point. I think the combination of those two technical practices definitely leads to something of a discoverability issue for new streamers. Like Twitch used to do the spotlight thing where they would take a low to mid tier streamer, so like someone who's been streaming for a bit, someone who has a decent community around them, but someone who definitely does not make enough money to make it their job, they would find them and publicize them on the homepage. The sense I got from talking to some of those broadcasters was that that

helps a lot but he but even so if there's 200,000 low- to mid-tier streamers or 300,000 low- to mid-tier streamers, it's still only one of them getting publicity on the homepage every day. So I think the big thing is, how do you discover new streamers who are already big names? And it's hard to see what the answer to that is... I don't think this is a "blame Twitch" thing at all, as all platforms struggle with discoverability for smaller voices, all platforms do this because the kind of metricization and the algorithmic way these platforms work, do tend to privilege existing big names, and lots of cases, that's what the platform itself wants on Twitch, or Facebook, or Twitter, or YouTube, or wherever, because the biggest names will be those who have most effectively monetized their content, and therefore it's in the platform's interest to push those who've monetized their content, right? And so in that context, I think it is very tricky...to see both how Twitch could do this, because it's hard for platforms in general to push smaller figures, but it's also I think it's at least open for debate. To what extent is it in Twitch's interests to show off small streamers as much as they show off bigger streams?

Alex - 44:55

Interesting. So kind of an extension off of that or rather an inversion of it. What is there, if anything, that you have seen or you have observed that you think people should not be doing?

Mark - 45:13

Oh, let me think about that for a second. You mean any kind of critical mistakes?

Alex - 45:24

I mean, obviously racial slurs on stream, that's a big one.

Mark - 45:28

Not a good idea, although there are number of alt-right streams, where the streamer prides themselves on a space for "free speech," quote, unquote. Where in those streams they are supposedly comfortable with a lot of slurs and unfriendly terms, which is an interesting side issue, which I can say more on if you want. But in general, yeah, clearly, in general, just not

being a shithead is a good idea. And also just not taking your viewers as granted, I think is quite important as well. Not that a lot of streamers do this, but I've definitely seen streamers who...who are definitely less responsive to viewers than most streamers would be, let's say. And I would also add that there are some streamers who have very impressive communities of people, but who don't monetize them, and clearly if they don't want to, that's fine. And I think if you fail to do that, initially, it's very hard to then go back and monetize them after, because your viewers have become used to not having to give money to get the streamer's attention, or to be part of the culture on that stream, and so forth. And if you get up to up to a few thousand viewers, and then you go back and say, hey, actually, in fact, from now on, if you want to talk to me, you need to give me money that probably won't go down well. So if you want to be a pro or a semi-pro on Twitch, I think you need to frame your steam like that...not from day one, but at least from pretty early.

Alex - 47:57

Okay, interesting. So it's let alone on Twitch in 2018 or 2019, I should say, in the in the current year it's essentially impossible to flourish and succeed especially on internet-oriented markets without a Twitter and various social media handles. So for somebody that's looking to make money on Twitch, what are aside from the standards like Twitter, YouTube, etc. Is there any other third party services or activities that you think would be beneficial to them outside of the standard?

Mark - 48:45

Hmm, well, we are seeing the emergence now of people whose entire jobs it is to support Twitch streamers, like people whose job it is to make overlays and stuff like this, and that's pretty interesting that that's emerged as a viable entire career choice for people to just make overlays or to do social media work for streamers, or to help convert their videos to YouTube and stuff like this. So the existence of roles like that...could you say the exact question again, actually, please?

Alex - 49:29

So in the modern day, it's...

Mark - 49:32

Oh, yeah. So, I think streamers who want to succeed would do well to hire these sorts of people. To not have to do one's own work on YouTube conversion, or graphics, or making sub icons and emotes and stuff like this. I think that's a significant edge for the aspirational steamer to take, as it frees them up to do much more of the on stream and off stream work that they have to do. And in general, these people who offer these kinds of things, they don't charge that much. So I think as well as Twitter and Facebook and YouTube and blah, blah, blah, I think also engaging with this new micro community of entrepreneurial, "second order" Twitch workers, who make money through supporting Twitch streamers. I think engaging with them is very important.

Alex - 50:38

Okay, interesting. Let's see what else. This is a section that I usually kind of just rapid fire some concepts that streamers, and see what their thoughts are on it, and you can probably echo that. So what is your take on variety content? On starting a stream without almost any plan of what you want to play and building a community pretty much solely off of your personality rather than a central theme of your own content.

Mark - 51:14

It's certainly viable. I think it is more viable if you limit the variety broadcast. So there's a difference between I'm a variety streamer who broadcasts everything on Earth and I'm a variety streamer who broadcasts RPGs, or city building games, or mobile games, or whatever. I would say that a more specific framing always helps, but you don't want to be too specific either. So there's a middle ground of appealing to a particular community who know that they will always see the sorts of games they want to see on your channel and being too broad. So I think that that there's a middle ground in there somewhere, but I think variety streaming is still super valid and super viable for new broadcaster, but they will do better if they if they limit their scope a little bit, I think.

Alex - 52:11

Okay. Well next one is risk management. Let's say a slur does in fact come out on stream or you are involved in some significant amount of drama in relation to you, your brand and your channel. What actions do you think should be taken there?

Mark - 52:37

That's an interesting question. I don't think there's really any kind of best practice thing for how to manage controversy on Twitch yet. I think Twitch is too young on some level, and I think too few people have screwed up on Twitch to have any kind of best practice thing for this; on some level I don't think it's too different from other social media platforms...just say you're sorry and appear contrite and go from there. Hmm, let me think about that for a second.

Alex - 53:18

No problem.

Mark - 53:33

Well, I have seen a couple of streamers who accidentally said much milder things. Words that are commonly culturally considered to be milder. So for instance, the word "retard"; a lot of people consider that word very unacceptable, but lots of people still consider that word fine, or to say that something "was retarded". There are also those who used to be okay with it, and then reframed themselves to not be as time went by. I remember seeing one streamer who accidentally let it slip, and who kind of paused their stream to say, "Hey, I'm sorry, I said that, I used say that, as that's a word used a lot of online culture and gaming culture, I no longer like that word, I try to no longer use it, I'm sorry it slipped out." And it was interesting to see how Twitch chat responded to that, since no one really knew what to say, because it was this kind of this awkward confession, right? And so no one was sure what to say, and some said, hey, streamer, it's okay, we don't mind. Some said "Who gives a shit?". Some said thanks for saying that, it shows what a good and sensitive person you are, etc. But there wasn't really any sort of clarity in Twitch chat,

about how to respond to this kind of minor “confessional” experience. But it definitely seemed to get the job done. That’s the important thing, I think. Then the stream went on and it never turned into a controversy. But I think that that kind of approach of, "Hey, I'm sorry, I used to use this word I don't these days these things just slip out, we are all human, etc”, really seemed to work well for that particular streamer... but I suspect for streamers who let slip stronger word, I don't know how that would work. I think there's a gap between words which one uses because they are well used within a certain culture but I no longer want to use, and words which are considered unacceptable in every culture except the most extreme and the most intolerant. I think there is a gap there between the cultural perspectives on those words, and if someone let slip a really strong racial slur, for instance, I think that would be a very, very different scenario.

Alex - 56:16

Interesting.

Mark - 56:18

Culturally speaking.

Alex - 56:20

Yeah, absolutely. The last topic - do you have any thoughts about paid advertising? Let's say you actually seek out services to increase your exposure, be a banner ads, be it advertisements on other websites, and be it YouTube advertisements. Do you think that financing a service to increase your exposure could pay dividend or is the internet's existing attitudes on advertisement too caustic to warrant such a practice?

Mark - 57:03

Well, it's interesting to note that that a lot of Twitch streamers don't run ads on their streams at all, and they frame this as doing their viewers a favor, and therefore sometimes almost suggest that viewers should make up the missing money by giving them donations. So as you say, internet culture hates adverts, gamers hate adverts. Twitch viewers hate adverts. I think

sponsorships of streams are going to grow rapidly and are growing as we speak. I think those are generally accepted, although streamers have to be careful how precisely they present themselves as authentic, independent influencers rather than just people who've been sponsored. And it's tricky in that if a company sponsors you to play their game, and you think it's a piece of shit, if you say that, chances are they probably won't sponsor you again. And yet your viewers are watching you because they want your genuine opinion. So there's an interesting tension there, which I think we will see more and more emerge as time goes by. I don't think we'll ever see adverts take off on Twitch but I do think that sponsored streams will continue to grow even beyond what they are already right now.

Alex - 58:26

Um, yeah. So is there anything that you see examining a long enough timeline. Is there anything that you see coming after Twitch?

Mark - 58:40

I think at this point Twitch has become quite like Twitter, or Facebook or YouTube in that outside of China, it is a monopoly actor, in essence, and I think it's extremely hard to see what could challenge Twitch and what unique aspect a hypothetical platform from could use to do so. I think it's very hard to see that at this point. Of course, nothing lasts forever... there was a time when the first banks of Europe thought that they would last forever and they had more wealth, relatively speaking, than any human in the modern day ever has had. And now no one's ever heard of them. So nothing lasts forever, of course, and new platforms emerge and so on, but...at this point, I don't think any other live streaming platform can really challenge Twitch outside of China, because any platform which basically offers what Twitch offers Twitch already does that, and everyone's already invested in Twitch. I think, if anything comes after Twitch, it has to do something deeply new, and that the reason Twitch has viewers rather than YouTube having those viewers is because it's live. It's live and you chat directly and live to people and those are new things for a video platform which YouTube did not offer. So whatever comes after Twitch, if something does within our lifetimes, it has to offer one fundamentally new thing which Twitch

doesn't, and given contemporary technology, I'm not sure what that could be, to be honest, and if I did, I would patent it immediately and go and make that website! So right now at least, I don't see any potential challenge to Twitch emerging in the immediate future or in the indefinite future; both because Twitch is so new and so singular and so established, but also because like I say everyone is committed to their Twitch channels, to their subs, to their chat emotes, to their communities, it will take something big to move people off Twitch.

Alex - 1:00:59

Okay so an extension of that. What is your opinion of the other streaming platforms that are starting to pop up like Mixer owned by Microsoft, Caffeine on by I think that's Warner Brothers. This kind of cropping up here and then to eventually peter out due to lack of support. I know that YouTube Gaming had to shut down because they didn't garner the support that they expected for the platform.

Mark - 1:01:29

Clarity: isn't the Warner Brothers similar to a Netflix thing?

Alex - 1:01:35

Admittedly, I haven't done a ton of research on Caffeine since it's so brand new. When I started the project, it was just Mixer, Facebook gaming, and...

Mark - 1:01:46

Oh, ok. I think there is a potential market for a version of Twitch for people who are below 18. I think there's potential market there, and maybe that's what a company could shoot for, focusing on Facebook games and mobile games. I think that is a market there which is a very 18 or over website. Some people do frame their streams as being family spaces where they're trying not to swear, and things like this, and they don't play games where you shoot people in the head and their heads explode. So I think that there's definitely space for a teenager's Twitch. But that brings with it its own set of interesting legal and ethical problems, of course. So overall, I think

all the companies who are trying to compete with Twitch now – I think they fundamentally underestimate the importance of culture and community on Twitch. And they fundamentally overestimate the size of a non-Twitch demographic, which given the companies who we look at, these are not necessarily companies who are all that savvy about gaming culture and internet culture, and big companies tend to be pretty incompetent when it comes to that kind of stuff, of course. So yeah, I think we will see more companies keep trying, but I'm not holding out any hope for them to succeed unless they can offer something very different, or, unless there is genuinely a different demographic out there who would watch this kind of content, but who don't watch on Twitch. Maybe a young person platform is that platform, but even then, I mean, 15-year-olds swear and watch 18+ content, of course they do. So, I mean, if I was 15 and Twitch had existed then, I will have just watched Twitch of course. So yeah, I'm not so sure whether these will go anywhere.

Alex - 1:03:51

Okay, what about maybe possibly grabbing the IRL and the art stream crowds? The marginalized groups that are on Twitch. Do you think there's potential there?

Mark - 1:04:02

There's definitely potential. But again, Twitch has so much infrastructure already for those crowds, Twitch is linked up with Amazon, and as we said, Prime subs count for a lot. So a small amount of potential, but again, how many people are there who can make a living from broadcasting their artwork? Artwork in a broad sense I mean. Probably not that many, and I think a lot of them are already doing that on Twitch, and so Twitch has a tremendous advantage of being the incumbent. So again, yeah, maybe, but I wouldn't hold out too much hope for that.

Alex - 1:04:37

Okay, so for the last question, do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, or encouragement for any streamer that is looking to get into these platforms and make money or even just to get into the platform for the sake of the passion.

Mark - 1:04:56

To make money: be extremely realistic. You are competing with 2 million other people to become one of a few thousand who have a full time job. And all those 2 million, by definition, have been on the platform longer than you, and are therefore more experienced, are further ahead in that objective than you are, even if they don't want to be a pro. They're still closer to being a pro than you are as someone new coming onto the platform, and just by virtue of being there, and having a community people who watch them. Be very aware that this will consume your life if you want to be a pro streamer. If you want to be a semi-pro streamer and to make some money from Twitch, it's far more viable. Just reflect on the challenges that aspiring streamers have to face, and that this is a tremendously competitive space. On the other hand, if you can truly offer something unique, if you are one of the best players on Earth at a certain game, or in a certain genre, or if you have an existing community of fans, those things will both give you a tremendous leg up over other streamers. Not necessarily to the point where you're guaranteed to make it, but still a tremendous advantage. If you have either of those things, use it; and if you're doing it for leisure, then just I mean, just enjoy it and don't worry too much about the money, which is fairly obvious, really.

Alex - 1:06:49

Okay. Well, Mr. Johnson, it has been an absolute pleasure.

Mark - 1:06:55

You're very welcome, Alex.

Alex - 1:06:56

All right. I will stop the recording...

Alex - 0:00

Okay, so the first question that I usually start out with is "what got you into streaming on your channel?" You mentioned that you started way back in 2013. What convinced you to be such an early adopter of the platform?

MembTV - 0:15

Well, it was for a coincidence because I was getting in my personal life some break from previous job because I got some personal problems with my health. So I couldn't work and I always loved the game that they were streaming - Age of Empires. I remembered that by coincidence, I joined it. The actual platform boldly that is called and I saw that there was some people with a symbol then I check it with this second button in the mouse, and it linked me to Twitch. I have, I think, I don't remember if I was in Twitch before or because I got the account. Longer ago but I think Twitch was another company before. I don't remember the name - Justin TV- I think it was called.

Alex - 1:07

Justin TV was the original name of the platform. Yes.

MembTV - 1:10

I think so. I think I did my account in Justin TV, but I have never been on Twitch. It linked me onto Twitch and when I was watching the official channel, but it was more or less their official channel that was streaming all the tournaments back in the days. I saw one guy every Monday called Kitsune, and I also got interested by his accent because I could easily understand him. By that time my English was a little bit worse than the now. I could understand everything. What I really meant is the feeling that "I think I can do this. I would like to do this, he's doing or participate". I messaged him and I explained my feeling - how I felt when I watched it. Then we started to stream together. And just like that, I started.

Alex - 2:13

Interesting.

MembTV - 2:14

I never did it before.

Alex - 2:17

So back in 2013 was there even any way that you could profit off of the platform or was it purely just from a hobbyist standpoint back then?

MembTV - 2:27

No, I was streaming. I was streaming for almost two years with almost zero income. I wouldn't say zero. I don't remember 100%, but it was definitely something that I was doing because I was just enjoying alot. I never thought that that could be a real job. I could get some profit for from that.

Alex - 3:02

Right. So for the first year or so what was the stream like when you had first started out?

MembTV - 3:13

Do you mean, how it was, my channel?

Alex - 3:15

Yeah. How did you run your channel? What kind of content did you or what kind of games do you see? I would assume that it's just Age of Empires that you've been running this entire time.

MembTV - 3:24

It was almost Age of Empires all the time because it's a game that I've been playing for years. Long, long time ago and I was just really more in employee official I was being called, "Caster". More than even a Caster, and myself I was learning how to stream. There was also a guy that was

from the staff in a building that was teaching me how to stream with my own channel, and teach me the software, and helped me with all that stuff. Little by little. How was the channel back in the days in 2014? You check now? The quality difference is just...

Alex - 4:07

Oh, I can believe that.

MembTV - 4:08

...incredible. I mean it's really incredible. It has improved so much. So I was streaming with two megabytes upload so it was...

Alex - 4:17

[laughs]

MembTV - 4:18

It was a miracle that I could even stream a tournament with that bandwidth. It was fine for many people because they say that they like how I was doing. Not the stream itself...

Alex - 4:34

Okay back in the day do you remember doing anything specific to garner more, to gain more views, and to get more people watching your channel or did you just approach it from a natural standpoint? Just throw the stream up and whoever comes, comes.

MembTV - 4:52

I wasn't doing anything really special in the start. I was just being me. I'm a pretty open guy but also I'm restraint. So when I have a feeling good or bad, I usually saw in the stream. There is a lot of people that like that because they feel I'm talking not what I think. It was what they say to me. So I have to believe, right? They say that they feel that they are not with a fake guy because when you are on the internet you never know who is behind internet - behind the camera. Right?

Alex - 5:30

Mmm.

MembTV - 5:30

If it is true or if it is just a role that display a cosplay or something. They like because they feel that is just how I am.

Alex - 5:44

Mkay. Um. Is there anything that you did back in the day that maybe... you regret, or maybe you wish you had done differently?

MembTV - 5:57

I'm not sure because I only have been trying to be like I say this straight and I mean you always can make mistakes. But the problem with the internet is that the communication is not the same as in real life. Sometimes even if people get heart for some comments or do something some people don't tell you. You don't know if you have done something wrong for someone. Some people do, but some others don't. It's really difficult to respond to that question really. I'm sure that if I was thinking a little bit more probably there is something that I will make different.

Alex - 6:43

[agreeing tone] Hmm.

MembTV - 6:43

But it's very difficult to think right now about something specific.

Alex - 6:50

Right. So you mentioned that it took you probably a year and a half before you were making any kind of money off of the platform. Were there any other hurdles that you had encountered on your time with twitch? Any other obstacles or challenges that you faced with as a streamer?

MembTV - 7:11

Obstacles? I was expecting to get something else? I don't understand that question. If you can repeat it again?

Alex - 7:19

Okay. So are there any challenges or obstacles that you've had to overcome with your time as a streamer?

MembTV - 7:32

Yeah. No. Now, I know what you mean. 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.

Alex - 7:59

Really?

MembTV - 8:00

So yeah it's really complicated. 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 obstacles for sure.

Alex - 8:25

That's really interesting to hear.

MembTV - 8:27

A challenge for me. Well I might look, I don't know how it looks but I'm a guy that when I'm doing something I want to do my best. So I would like to be the best at what I do, but there wasn't the best at what I do. It's something that you cannot control yourself. That can be sometimes a little bit tricky.

Alex - 8:53

Interesting. So obviously your channel is all about Age of Empires 2. How do you present your channel - the Age of Empires 2? What's the style of the channel? What's the flavor?

MembTV - 9:18

Yeah, I have changed a little bit how to present the channel. I have rebranded like one month ago or something. I have changed the logo. I have changed the intro. I have changed many things. That you don't see Age of Empires in those intros. You see something related with my nationality. The time is spent is playing some music that is more or less related with the Spanish. In the channel days a lot of times that we go sometimes real life is tough. Uh, for example, the late night when I do stream or days not many games. We go to chat to talk about many things. I talk about family. It's a little bit like a little special community. A lot of people know each other. I also have got some friends from the stream. I get webcam chat here in Discord or in Skype with some of the members, and some of the viewers. I consider some of them, it's hard to say, like real friends in real life, but it's pretty close. So it has been a really rich experience for me.

Alex - 10:37

That's awesome. So building off of that question you mentioned you like the chats, and talking with the viewers. In addition to the Age of Empires content, what kind of viewers are you looking to attract to your stream?

MembTV - 11:01

Well, I never thought about that. You know?

Alex - 11:04

Hmm.

MembTV - 11:04

I never thought about that, but since I'm 41 years old it is more or less obvious that at least they have to be 20 years old something, because, for example, there's many, many kids. No disrespect to them. In Twitch or YouTube or on other platform and with 15-16 years old man it's probably a profile that not going to feel like really close to me. There is a lot of people joining my channel like a 19, 20, 21 years old and that they are very mature. I'm joking a lot, but a lot of times I am going to serious. Many, many, of those people see me like that big brother. Like that big brother and, sometimes, they even ask me in private some advice for the real life and I say to them, "Well, I'm nobody to give you an advice. I only can tell you if according to my experience what I will do or if I got something similar. You are different than me and you have to do according to your feelings and not allow not according to my feelings." This kind of relationship I get with more than what... Well, they get with me because they feel many of them. That's really incredible that people can feel that close to someone. When you are even if you have the webcam there, but it's still at webcam. It's not like I am face to face to you. Right?

Alex - 12:32

Right. So has that kind of led you in into trouble in some people? Where some of the viewers...

MembTV - 12:41

No.

Alex - 12:42

Have tried to get too close?

MembTV - 12:45

No. Well, there was for example, this is the probably the worst moment that I have got because people think that when they are in the stream some people think that if they subscribe or they donate a good amount of money, they think that they can control your channel or that they can control you. There was a guy. I'm not gonna say names and...

Alex - 13:12

Of course.

MembTV - 13:12

...I'm not gonna say nicknames. There was a guy that was even older than me and he just wanted to basically donating to me. He wanted to just to control my channel, and he wanted to make stuff with my channel. I say to him a couple of times, "No. This is not going like this and I don't want that you donate anymore." Well, he donated to me like maybe \$900,000.

Alex - 13:39

Wow.

MembTV - 13:40

Yeah but that was not in one time. You know? Like over time.

Alex - 13:45

Right, right.

MembTV - 13:46

But even like that I banned him from my channel. I put his account in the blacklist so even if he want to donate to me, he can't. What I'm trying to say is that money is not everything. People think this is also that I knew or really I didn't need to know in the stream, but in the stream happens and but myself I'm sorry, but I'm not gonna sell my soul for money.

Alex - 14:24

Well put. So speaking on the money aspect it's kind of ironic that you say that money isn't everything. Money is kind of one of the core themes of my project since it's just...

MembTV - 14:39

Yeah, but I'm sorry that I interrupt you.

Alex - 14:41

Yeah?

MembTV - 14:41

It's very important without money you probably cannot do in life almost anything. Right?

Alex - 14:48

Right.

MembTV - 14:49

But what price you have to pay to get some money?

Alex - 15:00

Yeah, absolutely. Completely understandable. So while we're talking about money, Twitch has the standard methods of making money on stream. You've got bits, you have donations, and you've got subscribers. Are there any sources of money that you do outside of the standard quote, unquote, 'standard package' that Twitch gives to a streamer?

MembTV - 15:27

Well, they get the ads, the publicity. You forgot to mention that it's really low. At least in my channel, it can be, I don't know, \$200 maybe or 100 something to publicity. There's some other stuff that you can integrate in your stream that is also a lot of help some of the publicity more,

but this is basically what it is. It's a work that is very unstable because if people don't want to subscribe or donate you can spend eight hours and you don't have income.

Alex - 16:02

Right.

MembTV - 16:04

So, it's a risky profession. You don't know when the channel is going to go down. If it's going to stay like this.

Alex - 16:14

Right. Have you ever considered adding additional sources of money such as a Patreon or other third party profit generating services?

MembTV - 16:28

I have to be honest with you. I never knew how it works, Patreon, really.

Alex - 16:35

Hm.

MembTV - 16:35

I don't know really how it works. I know that some people use it, but I don't really know well how it's working so I have thought about that. No I've never used it.

Alex - 16:50

Ok. Moving past the explicit subject of money. I want to talk a little bit about social media. What is your presence like on social media? How do you manage your Twitter, your Facebook, and your YouTube, any other media sources that are outside of the Twitch channel?

MembTV - 17:16

No, no, I mean I started well. I'm starting to use more Facebook, and Twitter. Mostly Twitter, I have been using Facebook little bit more but Twitter I like more how it works. I think. Yeah, it's more, I don't know how to say, it's smoother to use it. I like Twitter more than Facebook because it's more simple. You go and do post something short and direct. And, "Okay I'm here. I'm going to be live. This is great. You can watch this." You can do that the same in Facebook, but there is no limit and people also make long, super long post. I prefer that, but you do, for example, it's a platform that I don't understand. I am doing the same that I'm doing in Twitch. I'm getting into Twitch, I will say a nice or good success. YouTube I don't know if it's the algorithm or what it is, but with same content that some other streamers or some other people and I check the video quality. My video quality is even better with 60 frames per second. I don't know well, but Youtube doesn't grow. I don't know how to make it success YouTube. I have tried, but it's not working. I don't know if it's the crowd that they're different and that they don't like my style or if they don't like that I'm not a native English speaker since my content is in English. YouTube is a little bit frustrating for me.

Alex - 18:52

Interesting. You mentioned that you... you tried to grow the YouTube channel a couple of times. What were some of the things that you tried to implement?

MembTV - 19:00

No. Well, I mean what I do is that. I edit to what the best content that I get on Twitch. I edit it and I upload there. Sometimes I have done some specific tutorials. Maybe I should make more arena content for YouTube. The problem is the time. I mean the time is what it consumes me. I don't feel that I have time because the editing the video and also the streaming in Twitch, and then real life. With I have two kids. I don't find the time to make something special for YouTube. Maybe it's needed. YouTube is my black ship. You know? It's...

Alex - 19:20

Right.

MembTV - 19:44

...my black ship. I can't make it work like it should be because most of Twitch streamers, their YouTube channels is bigger than the Twitch. You know?

Alex - 19:44

[laughs] Hm.

MembTV - 20:02

I have checked that and have analyzed that. It's really like this. I mean like the YouTube channels usually are with a lot more followers or subscribers. It's "followers" there, right?

Alex - 20:12

Right.

MembTV - 20:12

But, in my case, my Twitch channel is five times bigger than my YouTube.

Alex - 20:18

Interesting. Have you considered, perhaps...

MembTV - 20:21

It's very interesting. I don't know how would that can be changed.

Alex - 20:25

...right. Have you considered possibly hiring an editor to go through your content and manage your YouTube external of your own efforts?

MembTV - 20:35

Yeah, I have thought about that, but it's what we talk. I don't know if I can afford that.

Alex - 20:42

Okay.

MembTV - 20:43

That's a problem. When you need to not only be able to afford that, you need someone that you really trust.

Alex - 20:52

Yeah. Absolutely.

MembTV - 20:52

These candidates do this really personal because I don't like to say like this, but it's what people say that people like my content because of my personality. So if you hire someone outside, maybe, the sense of my content it can be lost.

Alex - 21:13

Yeah. Interesting.

MembTV - 21:14

It's tricky. It's really tricky.

Alex - 21:15

Yeah, absolutely. So you mentioned that you've been picking up on using social media more, and using Twitter more. Back when you first started, back in 2013 and 2014, did you use those social media platforms at all?

MembTV - 21:32

Youtube, but it build us nothing. Youtube not I mean, I was using it. The quality wasn't too great because the stream itself, it wasn't too great.

Alex - 21:43

Right.

MembTV - 21:44

So maybe I should start a new YouTube channel. Right? [laughs]

Alex - 21:49

[laughs]

MembTV - 21:51

To see what is happening and make it looking good from the start.

Alex - 21:55

Hey, it'd be a great experiment! What prompted you to start the Facebook page and to get the Twitter account? Was there anything specific that told you, "I need to make accounts on these" or was it just kind of made the realization, "Everybody else is doing it. I probably should as well."

MembTV - 22:17

More or less, the last one.

Alex - 22:19

Okay.

MembTV - 22:20

Everyone get it. It's like if you are not doing it, you're out of the loop.

Alex - 22:25

Right.

MembTV - 22:26

Like if everyone is using nowadays everyone use that. Everyone has a mobile, right? Almost everyone has an iPad or tablet. Everyone is with this all the time and you are joining a meeting and you don't see that people is looking face to face, they are looking at the mobiles.

Alex - 22:45

Right.

MembTV - 22:46

So if you are not in those social media, you're not there. If you are not involved, it's like well you are all in Twitch when all people is in everywhere. You have to be there or you are a little bit lost.

Alex - 23:06

Right. On kind of the opposite of that do you have anything that you employ outside of social media? Do you do any networking that doesn't involve Twitter or YouTube or you Discord? Is there anything that you do outside of those services or is it mostly contained within those?

MembTV - 23:29

I don't understand outside of what you mean. Can you give me an example?

Alex - 23:34

Let's say going to gaming conventions.

MembTV - 23:38

Oh, well that's a good example. I have tried to go to TwitchCon for the last three years. Can you really believe that the last three years really in the weekend I have gone three years in a row waiting for somewhere close to my life, friends, family?

Alex - 24:00

Really?

MembTV - 24:04

Yeah, man. Three years in a row and I was almost getting the ticket for the last TwitchCon and then my wife tells me, "This is my closing weekend with you. Remember?" So [laughs] I was about to get divorced, but I would like...

Alex - 24:20

[laughs]

MembTV - 24:20

...to go there. I think, I really think that the real life, meet in real life people this kind of networking. It's really helped.

Alex - 24:32

Awesome. So moving forward to the present what works right now? What are you doing that is keeping the channel held together, that is keeping things growing, keeping your audience engaged? Are there any specific tricks that you're employing or any particular events? I know that you did...I think you're currently running...I think it's called, "The King of the Desert" -which is an Age of Empires.

MembTV - 25:02

Yes.

Alex - 25:02

Any tournament that you're running. Is that with specifically with viewers? Is it a more seriously organized event? Give me a snapshot of what your channel is right now.

MembTV - 25:16

Yeah the channel right now is in a strong position because I'm actually hosting a tournament with Microsoft.

Alex - 25:23

Wow.

MembTV - 25:25

Yeah, you say that and it sounds good. And yeah, I'm getting a lot more viewers than I usually get. A lot of followers, more subscribers, and the tournament is with the best 52 players in the world. We are currently going to play the quarter-finals in the 26th-27th of January. Then the next weekend will be the semi-finals and then the final. I think we did yesterday because everyone can stream it. They have to pay me some fees for streaming that. I don't know if that's a good model because maybe if you host something that big, maybe, I should make closed streaming and just be the only one to stream. That's something that I'm considering for the future. Since this is a small community I don't know if it's a good thing to do. I'm not sure. Maybe, it's better for my channel, but it's probably worse for the whole victor. I'm not sure what to do about that, but the channel is going well thanks to that. Well because I got a very loyal community that never leave me. No matter who is streaming, no matter who is doing some stuff, there is, I don't know 400 to 500 viewers that they're always watching my content. Which is really great.

Alex - 26:43

That's awesome to hear. You mentioned that the tournament was in partnered with Microsoft. Was there anything that you that you specifically did to gain that partnership or did Microsoft approach you?

MembTV - 26:59

Well, I hosted before a couple of tournaments - one in 2018 and one in 2017. Then, I save it somebody to because I wanted to contribute I wanted to host this event, but then I thought, "I am losing nothing with trying to contact Microsoft." I got the lucky that they contact me about one year ago or something. They wanted to ask me as a streamer, I know as a streamer and with a lot of experience in this game, what I will add for future game they are doing. Which I feel honored that they asked me.

Alex - 27:41

Wow!

MembTV - 27:41

Advice you know I never expect that. They contact me. So then I check in Discord that contact that guy, and I messaged him and I said, "I'm thinking... I'm planning to do this and this. I would like to have a conversation with you." Then I got surprised because that same day that I sent that message we got the conversation like I'm having the conversation with you. This is all I did. We got this conversation and they support with another \$5,000 and their name and everything. Well I got the tournament on the Microsoft website with all that exposure. Well, really, really, proud. Never expected that they wanted to until they say, "Yes".

Alex - 28:23

That's awesome to hear. Congratulations on that, that's really interesting.

MembTV - 28:28

Thank you so much.

Alex - 28:30

There was a question with the tournament and the partnership with Microsoft. You've said that that's done amazing things for your channel. Is there anything that you find makes more money? What kind of content do you enjoy doing the most? Is there an overlap between the two or are they separate?

MembTV - 29:03

I don't understand about the money. What do you ask about the money?

Alex - 29:09

Is there anything that you do on stream, any kind of events, like the tournament that you're running? Is there anything that you find makes more money for the channel? The second part of the question is out of all the content that you create in the streams that you do, what do you find you have the most fun doing? Are the two similar or different?

MembTV - 29:33

It's pretty similar because what I enjoy the most is with the competition. The high level competition it began with tournaments when the best players are playing. I just get concentrated. I get like, if there's nobody around you, I focus completely in the game. They like to call it "Memb..." This is my name on Twitch...Memb In Crazy Mode." Then I go casting with a lot of passion. I mean, I don't need a co-caster. They said co-caster, because I think in the United States you call this kind of color "caster". They say it, I don't know if that's correct according to what I do, but I just like I am you start the mode. You get into the train. The train starts to slow. Right?

Alex - 30:24

Yup.

MembTV - 30:24

Start slow. It's going slower, but then it to start to go a little bit faster than at first. Then you get the speed that you know that you're going to arrive soon. Right? Hmn. You see, what I do with

the casting I start like this, "Okay, I'm starting. The game is just starting." Do not over hype, but you don't hype when you are starting. Start a little bit when you introduce the players and so on. Then when they start to come the action what I try to do with the casting. I tried that. People cannot leave the stream. That if the game is interesting, I tried to put something else that it is make even a little approves more. In that situation people enjoy a lot. It's when I get the most viewers, when I enjoy the most. When I get more tired and I wouldn't say that these when people subscribe or donate more. I really think that and this is what is incredible with the channel. If I don't have those crazy tournaments or great tournaments, I always try to find a way to put the passion with some of the situation that our fans that are, you know, I tried to put a smile to people that join in my channel. They join a lot of people say because after a long day working, they are just going to watch a show that they know that they are going to have fun. I smile in their face and this is what I try most likely.

Alex - 31:46

Awesome. So going back to an earlier question just to get a little bit more details on it. Are there any methodologies or any techniques or any strategies that you do not recommend to other streamers? You think these are things that should be avoided, things that you should not do on a Twitch channel.

MembTV - 32:12

Well never try to copy anyone, right? What works for some maybe for you don't work? I mean, there's not a rule. You have to be yourself really. Of course, you have to be smart and sometimes being 100% yourself is not the way to go because sometimes you have to be polite with some topics or something. How you control that is difficult. I think it's very difficult and the age it helps. I think I started to stream and age that it's really helped me. I'm not a kid, right? I started at 35 or 36 years old and I have done a lot of other jobs in my life, and a lot of experience so in some specific situations that help because you manage with a lot of people. That maybe some people say that they love you, but there's many people that also come on and insult you because it's free on the internet. You can do it. Well you ban that seems you are not in face to face. The

people can tell you anything. So you have to be careful. But if you want to stream like I say there's not a rule. I mean I watch some tutorials and I see some videos people telling advice and they said, "Oh, this work".

Alex - 32:51

Right.

MembTV - 33:34

It can help in some situations, but what works for you maybe it's not working for the other and vice versa. It's really difficult because you think that your crowd is people for everywhere.

Alex - 33:34

[laughs]

MembTV - 33:49

Maybe sometimes you reach some kind of people and maybe sometimes you reach some other people. You don't know who you are. Who's gonna watch you?

Alex - 34:00

Mkay.

MembTV - 34:00

No control on that.

Alex - 34:03

You mentioned that age was something that helped you out and with the wisdom that you've acquired over the different experiences that you've had. Obviously over somebody that's 21 or even 17 signing up to the website. Are there any specific situations that come to mind where that helped out?

MembTV - 34:24

[thoughtful sigh] Well I don't know. When you are doing something, some people are going to love you and some people are gonna do create jealousy. Because sadly it's like this if you success some people are going to be happy, but some of the people is not going to be happy. They might think, "Why is he successful and why I'm not?"

Alex - 34:56

Right.

MembTV - 34:58

And these kind of things is subjective. If I know that I'm telling something that is difficult to prove because people is not going to go and tell you, "I am jealous of you". It's just something that you can guess so it's not something that you can say 100%. You feel that that can happen. Then how to deal with all this these things? It's very difficult. I don't recommend that people that is super join a stream. You need a really strong character because a lot of people gonna talk about you, gonna say a lot of things about you. The good things can affect you, but the bad things can affect you even more.

Alex - 35:43

Right.

MembTV - 35:43

It's complicated. I wouldn't recommend my daughter stream for example. At this not in early age.

Alex - 35:54

Right. Especially young age that's you know.

MembTV - 35:59

No, no, no.

Alex - 35:59

Like you said.

MembTV - 36:02

Get some job offers, get 20 something and then maybe if you like it on something then try, but not with 16, 17.

Alex - 36:10

Oh yeah.

MembTV - 36:11

Really?

Alex - 36:12

Absolutely. So here's a trickier question that you might not have an answer for. I've gotten mixed results across all the people that I've been interviewing. So kind of a two parter: What is something that you think everyone should be doing that nobody is or what is something that you think people should be doing more?

MembTV - 36:38

Streaming?

Alex - 36:39

In reference to streaming. Yes.

MembTV - 36:43

What this will do and what this will not. What they never should do is to look to others. You have to see it yourself. I'm telling this and it's also something that is hard for me to do it. You know? But I can admit that it's hard to not compare with others because of what we were talking about before. If you do that, you probably going to lose the focus of your goal and probably you're going to lose the fan as well. What people should do more is streaming, but I don't know. I think it's, I don't like, I don't say that people is fake. You know?

Alex - 37:30

Mmhm.

MembTV - 37:31

But I would like to really feel that when you see a streamer it's him and it's not another person. You know what I mean?

Alex - 37:39

Yes, absolutely.

MembTV - 37:40

I think streamers shouldn't be an actor. If he's an actor, he should really play it and be obvious like I'm playing a role. I call a cosplay. You know?

Alex - 37:52

Right.

MembTV - 37:52

There is some streamer that I really love them and I like them. I'm not gonna say name but I really like them. It's a cosplay clearly.

Alex - 38:02

Yep and I have a feeling we're thinking about the same guy.

MembTV - 38:06

Probably...probably.

Alex - 38:06

[laughs]

MembTV - 38:08

Well, I don't know if we can say, but, it's a compliment. Well I love doctor, the doctor to respect for example.

Alex - 38:15

Yup.

MembTV - 38:16

I don't know if he's that same guy that you were thinking.

Alex - 38:19

That's who I was thinking about.

MembTV - 38:21

Nice I was thinking too. I really like him.

Alex - 38:21

[laughs]

MembTV - 38:22

I think he's a great. I think he's a great streamer, but he is playing a role and I like to see that from time to time. You know? When I'm bored, I like to tune in to him. I just a smile with him. Well because I know that he's just doing his show and I like it. That is a show.

Alex - 38:34

[agreement] Yeah.

MembTV - 38:48

I used to think that people that it's not playing a show and they say, "I'm real, eh?" They really be a real and not a fake. This is what people should be. Not lie to the viewers.

Alex - 39:03

Okay. So for the next section... I got a few kind of topics that are kind of going to rapid fire at you to get what you think about the topic. Get your thoughts on it and so on and so forth. So the first one is - what are your thoughts on variety content? On starting up a Twitch stream and not really having any plan whatsoever as to what games you play. If you can start up a stream and play Age of Empires, and then the next day you can start up the stream and play Call of Duty just kind of spreading yourself out across the spectrum.

MembTV - 39:42

If I have some plans to do that? Oh, well, I play also PlayStation. I didn't mention. I stream Playstation less because the game that I am streaming it's a community that is too used to Age of Empires. I mean, if I go stream other thing, they are asking constantly, "When you play the Age of Empires? Are you going to play today? Are you playing? Are you playing?" You know? But I like to play other games. I love to play is story games. You know I played Detroit: Become a Human not so long ago. It's an amazing one for example. I love the NBA. I play a lot NBA 2K19. I love it. There's many games that I would like to stream more, but the problem, this is the truth since that I enjoy a lot with the children bars, and it gives me a good income; I don't

want to take the risk to lose that. It's sad, but it's truth. When you have a family that you have to support, you cannot do whatever you want.

Alex - 40:52

Interesting. Okay, so next one this is going to be all hypothetical, but I want to talk about risk management. Let's say you have been involved in some big drama blow up. Something's going wrong. Your community is angry at you. How would you respond to that situation?

MembTV - 41:22

Well I have been involved with in some dramas during this during this time, but it never was with my community. It was with other streamers because they were looking too much at me and then they were blaming me. Twitch is really serious with this with these things, but I never did anything. My community always support me back. The hypothetical that there was drama with my own community well... [thoughtful hum] ...if that happens, I will be what I what I have been always in my life. I'm not perfect. If I do a mistake, I know I can't say sorry. This is a big problem that happens nowadays. That many people or not many people I mean in all the countries there is too much proud. You know about say, "Sorry". You know we are too proud. If you make something wrong, just to say, "Sorry" and nothing happens. Don't try to make that it's about something because we all fail sometimes.

Alex - 42:32

Hm. Mokay.

MembTV - 42:35

If I don't say sorry, I mean there will be a moment that your community will support you in the start, but if they see that, oh man, is this guy always right? He's perfect. He never make a mistake. I think people will not like this in long run because nobody's doing always all good. Right?

Alex - 42:56

Right. That's a good point. The next one is do you have any thoughts about paid advertising? Going to any third party services that will distribute your name, your image across the internet in an effort to gain more exposure?

MembTV - 43:22

Well, I don't know because I felt that being involved with Microsoft will be that one. Let's see because they still have the quarter-final, the semi-final, and the final. I'm going to see that that gonna bring some impact into it. I don't know which other third party could help me in this kind of regard. Really, I don't know. Maybe it's there, but I really don't know.

Alex - 43:49

Okay, the last one is extreme problem users. These are the people that when you ban their account they make another one. They come back to your channel, they start harassing you again. The people that might go so far as to steal your personal information, and try to extort you for these kinds of things. You know or the just the absolute like you mentioned the guy that would pay you a ton of money to try and control your channel. Is there anything specific that you do or that you have prepared to deal with these kinds of just absolute, complete end-of-the-spectrum-crazies?

MembTV - 44:35

Well, I have rules that are clear below my stream. Also when you joined you accept you have to accept some rules to chat into it. I have read the how Twitch policy is and I have cover my back from Twitch because I have also my channel under Mature Content. So people have to accept all this stuff. So if they don't, if they cross the line, I just ban, kick them, and they can't complain. It's my channel and they have to respect me. If they don't, they are out, and I have to respect them as well. So I'm really not worried about anything related with this topic. I'm pretty, pretty relaxed about that. I don't think so. It can happen anytime. I mean it always can happen. So what I do is just I take care. I'd be careful sometimes. And that's it.

Alex - 45:42

Okay. So then one of the last questions I have is what's next?

MembTV - 45:51

For that something important is to don't talk about third people. When some people come to my channel to talk about someone, I said, "In my channel. We don't talk about anyone out of this channel." For example, all the streamers, all the personalities that stream you can talk about something general, but you don't have to put names to something stupid because it's not needed. The stream is not for that.

Alex - 46:16

That's a good point. That's a very good point. So the question that I was asking is what's next? Do you have anything? Do you have any plans? What you would do after the Twitch channel and when you do retire from streaming?

MembTV - 46:35

For now no, because I still see this far. I'm still with a lot of energy and I will like to keep growing and improving my channel. I will really like to be able to get the channel in a position that I don't have to stream as much as I do now. I stream a lot. I would like to be able to stream a little bit less and could be able to spend more time with my family, and with other stuff. That the channel keep going to well without the amount of hours that I put in. That the hours are a lot. It's true that the channel is going well, it's going fine, but I say saved. It should be better than what it is right now. Then for the future, I don't know because you never know if there is going to be Age of Empires 4 like they say. If Ages of Empires the game that I'm doing maybe is dying one day and then I will have to check. I honestly if I put some effort, I have a solid community. I'm convinced that I could try another game or another and that people will enjoy a lot. I can try to play with how the games can be and make it interesting.

Alex - 47:52

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

MembTV - 48:10

Well you have to think that I mean I think people underestimate the streaming role. The streaming is work, right? Everyone thinks, "Okay! I can stream. I just have to get a computer, one program I will load and let's just stream." If you want to stream, you have to think that it's harder than it looks. You have to put some in effort, you have to plan a little bit. I see some stream that below the stream don't even have information, don't have anything, and don't put anything, there's no overlay. There's some people can success like this. Most of the case people will say, "Well this is a newb."

Alex - 48:50

[laughs]

MembTV - 48:50

So, you have to you in my opinion it used to be simple. Right?

Alex - 48:55

Right.

MembTV - 48:55

Look and then they close. What I think you have to do is to try to make a little bit of a plan. What do you want to be? What do you want that is going to be in your channel? What's your objective? Then according to that try to improve. Also there is plenty of videos, plenty of streamers out there. Try to watch several people. Don't copy anyone. You can always take some little details from some people and then put all together. Be yourself, you can always gain from some people, but saying that you need a really good computer if you want to stream in a good

quality. Also good connection. Well, I really think that this internet thing for that reason is tricky. The luck is needed too, you know? You have to be in the right moment in the right time. And you know, like, the momentum the timing has to be good. It can be good because it helps. Really, it helps. For example, when you start to stream, and there is nobody else is streaming the game that you are doing well, you get advantage. If there is 2000 people, it's going to be more complicated. So it's difficult. It's very difficult to give advice. Really. I don't know. I think a good way to see the streaming if you have a health part job.

Alex - 50:44

Yep.

MembTV - 50:45

Then try streaming, but going full streaming from the start is difficult. Try a little bit. It's like I did that actually. No? This is what I did. I didn't go thinking, "Okay, this is gonna be my job." It became with time and you have to be patient. The best advice I can give is patience. You have to be patient. If you really like the streaming thing, you have to be patient. And maybe, really, really patient.

Alex - 51:19

Mkay. Anything else?

MembTV - 51:23

I mean how it's called the viral videos to viral stuff that we see? It doesn't happen that often.

Alex - 51:34

Right.

MembTV - 51:35

It happen, but it is difficult to happen and it's not like, "Okay, I'm going to be there. I'm going to get the viral thing and bam, boom." No, man.

Alex - 51:46

Right. Absolutely.

MembTV - 51:47

That's the TV.

Alex - 51:51

Okay. Is there anything else that you want to add?

MembTV - 51:55

Well, I don't know. I mean I feel good talking with you about all this and for me it's a pleasure to answer all your questions. I felt comfortable hopefully it was similar for you.

Alex - 52:09

No. I've had a great time. Mister Lena. It has been an absolute pleasure. I'm going to just stop the recording now.

Alex - 0:00

Okay usually I start with what got you into streaming? Was there anything specific? How did you get exposed to Twitch?

Zizaran - 0:11

So I wanted to do, like, content creation, either in the form of YouTube or Twitch, for quite a while, and I had a friend of mine who always kept saying, "Ziz, you always talk, you never shut up, so you should stream," and I think back in 2013, 2014 I tried downloading like exploit [sic] or something and my computer wasn't good enough to stream on that, and then I tried again in 2015, 2016. No wait, 2015. And still, didn't have a good enough PC. Then I graduated and I bought a really, really good PC and I was able to start streaming and, around five weeks after starting, I got partnered.

Alex - 0:51

Wow, that's a relatively short time. Was there anything specific that led to the partnership?

Zizaran - 0:56

I was doing around 400 hours a month, and I did that for the first six months to a year, or something like that. I was doing an insane amount of time, basically just sleeping and streaming.

Alex - 1:07

Wow.

Zizaran - 1:07

Which helped a lot because I was basically always on.

Alex - 1:11

Yeah, you're one of the grinders, very commendable.

Zizaran - 1:15

On top of that, Path of Exile has a ladder system, or it would directly link to the highest person on the ladder that was streaming, so regardless if somebody else had 2000 viewers or 3000 viewers, my stream would be the first one to open as long as I was the highest on the ladder, which I was for the entire first two months.

Alex - 1:32

Wow. How have you been enjoying Betrayal by the way?

Zizaran - 1:36

Yeah, it's been really good. A lot of fun I love the new content and there's been so many new people checking out the games it's been great.

Alex - 1:43

Yeah, absolutely. Who's your favorite character this season?

Zizaran - 1:48

Winter Orb for sure. It's really fun. Winter Orb is good. A lot of fun.

Alex - 1:52

Yeah, bunch of my buddies had been running Winter Orb, they were excited to see that come out. I just dabbled with... it was a cyclone righteous fire Raider. It was a Pathfinder, I'd never seen anything like it. And it was just absolutely wonderful to play around with. So you said that you wanted to do content creation, either YouTube or Twitch, how much of how much of a factor was money in your decision?

Zizaran - 2:22

I had enough to live on for around six months without doing anything. Once I finished university from the leftover loans and sources like that, money I had saved up, I also had my parents if I

went broke. I could move home to Norway and start finding a new job there. I had backup options, like planned out everything. And I was hoping to get partnered within six months. And then I was going to quit Twitch entirely, if I didn't get partnered within a year.

Alex - 2:51

That's very interesting. So you just kind of threw it all out there, and hoped that something stuck.

Zizaran - 2:58

Yeah. And it worked really well.

Alex - 3:00

Yeah, it seems to have done so. So, let's go into detail about those first five weeks, or really just the first few months of streaming. Walk me through what a standard week was like.

Zizaran - 3:21

Well, first off, advice I give to a lot of new streamers is make sure all your friends and family have the ability to open your stream., You need to convince them how important that is. And I say if you can't convince friends and family to watch you then you're going to have a hard time on Twitch, because then you're going to be in zero-viewer hell. I had my mom watching, I had loads of friends from, like, ARK. I started with five to eight viewers and having one person occasionally say hi in your chat just does wonders. You also have to be really good at talking and explaining what you're doing without any feedback.

Alex - 3:48

Right. Right.

Zizaran - 3:51

But, the start would literally be I drank a lot of Red Bull, which was bad and I've cut that out pretty much entirely. I try not to eat much takeaway anymore, either. I'm trying to be fairly

healthy now, but the start was insane. Like, I was literally just streaming, sleeping, didn't see my friends. And a lot of the real-life friends I had didn't get it. They were saying, "When are you getting a real job?" And I got stuff like that a lot.

Alex - 4:16

Interesting. Interesting. Was there anything specific that you did during that time period to pull viewers towards your channel? You mentioned talking to your family, getting close acquaintances of yours? Was there anything else that you used?

Zizaran - 4:28

Oh, like networking with other people in the community. There were loads of other streams that I had already watched before that I was not necessarily friends with, but knew about them a little bit and talked to them. Particularly not like a streamer at the time, but Steelmage, as soon as he won the race that I was competing for, I thought, you know what, I think I should start up a podcast. So I asked him, "Could you go on an AMA with me, similar to the Reddit AMAs?" And then he was like, "Yeah, sure dude." We, we like didn't particularly know each other, but he was down to help me. So I did a podcast with him and that got some attention. And then I started doing them regularly. I think Habit [sic] was the second person I did, which is already pretty big in the community and Ziggy pretty early on as well. I did have a couple of people literally just say, "No, you're too small. I'm not interested in being on your podcast." But Ziggy, who was the largest streamer by far at the time said, "Yeah, I'll help you." And he, like, answered so many questions for me. He's just really, really a stand-up guy.

Alex - 5:27

Wow. Did Ziggy's involvement help with your numbers?

Zizaran - 5:30

Oh yeah, for sure, networking with other people are huge. Just becoming...it's sort of inserting yourself into a games community and becoming part of it, but you have to find a fine balance

where, you know, you're positively contributing for everyone and not just leeching off other people. You want to try to create events, make friends with people. Something I never did, and something I hate to see people do in other channels, is "Oh, I'm starting my stream now." It's easy to get on people's nerves when doing that.

Alex - 6:07

Absolutely.

Zizaran - 6:09

I remember early on and I think it was Rice {sic} or something and asked me "Have you ever thought about streaming?" And I was like, "Oh, I am," but I never wanted to say that in anyone else's stream.

Alex - 6:17

Okay, what else? You mentioned the Red Bull, that was something that you had you backed off on, the unhealthy eating? Were there any other habits or anything specific to the stream that you wish you had changed earlier? Or you wish you hadn't done at all?

Zizaran - 6:44

No, not really.

Alex - 6:47

Okay. Um, what are some of the major hurdles that you've faced? Any kind of challenges that you've had to overcome with your time as a streamer?

Zizaran - 7:00

I think one of the hardest moments for me was Dark Shrine, which was also my favorite League, and it was sort of when I started blowing up because [name] sort of quit, [name], Havoc, a lot of the big streamers quit playing Path of Exile. So, I started streaming extra hard then. And what

happened was I had, after summer, between 500 to 800 concurrent viewers, when I ended my stream, which was huge, because I'd only streamed for three or four months. But I was always online. And I made a joke pretty early on in my stream, that I might not be the best streamer or the funniest streamer, but I'm always online. So when your favorite streamer goes to sleep, I'll be here. That went viral really quickly, if you can find the jokes or anything like that, similar to Don the Crown has a meme where he says, "And remember, open all your chests!" Loads of people started using that clip over and over again. Going viral can be really, really big. But the biggest hurdle for me was that when there was an alpha test, where some streamers were invited to stream it, and play it. And I wasn't. I was really, really upset because they were streamers with like five to ten viewers and stuff who were getting these alpha keys. And I just wasn't, I had just been doing it so short that I wasn't known in the community yet, and because this was still in a time in my life where I was, "Shoot, am I going to make it as a streamer? Do I have a chance here?" And I went all the way from like, 800 concurrent viewers to like, 100 and so I thought, "Do I have a chance here?" And people would keep asking in my chat like, "Hey Ziz, why aren't you streaming the alpha?" And I was like, "I don't know, man."

Alex - 8:46

Okay. Okay. So give me a snapshot of your channel. What is your channel about, what kind of content do you create and advertise? I know that you primarily involve yourself with Path of Exile. Is there any specific flavor that you have to go with that?

Zizaran - 9:05

Yeah, so, this is another thing, I also like to mention on my stream; if you can't tell people why they should be watching your channel....

Alex - 9:38

Excuse me, just one second, I am getting a significant amount of interference from your end. I don't know if that's a network issue on your end. Okay. Take two.

Zizaran - 10:01

Alright, so that is better. When did I cut out?

Alex - 10:06

You cut out pretty much as soon as you started talking about your channel.

Zizaran - 10:09

Okay, that's fine. Something I pride myself in and something I said often in my stream is that if you can't tell people why they should be watching your channel, they probably shouldn't. You need to be a little confident, a little cocky, and give people a reason to watch. There are 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. One of those things for me is I wanted to be the most interactive stream on Twitch, and that's pretty easy to do early on, because there's not that many people chatting in your chat, but once you're getting like 500, 1000, 5,000, 10,000 viewers, then it becomes pretty hard. I've taken a lot of steps to ensure that I can still do that. Some examples are, I don't like it when people copy paste or do pyramids in my chat, and you'd think that usually, if you ask people not to do these things, people are going to be like "Haha, let's do it." But most people seem to respect it. There's like very little of it in my chat. It can seem like pretty dead, which can be harder on the streamer. Especially if you're in a bit of a lull with nothing happening. But then you just have to keep talking for yourself. And ever since you got above 1000 viewers, that's not really been a problem anyway.

Alex - 11:26

Okay.

Zizaran - 11:26

Um, but yeah, I think that's really big for my channel. I try to read every message, I try to grow and nurture like a community, and I do believe that the community you have is a direct representation of the streamer, which can be really easy to let it go out of control. I also looked at

a lot of streamers before I started streaming, like Sodapoppin, [name], Havoc, Ziggy, names like that, and I've tried to take different elements from other streamers. I always liked how hardcore and good at the game, how [name] was, then I was like, like, what a welcoming and positive community Ziggy had. I've tried to do everything I can to have a positive, good community and still play hardcore and become one of the most competitive players. I've won quite a lot of races and yeah, I think that's one of the things that sets me apart, that I tried to do everything.

Alex - 12:20

Interesting. Interesting. Okay, kind of an elaboration on that question; is there a specific kind of viewer that you're looking to attract towards your channel?

Zizaran - 12:33

I generally think there's a lot of people that are very alone on Twitch, a lot of people have anxiety, autism, and it can be really hard to connect with people, especially if you see the talk going like 400 miles an hour. It's very easy to think like, "Well, why am I going to bother talking?" And yeah, especially something I focus on is streaming harder at Christmas, suicide rates can be really hard then and a lot of people are completely alone. So, I try to make sure I do close to 24-hour streams on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th and also advertise on my stream that I am always online during Christmas and that my DMs are open on my Twitter and Twitch and Discord for those are having a hard time which is really important. I do really, really go for the community feeling, which usually attracts an older audience most times where I've checked the average age by polls and stuff. It's been 27 years old. That has been the average age.

Alex - 13:32

Interesting

Zizaran - 13:33

Which is pretty old compared to the average age of a lot of communities. And I do get a lot of younger people as well. I still get a lot of trolls, you know, death threats, people just coming in

trolling, kill yourself, stuff like that. That'll be pretty common. I try to have a different approach to that where I'll try to, not get annoyed by it visibly, and I'll ask, "Are you having a bad day?" And I remember there was one guy coming in, those are really slurs and yeah, just being pretty toxic. And I was very friendly to him for around 30 minutes and then gave him a 10-minute timeout. He came back the next day. And he said he was having a really hard time as his dog had just died, then he was like just lashing out, and he's been a regular community member ever since.

Alex - 14:19

That's an interesting approach. Anything else you want to add?

Zizaran - 14:26

Yeah, I mean, sometimes it's just a couple of people having fun and trying to impress their friends. Well, a lot of time it is somebody having like a genuinely hard time and they don't have a positive outlet.

Alex - 14:42

That's interesting. That is interesting. So, another part to this question is you started out with Path of Exile, you started out going really hardcore, and just pumping out the hours. Has the content or direction of your channel changed since you started or have you gone with the same theme?

Zizaran - 15:05

In the start I didn't try any variety at all. Literally zero. And now I'll do two months pretty heavily of Path of Exile. If there's any releases I'm super keen on in the second month, I'll play that. And then in the third month, I'll play a little bit more variety, depends a bit on the Path of Exile league, I suddenly... everybody gets burned out to some degree. So, if I feel like I've accomplished everything I want to in that Path of Exile league, I'm never going to force myself to play when it's burned out just to get more viewers and I'm at the point now where I'm doing a fairly good variety. I remember pretty early on in Path of Exile I switched over to Jurassic World,

there's the game I really, really wanted to play. And everybody was like, I can't believe Ziz is switching over so soon, because I had 4,000 viewers in Path of Exile, which is very very high for me at the time. And then it turned out that I was one of the first people in the world to stream Jurassic World and I went to 5,000, nearly 6,000 viewers. So, I'm doing really well on variety as well, which was a big surprise for me. Generally, when the game is something that I can interact with, and have fun with my viewers, it does really well. If it's something like Dota or Overwatch where I focus more on the game than my viewers then my channel suffers pretty hard and I end up below 2000 viewers.

Alex - 16:20

Interesting. Interesting. Okay. I'm not looking to know how much you make, but I do want to talk about the monetization methods that you have on your channel. You know, you have the standard package that Twitch provides, you have the subs, you have the bits, you can set up a donation system, are there any monetization methods that you use outside of the standard?

Zizaran - 16:45

So I've tried some things like the stream labs bit boss and stuff like that, I feel a lot of them are obnoxious and get in the way. I do sell merchandise, like tee shirts and stuff that are related to my brand, they sell very little, and I am not very good at advertising. Other than that, I've done, I think I've done two sponsored games so far. One was a game I was like, pretty okay with playing. I generally get offered, I'd say, around five different video games a day that want to offer various amounts of money for me to play them per hour. So far, I've only accepted two. One was Black Desert Online, which was a lot of fun. It was three hours, I think. It was just a way for me to try different games, make some extra revenue to put towards a mortgage. And then Twitch has a new thing called the bounty board where it will basically come up on a panel saying, hey, you can stream this for x amount of money. And the way I did that, for trying it out was I said to my community, depending on how well we do, I'm going to be adding between five hundred dollars to a thousand dollars to the giveaway. I gave like a large chunk of that money back to my

community. Then people that are watching me also get rewarded and we get to try out something new. It's like a double win.

Alex - 18:05

Awesome. That is that is very well put. Do you believe that there is a “saturation point” for monetization methods? Do you think that you can spread yourself too thin on money making?

Zizaran - 18:19

100%.

Alex - 18:20

Okay.

Zizaran - 18:25

I've seen a couple of streams where I've gone in, and there was this guy, and he was like, "Hooah, let's do a giveaway." And that was his entire channel, back-to-back giveaway. He had, I think it was like, 15 or 10 affiliate links. It was insane. And, yeah, I mean, I get they have to make money, but it was so in your face. And so obnoxious and it felt like the stream didn't have any content besides that stuff. So, there's definitely like a good line. By all means, take sponsorships from things you use anyway, and be pretty be transparent with your stream about it.

People are generally okay with you making money this is 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, you know, it's starting to be a little bit more about the money and less about the content. There is definitely a healthy balance.

Alex - 19:21

Ok, ok. Moving away from the monetization, let's talk about social media, how many different platforms are you involved with? I know, obviously, every streamer and their mother included

has a Twitter account, everybody obviously has a Twitch account, I believe you also have a YouTube account running. Are there other accounts for social media services that you do use, obviously Discord, as well.

Zizaran - 19:48

Yeah, so I've tried using Facebook. I gave up on that pretty fast just because, especially in the start, when I was doing that so many hours, it was hard for me to update Twitter, hard for me to update Facebook, and something like Instagram as well. I did reserve all those names the instant I started to make sure people can put up fake websites and stuff like that. And every time a new social media springs up I make sure to reserve the name Zizaran early on because the larger you become, the more people are going to try to fake you to make money. At the moment, I have Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and mostly focus on my Twitter; the Instagram is something I post to very rarely, mostly when I go to conventions and it seems the biggest one is Twitter, because once you learn how to use it, it's a crazy amount of following you can get there. Sorry, YouTube is actually more important but I don't consider that just a social media platform. First of all, it's a big competitor for Twitch. But I've been using YouTube to feed extra viewers into my Twitch; I make sure to say at the end of my YouTube videos, "Hey, you know, I'm also streaming on Twitch. Go check me out there if you have any questions." And 1% of YouTube views 1% of what YouTube gets per day. That's the entirety of all Twitch views per day. Literally one to 100, so it is an insane number of viewers on YouTube. I'd say... I don't have the stats in front of me right now, but I believe I've like 16 or 17 million views on YouTube, 23 million on Twitch. And I think I make around three to 5% on YouTube compared to what I make on Twitch.

Alex - 21:24

Wow.

Zizaran - 21:24

The revenue and monetization options are garbage, especially if you're starting out. They're very unfriendly towards content creators. There's no contact point. Generally, YouTube is trash, but

it's got the viewer base. That's why so many people stick around. There's nowhere else to go; Twitch is great and it can make you a lot of money, but does not have the same viewer base.

Alex - 21:47

Okay. You mentioned that YouTube is not very friendly to content creators. And I don't think anybody's going to disagree with you on that. With Amazon now owning Twitch, do you worry about that platform heading towards the centralization and this homogenization and, you know, making things less intuitive for the content creators? Are there any trends like that that you're seeing? Or do you think the platform is doing just fine?

Zizaran - 22:14

Out of all the things that Twitch has done since I've been on the platform, the only thing I really disagreed with was removing ads from Twitch Prime. Before, if you have to explain you would be immune to ads in any channel there. Now you have to be subscribed to the channel, not to get ads. That is very counterintuitive to visibility. A lot of people hate ads. It's part of the reason why Netflix does so well is that it doesn't have ads, I think Netflix started experimenting with customized ads, and they got massive instant backlash. That's definitely one thing I've been worried about. However, I do go to meetings with my, for example, you get a partner representative from Twitch, they can directly speak to you, you can ask for help with things, you can ask for advice. You can also give feedback on Twitch and they understand exactly how important that is. Their partnership team is always growing bigger. I think when I got partnered, every single streamer who got partnered then would get a partner rep. I think now you have to have somewhere in between, 100 and 500 subscribers to be partnered. But they are working hard to make it easier. Obviously, the platform is growing a lot as well. And a big positive thing with Amazon taking over Twitch, is that you don't have to worry about the company going bankrupt, because it's obviously going to make a crazy amount of money from advertisers. It's sort of safe now.

Alex - 23:40

Okay. Let's see. What are some of the big do's and don'ts on social media?

Zizaran - 23:52

Something I see people do a lot is hashtag support small streamers I've never, ever used that. At one point, I had the impression you should dress for the job you want. I very, very early started saying that my goal was to be in the top 10 most concurrent channels and for an entire two week period in December, at least once per day. I was in the top 10 concurrent viewer channel on Twitch, at one point reaching, like, third.

Alex - 24:19

Wow.

Zizaran - 24:20

I remember early on a lot of people were saying there's no way you're doing that on Path of Exile or doing that full stop. But the more I've been pushing, the less people are saying no. So yeah, I would, I would say all that hashtag support small streamer stuff, it's crazy. It promotes a negative way of thinking. You should, at least in my opinion, and like, I mean, a lot of this is just opinion, but in my opinion, you should treat your stream the same regardless if you have 5,000 viewers or 500. Because that's still people choosing to take time out of their day to watch you.

Alex - 24:54

Absolutely.

Zizaran - 24:55

I also see a lot of people on social media trying to tag below the streamers, create drama, this depends entirely on the channel that you want to grow. Because a lot of the drama or like stuff like that, forcefully interacting with streamers, it can work and it does for some people. It's something I'm against. Whenever somebody like starts tagging me and stuff, I'm like, "Okay, you're never getting hosted." I mean, again, it depends on the sort of community you want to be

part of, but there's a subreddit called LivestreamFails, and it does show that a lot of the time, drama and things that are a little bit edgy like can definitely work on Twitch. As I mentioned earlier, positive networking with other streamers, arranging things like tournaments, trying to make guides, especially really early on. When I say the first four days, there's no way in hell that I'm going to be able to make a YouTube video so somebody makes one before me, that's a large chance for them to be like, yeah, to get a lot of views from the community without necessarily focusing on streaming, so hard, because a couple of streamers, myself included. For example, Methyl and Ziggy will very easily turn into black holes, at least start where everybody's going to watch us. You can see streamers that have like, 800 to 1,000 go down to like 100 to 200 views. I usually recommend focusing more on YouTube right now, because it's, it's such a good way of getting extra.

Alex - 26:29

Interesting, very interesting. You mentioned a little while ago, you....

Zizaran - 26:37

Oh, actually, one thing to add.

Alex - 26:38

Yeah.

Zizaran - 26:39

Something that can very easily put off a lot of people is very, extreme opinions. Politics or like super edgy jokes. I mean, there are a couple of channels dedicated to talking about politics and stuff. But a lot of people don't come to Twitch for that, a lot of people come there to have fun and relax and talk to their friends. I usually say, why should anyone care what a guy with blue hair says about politics? Also, there's so many people from different countries there.

Alex - 27:08

Right, right. You mentioned a little while ago you use your Instagram when you go to conventions? Are there any networking, any - what am I trying to say - any networking efforts that you exert, such as conventions, any, anything else outside of conventions that you use off of social media in the form of networking? Or is it just usually conventions.

Zizaran - 27:36

I went to TwitchCon. The first one that I was a streamer for, and I accidentally ended up with a meet and greet. And I didn't believe that I was big enough to get a meet and greet. And I didn't realize that you had to apply for one. So at some point my partner rep messages me, and he's like Ziz, why did you not apply for a meet and greet? And I was like, "You didn't ask me?" It was like, "Oh, we know. We don't ask, you're big enough to get one. Why didn't you apply for one?" I was like, oh, no. But he put me in a queue. And what happened is someone got really sick, I think he had to remove a kidney or something. I don't know, he got really sick anyway. And they asked, "Do you want a meet and greet?" And I said, "Yeah, of course I want a meet and greet! In how many days?" "Two hours." I got two hours to start spamming Twitter saying, "Please come to my meet and greet." This was when I was a lot smaller. It was also a two hour meet and greet. It was intended for one of the biggest streamers on Twitch. There was like an hour of nobody there, which was super awkward. There was even at one point where one guy came. And he was like, "I don't watch your channel. But you looked really alone. So I figured I'd come say hi." And I thought, Oh my god. That was awful. I had a meet and greet the next year as well. And it was crazy. I was so nervous about, you know, any form of repeat incident, but 200 plus people showed up, it was full the entire time. And yeah, it was super cool. Actually, Twitch staff had arranged - like it was my birthday at TwitchCon - So they had arranged for like the entire meet and greet hall pretty much sang Happy Birthday to me, which was crazy.

Alex - 29:05

Holy cow.

Zizaran - 29:07

So that was really cool. Like I said, there's so many cool people and talented people that work at Twitch. And it really shows; I feel like, that's the big difference. You do get a lot of offers from competitive platforms, which can give me a crazy amount of money per month. But, the partnership is the main reason to stay on Twitch.

Alex - 29:28

Interesting.

Zizaran - 29:29

I also participated in things like panels; you can message your partner up, "Hey, I'm interested in doing a little extra at TwitchCon, are there any panels or interviews, anything I can participate in." So, I got invited to this feedback mixer, where you get to talk directly to staff that are developing new features with Twitch, then you sign an NDA. And you get to ask us, loads of questions and feedback. And, and my partner rep remarked afterwards that apparently, I was the one who said the most there, because a lot of people just go there for whatever. But I really used the time to ask and suggest a lot of things. They even took some of the suggestions and they're part of Twitch now, which was really cool. One of the small ones I'm sure I can mention was that they didn't give us notebooks at the mixer. And I thought, how are we supposed to remember anything? This is a one-hour meeting and then people ask questions. At the next one I went to them and they said, "Hey, Ziz, look!" And I was like, "Oh my god, notebooks." I was really happy about that, even though it's a fairly small thing. But, they really do listen to their content creators. And regardless if it's just you asking, you do feel like your voice gets heard. Because a lot of the thing that you might be asking or suggesting, there's going to be thousands of others, thinking the same thing. Making sure you, make your voice heard is important. And you can meet a lot of other streamers, like at the panels.

Alex - 30:51

Okay. Yeah, I've definitely been to my fair share of the panels. They are in no short supply. We went over the real-life social media. So what works right now? What are you doing on the

channel that you find is bringing you the most success? What is keeping everything held together and keeping the channel growing?

Zizaran - 31:19

That's something that's very interesting. I very recently stagnated for around three different Path of Exile leagues. Great at launch, like 8,000 to 18,000 viewers, crazy amount of years at launch. But then, very quickly, went up to 43,000 and stayed there. And I wasn't seeing a big increase every new season where in the start I felt like I was breaking new records, I was the first PoE streamer to get 1,000 subs, stuff like that. Then it hit me pretty hard when I felt like it was stagnating. So it turned out that I accidentally had the world record in most hours streamed, because I was just doing a crazy amount at league start. Whereas most people who are doing the really long streams - there are people that do like 100 and 110 hours streamed in one session, but they usually crash really hard and then take time off. I was just doing a crazy 16 to 17 hours a day, sometimes 10. I had, I think it was, 405 hours and GiantWaffle was, like, "Oh, I'm going to break Zizaran's world record for streaming the most on Twitch." And I was like, wait, you what now? He made a really big deal about that. And he did 464 hours. And I was like, wow, I have that on accident. That's awesome. Let's do 500. GiantWaffle is a really cool guy. He's a good friend of mine, and he started talking about me, trying to retake the record, which is really big of him, because he could have been completely silent about that, and that would have given me a lot less traction and it ended up with Lyric told Carnage, and a lot of other like big people on Twitch talking about it that I was just instantly going back for the 500. And that was huge for my channel. First of all, I went into it really cocky, because I'd already done 405 and I was so used to doing long streams so I was like, this won't be that hard, it'll be fine. Like, sure it's hard, but it's just 100 more hours, you know, I can still sleep six hours a day. But I went to the Doctor, got lots of blood work done, consulted with doctors. They did say "We can't recommend this in any way. But it does seem like you're doing all the proper precautions and you seem to have your head screwed on." I was like, "whew, you don't know me." They like, they basically said I won't die from doing it. Also went to a physio and I went to great lengths to buy a standing desk. You can switch between a hydraulic one, so you can switch between standing and sitting. I would sit for

an hour or two and then stand for 20 to 30 minutes and just alternate. I would also try to move a lot. I would take a break every hour. Usually on marathon runs you're allowed, like, three minutes, three to five minutes per hour for bathroom breaks, food, stuff like that. I ended up with less than 90 seconds or less than a minute for the entire run, per hour. Didn't use as much stretching time as I should have or could have. But yeah, I was very, very health conscious, about as much as you can be when going for something that extreme. And I also have real life friends who were interested; like, "Hey, we don't want you eating take away, we're going to help you. We're going to make you food." So, I didn't eat a single takeaway. And like I said, I was stretching a lot. It was very, very important to take everything seriously. And I ended up beating the most hours streamed, there were so many people, I stayed on above 10,000 concurrent viewers for such a long time. There was a crazy number of subs, I managed to hit over 10,500 subs, I was the first PoE streamer to do so.

Alex - 34:53

Congratulations.

Zizaran - 34:54

I felt like I was getting back into the groove of things. And I was, "Yay, I'm not stagnating anymore." And ten thousand subs on Twitch is also the most amount of... don't know how to explain it. But basically, once you have 10,000 subs, you can't unlock any more emote slots. That's max, like, so even if you get 20,000 there's like, no, like, obviously, you get more money, but you don't get any more like Twitch benefits.

Alex - 35:17

Interesting.

Zizaran - 35:18

So that was insane. That was huge.

Alex - 35:20

And when was that?

Zizaran - 35:22

That was just now in December, 2018. I'm just recovering from that now.

Alex - 35:25

Wow. Holy crap. Congratulations on that.

Zizaran - 35:28

Thank you.

Alex - 35:28

For somebody that's doing such extensive research on the platform, I'm not very up on the news and the happenings of the community. Grad school tends to take away all of that time from you.

Zizaran - 35:50

There were, pretty instantly, a lot of people starting to post screenshots of themselves. Like having, 550, 600, and one guy was 697 hours streaming in a month. But then when you go to the channel, the left there's sometimes like a black screen sometimes there's no web camera with nobody talking and you're like, oh, okay.

Alex - 36:07

Farming it.

Zizaran - 36:08

So, yeah. It's sort of hard to prove that you did it without a webcam and yourself there.

Alex - 36:13

Right. So let's see. You talked about going for the record, are there any other methodologies that you're using, anything that you can do over the long term, anything that you're doing for the right now along those lines?

Zizaran - 36:32

One big thing I did recently, around five months ago I joined CLG - Counter Logic Gaming. A big eSports team and they have recently started getting more like not just eSports but also like streamers to stream for their team and obviously you do get the revenue from that but a big part of it is that they can promote you on their platforms and be like hey, this guy is part of CLG, go check him out which also helps with the growth and stuff.

Alex - 37:00

Okay really good really good. Um, so here's here's a two parter. What makes the most money? What's the most fun? Do the two overlap?

Zizaran - 37:12

I'm still enjoying playing Path of Exile. I still play off stream, not as much as I used to because I don't like doing mapping content. They removed a low-level farming zone that I would normally farm play one or two hours off stream. Once that was removed I've stopped playing it as much, but I still play and I record everything I play off stream in case I die, because I do play on hardcore in December and any holiday period, gift subs which is a new feature and drop on Twitch is definitely the highest. Then you have a fairly even split between the normal \$5 subs, Twitch prime subs, and ad revenue, so it's pretty 25 there. It's a pretty even split.

Alex - 37:55

Okay, okay, um, anything else to add on that?

Zizaran - 38:03

As far as what's the most fun, I always do whatever I enjoy the most and there hasn't been a time where I've felt like I have to stream Path of Exile today because I just don't. I'll either go play Dark Souls, Subnautica. A couple of times I would stream, like, going to an overwatch as well, that did really badly for my channel. I don't have that much fun streaming those games because I can't talk to my audience. And that's like, definitely like my favorite time. I do feel like I know thousands of the regular people that watch me even what country they live in. Something I'm trying to do as well to diversify a little bit, is I'm trying to learn how to say welcome to my channel in every language.

Alex - 38:42

Oh wow!

Zizaran - 38:42

I know Finnish, Russian, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and a couple more as well, Spanish. I'm learning a couple of things in different languages. Especially for Russian I started learning things like please, or [speaks in Russian] which is, "Please speak English in my channel," and then I'll say [speaks in Russian] "because I don't speak Russian." and then a lot of people instead of being disrespectful they'll say, "Oh wow, he took some time to learn some Russian, that's badass." There will be the occasion when someone will be like "[sad face] I don't speak English" and then we'll talk a little bit using Google Translate. Just putting a little extra effort in caring with your community; it goes a really long way on Twitch.

Alex - 39:25

That's incredible that's really impressive. I would never have thought of that myself.

Zizaran - 39:32

Yeah. On a similar note, I thought it would be really funny to play alternative national theme songs of the world; for example, I would do like the America Fuck Yeah song for America, I'd do Justin Bieber's Sorry for Canada, and then Canada got very offended, actually. I got to Korea,

South Korea and I got to China and I did Mulan's How To Make A Man Out Of You [sic] and Gangnam Style, and for around a month, I was just getting flamed in Korean.

Alex - 40:06

Okay, how do you handle that?

Zizaran - 40:12

I actually... so with that there wasn't much I could do, right? Like, I tried translating a few times and being like, "Hey, you know, it was a joke, calm down," but at some point I had to block I think 30 to 50 accounts.

Alex - 40:24

Wow, interesting.

Zizaran - 40:25

Yeah, people get a little bit crazy sometimes.

Alex - 40:28

Right. Well, the interesting thing is the overwhelming majority, especially in China, there for the life of me, I can't remember their streaming platform. But their streaming platform outnumbers Twitch by a drastic margin.

Zizaran - 40:44

Very few people. It's mostly people from Hong Kong, a couple people, they won't show up in your stats, because they're using proxies. A couple of people from Hong Kong, a couple of people from Mainland China. Quite a lot of people from Korea and stuff though.

Alex - 40:55

Interesting, interesting. I think Korea uses - Afreeca TV- was the service that they have.

Zizaran - 41:01

There's a couple, yeah.

Alex - 41:02

Going back to an earlier question to flesh it out a bit more, is there anything that you recommend that streamers not do. Not just on social media, but in general, what are the don'ts.

Zizaran - 41:22

I think it's going to sound harsh, but having the ability to not take time off is huge. And I do want to make a streaming guide for this. I say a lot of people on Twitch, the Twitch subreddit, will say "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 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 lot of people I see having that, oh you know, I'm just going to take a day off today, because you can. You can take a day off whenever you want to. But you shouldn't. So far since 2015 I've taken three, no sorry, I took today off so four, four days off including today.

Alex - 42:12

Aw, just for me.

Zizaran - 42:14

No, I was just not feeling great. But four, four days off so far. Where I was like, I just I need a day off. I need a little time to recover, then I'm on 15 or 14 days, total. And that includes things like flying to conventions, funerals, stuff like that. Only absolute necessary stuff. And at the conventions I will usually stream there, as well.

Alex - 42:36

That's incredible. You know dude, kudos to the dedication and to the work ethic. That's, that's just really, really commendable.

Zizaran - 42:45

Thanks.

Alex - 42:47

Is there anything else that you recommend that people stay away from?

Zizaran - 42:51

A lot of people definitely don't network enough, or really talk to other streamers and stuff. Inserting yourself into the community is, is huge. There are people who do lone wolf it, and there's a lot of things that I believe are necessary. For example, using a webcam, using a microphone; these things are definitely going to give you a wider reach and scope. Other people who don't do that, and they'll always bring up, "Oh you know, Larry, he doesn't do that." It's completely pointless. Giving some examples of streamers who are already super successful, because they grew at a completely different time in Twitch, when there was less than 1,000 streamers. Now you're looking at over hundreds of thousands.

Alex - 43:32

Millions, even.

Zizaran - 43:33

It kills me when people give examples of old things.

Alex - 43:37

Right, exactly. So here is a trickier question that you might have an answer to, might not. This a two parter. What do you think is something that everyone should be doing, but isn't? You already

mentioned a couple of them. What do you think is something that people should be doing more of?

Zizaran - 44:00

Didn't I just answer that?

Alex - 44:05

I guess you did.

Zizaran - 44:06

Yay.

Alex - 44:07

All right. Knocked that one out of the park. Okay, for the next question, a quick fire segment where I want to go over a few different topics to get your thoughts on it and how you feel about them. First on the list is variety content. You've already mentioned that you've dabbled in it. What are your thoughts on variety content? Is there a bad way to do variety content? If so, what do you feel is the best way to do variety content?

Zizaran - 44:35

The hardest way to grow on Twitch is variety. You need to have an insanely strong personality. Whereas for example, streaming one game and being really good at it, you don't necessarily need to be the most upstanding person in the world, you could, technically, just be really good. Something we see from a few PoE streamers is that they had 2,000 viewers on Path of Exile, and when going over to other games they go all the way down to 100 viewers. A lot of people are only watching to watch them for the game they're on. If you're able to, like, just stream one game over and over again. And repeating that, then you're going to see a lot more success than somebody who's like, "Oh, you know, I'll play the game for two weeks and then I'm bored, I'm

going to stream another game." Because you'll get a lot of negativity and your channel, "Why aren't you streaming Path of Exile," for example.

Alex - 45:19

Right. Right. I've been getting that a lot. The next one: risk and risk management. I'll throw a hypothetical at you. Let's say you are involved in some big drama, either between you and another streamer or you and your own community. Let's say that the community is not happy with you, how are you going to handle this? And how are you going to move forward from it.

Zizaran - 45:47

So that hasn't really happened to me so far. It has been another streamer that at some point said some pretty toxic stuff, and I completely ignored it on my stream. I just said, like, "No, I don't think they would say that about me, they're a cool person," and I was generally really positive about it. Turns out they did say those things. I just completely didn't talk about it. And he ended up getting massive community backlash, and lost a large number of subscribers, a lot of people who were really unhappy with it. But yeah, generally... I stay out of drama completely. There's no reason for me to get involved in anything. And yeah, I'm... mostly people just want to have a good time. Staying out of it completely. Yes. Well, it's worked the best for me.

Alex - 46:29

Okay. Okay. But, just as a thought experiment, how would you handle a dramatic situation between you and your community?

Zizaran - 46:40

Well, like, entirely depends on what's happened. If I've done something wrong, I would be pretty transparent, and, apologize about that. Whereas if I didn't do anything wrong, I'll try to explain it calmly. But it's a sticky situation sometimes.

Alex - 46:57

Okay. Okay. You already made a couple of comments about this, but let's flush the idea about it out a little bit more. Paid advertising. Let's say you seek out services to spread you and your image throughout the internet in an effort to gain more exposure. Do you think that that could eventually lead to more numbers on your channel? Or do you think it would backfire due to the internet's pre-existing notions about advertisements?

Zizaran - 47:25

Oh, no, I think generally being seen as better than not being seen. The problem with that is when you're in a position to do that, you can't afford that, which is a catch-22 situation, because once you can afford it, you generally don't need it, and then it can come across [recording cuts out]

Alex - 47:40

Interesting.

Zizaran - 47:47

Like there's recently been drama with one streamer who literally purchased Twitch advertisement so actual ads that played on Twitch for their New Year's stream, and there was insane backlash. They instantly took it down, Twitter was just on fire.

Alex - 48:04

I have a feeling I know who we're talking about. And okay, so the last one on the list. And this one is one that I'm really curious about. What about and you, in all likelihood, have not experienced this, but extreme problem users, you know, the people that go above and beyond to be, not just an issue to you in your channel, but a hazard to you. You know, the people that dodge bans, like you said, the people that are running on proxies, the people that will dox your information and will contact you privately and try to extort you. And just the outright fanatics, you know. Do you have any backup plans to deal with this kind of kinds of user? Or...

Zizaran - 48:51

So, first of all, I live in Northern Ireland. So, if I got doxxed, we don't really have things like swatting and stuff here. It's not a culture... it's a lot more chilled out, like in the UK itself; England and America can be more of a problem, although, a couple people died from swatting lately. And it's calmed down a lot because people start getting jail time. I've definitely had a few moments where there's been people who say, "Hey, I'm going to throw acid at your face at TwitchCon, you know, watch out for me in the blue jacket." Stuff like that. And a couple of people are just straight up being like, "Hey, I'm going to kill you. I hate you." And a few of those people have been like very intense. Mostly you just want to ignore it and hope they're joking. You report it to the police. There's not much they can do. So yeah, it's just for the love of God. Don't accidentally dox yourself.

Alex - 49:41

Right. Absolutely. Okay, so now we're past that little section. What's next? Do you have any plans for what you want to do after you retire from streaming? Do you see yourself retiring from streaming, or simply moving on to the next form of video game media that crops up?

Zizaran - 50:05

Yeah, so I can see myself doing this for at least another 10 to 15 years. Hopefully, after somewhere between five to 10 years maybe reduce it to somewhere like eight to 10 hours a day instead of doing more, and turning to a bit more normal job at that point, so I have more time to enjoy other things. But, I mean, I do have like a pension fund that I've set up, and an accountant, so, I do plan for the future. Ideally, I want to buy like a house, pay down a mortgage, which I'm hoping to do this year. So yeah, I definitely do plan a lot for the future. I can't see myself doing much other stuff in like the entertainment industry.

Alex - 50:40

Okay. Okay. You've done an amazing job of answering pretty much everything I have here. The last question I have is do you have any tips, tricks, advice, encouragement, or suggestions for,

you know, a new streamer that's just starting out and is looking for something to help get them off of their feet.

Zizaran - 51:07

Make sure you create community events, try to get people involved without being obnoxious. Be fun, make sure you figure out why people should watch you. And yeah, get a few friends, real life friends, your mom, whatever, your dad, to watch your stream. It's huge in the start. And yeah, don't give up. But you need to find a healthy balance of making sure that there is growth. If you've streamed for six months, and you're still sitting there and literally zero or one viewer, then maybe it's time to find something else to do. Streaming isn't for everyone. It's a really hard thing to do. And you need to have insane self-discipline.

Alex - 51:44

Okay. Now is there anything else you'd like to add at the end of this?

Zizaran - 51:51

No, I think I've said pretty much everything. Thank you for taking time to ask me all the questions.

Alex - 51:56

No, dude, thank you for taking the time to answer them. That's the hard part. Asking them is easy one. So Ziz, it's been wonderful. I'm going to stop the recording now.

Alex - 0:00

So, one of the- the first question that I always start with is: What got you into streaming? What led you to twitch?

BackgroundGuy - 0:09

Originally, a long time ago, it was, I just was a raid leader for my guild on World of Warcraft. I tried it one time under a different username way back, long time ago. I think it was still Justin TV. I thought it was stupid. I hated it. I never paid any more attention to it. For years and years to come.

Alex - 0:27

[Laughs]

BackgroundGuy - 0:28

I started getting involved with one of my guild mates, we lived together for five years, she was, what we like one of our top players. So she was always in on the raids. And then I was the raid leader/GM - Guild Master. And she started streaming. So that kind of got me a little bit more involved in it. She's actually a partner and streamer herself now because she, well, she was fun. And anyway, when we broke up, I had a lot of free time on my hand. During our time together, I had learned about speed runs through GDQ - Games Done Quick because one of my guild mates, and since I already had a username on Twitch, I had been getting involved in a lot of different communities from because of her, our association. And when we broke up and I moved back home, I had nothing to do, lots of time I thought, Okay, I'll try my hand at the speed running thing, just because I wanted to speed run. That was it. There was no other reason, I didn't think I was gonna make it big. You know, she hadn't made it yet, either. If you want to call being a partner making it, which it isn't. But [Laughs] but I just kind of streamed, and then people stayed.

Alex - 1:52

Interesting. So one of the things and while I personally don't speed run, but like speed running is on my bucket list of things that I definitely want to do. You know, everybody, every speed runner has the story about how they found the game that they run. What's yours?

BackgroundGuy - 2:12

Well, I run a lot of games. But the game I started with was Earthbound, it was just a game that I had a lot of fun memories of as a kid. It wasn't my favorite game, but it was a game I really loved. So I thought, well, if I'm, you know, I had been particularly getting involved with the Earthbound community. A lot of channels that I watched were Earthbound runners, and it was a really good community and it's not bad now, it's just that, it's not nearly as good as it used to be. But that was it was just kind of arbitrary, just happened to be that this was the community I had been involved in. It just happened to be that was the first game I just decided, but it was a game I had as a kid and I loved it. And it's just a great game.

Alex - 2:59

Okay, interesting. So when you had picked up streaming was it purely from, you know, you mentioned you just had way too much time on your hands. Was money at all a factor when you had joined?

BackgroundGuy - 3:11

No.

Alex - 3:11

The platform? Not at all?

BackgroundGuy - 3:12

No. Zero interest in making money off of twitch I, in fact, I still kind of didn't like twitch when I started because of my previous experience with it.

Alex - 3:21

Interesting. And has that changed over time?

BackgroundGuy - 3:25

My interest in streaming is not financial, my interest in streaming is because I enjoy it. It just so happens to also be my means of living.

Alex - 3:35

Okay. So for the next one, I'm going to use just a phrase called day one. And that's just going to essentially mean the first few months to about a year of when you started streaming. So run me through what your average week was like, during that time period.

BackgroundGuy - 4:16

I think I got a little bit lucky with the viewership because I started streaming with Earthbound. The Earthbound community was already watching my progress as I went through streams. And so- so even like the first week, I had probably three to five viewers on average, but it just kind of kept growing as different Earthbound runners would host me. Then they end up watching me instead of the other Earthbound runners. And it just kind of- sort of slowly steadily grew until about I want to say about four months into streaming. I participated in an event called "SNES Superstars", which was a speed running marathon event, just a small one, about 2-3000 viewers. We did a three person race. At the end of that marathon they hosted me for 2500 viewers, which was the biggest host to this day that I've gotten.

Alex - 4:55

Wow.

BackgroundGuy - 4:58

I went from averaging 40-50 viewers a day to 80, 90, 100, 110 just overnight, just because of that host. So at that point, I started taking things a lot more seriously and said, okay, let's try this

thing, and a month or two later, I was partnered - that was six and a half months in since starting, and I was partnered.

Alex - 5:21

Wowie.

BackgroundGuy - 5:22

And then, from then on in, I just kept taking it more seriously trying to introduce different events, and then thinking, okay, look, if I'm partnered, and this is at the time, we're only partners can get subscriptions and bits weren't even a thing. So I thought, if I'm partnered that means I can I monetize my stream. I can make this a living. I should create some fun events and do fun things to, you know, and take this seriously. And not just stream, and piss away this opportunity that I've been given. So I devised a few fun events, I started trying to network a little bit. I'm terrible at that, by the way. [Laughs]

Alex - 6:09

Aren't we all?

BackgroundGuy - 6:11

But my stream isn't big, it's not gigantic, it's still relatively small. I mean, after three and a half years of streaming, I would say I would probably get, you know, 200 average on a random casual game. But if I speed run maybe a little bit more 300 or something like that. So even after all that long, I don't have a huge following, but I have a really, really supportive community because those events that I created were successful, and allowed me to continue streaming because I was able to feed myself and pay my bills and do what I needed to do because of a very generous community. So viewership isn't always the thing, I've always sort of said quality over quantity, and not only is the community absolutely amazing, just be around with, but also supportive. And if it wasn't for that, then I wouldn't be here.

Alex - 7:07

Awesome. Awesome. So-

BackgroundGuy - 7:07

That would be the first year at that point. I was like, I can actually do this now, and I just kind of kept going.

Alex - 7:14

That's awesome. That's awesome. So you mentioned you ran a bunch of events, and fun stuff to do on your stream, you mind elaborating on that some more?

BackgroundGuy - 7:23

So there would be like maybe a bit more for what game I would speed run next, which would, you know, help generate money so that I could live, and also it would give something people to look forward to. During that time, I would play the games that were like, part of the event, you know, so I would, just kind of, dip into a little bit more than just here, give me money. And I'll run and I'll play a game kind of thing. It was different events, different angles to it. I also did a thing called like "Mario M-Games", because you know if someone wants to make a clever name for an event, it's like always the same letter in the Mario madness, Mario hole, and

Alex - 8:18

Yeah.

BackgroundGuy - 8:18

couldn't think of anything, because all that stuff have been taken. Mario M-Games! You know, so, whatever, just kind of make it goofy, and then people could donate to kill me, make me replay levels, make me replay extra levels. And it was fun. It was tons of fun. Just it wasn't extraordinary amounts, you know, you send a few bucks, you're helping support a streamer. And then I wouldn't have to die, and redo the level all over again. I had a blast and it was fun. Not

just for me, but for everybody. You know, stuff like that interactive, fun kind of stepping over the line of just playing a video game, and then hoping people give you money which is I think really arrogant to do that, to just go on the internet and play a game and just expect people to give you money just because you're on the internet. You need to be there doing something for them. If you're not doing something for them, why should they do anything for you? So every event that I plan, or I'm a part of I try to at least create some kind of interaction where I'm participating with the chat, and not just holding out a cup saying, "Give me money."

Alex - 8:20

Mario M-Games [Laughs] Yeah.

BackgroundGuy - 9:35

I think that's what has made this possible.

Alex - 9:40

Awesome. Awesome. Yeah, I just had an interview yesterday, and the guy was talking about, when you enter into a community it becomes very aware whether or not you are participating or leeching off of them. That can just simply make and break your channel from the get go.

BackgroundGuy - 10:01

I definitely had my fair share of people come in and start making comments like "Sell out" this, or "I can't believe" this, that or the other. I'm running an event right now, which has a running total which people can see and, it's a long event, for like three months and people will come in and just be like, lol making X amount of money while playing Final Fantasy. What a joke. What is this world coming to? And it's just like, - listen, you're not a part of this community. You can be if you want to, but coming in with a comment like that you don't have any idea what's going on.

Alex - 10:37

Bitch, you hate me because you ain't me.

BackgroundGuy - 10:40

It's not even that, I mean, I think there's a fair amount of jealousy for sure, like what you say, but there's a lack of understanding as well. They think all I'm doing is turning on a video game and playing things and I'm somehow tricking people into giving me money. I'm somehow holding a gun to anybody's head. You know, I'm playing a video game, I'm trying to be entertaining and trying to be fun. I'm being myself at most you know. And that's it, that's all there is.

Alex - 10:43

And it's interesting that these kinds of people are out there, and that people will cry sell out all the time, because, like with all the people that I've been talking with the general attitude is that the disingenuous will eventually be weeded out. So you would think that perceptions of people that are trying to make a living on these platforms would be changing towards the better. There still seems to be this level of cynicism behind it, but I guess that's just the cynicism of the internet.

BackgroundGuy - 11:43

I think, I think like you say, it's a lot of it is jealousy. I think a lot is just ignorance as well, because they don't know what's going on and they just see a number. They just see a video game and they make, what do you call it, jump to a conclusion. They're just jumping to conclusions, you know, they're not actually looking into it. They're not involving themselves in the community. And that's fine. Some people are going to be part of it. Some people just aren't. And that's okay. And I think 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 that, chat will jump to the defense and be like - look, nobody's holding the gun to our heads. We're having fun. We don't care. Dahdahdahdah! And that's kind of, like, my mentality. It's like, if you don't understand it's not my fault. You can be a part of this if you want to or you can just lurk or you can just leave. No one's forcing you.

Alex - 12:41

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So you, you mentioned it took you what, four month computer notification to gain partnership?

BackgroundGuy - 12:50

Six and a half-

Alex - 12:51

Six and a half months. Cat aggro?

BackgroundGuy - 12:53

Yeah, he's learned to open. He just reaches up and opens the door. I started streaming September 19th. Augh, gosh darn cat one second.

Alex - 13:07

[Laughs] That's fantastic.

BackgroundGuy - 13:13

Yeah it's great. When I need to focus on something and do work, then he's always there to make sure that I know he's around 19th, 2016. I think, I don't know, years. I just know, September 19th, three years ago. And then partnership, May the Fourth. That one's easy to remember, because May The Fourth be with You.

Alex - 13:33

Yep. That's cool. So besides gaining partnership, were there any other hurdles and challenges that you had to face or overcome with your time in streaming?

BackgroundGuy - 13:47

The fact that I don't have any free time. Which isn't a huge issue, I think with speed running also, there's the burnout factor. Speed running is not just - play a game a bunch of times, and then hope you do good next time. It's constant practice. It's constantly learning new strategies. It's constantly changing your entire route which means changing your splits, which means practicing offline, which means, talking in all the Discords and staying up to date with everything which takes an enormous amount of time. I don't have that time. Just being a streamer don't have that much time.

Alex - 14:26

I can completely understand that. Are you very familiar with rocket jumping at all?

BackgroundGuy - 14:32

Rocket jumping for what game?

Alex - 14:33

Team Fortress 2?

BackgroundGuy - 14:36

Oh, yeah. Yeah, like jump shooter rocket underneath you.

Alex - 14:39

Yeah, yeah.

BackgroundGuy - 14:40

Propel yourself forward. Yeah. That's in a lot of FPS games.

Alex - 14:41

Oh, yeah. But there is actually a surprisingly large speed running community within rocket jumping. I remember when I tried to give, you know, put my hand at that. And it's just, I have

immense respect for speed runners to tolerate the monotony and tedium of rerunning the same segments again, and again, and again, like, I don't know how you guys do it.

BackgroundGuy - 15:08

The one thing that makes it a little bit more tolerable for me is that - you don't really end up feeling like you're playing the same game. It's more like, if you were to go play basketball, you're doing the same thing, you're just throwing a ball in a hoop over and over and over again, just like a speed runner, but you're competing against something. You're either competing against your opponent or yourself, trying to shoot more, more, you know, score more, more shots than previous same with any kind of sport. It's the same game over and over and over again. But you're trying to do better, you're trying to be competitive. That's the difference, that's why it doesn't feel as monotonous as a lot of people might think it does.

Alex - 15:50

I can see that angle, I can see that. So mentioned the challenges- so give me, give me a snapshot of your channel what is your channel about, what kind of content do you create, and- and advertise to your community?

BackgroundGuy - 16:08

The first and foremost I'm a place that welcomes all walks of life. It doesn't matter who you are, or what your interest is. You're welcome. Period. The only people that are not welcome are bigots and racists and assholes. That's it, everybody else is free to enjoy it. Other than that, I try to have a really welcoming chill environments where I'll play just about anything, except for sports and racing games, pretty much. Mostly RPG's.

Alex - 16:41

Okay. Has the content of your channel changed over time or has that remained relatively consistent? How has it changed, and was it influenced by the community or through your own action?

BackgroundGuy - 16:52

Much less speed running, through my own actions because as we've discussed before, speed running isn't incredibly taxing. I have very little time because I worked on my stream all the time. Right now, I'm doing that, you know, I guess I wouldn't really consider working on my stream, but simulated things. So I don't have a whole lot of time I only give myself one day off of work six days a week, eight hours a day plus whatever management, you know, with the stream or the community I'm doing outside of that. So I don't get much time to play games that I want to play so I put down speed reading content to be two to three days a week instead of six days a week. Now and then I like a different variety type streams, two or three times a day a week, and if I ever want to play like a random game, I'll take a speed running day off.

Alex - 17:51

Okay, has the switching from or dialing back the speed running, and bringing up more variety content has that positively impacted your channel?

BackgroundGuy - 18:01

Only negatively impacted my channel.

Alex - 18:03

[Laughs]

BackgroundGuy - 18:05

Yeah, only negatively impacted it because I grew my stream doing speed runs. I was doing, you know, 400-500 viewers at night on average. And it's been probably years since I've dialed it back. If I'm running a big event, like what I'm doing now easily - I'll get, you know 300-700 people every night because of the big event. It's focused primarily on one of the biggest things that I enjoy which is Final Fantasy games. But once this is over, and I start playing some random game very few people have heard about it'll go back and it went down from 400-500 a night to

100 when I started changing my content. I knew that was going to happen. I also changed my schedule at the same time which also didn't help, but I was up until 10 in the morning which is really bad. I just stream through the twilight. That's bad for my health, but I knew it was only going to negatively influence my stream. It's still been like the supporters of the stream, the core viewership, they're still there. They're still being part of it, they're still supporting the stream because of that I'm still been able to manage, you know, continuing that, but it's been slowly kind of growing back. So there's two sides of this that is particularly interesting because I'm probably the only speed runner that you've interviewed, I would guess.

Alex - 19:33

You are the first, yes.

BackgroundGuy - 19:35

Or at least the first one. There's two ways to grow your stream. And I think it's important to denote the difference. Let me dial that back a second. There's two ways to start streaming. Growing your stream, that's different. There's no real way to grow your stream, you just kind of do the things and hope it goes. Speed running or variety. If you speed run, you will grow your community faster, but it will cap out at a lower number. If you do anything other than speed running, kiss your viewers goodbye. If you do variety, it'll take a lot longer to grow your stream, it'll build up slower, but those people that go there go for you not the one video game that you speed run eight hours a day, six days a week. So they will be there, no matter what game you're playing, as long as they can be there or they feel like being there.

Alex - 20:34

Right.

BackgroundGuy - 20:35

And that generates a community rather than just people that watch this game.

Alex - 20:41

Right. Right.

BackgroundGuy - 20:43

So because I started building with speed running, I was able to grow fast. I guess I have some kind of redeeming quality because they stayed. I don't see it, but hey whatever! When I mean so much- huh?

Alex - 20:58

You're fine in my book.

BackgroundGuy - 21:01

[Laughs] Thank you. Wow, I was worried. When I stopped doing so much speed running, and I went towards a more variety-based content, a lot of those "I only want to watch this video game" guys, they went away. I was lucky that I still had a core viewership of around like 100 or 200 people, you know, off and on because that allowed me to have an established channel field because if somebody comes into it when people are browsing Twitch, the larger viewership number they see, the more likely they are to click on the number, because they gotta be like, wow, what's going on here? So when I stopped doing that speed run content went towards more towards variety, if I didn't have that core viewership, I don't think I would be here today. You know because I still had people in the channel, people were still, you know, potentially going to click on that, see what's up with the channel. Why it's got the viewership that it has, and maybe stay. I've kind of slowly been able to grow my channel back up from that, but because of that core community, that of course, supportive community, I've definitely been able to continue being a full time streamer and not just a streamer.

Alex - 22:24

Okay. Yeah. So let's take a step and look at monetization. I'm not trying to figure out how much money you make, I don't need that number, but what I want to talk about is how you monetize

your content. You know, Twitch has their standard package, you've got donations, you've got subscribers, you've got bits, is there anything outside of that standard package that you utilize?

BackgroundGuy - 22:53

No, I'm not sponsored by anybody. I don't have any kind of like, outside deals or anything. I'm- I'm 100% of my income comes from Twitch.

Alex - 23:03

Okay.

BackgroundGuy - 23:04

That's not true. I have an Amazon thing that I signed up for, which Amazon owns Twitch so once again still within that circle,

Alex - 23:13

Still relatively domestic. Yeah.

BackgroundGuy - 23:15

Yeah. And it's tiny. I don't play ads so it basically covers the amount that I would get for playing ads every couple hours.

Alex - 23:24

Okay. Okay. Um, so with the standard package of monetization, is there anything unique that you do? I know you mentioned the bit war to decide what game you are going to run. Is there anything else that you employ using those monetization methods?

BackgroundGuy - 23:43

It's weird because I don't want to sit there and goad people into supporting the stream monetarily, you know, but I want to encourage it, obviously, because, it's my job. But like, if you don't

donate or whatever, then that's fine. And if but the thing is that if, if I'm going to encourage donations in some way, shape or form or some kind of monetization, I'm going to give them something in return. So the only thing I ever do to actually encourage monetary support is if I'm running an event that allows them to get something out of it. Hey, if X amount of is donated, then I will do this thing. If X amount of subs is hit, then I will do this thing, you know, that kind of stuff. Or if you if you donate X amount, I will do this thing, that kind of stuff. Like, interact, give back whatever I can as an entertainer to the community and not just sit there and go so how heavy are your wallets?

Alex - 24:54

[Laughs]

BackgroundGuy - 24:56

Come on, come on in. One thing I never want to do, is look at any of my viewers as a number. I have unfortunately seen that where streamers have a particularly supportive member of the community and they don't treat them special. They are always overly cheerful to them, they treat them like a number. Oh, let's make him a VIP now with the new VIP system because they've given me lots of money. I cannot condone that kind of behavior ever.

Alex - 25:29

So how would you handle, somebody who has a heavy wallet and a loose hand so to speak? Somebody come into your channel.

BackgroundGuy - 25:37

They're another person in the community just like anybody else.

Alex - 25:40

Okay.

BackgroundGuy - 25:40

The fact that they give more or less is entirely up to them, and their prerogative, and their choice. If they give, they give because they're generous not because they want some kind of special treatment. I will never treat anybody else differently. That your actual actions speak louder, you know. Are you racist? Yes? Okay, well, then you're banned, you know, that kind of thing. Like, are you a piece of shit or are you shitposting- sorry, I didn't mean to swear.

Alex - 26:08

You can go right ahead.

BackgroundGuy - 26:09

Are you being a negative influence on the community? That's the biggest one. Are you insulting chat? Are you arguing? Are you always coming in and bickering? Are you back seeding all the time? Those are the things that determine someone's worth not how heavy their wallet is.

Alex - 26:28

Okay. And should somebody come in, let's say throw 1000 bucks your way and demand preferential treatment, would you just outright refuse that?

BackgroundGuy - 26:38

Yes.

Alex - 26:39

Okay. Interesting to note. Um, so you mentioned...

BackgroundGuy - 26:44

Unless they wanted something really minor, like they wanted me to burp them happy birthday or something. Which I used to do because I got GERD [Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease]. I burp a lot. [Laughs] So it was kind of a joke to burp Happy Birthday for some people but if it was

something minor fun, and didn't take away from the content that I was delivering to my stream. Yeah, that's fine, but if they're like going all right now I want moderator or VIP or something I'd be like - thank you for your very generous donation, and kindly go fuck yourself.

Unknown 27:12

[Both laugh]

Alex - 27:16

Okay. 'kay.

BackgroundGuy - 27:19

Because, I'm not like, you know a dancing bunny, for your enjoyment or monkey for your enjoyment. You don't just throw money at me and tell me to dance. That's not what I do. Okay.

Alex - 27:32

Burping Happy Birthday that's...

BackgroundGuy - 27:36

[Laughs] It's kind of a stream joke because I hear it. I burp a lot and instead of hiding behind it I just gab it.

Alex - 27:42

I certainly can't burp happy birthday.

BackgroundGuy - 27:45

I don't really do that anymore because it's too much.

Alex - 27:49

So taking a step back from the monetization, I want to talk a little bit about social media. Obviously everybody and their mother, including their mother has a Twitter account. So you know, everybody's got a Twitter account, obviously everybody has a Twitch account, most people usually pair YouTube account with their channels. What is your presence on social media like?

BackgroundGuy - 28:13

I'm really bad at that. Like, really bad at that. I'm not very like- this is one of the things that makes me surprised that I'm actually able to do this full time because I don't know how to do that people thing with the social media stuff. I'm almost kind of older. I'm 36 this year will be 37 later this year, but I just turned 36 last month.

Alex - 28:39

Happy birthday, I can't burp this for you.

Unknown 28:46

[Both laugh]

BackgroundGuy - 28:46

So I don't really. I never even. If I were younger, I don't think I would really understand how to do it very well. I'm an introvert, I have social anxiety, you know, I don't know what the hell to do. And with that I've had like small discussions with social media experts, and I just can't figure out for the life of me how to generate viewership through social media so I don't really have a big social media presence. I have a Twitter which I think is really nice because it's not invasive. I don't really have a YouTube. I had a YouTube, but then I stopped speed running. There wasn't really a whole lot of content to put on YouTube other than just VODs which I thought was kind of redundant because you can just watch the VOD. Instagram. I tried that for a short period of time. I would do like one post a week, and I lasted about six weeks before I just forgot about it.

And it's funny because your Instagram is far more popular than Twitter. If you know how to social media, you should social media with Instagram.

Alex - 29:56

Get one of them premium accounts.

BackgroundGuy - 29:58

I don't even know what that is.

Alex - 29:59

Just- people can pay you to burp Happy Birthday to them.

BackgroundGuy - 30:04

Oh, boy. Well then. What have I been doing with my life?

Alex - 30:08

Seriously, you need to hop on this shit.

BackgroundGuy - 30:11

I'm on it.

Alex - 30:13

Okay, so you know with this lack of social media that you engage in, is there any real life networking that you participate in like conventions or meet and greets anything along those lines? Or you just kind of...

BackgroundGuy - 30:27

I went to GDQ and I got an RPG Limit Break every year. RPG Limit Break is like GDQ, but for RPG's.

Alex - 30:34

Okay. Okay.

BackgroundGuy - 30:36

I do post on Twitter. So I mean, I do post every time I go live. I'd post random things, I post my food that I'm making, I'd like to cook, I post my cats. You know, I do have a social media presence, it's just Twitter, and that's about it, though.

Alex - 30:50

Yeah, yeah. So has the networking you know, you RPG Limit Break and GDQ - how have those impacted you and your channel?

BackgroundGuy - 31:02

I think only negatively, I...

Alex - 31:05

Really?

BackgroundGuy - 31:06

Yeah, I think, well, I think that's my fault because I think I'm absolutely completely unimpressive in person. I think it's easier to enjoy me as if you're not directly involved with like discourse with me, you know what I mean, like, on a stream, people chat and I talk, but if we're talking in the same room, I have a propensity to interrupt a lot because I have ADHD on top of all the other things that I've been talking about. That makes it really hard to have a conversation for me because, like, I'll not knowingly interrupt people all the time. I don't think I'm very impressive like physically looking. I don't think I'm a lot of fun in person. I'm really awkward. I said, I have social anxiety, right? So like, I think because I'm not interesting as a person in person that going to these events only affects me negatively. Although I don't go to like network or spread my

name or anything like that, I go to just to meet the people that have been part of the community for so long to shake their hand, give them a hug, and thank them and hang out with them.

Alex - 32:18

You and I are in strikingly similar camps. I am also an introvert with ADHD. Ain't it so fun!

BackgroundGuy - 32:33

Yeah.

Alex - 32:34

Okay.

BackgroundGuy - 32:35

I'm surprised that you have such a command of this project with ADHD. Then, my hat's off to you.

Alex - 32:43

'cause it truly interests me. That's...

BackgroundGuy - 32:45

That's part of why streaming has been so successful for me, I think is because it truly interests me as well.

Alex - 32:50

Awesome. Awesome. That is just great. So let's see.

BackgroundGuy - 32:57

I wouldn't call it so successful though. I mean, I'm kind of a...

Alex - 33:01

Hey you can only go up from here.

BackgroundGuy - 33:02

Small fish in a big pond, but...

Alex - 33:04

Only you can only improve. That's the great thing you already you got past the hard part. You do it for a living.

BackgroundGuy - 33:11

I did yeah. The 10 viewers, the double digits is the hardest part.

Alex - 33:14

Oh, I believe that. Um, so what works right now? What is you know, what's the current state of your channel? Is there anything special that you're doing that is, you know, keeping things active, keeping your community engaged, keeping the numbers growing, so on and so forth?

BackgroundGuy - 33:33

Currently, I'm running a big event called the Final Fantasy Fiesta. It's a race between myself and my friend Seven Sins through the entire franchise.

Alex - 33:42

Yeah I saw that, how is that going?

BackgroundGuy - 33:44

It is the biggest part of my stream ever since I started doing it last year. It is by far the most important part of my stream because it helps me sustain myself. It is a lot of fun, it's very interactive, and it just generates the most viewership for my channel.

Alex - 34:03

Now, if I remember correctly, you're not doing the entire series, you're stopping at one point.

BackgroundGuy - 34:11

We're doing 1-15 minus the MMO's.

Alex - 34:13

1-15, you're doing all of them. Okay. I thought it was...

BackgroundGuy - 34:16

There's a lot of side games as part of, like incentives and stuff. So like we did, the after years. We did Dirge the Cerberus. We did X-2, we're doing Revenant Wings, and we'll be doing 13 to- and Lightning Returns. And we're also doing World of Final Fantasy after the end, and potentially another game - Crisis Core as a stretch goal.

Alex - 34:37

Wowie. Yeah. Final Fantasy 12 is actually one of the reasons I became a game designer. It's...

BackgroundGuy - 34:42

12?

Alex - 34:42

12. Yeah, the gambit system, you get to program your own AI.

BackgroundGuy - 34:47

Yeah, more or less. That's exactly what it is. Yeah. I like 12. We just finished it and I love it.

Alex - 34:52

I'm actually going through the Zodiac Age right now.

BackgroundGuy - 34:55

That's the version we played!

Alex - 34:57

Yeah. Oh my god, it's just an absolute pleasure. It's harder than the International Version, the International Version kind of handed you a lot of things on a silver plate.

BackgroundGuy - 35:06

But the limitation is what makes it more difficult, but in a good way.

Alex - 35:10

I think it's just so much better designed because when I played the International Version when I was younger, like back in 06, at the end of the game, I had six party members with great swords equipped. That's it.

BackgroundGuy - 35:22

Everybody was everybody. Yeah.

Alex - 35:24

Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

BackgroundGuy - 35:25

Everybody's everything.

Alex - 35:26

It was all just homogenized and washed out. Yeah, absolutely. I like how it's forcing you to differentiate and it's much more engaging and that way.

BackgroundGuy - 35:35

I agree.

Alex - 35:36

Yeah, getting back to the topic at hand a little bit, um.

BackgroundGuy - 35:40

Sure.

Alex - 35:41

Let's see... So here's a question I have. Is there anything that you recommend that you do NOT recommend that streamers do? I know that you said asking for handouts is a big no, being disingenuous also another one. Is there anything else that you think is something that should be avoided in this space?

BackgroundGuy - 36:07

Don't put anime waifus on your layout.

Alex - 36:11

Guffaws

BackgroundGuy - 36:11

Or GIFs...

Alex - 36:14

Every day.

BackgroundGuy - 36:18

Like care about the presentation, care about your presentation, if your layout is just a mess, no one's going to want to look at that, like make things organized, have a good color scheme, put things together, and leave your anime waifus at home. Especially if they got their boobs out and everything, just like hanging out and it's really, like heavy skin and everything like just... you're alienating half of your audience by doing that. Half of your audience doesn't give a shit about half naked girls or guys, one of the other, you know, so like, by doing displaying that heavy sexuality right on front like that, you're just chasing away people that want to maybe enjoy your content. Don't do it. I think it's the biggest faux pas out there that people do.

Alex - 37:06

And I see it everywhere.

BackgroundGuy - 37:09

It's all over the place.

Alex - 37:10

Oh, oh yeah.

BackgroundGuy - 37:11

I don't know what people think they're like they want people to show their own interests and that's great. You can show your interests through your content not with a big booby anime waifu, like with her giant jugs hanging down in front of everybody. You don't have to do that, there's like- I understand, you're attracted to attractive women with large breasts, that's great! Do that on your own time.

Alex - 37:47

[Breaking into laughter]

BackgroundGuy - 37:48

Play a game that has those characters. Just don't sit there with the camera zoomed in on them or something. You know what I mean? Like, scooch that to the side! Your content's great until you do that. You know?

Alex - 37:58

[Recovering from laughter] Okay, is there anything else that you think?

BackgroundGuy - 38:03

Clean layouts. Yeah, clean layouts. Hire professional artists to do your stuff, and care about how things look. If you ever have emotes, please care about the quality of those emotes because that is the one thing that you can give back to your community, that is always there. If you just don't care about the quality and art style of the emotes, that you have, it just feel so insulting to me. It just feels like...

Alex - 38:32

Oh, absolutely.

BackgroundGuy - 38:33

It feels like you don't care. I think that's probably the most disingenuous because we're talking about disingenuous being disingenuous. I think not caring about your emotes is the most disingenuous that you could do. Like, you actually don't care about people that are supporting your channel.

Alex - 38:50

That's a really good response. That's really good. So, next question is a little tricky. It's kind of a two part, but, we'll see if you have an answer for it. First part, is there anything that you see some people doing that you think more people should do? Um, and the second part... is there something that nobody is doing that you think people should be doing? Or really, I guess it boils down to what do you think people should be doing more of?

BackgroundGuy - 39:28

That's actually a tough question because as a streamer it's really easy to compare yourself to other streamers. All you have to do is go on Twitch, watch a random channel, and go, "Wow, they're doing this. That's great." You know? I think it's kind of a hard question to answer because it depends on your expertise in other things. For instance, part of why MoonMoon grew so fast, so amazingly is because he had all these awesome YouTube compilations that he would put up, and it was amazing. And he knew how to make those compilations: when to cut off, when to start it, not to make it too long, nice, little quick little- it was like a vine compilation. And it was funny. I loved it. It was great. MoonMoon started streaming around the same time I got partnered. So I was already partnered and I remember the first time seeing his emotes in my channels. Who's that guy? I was already a partner. So like, I had just made partner, you know, and I'm just like, "Oh, yeah, that's right. I'm a partner." I mean, you know, I thought, I thought this is like the greatest thing in the world. I had done it, you know, and boy was I humbled after that. But like, he knew how to make fun, engaging videos for his viewer. He exploded because he was fun, and engaging. So if you can do extra content, like creating those little videos, fun, funny moments. It's basically his own little clip show except without the clips. You know? You could piece them all together. And if you can add more to what you offer your viewers, then... Yeah. He also streams really odd. Four hours in the morning, four hours at night, which I guess works. Actually, there was an interview he did, where he said, when he started streaming again, he chose those hours specifically because he thought of the study he had done, it suggested that streaming at four hours in the morning and four hours at night was better. The attributes that as part of his success.

Alex - 41:48

I believe that. You're probably because a lot of people are going to be, you know, streaming during normal business hours even. And so if you can get four hours on either end, you're going to definitely catch a bunch of outliers.

BackgroundGuy - 42:01

I always thought to me, it was like... the more you stream, the more your viewership is going to steadily increase as more people come in, and people are staying. And so I thought, well four hours. That's like, when your streams just really starts picking up in viewership. How does that even work? But I mean, what do I know? He's doing something right.

Alex - 42:19

Right. There was actually just a panel that I attended, that we're talking about how the meta is kind of tuning away- from being from running 12 hours streams every day, to running four to six hours during prime time and figuring out where that best block of time is, and capitalizing on it every single time.

BackgroundGuy - 42:41

Co-Carnage is the same way. I believe he only streams six hours a day, if I'm not mistaken. And I think part of that is because in the first four hours of your stream, you have the most energy and hype. I know that after about six hours, I really start to just kind of pitter off. You know?

Alex - 42:59

Oh yeah, I believe that.

BackgroundGuy - 43:00

I start to lose a lot of energy and focus.

Alex - 43:02

M'kay.

BackgroundGuy - 43:06

Something that people should be doing more of or less of. The thing about Twitch streaming is you got to play to your strengths. So there's no way to succeed at Twitch. You know? You don't

just do the thing and suddenly you're successful. You have to play to what your strengths are as a person, for sure. And you also have to, like, there are small things you can do that will help influence it like networking or social media or just being funny. Or like, maybe MoonMoon's schedule thing really matters. I don't know, but the only thing you should be doing less of are things that actively chase viewers away. Like a lot of negativity, racism, you know, bigotry. I mean, it's all garbage. Anyway, you should never be that person if you want to be on Twitch.

Alex - 44:05

Right.

BackgroundGuy - 44:07

And then of course, like I was talking about waifus on the layout and stuff like that. Do less of that, but as far as content goes, you want to say game doesn't matter. You always want to say, "Oh, the game doesn't, the game doesn't matter. We're watching the stream or not the game. I have to disagree with that, because I have seen it firsthand, especially when I stopped doing speed runs, how game does matter. Oh, I have played lots of bad games and gotten lots of viewership, but it's because that's kind of part of my strength is the play a bad game and just laugh at it and have a good time with it and just make fun of it, you know? So that's like, one of my strengths. So I can play into that, but if you're going to I would say at the very least don't stream really, really, really, niche games unless that's just your interest. And don't force a game just because you think it's going to get your viewership. Don't like, oh, well, the Assassin's Creed came out, I don't give a damn about the series, but I'm going to play it because it's new, hype, and everybody's going to watch me play. That's not going to happen. They're going to watch Dan's Gaming, they're going to watch Lyric, and they're going to watch the big streamers they've always watched when a big new game comes out. Those are the people that do that. They've done it for years. They're not going to watch, you know, random new streamer guy play the new game. I do it anyway. When games like Final Fantasy 15 came out, I didn't give a damn that I was at a third of my viewership. I just want to play Final Fantasy 15.

Alex - 44:24

That depends. 15 was great. 15 ended up being one of my favorite games of all time. I loved that game.

BackgroundGuy - 45:47

Yeah, same. But... don't..., like, I think people need to: A. Stop caring so much about what they're doing and how that influenced content in terms of what game they play and they need to start playing games that are more interesting to them. But, also taking into consideration the first part as like, part of it so if you love World of Warcraft and you love, I don't know, Putt-Putt Saves The Zoo, which by the way I know a partner streamer that speed runs Putt-Putt Saves the Zoo.

Alex - 46:31

Isn't the world record like 45 seconds?

BackgroundGuy - 46:34

Yeah, his name is Frozen Trually and he is a partnered streamer that speed runs that game and he gets a lot of viewers for it. But...

Alex - 46:43

That is the definition of insanity.

BackgroundGuy - 46:46

...if you love those two games, don't start your stream with Putt-Putt Saves the Zoo. You know, nobody's gonna go to the Twitch Directory and gonna be like, "Oh yeah! Alright! Putt-Putt Saves The Zoo let's go!" You know? They're gonna search games that they love and again World of Warcraft is an established game. There's a lot of streamers that do it, but it's established and you can get involved in those communities because it has a community. So you can build off of that. So if you have two choices or several choices on what games to play at least take into consideration how popular a game is, but don't play a game you have no interest in just because

you think you're going to get views. What did I say before - chat is a reflection of the streamer. If you're not having fun, they're not having fun.

Alex - 47:32

Right? Totally, totally. So for the next section this is going to be a little rapid fire section. I want to go over a couple of topics to kind of get your take on them.

BackgroundGuy - 47:42

Okay.

Alex - 47:42

So the first topic is risk and risk management. So let's just a complete hypothetical here- let's say you are involved in some significant drama between you and your community or maybe you and another streamer.

BackgroundGuy - 47:56

Already been there. [laughs]

Alex - 47:58

So walk me through how you may have already handled something like this or how you would handle something like this in the future.

BackgroundGuy - 48:09

You do nothing. Least for me because it was - it involved.

Alex - 48:14

It involved what? Sorry.

BackgroundGuy - 48:15

It involved a girl. So you just do nothing. Like, she spread a bunch of lies and tried to seed descent amongst my viewers. There's nothing I could do. What was I gonna do? If I try to post and argue. It just looks like I'm trying to put out the fire. There's nothing you can do. The best thing to do is to do nothing. Talk to your friends, you're close ones, privately and discuss the situation. They can help put out the fire for you. Maybe? But you can't ask them to do that. They have to be willing to. You know? So basically if some kind of drama happens, there's nothing you can do. You just have to let it pass by.

Alex - 48:52

Okay.

BackgroundGuy - 48:52

I hate drama, by the way. [laughs]

Alex - 48:54

I hate drama too. Where's my popcorn?

BackgroundGuy - 48:57

Yeah. [laughs]

Alex - 49:01

[laughs] Okay, so the next topic is, how do you feel about paid advertising? How do you feel about funding going to some external service that distributes your brand, your name, your image, throughout the internet as a form of advertising? Be it on YouTube, be it banner ads, be at what have you. For exposure, yes.

BackgroundGuy - 49:21

For exposure? Basically? I think that is probably worth something. Like its variable worth based on what kind of promotion you're getting. If it's like Square Enix is promoting my Final

Fantasy Fiesta, officially? Hell yeah! If it's like, you know, somebody wants something from you and they'll totally give you a shout out on their YouTube video and they got a thousand subscribers then no thanks.

Alex - 49:56

Okay. Interesting.

BackgroundGuy - 49:57

Like, I have never really been in a situation where I would be able to accept or decline that kind of offer, but I think exposure is kind of hit and miss. It's really hard to gauge that worth. You need to be more fluid with your, what do you call it? Morals? I think? It's depending on the kind of thing- if it's like, hey, you know, give me this thing and I'll shout you out kind of thing. That's loose morals. You know? I don't know- I don't know how I feel. It really depends on the situation. That's not a, "yes-or-no" kind of question.

Alex - 50:36

Okay. No, yeah. Absolutely any answer is a good. You're helping to flush out the spectrum. You know?

BackgroundGuy - 50:44

I try to at least have integrity if that matters.

Alex - 50:47

No. Absolutely, Absolutely. So, the last one is - what about extreme problem users? You know the people who are the, 'ban dodgers', the proxy users, people who might doxx you, and threaten to extort you, the just and, you know, maybe the outright fanatics. You know, these people go above and beyond the standard quote, unquote, 'problem user' to you become a hazard to your channel.

BackgroundGuy - 51:18

I think, because... I'm not a woman. I think the likelihood of me having absurd, crazy users and fans is less likely because I'm not trying to be sexist. This is just the reality of the situation.

Alex - 51:35

No, it is the reality.

BackgroundGuy - 51:35

Women have to go through that every day of their lives.

Alex - 51:38

The gaming industry is 96% male.

BackgroundGuy - 51:42

That's not true, actually. Gaming is about 40-60. Yeah.

Alex - 51:46

Well, the gaming community is. I guess I should have specified...

BackgroundGuy - 51:50

Gamers are about 40-60 female to male.

Alex - 51:54

When you actually...

BackgroundGuy - 51:55

I actually did a research paper on this.

Alex - 51:57

...Oh, interesting!

BackgroundGuy - 52:00

People that qualify themselves as a 'gamer'. It's about 40% female to 60% male. It's probably closer to 50-50 now because that was a little bit older. But, it's not that it just has to do with the fact that it's the difference between a male mentality and a female mentality. They'll just get really attached to a female. Like women have by nature more stalkers because men are more aggressive. But anyway, that aside... I don't, I don't, I'm not a woman. So, I'm not going to have really, really crazy fans. I don't think. But, if I did have some kind of threat to doxx me, some kind of threat, to the channel feel, they get banned. Then I ignore it. You know? That's it I have had people that have been extremely negative or just always wanted to provide an argument of some kind, and really just didn't want to be meaningful member of the community. They just get to go because you're not breaking the rules, doesn't mean that you're somehow object from a ban, like you're not immune to it because you didn't specifically break this rule. If you're bringing down the community and if you're negative you're going to get a warning, you're going to get a timeout, and then you're going to get a ban. Plain and simple.

Unknown 53:25

Okay.

BackgroundGuy - 53:26

As far as like, somebody stalking me... hasn't happened yet. I really hope it never does. I just want to play video games on the internet.

Alex - 53:36

Right. Okay, so next question, what's next? Do you have any plans in mind for what you'd want to do after streaming or you even see yourself retiring from streaming right now or you just kind of riding the wave?

BackgroundGuy - 53:54

I have no idea. I just want this to happen forever. If streaming suddenly becomes not viable, because Twitch goes down or my life circumstances change I will probably just go back to normal unskilled trade. Maybe, I'll finish my degree in Economics and go from there. I don't know. But, I was mid- I'm undergrad. I never finished college because of my ex-girlfriend that I previously mentioned. She was Canadian so I couldn't finish my degree. So when I got back, everything just kind of happened from there. So I wasn't really able to pick up the remnants of my life. I was with her for five years, and I have been streaming for three years. So that's a lot of time. For nothing was able to be happening and I probably would just get a normal job, try to finish my degree, and then then just go from there, but I don't want streaming to end. I'm hoping that I can get gather the pieces of my life together before that's the thing. That's the plan.

Alex - 55:02

Awesome. Awesome. And, so, for this last question I have for you, is there any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, encouragement anything at all that you can offer to a new streamer who would be just starting out to help get them off of their feet?

BackgroundGuy - 55:22

Never stream with the intent of making it. Just stream because you think it's interesting and fun, and you want to share the world. That's it?

Alex - 55:32

Okay. Anything else?

BackgroundGuy - 55:34

Although based on our conversation, it seems to me that a part of the motivation for this project is to stream yourself and gather information to do that.

Alex - 55:44

Yeah.

BackgroundGuy - 55:44

I wish you the best, but you know, you're putting a lot of work into this. It's your master's thesis and it's also something that you have a personal interest in. My advice would just be, you're putting a lot of effort into it, you're gathering a lot data, just don't expect anything to happen. 1% of streamers become partners, and that means that a lot of what you're doing may or may not yield the results you're expecting.

Alex - 56:19

Okay. Well, I appreciate...

BackgroundGuy - 56:23

But I don't want to discourage. You.

Alex - 56:24

No, no.

BackgroundGuy - 56:25

Do it.

Alex - 56:25

I get it. I absolutely get it. Oh, and I appreciate you kind of personalizing that question that was kind of intended as a general. Like, anybody who is reading this paper in the future who was thinking about getting into streaming. Yeah, I personally, I have a high level of confidence that this system can be gamed and it's just a matter of time before somebody figures it out.

BackgroundGuy - 56:45

I think you're absolutely right, that there's definitely a preferable method there. There is a means of success. If you ask me, you want to look at streamers, like Dr. Disrespect?

Alex - 56:57

Oh, yeah, I look at him very often.

BackgroundGuy - 57:01

Dr. Disrespect specifically just because he created something and adheres to that creation every day. And it's good. And it's impressive. The amount of work that he puts into it, like the little layout transitions, and the vest and the persona, everything. It is absolutely insanely good. He is an entertainer, period. I would also look at MoonMoon because while he doesn't have this persona, he has a way about him that is beyond what you would expect from a normal person. It's his personality, it's his content and the way he generates the content that is really important. There's definitely a way to increase your likelihood of being successful on Twitch. I would also say there is no like one way to do it.

Alex - 58:09

Right. Absolutely. So is there anything else that you feel like you want to add?

BackgroundGuy - 58:16

No, I think- I think that's pretty all-inclusive from the questions perspective. You insert a lot of different questions that encompass most of Twitch culture.

Alex - 58:27

Right, yeah. All right. Well, I'm going to stop the recording in that case.

Alex - 0:00

Okie doke. So the first question that I always starts with is what got you into streaming? What led you to Twitch?

BeastTrollMC - 0:08

Okay, funny story, I was actually talking with my hairstylist about this earlier. So the reason why I actually started to actually live stream on Twitch – I created my account years ago when I was like 13 years old or something to watch other streamers, right? But I only started live streaming on it when I was afraid of accusations that I was a cheater in OSU. So I used to play OSU with my friend, and we would try to race each other up the rankings, and try to get good to defeat the other person in the multiplayer or something, right? But my friend actually got falsely banned from the game, and he had to go through this gigantic fiasco over two years to get himself unbanned, and I didn't want to put myself through the same process. So for fear of my own account, I decided to live stream every single one of my plays to prove that I was a legitimate player, and that's basically it.

Alex - 1:04

Okay. Okay. Yeah, I had a stint where I went pretty hard into OSU. I think at the end of it, I had stopped around 70 K [70,000]. At this point, I've decayed way past 100,000, but it was absolutely awful, because one day, I literally - just like, one day, everything was fine. The next day, the drivers for my Huion tablet stopped working. I couldn't get it fixed for like six months, and by that time, I had just given up on the game.

BeastTrollMC - 1:15

Mm-hmm. Damn.

Alex - 1:38

Oh, yeah. I still go back to that every now and then, but it just - I lost that fire.

BeastTrollMC - 1:43

Mm-hmm

Alex - 1:44

So when you started streaming, I'm going to use a phrase called "day one", and that essentially means the first week to up the first few weeks to up to a year of when you had started streaming. So run me through what a typical week was like during that time period.

BeastTrollMC - 2:02

Well, everything was much more laid back since there wasn't like a huge audience or something. I could really just do basically whatever I want without any fear of repercussions, and for like today's standards in comparison if I were to mess up or if something were to display on screen for a moment that was inappropriate, then that would be broadcasted to literally hundreds of people, right? But back in the day, there was only like 1, 2, 3, maybe there was no one there. Sometimes there was upwards of 10 viewers would be like a really good number for me, but back in the day when I first started streaming numbers were not really an issue. It was just being able to document my scores and show that yes, I set the score. Here's me actually setting it, it's real, right? But um, for the first year, it was basically like that, but then I realized that throughout that first year, I realized there was potential in growth and a career in Twitch and of course, I didn't want to close off any possibilities or any opportunities. I decided to start advertising my Twitch channel on my YouTube channel. I had a YouTube channel that I had when I was 12 or 13 years old where I uploaded Minecraft videos. Now my channel eventually died because the server that I played on died.

Alex - 3:17

So MC is Minecraft!

BeastTrollMC - 3:19

Yes!

Alex - 3:19

[laughter]

BeastTrollMC - 3:20

Yes, MC originally stood for Minecraft because of my YouTube channel and my Minecraft account, but I transferred over to Twitch because I wanted my name to be similar on all platforms, and I decided to advertise my Twitch. Every single time I live stream on Twitch, I would upload a video on to YouTube notifying all my subscribers that I was live streaming, and that will normally settle me around the one thousand - I mean, the 10 viewer mark or seven viewer mark, which is really low but it's still something to definitely get you a head start.

Alex - 3:54

Absolutely.

BeastTrollMC - 3:54

On Twitch. Mm-hmm.

Alex - 3:57

Okay, so you mentioned during the process, the thought of making money on this platform, you know, came to you.

BeastTrollMC - 4:05

Right

Alex - 4:05

Then you started putting effort towards bringing people to your stream. You're uploading videos to YouTube channel was there anything else that you were doing at the time to bring people towards your stream?

BeastTrollMC - 4:17

Um, not really. I mean, obviously, naturally, one of the biggest parts about growing on Twitch is finding a way for viewers to actually know who you are and realize that you're a streamer, right. One of the biggest ways to actually do that in OSU is your rank. The better of a player that you are or the higher that your rank is - the more people are going to see you and be like "Hey, that's a good player. Maybe I should check out his streams, right?" Well, that was already my main goal. My main goal was to get better at OSU, right? So that was already my main goal but I tried even harder to get better and better and better and better at the game because I knew the higher that my rank gets the more popularity that I would be able to garner as both a streamer and a player.

Alex - 5:06

Okay okay. Just out of pure curiosity, what's your current rank in OSU?

BeastTrollMC - 5:11

32 at the moment.

Alex - 5:15

Oh my God! Oh my God! [laughter]

BeastTrollMC - 5:18

I can double check for you on that.

Alex - 5:20

That's ridiculous!

BeastTrollMC - 5:23

Okay, I decayed one rank: 33.

Alex - 5:27

Holy crap! I didn't know I was speaking to top 100 talent. Wowiee!

BeastTrollMC - 5:33

Yeah, and I started streaming when I was around 7000, rank 7000.

Alex - 5:37

Holy cow.

BeastTrollMC - 5:38

Yeah, just around there. Just into the four digit mark.

Alex - 5:42

What's got you sticking with OSU? Like, I know, I had plenty of reasons to stick with it, but one of the things I found was the tracks kind of got repetitive. What's got you to still stick with this game and to still stream it?

BeastTrollMC - 5:56

Okay. So I think the biggest part is the community, right? Because OSU isn't just one of those games where you see the updates, you see people setting scores, and you're just like, "Oh, cool. I don't really care." You know, OSU is one of those games where the community matters a lot. Me being a top player, I basically know almost every single person in the top 100. Everyone in the game who actually takes the game seriously knows exactly who's in the top 10 and who has the potential to get into the top 10. Everyone knows each other, right? Of course, since the game has blown up quite a bit, it's really hard to keep track of it nowadays, but the dedicated players know who they are, and we've gone through so many efforts to really even meet each other like IRL [in real life] through events, conventions, things like that, but the community is definitely one of the biggest aspects, because I just have so many friends, and even if I were to quit the game those

friendships really last beyond it, right? So it also makes it harder to quit the game because if you quit the game, then you kind of like, "Well, you're not really associated with anything", you know what I'm saying?

Alex - 6:54

Right.

BeastTrollMC - 7:04

But the community is definitely the biggest thing. Now, you talk about repetitive tracks and things like that. Those who play OSU for fun and just for the music. Eventually, once you run out of maps to really play in your musical genre that interests you, then yeah, it can get pretty boring. But one of the main things that I enjoy about OSU is its difficulty, right? Like, OSU mainly appeals to a Japanese subculture of the world, right? People who enjoy Japanese culture, anime, music, things like that, right?

Alex - 7:22

Pretty much, yeah.

BeastTrollMC - 7:30

Yeah, me personally, although it may seem with my brand with my profile pictures and stuff, although I embrace Japanese culture, it is not my favorite music genre, right? That whole anime style. I prefer more rock or metal style music, right? But the thing is especially at the start, I wasn't good enough to play it, right? There were a couple of metal songs out there, but they're just so difficult because they rely on stamina and speed, right? So difficulty was a huge motivating factor for me to actually get better at the game so not only could I listen to the music that I enjoy, but I could also play it in the game, and plus, it's a challenge, right? And challenges are fun for me, at least. So I would try to get better at the game so I could actually play the songs I enjoyed listening to in the game.

Alex - 8:28

Awesome. Awesome. So when you were, you know, during the day one period, what were some of the challenges or even just like in during streaming as a whole, what were some of the challenges or hurdles that you've had to overcome?

BeastTrollMC - 8:42

Challenges and hurdles? Well, because I didn't really value, like, in the day one timeframe, there weren't really many challenges or hurdles because it wasn't really something that I took too seriously. You know, of course, I knew there was the possibility and the opportunity for success in it, but I didn't really other than like keeping that opportunity open, I didn't really have to deal with any obstacles. I didn't really see any obstacles. It was mainly just setting up OBS [streaming software], getting the overlays in, having a basic setup, and that was basically it, right? In terms of just basic obstacles, there weren't really any. Like, if I really wanted to give myself any obstacles the only reason for there to be obstacles is if you actually put those obstacles in front of you. If you had any goals of improving the stream quality or if you had obstacles of just working with audio engineering, or making sure that the quality is in a watchable manner or trying to get your brand out there, things like that. Of course, it does lead to more success in the platform, but at the moment especially in the day one area that wasn't my biggest concern. I was just playing the game, setting scores, things like that.

Alex - 9:59

Okay.

BeastTrollMC - 10:00

So yeah.

Alex - 10:01

All right. Um, so as of right now, give me a snapshot of your channel. What is your channel about? What content do you create and advertise? You know, what kind of viewers are you looking to attract to your stream?

BeastTrollMC - 10:16

Okay, so for me. A lot of people currently would call me an OSU streamer, an OSU player, something like that. Currently, I'm trying to branch myself out more towards not being just an OSU player, but just a full time live streamer not restricting myself just to OSU. I've been branching out into other games and bringing my community along with it, right? So if I were to talk to someone else about my channel, I would say that I'm an interactive live streamer. I take pride - one of the few things that I really take pride in doing with my channel specifically is interaction with my viewers because I see other streamers, like with thousands of viewers. They barely ever look at their chat or even respond to their notifications when it comes to donations and subscriptions and things like that. I take pride in really taking the time to really connect with my audience. People who are willing to take time out of their day to watch me and watch me do my thing, I want to make sure I take time out of my day to really interact with the people who are spending their time, right? So I prefer to call myself more of an interactive streamer. Not only am I going to be trying to give the best gameplay, advanced gameplay in various games, but I'm also trying to really connect with an audience and make them really feel like they're at home and that their time isn't just spent watching someone else playing a game.

Alex - 11:42

Okay. Okay, so how do you manage chat? Is there anything specific that you do to promote activity in chat?

BeastTrollMC - 11:50

Well, I do-- Well, what's great currently is that I already have an existing community of people who are active, right? So when someone new comes in, they say hi. I could respond to them, my chat could respond to them, or eventually down the line I like to promote questions. So if they

have any questions about the game that I'm playing or if they have any questions on how to get better. I welcome that sort of conversation. Right? Because conversation's what really builds the whole atmosphere, it builds the community itself, right? So I encourage interactions through questions. I ask about their day obviously because I want to know how my viewers are feeling, things like that. Really building the conversation is one of the biggest parts about it.

Alex - 12:38

Okay, that's interesting. Going back to a little earlier question that I don't think I got an answer to. What kind of viewers are you looking to attract to your stream?

BeastTrollMC - 12:50

Oh, kind of viewers? Well, hmm. Well, it's not really a sort of like, it's really hard to answer that. I mean, there's like the ideal viewer who is not only there to spend time in the channel, but also there to interact with the chat. If they're generous, would like to support me financially through their donations or subscription, but just their time is just enough, obviously. But that would be the ideal viewer, but if I were to be picky about it, it wouldn't really seem as genuine because I really welcome everyone, right? Anyone who just wants to watch a high quality gameplay and advanced skills in the game, I welcome that sort of viewer. Even if they don't talk in the chat at all. Even if they don't donate. If they just want to see me playing some songs, that's fine. I welcome it. If they want to come in and ask some questions, and then leave and never show up ever again, I also welcome, right? So I'm not really picky when it comes to viewers because whenever someone comes into the channel, they're supporting me, right? So that's about it.

Alex - 13:48

Alright, so building off of that, you mentioned financial support. I want to talk about monetization a little bit. I'm not looking to know how much money you make. I wouldn't ask that question of you. But you know, Twitter obviously has its standard package of monetization. You've got the bit system. You've got subscribers. You've got donations. You know, you've got ads, whether or not you decided to run them on your channel.

BeastTrollMC - 14:12

Right.

Alex - 14:12

Is there anything outside of the Twitch standard package that you utilize?

BeastTrollMC - 14:24

Not currently but I'm an advocate. I am currently working on it so there are things like sponsorships outside brands that pay a streamer to advertise their products. Things like just recently, I'm partnered up with Blue which I use so many of their products. I'm in the works with G Fuel, that's an energy drink company so sponsorships is definitely a big one, and I'm trying to find more and more brands to connect with to help promote their content to bring extra revenue to the channel. Another one is merchandise. Merchandise is something that's actually been really pushed for by my fans themselves. Actually, it's not really something that I was too interested in ideally, but because my audience is really demanding it, that's why I'm basically working on it. So merchandise when it comes to T-shirts with graphics that represent the channel or just a logo or something like that. Merchandise is definitely one really big way to bring extra revenue to a channel. So merchandise and sponsorships, those are the two main things I'm currently working on. But as of right now that package that you said, that's basically what I have currently for my revenue.

Alex - 15:37

Okay. Is there anything in regards to the Twitch standard package that you utilize in a unique or special way? Is there anything that you do or any monetization tactics that you use on stream that you find differs from other channels?

BeastTrollMC - 15:58

Well, not really. I mean, for me, when it comes to monetization, I have a very viewer prioritization approach, right? I always put myself in the mindset of the viewers, right? Because you mentioned and you are aware that Twitch does give the streamer the ability to push advertisements out to the viewers if they want to. If they want to display an ad, they can just press a button and an advertisement will play right? I think of things more towards from the viewer standpoint, right. So if I'm watching a streamer, I want to watch the streamer not an advertisement, right? There are some things I can't control like the advertisement that plays at the start. So that's where the ad revenue comes in. But for me, if I were to think of it from a viewer standpoint, I don't want to see any ads while I'm watching that person. So I never press the ad button, right? Outside of voluntary support, I don't really encourage it. You know? Like, if it's voluntary support, I welcome it wholeheartedly. But when it comes to trying to really advocate and push things in order to make more money, I find that I don't really respect that sort of tactics in order to gain revenue. I prefer it solely based off of community support.

Alex - 17:15

Okay. So taking a step away from monetization. Let's talk about social media. You know, obviously, everybody and their mother has a Twitter account, including their mother.

BeastTrollMC - 17:26

[laughter]

Alex - 17:28

You know, obviously, you have your Twitch account. You've mentioned that you've had a YouTube account. Are there any other social media platforms you have a presence on, and of the social media platforms that you do participate on what's the kind of attitude that you have towards it?

BeastTrollMC - 17:44

Okay, so you mentioned, you're aware, I have a YouTube channel. That's where I upload content or what I really like to emphasize with YouTube are mainly memes because my channel is mainly community based, right? There are specific moments that are really famous in my channel, right? If you're in my channel, you're basically expected and to know these different moments and clips that happened on my stream that are really widely known, right? And that's what the YouTube channel is really, mainly therefore, right? Emphasizing, and putting out there these crazy or amazing or hilarious moments that happen on my channel that everyone will be able to reference to, and really get a laugh out of it during the live channel. For the Twitch obviously, that's where the main platform is, it used to be YouTube as my main platform. So we're mainly focus on uploading YouTube content that isn't really the case anymore, I am full time on Twitch and as a content creator as a whole. So which is really the main juices of the whole social media platform thing. I do have a twitter mainly where I bring in a more personal side. So if viewers are interested in the content, and they want to know more about me personally, that's where Twitter comes in. That's where I tweet about random things happening throughout my life. Just recently, I put out the pole trying to get a new color for my hair, trying to dye my hair different color so I it's a way for me to get more personal opinions and just more personal interaction with my individual viewers who are willing to go out of their way to know more about me person, right. Um, I've wanted to get an Instagram account but someone still be strolling, see on Instagram. So I'm trying to figure out so installed beast troll MC and beast a troll. So I'm kind of in a predicament because I really don't want to change my brand or go like a beast full MC official because that just sounds obnoxious. So I'm trying to figure out a way to get that name without having to register like a trademark or something like that because we haven't really gotten down that path yet. Um, the other social media platforms I do use a lot though is read it because OSU is such a community driven game. They also have other platforms that they also bring off into and read it is a huge one, the our slash OSU game subreddit is has a lot of really active OSU players on it. And that's where a lot of discussion is brought a lot of means obviously, about current top players and situations and drama going around in the community. It's a great way to get updated right and read it is one of the great places where I can basically interact with discussion. It's my go to form of discussion when it comes to talking about different

topics or trends. Just trying to put my opinion out there. There's also the OSU forums where if you just go on the website, there's an entire forums where sometimes discussion goes on about certain big beat maps or modding forums in order to modify the maps to really help them push for a higher standard of quality, right, so those are the main ones OSU, Reddit, Twitter, YouTube and Twitch.

Alex - 20:57

Okay, so in your opinion, what are some of the big do's and don'ts on social media?

BeastTrollMC - 21:06

Um. Let's see. Do's and don'ts of social media. Well, abrupt change, I think is the biggest one - don't, right? Because I've seen so many channels go from all "I'm just going to switch things up. I'm going from consistent topics about." I don't know. Say if this is a hypothetical situation, say I were to just randomly start uploading Minecraft content on my existing YouTube channel, right? Although it originally started with Minecraft, it's slowly transitioned into OSU, right? And if I were to abruptly just stop uploading OSU and start uploading Minecraft that would cause a huge change of just interest in my channel, right? People subscribe to a channel and people follow a Twitter account, people watch a Twitch account for a specific reason. And if you break that trust, if you stop providing that sort of content the people that you provided for will leave. That's basically the general rule of thumb. So that's why I've been working really hard to branch away from being just an OSU streamer. I don't want OSU's brand to be that heavily associated with me as a channel, right? I'm a Twitch streamer, I'm a Twitch entertainer, not just an OSU player, right? So that's why with Twitch, and specifically, I've been working really hard on this, I've been trying to shift the focus away from just my OSU gameplay, but just on me personally as a person. So now people I'm trying what I'm trying to do, and it's been pretty successful so far is trying to shift the interest from not just my gameplay, but on me as a person. So people watch my channel for me. When people are watching the channel for me as a person, I'm able to easily take that and shift it other games because even though I'm playing a different game, it's still me playing the game. So people are still interested like that, right?

Alex - 23:02

Mm-hmm

BeastTrollMC - 23:02

That's really easy for Twitter because Twitter is just me personally. I can tweet out any of my opinions. People are always interested because it's all about me. As for YouTube, YouTube is something that I've neglected for a couple months already. It's been like a good three months since I've uploaded to the channel, but people still regard to me as an OSU content creator on YouTube. So I'm still working on that shift, but the biggest don't I have to emphasize is no sudden shifts in content because that results in just a waste of your existing fan base. People will just leave and all the work that you really put in to get to the point that you are right now is just wasted.

Alex - 23:42

Okay.

BeastTrollMC - 23:43

Um, yeah, that's the biggest one, the biggest don't.

Alex - 23:46

Okay.

BeastTrollMC - 23:47

I can't think of any Do's because that's really flexible. There are many things that are encouraged for you to do on all social medias like be active on them, and be consistent, and have a schedule for Twitch specifically, and YouTube. The guidelines, follow the guidelines, so you're not breaking any rules, things like that. Most of them are common sense, but it's really unique from channel to channel, right? It's very unique because each content creator is different so they

employ different strategies to really attract an audience, right? So it's just being able to stand out from the wave of content creators that are all trying to compete for the top spot. That's what makes it difficult, you know?

Alex - 24:33

Okay. Okay. So taking a step back from social media and going more towards real world networking and alternative networking methods such as tournaments, conventions, events like that. Do you participate in these kinds of things, and if you do, has that positively impacted you and your channel?

BeastTrollMC - 24:59

Yes and yes. So when it comes to OSU, and specifically I've attended the OSU event 2018. Well, it's not really a convention, but it was just like a gathering of a bunch of OSU players. That was located in the Netherlands in 2018. That's where I met a bunch of top players, a bunch of community players, a bunch of content creators, and I also met the developer for the first time over there. I also went to TwitchCon 2018. That was in San Jose, California, and that's where I met the developer again, and a bunch of competitive players. I met basically the entire Oda bc team for the United States there and also met some other people and saw some old friends from those events as well. Why I think it's been a positive impact? Well, it's a huge impact really, because especially at the time when you have the essence of a content creator slapped on your brand, just the content creator, it's really hard to push past the idea of about, "I'm just in it for the audience" or "I'm just in it for the money" or "I'm on or I'm taking advantage of the community for monetary gain." Right? It's really hard to overcome that prejudice, I guess, from an outside perspective because if other people were to ask me, "Oh, he's just an OSU streamer. He just live streams OSU", and stuff like that, it's really hard to present me as an actual person who's passionate about the game. So going to these events, I'm able to meet these people. I'm able to meet the people who actually watch me. I'm actually able to connect with the staff members to show that yeah, I'm actually really passionate about your game. I'm not just here to make money off of it, right? I actually have fun and I like the game itself. I'm able to actually have fun and it's

really to present myself in a more humane way. It really emphasizes the more human for me. I'm not just a person on the internet. I'm a person, you know?

Alex - 27:05

Okay

BeastTrollMC - 27:05

Something like that. So that's, I feel like it's been so beneficial, and not only that, but the networking as well. I've been able to talk with so many other top players I'm now have secured basically spots with tournament's with them. I've competed with so many other players around the world, I've met IRL[in real life] because of it and things like that. Like, that sort of networking is definitely really important. So it's been really beneficial and worth the trip and time.

Alex - 27:32

Awesome, awesome to hear. So in regards to your channel right now, what works right now? What are you doing that's keeping everything held together? What's keeping the channel growing? Is there anything specific that you find is effective at accomplishing that?

BeastTrollMC - 27:57

Um... what do you mean by that? Could you go into more detail on the question?

Alex - 28:00

So just essentially run me through, you know, I said earlier give me a snapshot of your channel to kind of give me what it is that you are? What it is that you do now? Flushing that out a little bit more. Give me some details. Is there anything that you're doing that you think is promoting growth for your channel? You mentioned going to the conventions. Are there any events that you're running on stream? Any giveaways that you do? Anything of the sort that you think is providing a positive growth trend for your channel.

BeastTrollMC - 28:36

Okay, so, one of the biggest ones is the first segment of my channel because normally, I always start off my streams almost every single time with at least an hour of just chatting. That's a subcategory on Twitch where it's a category that's literally just for the streamer to talk or just do their own thing and just chat with their viewers. They're basically not even playing a game. They're just chatting, right? So I always have an entire hour at the start that 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. It brings in and constructs that environment in the channel that will then carry on throughout the rest of the stream, right? So it's also one of those things that's been pushing me to more as a content creator, undermining just me as a person instead of just as a streamer, right? Because the couple hundred people who show up for the just chatting streams are also the couple hundred people who are there to follow me around when I jump to other games as well, right? Yep. Um, OSU because I am aware that a large portion of my audience comes from OSU. I still play OSU a lot not only because of the audience, but also because I am still a competitive player. I still have interests in the competitive leaderboard of the game. I still have a passion to get good at the game and improve at the game. So I still play a lot of OSU like a large segment of my streams are entirely engulfed by OSU gameplay, right? So I always make sure to keep OSU as the main segments, the main parts of my live streams, right? As for other social medias, I am working. This isn't something I'm doing right now. It's something I've kind of neglected, but I'm focusing on working on the YouTube channel because YouTube Twitch is a great way to really like monetize your content and make money, but it's really hard to grow. What's great is the fact I'm already on the top of the Twitch category whenever I live. So I'm basically the number one streamer for OSU almost every single time that I live stream, which is great. It's that one aspect to grow, but it's not the best because Twitch itself doesn't have any algorithm to really recommend my stream to other people who are trying to watch OSU. So YouTube is probably going to be one of the best ways for me to really expand myself and reach new viewers. Not

only just for the YouTube channel, but just for viewers in general for Twitch who will carry on to Twitch. So they watched YouTube, it'll be like, "Hey, let me check out their channel". And then they'll follow me on Twitch. That is the main reason for getting back into YouTube. Um, other than that, though not really. I can't really think of anything else. Perfect.

Alex - 31:42

So here is a trickier question that you might not have an answer for. What is something you think people should be doing more of?

BeastTrollMC - 31:50

"More of" in pertains to what?

Alex - 31:55

In reference to how they manage their live streams?

BeastTrollMC - 31:58

Okay. Um... So this is a general thing, all right. This is what I believe to be one of the things that really sets apart my channel from other people, right? Because a lot of people have a mindset of "Oh, I want to get a really popular stream. I'm going to ask the top streamer and tell and ask them how do I grow a successful channel on Twitch?" I've gotten that question so many times, and it just doesn't work. There's nothing that I can tell you, that *I* can tell *you* that'll make your channel a success, right? You are your own critic. Each person who wants to live stream on the platform is their own critic. They have to judge themselves. That's what I do as well, and one of the best ways to do that is by watching your own strengths. It sounds counter-intuitive, right? Because you are the live streamer, you're the one who's putting the content out there. There's no reason to why your streams but I'm telling you that watching your own streams is very important because it gives yourself the perspective of both the broadcaster and the viewer. Not only are you understanding what you're putting out there, but you're also understanding what other people are consuming. So when you watch your own streams, you understand the quality and whether or

not the quality is good and whether or not you like your own stream's quality. You understand whether or not you like your own stream's audio, whether or not the gameplay is too loud or your voice is too low. You understand maybe it's lagging, maybe your computer is having issues that you didn't realize that you had before, maybe that the chat is misbehaving, and you need more moderators. There are so many things that you can understand just by watching your own live streams that a lot of people just don't take the time to do it. To this day, I still watch my own streams every now and then to make sure that things are still running smoothly, and I'm still trying to critique my own self to make sure that my stream is the best that it possibly can be, but a lot of people just refuse to take the time to do that. They instead try to go the short route of asking other streamers or other established community members to get advice before they make their own improvements, right? Because no one else can really tell you how to make a live stream, how to make a successful stream. It's a long process of realizing that your stream is bad and making the improvements over time to improve it.

Alex - 34:27

Okay, that's a good answer. That's not even something that I would have thought of. Okay so for the next segment, this is just kind of a bunch of rapid fire topics that I kind of want to get your thoughts on, and how you feel about them, so on and so forth. So the first one is variety content. I feel like everybody on Twitch knows what this is, but just to be sure, starting up your stream, not really having any plan whatsoever as to what game you're going to be playing and presenting the channel as such.

BeastTrollMC - 35:01

What is the question here?

Alex - 35:03

So just give me your thoughts on these topics.

BeastTrollMC - 35:06

Oh, my thoughts? Okay, so my thoughts on variety topics. Um, I think variety is a great way for you to really take your channel to the next level. I think at of streamer's mistakes when it comes to variety is that they want. They expect to just come in straight with variety and expect their channels to grow. Unfortunately, that's not how things work. Smaller channels usually start out with variety, and they realize that they can't grow an audience at all. The best way to really grow is to start off with a game, build an audience, and then take that audience with them to other games, and expand into the variety. That's basically what I'm doing right now. Variety is a lot of fun. When you think of a streamer, when you think of a full time streamer, they're like, "Oh, they can play whatever the game they want, and they get paid for doing that." The idea itself is really awesome, getting to the point to be able to do that is difficult - is extremely difficult because you are building a brand, you're building a channel, you're building an audience, and that is difficult. The people who are able to take themselves to variety, those are probably some of the most successful people on Twitch. There's not too many of them that really exists out there.

Alex - 36:16

Okay, so the next topic, I want to talk about risk and risk management here. So I'm going to throw a hypothetical your way. Let's say you are involved in some level of drama that your community is now angry at you. Your community is not happy. What steps would you take to manage a situation like this?

BeastTrollMC - 36:39

Okay, so I'm a very logical based person. I'm a type of person where if I'm in the wrong, I am totally fine to admit to it, right? If I am in the wrong, if I make a mistake, if I know I fucked up, [laughter] I am willing to repent. I'm willing to make changes to fix it, and I know that the consequences have already been established, but I will try my best to regain the trust of the people that I've harmed, right? Because that's really what happens out of every single drama. There's the type of persons who was affected. There's the type of person who doesn't care. There's the type of person who wants to see what will happen next, right? And after every single drama where a person's in the wrong, the person who's in the wrong in order to establish that

level of trust again, needs to admit themselves that they are in the wrong. A lot of people are unable to do that nowadays for some odd reason, but I just feel like it's as simple as having a genuine apology. A genuine apology in something like that is one of the main factors, and the reason why it's so important is because it tells everyone that you understand that you're wrong. The apology also tells that you're going to try to give a list of things that I'm going to do that are going to fix the issues in the problems. I've created and give people an expectation of how I'm going to move forward from it, right? Because no drama is going to be able to basically stopped me in my tracks, right? I always have to keep moving forward no matter what, but an apology - really good apology, and a really good understanding of what I've done and how it's affected other people is definitely one of the best ways to start.

Alex - 38:23

Okay, that was very well thought out.

BeastTrollMC - 38:26

Mm-hmm.

Alex - 38:27

So for the next one, this one's an interesting one. How do you feel about paid advertising, meaning going to an external service that distributes your name, your brand, your image, you know, throughout the internet, be it banner ads, be it YouTube ads, be it ads on Twitch, you know, that sort of thing?

BeastTrollMC - 38:46

So me paying an advertising company to put my channel on those banner ads and stuff like that. How do I feel on that?

Alex - 38:56

Yep

BeastTrollMC - 38:57

I think it's stupid.

Alex - 38:58

[laughter]

BeastTrollMC - 38:59

Because it is impossible to convey the idea of me as a person and me as a channel in just a still image or a single sentence which is all these advertisements are. Even as just a YouTube advertisement, it's hard to convey people who I am as a person. It is extremely difficult. I got to say that it's impossible to really convince someone to spend their time that we're talking about Twitch live stream. This is hours on end. This can take hours and hours and hours, right? Over time and trying to convince people to give that sort of dedication in a 30 second ad is impossible. Not only that, ads are annoying, all right? When a person is trying to watch a video and they see an ad, they're not worried about an ad for the most part, right? If it's something related, and it's something that they're interested in, then yeah, that's cool, but most of the times, no one's going to be interested in watching a Twitch streamer if they're focused on some other topic. They just skip the ad. This is what I do. When I see an advertisement, I instantly skip on it. No single advertisement has ever appealed to me, really. So I don't see the effectiveness of it. I see advertisements currently as a way to really keep an idea stuck in your mind, to refresh your mind on an idea, it's not a good way to really get hard results as in more viewers to my channel. I just see it as things to keep an idea in your mind. So if you were looking at food videos and you see an advertisement for Dr. Pepper, next time you go to a restaurant, you can think of Dr. Pepper more and more and more and more, right? No one is going to be watching a Twitch stream. If they're on Twitch the platform, they already know which streamer they want to watch. It's not going to be me if they haven't been to my channel before and really sent spent time to really, like, look at my own content. So that's my opinion.

Alex - 40:53

Okay. Now for this next one. This is the last one in the segment. What about extreme problem users? The people that go above and beyond the standard troll that get to the point of being a hazard to you and your livelihood? The ban dodgers, the doxxers, even the swatters, you know?

BeastTrollMC - 41:16

Right, so what is my thoughts on that?

Alex - 41:21

Yep

BeastTrollMC - 41:22

Okay. So this has been a very touchy topic. One of the best ways to really avoid it is not to bring it up, okay? It's hard if people don't have the idea in their mind, then it won't happen, right? Which is why I like to avoid the topic of things when it comes to my security as my channel even though I know that I have like different passwords for every single website. The fact is, if any of them gets compromised that will cause major issues for me. So me avoiding the channel no avoiding the topic itself is one of the ways to really avoid that situation as a whole, but it is inevitable that something like this will happen sometime in the future. Either I get swatted, either one of my platforms gets compromised, something like that. In the event of something like that will happen, I've made sure to prepare precautions to mitigate the damage. As for the ability to really stop the situation from ever happening that is outside of my control. That is done. That is in the hands of the person who's conducting the hazard, right? As for me, I can only set up safety nets to make sure that the fall isn't that hard because the fact of the matter is I am powerless to hackers. If a person really wanted to compromise one of my accounts, they will do so. If a person really wanted to send a SWAT team to my house and they really dug, and did their research, they can find my address. If they really wanted to do anything super harmful to me, they can do so. But if you think about it that's also how the world works in general, right? If you think about it, if you go to Walmart, and you're looking at the cashier, you could assault that cashier right there,

right? But it's that trust, it's that level of trust with me and the internet, and the trust that I have with the internet that hopefully will not happen. Of course, the possibility will always be there. Someone could just go out of their way to really ruin my day and ruin my career, but I just hope especially with my history and my reputation in the community that I haven't upset a person to the point where they would want to do that.

Alex - 43:28

Okay, do you want to elaborate a little bit on those precautions that you mentioned.

BeastTrollMC - 43:32

The precautions. Okay, so when it comes to password security, I've used a different password for every single platform that I own, right? I'll use one of those password hubs or password managers to make sure that if a single account were to get compromised no other account would be in jeopardy. So having a different password for everything that certainly helps mitigate the damage. Of course, they get into a platform, I won't have control over that platform for the duration of their control. There's nothing I can do about that, but I can at least prevent them from using that password, and using it because it's the same password on another platform for instance, that they can get into other social medias, other accounts, things like that, right?

Alex - 44:17

Mm-hmm.

BeastTrollMC - 44:18

When it comes to my address, I've searched myself on white pages. I've searched my family members on white pages and other public information displays of the likes because the fact of the matter is, I am aware what information I put out to the public. People know my city. People know my first and last name. People know my father's first and last name. A lot of people know my brother's first name. There's a lot of information that I am aware that is public, and I want to make sure that if people want to find my personal address, my exact address, that's as difficult as

possible. So I've removed myself from White Pages. I remove myself from Yellow Pages. I remove my family members from White and Yellow Pages, but it does get to a point where if someone really wanted to they can go through all of my connections and get my information through those connections. I've done other interviews for college projects. If any of those people do have my personal information and things that they want to do something haphazard to me, I've opened up that possibility because I put that information out there. I'm aware of that, but I feel like the benefit that it could do for that other person outweighs the risk that it has for me, which is why I continue to do things like this, like interviews, but I am aware of how much information I put out there. I'm aware that it could easily be used against me, but just being aware of it is already good enough, that I know that I shouldn't give out too much information to the point where it could actually be a very strong potential for it to be a hazard.

Alex - 45:57

Okay. So what's next? Do you have any kind of plans for what you want to do after you finish streaming? Do you see yourself retiring from streaming in any capacity in the near future or even the far future?

BeastTrollMC - 46:14

Okay, so this is something I've worked on. I thought about it a lot because it was one of the biggest risks that I took when I was 16 years old. Quitting my job, well, 17. No, I graduated at 16, right. So I quit my job, I went streaming full time, and I decided not to go to college. I am aware of my future. I'm aware of the jeopardy that I put myself in if I'm not going for a higher education, but I've made the conscious decision not to take a higher education because I feel the potential that Twitch offers with the current growth of my channel outweighs the opportunity that is available by just going through college, right? I still see it as a fallback option. If something were to go wrong with Twitch, I can always fall back and go to college. You can go to college at any age. You can always find the financial assistance to do so, things like that. As for my future, with what I see right now, it is the main reason why I prefer not to spend basically any money for my own personal enjoyment. Every single penny that I earn, that is not spent on bills or

improvements for the stream or something that is needed for my life I save it, and it's sitting there waiting for the opportunity that arises where I can take it to the next level. Of course, I have no intentions of moving on from Twitch yet, but I'm also worried I'm probably not going to do Twitch when I'm like 40 or 60 years old, right? So I don't know what I'm doing for the future, but I'm making sure that I have the money there, and I have the tools to find out what it is, what my future is going to be. Right now, it's pretty secure for myself, and currently, especially even for the next year. I feel like the channel is going to do well, but as for what I'm going to be able to do for the future, the far future, that is a mystery. I know I'm able to prove with the platform that I have right now. I could go into something with PR for a game company. I could do something along the lines of that or game development or beta testing for actual games or alpha testing. I could do things like that, but in terms of just raw skills because I'm doing Twitch, I'm basically sacrificing the education now in order to get the monetary compensation right now. I'm giving up the education for the money in order to get the money because I feel like I can use the money to open up much bigger possibilities for the future.

Alex - 48:57

Okay. Okay.

BeastTrollMC - 48:58

Mm-hmm.

Alex - 48:59

So for this last question, do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, or encouragement that you could give to a new streamer who is just starting out and trying to get off of their feet?

BeastTrollMC - 49:18

Um... See, this is the part I've touched on this topic before that when the new streamer comes in, and they want to grow big and stuff like that, it's probably not going to happen. One of the biggest things that you have to realize is that if you're trying to be a big on Twitch and you're

trying to blow up and you're trying to be famous, it's probably not going to happen. I'm an outlier. I'm very lucky to be in the position that I'm in right now. There are specific decisions. There are things that I've made. There are things that I've done to help my chances, and to help grow the platform that I am right now, but if you are a person starting out trying to get into Twitch chances are you're not going to get anywhere. So my first piece of advice is don't expect to get anywhere if you're doing Twitch. If you're doing Twitch, you're doing it for the sole purpose of fun when you start out. You live stream because you want to have your content out there. You want to stream for the fun of it because you like looking back on your own stuff or capturing clips or things like that. Everything else, the monetary gain, the audience, the reputation, the fame comes later, far later. You cannot have that expectation of making money on Twitch when you start out or else you're destined to fail. There are specific steps that you can take to increase your chances of becoming successful like handling a good social media, branching out into other platforms to relay more audiences into your channel. A great example is Harris Heller which is a channel that just got partnered recently. He's been doing very good videos on helping other streamers how to grow their channels, and as a result he's been able to direct that traffic that he's gotten into his own channel which has been pretty successful. So utilizing other social media platforms, direct attention, having a consistent schedule that people can rely on for the people who actually do want to watch your channel, the self-awareness, knowing that you're one person of literally millions of streamers trying to get the same goal and the same prize, um... staying out of controversies for the most part, but also being aware that controversy could also help propel your channel to a higher state of popularity. There's so many tiny things that add up to make a huge difference, but the biggest problem that I want to emphasize is a person's intentions for coming to Twitch. Your main intention for coming to Twitch should be to broadcast yourself live. That is it. No monetary gain will come to you. Also you will want to have that possibility out there which is fine to have a donation button when you're just starting out, but you have to understand that if you're expecting to make money on Twitch, stop. Go to college and get an education and take some other directed route because you know the odds of you actually becoming successful on Twitch is so tiny, it's gonna be hard. It's not going to be worth the effort. There's no guarantee with Twitch. That's it. That's why even me

as an established streamer who's already somewhat successful who's able to sustain themselves, I don't know how long this is going to last. So I don't have the expectation that Twitch is really going to be my future. I'm still just trying to write it out day by day and hope for the best.

Alex - 52:46

Okay.

BeastTrollMC - 52:46

Yeah

Alex - 52:47

Now is there anything else that you want to add?

BeastTrollMC - 52:51

Um, not really. It's sad really because a lot of people really have that "Oh, I want to grow big on Twitch" and stuff like that, right? But it's really the crushing truth, right? Because everyone wants to get the same thing, but if everyone gets it it's no longer a novelty, right? Which is why it's just not easy overall, and people need to realize this. If you are determined to become a famous Twitch streamer, and you really put in the work, then yes, you could make it, but a lot of people think that, "Oh, I want to play video games for a living and make tons of money by playing video games. Let me just live stream on Twitch." That's not going to help you at all. That is going to hinder you, that's going to prevent your mindset, and you're not going to foster anything at all out of Twitch.

Alex - 53:35

All right.

BeastTrollMC - 53:36

Yeah.

Alex - 53:37

Beast. It's been great! I got a lot of good info from this interview, and I'm going to stop the recording now.

NOTE: Mylixia chose to conduct this interview on his livestream, third parties he addresses are members of his chat.

Alex - 0:00

Okay, so the first question that I start out with, although in your case, I'll modify it a little bit, what made you get involved with the streaming industry?

Mylixia - 0:12

what made me get involved with the streaming industry...I'm insanely passionate about the ability that influencers have to positively impact large groups of people in a community format. So, live streaming is the only medium of content delivery where broadcasters can interact almost directly with other people, and...I have a personal interest in motivational topics, self improvement, things that are inspirational. I think that live broadcasting is a way for people all over the world to benefit in a lot of different ways. At first, I thought that there was a more direct application. So I used to think that...the main way would be like, if you established like charity events and streams and stuff like that, or if you were going to...maybe even create a show that's like, was dedicated towards, like, helping people or things like that. But now I realize that there's actually a way bigger benefit, which is...the fact that there's just like, a lot of lonely or sad people out there, or just normal people that would like, rather have a friend; and live broadcasting is like the only medium where you can really feel that way. Like you can find a broadcaster like they're your actual friend, they know who you are, you come back every day. So the ability for live streaming to impact issues in our society where we increasingly are becoming more connected to technology and less connected to each other, live broadcasting is sort of one of the only things that can breach that gap, which is really, really interesting to me, so I'm very passionate about growing that as much as I can, and particularly on the talent side and in many communities.

Alex - 1:57

That's awesome. That's awesome. So what was your your entry point? You mentioned that you're not necessarily a broadcaster at heart, where did you start?

Mylixia - 2:09

I'm definitely a broadcaster at heart. It's just that I have a problem where I'm really, really good at building businesses, but I don't like doing it. And unfortunately, it's such a good skill to have, right, like I keep getting roped into this shit. So now I'm stuck in another one, but like, I've always been a broadcaster at heart, right? Like, in 2012, I started a broadcast where I streamed League of Legends. I don't know why I played the game, but like, but full time, and that led me eventually into a career doing eSports work for a team called Team Dignitas. Then I took-because of the aforementioned proclivity towards business, I had been doing entrepreneurship since I was 16 running companies, I took on as regional manager of Dignitas, then later came on as CEO of Counter Logic Gaming. After that, I left CLG once we sold to Madison Square Garden, and I went back to broadcasting...but pretty shortly got noticed by a company called NerdFusion up in Seattle, that's run by my friend Sevadus; and Sevadus is one of the very few people in the world that I think has pretty much the exact same vision I have for the live streaming industry and is super passionate about it, is more knowledgeable than me, and even more skilled in it, and just made sense to make a perfect partnership for what we're doing now. So that that's sort of how it evolved. So I've always been a broadcaster at heart, I absolutely love broadcasting. Like at my core; if I could do anything with my life, I'd be a full time streamer, but I just...I'm literally so good at running businesses that I can't not do it, it sounds totally pretentious but it's actually true.

Alex - 3:49

Okay. Okay, so you mentioned you started streaming way back in 2012, back at that time, Twitch had absolutely, you know, next to zero methods of monetization on the platform. At what point did you start seeing this as as a business, as a means of making money?

Mylixia - 4:10

Oh, I saw it as a business immediately, it's just nobody else did. The thing is, there has always been unbelievable monetization options for Twitch, it's just that live streamers don't understand

that, unless it gets handed to them in their face, right. So for example, you could always monetize your audience, you could always do things like Patreon, you could always drive them to apparel, you could always drive them towards third party products or services, there was always affiliate marketing and that was at a way higher engagement rate than anything besides email so that the the options for monetization were there, particularly like what one of the things that we did at the time was we had the highest number of subscribers to viewers ratio on any channel on Twitch for a year running. So what that meant was like, if you had like 100 concurrent viewers, we were somehow we were running it like 15 or 20 X the number of subscribers. The reason for that was because we were incentivizing subscribers super hard on the marketing side. So, um, what So what I'm saying is like, the monetization options were always there even very early. It's just that people weren't conscious of them. Would you see with any new platform, right?

Alex - 5:09

Yeah, yeah. Let's see, you mentioned that when you had started out, you guys had this, you know, absolutely massive spike in in engagement. Was there anything specific that you did to to promote that?

Mylixia - 5:26

Engagement in terms of like, viewership for the stream?

Alex - 5:28

Yes.

Mylixia - 5:30

Yeah, I danced at the end of every show. So I'm a competitive dancer, and at the beginning of every show, I danced and then if there was like a really hype moment then I would do that too. So that was usually what spiked a lot of viewership. It was a livestreamfails type of thing.

Alex - 5:45

Okay, okay. Very interesting.

Mylixia - 5:50

It would take a long time, but I had a bunch of stuff I did as far as like, marketing that I went into the stream, right so I linked up with Riot Games, I got tied up in their community program, I was one of the only streamers to ever be featured by Riot Games, way before they had like the League of Legends partnership program that they have now, it was like five years before that. I got featured on the front page of Riot, so when you logged in, you saw my stream; just like nutty shit like that, just I was always doing outbound partnerships, I was always emailing people, I was getting collaborations and stuff like that, I was working with other streamers like Trick2G, NightBlue, people that would raid me every day, imaqtpie, stuff like that, right. There's just like, there's so...it would take so much time to explain all that stuff, but that was like, that was all stuff we were doing too.

Alex - 6:34

Okay, were there any highlights from back in the day that you can you can remember?

Mylixia - 6:41

Just the aforementioned, everything I said.

Alex - 6:44

Yeah. Um, was there anything that you wish you had not done during that time period?

Mylixia - 6:51

Play League of Legends.

Unknown 6:52

[Laughter]

Mylixia - 6:54

It was great for my career, so, and also, like, I have a lot of respect for some of people that I met. I mean, yeah, play League of Legends is like, sort of, I say that ironically, but like, at some point, it became...the ROI wasn't there in any way, right, and I was still doing it because I didn't know what else to do. So I would say...that's a very broad question, because there's just so many lessons in live streaming that are not intuitive to know and are not taught anywhere, right?

Alex - 7:33

That's what I'm trying to fix.

Mylixia - 7:34

For example, like, how do you know what game to play, right? So...and I still make this mistake, right? So right now, like this stream that's live right now, I think we're 70% below our normal concurrent viewers, which is because I'm playing a game that most of twitch would consider to be super residentSleeper, right? So like lessons like that, like how do you find like, a really optimal game, are not things that are intuitive and even experts at it still make mistakes. So I would have been much more successful today if I had streamed anthem for example, and if I prepared for it, but I just couldn't be fucked so there's like a lot of different...there's just so many things. If I tried to think of like one thing...I don't know what do you OGs thing? Like what's the one thing...it's going to be they're gonna say play ArcheAge. But there is probably a mistake that was bigger than that...um, I actually think the mistake would have been...this is not going to be something that the chat's going to identify with necessarily, but it's on the personal side, and this is true for every streamer. If any streamer is going to make a big mistake, this is the number one mistake they can make. They won't capitalize on a breakout moment. So for example, when League of Legends featured me on the front of the Riot Games page, I was like, sitting at 10,000 concurrents for days. I should have streamed like 15 hours a day as much as possible to retain that viewership. So what I mean by a breakout moment is every streamer, every single streamer, it doesn't matter if you have zero viewers, or whatever, if you keep streaming consistently,

consistently being the keyword - that's the other big thing I don't do - at a consistent time, is the most important thing you can do as a broadcaster, is stream at the same time. A breakout moment means you get hosted, somebody acknowledges you, you might be the only person on a category of the game and everybody's interested in it. Something will happen, luck meets opportunity...or preparation meets opportunity and luck happens and you get noticed. Now the question is, "What are you going to do with that breakout moment?" And if you can capitalize on that breakout moment that is the single, period, best, period, thing, period, that you can do. I would say that I've had more of those moments than any streamer I've ever known, and I don't capitalize on them very well...typically, because I'm involved in some other thing like CLG or something like that, where I don't have the ability to devote all my time to it. So in the last like two or three months, I've had an insane amount of breakout moments; 10,000 viewer hosts, like opportunities where I've literally lived with big streamers for a couple of weeks, there's so many things that I could do, that right now we'd be sitting at, like 1000 concurrent viewers, but I just don't, because one of my own, like personal issues, I just don't have the self discipline and because I'm literally tied up running a company or doing whatever else I'm doing.

Alex - 9:31

Okay. Were there any major hurdles or challenges that you faced over the course of your career in the industry?

Mylixia - 11:11

The hardest thing about broadcasting, for me, is staying consistent. Most people will answer that the hardest thing about broadcasting is probably the emotional, physical and mental toll. I mean, you've been through nine of these, so you might confirm or deny that, like, I don't know, but I would suspect that. For me personally, right, it's, can I show up every day to the time that I commit to, run the broadcast at a at a at a good level, and then can I review that information afterwards? Because I watch my own show afterwards, right, and take notes, to basically do the best show possible on Twitch. So all my problems...like some people will be like, well, it's making money, or it's getting more viewers, those are answers like that. But that's a very short

sighted way to look at streaming. The way that you want to look at streaming is, what am I doing today, right now to run the best broadcast possible, and you go back through your tape and you say, okay, from 1pm to 2pm was like, super residentSleeper, I wouldn't watch this content. What do I need to do to change that? And that's led me to do things like take improv classes, right? Like, I literally take improv classes to be better at comedy. I call this an improv stream because I'm working on my improv comedy in the stream. That's what I'm doing actively. So moment to moment can I be consistent, and can I run the best show possible, and can I go back and analyze where that stuff went wrong and make it better, are the biggest challenges I have as a broadcaster and should be the biggest problems that everybody has as a broadcaster.

Alex - 12:54

Okay, that that is a really good answer. Let's see...so give me just kind of a snapshot of your channel. What is it that that you do on this channel? What kind of content do you create and advertise for it? What kind of viewers are you looking to attract to the stream?

Mylixia - 13:17

I don't care who watches at this point. I used to want a very specific demographic, now it's just whoever can benefit from listening to it. Um, I don't know, twitch.tv/mylixia is a weird egg. It's a kind of combination of a discussion stream where we cover like meta issues on Twitch and business, and also like an entertainment/improv stream where we play usually pretty funny or like engaging games and people get like, good laughs out of it. My objective is to make...I have one objective on this channel; and that is for the person that comes into this channel to leave better than they came in. That is my only objective. I don't care if they give me money. I don't care if they convert as a viewer. I don't care if they subscribe with tier three. It's nice, that helps up the stream a lot. But my one objective is if you come in here, and you're like 40% happiness, leave at 45%, leave at 60%, leave at 70%. Whether it's because you were informed, or because you're entertained, I don't care, that is what I want to do, and that is the objective of this channel and is the reason I run this broadcast.

Alex - 14:18

That's awesome, that really is. So building off of that, how do you manage chat? Do you put forth an effort to interact and promote chat activity or anything along those lines?

Mylixia - 14:32

I have 100% chat interaction except when these troglodytes are giving me spoilers to fucking games like Dark Souls and Subnautica. Like generally, I'm very interactive with chat, answer every single question, that's actually...this is another thing that streamers will probably not answer...I'll answer differently, hopefully, but 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, right? So I answered chat again, because my main KPIs are not about growing viewership. If they were, then I would ignore chat, and I would just create good content all the time and I do a lot better; this is a huge mistake that many small streamers make, they think that chat interaction is really good idea, but if you're trying to grow the viewership of your channel it's not a good idea. It is in like, kind of interspersed, like picking and choosing comments that can increase your content, but a good way to do this also is, if you sort of like mold your chat to respond in certain ways to certain emotes, or certain keys or cues; so like I really like "LuL." I use "LuL" as like a way to determine if I'm creating good content or not, right? If people are posting positive emotes, then I know they like this stuff, right; and if they're not saying anything, silence is like the biggest indication. If people aren't typing anything, that means I'm running a real shit show...and you can figure this out by using the metric *unique chatters;* so like if you look at your unique chatters for a show, and it's well below your average...mine is around 600, and 1000 for a good show. If I like, on this Battlefleet Armada show, it should be like, I don't know, somewhere around like 2 or 300. I know I have to do some serious work to go back through and look at like, where this broadcast went wrong, because it's

one of the worst broadcasts...it is the worst broadcast in January, right in terms of in terms of engagement and metrics. So I keep those things in mind.

Alex - 17:00

That's very interesting, and you are right, most of the other people that I've been interviewing him have kind of been saying like, you know, chat's the most important asset that you have-

Mylixia - 17:11

Bullshit, nobody runs the data, nobody knows the statistics, yeah.

Alex - 17:16

[Chuckles] Awesome, awesome. Very, very good answers, I'm really liking the way that you're approaching this. Moving forward from that, give a little bit of a call back to an earlier thing that you mentioned, monetization. Obviously, I'm not looking to know how much money you make, I don't really care about that number. But what I'm more interested in is how you monetize off of your content, what are...you know twitch has the standard package, you've got subs, bits, donations, etc. Is there anything unique that you use with that system? Or are there any third party monetization methods that you employ?

Mylixia - 17:58

I don't, but if I was a real streamer, I would.

Unknown 18:02

[laughter]

Mylixia - 18:02

And if you wanna know how I would do it, I could answer that.

Alex - 18:05

Go for it! [laughs]

Mylixia - 18:07

Okay, so the first thing I would do is I would create an email list, I would make sure I would try to convert as many people that are my viewers to email as possible, and send them an update every other week, or whatever. The second thing that I would do is I'd create a Patreon immediately, like in one second, and I would try to convert as many users off of Twitch onto that platform to get them unique content through VOD content as possible. I would use every single second of free time that I have to create videos that I put them on YouTube and Instagram in short form content clips. Then I would drive those people back to the Twitch stream, and back to Patreon, and back to the email list, right? The objective of the email list would be able to own my viewership, because right now I don't own my viewership. I don't know any of the emails of any of my subscribers, I used to know that when to provide that information, now they don't; and I don't have any real connection these people unless they come back to my stream for some reason. So I want to I want to own my viewers, right. I want to own those people better than if I...than the information that Twitch gives me. I don't want those people to live on the Twitch platform, I want them to live on my platform. The best way to do that in marketing is email. So if I create an email newsletter and a list, combined with a Patreon, I monetize that way, right. Then from there, once I have an established base there, let's say I have 10,000 users on that list, or maybe 5000 users, you create an apparel line, you drive people from the email to the apparel line, you can expect a certain percentage of conversion. Then, once I understand what that conversion is, I can drive Pay Per Click to it, right, because I can start advertising Facebook, and I can start advertising Instagram, because I know how much I can spend to acquire a user, which is also impossible to do on Twitch. So if I know how much it costs to acquire a converting viewer, then I can spend advertising funds relative to that number, and I can print viewers and money ad nauseum included to infinity, "Oh my God, it's the next Ninja, wow, amazing."

Unknown 19:49

[laughter]

Mylixia - 19:57

So those are all the things that I would do, IF I was a full time streamer.

Alex - 20:00

IF you were.

Mylixia - 20:01

Yeah, but I do any of that, because I'm, uh, not.

Alex - 20:05

Holy cow. This is this is going great. Um, so one of the drawbacks of monetization a lot of the times is when people will put up, you know, an excess of monetization, and then a lot of the community members will adopt this mentality of, "Oh, you're a sellout, you're just doing it for the money." Um, are there ways that you can think of, to to mitigate this hazard?

Mylixia - 20:29

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? So if Shroud runs a shitty stream for some mobile game, and everybody says "sellout," it's because they're not getting the actual value that they have come to expect from that broadcast, does that make sense?

Alex - 21:01

Yep.

Mylixia - 21:02

Yeah. So the way to counteract any kind of like, sellout etc. stuff, you can have as many monetization options as you want. It's not the monetization options themselves that are causing that problem, it's the fact that your content is deteriorating as a result of doing them. So the trick is to be able to find a way to keep your content at a level that is consistent with the quality of your other broadcasts, and then nobody will ever call you that.

Alex - 21:27

Awesome. Awesome. Okay, so at this point, I can start to preface these questions "If you WERE a full time broadcaster..."

Mylixia - 21:39

[chuckles] Yeah.

Alex - 21:42

...what would your social media presence be like? You already mentioned YouTube and Instagram, obviously everybody and their mother needs a Twitter account. You know, do you want to elaborate a little bit more on that?

Mylixia - 21:53

Yeah, spend as little time streaming on Twitch as possible. I'm not even memeing. [Laughs] If you want grow on Twitch, the number one thing you can do is post YouTube videos. [Laughs] I'm not even trolling.

Alex - 22:04

No, no, I believe you. 100%. [Laughs]

Mylixia - 22:06

Yeah, it's because the content lives there, and the the algorithm to search and find videos is so much better than Twitch, right. Because the only way you get real discovery organically through

Twitch is from the Browse function, and that's weighted towards people that have more viewers, so if you don't have viewers, you can't be found on Twitch, and it's just an endless cycle, you're just fucked. So the way that you...the way that you actually get people to come into your stream, is you post videos of interesting content, and then what that also does is it establishes you as a niche, right. So people need to come to your channel and know what you're about. So if you create a YouTube channel that is themed towards, like, what you want to be about, so let's say it's like game analysis, or maybe it's comedy. So you just like post like your best comedy clips and stuff like that, and then you tag those videos properly, you're going to start to get people from YouTube to come into your stream. So yeah, Fred says in chat "Be a better streamer by not streaming galaxy brain." But that's actually the truth, that's what you do, you do everything but stream. So I would say, the ratio would be probably 70-30; I'd spend 70% of my time on Instagram, posting one minute clips, doing hashtags, tagging people that are interested...and ironically, if you did nothing, like let's say that you ignore all that, let's say you're not going to do any kind of social media presence, I would still be spending the majority of my time doing outbound, so I'd be looking for other streamers to collaborate with, I'd be looking for other people to do events with, I'd be looking for other people to do podcasts with, or anything that would get me in front of other audiences with the philosophy of one is greater than zero [sic], right, the Gary Vaynerchuk principle, it's always better to be in front of one person than zero people. But yeah, you'd be spending all of your time creating YouTube videos, optimizing those correctly, refining them, and then coming back to your stream, which would be every day at a consistent time. So you'd be showing up every single day, for example, at like, 9am, and you would run till 12pm, but you would NOT do an eight hour, ten hour stream, which is absolutely full...I can't say that word anymore on Twitch, right? 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. Okay, that's like the real truth of it. So as a result, the broadcasters are, universally the, period, laziest, period, people, period, that I've ever fucking met.

Unknown 24:43

[Laughter]

Mylixia - 24:52

So streamers don't really want to do hard work, they want to do the thing that is the easiest path to victory, right? Most of the broadcasters that are big on Twitch are not there because of hard work, they're there because they were first. And if you ask them, how they became successful, they don't even know it right? Now, there are exceptions to that rule in the upper echelons; people like Dr. Disrespect who legitimately worked very hard to make a high quality production show, like scripts out his work, things like that, but the vast majority of people have no idea right?

Alex - 25:26

Okay. So for this question, less if you were a full time streamer, more as the former CEO of CLG and somebody who's very ingratiated with the business side of things, what are the do's and don'ts of social media?

Mylixia - 25:56

What are the do's and don'ts of social media? So from the context of being a streamer who's trying to become a successful?

Alex - 26:00

Right.

Mylixia - 26:05

It's a really long answer...because the only way that I can answer this question is in like, kind of vagaries that won't actually be objectively helpful, because the answer is, you have to structure all of your social media posts to the niche that you want to create; but that's not...that's a very

general way to say like, let's say that you're doing strategy analysis on games, like you analyze how to be the best at a game, and that's your stick and you're forwarding that through YouTube. Well, okay, the way you'd want to word your social media is in the context of those things. So you'd want to make maybe like a short...excerpt on Twitter about like, what you think of Battlefleet Armada, and how this aspect of it is really interesting for that kind of strategy analysis, right? You wouldn't want to diverge and post something that's like vastly different, like all of a sudden like be posting like cat memes and stuff like that; a little bit of that is ok, but like you want to keep the focus of your social media on the thing that you're trying to accomplish.

Alex - 27:08

Okay.

Mylixia - 27:12

Then beyond that is very obvious stuff, which is like, you know, don't post racist comments, don't blow up at people, these are super simple things. Generally getting personal, I believe this, a lot of people don't believe this, but getting personal on social media is almost universally bad for brands...or rather will attract the wrong kind of audience. It'll work to get viewers, but it'll be really bad in the end for your brand. I guess the example I would use is like Boogie2998, where he like very frequently posts political stuff or like really controversial stuff, and this gets him a lot of hate which then...but this is part of the media cycle for him so it does well for his channel; but it's just example of, you can compare him to say Philip DeFranco, who keeps very neutral on social media, because he understands his narrative, he understands the thing he's selling is bipartisanship. He's not on the left or right, he's not on one side issue or the other, he tends to be square in the middle and try to give you the information as objectively as possible. So you can look at those two people as examples of people who are conscious of their brand. Boogie he wants that controversy, so he advertises himself in that way, Philip DeFranco does not want that controversy, so he advertises himself in another way. If you want to be conscious of what your niche is, and what you want to deliver to people, you have to have a mission in mind for how your social media is structured. Does that make sense?

Alex - 28:34

Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so taking a step back from that, or taking a step outwards from that, looking towards networking, outside of social media. You already mentioned the email list, which, that's something I haven't even heard of as of yet, which is an amazing suggestion. What about tournaments, conventions, you know, meet and greets, stuff along those lines.

Mylixia - 29:03

What about them?

Alex - 29:06

I guess if you were looking to be a successful streamer, what kind of attitude would you have towards those things?

Mylixia - 29:13

I would never go to them. And I would always stay at home and make the best content I possibly can.

Alex - 29:18

Okay.

Mylixia - 29:20

Yeah, um, again, you're going to get totally opposite answers from streamers. There's almost no benefit from going to large conventions as a small broadcaster, you're never going to be able to impact anybody meaningful. You might make some collaborations with a few other smaller broadcasters, but 99% of the time those people aren't going to pan out because they're probably lazy, there's a reason why they're small broadcasters; and even if they are, you're going to get like a modicum of benefit from that. 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, when 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 about shop? Hang out, go out to dinners that are too expensive? Meet people that you're not going to actually engage with later on? Fuck that. You spend all your time creating the best content possible, and you don't ever leave your house, you stay in your basement. If you're a huge streamer, then you go because you're getting sponsored activations to go there, it's improving your collab, you're collabing with other really big streamers, for people like GreekGodX or Destiny or things like that, they should be at every single one of those things, right? Because they can always use that as an opportunity to create content.

Alex - 30:46

When do you think is the transition point where you-

Mylixia - 30:56

Like 3000, 4000 concurrents. Pretty much nobody listening to this is ever gonna have to worry about it. You can safely stay in your basement for the next like three years working on your stuff, and never breach that chasm. Like, the answer is hard work. Streaming conventions are excuses to not work, you're not going to get work done there. The exception to that rule would be like at PAX West, I had the specific objective of getting partnered for Twitch in 2012. So I went with a laminated business plan, I went up to the head of partnerships, then and now John Howell, who's now just like a fucking God, because he's...since then, like, 10,000 people been hired under him, or whatever, you know, 1000 people. So I went up to John Howell, and I said I want to get partnered, I'm going to commit 15 hours a day to this, here's my business plan. Let me know what you think and let's see what the next steps are. He said, "Did you just hand me a fucking laminated business plan?" I said I did, and he said, okay, no streamer's ever done that, let's get you partnered, and he didn't even read it. So I came with a specific objective, but that whole trip was also sponsored by my stream. So a dude was going to PAX anyway, and couldn't go because

work told him he couldn't go, but he already had tickets at a hotel; he gave them to me for free, so my trip was all expenses paid. I went there with a specific objective, and then I spent the rest of the convention, not meeting anyone, and going to every single booth; Corsair, Logitech, indie games, and introducing myself, handing out business cards, which I got 1000 of before, and trying to get partnerships, and from there, I got a ton of collaborations and stuff like that, right. So that's an example of like, if you have to go to one of those conventions, that's probably how you'd utilize yourself in a good way.

Alex - 32:09

[Laughter] Awesome, great answer. Great answer. So, you can say you've said your piece on this question, but if you have any additional thoughts on this, go right ahead. Are there any...I know, that we talked about specifically in the circle of social media, but are there any just general don'ts for live streaming as a whole?

Mylixia - 33:18

Yeah, don't livestream, go on YouTube instead.

Unknown 33:25

[laughter]

Mylixia - 33:26

I think like, I covered the really important stuff, which is yeah, you should really limit your live stream time. When people say they're going full time on Twitch, what that really means is, they should go full time on social media and YouTube, and then they should have a scheduled broadcast that runs consistently six to seven days a week for 4-5 hours, 4-6 hours, six hours absolute maximum. There's a ton of other don't do's or whatever, but like for a broadcaster that's starting out that wants to know what to do, run a consistent show, and leverage your other social media as much as possible. Those are really the most important, I want to keep it simple.

Alex - 34:03

Okay. Again, for this question, if you feel like you've already kind of answered it, just let me know, that's fine. Is there anything that you think streamers should be doing more of?

Mylixia - 34:20

I would say it's the same, yeah, it was run a consistent broadcast, and just again, there are millions of ways to answer this question and there's tons of minutia that you can go into, but just to not get people confused, like run a consistent broadcast. Because these two things are...if you do these two things, you're just so astronomically far ahead of any of the competition, it's unbelievable. Run a consistent show from hour X to hour Y, and let viewers know when they can expect you and be there, right? Then spend as much time as possible creating content on Instagram and YouTube, those are literally the things to do.

Alex - 35:02

Okay, perfect. So for the next segment, it's just going to be a bunch of kind of rapid fire topics that I want to get your thoughts on, either from the perspective of somebody who's looking to succeed on Twitch, or from the perspective of somebody who's handling this medium as a business. So, the first one is variety content.

Mylixia - 35:29

Yep. Rapid fire is good, because I have like, maybe seven minutes before I gotta do a phone call. So variety content what, you just want me to...is it like, I just say the first word that I'm associated with, or-

Alex - 35:43

Just kind of get your thoughts on these topics from either the perspectives that I mentioned.

Mylixia - 35:51

Okay. So you just said variety content, you want me to give you the thoughts on that?

Alex - 35:55

Yeah, yeah.

Mylixia - 35:57

Um, if you are trying to grow your viewership, it's better to stick to one game for as long as you can, and it's very very hard to make it as a variety broadcaster; but you can do it if you do focus on social media instead of individual Twitch streams.

Alex - 36:13

Okay, then for the next one is risk and risk management, one of the biggest, not necessarily downfalls, but a big hazard for streamers is quote unquote drama; what are some things that you can do to avoid drama, or what are some things to to manage existing drama?

Mylixia - 36:40

You need to have a good base of self confidence. This is this would be a kind of esoteric answer, because most people will just be like "Well just don't drama 4head." But the truth is that's dependent on your individual ability to weather what is going to come at you in the context of being a broadcaster. So I would say, having a regular practice of like...having hobbies outside of streaming, not just sitting down your computer and streaming 24/7; exercising a lot, meditating, eating well, those are kind of things that will make you less likely to engage with some troglodyte in Twitch chat, then if you're having a really bad day because you've been streaming for three days straight, 12 hours a day, and you're just at your wit's end because your body is tired, your mind is tired, and whatever. So I think if you if you focus on your own self empowerment outside of Twitch, you will be much less likely to engage in something that could get you in trouble, or any kind of dramatic stuff.

Alex - 37:28

Okay, I like that answer. Again, with the previous stuff, if you feel like you've already answered this, just specify...paid advertising. I know you mentioned it earlier on in the interview, do you think that that can benefit somebody, and if so, to what extent? When should somebody start diving into paid advertising?

Mylixia - 37:56

Paid advertising is the single most underutilized thing that Twitch streamers don't do.

Alex - 38:01

That's what I've been finding.

Mylixia - 38:01

...probably less than 0.0001% of channels pay to advertise. Funny enough it seems like the best way to actually get press now is to be Ninja or Pokemane, buy advertisements with Twitch, and then every other streamer bitches about you getting advertised through Twitch, and then by virtue of that attracts infinitely more people to your channel and awareness.

Alex - 38:25

[laughter]

Mylixia - 38:26

Seems to be the best way to do it right now.

Alex - 38:28

Okay. Have people complain about your advertisements, that's an interesting one.

Mylixia - 38:35

It's a meme answer, but yes, paid advertising is incredibly effective for live broadcasters, particularly on Facebook. Not enough time to get into why but yeah.

Alex - 38:44

Okay, yeah, yeah. So the last one for this segment, what about extreme problem users, you know, the people that are just so much of an issue that they become potentially a hazard to you and your livelihood; like the ban dodgers, the doxxers, the swatters, the absolute fanatics.

Mylixia - 39:04

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. Every person that is like insane...so, for example, like, I'm fucking crazy, by most standards. My full name is out there, everybody knows what I do, everyone knows almost exactly where I live in downtown Redmond, I'm extremely easy to find. You can literally...I was very transparent about the previous place I lived in Lake Tahoe and Incline Village. I said I'm at this store every time; I never, ever once got bothered, I never ever once had anything happen like that. Because I truly believe in the good of people, and I have no concern whatsoever as a negative to anybody affecting my life in that way. It doesn't bother me at all if somebody wants to jerk off to my stream, or whatever have you like, that's your prerogative or whatever. When it comes to like 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; like a good thing would be like, look at Dr. Disrespect and stream snipers versus someone like Forsen and stream snipers, right? Where like Forsen's community basically just encourages stream sniping so that everything is a shit show it becomes part of his content. But someone that gets like legitimately...or I guess another streamer that might be better to use as an example is Grimmmz, a person who legitimately gets mad, and his content changes because he's getting stream sniped, as a result everybody stream snipes, and his content goes down the tube because he's fighting his chat and stuff like that, right? So the way that you respond to these things, the way that you control your response is the most important thing. Psycho people are a reality, they're going to be around, and it's going to happen. So the only thing that you can control is your response to it, and the way that you react

to it; and and by not giving those people any kind of emotional fuel to get at you, they will generally go to greener pastures where they can get that attention, probably, unfortunately, female streamers. And there's an exception, there's an asterisk in this answer for female streamers, because there's a whole issue of online harassment with them that is very real, that extremely sucks, and I don't have time to get into, but it is a really big issue. That's a big problem in the industry I've been trying to tackle for a long time.

Alex - 41:26

Okay. And I know that you're trying to get out of here. So I'll just throw this one last question. Do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice or encouragement that you could give to a new streamer who is coming to this platform to help get them off of their feet?

Mylixia - 42:04

Yeah, don't stream, go to school, and get an actual skill set that's based on something that provides value to society and do that, don't stream.

Alex - 42:16

All right.

Mylixia - 42:19

If you want me to qualify that I can,

Alex - 42:28

if you want to. Sure.

Mylixia - 42:30

The vast majority of people shouldn't be Twitch broadcasters; the people that are going to be Twitch broadcasters will never, ever be in a chat or be asking someone how to do it. What they'll do is they'll turn on OBS, grind the hours, and not talk to anybody. Which if you look at any

successful streamer...let's just pull the list right? Did Sodapoppin ever go into someone's stream and say, "How do I become a streamer," and look up stuff? Did anybody over 20,000...did Liric? Did DisguisedToast? Anybody over 20,000 viewers ever do that? No. They did the work, they put in the work, right. So I automatically assume that somebody is asking me how to become a good streamer is never going to become a good streamer. And to date, I've run a broadcast...let's see, it's now 2019? Shit, I've been in this game for how many years guys, like seven years now? I have never once seen a person who has come into my chat and said "I'm going to be a successful streamer" actually do it. Never once. They've never gotten above five concurrent viewers, and I have seen hundreds and hundreds of people do that. Keep it in mind that I'm also in the talent industry, so I'm exposed to this more than anything. So if a person really wants to be a broadcaster, then shut up and get on the grind. Get the fucking work, right. Same with everything with success. If you want to be successful, do the work, get into it, do the late nights, do the sacrifice, do that; don't come in here, don't go anywhere, and try to say you're going to do it. I get so many posers, people trying to say they're going to do something. But most people shouldn't be live broadcasters, what they should do is they should focus on a skill set that matters. What I mean by that is, so I can do a lot of things, I can run companies, I've been a CEO, I'm a CMO now. The real skill I have to fall back on, the thing that I do the best, is marketing. I understand marketing better than almost anyone in the digital ad space. So because I understand that, I can consistently add value to companies and people across a very wide spectrum that are interested in digital advertising, which is almost everybody these days. So it is for that reason that I maintain my success in this industry, and it's that skill set that carries me, right? Being a live broadcaster someday is going to fail. Either the content medium is going to change, or there's going to be some kind of transition, or you're going to fall out of relevance, or whatever, it's not a reliable path to pursue. If it's your passion, you should at least have some kind of skills to fall back on, and for that matter that makes you interesting anyway right? I mean, that makes you interesting in people anyway, not just be a streamer. Not a gamer but someone that actually can provide value to people.

Alex - 45:08

Right exactly. Exactly. Is there anything else that you feel you want to add?

Mylixia - 45:15

Not unless there's anything you want to know.

Alex - 45:54

Alright, it's been wonderful. I hope you enjoy the rest of your day, I hope you enjoy your weekend, I'm gonna stop the recording...

Alex - 0:01

So, usually, the first question that I always start with is, what got you into streaming? What made you pick this particular medium?

Driggsy - 0:08

Okay. So I originally got started in the social media space back on Vine, and as that platform was starting to die out, I was trying to find another way to let my creativity out and also entertain people. [So] ever since I was a little kid, I've always had a passion for gaming, this goes back to when I was pretty much three years old. My older brothers got me into gaming, and I even went so far as to study Game Development at WPI. So it's always been a huge part of my life, [and] I just figured, let me try out the streaming thing, because I'll be able to play games and I'll be able to entertain people, and lo and behold, I'm here two and a half years later, and I'm still loving every day of it.

Alex - 0:57

Awesome. Awesome. So, your choice to go to live streaming, did money have any factor in this decision at all, or did you simply just go to the platform for the reasons previously stated?

Driggsy - 1:24

Oh, yeah, so I just started streaming because I just wanted to make people laugh. I got a huge joy out of making people laugh, and just talking with people on the internet. I just really like it. I'm honestly not too much of a social person in the real life, but when it comes to streaming, I feel like my personality really comes out. So having that outlet for that is really nice. You mentioned money, and, money definitely did not have any say into the whole streaming thing at all, that was just an afterthought.

Alex - 1:56

Okay. So, you are on Mixer, correct?

Driggsy - 2:01

Yeah, that's correct.

Alex - 2:02

So what made you pick that platform over Twitch?

Driggsy - 2:08

I originally started on Twitch in July 2016 and I loved it. I was on Twitch for about six months, and it was great. I grew a little bit of a following, I had an awesome time playing Dark Souls 1 on there, and then just a whole bunch of other games at that time that were popular. But then I experienced Beam - that's Mixer back in the day - it was originally called Beam, and the really cool part about Beam was that it had sub second delay. Meaning that, if I'm talking in the chat, if I'm a viewer, and I type "Hi" to the to the streamer, the streamer [can] respond back immediately, because there's [only] a second delay. When I first experienced that on Beam, I was like "Oh, my God, this is what I want." I want to have this instant interaction with my viewers, I want to be able to talk to them and have a conversation this easily, because on Twitch there is that three to five second delay, and when you have multiple conversations going on it makes it a little difficult to keep up and to think back to what happened a couple seconds ago. So yeah, it was pretty much FTL, that's what it's called, "Faster Than Light."

Alex - 3:20

Yep.

Driggsy - 3:21

That encoding really just drew me to Beam, and then of course the tighter community, because Beam...it's still in its infancy now as Mixer, but especially back then, everyone on Beam knew each other. So I kind of just wanted to bring my established community over to Beam and see what it could become.

Alex - 3:41

Okay, interesting. So for this next part, I'm going to use a phrase called "Day One," and so "Day One" essentially is a term that means the first few months up to your first year of streaming. So, during the "Day One" period, run me through an average week during that time.

Driggsy - 4:14

Okay, so, I didn't really think much of it, you know? The very first couple times I started streaming, I told some of my friends from college and high school, I was like, "Yeah, man, I want to try out streaming, it'd be sweet if you could just stop by and check it out, see how it looks, and just try talking to me." In the beginning, there weren't many viewers, maybe I would have like...two or three if I was lucky. Then eventually, over time, I want to say over the course of two weeks, I started getting some regular viewers coming back. Those regular viewers, even to this day, they still come back to the streams, which is...it's pretty remarkable, and that built that initial foundation of my community. Yeah, the first few weeks and the first few months of streaming definitely were slow.

Alex - 5:25

Was there anything specific that you did during that time to bring viewers in?

Driggsy - 5:33

During that time, so I did my initial research and like, I like to watch other successful streamers like TimtheTatMan, for example. He put out a really good breakdown of how to get started in streaming, and he's actually one of my idols when it comes to streaming. Basically, I just followed the cliché things that he would talk about. They're cliché nowadays, but you know, having a set schedule, making sure that your viewers will know when you're going to be live, when you're not going to be having a stream that day, that type of thing, and always keeping up on your other social medias. So it's pretty much just following those guidelines and making sure that I had the most consistent schedule possible so that people knew when to come back.

Alex - 6:19

Was there anything that you wish you had or had not done during that time period?

Driggsy - 6:27

I want to say I really, really, really wish that I had buckled down more on my branding within my first year of streaming. During my first year, I didn't focus too much on having an easily recognizable logo or anything like that. This has just really happened over the past six months, [but] I wish that after my initial six or seven months streaming I had introduced an actual mascot logo or more consistent branding during that time period. I think I waited a little bit too long for that.

Alex - 7:02

What were some of the hurdles or challenges that you have faced over the course of streaming since you started?

Driggsy - 7:14

Since I started, I think the very first hurdle that every streamer has to go through is trying to figure out what you're doing wrong, and trying to improve upon what you're doing as a streamer to bring viewers in. When you're getting started, you might only have one or two people like I mentioned earlier, and [you'll] see other people that are doing the same exact thing as you, [and] you might even be doing it better, [but] somehow they have 50-60 viewers, and you're like, "What am I doing wrong here?" So, I guess there's that demotivating factor of comparing yourself to others, and that's something that you really have to look past as a streamer. You have to think, "If I just grind this out long enough, if I just have fun with my viewers, eventually, I'll get to that point." I think that's the biggest hurdle any streamer can go through.

Alex - 8:09

Okay. Was there anything else besides that?

Driggsy - 8:14

There's of course the whole work life balance, you know? Work, life, stream, eat, gym balance.

Both - 8:25

[laughter]

Driggsy - 8:25

It's hard, man, and I'm still struggling with it to this day. It's hard and you might shut some people out of your life because of it, and that can be unhealthy. But your real true friends will stick around with you and help you through this journey.

Alex - 8:44

Okay, were there any specific tricks or methods that you've come up with in handling that work-life balance?

Driggsy - 8:55

Definitely trying to end the stream on time. That's the biggest thing, dude. Right now, my set schedule, is 9PM until 11PM, that's typically what it should be. But, you know, even when you're playing just solo, just by yourself, [you're] like, "Oh, one more game. One more game. "

Alex - 9:13

Oh, yeah.

Both - 9:14

[Laughter]

Driggsy - 9:14

As a streamer man, it's even worse. So take that feeling, and let's say you have...even if you have 10 viewers in your chat, especially when you have higher numbers like, 30, 40, 50 people in your

chat. That "one more game" mentality, it gets multiplied by 50. [laughs] Because you just want to keep entertaining them and you don't want to lose their viewership; because you might be having a really good night that night, like you might be having a ton of viewers. So you just keep on streaming, keep on streaming, keep on streaming, and before you know it, it's already 1AM, you gotta get up for work at 6, and you're like, "Okay, great." So it's trying to stick to that schedule and get off in time, that's definitely the hardest thing.

Alex - 10:04

Okay.

Driggsy - 10:04

Also I would say, as much of a hurdle as it is trying to figure out your schedule around streaming [and] how to make it work, it's really good for like, day-to-day life. It kind of puts you on this schedule and puts you in this mindset to think, "How can I maximize my time every day to make sure that I'm getting the most out of it?" So it's a pretty good practice.

Alex - 10:28

Okay, awesome, good answer. So, give me a snapshot of your channel. What is your channel about? What kind of content do you create and advertise?

Driggsy - 10:41

So my name is Driggsy, and my followers, my community, we're called "The Driggsy Division." Basically, my channel is just a place just to hang out, have some laughs, maybe snicker at some really terrible dad jokes, and all around just have fun. I'm not an overly competitive gamer or anything like that, so it's more about just interacting with my community and just bringing smiles and laughs.

Alex - 11:09

Okay, is there anything that you feel makes your channel unique?

Driggsy - 11:13

Makes my channel unique? Um, yeah, I would say just there's not too much of a stress on being overly competitive, or anything like that; it's pretty much a chill zone, right? Like, I want every single person in my stream to feel welcome, talk in the chat, talk to each other, talk to me. It's really cool, because over time I'm seeing that evolve more and more and more. For example, my roommate, he just started a stream, and a couple of my followers have gone over to his channel because he streams before I stream, and it's really cool to see them interacting with him. So they're taking themselves out of my community and moving over to his community and building another community over there. So I guess, it's that whole community aspect of it, that is a staple of my channel.

Alex - 12:01

Awesome, awesome; so you talked a little bit about your viewers. Is there a particular type or kind of viewer that you're looking to attract to your stream, or is it just come one come all?

Driggsy - 12:15

I don't really want to segment anyone out. I want everyone to be able to watch my streams, especially when it's a teen rated stream. So say...let me take a step back here. So I do have teen rated streams and I have 18+ streams, and all these streams it depends on what game I'm playing. So, if I'm playing, for example, Call of Duty, that has to be an 18+ stream because the game itself is rated M for Mature, but if I'm playing Fortnite, for example, that can be teen rated. When I'm playing Fortnite, the way that I'm trying to present myself and the way that I'm trying to present my content is in such a way that, if it's on a TV in the living room - which many of times it is, because Mixer is native on the Xbox app - I want to make sure that my content is suitable not only for that one viewer, which might be a 15 year old, might be an 18 year old, but I also want to make sure that it's suitable for anyone in their family, that pretty much anyone can watch it now. But when it comes to an 18+ stream, that's a little bit different, that's where I kind of let go

a little. I might have more dirty jokes and stuff like that in the chat, but yeah, that's where the age restriction really comes into play.

Alex - 13:25

Okay; so, building more off of chat, how do you manage chat? Do you put forth any kind of effort towards promoting chat activity?

Driggsy - 13:39

For the most part, I would say 70% of the chat...it's very on their own. They're very independent and they talk to themselves, or they'll make up a conversation, or they'll bring something up. But, many times, if the chat is dead, as a streamer having a dead chat...I'm not sure if it's this way for every other streamer, but for me it's kind of unsettling. I'm not used to it. So when the chat goes dry for a minute or two, it's like, "Okay, what am I doing wrong?" So a technique that I've recently picked up from one of my friends, Safiria; she mentioned that asking questions to the chat is something that's very, very easy to get people to start talking, even if it's a stupid question, like "What's your favorite color?" or like "What's your favorite food on a pizza?" And you start talking about that and that conversation leads to another conversation, another conversation. Always trying to keep the chat going is always helpful.

Alex - 14:40

Okie doke. So for the next part, I want to talk a little bit about monetization. I'm not necessarily looking to know how much you make, I wouldn't ask that number from you, but, Mixer, same with Twitch, they have their standard package of monetization options. I don't believe Mixer has implemented their tips system yet, I know that Twitch obviously has the bit system. You've got your subscribers, you've got ad revenue, so on and so forth; is there anything that you are using outside of that standard package?

Driggsy - 15:16

I'm going to take a step back and just talk about Mixer for a second. So Mixer as a whole, the only type of monetization that you can have through Mixer is if you are a partnered streamer. People can subscribe to you for...I believe it's \$5.99 a month. The streamer gets half and Mixer gets half. Mixer has also introduced a system called "Embers," and Embers are very, very, very similar to Bits, you know? You buy their digital currency as a viewer, and as a viewer, you spend that digital currency in the stream and it applies what they call an "Effect." It's basically like a sticker that pops up in the chat, and the the streamer from that also gets half of the revenue. So unfortunately, I'm not partnered yet, [but] I'm working my butt off to get partnered.

Alex - 16:08

Good to hear.

Driggsy - 16:08

The past two months of growth have really been phenomenal, and I think it's setting up for the partnership in the future. I'm going to be applying in a couple of days, actually; February 4th.

Alex - 16:19

Awesome.

Driggsy - 16:20

So hopefully that goes well, we'll see. I got a bunch of people on my side, so I'm really hoping for it. Um, but basically, when it comes down to my stream, the only monetization that I have currently is just a simple donation system, that's all. So, I just use the Streamlabs donation system that's built in the streaming suite.

Alex - 16:46

How do you manage presenting the donations? A lot of the times there can be this attitude of panhandling from people that are looking for handouts and [using] poorly implemented monetization options. How do you go about managing that?

Driggsy - 17:07

So, when I first started streaming, I streamed simply all PC gaming. I had an Xbox, but I couldn't use it because I didn't have a capture card. So what I did was, I put up one of those donation tickers, and surprisingly, I couldn't believe it, but people were donating pretty quickly to help me get that Elgato [capture card]. So I have seen instances where that works, where having a little graph on your stream will work; but when it comes to my stream, I don't have any of that. I work a full time job, so streaming right now, it's more of a side hobby and the people know that. So, when people are donating I make sure to make it clear, I say "Every single dollar that I make while streaming is going to go back directly into the stream," and I think that having that sort of transparent nature really helps out with people donating and stuff like that. As an example, yesterday on stream, I bought Resident Evil 2 and I downloaded it and played it right there using some of the donations that I got from the day prior.

Alex - 18:23

Awesome. Moving past monetization, let's talk a little bit about social media. Obviously everybody and their mother has a Twitter account, it's pretty much expected that every streamer's mother does, in fact, have an active Twitter account. Are there any social media accounts that you manage outside of Mixer and Twitter?

Driggsy - 18:48

Really quick, I forgot to mention one other thing for monetization, Merch. Merch sales have been helping out a little bit. So when it comes to the merch I really don't make too much money off of each item that I sell, but I do make a couple of dollars. So, that's just another realm that I think is helping out is the merch sales.

Alex - 19:11

Cool, cool. Money in your pocket.

Driggsy - 19:14

Yeah, exactly. Money *and* advertising, because people are wearing your stuff around, and then this kind of also fits into the next piece that we were just talking about: other social media accounts. So when one of my viewers or one of my friends, whenever they buy a shirt, I always use them as a post; with their permission, of course. I ask them "Can I, can I use your picture that you took in my Driggsy Division shirt, can I use that as a post?" That right there, you know, it builds up some hype for the merch and it gives me some content. So the other accounts that I manage...I manage a Twitter and an Instagram, and I post on there pretty regularly.

Alex - 19:59

How effective do you think the Instagram is over the Twitter?

Driggsy - 20:07

I would say, honestly, Instagram and Twitter, they're two very different, very, very different audiences. Or maybe [they're] not audiences, but [they're] two different ways to perceive your content, I would say. Instagram is a really, really good way to connect with other streamers because you're simply able to use "#Mixer" or "#WatchMixer," "#MixerStreamer." From there, you're able to find other Mixer streamers that are using that same hashtag, and it could be something as simple as liking their picture and following them. You know they'll do the same back to you, and before you know it you guys are friends, and a couple months down the road, you guys are really good friends on Mixer talking it up; and that friendship leads to another friendship, leads to another friendship, and before you know it, that's how you build your community as well. I think that's one of the things that a lot of new streamers don't really invest too much time in. They pretty much will just only stream and not think about social media on the outside.

Alex - 21:07

It's more important.

Driggsy - 21:08

When it comes down to it, the other social medias are just as important as simply streaming.

Alex - 21:16

Oh, it's arguably more important, because especially...I know that Mixer has put forth significant effort to drastically increase new creator exposure, whereas you look at Twitch, Twitch does not have any tools to expose new creators. It's always just whoever's at the top is staying at the top and it doesn't advertise anybody lower at the bottom. So your best chance of exposure is putting up the highlights channel on YouTube and getting their algorithm to work for you. It's going to get you more exposure than you do by streaming for double the time that you would [have] expected.

Driggsy - 21:57

Yeah, exactly, exactly; YouTube...I think that's another avenue that I definitely need to explore more. I haven't posted really anything on there. I posted only a couple videos. We just hit 100 subscribers so that's cool. Yay! So, I get a custom URL. The other social media site is also Facebook. So I also have a Facebook group page. Not a group page...what's it called? Like, a Facebook company page, maybe?

Alex - 22:34

A company page, something along those lines. I know what you're getting at.

Driggsy - 22:38

I think that was really successful because you're able to invite your friends. You might have a couple hundred, couple thousand friends on Facebook that you don't necessarily interact with every single day, right? But the thing is, if you have them like your page, then they get your content on their feed, and then they might see you, they might drop by your streams, they might tell their friends "Hey, this kid I knew from high school, he started streaming and yeah, like his content's pretty good." Before you know it, word travels and it all adds up with that as well.

Alex - 23:16

So how have things changed on social media compared to the day one period? How did you handle things back then?

Driggsy - 23:23

Oh man.

Both - 23:26

[laughter]

Driggsy - 23:27

So like I said I had like that small following on Vine. So that vine following, a decent number of them follow me on Twitter as well. So that kind of built my base for Twitter and Instagram, was my original Vine followers. So I'm kind of lucky in that regards, I didn't start out with like zero followers or anything like that on there. But the thing is, I think over time, like when you build up more friends that are streamers, and more friends with with common interest and stuff like that, then you start to see those likes piling up on Twitter and Instagram because they're just your friends at this point. So it's really cool, now I'm starting to hit like, 20-30 likes on Twitter, which like, back in the day, like, even last year, that's like, "Holy crap, like, that's a crap ton of likes." Twitter is hard, it's hard to get likes on Twitter.

Alex - 24:17

I believe you, I believe you. I don't think I've gotten a dozen...total.

Both - 24:32

[Laughter]

Driggsy - 24:35

But yeah, it's pretty cool the way that things work with streaming and other social media, it's not just building your one following on Mixer, or your one following on Twitch; if they really do like your content and they like you as a person and a content creator, then they'll follow you on all the other social medias, and before you know it you're interacting with them outside of the stream.

Alex - 24:57

Awesome. Okay, so let's take a step away from digital networking. Is there any networking that you do outside of social media, for example, tournaments, conventions, meet and greet events, so on and so forth?

Driggsy - 25:16

PAX East; I've been to PAX East since, like, 2012, or whenever it first started over in Boston, and...so last year and the year before that, I think...yeah, the year before that as well; pretty much going there, and meeting up with some of your streamer friends and be like "Hey, what's up man," and it's really weird to meet them in real life. Then before you know what, you're shaking hands with other people that are also streamers. You meet them IRL, and then the next week when you go into their stream, you can start that conversation being like, "Yo it was nice meeting you at PAX, like, dude how crazy was it blah blah blah..." and yeah, it's just building friendships. That's actually one of the things that I think I've changed my whole outlook on in the past year; don't look at it as networking, look at it as making friends. That's really changed my whole perception of networking as a whole.

Alex - 26:15

Okey doke, so what works right now? What are you doing on the channel that's keeping everything held together, is keeping the community growing, that's keeping you happy?

Driggsy - 27:28

So right now I have a rotating schedule of games, I'm not just maining Fortnite, I'm not just playing Fortnite five, six days out of the week. The way that I like to handle it is, I like to play

Fortnite two days out of the week, because you know, there is that audience there, there is the Fortnite audience...and those are the biggest streams that I have, like I'm not afraid to admit it. Those are definitely the biggest dreams that I have that draw the most viewers. Then on other nights, like for example tonight's Sunday...at nine o'clock I'm going to be having a VR Beat Saber stream, and it's really awesome because like...the way that I think of it, I bring in an audience with Fortnite, I make some friends that way. Then the next day, when I switched up to a different game, then I'll really bring them into the community and I'll show them "Look, like you don't only have to watch Fortnite streams, you can also watch these really cool VR Beat Saber streams!" You know, like I'm trying to show people that there's more content out there besides just Fortnite, and I think that that's really working. A good example of that is a couple nights ago, one of my viewers that came in during Fortnite, he was just in my chat. He's like, "Yeah, man, like, I'm super excited for your VR stream tomorrow." Then another person in the chat was like, "Yeah, me too." So it's just that sort of thing, bringing awareness, I guess to other games that are available to be streamed. So like for example, on Monday I'll play Fortnite, on Tuesday I'll play Call of Duty, Wednesday I'll play Rainbow Six Siege, and Thursday I'll play...either Resident Evil 2 or Red Dead Redemption 2 or something like that. So having a rotating schedule in there really works, and then also something that I've been doing recently is I'm investing more money into the stream by doing giveaways. Now the biggest thing, the biggest thing when it comes to giveaways is doing...there's two ways to do it. You can do giveaways wrong or you can do giveaways right. What you'll see a lot of people do is they'll be like, in their stream title, it will say, "\$10 giveaway today" or something like that, "\$20 giveaway today!" What that does, is it brings in a bunch of viewers just simply there for the giveaway and only for the giveaway, because you're advertising in your title, right, kinda like clickbait. Once the giveaway ends, everyone leaves. That's not what you want. That's not building a healthy community. So my giveaway system, the way that I do it is, to be able to enter the giveaway, it's all dependent on how many points you've racked up over the course of like a week, for example, or a week or a month. So you're able to enter into the giveaways if you've earned...they're called DriggsyDollars; so if you've earned 10 DriggsyDollars over the course of a week, then you can

go ahead and enter the \$10 gift card giveaway. So by having that sort of virtual currency in the stream, it brings in the loyalty and the and the recurring viewers.

Alex - 30:34

Okay. I do see those individual currencies, I see them all over the place with each individual streamer. How do you think that that system has worked over the long run? How long have you been implementing that system?

Driggsy - 30:50

So I've had it for a while. Um, I had it for about I want to say like four months, but the thing is, over the past two months, I've really revamped it, I've put more stress on it, I've mentioned it more in the stream...I've just been talking about it more, and I've also been doing random DriggsyDollar giveaways and stuff like that. It's really cool, it's like really funny, now my community is talking about how many DriggsyDollars they have. They're trying to figure out ways to earn more DriggsyDollars. Like for example, I implemented a way...they're called the "one minute squad." So if you're there at the very beginning of my stream when the stream first starts, and you're there when I hit the transition button where you see me on the stream, you're a part of the "one minute squad," and so you earn one free DriggsyDollar right there. And I'm definitely seeing people coming back and back and back, just so that they can get that one DriggsyDollar in the beginning. Then I also do it at the end of the stream, so they get another free DriggsyDollar there. I think it's that evolution that I've had with the DriggsyDollar system, has really influenced my average concurrent viewership over the past few months.

Alex - 31:58

Awesome, awesome, I like to hear that. Um, let's see. So going back to a previous question, just to flesh it out a little bit more. Is there anything that you, you know - like I said if there is there anything that you wish you had or hadn't done - is there anything that you do not, or explicitly do recommend that other people do as a streamer?

Driggsy - 32:25

As a streamer, hmm...I mean, it all depends on the type of streamer that you want to be, right? It all depends on...you know, if you're a competitive streamer, the chat might not be important to you. But if you're a community streamer, it's very important. So 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. They're there to talk to you, they're there to just have fun, and if you're ignoring your chat, it doesn't set a good tone for your stream in my opinion. So I would say if you're a community streamer, please don't ignore chat. That's the one thing I would say, because they're the reason why you're where you are. If it wasn't for the chat, you wouldn't have built that community.

Alex - 33:25

Alright, so the next question, this is going to be a little trickier, you might not have an answer for it. Is there anything that you think people should be doing more of?

Driggsy - 33:40

As streamers, or, viewers, or...

Alex - 33:42

Yeah, as a streamer, from that perspective.

Driggsy - 33:44

As a streamer, anything people should be doing more of...mmm, that is kind of tricky. I would say, in general, always watching other people's streams, even when you're not streaming. Always trying to support your friends and stuff like that, that's the number one, that's the golden rule I think. You know how it's like, "treat others how you want to be treated?"

Alex - 34:14

Yep.

Driggsy - 34:15

So it's sort of that same type of mentality, like..."watch others how you want to be watched."

Alex - 34:19

[Laughter]

Driggsy - 34:40

Even if you're busy, right, if you can open up a tab for your friend, that's a huge, huge huge help, and I definitely think that that's something...again, this goes back to another question, I think that this is something that I wish I had done earlier on in the streaming process. I wish that I had watched more streams, even when I didn't have time to. So for example, like when I'm at work, and don't tell my boss this...

Alex - 35:07

[Laughs]

Driggsy - 35:09

When I'm at work, I do have a tab open, at least one or two tabs open with my friends streams on there. I might have their volume on and use it as background music, or I might have the volume off, but I'm still there as a viewer, you know. I'm still there supporting their stream, even if I am lurking. It helps.

Alex - 35:22

Awesome. Awesome. So for the next segment, this is just going to be a few rapid fire topics just to kind of get your thoughts on the topic, so on and so forth. So, the first one, you're probably already familiar with this one, variety content. Doesn't really need an explanation; what's your take on it, how do you think it could be best implemented? What are some unoptimal ways of doing variety content?

Driggsy - 35:53

I think variety content is huge, just for the sanity of a streamer itself. Like for example, like if I'm playing Fortnite, and if I play Fortnite for an entire week straight, I just get burnt out, dude. I have the utmost respect for people that can play the same game, weeks or months at a time.

Alex - 36:22

I don't know how they do it. [Scoffs]

Driggsy - 36:24

I don't either, man, it's crazy. So the thing is, if you go really hard on a single game, you build your community based off of that single game., and it's kind of risky because if your viewers are only there for the game, you're not really building a strong community. You want to make sure that you're building a community that's there for you, and that's there for the chat, not necessarily there because of the game...if that makes any sense. It's definitely really hard, especially as new streamer, dude. Like it's really, really hard. If you're playing a game that's not really popular...like let's say...this is weird, but let's say I want to go out there and be a Half-Life 2 deathmatch streamer.

Alex - 37:13

In 2019?

Driggsy - 37:13

The chance of that happening is slim to none, right? You're not gonna build an initial fan base, because that game is not being played by anyone, and no one's gonna watch it. So that's where it kind of, it's really hard to balance playing games that you love and streaming them, versus playing games that might be a little bit more popular and bring in more of a crowd, because you want to build that initial fan base. So I think there's a little bit of trying to find that right balance in there that really will help you build your community.

Both - 37:18

[laughter]

Alex - 37:56

Alright, so the next segment is risk and risk management. So I'll just throw a hypothetical your way. Let's say you are involved in some hefty drama; like, grab your popcorn, it's going down...

Driggsy - 38:07

Oh my god, dude, yeah.

Alex - 38:09

How would you handle the situation, be it significant drama with another streamer, or significant drama between you and your own community?

Driggsy - 38:20

All right. So, um, so basically let's say there's something going down in the chat. You notice that a couple of community members are like fighting, or being rude to one another. It doesn't happen all that often, but in the times where it does happen, you kind of got to think of yourself as like...as the Dad. [Chuckles] As the Dad of your chat. You got to be like, "Guys," and call them out. I like calling people out when they're being rude in the chat, just because...they know you're talking to them. I don't know if everyone feels that way, but that's how I feel. I'll be like, "Yo, so and so, and so and so, please stop talking that way in the chat. Like, if you want to talk that way, please bring it outside." We like to have the positive vibes here...

Alex - 39:03

You wanna do that shit, go to Twitch, we don't do that on Mixer!

Both - 39:06

[Laughter]

Driggsy - 39:09

When there's drama that happens with another streamer, I haven't really had that happen just yet, but the thing is, you want to make sure that you handle it in the most mature way possible, because you're really walking on eggshells when it comes to that point. If there's drama happening with another streamer that has a pre-built community, and their community is strong, and your community as strong as well, you really don't want to have those two communities hating each other, because that just breeds hate on the platform, and before you know it that hate will spread. So just trying to talk things out at a mature level is really important.

Alex - 39:49

Okay. Okay, so next one, what about paid advertising? Going to some third party service, paying them to distribute your name, your brand, your image, throughout the internet; banner ads, YouTube ads, Twitch ads, so on and so forth?

Driggsy - 40:26

If you're producing decent content, and you have the money to throw away and try to promote that way, I'd say the more power to you. If it brings in a couple extra viewers then I mean, I guess that's a success, you know? Yeah, I would say why not? Especially in this world, you know, 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. Especially the kids that are watching nowadays...dude, I was just out, I was getting pho with my parents. I looked over and I saw this kid, maybe about six years old, and he was watching someone, I don't know who it was, but he was watching a YouTuber play Minecraft on his phone. He's watching a YouTube video while his parents were there eating with them. That generation, the next generation that's coming up, they're going to want to be content creators as well, it's just going to be every single person trying to be a content creator. 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.

Alex - 41:29

All right. Then for the last one, let's talk about extreme problem users, the people that go above and beyond not just to be a nuisance in your community, but to be a hazard to your livelihood. The ban dodgers, the doxxers, even potentially the swatters, you know, those kinds of people.

Driggsy - 41:53

Yeah. So luckily dude, knock on wood, I haven't been harassed by anyone at that point, it hasn't been that bad. I'm kind of terrified if that ever would happen, because I know that there are people out there that, if you piss them off, if you say the wrong thing in the chat, they might find your IP address and stuff like that, and just completely mess with you. Luckily, right now, Mixer is in a good place where I don't think that those type of people exist on the platform, but as the platform grows and gets bigger and bigger and bigger, it definitely is a risk. Yeah, hopefully, it doesn't happen to me, and it sucks that it happens to people.

Alex - 42:38

So what's next? Do you have any plans...I know that you are in what could be considered the initial stages of your streaming career, do you see anything past your streaming [career] at this point, or you just kind of trying to get to streaming [full time] right now?

Driggsy - 43:04

So the past two months have been really, really, really huge for my growth. Not only has the channel grown significantly, but I think that my content as a whole has really evolved, average concurrent viewership has gone up and everything. So the next steps are achieving that partnership, and seeing where that takes us. I took a week off of work in December, the week before Christmas, I took that week off, and I streamed full time...and I loved absolutely everything about it. I'm not sure if I'll ever get to that point, but that's definitely like, the all time goal is to get to that point where I can stream full time and still be financially stable.

Alex - 43:47

You and me both brother.

Driggsy - 43:49

Yeah, definitely, man.

Alex - 43:51

So for this last question, is there any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, or encouragement that you could give to a new streamer, or somebody who has just come to these platforms and is looking to get off of their feet?

Driggsy - 44:09

I get this question a lot, dude. Especially on Mixer, because I think a lot of people are trying to start up on Mixer and Twitch and whatever platform it is, but a lot of people are coming in and asking the same exact type of question, and I have to give the same answer, and it's just keep on grinding and don't stop grinding. Like some days, you might not have any viewers, and every single streamer started out that way. Every single streamer. Some days you might have more viewers, some days you might have less viewers, but you gotta let those days where you have the more viewers, and you might have like a boom in chat and everything like that, you want to have that be what you look forward to, what you're trying to achieve, and don't give up. When you have those bad streams, you can't let that get to you. You just gotta brush it off, end the stream, go to bed, and then wake up the next day and try it again. So it's having that...is it resilience? Is that the word I'm looking for?

Alex - 45:00

Probably.

Driggsy - 45:02

Yeah, probably resilience.

Both - 45:03

[Laughter]

Driggsy - 45:05

It's really easy to get demotivated when it comes to streaming, like, still myself, I'll get demotivated sometimes too if my viewer count isn't as high as it should be. Another thing, don't pay attention to viewer count. While we're talking about viewer count, do NOT pay attention to viewer count. You should be streaming to one person the same way that you'd be streaming to 10, the same way you would be streaming to 100; don't pay attention to viewer count, because when you look at the viewer count and you see your number is low, that's when you get really demotivated. So you want to make sure you maintain that that same charisma or mentality throughout the entire stream. Then I want to say the other point is, focus on other social medias as well like we talked about earlier, you want to make sure you have a Twitter, an Instagram, maybe even a Facebook, a YouTube if possible. Finally...hold up I have two more points. One point is a schedule; a schedule is so freakin important, like I can't stress to you how important I think a schedule is. I know some streamers might argue with me and say it's not really that important, but in my opinion a schedule is so important, because that's what tells your viewers when to come back and when to go to your URL every single night or whatever day it might be. Then the final point I would say is, make as many friends with other streamers and other people in their communities as possible. And don't make the friendships in a fake way, obviously; you want to make sure you have real friends. Yeah, just try to try to make as many friends as you can.

Alex - 45:51

Awesome. Awesome. Is there anything else that you want to add?

Driggsy - 46:41

Um, no, no, there's nothing more I want to add. Besides, you know, if you want to check out my stream...

Alex - 46:56

[laughing]

Driggsy - 46:57

...I'll be streaming at 9PM tonight, and I would love to have you there.

Alex - 47:04

Okay, I'm going to stop the recording now.

Alex - 0:00

The first question that I always start with is "What got you into streaming?"

ImSiccWidIt - 0:06

So, I got out of the Navy. I was working overnight security and one of my friends recommended watching Twitch in my downtime. I turned it on that night and the next day start up my first stream.

Alex - 0:19

Interesting.

ImSiccWidIt - 0:19

I just wanted to share that experience that gaming knowledge I had from so many years.

Alex - 0:24

Okay. When you did decide to join the website? Was it purely from a hobbyist standpoint or did money had any impact on that decision? It was 100% from a hobbyist standpoint. Okay, obviously since you've got well over 20,000 followers. Was there a point at which or when was the point at which you started to consider money?

ImSiccWidIt - 0:52

Probably after my first full month - my first 30 days I started helping people through the competitive aspects of games that they couldn't on their own. They would donate to show appreciation and I started doing that every weekend because I only worked my regular job Monday through Thursday. So that first month I made more on the weekends than I was at my actual job.

Alex - 1:13

[laughs]

ImSiccWidIt - 1:13

So about 60 days in to streaming, I quit my job and went full time.

Alex - 1:18

Holy cow. That's pretty fast by Twitch standards.

ImSiccWidIt - 1:23

It was way too early. To be honest. I was just lucky that I was in one of those kind of niches that had a lot of money to be made and nobody was capitalizing.

Alex - 1:34

Understandable. So how long have you been streaming at this point?

ImSiccWidIt - 1:41

A little under three and a half years.

Alex - 1:43

Three and a half years. Congratulations. So for the next couple of questions I want to talk about something that I call "day one" which essentially that means the first couple of months up to the first year that you were streaming. So run me through what a typical week was like during that time period?

ImSiccWidIt - 2:10

I'm sorry. Was that from when I started full time or just in general?

Alex - 2:13

Just in general the first year that you were streaming. Run me through what a typical week was like.

ImSiccWidIt - 2:14

A typical week for the first few months was just getting as many hours as I could. You know? I never wanted to miss anything. You never know, right? When you start out, it could be two-in-the-morning where somebody rolls in and gives you an insane amount of support. It could be four o'clock in the afternoon. So, for me I was just nonstop, hundred hours a week, full board for a few months. I started figuring out that having a schedule being and letting people know, "Hey, you can find me at 6pm every single day or you can find me at 2am every single day". I figured the schedule started making it more beneficial. If you're on 24-7, it seems when you start out that that's the best idea. Get the maximum amount of time, but what happens is people start realizing that they can watch it at any time of day. So they will go to the other streams that they know are ending at 8 o'clock or starting at 6 o'clock. I kind of found out the schedule so the second half of that first year - the last six months, it was all about trying to form a schedule. I was trying to find out, you know, is it good to stream twice a day or one eight hour session? It was a lot of just playing around with timing.

Alex - 3:47

Okay. So during that time, was there anything you mentioned obviously the schedule. Was there anything else, specifically, that you were trying to do to beef up the channel get more viewers and make things better?

ImSiccWidIt - 3:49

So for me in terms of that I never really networked when I first started out. Getting to know other streamers and for me it was just watching streamers that I enjoyed, why did I enjoy them? Why was the content so engaging? What kept making me come back to the channel? I was trying to pinpoint those differences and then find out what I have to offer. You know? What can make me stand out? What can make it so people want to come back repeatedly to my channel?

Alex - 4:17

Okay, so you mentioned networking was something that you didn't really do a lot of. Is there anything else during that time period that you wish you had done?

ImSiccWidIt - 4:29

During that period? I wish I'd focused more. Like I said, I was kind of an anomaly on Twitch because I got on and I just started making money like crazy. I wasn't focused on my community as much as I was pumping out as many quote unquote "orders" as I could. You know? Somebody says, "Hey, can you get my account to level 20?" You know, my focus is now turn the stream on so people have something to watch, but crank out this account as fast as I can. So I can do another one and another one. So I wish starting out I had focus more on building a community, getting to know people - their names, their jobs, their family situation rather than just be concerned with financials.

Alex - 5:08

Okay so moving forward from that time period or rather just including that time period and including the entirety of your streaming career, what are some of the major hurdles or challenges that you faced?

ImSiccWidIt - 5:23

I think locking myself into the Destiny directory and when I started streaming, I only played Destiny for my first two years. I never streamed a different game and I think locking myself into a directory was really the hardest thing to overcome because when I did go to play another game-nobody really wanted to watch or hangout. It was, "Oh, he's not playing Destiny. I'm going to go find somebody that is". So not starting out as a variety streamer was probably the biggest hurdle I faced in the last four years.

Alex - 5:57

Interesting. So when you were switching over from playing a single game to variety. Walk me through that process.

ImSiccWidIt - 6:07

So this is common for a lot of streamers. Once you know you're kind of edging toward that partnership, you'll play whatever game gets you the most viewers and most consistent statistic. So Destiny was kind of dying down the game wasn't really fun anymore. I was stuck in that game and then I got partnered and I was like, "Awesome. I can switch games, now. I'm not stressing about trying to get partnered." I went from about 150 concurrent to about 15 overnight.

Alex - 6:35

Oof.

ImSiccWidIt - 6:35

I started playing H1Z1 and Overwatch. And yeah about 90% of my viewership disappeared so for me it was a big mental wake up call. I guess, you could say it was, "Hey, we know numbers are going to be low but if I really want to make this work I have to continue to grind every single day. Just block out the viewership numbers, block out the sub numbers, and just enjoy myself. If I'm enjoying myself, I can rebuild. Just like I did with Destiny.

Alex - 7:03

Okay.

ImSiccWidIt - 7:04

So, that's kind of what I went through. There was a big mental transition.

Alex - 7:07

Right and then after you had switched to variety content was it just back to the same just grind it out? Except rather than a single game it's just variety?

ImSiccWidIt - 7:18

It was.

Alex - 7:18

Okay.

ImSiccWidIt - 7:19

So for me I'm one of those people that I love grinding. It's something that I just thoroughly enjoy. So when I went to variety, I kind of started over with that mentality when I very first started was, "Have to be on all the time. We're starting from scratch, we have to grind." It kind of took me a couple months and to get back in that mindset of okay, let's take a step back. Let's figure out a big thing on Twitch, and a lot of people don't look into this. If a lot of people think you flip on your channel and you stream and for the most part there're true, but there's a lot of stuff if you want to be successful, you should look into. You know? What time of day is the directory lower in viewership? You know, say you want to play Overwatch tomorrow? Okay, well during the day there's thousands of top tier Overwatch players but between 2 and 6am, there's not. So a lot of that stuff came into finding the right time to kind of work into the directory and then networking inside of that directory.

Alex - 8:19

So give me a snapshot of your channel. What is your channel about? What kind of content do you create and advertise?

ImSiccWidIt - 8:28

So my channel is very family based. I try to go off first names as much as I can. I like to get to know everybody. The people that are in my chat every day I could tell you what they do for a living. I can tell you their people, they live with their names. It's something I've always wanted to build a place that was just safe for people. The gaming industry kind of has two sides in terms of content creation, you have your quote unquote, 'toxic players' that... you know, a lot of people like watching them because they're raging all the time, yelling. Then, you have your more just

family friendly. We're here to have a good time win or lose. When I started out, I was kind of in that more toxic segment. I started realizing one day actually I've installed some LED lights and the LED lights are 24 color. So they have a strobe effect and we were kind of like partying or having a good time. I hit the strobe effect and somewhat joking around I was like, "Hey, you know, if you're epileptic don't look at the stream right now. I don't want anyone have a seizure". I got a whisper from somebody I'd never seen before. They were like, "Hey, man, I actually really appreciate that because I am epileptic". That was the moment for me where I was like, "You know what? I want to transition this to more family friendly. I want to get to know people". You know, I blacklisted words like, cancer, AIDs, rape. I got rid of all that language because you never know what people are going through on the internet or in general. You never know what might offend somebody. So I'd say snapshot wise, more family friendly. You know, there's a lot of mature language use. I was in the Navy, I can't stop cursing to save my life but definitely the more family friendly and charity feel. We actually just hit \$100,000 raised in three years for charity.

Alex - 10:11

Congratulations.

ImSiccWidIt - 10:13

Thank you.

Alex - 10:15

So, what, specifically, kind of users are you looking to attract to the stream?

ImSiccWidIt - 10:23

For me, I'm not looking for anybody in particular or any group I should say. I have attracted a lot of military being military back connections, really, it's different, I guess. I don't know how to explain it so much, but there's that that bridge you can cross with people instantly having that kind of "we've been through the same thing". Yeah, absolutely, but for me it's more just, I want

everyone to come in and have a good time. We've had people that have come in and ended up getting banned within five minutes because they say silly things or they act up. They've whispered me a day, a week, a month later, and like, "Hey, man, I've lurked your channel since I got banned, it's really cool. Everyone's family can I get unbanned?" So for me, it's not really any sort of group. It just I want to bring as many people as I can together to just help other people.

Alex - 11:12

Awesome. So is there anything that you feel makes your channel unique?

ImSiccWidIt - 11:21

For me, um uniqueness. Again, I love doing charity work. It's my favorite part of Twitch. So for me all my tier two and all my tier three subs I donate \$2 out of my own pocket every month per sub that we have to a charity. We've been doing that for about 14 months now and then around Christmas time instead of Secret Santa we do what's called, "Secret Sick". It's the same premise. We find people that might be struggling, I'll put up a donation goal. They don't know what's coming. They have no idea and we will raise the money and then we'll send it to them. That's honestly, what I want my channel to be known for - it's just constantly trying to give back.

Alex - 12:00

That's awesome. That's really commendable. So how do you manage chat? I know that you talked about being very family friendly and really getting to know people. What kind of effort do you put into like I said manage chat, interact with them, promote chat activity, so on and so forth?

ImSiccWidIt - 12:25

So I look at state or Twitch in about three stages when it comes to chat. When you're very first starting out, it's almost awkward. You don't want to force it, but you also want to sit there quietly where nobody gets to know you. So when I started out, I just made sure no matter what game I was playing, no matter what I was doing in the game, whether it was leisure or competitive that

if anyone came into the channel, I always took time asking how their day was. If they said, "Hey, I was working today." "Oh, that's cool. What do you do for work?" And just try to build a little foundation because when somebody comes back the next day or the next week, and you can instantly go, "Hey, how are you today?" "Oh, I was at work". "Oh, how was working at the factory?" If you can make that connection, it makes them feel included. The second stage of that is when chat starts building you're getting more viewership, you're starting to gain momentum. It becomes harder to balance chat because you'll have more people talking. When you get to that stage, for me personally, what I did was I just always ask people, "Hey, if you're going to talk to me, particularly, make sure you "at me" in the chat. That way it highlights right on my screen, I'll never miss it." Then the third stage of that which I think is the coolest is when you build a community off those kind of family values. Chat pretty much takes care of itself, now. So there's a lot of times where I'll go 20 minutes without even talking to chat because they're just talking to each other, and they're coming in asking each other how their day was. You know, they're in my Discord every night and talking to each other in my general chat in Discord. So for me managing chat now is very simple. Like I said, most of them come to interact with each other which is really cool.

Alex - 14:03

Interesting. Very interesting. So for the next segment I want to talk about monetization. I'm not looking to know how much money you make. I wouldn't ask that question of you. So Twitch has the standard set of monetization options. You've got your subs. You've got bits. You've got donations that you can set up. Is there anything unique or specific that you use with Twitch's standard set?

ImSiccWidIt - 14:32

I'm sorry. Can you repeat the question?

Alex - 14:34

So Twitch has the standard package for donations or the standard package for monetization I should say. Is there anything that you do, anything special that you do with that standard set of monetization options?

ImSiccWidIt - 14:52

So, as far as Twitch goes monetarily I think the biggest thing for streamers in general right now is the Prime subs. Amazon is globally huge.

Alex - 15:05

Oh yes.

ImSiccWidIt - 15:06

So many people have Amazon Prime, which, in turn, Twitch Prime can turn one free sub per month. So for me I do at least one giveaway a month and this is my way of maximizing. The monetization for Twitch is, "Hey, you could set the channel for completely free if you have Prime and then be entered into whatever we're giving away this month." Which is normally, at the lowest it's like an Xbox controller, an Elite controller. Last month, we gave away two different vinyl mice. So for me that's how I try to capitalize on the monetization for Twitch. As a partnered streamer emotes are so much bigger than people think. If you can get good emotes out that are unusual, they're new, and that's a huge way to capitalize. And then for me the giveaways, you know, making sure people are using that Prime sub.

Alex - 15:54

Okay, are there any third party monetization options that you will employ outside of Twitch?

ImSiccWidIt - 16:04

I did. I don't currently. I do have two sponsors that I work with regularly. One being GamerSupps which I'm very good friends with the owner. So for me I don't look for a monetary return from them. I get a product return. They'll send me product to do giveaways with. So I kind of look at

that as a third party monetization just for the fact that they are sending the product that I didn't buy. And, I'm in turn able to flip that and give it away for Prime subs. Before I got partnered, I use what's called GameWisps. GameWisps was essentially a site where people could subscribe to support you a little bit extra before you have a subscribe button on Twitch. Once I got partnered, I took that site down, but other than that I don't do much third party stuff anymore.

Alex - 16:51

Ok. So moving past monetization. Let's talk about social media. Everybody's favorite.

ImSiccWidIt - 17:00

Yes.

Alex - 17:01

So, everybody and their mother, and it's pretty much expected at this point that your mother does have a Twitter account. Everybody and their mother's on Twitter. Obviously, everybody has a Twitch account. Is there anything outside of those two that you employ?

ImSiccWidIt - 17:16

I recently started Instagram. Instagram through 2018 was one of the most insanely growing social media platforms for Twitch because not many people did it. Instagram's a little bit slower. Twitter, I'm very active. I'm on all day long constantly interacting. Gary Vee, if you know who that is, Gary Vee. I watch all of his videos and he talks so much about having an active presence on social media. It's essentially name repetition, right? The more people see your name, the more they're looking at your content, more chances are going to come in and support you. YouTube. I've started YouTube and Instagram last year. YouTube is insanely difficult to grow on. I have a lot of respect for YouTubers. Instagram is kind of what you make of it you know. The more content you're posting obviously the bigger your followings and get those are the three socials that I use.

Alex - 18:13

Okay, how does your current use of social media compared to the “day-one” period?

ImSiccWidIt - 18:22

I tenfold more active? I didn't even have a Twitter for my first like two or three months of streaming. I mean, I was like, "What do you need Twitter for?" You know?

Alex - 18:32

[laughs]

ImSiccWidIt - 18:33

I learned very quickly that as a streamer no matter what platform you stream to Twitter is the most vital to have. Like you said, everyone has Twitter, right? Everyone's using Twitter?

Alex - 18:45

Oh, yeah.

ImSiccWidIt - 18:47

So, I've definitely become incredibly more active on social media than I was when I started.

Alex - 18:53

Okay. According to you what are some of the big do's and don'ts on social media?

ImSiccWidIt - 19:04

So biggest don'ts for me are posting anything political. If you have a personal social media separate from your branded social media, I don't mind that, but I've never liked mixing Twitch with politics. I think it's one of the biggest no-no's because you have such a diverse group that views you. You never want to split that group in half and have them arguing amongst each other. The second one was everything on the internet is permanent. I mean, I've posted videos on

Twitter when I've had a night drinking and the next day I've woken up and been like, "Yikes, you know, there's probably going to be one or two people a little upset about that." So controlling the content you're putting out to people understanding that the internet has unlimited reach, and everything is permanent. You can't just delete stuff off the internet these days. So those are two big don'ts for me. Do's when you're going live whatever your schedule is going to be for that day or that week make sure it's posted. Make sure it's pinned. Make sure people know it's easy to access and constantly linking yourself. You know, a lot of people will say, "Hey, I'm live on Twitch", but they'll never post their link in. People will just scroll right through it. Whereas if you say, "Hey, I'm live right now", and then you post your actual URL. So it's easy access. People can click it and go right to your channel. They don't have to search your profile or go to Twitch to type your name in. So I think those are kind of the biggest do's and don'ts for me.

Alex - 20:32

Okay. All right. So taking a step back from digital networking. Let's talk a little bit more about like physical and real life networking. Have you gone to any conventions, tournaments, meet and greets or anything along those lines?

ImSiccWidIt - 20:48

A lot of them. I have done TwitchCon the last three years. I've done GuardianCon. This will be my fourth year. PAX is the only convention I haven't made it to, yet. But physical networking in terms of your everyday life, it's not always that easy. You know? Talking to your family and your friends can help, but nobody's really going door to door and saying "Hey, have you heard of Twitch?" You know what I mean?

Alex - 21:11

[laughs]

ImSiccWidIt - 21:11

Which I've thought about it multiple times going door to door and getting Prime subs. I really have thought about it. But for the most part only physical networking you're going to get is from conventions. Conventions are great. You just get to meet so many people. Everyone's there for the same reason because they enjoy gaming. So it's really cool, but I feel at the end of the day that physical networking is a lot more difficult. I spent two hours a day on Twitch going through channels I do follow that are looking for new channels and it always is more beneficial networking directly through Twitch than I feel it is a 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.

Alex - 22:04

Okay. So with the conventions with GuardianCon, Twitchcon, etc., have you seen a positive impact on your channel as a result of attending those events?

ImSiccWidIt - 22:18

I have. I've been really lucky in that aspect. Like I mentioned earlier I've been working with GamerSupps for years, and the owner is a good friend. So he'll fly me to Twitchcon or fly me to Cali, and then Canada last year, and I get to work the booth. So my trips are paid for which is amazing. Then working the booth - all the content creators are essentially coming to me rather than me having to go around and try to network awkwardly. So it's definitely helped in the fact that people know me, "Oh, hey, I talked with you at the GamerSupps booth. I just wanted to pop in and say "hey" and it kind of gives me a little bit of an extra in working with them and doing networking.

Alex - 22:54

Okay, so, what works right now? What are you doing that's keeping everything held together, that's keeping the community growing, keeping the community healthy, so on and so forth...?

ImSiccWidIt - 23:08

For me, right now, it's all about attitude. One of my biggest things I see on Twitch is people posting on Twitter all the time, "Viewership down, subs are down. I'm finding it hard to stream today. I don't know if I want to work today because my numbers aren't good." That's so disrespectful in my mind to the people that are there every day that are here to support every day. So for me, it's all about having a positive outlook when I turn the stream on. One viewer, 100 viewers the same positive energy, same positive outlook and just trying to keep the energy up as high as I can to keep the stream progressing in the direction I want it to.

Alex - 23:47

Okay, is there anything specific that you were employing in the long term or the short term to help out your channel?

ImSiccWidIt - 24:00

I want to say, too much in the long term. The gaming world is always changing, evolving, adapting. I mean we were in the biggest content drought in years, and then Fortnite comes along and revolutionizes gaming. So for me, it's long term. You know, I set my goals for 2018. I looked at my end of the year stats. I posted some new ones for 2019 where I want to be. I try not to force anything and make people feel like they need to be here and make people feel like that they have to sub. So long term wise, I try to stay away from that. I try to go three months at a time and just kind of constantly see where we're at. So, I guess, long term I really don't have too much.

Alex - 24:44

Anything in the short term?

ImSiccWidIt - 24:47

Short term is just constantly progressing. Making sure that our sub count is consistently growing, and it doesn't have to be going up 20, 30, 40..., but one or two or three a day even is acceptable. Just trying to constantly get little milestones added up.

Alex - 25:05

Okay, so here's an interesting question. What is the most fun for you, what makes the most money, and are they different?

ImSiccWidIt - 25:23

There's so many different ways to interact with your community. So every now and then we'll do a drink night. Where my channel personally the way I do it is X amount of monetary support equals a spin up of a wheel. The wheel could be a sip of beer, take a shot, chug a beer that for me is a ton of fun. It gets the community involved. Everyone loves watching people get drunk on Twitch. It's been a thing since Twitch started. So for me that's one of the more fun things that we do to kind of make money. The most fun I have on Twitch honestly is just when chat is active. It doesn't have to be about the game I'm playing. It doesn't have to be about me, but just when it's active, and chats flowing even if it's just among themselves for me that's the most fun.

Financially, the most profitable thing I do would be when I was doing account recoveries and helping people beat certain parts of games, but that's also the least fun for me because it makes it feel like a job. It doesn't make it feel fun. It makes it feel like we have to get on today, and we have to win X amount of games. That takes away from chat.

Alex - 26:42

Interesting. So going back to an earlier question to flush it out a little bit more. Is there anything not just on social media, but just kind of streaming as a whole? Is there anything that you do not recommend to other streamers?

ImSiccWidIt - 26:59

The self-promotion is one of the biggest issues on Twitch currently for multiple reasons. When you go into a different Twitch channel as a broadcaster, and one of the first things that your mouth is, "Hey, I just got done streaming, figured I'd come hang out here. Hey, I'm a streamer, too. We should play together." You're broadcasting yourself to that person's community, and I use

the reference all the time. It's like working at McDonald's, but walking into Burger King and handing out McDonald's coupons. Burger King is going to kick you out.

Alex - 27:28

[laughs]

ImSiccWidIt - 27:31

It's the same way with Twitch. People don't understand that at the end of the day Twitch is a business. So you don't want people coming into your business and promoting their business. So for me, I did it. When I started out, I used to be that person that spam tagged everybody on Twitter. "Hey, I'm going live." And I'd tag streamers I didn't even know just because they were big streamers. I was fortunate that a bigger streamer reached out was like, "Hey, you're gonna end up ruining your reputation." So for me that's just the biggest don't. Don't force your content onto somebody else's community. Let that happen naturally. Get to know them. Eventually they might ask you if you're a streamer or it might work into the conversation, but definitely the biggest don't on Twitch for me is self-promoting.

Alex - 28:14

All right. So kind of another side to the question, and this one's a little trickier. I'm not necessarily expecting an answer. Is there anything that you feel other streamers should be doing more of?

ImSiccWidIt - 28:31

I think just helping each other grow and sharing communities. It's kind of funny, right? We talked about networking, and not promoting your community, but on the same note helping promote other communities. So it's one of those kind of gray areas on Twitch that a lot of people don't know how to navigate, but streamers get to a point where you always want to grow. You never want to stop growing even Ninja who's at the top of the world you don't want to stop growing?

Alex - 28:58

Of course not.

ImSiccWidIt - 28:59

So you have to continue missing network and continues to cross your community with other communities and get new blood into the stream. I'd like to see streamers do a little more of that, and the second part of that is charity work. I see so many communities that could actually just dominate. Dr. Lupo is a perfect example. 24 hour stream – the guy raises like a million dollars. You know what I mean? There's so much potential to help other people, and I see a lot of streamers that don't want to do that because they're afraid if they do charity events, "Oh, well, that might be less money I'll make this month." In the reality of that if people wanted to donate that money they would. If they want to give to charity, they will. So it doesn't hurt you to do these things. I think a lot of streamers kind of have a bad outlook on it. That's something that I think I'd like to see other streamers working together with.

Alex - 29:53

That's a very good answer. That's not something I've heard from the other interviewees. So for the next segment, this is kind of like a rapid fire segment to just kind of get your thoughts on. How do you feel about these particular subjects? So you talked about how you transitioned into variety content and how you wish that you had started out with variety content. What is your ultimate take on that genre of content creation? Give me your thoughts on it.

ImSiccWidIt - 31:00

In terms of variety streaming, I think it's the best tool you have on Twitch. Becoming a variety streamer is difficult if you're like. I was and stuck, but if you start out and your community is used to watching you play different games, but they still show up it's because they're showing up for you. So at the end of the day being a variety streamer is the number one thing I tell people on Twitch. It's the best tool you can have because it solidifies that no matter what game you play your community is there for you and not for the game. A lot of these big Fornite streamers that

only ever stream Fortnite, and only got big from Fornite they're going to look at that when they transition out a Fornite- whether it's in a year or two years, and they're going to see a massive drop in numbers because their viewers only ever watched them play for Fornite. So, I think being a variety of streamer is the most important thing. I think everyone should strive to be variety. That doesn't mean you can't play Fornite five days a week. But you know, maybe for a couple hours on Thursday night, you throw a different game in just to start getting your community used to it. Used to seeing you do other things.

Alex - 32:01

Okay, so for the next one, want to talk a little bit about risk management. So hypothetical situation, you know, you your community, you know, your brand has become involved with a serious amount of controversy or drama. How would you go about handling this?

ImSiccWidIt - 32:25

Um, so that's a tough one. So a lot of that stuff is situational, right? There is no real bad situation that's just like the next. I've had issues where I've had mods fighting in my chat. And, you know, that just destroys your community instantly. When your mods start fighting, your viewers don't want to hang out. For me, it's always something that...- I'm very blunt. I like to address things at the time that they happen and get it over with. I've actually ended stream, midstream, and did it. [I] pulled in the two or three people that I was having issues with, you know, pulled them into a voice chat, pulled them into a better message, and hammered out the details. Got it all figured out and moved on. The big thing about Twitch is, we always joke around that it's like the 13th grade. Right? It's just so much high school drama you see from 40 year old men. And one of the big things is, if you let something like that simmer, it's going to get around Twitch. It's going to spread, people are going to start getting reputation about you that don't know you... So, for me in terms of risk management and stuff like that, I like to get everything on the table as fast as possible and everything squashed as fast as possible and move on.

Alex - 33:40

Okay. Alright. So, for the next one... How do you feel about paid advertising? You know... going to some other service, you know, outside of Twitch and ,you know, paying them to distribute your name, your image, your brand, throughout the internet in the form of banner ads, YouTube ads, Twitch ads etc.?

ImSiccWidIt - 34:00

I think it's extremely beneficial. But, it's also extremely costly. Most, and when I say most I'm talking 99% of Twitch streamers, can't afford to do advertisements like that. Right? Some of your bigger streamers, you know ,your- your streamers that are making over six figures, some of them do pay for that kind of advertisement on third party sites. For the average person, it's probably too expensive. I mean, just promoting a tweet on Twitter, right? I forget what the exact math is on it, but it's like every hit that tweet gets that you asked them to promote, it's like 10 cents. I mean, that adds up quick. So, I think it's great. I think Twitch does it a decent amount for some of their higher tiered streamers. But, for the most part, I think it's just out of the question for a lot of people, financially. Now I'm huge into cryptocurrencies and TRX, also known as Tron, is working toward a free internet essentially. Where you know, the content, you put out your content, the advertisements are cheap [and] stuff like that. So, that's something I'd like to see in the future. But, I just think for the most part, it's extremely beneficial if it's, you know, in a place where you can afford it.

Alex - 35:13

Okay. And then for the last one, let's talk about extreme problem users. You know, the people that go above and beyond to be not only just a problem for the chat for the community, but to potentially be a hazard to your livelihood. You know, the ban dodgers, the doxxers, the absolute fanatics, even the SWATers.

ImSiccWidIt - 35:35

That situation... it's tricky. And, I've had multiple conversations with people that work at Twitch and multiple conversations with other streamers. It's... there's so many things I'd like to see

Twitch do to alleviate that stress [for] the broadcasters. First and foremost, names that are just plainly racist. You know? I've seen just Twitch channels that you can't even imagine that Twitch allows people to create. So, I'd like to see some sort of blacklisting system from Twitch. Stop it before it happens. From a content creator standpoint, unfortunately, there's really not much you can do. You can continuously ban an account. You know, we talked about ban evasion. They keep coming back and coming back. They're supposed to hit a point where if you ban you know, an account so many times Twitch will look at their IP and ban their IP. Haven't seen that happen that much. From a broadcaster's standpoint, it's difficult. You know, it's something that takes away from what you're trying to do. DOSing? There's a reason I don't play Destiny anymore. [It's because] Bungie opens up your IP in game, the way that they run their matchmaking. And anyone can get your IP as long as they have an IP puller. And I mean, that cost like five bucks. So getting DOS'ed is one of the main reasons I don't play Destiny anymore. It was taking away from my content, it was taking away from my financial bottom line. So, I think there's just a point where there's not a lot we can do about it, right? DOSing is a felony. It's considered a felony offense in like over 40 states. So, the problem with that is... when you have to across state lines... And I've tried to report it because I actually knew someone that was DOSing me. I knew who they were, their full name. When I reported it to my local authorities, they were like, "This person lives in Washington, you live in Florida, trying to go across state lines like this is going to be a process.". So, I feel like there's not that much protection. So as a streamer, you just kind of have to, you know, get some thicker skin and just kind of learn how to deal with it and not let it affect you mentally, unfortunately.

Alex - 37:44

Okay. So what's next? What kind of plans do you have for the future if any? Do you see yourself moving on from streaming? What could you potentially see yourself doing in that situation? You know, what's- where's the future headed for you?

ImSiccWidIt - 38:06

For me, I'm actually starting school again in summer.

I figured, "I have my military benefits. So, I can go to school for free. And I've positioned myself on Twitch, where, you know, I can work the hours I want to work. I don't have to work when I don't want to. You know I can form my own schedule, which makes school extremely easy." You know, when you can not have to worry about, "Oh I gotta get out of class in 30 minutes to get to my job..." It makes things a lot easier, overall. So, the plan for me is to continue streaming for the next, you know, two to four years, finish out my degree, figure out where I want to go after that. At that point, I'm, you know, probably going to be 32 [years old] and probably starting to wind down on the Twitch stream. You know? There is some enigmas on Twitch. You know, Summit, you know, -people that are much older, but have such a good community. But I think for the most part, once you pass like 30 [years old], it's kind of hard to be a full time streamer. You know? There's just so much stuff in life that catches up to you. Families. You know, spouses. For me, just the next three years, really hammer down on school and enjoy streaming. And, you know, I'd like to continue to stream, you know, for as long as I can, even if it's just part time. But, for me, it's definitely take the opportunity to do the best I can in school because I have it so easy in my work life.

Alex - 38:11

Awesome. Okay. Um, so for this last question, do you have any tips, tricks, suggestions, advice or encouragement that you could give to a new streamer that's just arriving to the platform and is looking to take-looking to get off of their feet and looking to take things seriously?

ImSiccWidIt - 39:50

Yes, tons tons of advice.

Alex - 39:54

Fire away.

ImSiccWidIt - 39:55

I'll give you the major ones. And this- is I tell everyone this, no matter who they are, no matter what their background is. First and foremost, just stream. It's hit, "Go Live", and stream. Even if nobody's watching, get yourself in the habit. It's like going to the gym, right? Nobody wants to go to the gym everyday. You might love the gym. You might tell your friends, "I love leg day.". Bullshit. Nobody wants to do that. But you get yourself into such a habit of constantly going that you stopped dreading it and you just do it. Streaming is the same way. I mean, the first 30 days I streamed, I think I was talking to my bot. It was me and MooBot hanging out. You know? So, don't get discouraged by numbers. Don't start being, you know, that- Don't be the streamer that has four viewers and puts in your title, "Partnership Push". You're way off of that. build a community. Focus on your community. Don't worry about numbers. Don't worry about views, subs, anything. Just stream. Networking is right behind that. And by networking, I don't mean going into streams, letting them know you're a streamer, and trying to play with them. I spend one hour every day [networking] when I wake up. I go through all my following, anyone that's live. I say, "Hi ". You know, "What's up? How's your day going? What's your plans?" And then I do the same thing at nighttime for an hour. The third thing I find the most of is people going, "I just don't have time to stream. I can't. I can't make time." For me, that's a cop out. And, I played sports my whole life. I went to the Navy after high school. Like, I've always had some sort of direction and guidance in terms of what I should be doing. And when I see people on Twitch that go, "Hey, I work a full time job. I can't stream."... I stream a hundred hours a week, 400 hours a month. You know, a lot of people don't work that much in, you know, four months, five months. So, there's always time. You can always make time. You can always find a time if it's something you really want to do. Saying, "I'm giving up on streaming because I can only stream once a week," for me, it's just a major cop out. So don't - if you want to do it, don't make excuses. Find a way to do it. Network. And, just be consistent. Those are my three biggest tips for people.

Alex - 42:05

All right. Do you think there's anything else that you want to add?

ImSiccWidIt - 42:09

No, I appreciate the interview, man.

Alex - 42:12

All right. So I'm going to stop the recording now...

Alex - 0:00

So the first question that I always start with is, how did you start with streaming? What brought you to twitch?

Nili - 0:06

Hmmm...well we had streaming kind of before Twitch times even, right? But they were pretty bad, and it only happened for other [non-Age of Empires] games. So I was following other eSports there...and then Twitch just came out of, for me nowhere, just providing great quality, stable servers, and then kind of every eSport event switched on to that...like, at least the ones in the Western world.

Alex - 0:44

Right. Um, so when when did you decide to start streaming on Twitch...or rather, when did you decide to start taking it seriously?

Nili - 0:54

Hmm. Well, those are two different questions, right. Starting streaming on Twitch...I don't know, when did I create my account? I thought I looked it up the other day, it was 2012.

Alex - 1:06

Oh, wow.

Nili - 1:09

That...I think I was kind of the first one who ever did an Age of Empires stream together with Dreams. It was a very old...Chris against Doubt, two legends of the game, played a best of 21 against each other, and then we did the very first stream like in front of like, 30 people or something, and people loved it. Although the quality was obviously super bad. Yeah, then I continued to stream a lot on another channel, then made my own channel in...kind of went independent, late 2016, I would say? And then decided to be full time by the end of 2017, and

March 2018 I went full time.

Alex - 1:53

Awesome. Awesome. So just, it's just honestly, just recently that you went full time, you're coming up on, on your first year. That's, that's impressive. That's impressive.

Nili - 2:02

Yeah, but well, like, I still was streaming like, 30 hours, 40 hours a week. So yeah, it didn't really work out too well, with like streaming, and I kind of had two other jobs at the same time. So I didn't sleep a lot during that time, and luckily, I have[sic] paused the being a school teacher for now. And yeah, just focusing full-time on streaming.

Alex - 2:29

Okay. Okay. So for the next couple of questions, I'm going to use the phrase day one, and that essentially means the first few weeks, couple of months up to, basically, the first year that you started to get into streaming. So, run me through what a typical week was like during that time period.

Nili - 2:52

Hmm...that's like it on my own channel? Or, like, I didn't go the normal way, I kind of started on another channel, which was called VooblyOfficial, and I kind of started to stream there, and kind of made a small name for myself there, and only then switched to my own channel.

Alex - 3:15

Okay, so let's, let's consider this from the perspective of your own channel. So when you started your own channel on Twitch, what was the average week like.

Nili - 3:25

Hmmm...as I said, I wasn't full time, and the game was a very small. Age of Empires II at that

point, never had more than 600 viewers, like the biggest tournaments had, like 500 viewers or something. So it was very small compared to other games, especially. And yeah, compared to what it is today. And it was just sitting there and playing games, and then I came up with, okay, let's do some fun weekend events. So I didn't really have my typical like, day schedule, but it just was a lot "I'm streaming and see what happens." So I didn't didn't start with a lot of goals actually.

Alex - 4:14

MMkay. Um, let's see. So you mentioned the weekend events, was there anything else that you had done during those early stages to bring in viewers?

Nili - 4:31

Hmm, kind of no, there weren't that many because the game isn't that big, and I was kind of known in the Age of Empires community, maybe I was kind of...some people called me the voice of VooblyOfficial, but it kind of feels weird because other people were working there as well, and, but they moved away from there as well. To answer your question, what did I do to gain viewers at the start? Not too much. I didn't approach it very professionally, I have to say it was more...okay I like streaming, and I wasn't happy anymore with the company I worked prior, so it was just moving my casting and my tournaments to my own channel.

Alex - 5:19

All right. Um, so when did you decide to start taking Twitch seriously? When did you know when...or rather when was money a factor in your participation with Twitch?

Nili - 5:40

Hmm, very late. Luckily, I've always had the benefit of having enough money and never really need to focus on that for very long, and it kind of started when sub numbers got bigger in...oh that's an interesting question. I think I had like, May or something 2017 when I got partners on Twitch. That's where I kind of felt, okay, now I could get some subs, I could really suddenly

make money out of that, because other streamers had subscribers and lot of people said, "Yeah, I would subscribe to you as well, like what you're doing." And then it kind of came on to me, I was never like, would I kind of want to do that to make money. I was even like, losing money, because I was giving out prize money for my tournaments. But, then, yeah, suddenly, viewer numbers did get higher and higher, and subscribers flew in. And then, other streamers made a lot of money, like TheViper got pretty big, ZeroEmpires got pretty big, and then I kind of tried to test the waters. I'd say I started probably, end 2017 when I'm focused a bit more on to it.

Alex - 7:12

Okay, so you know, you you gain your partnership, you got that sub button. Did you do anything differently with the channel after you had gotten over that that hurdle?

Nili - 7:29

Hmm...I actually I like I had a confirmation that that would get this up button to tell celebrate that I did uh, I believe at that point it was a 40 hour stream or something.

Alex - 7:39

Oh, wow.

Nili - 7:41

Actually, I didn't get the sub button because someone screwed up, or didn't read the email. And I got it...like I did [the stream] the whole weekend. And I got the sub button the Tuesday after. That didn't work out too well for me, I still went through it obviously. Could have delayed it for a week or something but I think it was holidays, I'm not really sure what I did there. And yeah, so that didn't work out too well. And...what did I change after I got the sub button? Well, I thought about how can I give something back a bit? And in what way can I increase the, the sub numbers, and I'm not that experienced in any marketing strategies or any, like business approaches. So it was a bit more like, what do I like to do that kind of gives something back to the subs? And so then I started to do regular sub-subscriber coachings. And yeah, once a month,

I gave coaching to one of the subscribers. But, except that, not a lot of stuff changed. I didn't didn't like this like, "Oh we're trying to create an elite Hippo part of this channel that only includes subscribers" or "Subscribers get this and that better," it's more like yeah, thank you that it's happening, thanks for like, appreciating what I'm doing, but I never felt the money is the focus. But obviously later after I quit my teaching job, um, I put more focus on that and thought about, okay, how do I increase subscriber numbers?

Alex - 9:35

Okay, um, so where'd you go from there after you quit your job?

Nili - 9:42

Well, the was just staying full time. And finally really focusing on it. Most of the time, it was like coming out of school, just streaming, streaming late, then going back to school, never sleeping enough, and yeah, I simply had free weekends. I could work whenever I wanted, I could put more work into my videos. And...yeah, I just had the chance to cast every event, because before that, it was like, Okay yeah, I'm, like, have a school trip at that time or had to be in school or whatever, and simply couldn't cast some events. So now I could like really put my schedule around the Age of Empires calendar.

Alex - 10:29

Okay. All right. That's cool. Um, so is there anything that you know now, that you wish you had or had not done back in the day?

Nili - 10:48

Good question. I think like, it's tricky to say, right? I didn't know much. And I think...I'm pretty happy with where I am at the moment. Can I give myself advice or something? I think I did most of it really well, I always did it and enjoyed it, and always had fun as my main focus. So, I think I never, I never really lost that goal. That's great, I believe.

Alex - 11:35

Okay. All right. Um, let's see, are there any kind of - I know, obviously, there's getting partnered - are there any other kind of major hurdles or challenges that you had to face? You know, while you were being a streamer, and you...like I said, you mentioned the partner[ship], you mentioned trouble scheduling, you know, matching your calendar up with the Age of Empires calendar; was there anything else to go along with that?

Nili - 12:00

Well, you know how Twitch works, right? If you type Age of Empires, you will see the biggest streamer first. And that's in our case, T90Official, then TheViper, EscapeTV, MembTV, you name it. So the thing is, if you ever want to have new viewers, you kind of need to stream when they aren't streaming. And that's kind of weird, because you can never really outgrow bigger channel unless you stream double the time...than them. And for me, that kind of was painful and that really was tough for me. Sometimes I started my stream, the Viper was streaming T90 was streaming, and suddenly, I was streaming in front of 20 viewers. And there are other days I had like 200, and that was really tough for me to face. And then I started "Ok, I will try to stream after they finish their stream," I will see...I even knew what hobbies they had, what real life activities they had, and planned my streams around that as well. And nowadays it easier for me, I don't have the problem, and now I built such a hardcore fanbase that is watching me even if the biggest streamers are streaming. So I kind of broke that for me because it felt so bad, right? You're streaming, you're trying to be entertaining, be there for other people, kind of, and there's not a single one chatting You ask them like "What you want to see next?" No one responding. Although like, even if 50 people are there simply because they just have my screen open, they just jump in if it's in between games from from TheViper.

Alex - 13:54

Oof, that is super rough when you have a dead chat; that is like every streamer's fear. So okay, so for the next bit, give me a snapshot of your channel: what kind of content do you create and advertise, and you know, if any, what kind of viewers are you looking to attract to your channel?

Nili - 14:22

So obviously, I'm only doing Age of Empires II content I'm playing myself and I'm casting, I'm kind of known to be the caster with the most knowledge about the game. I'm probably like, number 40, number 50 in the world when it comes to skill. And...so I attract a lot of I would say hardcore fans, and people that are really deep in this game, and scare away or a lot of like casual viewers, because I'm talking a lot about advanced stuff, [I] never introduce the kind of terminology that needs to be introduced if you watch an Age of Empires stream for, let's say the first time. So I'm not really aiming to only attract, like, people that are kind of deep in this game. But just my way of thinking about this game makes it tough for other people to follow.

Alex - 15:34

Okay. Let's see, um, is there anything that you feel makes your channel unique?

Nili - 15:44

Hmm...probably that I'm streaming in German, one day a week. No other big Age of Empires streamer is doing that. Like, there's some fan guys, some from another community, but they aren't like playing super competitively. I'm probably the only competitive big German streamer, that makes me unique. Then I have some very unique tournament ideas. For example, like, next weekend, there's a tournament coming up in my apartment. Then I had some other tournament format that...yeah, no one ever did before. So I think it's a bit...creativity with the elite players. There are other streamers that are very creative and coming up with other ideas, but more on like, a casual viewer base. And I think I have...different competitive tournaments.

Alex - 16:42

Okay, let's see. Um, so you already briefly mentioned this before, but let's dig into a little bit further. How do you manage chat? What kind of effort do you put forth in managing chat activity, promoting chat activity, you know, so on and so forth?

Nili - 17:01

Hmm...I'm not that active in there. Especially if I'm playing, my brain isn't working fast enough to interact with chat and playing on the level that I want to play. So I can only interact with chat if I'm casting, and well, how do I interact? In between games, I will always ask them to ask me questions, I will give them the chance to predict who is going to win the series, and at some point, I will let them spam emotes, for example, I have a signature song, and then just spam that emote. Sometimes I send like, Oh, god, this players 3-0 down, now send them some energy, then they send the energy emote. But I think I'm not the guy who interacts the most. I think I'm answering a lot of question, which obviously...result into activity, right? If you see, okay, the stream already answered 500 questions, then it really worth to ask a question myself on the chat.

Alex - 18:10

Let's see, okay. So for the next section, I want to talk about, specifically about monetization and/or making money on the stream. I'm not looking to know how much money you make, I wouldn't ask that question of you. But so you have, you know, Twitch has their standard package: you have bits, you got subs, you have donations that you can set up; is there anything unique or special that you use with this standard set?

Nili - 18:44

Yeah, I'm the only streamer that for now at least, is not taking any donations into his own pocket, because I'm always reinvesting it into tournaments. For example, like the last tournament I'm organizing cost me like, 16k out of donations. And then I did show matches on top of that, and some other like, costs, so unique of me is that...I make very transparent what is happening, what is happening with the donations. It's not like, I'm buying a PC on spending it somewhere else. Because I still, as I said, I'm in the fortunate position to not be dependent on that. So I'm yeah, just kind of showing the communities this is happening with the money for the community if you donate.

Alex - 19:43

All right. All right. Um, and then. So the follow up question, is there anything that you use outside of the standard Twitch package to make money?

Nili - 19:54

Well, YouTube adverts are giving a bit, but Twitch is the main income by far.

Alex - 20:02

Okay, so moving on from money and profit, let's talk about social media. Kind of give me an overview of what your social media presence is like, and how you manage your accounts.

Nili - 20:19

Hmm...Very early, when I spoke with VooblyOfficial, a guy came to me and told me, "Oh, it looks like you want to be independent, you need to do this and that." And I had like, zero idea, and he gave me so many good ideas. I'm, I'm super thankful; we aren't in contact anymore, it just one day broke off. And sometimes messaging him like, Oh, look at that, I'm still using this trick you told me, and yeah, as I said, I had zero idea. And then I even only started like, looking up, "Okay, what do I do?" At the moment I'm using Twitter, not sure how important it is...Facebook, which is pretty unimportant, I believe. YouTube...is that is that social media? I think so. Right?

Alex - 21:06

I would consider it, especially within the circle of Twitch, you know.

Nili - 21:13

So, YouTube kind of is helping me to jump on higher numbers on Twitch for sure. And that's kind of it, I believe, well, there is still an Age of Empires forum where I'm kind of active, and Reddit. Not too sure if you call those social media as well. But like, yeah, some ways to interact with the community for sure.

Alex - 21:36

Right. Absolutely. Anything counts, you know, anything that you are using to directly interact with your community or members of the community. Um, let's see...in your book, what are some do's and don'ts of social media?

Nili - 22:04

Spamming is for me a don't; like this, "Okay, I uploaded a video today. Oh, I uploaded the next video. I'm going live oh what a stream thank you so much." And having like eight Twitter posts per day, is it clear don't for me, but I think it could be good, but just the flood is not really my thing. It's like, I like to have like a post a day. Like saying, "Okay, yesterday was nice, thanks all, we're streaming today at 16GMT, and meanwhile, you can watch my YouTube video."

Something, I try to be a bit more compact there. Do's is, yeah, still spreading it. And you should be super active; I absolutely hate it, and especially like all this thumbnail creation for YouTube, all the gif searching or something. It's like very probably simple, but it really annoys me and I hope one day to outsource that, to have a social media manager, but I think I'm still like, 2000 subs away from that. Hmm...do's and don'ts. I think if you do something, it should have some standard of quality. And in the old days, I didn't care about that too much.

Alex - 23:37

All right.

Nili - 23:40

And I'm probably never negative. That could be kind of me as well. Shouldn't be like a do or don't, I think if you're like, super negative, and you're controversial, that can push your social media as well.

Alex - 23:57

Yeah, absolutely. Um, I've talked with several people about that kind of subject, and it's like...yes, you can be controversial and you can be negative and you can be, you know, angry and toxic on stream. But it's like your your content will have, you know, your content becomes a

reflection of your community...or your community is a reflection of your content, I'm sorry. You know, if you're the guy that's screaming and pounding on his keyboard, and you know, throwing these expletives left and right, then what kind of community are you going to be having in chat? If you're, you know, shouting out people on Twitter and calling people out and talking trash, you know, what kind of people are you, are you attracting? What kind of community are you building for yourself? Is that really something that's going to work for you, especially in the long term?

Nili - 24:51

Yeah, and I think, obviously, everyone will say, like "my community is the best," but I think, especially for the internet, I think I got an extremely mature ivory tower community. I think we rarely have swearing. I have basically never timeouts of bans. Unless there is a very, very big tournament where, like, [a] mass of my non-fans are coming as well, just because they want to see the event. But I'd say like, let's, let's call it my, main 1000 viewers are, I think, super responsible in the chat, and I think that, as you said, [they are] a reflection of me, like, I very rarely swear, I never flame anyone...I shouldn't say never. But like, I can't remember what I did last time did. And...yeah, I'm super happy with the people that are watching me.

Alex - 26:10

Awesome. Awesome. So taking a step back from social media and online networking. Let's, you know, let's talk a little bit about physical networking. I know that you mentioned you're going to be hosting a tournament...you're either going to be hosting or you did host a tournament in your apartment. You know, are there any other events that you have attended in person? And if so, do you feel as though your attendance has impacted or helped your channel?

Nili - 26:44

Yes, heavily. Um, simply because I always took a lot of responsibility for that. We had an event...when was that, 2017? I think, at GamesCom, and I kind of organized a meet and greet there for like 50-60 people. We had SoccerPlays, IAtePizza after that, and I think I became a big part of the community simply due to organizing that. And then with my apartment cup, that's

kind of a small thing, because I'm only interacting with like the 8 players, three casters, but we also have a meet and greet and public viewing. And I'm expecting 150 people that are obviously...like, very, will have a very strong relationship with me, simply because they are here, they are flying from all over the world, simply to come to Hamburg, meet the players and that, at kind of my tournament. So I think that's something that really relates heavily to like, yeah, kind of bounds us.

Alex - 28:03

Yeah. Awesome. Awesome. So let's see. So what works right now? What are you doing that is keeping everything held together and keeping your community growing, keeping the numbers you know, going up, as opposed to going down.

Nili - 28:21

Hmmm...like, fortunately, the game is growing heavily, so that's nice for me. So even if I just kept my percentage of the market share, I would be growing at the moment. Then fortunately for, like, I have to say for my viewer numbers, is that one of the two clearly bigger streamers...one of them kind of stopped streaming for the last two, three months. Then there was another channel that is, I don't want to say struggling, but it is not performing as highly as some people thought. And yeah, just with consistency, just streaming a lot. Like, what did I do? I think in December, I streamed...22 days or something. Now I will stream...I will have a three day break now, but that's still going to be February, probably 26 stream days or 20-24 because it's a short month. Just today, I kind of thought about streaming, and I just had my chat open and people came like "Is there content today?" and this is so sick, right? People actually like knowing "Okay, this is the place where I get entertained, why is not happening today." That's just pretty sick for me. Yeah, I think, like, the other things is constantly having new ideas, new tournaments, kind of keeps people getting to my channel, then the German community is growing quite a lot, and I'm kind of the only stop to deliver a competitive Age of Empires at the moment in German. And...there was one other thing...I, I think I've just improved my own gameplay as well, which made it more bearable for other players to see, right? Because if you're coming from the stream that is

featuring a top 10 player, and then they're going over to me and "no, yeah, okay, might be funny, dropping a joke here and there...but his gameplay is really bad." They might not stay. But if I'm a bit more up there and can compete or like, maybe even win some games off the top guys, there's just so much more more for them to stay for.

Alex - 31:02

Okay. All right. Let's see. So this is a two part question. So part one, what makes the most money? And then, what is the most fun for you? Are the two different, and if so, why?

Nili - 31:32

What makes the most money? It's obviously tricky for me, because at the moment, I'm not like using my donations, right? What makes the most money is one guy going crazy. Like, it just happens. Sometimes in the stream, someone is coming over, "I like you, I donated \$100," you say thanks. You win a game, and he says, "Okay, I will donate another \$100, well played." That somebody donates like \$100, 10 times or something in one stream, and you didn't do anything differently. So those are kind of the guys where you make a lot from, but it's kind of uncontrollable as well, right? And then they suddenly leave, and you don't hear from them ever again. Like I had several of those. And yeah, so it's sometimes it's just...randomness, with the donators. There was some guy in 2017 heavily donating, now there's another guy heavily donating to the top 10 streamers I'd say, and everyone is benefiting from that. So that would be the thing where you get the most money; for me at the moment, where I get constant consistent money is obviously subscriptions. And what's the most time for me? Hmm, that differs. I enjoy my "GerMondays," I enjoy casting, especially if it's like top 20 players. I really love my tournaments. So I think everything that happens on my stream is something I really like or love. So that's pretty sweet for me, there's just some stuff around that is annoying, but nothing I really hate, so to to really answer your question what brings the most money, donations of a single person, and what what's the most fun, people thanking me for great tournaments.

Alex - 34:01

Ayy, all right, so let's see. Um, so here's a trickier question that you might not have an answer for,

Nili - 34:11

Oy yoy yoy.

Alex - 34:14

I got the hard hitting questions! What is something you think people should be doing more of?

Nili - 34:26

To do...to get what goal?

Alex - 34:27

In terms of you know, streaming from the perspective of like, how you should run a stream? Is there anything that you think people aren't doing enough of, you know, specifically like other streamers, or other streamers who are looking to grow their communities, you know, that kind of stuff.

Nili - 34:50

I think different streamers [are] making different mistakes...I could kind of point [to] some mistakes that other streamers are making in my community, and that's the reason why they're not growing as fast as they could. And...I think in general, the main thing that like, heavily relates to channel growth is the amount of streaming It's that simple. If you stream once a week, you will, you will grow your channel by like, 5%, 10% per year, that's, it's simply like, you need to put yourself out there. And if you like, think about, okay, I want to heavily grow and I want to consider making money out of that, you have to put in the hours, there's no way around it.

Alex - 35:46

All right. Okay. So for the next section, this is kind of just a rapid fire segment, I'm looking to get, you know, basically, just your thoughts about these particular topics. So, you know, I'll throw

the topic at you. And then you just kind of, you know, ramble off what, you know, what comes to mind when you think about it.

Nili - 36:07

I can do that.

Alex - 36:09

Okay, so the first one is variety content, basically, starting up your stream, and, and not really having any game plan whatsoever as to what games are going to play. You could go from, you know, Super Mario 64 to Call of Duty Black Ops three, on any given day.

Nili - 36:26

Uh, well, that's not really how successful variety streamers are working right? They say, "Okay, I'm going to stream this game on Monday, this game on Tuesday, or those two games on Wednesday." It's not like, "Okay, I get there and have no idea, right?" Okay. At least that's what I think, I'm not following a single variety streamer.

Alex - 36:51

Oh, well, at the very least, what you're saying matches up with what I've been researching. So there's that.

Nili - 36:59

For myself, it's pretty much impossible, because what I live from and what my viewers are living from is my expertise, and that I really am deep in the game, and I could never do that for another game. For example, there was a remake of another Age of Empires version, and it could have been big, but I knew I wouldn't be having that deep thoughts about that game. So kind of never even touched it at all, and other streamers, they, they kind of went with the hype, jumped on it, then it flopped and came back to Age of Empires 2.

Alex - 37:43

And there you were, the whole time.

Nili - 37:46

Well, like, it wasn't a lot of investment they did, but I just, I didn't even try it. I completely stay focused on one thing.

Alex - 37:56

Okay, all right. So next one is risk and risk management. I know that you said that, you know, you make a really good effort, which I applaud you for, for, you know, no cursing, keeping things positive, having this mature audience but, just as a hypothetical, let's imagine you are involved in some kind of drama, like, grab your popcorn, browse the Reddit threads, what's going down kind of drama. How would you handle this situation?

Nili - 38:31

Off stream, that's the most important thing. Um, well, there are like a lot of...steps where people kind of tried to create drama around me. There was one player people thought, "Why was he hating him? What's going on?" And then I contacted him, he agreed with me, we were good friends behind the scenes, everything now was settled, no one else was thinking that anything would be bad. Then another streamer, there was some shenanigans, people were like, "holy shit, now do they hate each other?" Nothing happened. It's just important that you talk to them a lot. Like, obviously, like in every conflict, communication is key, make it off stream, contact the person that you could have drama with...and I think I'm also approaching potential problems ahead of time. For example, my tournament now, I kind of messaged people ahead and, like, even told them, "I think this might be unpleasant for you, but it's going to happen this way, how can we work around it or are you fine with it?" or whatever. And yeah, I think just just off-stream communication, and then it's very tough to have a lot of drama coming into your stream.

Alex - 39:55

Yeah, absolutely. Okay. So next is paid advertising. You know, going let's say, going to a third party service that, you provide them with some form of money, some form of compensation, and they will distribute your name, your image, your brand, you know, across the internet, be it banner ads, be it YouTube ads, you know, so on.

Nili - 40:25

Never did that. Okay, so, so you're meaning they should advertise me? Hmm...I think I'm too small of a nice, right? Like, where should I be advertised? You cannot put me in a bus or on a normal YouTube video or, or whatever, like a Facebook ad. It's just very, very specific. It has to be like, less than 1% of the of the world population obviously could even be attracted to the content that I'm doing. So global advertisement is I think, absolutely not an option. So if I wanted to advertise, it kind of has to be via the channels where I'm active anyways.

Alex - 41:17

All right.

Nili - 41:19

Or I'm missing something, but none of the other Age of Empires players are doing it, and I don't really see any of the other streamers that I follow. I only follow one other streamer and he's [not] doing it either.

Alex - 41:42

So last one. Um, let's talk about extreme problem users. Now, hopefully, you've never had to deal with one of these guys. But you know, the people that just go out of their way to be not only just a nuisance to you and your your community, but in some cases is to be a hazard to your livelihood. You know, the ban dodgers, the doxxers, the absolute fanatics, or even the swatters.

Nili - 42:11

Yeah like swatting never happened to me, and we have like...every community has some not so

clever people in the community and...yeah, then you can only give them as little as possible right every time if you just go crazy like "Why are you coming back again?!" Then they have another reason to come back again. It's just ban them, continue your show, ban them, continue your show. It's like...the classical saying don't feed the troll. Just stay relaxed, and like, I pity them.

Alex - 42:59

Interesting. Okay, so let's see. Alright, so what's next? Do you have any plans right now for what you would do if you ever left streaming? I know that you already mentioned that you worked as a school teacher, do you think you're eventually going to go back and work as a teacher again?

Nili - 43:28

Yeah, so like, my goal probably, is to continue streaming something like, I'd say, two to five years, something like that. Maybe if it goes super good, I continue. Maybe if I lose interest, I will quit earlier, and then it's kind of back to teaching. At the moment, my goal is to teach in prison, and give them their first school education or diploma.

Alex - 43:54

That's commendable.

Nili - 43:56

Yeah, that's kind of what I really enjoy at the moment, and then probably just go back to primary school and be there for another 20 years or something. But well, like at the moment, I'm just living into the next month. Do I want to continue streaming next month? Yes. Okay. What can I do, this or that, enjoy.

Alex - 44:18

All right. All right. So one last question for you. Do you have any tips, tricks, suggestions, advice, encouragement, anything at all that you could give to a new user coming to Twitch who's looking to take things seriously.

Nili - 44:42

Be aware that if you stream in front of three people and you just gained the fourth one, you grew your channel by 33%. It's that simple, right? Yeah, if you consider yourself a business, growing 33% let's say in a month is huge. It's it's that simple, right? If you're sitting there with 10 viewers, and you're up to 12 suddenly, that that super good for you, right? At the start it could be frustrating, right? Have some friends over, chat there, and yeah, just just be friendly. And most importantly, enjoy yourself, right? Because that should be the main motivation to do it in my opinion.

Alex - 46:27

Alright, so I will stop the recording now.

Alex - 0:01

Okay, so the first question that I always start with is what got you into streaming what brought you to the platform?

Kuriiie - 0:08

So I had watched twitch for a very long time without actually having an account, back when I used to work in VFX, and my ex said I needed to stop playing video games and be more productive. So I decided, why don't I be productive while playing video games and I started streaming for myself. I made an account and just started streaming so I had an excuse to play more video.

Alex - 0:36

Amen.

Kuriiie - 0:39

So that's how it all started and then took off from there. I think that was in 2014.

Alex - 0:48

Okay, are you full time at this point? Are you still working towards that goal?

Kuriiie - 0:55

I am full time but I also do freelance graphic design, so it works really in favor with what I do normally. So I have the ability to have a flexible schedule. But yeah, I'm full time.

Alex - 1:07

How long have you been streaming full time?

Kuriiie - 1:10

Just a year.

Alex - 1:11

Awesome!

Kurrie - 1:11

So I took a job. Yeah. And it's worked out fine.

Alex - 1:18

How did the transition period go from managing it part time and you finally got to that checkpoint? How did you transition into it?

Kurrie - 1:29

So I actually was working full time when I was doing part time mainly two times a week and, things didn't really work out with my job and, obviously, my ex was now in the picture so I was like, well, I can keep trying to get this promotion that they keep denying me that I've been trying to get for the past two years or I can just like take a leap. So I ended up moving across the country. I moved from Massachusetts to Texas with my friend and just completely 180 like flipped it around so it was something totally different, which was a big shock. But, at the same time I had already started doing freelance design work, especially, it coincided with Twitch really well, where I could work on emotes and get commissions that way, so I would stream my work and people would see that I was working on design stuff and then they would then, therefore, ask me if I could keep doing more commissions for them. So it was actually really, really productive for my freelance career as well as my streaming career, where I just put it all into our design and gaming so, it was a bit of a shock but it wasn't a really hard transition to where I felt like I was like falling behind a lot. I always had something to do which was really good.

Alex - 2:49

That's interesting. So between your actual Twitch channel and the the freelance design work, I'm not necessarily looking to know how much money you make, but like what's the split between them?

Kurrie - 3:03

It actually varies from month to month. So some days I'll have very little in commissions but I'll get an absurd amount of subs. I remember one time I got there was like a gifting sub spree and I probably got about 500 subs that month, but other days, typically, I get about 200 subs a month, is my normal so it kind of goes up and down a lot, in between there too, because if there's a gift sub or if there's a holiday coming up people say that, for Christmas, a lot of people are gifting subs just because the Christmas spirit or during my birthday stream people gifted subs because of my birthday. So it kind of fluctuates depending on what's going on in real life too, if that makes sense, but I would say for the months that Twitch is doing really well, I focus more on Twitch, and then for the month which is kind of slow I'll jump back and really, really focus on design work and try to get more of that done. So, I kind of keep it balanced, no matter what, it's just a matter of where the split is. It really depends on the month itself.

Alex - 4:08

So, when you had first started, when you first joined Twitch for the first few months up to maybe, like the first year, run me through what a typical week was like during that time period.

Kurrie - 4:25

So, when I first started, I didn't actually have the proper streaming setup. I streamed off of my MacBook Pro, so I would just like put it out, a folding chair, use the God of software. I didn't even use OBS and like plug in my Wii U, just play video games, and people will come in and play Splatoon with me or send me Mario Maker levels. I was, like, only Nintendo because that's all I had. And I just did it two times a week, Tuesday and Thursday. And that was it. It was like two hours, two times a week. And it was as much as I was allocated and then, eventually, as I started growing as a channel, my community was like, hey, we want you to stream more and I

was like, wow, you know I can, but I have to focus [Laughter] on my work too, and they're saying, you need a streaming computer, so they all pitched in to get me a streaming computer.

Alex - 5:20

Oh, damn!

Kurrie - 5:20

Yeah, so they actually donated over the course of a few months, it wasn't right away, I want to say they paid for about \$700 on my computer and then I put in the rest of it too. It was like a \$1,500 computer. So from there it just kind of kept growing and, you know, I got a green screen for Christmas one year and then I got better lighting and then I got a new microphone. So over the past three years it's been slowly developing but I also had started adding more as I would also I would do morning streams before work back when I lived in New England, and now it's just like a designated time every day, Monday through Friday, 2pm to 6pm. It was a very slow, long process, but it's worked out for me. And I've gotten a lot of friends that way, too.

Alex - 6:18

At what point did you know, when you were going through it all, and when you were growing as a channel, at one point, did you start thinking, this could be a potential job replacement?

Kurrie - 6:26

Not when affiliate status came out, because I didn't really ever think of it as like a job replacement. I was like, oh, it's cool. I used to think of it as like, oh, it's kind of like fun money. You know, I can use this money that I made as an affiliate to pay for more video games or do whatever. But it was really when I started freelancing more on Twitch and I would do my commissions on Twitch that people were really interested in not only my work process and how I do things but they would be able to see the quality of my work while I was working on it and see why I made the decisions that I did. And because of the freelancing that's really why I thought it was okay, that I could go into full time. I think if I had not had the freelancing ability of design

and artwork that I would not be able to go full time by myself. I wouldn't have taken the job. It was really the encouragement in the commission income that made it possible and then the the Twitch money from subscriptions was just an extra cushion if anything.

Alex - 7:39

When you would first started out doing it two times a week, was there anything specific that you tried to do to bring in viewers or did you just approach it from a very organic angle?

Kuriiie - 7:52

I was pretty organic, I am very much a person that doesn't follow trends, and I don't really do things the "right" way. So I just was like, you know, I'll have "NintenTuesdays" where I just play Nintendo games and then when I had the ability to play Minecraft I just jumped on a random server with friends and just played. So it was really kind of an organic growth because I would meet friends from either the Minecraft servers or from other streams and I never specifically said, 'Hey, I also stream,' and I never went into someone's stream and said, 'Hey, I'm streaming this,' it as always that people found out by chance. I would be joining a community to make new friends on Twitch and to understand the platform. They'd invite me into their Minecraft server. And then by some chance, whether it was my twitter or whatever, they found out I streamed organically and I never even told them. So that's kind of my method. I know there's a lot of different ways that people can grow a lot quicker. I just I don't really like that way. I'm not a huge hashtag user, unless I'm selling out my cats. Like, I don't really take selfies every time I stream. I don't do the typical things that people usually do. But I like it that way. It's slow, obviously, I've been streaming three years, but I like the quality of people that I get in my chat room just because I made them very organically.

Alex - 9:26

So is there anything that you know now that you wish you hadn't done back then?

Kuriiie - 9:32

Hmm, that's a really good question. I guess I would be more wary of people that try to take advantage of you. So a little bit of an unspoken thing on Twitch is that you'll meet new people who seem really friendly and like become really good friends with them. So as an example, I had this really good friend who joined my community like hung out with all my friends and our communities and she was doing pretty good as a streamer, and she had a really high quality stuff. And we would talk to her every single day, we are always in chat rooms together. We're always in like a group Discord. And as soon as she passed all of us in, following and her viewership, she's never talked to us again.

Alex - 10:20

Oh!

Kurrie - 10:20

Yeah, and what we noticed in the trend was she would go into communities around her size or a little bit bigger and only raid people who had higher stuff only talk to people who had higher stats, and would just kind of climb the ladder of people to get to where she is now, which is partnership. So, I kind of wish I had known because I was a bit heartbroken about it, how ferocious people can be and how there are people who think of it as a job and a job only and will climb the ladder and not really consider other people being human beings. Now that I've had that happen on a couple of occasions I know to look out for it, and I can spot right away when people are being disingenuous. And so I kind of wish I knew that but at the same time, it was a really valuable lesson for me. So it would have just been nice to have a warning about that ahead of time instead of the emotional distress that comes with it.

Alex - 11:23

Yeah, yeah. Bunch of the other streamers that I've interviewed have kind of keyed in on that point where, when you see somebody new enter into the community, based off of their behaviors, it's relatively easy to identify whether or not they care about the community that they're in.

Kurrie - 11:38

Yeah, exactly like it only takes experiencing it once to know the warning signs, the red flags, about who's coming in.

Alex - 11:47

For those people that advantage like that and get those numbers up like that, the other the other point that a lot of them key in on is that your community is a reflection of your content. If you want to approach it with this cutthroat business kind of perspective, then it's going to get back to you in some way, you know.

Kurrie - 12:06

Yeah. Or at least that's what you hope, anyway, in a twisted way, not not that I would actually want somebody to fail, because that would be a little bit rude. But it is a bit discouraging when I'm doing everything the right way and it's not getting me where I wanted to be, versus people using other people and then getting way ahead really quickly.

Alex - 12:32

So give me a snapshot of your channel, what is your channel about what kind of content do you promote and advertise?

Kurrie - 12:40

So mine is actually a family friendly stream. I focus a lot on multiplayer games I can play with my community. Occasionally I'll do solo stuff. My channel, I think, has gone through a lot of different waves of what I wanted it to be but I finally found the spot that I like, which is, playing games with the community so multiplayer games like MapleStory2 that's free to play; Terraria sometimes would jump on multiplayer we have a minecraft server. We'll play Stardew Valley multiplayer, so a lot of things that like Super Smash Brothers, things that always include the chat room, if they want. And I keep it family friendly I actually love swearing in real life like I do it all the time. But I keep it family friendly because I have a lot of friends who have kids who

watch with them. So one thing I made a point, from the very beginning, was, you know, I'm playing Nintendo games and playing Minecraft and playing like a lot of games that kids watch. I want to make sure I watch my language because I have the mouth of a sailor. Part of that fun has been that the chat has come up with really fun ways with me on how to replace words. So if I see "af" I'll be like, oh, as fluff. And then we just make up all these silly words. So just we all have this ridiculous dialogue with each other. So, you know, just inclusive. I hate to use this word because it's such a meme but it's so it's kind of wholesome,

Alex - 14:14

Wholesome is great!

Kurii - 14:15

Wholesome, I love wholesome. It's such a good word, but it's also a meme. So I've always like, Oh, do I actually say wholesome seriously, but yeah, just very inclusive welcoming, easygoing. I try to be very lenient about people who might not know Twitch etiquette, and I'm very lenient about, whether or not people get shout outs or not. I know some people who never shout out anyone, and if I know somebody streaming or know if somebody raids with three people I give them the same amount of attention as someone who might get a raid of 100 because the fact that somebody is spending their time in sending their community and trusting me with that community. It's like you want to be as welcoming as possible and you also want to be as grateful because regardless of who's there they're all people behind the screen and I just tried to like focus and remember that and just treat everybody like family almost where you're like very caring and make sure you pay attention to what's going on in their life. Try to know as much as they let you know if that makes sense. Let them know I'm paying attention to them. And I have a joke that everybody calls me mom even though I told them not to. So and I have mom mode where I'll have real talks with people if they need to so it's a place where people can go, literally, and talk about anything. I don't have a rule against politics i don't have a rule against any kind of controversial things, as long as we can talk about it very level headed, and we always do, so, I

don't know what that would mean, actually. I guess I don't know what the right word is for my community that you're looking for. Just inclusive, I guess.

Alex - 16:08

All right. With those talks about the controversial topics like, has that ever gone off the rails?

Kurrie - 16:15

Nope.

Alex - 16:16

Not once?

Kurrie - 16:18

Yeah. So I think it's partially is because I have a banned word list so I have over I have a list, you can set a blacklist on Twitch of words people can't type in chat, I have over 250 words on there, so I think that's part of the reason people can't get mad because they can't swear. But also, you know, I had somebody come in and question about politics and was like, well I see that you mentioned that you didn't like so and so, but did you ever consider that they've done this, this, and this, I'm like you know, that's right. You know that kind of thing is great. I think that these things weigh more heavily than what you mentioned is but I can respect what happened with said scenario. And a lot of the times people are pretty good. And sometimes there are a few people that are like, Oh, I can't talk about this. So I'm going to learn for me to leave for a little while. And I'm like, you know what, that's totally fine. I understand. But people respectfully walk away. And I try to emphasize like, you know, communication and keeping an open mind and talking about this stuff will help you understand it more rather than ignoring all of the facts or all of the opinions of other people. So I always try to encourage people to talk about it and listen more than just picking a side and sticking to your guns. It's okay to believe in something and it's okay to have really strong opinions about stuff but at the same time, you should be giving the other

people the same respect that have those strong opinions just not opposing thoughts or whatever opposing beliefs if that makes sense.

Alex - 18:00

So, building off of that first question, is there any kind of ideal viewer that you're looking to attract to your channel?

Kurii - 18:11

Oh, man, I guess the ones who are welcoming and the ones who are not necessarily active, but the ones who actively go out of their way to help other people. So I have a couple of viewers who came in and immediately would welcome new people that came in. So on Twitch, you can get like a hit Hello. This is a new viewer kind of notification if they choose to use it. And anytime like somebody comes in, or somebody doesn't recognize anybody, they'll they'll say, hey, let's say someone named cat donut came in we've never seen them before. And then some of my community say, hey, cat donut. What's going on? How's it going? And then they start conversation to make them feel included. Those are like my favorite chatters because they're immediately welcoming new people in so they don't feel like they're being shut out. Because personally, I know, as somebody who's gone into new streams, when you have, not necessarily a mod wall, but you have a really strong community already built it almost feels like they don't need any more people in there, they already have a designated person for every little thing and that they don't need you as part of their community, which isn't isn't even necessarily true. But you kind of get that you know who is important in a certain streamer's chat when you go in there, and as a new person, if my community can make the new people that come in feel just as important as everybody else in there, then that's definitely the ideal viewer chatter.

Alex - 19:48

Okay, so you already mentioned the freelance work and that's definitely something we don't see a lot on Twitch. Is there anything else that you feel makes your channel unique?

Kurii - 20:00

Have a lot of cats. But that's not really new. I don't really know. I guess, I guess, because I'm so lenient with a lot of things like, shout outs, like, I let people talk about their streams in my stream, which is like, a huge, no, no taboo on Twitch. I don't know, if I have a designated "schtick", if that makes sense. I guess it would just be like, how easy going it is. And, you know, I always value education over like assumptions if that makes sense. If someone comes in and is like, 'Hey, I'm also streaming' I'll say, 'hey, just so you know, it's kind of a taboo that can get you banned in other channels. I don't necessarily mind but I wanted you to be to be aware of what you're doing.' This is why it's a disrespectful kind of thing. So I think patience and education would be my two things about my channel that people really admire, I guess.

Alex - 21:03

Okay, yeah, so how do you manage chat? Is there anything that you do to deal with those those dead air moments where chat's not really doing much where there's not really much exciting going on in the game, what do you do incentivize that kind of activity?

Kurii - 21:20

I usually just talk about whatever I'm doing in the game to fill up kind of dead air but I will either talk about my two fall back's when I kind of want to get a rise out of people is I'll either talk about dreams or will talk about food and that usually gets people talking. Like, I had a dream last night that I didn't like. I have dreams every night or I'll talk about how I ate this the other day and people say 'oh, I love it,' then all of a sudden if you talk about food everybody comes back. They'll come back and be like, oh I hate this the other day it was really good. And then I ask questions or if somebody comes in when it's quiet and I remember who they are and what they've talked about, I'll say, 'hey, so and so how is your class today?' Or, 'how did your test go,' or, 'how was your visit to the post office?' Like, if I remember things that they had talked about in a previous stream, I'll try to bring that back. And it is also nice because it lets them know I'm paying attention to their lives as well, and I care about what they're doing. Yeah, but food is definitely the easiest 'go to.' [Laughter]

Alex - 22:29

Everybody eats, the big, big story came out today. [Laughter]. So, what kind of challenges and hurdles have you faced? It's no secret that Twitch and the gaming community is, by and large, predominantly a male community. Are there any challenges that you have faced due to being a woman in this community?

Kurii - 23:01

I would say, I get a lot of that. I think the banned word list helps me prevent getting a lot of trolls that come in. But, Minecraft is definitely my most 'trolley' game. And I have a lot of kids that come in and just kind of try to say inappropriate things that you would say to a lady and I'm a very modest dresser. So, you guys are at the wrong website [Big Laughter] for any of that stuff, I'm wearing my pajamas or a sweatshirt. I don't know what you opt for me. But I guess like in regards to chat room. I feel like the Minecraft trolls are just like the trolls in general. Obviously, I feel like I played off pretty cool because they don't bother me. I grew up with four brothers. I'm kind of a tomboy to begin with. But I think the other hardest thing as a female streamer is a lot of it's something people don't really talk about. A lot of women will use selfies and hashtags and stuff, and really dress up and look their best and kind of use that in a way where it's like you're going to get the attention that you reap because I don't take selfies because I'm not much of a selfie person. But I have noticed that my friends who do, when they go live on Instagram, will post things like 'hashtag Twitch girls,' 'hashtag Twitch streamer,' 'hashtag Gamer Girl,' 'hashtag Dave,' 'hashtag whatever,' they'll get hundreds of thousands of likes, and then it boosts their 'like,' it actually works. I think for me, the biggest challenge is I don't like taking selfies to begin with. And I don't really like using those kind of tactics either because it doesn't even necessarily have to be a selfie. It could just be anything. They can take a picture of their dog and use all those hashtags. But I think, you know, if people frequent the Gamer Girl hashtag on Instagram, they're going to find it. So, I feel me not using that to my advantage kind of puts me a little bit farther behind. And that's not the only thing that's holding me back from being successful. There's plenty of things that do that, but that's one of them that kind of irks me a bit, you know, I want

people to be successful for who they are not what hashtags they use. I don't know how to explain it. It's super weird, but it's something that a lot of and I've talked to a lot of girls streamers about this, and a lot of them see the same trends where it's just like, oh, all of a sudden, this person started taking really cute selfies and uses all these filters and uses all these hashtags, and there's like a turning point for a lot of streamers, where they do that. And I've seen it happen like, multiple, multiple, multiple times, which is why even like, consider it a thing because people who would take whatever selfie every once in a while, versus posting them every single day, every single time they go live, oh, something's going on behind the scenes. [Laughter] So I don't know i think that's the other thing, as a lady, as a woman on Twitch, where I feel it is a challenge that people take. I've seen I guess one last thing to bring up is I see a lot of pressure for those who want to succeed and just aren't doing really well to make a Patreon and incentive photo shoots which is something that's trending right now. I don't know if anybody else brought this up to you at all.

Alex - 26:58

Uh uh.

Kurjie - 26:59

I'm being completely open and honest here so just from what I've seen as a lady, I've seen at least, I can count on both hands how many times I've seen this happen where these streamers who are really, really great and you know kind of 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. Okay, selfie thing worked, I got a boost. What else can I do? Then a Patreon will be made, will take lewd photos for this tier and higher, and not necessarily nude, just like Cosplay, or 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. And it kind of breaks my heart because it's like, I know a lot of the streamers deserve better than that, and I know that they deserve attention. But I don't think that's the right kind of attention that they're hoping for. And I don't think it's the right kind of attention that they deserve. They should get a genuine community

versus one that's just, you know, trying to make a buck and become successful overnight, if that makes sense.

Alex - 28:23

Right. Right. Then and even going back on to that the previous point. Another interviewee I spoke to, they were saying, like, you can go the eye candy route, what kind of community are you making out of that? You know

Kurii - 28:37

Exactly

Alex - 28:39

You're not going to be making a wholesome, supportive you know, really....

Kurii - 28:42

Yeah, like I can play literally anything. I was auto fishing and MapleStory playing bad covers on an Otamatone the other day people hanging out versus like if I tried doing that after setting an expectation of only doing lewd workout streams or yoga or whatever's going on in that section, it's just like, who's gonna stick around? And that's one thing about having the kind of community I have is I can literally play anything on stream and I will have the same people come back to spend time with me, which is really nice.

Alex - 29:25

Okay, so what are some changes that you might like to see to this platform or even to this community that could improve this situation?

Kurii - 29:35

Hmm. I just I think it has to do with a lot of the streamers adjusting because they're so competitive, right? You have to be competitive, but because of that competition, people resort to all this crazy kind of stuff.

Alex - 29:56

Oh, yeah.

Kurii - 29:57

So, I don't know. I don't know if Twitch as a platform could necessarily control it, I feel like if they did try to control things, which they really have before, they've tried to cut back on dress codes or whatever, there's an outrage that happens. You know people will read headlines and say, 'oh my god Twitch is sexist' and try to get ladies to do whatever, so it's such a tough line. I think one thing that Mixer does pretty well is, and I wouldn't mind if twitch stole that idea, is (so mixers and other streaming platform, if anybody didn't know), they have specific ratings for your channels. They have rated G they have PG13 they have later teen, they have rated R. They have different dress codes for each, individual rating that you set your channel to, which I think is brilliant. If you want a rated R channel and, obviously, you can't be topless, but have a lower cut shirt. or wear whatever and swear up a storm, it's brilliant. It's a really, really smart approach to include everybody the way they want to be included, but also just keep in mind, these are the range of people that watch. You can have people who are 13 years old, do you want them to be seeing? Would you want your 13 year old watching? You know, someone doing 'x' here, so I think that would kind of be really cool. I don't think it'll solve anything I just think it'll be kind of a step in the right direction. But yeah, that's actually a good.....do you have any....., I'm curious to know if you if you have any solutions?

Alex - 31:56

Well, not to be disrespectful, but, obviously, I don't suffer from a lot of those same issues, it is difficult, you know, you obviously can't ban those kinds of practices, because then there are people that enjoy doing those practices and you don't want to exclude those people.

Kurrie - 32:18

Right.

Alex - 32:21

I do like your idea about linking up a dress code to the rating and I think just kind of pushing a stricter moderation with that, I think, definitely separating in between the ratings and and keeping those eye candy streams and those kinds of content away from, you know, the people that aren't necessarily the best viewers for it.

Kurrie - 32:48

Yeah, and it's tough too because sometimes it's just people wear what they're comfortable in and they're not actually trying to even be that you know, like, I wouldn't want to wear super tight sweater all the time, just because I was blessed with hashtag assets, but at the same time it's like what? How do you moderate like and how do you adjust stuff. It's such a hard line because some people are very genuine. You know, I'm literally just trying to be comfortable because it's 100 degrees out or they can't help it because they just are born that way. But there are others that definitely take advantage of that. So I think for the ones who are taking advantage and it's very, very obvious they might use the the actual reasons as an excuse and that's where it's such a hard way to moderate it. So this person wore this, or did this, and their air conditioner broke, but this person did the exact same thing. Why does this person have their air conditioner break? Why is it okay with them and not with me? It's just like a huge, huge, like, problem, I guess.

Alex - 34:06

Yeah, I think another big thing is that just like, over time, at least, that, my hope is that, over time, the attitudes of the internet and the community surrounding it are going to mature. When you consider just the raw age of some online communities like Justin.TV, like this streaming service in and of itself, it's barely pushing 20 years, you know. So yeah, I think just as, as the people that participate in these services get older, we we've, we've also seen the internet kind of

come to the world stage and video to the world stage. Whereas like back in the 90s and the early aughts, like there were people trying to prove the video games created serial killers, you know?

Kurrie - 34:53

Yeah, yeah. The internet is rapidly growing very quickly and everything in it is just like It's hard to keep up with.

Alex - 35:04

Yeah, that's fine. Yeah. So I guess the hope is that just over time, things will improve. I think that's, that's the general trend of most things. But the internet is a very unique beast. So we'll see.

Kurrie - 35:17

Yeah, for sure.

Alex - 35:18

Okay. So, let's talk about money next. I'm not looking to know how much money you make. I don't need to know that number. I wouldn't ask that of you. Um, but, you know, you have Twitch they have their standard set of monetization options. You've got subscriptions, bits, donations, you know, all of that. Do you feel you do anything unique with that set?

Kurrie - 35:41

Umm. Sorry. Can you repeat it? I'm like, I was like processing what you said and then I drank coffee [Laughter} and I also I haven't drank enough coffee today. [More laughter]

Alex - 35:57

I completely relate! So Twitch has the the standard set of monetization options you've got your donations you've got bits so on and so forth. Do you simply implement those features as-is, you know, throw them in there, they're there, take advantage, or do you try and do anything unique or different using them?

Kurrie - 36:20

okay um. I just leave it as is. I actually really dislike overlays that incentivize bits or try to persuade people to..... I don't have a daily sub goal. I don't have overlays that say top donate or top bit top, whatever. I don't like them at all. I find them really off putting in an almost guilt tripping and I think it has to do with my personality type, I'm an INFP and I get very emotionally attached. And I feel really guilty a lot of the time, if I see somebody that's says, 'oh, I'm four out of five daily sub goal today,' they only need one more. Or, I feel like if people really wanted to support my channel, regardless if I had a sub goal or not, they're going to do it. I had somebody the other day, who spent a week or two in a stream every day because they wanted to get into my Minecraft server. And they ended up just liking my channel enough to subscribe yesterday. And I felt like, oh my gosh, that's awesome. That's amazing. I I don't feel like I ever want to pressure anybody to subscribe or to use bits or to use whatever I have. If I wanted to do that. I feel like it would kind of go against what my channel is. which is supposed to be really easy going people don't have to pay to be there. And I don't know I just have a huge distaste in my mouth when I see 'all I want for Christmas is 500 subs,' you know, [Laughter] I mean, when I see stuff like that, that just turns me off from that channel so bad. And I would never want anybody to....., I didn't even go in there, I just saw the title, and I thought, no, I don't think I would ever want to spend time there. Because you're not valuing the people that are in there. You're only valuing what they can get you and I just don't..... there's something about it. That really bothers me a lot. Like I have a Patreon I've never brought it up in channel, in my chat, ever. And I've had people subscribe through there just because they wanted to. They found it in a tiny link in my profile in the panels, there's no panel for it. It's like a tiny little thing of text. And people have gone out of their way to find it. So, if people really want to support my channel, they're going to find ways to do it. If, however many people found that tiny Patreon link that's just barely there, they're gonna go out of their way to support me regardless. And I don't have to even ask, like, I wouldn't want to, I wouldn't want them to feel pressured.

Alex - 39:08

Okay, do you think there are any ways to implement monetization incentives without it seeming like it's pan handling or that you're pressuring people?

Kurii - 39:18

um, one thing that I know happens is people get into bit wars so, [Laughter] and they jump on the bandwagon. As soon as, like, a couple people start going back and forth, a lot of people will join in, and that's completely out of my control. Anyway, that's just up to my community to do that. But I know if people knew I was saving up to go to something, a lot of the time they'll ask 'okay, how much would you need? Or how much would you want to do?' That's the only time I really will put a stream goal, I guess, Okay, any donations or any bits for this month, putting towards here, you don't have to do it. But just so you know what it's going to earn. I have actually had them request having like the bar on the top, which I hate doing, but to see how far along they are. Because, as an example, last year I really wanted to go to PAX West because MapleStory2 was going to be there, I could meet the Nexon team and a lot of people wanted me to go. And it was a really good opportunity, which ended up being an awesome opportunity. Because I got to live stream with the with Nexon but, just so you guys know, for the next month, any donations or bits go toward this. If I hit the amount that I'm looking for, and I can pay for the second half, then that's great, I'm going to go and if not, then I'll put it toward the stream. I'll put it towards going to Twitch Connor, all no matter what. I'll put it towards something that goes to either Twitch streaming or conventions where I can meet my community. And so, I was doing that for a few days. And they're asking how far are we? Why can't you just put it on the screen, do whatever? So they bribed me into putting it onto the street lamps has like a little bar that slides up and they put this tiny one of the top and I said, all right, only so you guys can see how far we are. And then the next couple days of just flew up really quickly. So those things on stream definitely help if you do have a goal. Whether or not you like using them is like completely up to to the streamer themselves. But I feel like using them scarcely makes people more motivated when you do have them up as well. So if you had a stream goal every month like, hey, help me pay rent or help me with my phone bill? Or, if there's always a donation thing, people are less likely to do X. They don't think that when you do it, it's as valuable.

Alex - 41:55

Oh, yeah, I've seen some Donation incentives for somebody literally put up a \$15 donation goal to go buy pizza. [Laughter] Like, something like that.

Kurrie - 42:03

You're like, all right, people will do it as a joke. But if you did it every day, [Laughter] yeah, that's not, that's not how it works. I'm sorry. And they could just get tree stream if they really wanted the pizza. Let's be right.

Alex - 42:20

Right. So building off of that, you talked about the conventions, how do you feel as though your presence at those conventions has positively impacted your channel?

Kurrie - 42:32

Um, I feel like for my channel, it puts a face to a name with everybody. Because I get to have these really great experiences, like going out to dinner, or going to an arcade with people that I met, and them and I can, kind of like, we have that connection, that memory together where we had a really good time, and we have stuff to talk about. And then, one thing I think it helps me as a streamer is when you meet people in person, you understand their voice, you understand their tone, and you understand their mannerisms. And all this stuff that you missed out on when they were just in chat. And it's almost like they're a whole new person, because there's all this stuff about this person, all these qualities about this person that I didn't realize. And you can kind of put that face to the name and their chat. And it just makes it easier to connect them and easier to talk with them after the fact, not that it is hard to, but sometimes you think, oh, I only recognize people either username and username color, and how they behave in chat, versus, you get a whole new page of this person in their book. So I think for connection reasons, meeting people at conventions is super good for me to properly have more quality conversations with them during streams. As for conventions, and me, how it's helped me with my streams, I feel like it helps me

become a little bit more confident because I can present myself in a way where people met me. And it's not just me behind the screen that's really confident when you're in person. It's like a whole new thing. I can be as wild as I want on stream, but when you meet them in person, sometimes they'll have that expectation that you're like this crazy hyped up person all the time. And it would be really exhausting. So, I feel like that's something that you have to keep in mind when you're creating this person, almost like an internet personality is do you keep it up when you meet people at a convention? Or do you let them meet like you as you are? Luckily, I don't have to do too much different because me on stream is basically me in person when I'm comfortable with friends [Laughter] versus being shy. But I feel like that might be something that people struggle with a lot as streamers, where they'll have this internet personality, and they'll be a completely different person at a convention. So it's, it's interesting to see how it helps it also hurts their channel or their streams after the fact. If people meet someone and have a really bad taste in their mouth, are they going to come back? Or if they meet someone in person for the first time at a convention and then go to their stream and see that they're terribly dull or terribly whatever, are they going to stick around just because they met them in person? It's, it's kind of interesting to think about.

Alex - 45:35

Okay.

Kurjie - 45:37

Sorry, I just, like, rambled. I don't know.

Alex - 45:39

No, rambling is what I live for. [Laughter] It gives me the best data. So let's see, moving from there to social media. Give me a rundown of how you run your social media accounts.

Kurjie - 46:13

Twitter is my most important social media account. I post every time I go live. Anytime I go live, I try to put a gift or something interesting to look at. Because if you just post I'm going live and you post your link, people are going to scroll past it really quickly. So, you'll hear this from long streamers, which tweets will get you the most impressions, right? So something I posted yesterday, or the day before, about a clip of my stream got eight likes, and, let's see how many impressions, or whatever, has 561 impressions versus my going live. And I used a really cute animated gifts that I created, like in the game, has 63 likes, seven retweets and 13,000 impressions.

Alex - 47:09

Awesome!

Kurii - 47:09

So yeah, so little tricks like that. When you're tweeting or doing whatever, gifts are really, really successful. People love pictures. They love seeing stuff.

Alex - 47:22

Everybody wants gifts.

Kurii - 47:23

Yeah, versus if you just tweet something random and say, 'Hey, I'm going live,' I can guarantee if you tweeted saying 'I'm going live' and put 'hashtag support small streamers,' 'hashtag beauty gamers,' 'hashtag game girl,' you're probably going to get a little bit less impressions than you would if you did that with an image or, you could even get rid of all those stupid hashtags, and just put an image itself or usually animated ones work really well, because people will stare at them, if they're looping. [Laughter] If you make them a perfectly then they'll watch it for a while. And that's like, pretty good. So I always try to make perfect loop.

Alex - 48:07

These are the secrets. [Laughter]

Kurii - 48:09

Yeah, so the I get the impressions.

Alex - 48:13

Absolutely. So are there any other social media services that you use besides Twitter?

Kurii - 48:20

I use Instagram. But really, that's more for people to see what I do in my free time. So my Instagram is filled with cat pictures, drawings, artwork, location, if I go traveling I'll take pictures. So I don't really use it for what most people would do as a streamer where they'll post it going live picture, whether it's them or they're set up or whatever, and put a few hashtags for stuff. I probably should if I wanted to help out my stream a little bit and boost it up. But I just like my Instagram as something for me to remember. Like, oh, yeah, I went back here. So it's really more for me and people can come to to see what I do with my free time. Anyway, another thing I guess would be YouTube, occasionally. I have a secondary YouTube account with my boyfriend. So we have our duo-vlog gaming arcade channel, and then we kind of like promote our own Twitch channels in there, that's relatively new, so it's not like we're getting that many things transferred over from Twitch to YouTube versus the other way around. But I feel like eventually that could help bring in people from other platforms as well because it's important to kind of spread it out. I don't use Facebook at all normally. So I don't really have a Facebook page for my channel. I find that a little redundant but I know a lot of people also really like Facebook too. I'm trying to think if there's any other ones, but I think that's about it

Alex - 50:03

Covers most of the ones I've heard.

Kurii - 50:05

Yeah.

Alex - 50:07

Some people will go for like a Tumblr and you know some people will mention you know, the specific community forums like the Blizzard forums.

Kurrie - 50:16

Oh, interesting! Reddit and stuff.

Alex - 50:19

Yeah, exactly. Going to to the more community oriented rather than social media oriented platforms.

Kurrie - 50:25

Yeah, that actually makes a lot of sense. I don't use Reddit very often. I read Reddit, I don't type Reddit very often, though.

Alex - 50:33

There's a joke in there somewhere. [Laughter] Alright, so let's see. So this one's a two parter. First part is there to flesh, out, I asked this in a similar capacity earlier, but let's get a little bit more detail on it. Is there anything that you do not recommend that other streamers do?

Kurrie - 50:55

Going into other channels to advertise, especially while they're alive or, this is a really subtle thing that streamers notice, other chatters don't, going into a stream and only talking when the idea of talking about other streams comes up. So I'm very lenient, like I said a million times, about people talking about their streams and stuff. And and so someone coming on like, oh, how was your stream? What were you doing? And they'll be like, Oh, I was streaming this, this

happened. And then somebody who didn't really talk very much besides saying the initial highs, saying 'oh, I also streamed that the other day.'

Alex - 51:46

Oh no!

Kurrie - 51:48

And it's just like, uh, [Laughter] you don't want to discourage it, because, you know, you literally just asked somebody else about their own stream. But they took that opportunity; they're keeping an eye on opportunities to butt into the conversation in a way where they say 'I also do this,' but you can't punish it, because you just encouraged it with another person. So it will be, 'oh, that's awesome, that's really cool.' But at the same time, you know that they just did it just so they can get the attention on them for their stream, and not necessarily to actually contribute to the conversation.

Alex - 52:27

Right.

Kurrie - 52:28

The other thing that bothers a lot of people, including myself, is when people say, 'hey, I'm gonna head out, I'm going to start streaming now.' Yeah, and you like, Okay, bye. [Laughter] What do you are you supposed to say? And sometimes it'll happen where it's like, you know, people that you've talked to for a while, and I see it most happen right before I'm about to end because I feel like they're hoping that I'll raid if they mentioned, I have this one, one repeat offender. And he like a really nice guy. But I call him out for it, because we're on that level where I could just be kind of harsh with him. But he'll be like, All right, I'm gonna, I'm gonna head out, you know where to find me.

Alex - 53:13

Oh, no!

Kurii - 53:15

And I'm like, All right. Well, I'm going to end in 10 minutes, so see you later. [Laughter] It's like, how do you, especially as someone who encourages people to talk, be open and talk about it. It's like, yeah, that's fine. Like, I don't have a rule against it. But at the same time, it's a little crunchy. And then sometimes that new people that come in who who are new to twitch and they're genuinely just trying to learn how to stream and make new friends, but they just don't know the right approaches, and being on YouTube and a moderator on quite a few YouTube channels, I noticed a behavior on YouTube is that people were like, 'give me a shout out, can you do a 'collab' with me?' There's no filter on YouTube, there's no etiquette.

Alex - 54:06

YouTube comments section is ridiculous.

Kurii - 54:08

YouTube in the live streams are crazy. It is all like 'hi from New Zealand,' 'hi from Texas' 'hi, from whatever, 'can you shout me out?' 'I'm in Ohio,' and there's no remorse. There's a total free for all. [Laughter] And you're just like, Okay, I guess youtubers just allow this to happen. Then they just don't read it out loud. And they just forget, if you ignore it, it'll go away. But it very much does not go away, [Laughter] but on Twitch like I try to keep that in mind when new people come to twitch, because if they've only experienced YouTube chats that are like that, they're not going to know the twitch etiquette.

Alex - 54:50

Oh, yeah.

Kurii - 54:50

So I know a ton of people who will just immediately ban anyone comes in and says, 'hey, can you help me out?' Or, 'hey, can you do whatever?' 'Hey, I just started streaming.' Instead, what I'll do is, 'hey, are you new to Twitch?' And they'll say, yeah, I'm just started streaming like the other day and I'll be like, okay, one thing I want you to keep in mind, Twitch has this set of etiquette rules where you don't necessarily talk about streaming, it sounds ridiculous, but you don't talk about your stream unless you're asked about it. And then also, you don't tell people when you're leaving to go stream and you don't ever, ever ask people to come into your stream while someone else's streaming. And I tell them like the reason why is when you go in and say, 'hey, I'm also streaming Minecraft, can you come over and check out my server if you're not allowed in this one?' What that is saying is you don't respect, not only that streamer, but that that streamer's community, and you don't think that that community values the stream enough to leave and go to yours instead. And that is why it's so offensive as a streamer because you're basically calling out their community and saying, hey, this one's not worthwhile, and I'm going to make one that's better. And from that perspective, they kind of are like, Oh, Okay, I get it now. Like, I see it, I'm sorry, a lot. I would say about 90% of the time they apologize and say, I'm not going to do it again. Like it's like, I don't mind talking about it. I just wanted to you to let you know, like, this is how it's being perceived. And it's been really well received that way versus just banning and people like, why do I get banned, and I don't even know what's going on, which is a terrible platform.

Alex - 56:32

Right.

Kurii - 56:34

So yeah, I think I think educating people and keeping in mind like they might not have come from Twitch, they might have come from the garbage can, like YouTube, [Laughter] is probably....., not that all of YouTube's trash, like there's actually a really strong community there. But, there's a lot of trash as well.

Alex - 56:53

There's a lot of trash!

Kurii - 56:55

Yeah.

Alex - 56:56

All right. So second part of the question, is there anything that you think other streamers should be doing more of?

Kurii - 57:04

I would say, educating the people that don't know. Streamers are very quick to just like, yell at someone or lose their temper or ban people or like to say, that's not allowed, no, no politics, no, no, talking about streams, no shadows, no nothing, they're so rigid to the point of being, it's almost like you don't want to say....., you're stepping on eggshells every time you talk in there. They'll talk about what they didn't bed, they'll talk about what burrito they threw out their neighbor's car, like, they'll talk about anything. But if you bring up specific things that are sensitive, they're like - immediate ban, no, we can't talk about that here. It's like, why is it that you could talk about this without a problem, but something religious or something....., no, absolutely, there's no tolerance for that. Where I feel like if they were to just be more open, to listen into conversations about it that are very civil, it would benefit their community and kind of build them up in a way where they have a mutual respect for different points of view, instead of just being one sided and having a mob mentality. If someone brings something up that's against what they think everybody jumps on that one person when they didn't realize it was wrong, if that makes sense,

Alex - 58:25

Right. Okay. So for the next segment, this is kind of going to be a rapid fire segment, okay, where I'm just going to throw like a concept or an idea at you and just give me you know, what

your thoughts are on it, you know, just kind of like the knee jerk reaction to, you know, what you think about it. So, first up is variety content, not attaching yourself to any individual community, playing whatever games that you want, building your community around that concept.

Kurii - 59:00

Long and hard road, but definitely worth it. I was variety very early on, I still technically am a variety streamer, you will not find success the way that some people do, they stick to one game, but you also will get burnt out. And the people that you gather will be people that will stay with you example, I played Terraria for a while where I would play it three times a week, because I was doing really well with it. And I was like, You know what, maybe I should just try it. Terraria is a really fun game. I'm really passionate about it. And I got kind of burnt out on it. And, you know, I was pulling in 300 people some days and in other days to be like 50, but my best streams were from Terraria. But the problem is, as soon as you switch to another game, that is, the two days each week that I didn't play, nobody would be back. It would just be my initial 50 people that are always there. But those 50 people that are always there, I've gotten from variety streaming. So same with Warframe. Warframe's another one that people go to, because they have a good partner program, there's loot, so people will go and [get] drops and stuff. So people will go into the streams purposely just to get items for the actual game, because they have that implementation in Twitch, which is awesome. But, as soon as that person stops playing Warframe, the numbers will drop down like crazy.

Alex - 1:00:30

Okay. So, risk and risk management. So I'll throw a hypothetical your way. Let's say you have been involved in some kind of drama, you know, you you said the wrong thing, you you did something wrong, you know, it has hit the fan your community or somebody else's community is mad at you, how would you handle it.

Kurii - 1:00:53

I'm going to take time to reflect on it before saying anything. So what I am very much a person that doesn't know, post a lot of negativity or a lot of negative things on social media. But I think the first approach would be take a step back, figure out time to not just think about what I did that was completely wrong, but also how that person's taking it, versus how I think they take it how they probably actually are. So what my initial reaction was like, Oh, why would they be upset about that? That's stupid, I probably have to take a little bit of time. Let me think about this person. Let me think about their background. Let me think about how this affects them, and why they're reacting this way. When I get a good idea in that respect, I would say, reaching out to the person, don't do anything public. I feel like public apologies, first, as an initial step is disingenuous. And just as like, cover up, versus if I reached out to that particular person that I pissed off and say, 'hey,' which I have done before, I am a human, I've gotten people mad at me, I'll reach out to them privately, and I'll say, 'look, I wanted to apologize for this particular reason.' While at the time, this is what I was thinking, just so you know what it is, I would want either to understand where you're coming from, and why you're upset about this, or; two, if I thought about it (you might have figured it out), say, 'if this is the reason why you're upset, I completely can commiserate with that, I apologize. Figure out why it offended them, or why it bothered them in the first place. And if I don't know and if I can't figure it out, just ask them, 'hey, I understand you're really mad, help me understand why you're upset, because I'm seeing it this way.' And I don't necessarily understand and I want to understand. And then, if it was like a huge public thing that somebody got pissed off, I would just wait till it blew over. Let let trolls troll, let the white knights come in, and argue and then only reach out privately I'm not much of a person that that tries to publicize any drama, I'd rather keep it between me and the person that I caused it with.

Alex - 1:03:13

Okay. So, paid advertising; going to some external service to have them distribute your name, your image, your brand, so on and so forth throughout the internet. And as a means of gaining exposure.

Kurii - 1:03:27

I've never done that. I haven't even looked into that. But I don't have a problem with it. For people who want to do it as a business. I think if you're running a business, you're going to need somebody to do that eventually if you got big enough. So if their channel is that successful, or they're going out for someone to do some advertising, then more power to them because they're running their business the way the way a business should be. Run this it's a business versus for me. It's like a business but it's also like a huge hobby, not the same.

Alex - 1:03:58

Right. Right. And then lastly, on extreme problem users, the you know, the people that are just not even just a nuisance that they become a hazard to your channel, the ban-dodgers, potentially the doxxers, the swatters, the fanatics, the sexists, you know, so on and so forth.

Kurii - 1:04:20

I just ban immediately and report the account every time. And, if I see them come back for ban evasion, I will get my entire community to report them with me. And usually that takes care of it. Because my community also doesn't want to see that in my channel. And I'll say, dude, like this is not the right fit. But also you're being toxic, you're being what you said - hazards just coming back. I have a saying that says oh, I'm going to take out the trash real quick. And then I'll just ban somebody, [Laughter] you know, I and I think having that huge banned word list, going back to that, helps a lot because people have to come up with workaround words. And then my moderators will add that word to the list because they kind of know it from chat room. [Laughter] So it's really hard for people to say really toxic things in my channel to begin with. And if they find a workaround, we're going to just make it even harder for them.

Alex - 1:05:25

So what's next? Do you have any plans for what you want to do after Twitch? Or are you simply just going to run this until it runs out?

Kuriiie - 1:05:36

I don't know, if it's just, shut down one day I'd say, 'oh, no, what do I do?' But I think with Tinner, my boyfriend's and my YouTube channel, we want to kind of get off that that off the ground just because it's more of like our hobby together. Like we we go to arcades together as a date night thing and then we just record our wins and people really enjoy watching that kind of thing. Or, if we play video games, if Twitch disappeared, we would probably focus more on YouTube and the YouTube channel. But, I would say I would just keep rolling with freelancing and then worst case scenario if it doesn't work out then I'll just find a full time job. Find something to do. I don't mind working in an office but I really enjoy what I do now. I've worked in visual effects, I've worked in print companies, I don't mind going back to that if I had to. So it's not like Twitch is the only thing I have in my life that I need. I'm a pretty easygoing person, I can do other stuff if I needed to.

Alex - 1:06:49

So, I apologize, we're a little bit over an hour, here so this is my last question. Do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, advice, or encouragement that you could give to somebody who is arriving to Twitch and is looking to take things seriously.

Kuriiie - 1:07:08

Have a secondary form of income. If you get affiliate status you're like "I'm an affiliate now I'm gonna make so much money," [Laughter] it's not gonna work like I'm sorry. Yeah, an affiliate is Twitch's way to make extra money. I don't know if you if anybody told you this, but you need at least \$100 a month to get your paycheck from Twitch.

Alex - 1:07:40

Interesting.

Kuriiie - 1:07:41

So if you don't make \$100 in subs or bits or anything, you don't get paid. And they hold on to it. And after a certain amount of time, if like, you just stop streaming and like years go by. And you never collected that I'm pretty sure they get to keep it after a certain amount of time. So I'm pretty sure I don't actually know. I haven't read the thing in a while. But that's what I remember talking to somebody about. I don't know what the length of time is. I don't know if it's like years, or, it's probably a few years but that's a lot of money that Twitch can make. Think of all the affiliate channels that just want to get an email and they have their few good friends that subscribe to them just to show that they're supportive and use their email or on Twitch, but they never make enough money to take their paycheck out.

Alex - 1:08:32

Right.

Kuriie - 1:08:32

So affiliate I, in my mind is just a way for twitch to make a lot of money. It's a long term investment. But it's an investment that is like when they rake it in, it's going to be like, no problem.

Alex - 1:08:47

Interesting. Okay. Is there anything else that you want to add?

Kuriie - 1:08:53

Let's see. I know this isn't good advice to be successful, but don't use people. Don't be a jerk. Don't be a terrible human being. Just being on the receiving end of that feels so crummy, treat others the way you want to be treated. I don't know.

Alex - 1:09:21

Well, that wraps it up. Thank you very much for your time. Kuriie, do you want to go by your first name? How do you want it to-

Kurii - 1:09:29

Kurii would be perfect.

Alex - 1:09:32

Okay. Well, it has been great. I will stop the recording now.

Alex - 0:00

So the first question that I always start with is what made you pick streaming? How did you come to this platform?

Reinessa - 0:06

I started out wanting to get into the professional Dota 2 scene. And one of the ways to do that was casting. So I started up my stream, basically, as a platform to cast professional games.

Alex - 0:12

Okay, how did you go about starting that? What was your initial strategy?

Reinessa - 0:31

Essentially I was playing on, we'll say semi-professional, that's generous, [Laughter] a team at the time, as well as casting some games. So it was basically just doing a little bit of basic research into the software, setting up a stream, and just turning it on whenever I was playing Dota. And I had a solid friend group that just was watching. So I usually have, I don't know, five to seven viewers that I could chat with, that we knew that would bounce in and out of our games, and that was definitely the origin to grow from.

Alex - 1:07

Okay, how financially motivated were you when you arrived to the platform?

Reinessa - 1:15

Not at all, that's never really been a focus for me, when it comes to streaming.

Alex - 1:19

Has that ever changed over time? Or if you maintained that mentality?

Reinessa - 1:23

I certainly don't turn away opportunities to monetize. When Twitch introduced a bounty system, I have taken full advantage of that, and, you know, communicate to my viewers, hey, this is essentially free money if we watch this ad, or I play this game for an hour, come hang out with me. But I I don't make finances the motivation for streaming because then streaming will stop being enjoyable and I really never want it to get that point.

Alex - 1:55

Okay? What makes you think that focusing on finance makes streaming unenjoyable, elaborate on that thought for me.

Reinessa - 2:06

So the majority of income you get from streaming, especially when you're not a huge, huge streamer that can get away with ad revenue, and an influx of prime subs, is from donations. And, well, a lot of donations can be, oh, I just want to help this person out. You know, say you have a donation bar, that's basically your rent for the month or you want to go to an event so that you can do a meetup. Most donations are good natured, but there is an undercurrent of people who donate who expect special treatment beyond the basic, you know, thank you, I appreciate this. And a focus on streaming as a financial, like a soul financial support makes you more reliant on the potential of entitled donations. And I never want to put myself in a position where, and it's happened, where I feel uncomfortable, like I owe someone something just because they've chosen to support me.

Alex - 3:08

Okay. All right. So when you had first started, you mentioned that you were going on to this semi-professional Dota team. Run me through what an average week was like, during, you know, that first few months, maybe up to a year when you had started.

Reinessa - 3:25

So, first year of streaming, I was a senior in college, so I had plenty of free time. [Laughter] Yeah. And, you know, typically, if I didn't have work or classes or, you know, figure skating practice, I would pretty much be playing Dota. And the group, that I played with, we're all in college. So it was usually later at night, you just sit down and play. So I would stream anywhere from three to sometimes even 10 hours. And sometimes it would be actual competitive games that were playing and sometimes it'd be practice and sometimes it would just be screwing around and doing whatever. And back then it was very simple for me, I didn't have fancy overlays. I had a \$5 microphone that plugged in, it wasn't even a USB microphone, even lower tech than that, that sounded like I was in a basement under an ocean. [Laughter] And I had a tiny little camera, and I had Dota and that was it. I never switch scenes. I didn't have hotkeys for anything. Twitch alerts did not exist back then. So, anytime someone donated or followed, I had email notifications on and so, on my second monitor, while also having chat up would also have my email up so that when someone did something, I would see the email show up, and I could thank them for donating or following the channel

Alex - 5:04

Okay. Okay. And around when did you start streaming?

Reinessa - 5:10

My first stream was September 11, 2013.

Alex - 5:15

Oh. Okay.

Reinessa - 5:17

Which I didn't realize. And then I went and look back and I was like, I don't want that [Laughter] as my[inadible].

Alex - 5:25

All right. So you're going through the average week, was there anything that you did specifically to bring in viewers or did you just kind of have an organic approach to it?

Reinessa - 5:37

I had a very organic approach I didn't really use a lot of social media. Casting definitely helped because back then there's a website *joinDota*, which is who I casted for, was kind of the main hub for Dota 2 before Reddit really took over and if you were casting a game in their league, then you got featured on the website as the casters so you could have absolutely no viewers. Or I mean, one time I had 3000 viewers because I was the only person casting a really big game and then a big name caster came in. It was the best of three series came in the second game and started casting and I went down to 200 viewers.

Alex - 6:20

Oh, okay. All right.

Reinessa - 6:23

So for the most part, especially in the first year and a half, I didn't really do anything special.

Alex - 6:31

Okay. You talked about when you started out you had that super cheap microphone, you had the little teeny webcam. When did you start wanting to improve upon that setup, when did you want to start bringing up the production quality?

Reinessa - 7:08

I would say about six months in is probably when I upgraded the microphone and got a dedicated webcam instead of the one built into my monitor. And that was because I was casting a lot more at that point, I had partnered up with another caster. And we were covering a ton [of] South American Dota which is criminally undercovered region. So I wanted to step up that and because of that, I ended up with a lot of South American fans. I speak Spanish decently well, which the

Dota scene ignored the Spanish segment for a long time. So I was a bit of a unique content creator in the fact that I could communicate in Spanish additionally. But unfortunately, typically, the internet in South America is absolutely awful. And Twitch didn't have quality settings unless you were partnered streamer.

Alex - 7:44

Right?

Reinessa - 7:45

So yeah, so I really wanted to push for partner, I didn't really care about subscriptions, or the revenue side of things, I really want quality settings. I even contacted them and said, Hey, I don't need you to partner me, I'm just the for quality settings. You know, this is why and of course it costs resources on their end. So they wanted a revenue source as well. So I had to build up my channel in order to get to partner and not push. It really began I would say year and a half in is when I started actively promoting the stream quite a bit more, super loaded on the streaming hours, got way more active on social media and did a lot of content, Reddit, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, everything to try and push it so that could get partnered, essentially, for quality settings. Just because so many people who watch we couldn't watch on higher qualities and I would potentially lower my stream quality just so everyone could watch which was problematic for people with good internet because then they have blurrier stream they were watching.

Alex - 8:50

Right, right. So give me a snapshot of your channel. You talked about Dota 2. Kind of elaborate on what your content is, what content you create and advertise, and how you present your channel to your viewers?

Reinessa - 9:08

Oh, well, my channel has definitely morphed over the years, I would say it It started out obviously with that focus on playing and casting Dota, really cast in a professional level. Like I

certainly never thought I was going to play at a professional level. And the thing that I did to really push it was a cosplay and so I really wanted to integrate cosplaying into streaming as part of my brand. And I love to be creative. And I love doing fun things like that. But ultimately, I just want to play Dota. A lot of streamers, you know, they enjoy sitting and talking, they enjoy playing or games enjoy doing other things. And for me, it is always about Dota first and foremost. I want to play. I want to talk about about it, I want to focus on it. So I mean, that's the snapshot. It's just, it's just Dota with a focus on the competitive scene, because that's what I pay attention to. And then I just try and work in fun quirks. Like there's certain features in the game or heroes that I hate that I will rant out and I know that that's, you know, part of the brand. I like to work Cosplay in there, even if it's not done in Cosplay just because I love dressing up. But it's fun to bring characters to life. And then I would say the other main aspect that people associate with my channels that I listened to rather aggressive, angry part rock. And a lot of people have submitted, you know, they don't even watch the channel, just have it on to listen to music and to find new bands and find new artists.

Alex - 10:56

Interesting. Interesting. And if you if you had to just specify, is there an ideal viewer that you're looking to attract to your channel?

Reinessa - 11:08

Yes, there definitely is. Mostly because I honestly ban people who don't fit, it just gets annoying. And I'm like, 'No, you don't belong here, this isn't what you're looking for.' I would say that the demographic that has developed is one of university graduates or higher. They tend to be in professional degrees. There's a lot of like, pre-med or med students. There's a lot of programmers, those who have done like a science and tech focused demographic. I want people to be sarcastic and not cynical, but just maybe more realists, because I have a lot of optimism, but I also have a lot of realism. I think I've heard people describe it as cynical realism. But I'm looking for people that can criticize something without going too far. I'm looking for people who are supportive of good things, ask questions about bad things. I'm looking for people who want

to be part of a community and want to have fun and respect other people, but are also capable of having real discussions. I don't need yes-men or people who agree with me, 24/seven, I need people who can have a conversation, and a debate, and respect for parties. That's what community is developed into.

Alex - 12:45

Okay. All right. So you talked about a couple of things earlier there. Maybe you can elaborate on it. If you can think of anything else is there anything that you feel makes your channel unique?

Reinessa - 12:59

I would definitely say what I was talking about the encouragement to argue or have discussions, I think, is something that you don't....., you do see it, but in beer channels, that's hard to have happen. Because there's so many people and I think there's an undercurrent of not wanting to irritate your viewers or not wanting to call them out. That's another reason that I don't like to focus on the financial viability of my stream. Because I want the ability to say what I think and not have to worry about people leaving because they disagree with my opinion. So I think that is something unique in that I do feel total freedom to have strong opinions, and to call people out when I disagree with them, and to really call people out when I think they have gone too far. And it's not a criticism toward other streamers, and I honestly don't watch a lot of other streamers. But I do have this feeling that there's, again, this undercurrent of people pleasing, and taking the middle road and being a little more careful about how to navigate things because you don't want people to leave.

Alex - 14:20

True, true, don't want people to leave. But you know, definitely with the modern day, there's this huge hazard that you say something wrong, you piss off the wrong person, and then suddenly, they're going to go and they're going to spend the rest of their day....., because they don't have a job. They don't have anything. They they sit in front of their computer and are, you know, hateful and cynical on social media. So they they dig up all of your background information, they throw

all of that up on social media, and now you have this to deal with, because you said something wrong on stream.

Reinessa - 14:49

Yeah, yeah, that's, yeah, that's definitely a danger. And again, because of the way I've built my community, if somebody tries to go down that path, they instantly have 15 people going, you don't know what you're talking about. If this is what you think just happened, you're wrong. Let's have a discussion. And sometimes these people continue spitting vitriol and you just ignore them. And sometimes these people go, 'wait, I'm allowed to disagree?' [Laughter] And then you actually start an actual discussion. So it's, it's very interesting to watch those dynamics happen. When people think that because I have such a vehement disagreement, they have no platform for arguing and then they go, 'oh, this streamer's so full of herself,' and move on. And people are like, 'no, she's arguing with you; if you don't have a good counter point, you can't just say she's dumb, and walk away, like, that's your fault for not having a counter point.' And it's a it's a funny interaction to watch.

Alex - 15:54

Amen. Amen. Let's see. So building off of that, how do you manage your chat? Is there anything specific that you do either to manage chat or to promote chat activity? And what do you do during those, those blank moments when there's no chat activity, when the stream is quiet, those kinds of moments?

Reinessa - 16:16

So actually, I have a lot of chat is quiet moments, the majority of my active viewers are European, but I stream North American times. So typically, I have a very, very active stream the first hour or two, and then the next two to three hours that I stream, there's, I swear, it's one message every five minutes, maybe even, even if I have, you know, 50 people watching because no one is talking, because my North American demographic is typically much quieter, and you had a couple questions in there. So I'm going to start on how I deal with an empty chat. And

ultimately, like I said, one: a lot of people watch because of the music I listen to, because of the rants I go on about people in my team, and they're not necessarily there to interact. And if that's the case, then that's fine, because there's nothing for me to read in chat. But the other aspect here is that Dota 2 uses a very different game to stream than the majority of what you see streamed on Twitch and that chat interaction is not actually expected. Playing Dota takes 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. And so that's one of the reasons I think there is little chat is because people know that it won't necessarily be read or instantly interacted with and that's okay, for the aesthetic of my stream. It's not actually super chat focused. And then as far as, how do I manage it, I have a very strict moderation system that people disagree heavily with. And that's one of the reasons that I'll just ban someone or tell them to go away. Because if someone has an issue with what I'm doing, then they are not meant to be in the stream. They can't understand why. So I have a whole series of emotes banned, where if you type them, the auto-moderator won't let your message be sent. These are typically emotes that are used to patronize or that come across as racist or to be used in racist manners or, you know, patronizing, back seating, things that annoy me. If it annoys me I ban it, because it's my stream, and it's my rules. And anyone who tries to throw free speech at me, I don't care. It's my stream, I'm a dictator there, and I maintain that, and so I get a lot of anger at me for certain emotes not being allowed, and I tell them to deal with it. If you can't express yourself without that emote, then you're probably not saying anything worth saying. And then I also I also have a very aggressive moderation list both through night bot and through auto-mod on Twitch that filters out an additional list of words I deemed inappropriate. And certain things that I really don't approve of. And I don't want to discuss, for instance, we'll go with an example, around the elections. I did not want people talking about what was going on with elections and different candidates. So Clinton and Trump are both banned my chat and I have maintained it that way. And because I'm just like, know what I don't I don't want this to be a discussion right now, this isn't something we're getting into. I do not think that social media is the platform for political discussions. As social discussions, sure. But that's just something that I banned. I had people say, 'oh, you know, you're obviously some feminists Democrat, banning Trump, blah, blah, blah,' and I'm like, no, try

and type the other candidate - a ban. I don't want to talk about this. And that's just one example. I have a whole bunch of those things, different stupid names that come up, like I think radio is still banned, because it just didn't want to talk about it. People talk about Twitch chat being toxic and racist and hateful. And the reality is, I have so many things filtered that it forces people to think twice about what they're saying. I have the phrase you should ban because if anybody tries to type, 'you should buy this item,' 'you should go here,' 'you should do this,' I don't like backdating. It's my game. And so they try and type that it won't send. And then they have to sit there and ask, 'why won't this send?' And then they have to ask something. I'll be like, oh, were you trying to tell me what to do? And they're like, 'oh, yeah,' I say, 'there you go.' And it forces people to think twice. It keeps the chat really civil. It's really nice. And anybody who starts complaining about that does belong there, because they don't understand why it's necessary.

Alex - 21:00

Interesting. Interesting. I've heard this with a similar response from somebody else, and how the super restrictive moderation policies, while they definitely can get that kind of salt from people, like, 'oh, why are you doing this? Why are you being so restrictive? Why are you doing all of this?' but it leads to higher quality communities. You have said this and so as another interviewee. They've both reported that things are much cleaner, the more that you crack down. And that's really smart about it, is that you've tied that into your content. Because you play Dota, that's not necessarily a chat oriented stream. So you have this ability to do all of this crazy moderation because you don't need all of the chat. And so the chat that is there, is worth it.

Reinessa - 21:52

Yeah. And also, because I can't be an active moderator, because I'm playing and I'm playing ranked games. And it's a team game. So just because I'm streaming, I never want to impact my teammates, you know, they queued into a game, it's not their fault that I'm streaming and get distracted by something and have to moderate something in chat. So I have all these automatic control setup, so that I don't have to continually teach people lessons, the auto-moderator does it for me.

Alex - 22:23

So we are good to go from here. So you were talking about that one moderator.

Reinessa - 22:27

Yes. So I think it feels like every single stream community has anywhere from one to five very, very dedicated people who give a lot to the channel. So I certainly have that in mind, I have one person who is, I would say, there 95% of the time, he's a constant source of information, he's helpful, he knows all of my idiosyncrasies, and everything that makes my channel much easier to run.

Alex - 23:04

Okay, one of the things you know, obviously, this is no surprise to anybody, that with Twitch with the gaming spaces, with the gaming development spaces, it is all male dominated. Not only is it all male dominated, but we have an awful history of how we treat women in these spaces. So as a woman in these spaces, what are some of the challenges that you have faced, and how have you dealt with them?

Reinessa - 23:37

Well, that's a whole can of worms right there,

Alex - 23:39

Right.

Reinessa - 23:41

So I've had a few things, I've had several things happen. And so there are and I'll stick with the Dota 2 space, because it's what I know. And we can start with the assumptions people make 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. That's not really at the forefront of what you think. You think, oh, they're funny, oh, they just want to play games. Just because it's so normal to see a man in the gaming world. So when you see a woman you think there must be ulterior motives. Now, on top of that I also Cosplay. Cosplayers, especially in Dota, especially back when I started this is much better now, but initially was seen heavily as an attention thing. When you think about how female characters are designed, they tend to show off a lot. So if you Cosplay accurately, people think that you're doing it to show off when a lot of times it's just because you like crafting and you love the game. And you just want to create something from the game.

Alex - 25:15

Absolutely.

Reinessa - 25:17

I had those two strikes against me. And initially I didn't wear makeup, I just had on whatever I already had on. I didn't really do anything special. I was afraid to make my camera big. I had this tiny little camera because I didn't want anyone to judge me. And I was very, very afraid of constantly being judged. And I did a lot of things to minimize that. Now, what's irritating is how effective that was. I had a Cosplayer, -or a cosplay- become incredibly popular, I took a male hero. And I made what I interpreted would be the female version of it, and I got nonstop comments that thanked me for not making it crazy low cut, they're like, Oh, thanks for not over sexualizing this and at that time, I was so proud of myself for not being one of those girls, you know, for being different, and not using that as an advantage. And now I'm disgusted with myself. When I look back, because it's my body, I do whatever the hell I want with it. And I shouldn't have to change when I get home from from work in a lab. You know, I've been in a bio chemistry lab for, it's only the last eight months that I haven't been, I've been in one for five years straight. If what I wear in lab with my 60 year old professor is appropriate, I should be able to

wear it on stream and I didn't feel like I could because I was afraid of being judged for seeking attention. So you know, I put on a sweater or or zip up hoodie or put my hair up or anything like that, just to avoid being seen as someone who was looking for attention. And I hate that that was my attitude. But that's what was communicated again and again, everywhere is that you're a woman, how dare you take advantage of all of these guys.

Alex - 27:15

Interesting. Okay, so what, without getting too much into any vitriol, obviously, what are what are your thoughts on the people or the women that explicit explicitly market themselves as eye candy and make their money that way.

Reinessa - 27:30

I have absolutely nothing wrong with it. Honestly, back then, I didn't really have anything wrong with it. Either. My stance was and always will be, do whatever you're comfortable with. Just be....., I always said, just be prepared to accept the chat that comes with it. And that's where I've altered myself my thinking a little bit, actually a lot of it because I don't think these things are inevitable. I think a guy whose dream shortlist to show off his abs doesn't get any shit. Think a woman who streams in a low cut shirt gets non stop harassment because they say she's taking advantage of male gamers and of thirsty teenage boys. And so, whether that's your intention, or not do whatever you want. And, stand up for yourself. I The thing is, is I can't condone someone who does that and doesn't stand up for themselves and then says, I get all of these awful comments all the time I get all these horrible things. It's just so disheartening. Yes, those comments should never happen. You should never be disheartened. But it's important to speak up. And so the moment they say something, I will pat them on the back. But if they never say anything, and they just let people continue to say these horrible things, that upsets me, because everybody has to fight for what they want. And if someone as a woman is letting themselves be abused..... It's delicate to talk about, right, because I don't want to condemn them. It's not their fault, they're being abused. But they are normalizing that behavior in general, by not saying anything. And not everybody has the luxury or the platform or the confidence to speak up and

say something, so I can't fault them for not saying anything, but I wish that they would. Because 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. And 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.

Alex - 30:09

Okay, and so what are some other changes that you would want to see in this space that could improve things?

Reinessa - 30:17

I would love if people took my view on moderation to light or to heart, I think there's a lot of big streams like big tournament streams that have these awful chats. And people say, Oh, it's Twitch chat. That's just what they're like. And I think that it's only that's only what they're like, because it's been allowed to happen.

Alex - 30:39

Right.

Reinessa - 30:40

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.

Alex - 31:08

All right. Okay, so let's talk a little bit about money here. I know that you have already mentioned that that's not the explicit focus of your content. So Twitch has the standard set of

monetization options, you've got subs, bits, donations, etc. Do you feel as though you use that standard package in a unique way? Or do you just simply throw them where they're needed?

Reinessa - 31:36

I think that I actually do quite a bit less than most streamers do, as far as encouraging subscribers or donations or anything. I used to do quite a bit with it maybe two to three years ago. And I did have unique activations in a sense, I had a lot more active subscription perks, I had fun stream easter eggs structured around donations, I had a lot of fun events I was quite a bit more interactive in, I would say, unique ways, a lot of them were, you know, tied to my personal brand or to something about Dota. So that would make it unique. Nowadays, I would say I don't really do anything special. I have the standard emotes, badges, the sub discord with the benefits with that. And there's a few other benefits. But the main thing about my channel is people just want to support me, it's not really to get anything. And 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. And so right now, I do feel bad that I don't do as much for my regulars as I used to. But I'm also a lot less stressed because I don't have to constantly deal with people who expect things.

Alex - 33:27

interesting. Okay, so this attitude of people that have come to expect things, was that the reason you have dialed back on those monetization options?

Reinessa - 33:40

It's certainly part of it. I mean, part of it is also time commitment. I started getting a lot more work in eSports, outside of streaming: hosting, interviewing, running social media for big eSports companies, traveling to events. So, I love my stream, I love my community. But I don't view streaming as a forever thing. It's definitely my fun time. Like, I love it. But I don't see it being something I'm doing 30 hours a week when I'm 50 years old. I see eSports is the career

path and streaming as the fun time. So, part of that is definitely just my focus, not being able to be on streaming, because it's on career development in a tangentially related sec, you know, section that ties into streaming but isn't directly streaming. And yeah, part of it, there are certain things I stopped doing because I was sick of people feeling entitled to them, I want it to be a reward, I don't want it to be a requirement. And so I just took it away entirely, you know, like a kid who's being bad, you just take his toy away, because he can't handle it.

Alex - 35:05

Okay. You already you said the magic words in that response, the social media words. Let's talk about that. So go kind of run me through what your social media presence is like.

Reinessa - 35:21

I've taken more steps with it recently than I used to. So typically, I've used social media as almost a notification system. I viewed in a very purpose-driven orientation. I don't see a point in using social media unless it's to communicate something useful. So useful things from my community are when I'm streaming and news about streaming, funny little anecdotes about my life that I know they'll find amusing, and data information. So I view it almost as an RSS feed of important announcements about Reinessa. And that's not a very effective growth strategy. Successful social media growth typically comes from very, very high interaction, following a lot of people constantly commenting, having an opinion on everything. And I'm not, I don't like that approach. Because I don't need to say something that's already been said. I don't feel the need to have a million impressions in a week. I just want to be useful. I want my social media to be useful. And I realized that people do want to know more about, you know, it's fun to read people's opinions, it's fun to have something to interact with. So I've tried to be a little less stark in how I use it and and sort of amp it up a little bit more and share a little more effectively, but I still I don't use it to the extent that other people do, I think.

Alex - 37:16

Alright, so first was, you mentioned that you've been starting, you've started to take things seriously on social media more. Was there anything that prompted that and then is there anything stopping you from using your social media accounts in these more ideal ways that you see other people doing?

Reinessa - 37:41

So for my main job, I do quite a bit of social media. And I track a lot of analytics on it. And I started to see what corresponded to growth and what was effective. And my social media accounts have been very static for about over a year now, nothing has really changed on them. And I want to continue to work in the eSports scene. And one of the ways people evaluate whether or not they'll hire you is your social presence. So I wanted to put more effort into growing my social presence, maintaining relevance and everything. So part of it was seeing analytics and understanding what activity is rewarded, and what is best social media practices. And part of it is just about growing my brand, because of the career I'm trying to build for myself. And what is stopping me is that Dota 2 is a very cynical, judgmental community that is hyper-focused, so I can tweet some funny sign I see on a road or an amusing thing I heard in the grocery store, or me putting my shoes on the wrong way. And the majority of my followers do not care because they are there because they found me through some kind of Dota related content. And they're not there because I'm Reinessa, they're there because Reinessa interviewed that big name Dota 2 player so maybe she's going to be an interesting source of insider info. So I have to be careful about what I say and when, because of how the Dota community view social media and what they're looking to get out of who they follow.

Alex - 39:32

Okay. now, are you are you interested at all it's in separating from that label? Are you looking to..... because, you know, this is a pitfall that I've seen, if you identify too strongly with a single game, your personality doesn't shine through, as you just said, they're not following you because they're looking to follow Reinessa, they're following you because Reinessa did something cool

related to Dota 2. Are you interested separating from that or is this just the space that you've occupied and the space that you're comfortable in?

Reinessa - 40:07

The problem is that no other game has captured my interest whatsoever I have tried. I have actively tried. I have worked PUBG, I have done work with Rainbow Six. I've done CS:GO events. I Hearthstone. I watch these things. I interview people I'm at events and I cannot get engaged the same way that I have with Dota 2 and for me I need to love what I do or I don't want to do it. I was a grad student, I absolutely love science, and the environment that I was in made me hate science so I left. I said, no, this is not okay, I need to love what I do, and that's why I work full time and eSports with a focus on Dota now because I love it. I have definitely put some effort into being a brand myself that is not exclusively Dota 2 that's like Reinessa with a Dota focus rather than Dota with random Vanessa anecdotes. So I don't want to fully diversify because there's nothing else I care about, but I do want to build it as I'm Reinessa who happens to do Dota right now. Not here's some Dota stuff presented by Reinessa. It's like a weird distinction to make. It's definitely something that I've I've structured into how I've been using my Twitter account. And I mean, my Instagram account has absolutely nothing to do with Dota. I've been very intentional about that. So it really depends on the platform.

Alex - 41:54

All right. And are you scared about or have you prepared for burnout?

Reinessa - 42:05

I felt it before. And I figured out a lot of coping mechanisms to deal with it. While I was in grad school, I was definitely pushing myself very aggressively and way too hard. And I was doing way too much. And it was really hard. And that's one of the reasons I don't do as much with my stream anymore. Like I said, is because I could I technically have the time to engage more and do a lot more. But I know how important it is for me to say, Oh, I'm getting tired. I'm not going to play another game. I'm going to sit on the couch and watch Star Trek, because that's what I

need. So I'm not really concerned about burnout now, because I think I went through that phase, and I figured out how to handle it pretty well. And one of those things is what I continue touching on is that my stream is not my lifeline. It is not my source of existence. It is fun. It is what I do to relax. It is a group of friends that I hang out with. And so it can't ever be burnout because it is recreational.

Alex - 43:20

Interesting. Okay, I like that answer. So is there, be it in the beginning stages, be it at any point in their streaming career, is there anything that you do not recommend other streamers do?

Reinessa - 43:40

There's the very obvious answers of don't compare yourself to other people. That's the key one, it's the one that everybody says. It's the thing I would want to say is expectations are the core of misery. And, and that ties into comparing yourself to other people, you can see someone and say, Hey, Ninja got crazy popular, because he tweeted at Drake want to play some fortnight or whatever that interaction was, you could, and then they would say, 'oh, I'm going to tweet it to all these people and be hyperactive.' And it's because you have an expectation based on what you have seen happen for other people. And I think that when it comes to streaming, you cannot have expectations because people don't work how you think they're going to work. Memes and going viral and things happening at the right time - you can't engineer that. So if you expect it to happen, you'll constantly be miserable. You'll resent streaming and you'll turn away people because you won't be genuine. So streaming has to be approached from a I'm doing this because I want to anything else is gravy. And that has to be your approach. Because if you go into it looking for anything, you'll end up disappointed.

Alex - 45:22

Okay. Was there anything else? Or do you think that's the big point?

Reinessa - 45:27

I mean, I think that's the key one, there's probably some small technical things like when you start out streaming don't stream and 10 EDP because you won't have quality settings, and it'll be way too hard for people to watch. You shouldn't have a crazy erratic schedule, you probably shouldn't be a horrible person. I mean, there's [Laughter] little specific technical things like, 'don't steal other people's artwork,' Wiki Commons is a great thing to use. There's a bunch of technical little things that you absolutely shouldn't do. But, you know, the big one is, my big one is, just don't expect anyone to do anything for you. Because nobody owes you anything. it really doesn't ever hurt to ask; that sounds counterintuitive. But typically, it doesn't hurt to ask. So yeah, I guess my second one is why you shouldn't expect anything. Don't be afraid to ask as long as it's reasonable, and not crazy. People are normal human beings. So they may seem really, really busy. And if they're busy, and slide over your email, or your your tweet or whatever, then you lost nothing. And if they have free time, then maybe you've gained something. So I think a lot of people are afraid to network and it's one problem. And then the second problem is....., these are two different people. There's people who have expectations and expect people to help them and expect big breaks and expect certain things to happen. And then there are people who work really hard, but never take a leap or never take a risk and are afraid to ask people for help, or afraid to ask someone to collaborate with them. And I'm not sure how much those two categories overlap. But they might be the two groups of people I would give the advice to is for one of them. Don't be so arrogant. And for the other one, don't be so scared.

Alex - 47:29

Okay. All right. So a little trickier spin on the question, is there anything that you think people should be doing more of.

Reinessa - 47:50

I would say, looking internally, I think if people spent more time evaluating themselves and understand what works for them, then they could capitalize on that and be more successful. For instance, I was in a chat between the 30 different community managers, and someone posted a, you know, best time to post on different social media accounts. The post didn't have time zones

on it. So you had no idea like when they say don't post before 1pm on Twitter, what what time zone is that, and you have to assume, oh, like, if you're a North American company, you're going to have North American followers. So don't post before 1pm, you know, in Midwestern (sic) time, something like that. But the reality is these guidelines are generated by amalgamating either thousands or millions of accounts together, or they're from one specific account with a very specific following. And so while it can be great to look at guidelines and role models, understanding that maybe your community responds the best when you post at 3am; maybe they are all working professionals who are scrolling through Twitter at breakfast at 8am; maybe because they are working professionals, the best time for you to stream is past 8pm at night when they've already gotten home, and eaten dinner and everything, or; maybe your demographic are college students who don't have class in the afternoon. So the best time to stream is at 12pm. So that's one example of looking at yourself and what works for you rather than looking outward. The other one would be, you can learn a lot by watching your own content back.

Alex - 49:46

Oh, yes.

Reinessa - 49:47

How annoying you are.

Alex - 49:49

Oh, yes.

Reinessa - 49:50

Yeah. And so people need to look at what they're doing, and evaluate it and figure out what is obnoxious and what is working because you may think something you're doing is hilarious. And then you go back and look, you just like what was I thinking and people get comfortable after they've been doing something for two or three years and have a moderate level of success. They

go well, it's worked so far, let's keep going. And that is just it's you should always be pushing yourself you should be always be looking internally at how you can grow.

Alex - 50:27

Absolutely, yeah, the person that doesn't analyze their own VODs on the Twitch channel that does not grow; it's one of the most underused things that I have been witnessing from the mouth of you guys from looking out on the platform.

Reinnessa - 51:14

Unfortunate. And one of the really easy things there is Twitch doesn't have a great discovery system. So a lot of times, you want to be creating content across various platforms. So if you take your stream and cut it into a YouTube video, like something shorter and easy to digest, you have to watch a lot of yourself, you learn very quickly. So that's an easy one, to force people to watch themselves.

Alex - 51:38

Right. Exactly, exactly. So for this next little segment, we're almost done. I know that we're kind of getting up on time here, I want to run through this kind of a rapid fire segment, I'm going to run through these various concepts in the you know, present within the streaming industry. Just give me your knee jerk reaction to these what you think about them, what opinions that you have on them, that kind of thing. So the first is variety content, you know, basically the opposite of what you're doing, not necessarily marketing yourself as a personality rather than marketing yourself as a member of a community.

Reinnessa - 52:18

Seems more fun and like the better business strategy.

Alex - 52:22

Okay, all right. Risk and risk management let's say that you have done something, you have been involved in something, there is drama, grab the popcorn check the Reddit threads on how would you go about handling a situation like that?

Reinessa - 52:44

I always try to see it from both sides and take the rational approach. So personally, and you get a lot less traction this way, try to be the reasonable human being and not just pile on to the drama or instigate more. So my approach is always, let's take a step back and look at the reasons the ramifications and what's going on, is usually my take on it. Even if I have a particularly strong opinion, I'll be like, this was stupid, this guy's an idiot, but this is why it happened. And you can't really blame him ultimately. So this is what we need to change moving forward to prevent this from happening.

Alex - 53:23

Okay, analytical approach I like it. So what about paid advertising, meaning, going to some third party service and they're going to distribute your name your image your brand throughout the internet, Twitch, youtube, banner ads, etc.?

Reinessa - 53:40

Go for it spend whatever money you want.

Alex - 53:43

Okay. Awesome. And then lastly, you may have a bit more experience with this as a woman in the industry, talking about extreme problem users. Obviously you've had your fair share of the kids that come into chat and they're quickly disposed of. What about these people that the ban-dodgers, the doxers, the swatters, the absolute fanatics, how would you go about dealing with somebody that's this far off the deep end?

Reinessa - 54:15

I've had one person who really concerned me, the one thing that I do is, I do gather quite a bit of information about them in case I need to report them to local authorities, because I will. If I feel I am personally in danger, or something's happening, 100% I'm calling whatever country they're in, I'm finding whatever I need to find out about them and taking care of it. If someone is that aggressive, and that scary, usually it's not because you made them angry with an opinion, it's usually because they have some kind of relationship with you. And then they don't like how it's going. Typically someone who comes into your stream and gets mad because they get banned, or because they can't type an emote or whatever, they're not going to swat you. There's people who are going to swat just because they want to, I have no idea how I deal with that. Because I'm not going to know and I'm probably not going to know who they are. The moment you do, you just report them to every single avenue that you can. And I know people at Discord. And at Twitch that I can contact personally and be like, Hey, this is a problem that's happening. I need someone to personally look into this, I cannot leave it to an automated system. So it depends on the degree of the problem. I don't really have any experience with, like I said, swatting I have one person try and dox me because they thought it was funny and nobody cared. And it just kind of went away. And like I said, I hadn't one person be very uncomfortable because of did not like how our relationship was progressing as streamer to viewer. And I sort of dealt with it with like a slow disengage. And he continued to escalate, that's the word continue to escalate, which is typically you know, how people describe stalkers is that they start off simple, and then when their attention is not returned, or when they aren't getting what they want, they escalate. So ultimately, it got to a point where a few things were said that were very, very, very clearly out of line, which gave me 100% cause to ban because in a case like that, you need....., logic and reason don't work, obviously, and there's something wrong in that person's life. so you need very, very clear cause. So in that case, it was just every single person knew and was aware I had screenshots and records of everything I reported to every single platform and made it very, very clear, and then did a full cut off and just stopped engaging. But I did give it a lot more time than people would recommend. But when you don't know how unstable someone is, you have to kind of do like a hostage negotiation where you try to stop things from escalating. You try and talk them down,

you try and be rational, and then you just have to wait until they cross a line. That's very, very, very clear.

Alex - 57:44

Right?

Reinessa - 57:45

So thankfully, I don't have repeat experience with this. But it is handled differently in every single instance. And I would say the big thing is just communication. You have to communicate to your community. What is happening as much as you don't want to, you have to let them know because you can't have people take sides.

Alex - 58:10

Absolutely. Yes.

Reinessa - 58:11

Makes it worse.

Alex - 58:13

Okay. All right. So what is next? Are you super diversifying between the stream and eSports? Do you see anything after eSports? Do you see anything after Twitch?

Reinessa - 58:26

My ultimate goal is to host a morning show that centered around eSports in gaming that just lets people tell their stories, gives people their eSports headlines and news, shows off cool content. I've done a couple of them for events, I absolutely love it. And it ties everything that I do together really nicely. So that's, that's what I want in the future as mainstream media and outlets become more and more ingrained in the gaming world. And as the gaming world sort of grows up and starts mimicking mainstream media and traditional platforms, I sort of want to wedge my

way in there and be the host of some kind of regular show. I like being useful. I like providing information. And that's what I see as being the the ultimate example of that.

Alex - 59:17

Awesome, awesome. Okay, for the last question, do you have any suggestions, tips, tricks, or advice that you could give to a newer streamer who's coming to the platform and it's looking to get off of their feet and take things seriously?

Reinnessa - 59:31

The big thing that you have to do is breaking that zero viewer account. So if you can get five to seven friends and tell them, 'hey, guys, this is really important. I need you to hang out here and just talk to me.' Having chat activity when a new viewer clicks on a stream makes it much easier for them to enter the chat and become engaged, which is how you start building your following. And so it is very hard to break that zero viewer point. So if you can just press gang people into being there for the first month so that you can get like five regulars that you did not coerce into being there. [Laughter]

Alex - 1:00:19

Okay. All right. And is there anything else that you'd like to add?

Reinnessa - 1:00:23

I mean, that's the main one. Everything else is pretty good. There's a hell I did a whole course on Udemy on on how to be a streamer. There's a million things that are advice but the big thing is trying to get to like 15 or 20 viewers so that you get out of the trenches so that people actually start finding your stream.

Alex - 1:00:44

All right. Okay. So I will stop the recording.

Alex - 0:00

So the first question that I always start out with is what got you involved in streaming? What brought you to the platform? Also, if you can give me this number, how long have you been streaming?

K4iley - 0:12

I have been streaming for about four and a half years, I think. It'll be five in September, but I originally started streaming because I had started playing this game called League of Legends, I'm sure you've heard of it.

Alex - 0:28

My condolences.

K4iley - 0:29

[laughs] My boyfriend at the time had told me about this site called Twitch and he was like, "Yeah, you can watch other people play League. If it's something you enjoy, maybe it'll help you learn more about the game." So I did, I made a twitch account, and I found this streamer called OMGItsFirefoxx, her name is Sonia, and at the time she was unpartnered, and she pretty much only streamed League. So I started watching her channel pretty regularly, made some friends in her community, and I frequented there often. That pretty much made me decide that I wanted to start streaming because I really loved the concept of streaming games and having a community to watch me play them. There was something about it that seems so appealing. So it kind of started from there honestly, and the rest is history.

Alex - 1:27

Okay, when you decided to get involved with the platform did you think about money at all or was it kind of independent of that?

K4iley - 1:34

I did, but I know people who don't. I had just turned 16, and my mom was bugging me to start looking for jobs and nobody wants to work at fast food places. Nobody WANTS to do that, but you have to do what you have to do. There's nothing wrong with it if you have to do it. So I see these people getting donations and stuff off the stream maybe that's something that I could do. So unfortunately because I don't think this is a good thing to do I went into it with the idea that maybe I can make money off of it. As I said that is not a mindset you should have going into streaming. I highly recommend not having that mindset and just seeing it as a just for fun, hobby kind of thing. If you do make something off of it or out of it then great, but it shouldn't be something you expect if that makes sense.

Alex - 2:35

Okay, obviously plenty of people have echoed this sentiment, one thing that I kind of want to pick apart is everybody says pretty much the same thing; don't expect to make money, but not necessarily if you're expecting to make money. What if you go into this platform with the intention of making money?

K4iley - 2:57

I mean, you absolutely can. I did, and it kind of worked out for me. I mean, I'm here so it's not like it completely failed, but...

Alex - 3:08

Sorry to interrupt, but did that affect how you ran your channel in the beginning?

K4iley - 3:13

I think so. It's kind of hard to remember because it was so long ago, and I feel like, all the times I've streamed have just like meshed together into like one big memory. I do think it affected my mindset, and I think it affected it negatively. I think if I had went into it with just the pure intentions of keeping it a hobby, just for fun, maybe I would have had a more positive mindset overall, and maybe an overall better turnout in the early stages of me streaming.

Alex - 3:46

Okay. Do you think you could identify any negative impacts that occurred as a result of this mentality going in?

K4iley - 3:54

I mean if I went into somebody's stream, and they gave off the vibe of just doing it for money or like wanting money out of it, I would pick up on that pretty quickly, and I feel like it would kind of turn me off as a viewer. So I think that's kind of what ended up happening, and I don't know for sure, but I think I definitely maybe could have had better growth if I had a different mindset.

Alex - 4:22

Okay. So when you had first joined the platform run me through what an average week was like. How did you handle things, if you can remember?

K4iley - 4:34

I pretty much streamed whenever I wanted to which usually turned out to be every day. For a long time I streamed six days a week until recently where I cut back to four days a week because six days a week is kind of a lot to stream, and I only have one day available to get errands done and relax. So it'd pretty much just be like, wake up, eat, get ready, stream, eat again, and then go to bed, and then repeat. That was the majority of the past four and a half years. Up until recently where I cut back to try to be a little bit healthier about my habits. As far as I can remember, which that's pretty much all I can remember. It was six days of just wake up, eat, stream, repeat.

Alex - 5:24

Okay. Was there anything in those initial stages that you did in an attempt to bring in viewers?

K4iley - 5:32

I definitely tried a lot of different things like playing different games, doing things to incorporate the community, viewer games or giveaways. For a while I was only doing music streams, I don't know if you know this, but I also do music, I sing. So for a while I was only really doing music stream, and that's actually what got me partnered on Twitch, but doing only music takes a lot of emotional energy out of me so it burned me out really fast. I tried different games, and I tried a lot of different things, tried networking with other streamers, and doing duo streams, but really what it came down to was just doing what made me happy. I feel like although I wasn't getting the highest numbers that I could be getting which would be me doing music, I was having fun. The more that I have fun the more that I enjoy the stream the longer that I can go and I feel like the more fun people have in chat and watching the stream.

Alex - 6:36

Okay, well let's see. So knowing what you know now, is there anything that you would change back then?

K4iley - 6:44

I think everyone can say that looking at themselves a few years ago, they would change quite a few things. Particularly, my own self growth; a few years ago I was pretty much a judgmental person. I was pretty much a completely different person to who I consider myself to be now. So I think if I could expose myself to the way that I think now, back then I feel maybe I would have had an easier time growing. But I've also come to the conclusion that if I didn't go through all those times where I wasn't at my best self, I wouldn't be where I am today. So I guess I try not to think about it too much because there's only so much you can do as you're growing. So as long as you learn from your past mistakes, and work on them I think that's all that really matters.

Alex - 7:45

Okay. If you had to give one piece of advice to your past self, what would it be?

K4iley - 7:51

Don't be a judgmental “****”.

Both 7:52

[laughter]

K4iley - 7:55

I am allowed to swear right?

Alex - 7:57

Um, sure. [Laughs]

K4iley - 8:01

I probably should have asked first!

Alex - 8:02

It's fine. We'll just throw a couple of asterisks in there. [laughs] So give me a snapshot of your channel. What is your channel about, what kind of content do you promote and advertise?

K4iley - 8:49

I mean, I'm basically your everyday variety streamer. I do make-up, music, and video games. I kind of just stream whatever I'm passionate about which just so happens to be those three topics. It's nice because I have a platform to express my creativity. So that's kind of like what I lean towards with my channel. So I have the stereotypical gaming streams where I play through a lot of story games. I occasionally do some PvP stuff, but I tend to stick towards single player story games. Those tend to be my jam. Then I'll also have makeup streams where I'll do live, "Get ready with me's" or a live makeup tutorial or live product reviews. Then also pretty frequently, as I mentioned earlier, I do music streams, I sing and I play guitar. So that can be a lot of fun, I cover songs, and I write originals. So I don't at the moment, I think I would like to have a set schedule for what I'm going to do when, but at the moment, I don't have one set. It kind of just

depends on the day and how I'm feeling, but it definitely brings a lot of different people into our community, and I think it's really cool. So we have a good mixture of people who are just into video games, and then we have people who are really here for the music, and then I've had people come in who are just super interested in the makeup portion of the stream. More often than not, they all just kind of tend to hang out no matter what I'm streaming, and it's kind of a mixing pot of different kinds of people and I think it's really cool. Overall, I try to keep things pretty laid back and chill and positive because I think a lot of people go on Twitch to get away from real life, and nobody wants to go to what they consider a safe place for them to feel happy, only to be bombarded with negativity and whatever. So I try to keep things very positive and uplifting and happy because I know that Twitch is like my second home for me, and I want people to feel the same way.

Alex - 11:03

Okay. If you had to specify, is there an ideal type of viewer that you're looking to attract to the stream?

K4iley - 11:10

Um, no, I guess I haven't really thought about it. I mean, I'm kind of just welcoming of anybody who comes in as long as they're no asshole. I just like having people who are chill and happy. Well, I shouldn't say happy, but chill and like, relatively positive. Somebody who isn't I guess like the stereotypical Twitch troll, that's not really something I want in my chat. That's really the only thing I can think of specifically but otherwise we welcome anybody and everybody.

Alex - 11:49

Okay, all right. So you already mentioned the music and the makeup streams. Is there anything else that you do on your channel that you feel makes you unique?

K4iley - 12:02

No. I mean, I'm kind of a weirdo, but I think everybody is on Twitch. [laughs] I don't think that really makes me unique. No, apart from that, that's really about it, make-up, music, games.

Alex - 12:16

All right. How do you manage chat? How much of an effort do you put forth in interacting with the chat and promoting chat activity? How do you manage those dead air moments where chat is dead, there's not really a lot going on in the game, so on and so forth.

K4iley - 12:37

I do as much as I can to talk with chat. I mean chat is the whole reason why I'm here so I love them with all my heart. For encouraging chat activity, I'll say stuff like, "Oh, can I get like an F in the chat" to pay respects for like, insert thing going on here or I'll joke around and be like "everybody say hashtag...fuck Brenda," I don't know, random name, fuck Brenda, Brenda sucks-

Both 13:10

[Laughter]

K4iley - 13:10

...but when chat gets quiet, I mean I have a habit of talking to myself as is so I guess it's not that out of the ordinary for me to talk and not get a response. It's not super weird for me so I'll just talk about what's going on in the game or I'll talk about my day or I'll be "oh how is everyone's day" up in chat, "whadju guys do? Do you guys go to work, do you go to school, how'd that go, you have any plans for this weekend..." and that tends to get things going a little bit, and then if it's still really quiet, I'll pick a random story off the top of my head that happened that I'll tell or I'll talk about a dream that I had last night because I have very weird dreams, and they always make very interesting stories. It's really just talking about anything and everything, you always wanna keep the conversation going. It's not super easy to do it, and there are definitely times where I struggle with it, but it's the effort that counts.

Alex - 14:10

All right. So it's no surprise that Twitch the gaming community, the development community, all of that is primarily male dominated, and especially with Twitch. Twitch has a ton of problems with women on these platforms, and all of the issues that are associated with that. So run me through what are some of the challenges that you have faced as a woman in this community, and how do you manage them? How have you tried to overcome them?

K4iley - 14:44

I mean, I think general sexism is a good start. I think that's pretty obvious that kind of goes without saying. 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...

Alex - 15:16

[laughs]

K4iley - 15:30

"You're just doing it for attention," like, yeah, I'm live streaming on the internet, that's kind of the whole point. It's usually just typical nasty comments like that, and really the only way to go about them is really just to ban them from your chat. I'll give a snarky comment once in a while because that's really fun. That's one of my favorite things about being a streamer is responding to a troll with the snarky comments, chat finds it funny. I don't think it's the majority of the community, there have been so many people that I've met and that have come into chat that have been absolutely fantastic, and it sucks that we still have to deal with those few people that just decide to be assholes. I don't think anybody should let it reflect on the twitch community as a whole. 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 craters on the front page, and I think that is a very important step to take. There are of course going to be people that are, "Oh my god, like why are we featuring these people on the front page like blah blah blah, blah, blah like you're pandering your social justice warriors, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Fortunately, those tend to be at least I would hope so, the minority out of everybody. It seems like most people tend to be pretty accepting and pretty hyped about it which makes me very happy. There isn't really a whole lot you can do when you're faced with somebody or even with a group of people because I tend to notice that they come in groups. It's like they all get in a discord call and post Twitch links and like "Oh let's go to this Twitch streamer's chat and say this." It's easier to just ban them and forget about it, and I wish there was a way that I could talk to them one on one, and possibly open their perspectives, but that's pretty much all you can do is just ban them and hope they learn.

Alex - 17:52

Right. So kind of building off of that are there some things that you would like to see in this community that could improve these situations and make these problems a little easier to handle?

K4iley - 18:06

I think, Twitch is doing a pretty good fuckin job so far. There are of course cases where I think people have talked about this all over social media. Where some creators tend to get away with things that others don't. I think that's an issue that needs to be addressed. Not even just with sexism, but just overall in terms of the ToS. A creator says a bad word or something, and they get banned for three days and then they're fine, and then you have another creator who says the same bad word, and they get permabanned. Where's the equity in that? You have one person getting a pretty minor punishment, and then another person getting a major punishment for the same thing. So off the top of my head I guess I've never really, REALLY thought about it, that's the only thing that comes to mind.

Alex - 19:05

All right. You might have an answer for this one, you might not. Do you feel anything is stopping you from investing further in this platform? You think that there's anything that could be potentially holding you back as a result of your gender on here or do you not see that?

K4iley - 19:23

No, I don't think so. I think if somebody is really cut out for this or really cut out for anything, you'll get there. If I don't get there with all the hard work that I put in then that just means I wasn't really cut out for it. You can be male, female, somewhere in between, neither, but if you aren't putting in the hard work and you aren't considered entertaining enough you're not going to go anywhere.

Alex - 19:54

All right. So let's talk about money for a little sec here. I'm not looking to know how much you make, I wouldn't ask that number of you, but Twitch has the standard package of monetization options; you've got subscriptions, donations, bits, the standard system. Do you feel that you utilize those options in any unique way?

K4iley - 20:20

I do song requests for subs and resubs sometimes when I'm doing music streams, but I don't usually just because I feel like it can come off a little bit beggar-ish, you know what I mean? Which I'm not saying that that's the case at all, and I have no issue with anyone doing that for themselves, but it's something that I usually try to avoid.

Alex - 20:50

Is there any monetization options that you use outside of the standard package that Twitch provides?

K4iley - 20:58

I use Patreon. I get paid for that once a month, and I post music and makeup related stuff up on there. Plus like life updates, stuff like that. It's just a little bit more exclusive for my usual content, I guess. Most people who pledge to my Patreon really just do it because they really want to support. I could pretty much post anything I wanted on there and they would still want to support which is very wholesome and makes my heart very fuzzy. Apart from that the only other thing that I really do is I occasionally just do graphics commissions for stream stuff, stream intros, or occasionally I'll do stream panels, stuff like that. Apart from that, pretty much everything comes from Twitch directly.

Alex - 21:53

So when did you implement the Patreon? At what point - what size was your community when you decided to throw that in there?

K4iley - 22:01

I started on Patreon about a year or two ago so I was a little bit smaller than I am now, and I wasn't really sure what I was going to do with my Patreon for a while. I wasn't really using it for a while. Then I finally decided about last year what I was going to do with it. It was about a year and a half ago that I really decided to implement it and really work on it.

Alex - 22:39

So moving on from money, let's talk about social media. So give me an overview of what your social media presence is like, what kind of accounts to manage, how do you operate on them, what's your philosophy of how people should manage social media, so on and so forth?

K4iley - 22:55

Well, I use the basics. I use Twitter the most, I really like Twitter [laughs]. I use Instagram, and I used to have a Facebook "like page" for my stream, but I disabled it because I mean who really uses Facebook anymore? Most people don't really, and I never posted on it so I don't use it anymore. Apart from Twitter, it's mostly Twitter and Instagram, and then like my Discord server.

I'm pretty much just myself on social media. I don't consider myself to have a strict persona to uphold on social media because I just find that exhausting. There is no way in hell I could have the energy to do something like that, it's just not my thing. I just like being myself, and I'm comfortable being myself so that's pretty much how I manage my social media.

Alex - 23:54

Okay, so comparing that to when you first started streaming, how is your social media usage like?

K4iley - 24:02

Pretty much the same, except I was more using my Twitter as a personal Twitter because my stream wasn't - I don't want to say big because my stream is not big at all, but I didn't really have a community. That's a better way to put it, sorry. I didn't really have a community at the time so I really just used my Twitter as a personal Twitter and I kind of used it like a diary sometimes.

Both 24:29

[laughter]

K4iley - 24:31

So I was much more open in a not good way on Twitter.

Alex - 24:38

Okay, was there anything that prompted you to start dialing that back?

K4iley - 24:42

I think I just grew as a person. I just kind of got a better hold on where I was emotionally, and then I also realized I was growing a proper community, and I was having legitimate people, like legitimate other streamers, following me, so I was like "Mmm, this probably shouldn't be used in the same way anymore."

Alex - 25:10

Okay, so what are some of the in your book, what are some of the big do's and don'ts of social media?

K4iley - 25:18

Don't be racist, don't be sexist, don't be homophobic the basics. I don't think I really have to explain that, but I figured I'd include it. Basically just don't be a giant doody head. Um, definitely interact with your community, for sure. I know from a viewer perspective there's nothing I love more than a streamer that is interactive with their community, and makes you feel less like a viewer and more like an actual friend which is also a line you should be careful of. I think there's a good in-between state in a streamer to viewer connection where you can make a viewer feel like a friend without crossing into the "too personal" territory. I really appreciate when a streamer takes their time to actually recognize their community and interact with them. So that's something I definitely think is a must for any internet personality, honestly. Other than that, not being judgmental, not being an asshole, and then just being interactive with the people who follow you and support you. I think those are very basic starting points.

Alex - 26:50

Okay, so taking a step out of social media, let's look at some more IRL networking efforts. Do you do anything like tournaments, conventions, meet and greets, anything along those lines out in the public eye?

K4iley - 27:09

I do conventions when I can. I went to TwitchCon in October. That was a lot of fun, and I go to PAX East pretty much every year.

Alex - 27:19

I love PAX East.

K4iley - 27:22

Yeah, I'm very excited for PAX East this month. I don't really do anything specific for networking. I kind of had the mindset of, if I meet another streamer, and we get along and we become friends great, but it's not something that I try to go out of my way to initiate because I don't want to come off as like leech-y, you know what I mean? I don't want to talk with somebody just in hopes to get something out of it. I want to be friends with somebody, I want to hang out with them, and if we mutually benefit each other while being friends then that's great, but it's not something I ever expect or ever hope for. I do meet and greets when I can at conventions usually just someplace outside of the convention center if the weather's nice or some neutral place inside the convention center. I've never had an official Twitch meet and greet or anything like that, it's usually just been last minute plans announce in the discord the day of kind of meet and greet. So I think I covered everything with that.

Alex - 28:35

All right. What works right now? What are you doing that is keeping everything held together, keeping the numbers growing, keeping your channel prospering.

K4iley - 28:46

Well, being honest with you, my channel's been pretty stagnant for a little while. So I'm kind of at a crossroads figuring out what is the best for my channel. What's best for me and what's best for my community. It's not like we are losing people either so I kind of just play the games that I want to play, story games, I do full play throughs most recently hang out with my community, and just try to make sure I'm enjoying myself and my community's enjoying themselves. I ask for feedback very often, if anybody thinks I could be doing anything differently, if there's games you want to see me play, that kind of thing. I always try to keep it as a very open book in terms of feedback, I'm constantly asking for feedback because otherwise how am I supposed to know what I could be doing better? I mean, I can't really say I'm doing anything to make my channel grow because I'm kind of just at a very stagnant point in my channel at the moment.

Alex - 29:48

Do you feel as though there is anything that has led to that stagnation?

K4iley - 29:53

I think there's definitely something that I could be doing that I'm not aware of yet. I think it's going to be quite the journey figuring out what my big thing is. I feel like every streamer has this one defining moment or one defining thing that they do or game that they play that kind of jumpstarts their growth. So the question is, "Will I ever have that, will I ever find that?" Maybe the answer is maybe I won't, and if I don't, then I always come back to "it is what it is," and it wasn't meant to be, but I will definitely do my best and work my hardest to find that for me.

Alex - 30:38

All right. So going back to one of the earlier questions, just to flesh it out a little bit more. Is there anything, outside of social media, just in streaming in general, is there anything that you do not recommend that other people do?

K4iley - 30:51

Oh, my God, do not do the whole "follow4follow" or "sub4sub" thing.

Alex - 30:56

Oh man, oh yeah.

K4iley - 30:59

Oh, my God, please do not. I know when you see people following you, you think it's working, but those are people that are never going to come into your channel, and therefore, it is not worth it. Like...

Alex - 31:09

How else am I supposed to grow on Twitch?

K4iley - 31:13

[Laughs] Gain your followers organically! What I always did when I first started was, I was a part of Facebook groups that were related to the games that I was playing that allowed people to post their Twitch streams in the group. So that's really what I did, but going around in other people's Twitch chat saying, "Oh, my God, I'm streaming right now check out my channel," or like "I stream too, check out my channel." Don't do that. Don't self-promo on other people's streams, other people's social media, don't do "follow4follow," "share4share." Don't do anything like that. It's not going to get you anywhere.

Alex - 31:50

All right. Anything else to add or do you think that's it?

K4iley - 31:54

Um, I think that's it.

Alex - 31:57

Okay. So kind of a flip on that question, and this will be a little trickier. Is there anything that you think people should be doing more of?

K4iley - 32:10

I think people should...huh.

Both - 32:11

[Laughter]

K4iley - 32:15

I think people should just try to keep a more positive outlook, and I know that's much easier said than done, but every streamer that you have ever watched has been where you are, where I am, where we are, whether you're just starting out, maybe your growth is stagnant. Maybe you're not sure where you're supposed to be going, what you're supposed to be doing? Literally every streamer that you have ever seen has been at that point. So I think the best thing that I can recommend, it's just remember that you are by no means alone in the way that you're feeling and the struggles that you're having, and just find what works for you, what makes you the happiest, what makes your community the happiest, trying to find a happy medium and just keep working for it.

Alex - 33:13

All right. So for the next segment, this is going to be kind of like a little rapid fire section. I got a couple of different topics to go over. I'm going to throw the topic at you, and then just kind of respond with how you currently think about that topic.

K4iley - 33:29

Okay.

Alex - 33:30

So the first is something that you're very familiar with - variety content; elaborate on your thoughts on that.

K4iley - 33:38

I think variety content is probably what most people lean towards. A lot of people say it's not good for growth, but if that's what you enjoy doing, then do it and fuck anyone who says otherwise.

Alex - 33:53

Absolutely. All right, then let's do risk and risk management. So I'll throw a hypothetical at you. Let's say you have been involved in some kind of drama between you and another streamer, between you and your community, but DRAMA, grab the popcorn, check the Reddit threads, how would you go about managing that situation?

K4iley - 34:19

I would try not to be public with stuff like that. But hypothetically, if it was public, I don't know, I guess because I've never thought about it, it's not something I've ever really dealt with, I guess? [Laughs] If it was specifically like a community member, for example, they're being toxic, I would talk to them about it in private and try to sort it out, and depending on the severity of the situation, probably just ban them from the community. If it was another streamer, I think it applies to all scenarios, I'd try to sort it out in private and take care of it that way because I don't think there's really any other way of dealing with drama. Of course, you can capitalize on it, and try to get clout off of it.

Both - 35:14

[Laughter]

K4iley - 35:15

I don't know if that's something that I could do and be able to sleep at night afterwards. So I don't know, I guess I've never really thought about it.

Alex - 35:26

All right and continuing on things that you probably haven't thought about, paid advertising. Meaning going to some third party service, going to somebody who is going to distribute your name, your image, your brand, throughout the internet; promoted tweets, banner ads, YouTube ads, that kind of thing.

K4iley - 35:47

If it's a brand or company that I genuinely like and support then that's my jam, like hell yeah, sign me up. I've worked with companies before that have advertised me or paid me in return for advertisement, and I've always tried out what they've offered first before accepting it. If it's something that I feel that I like, and I feel that my community would like then I'm on board. My big issue with stuff like that is when people are very clearly being paid to advertise something or they're sent products to advertise, and they don't clarify that they were sent that product or that it's an advertisement. That's not something I really see in the Twitch community per se; it seems to be very, very common with the YouTube community, though. So that's really like my only issue with it. If you get paid to advertise something, hell yeah, make that coin.

Both - 36:49

[Laughter]

Alex - 36:50

Okay so for the last one, let's talk about extreme problem users. The people that go beyond the standard Twitch troll, all the ban dodgers, the doxxers, the potential swatters, the absolute fanatics.

K4iley - 37:08

Well, I would definitely have the number of your local police station saved, and it sucks that sometimes you have to consider that, but being involved actively on the internet unfortunately you're bound to run into somebody who is just very extreme. So if you're living with people, for example, I live with my parents. So I've talked to them multiple times about possibly being doxxed, getting swatted, you know, whatever. Explaining to them what that is, and that there's a very slight chance that it could possibly happen so at least if it does happen they will understand a little bit what's going on rather than being like "Oh my God, why is the police at our house like what the hell?!" So definitely talk to the people that you're living with, and have the number to your local police station saved, and if possible, also talk to the people at your local police station. Explain what you do, explain that there are people out there who like to call the police as a

prank, pretending to be you to get the police into your house. So that way, at least from what I've heard, they will call you if somebody calls from an unrecognized number pretending to be you, they will call your home number first to confirm. I'm not sure if it's like that everywhere, but better safe than sorry. So definitely hide all your personal information as much as possible. I personally prefer to not have my last name anywhere, if absolutely possible, I try to hide it completely. I'm very nervous about showing my family on screen. I'll show my parents every once in a while, but I don't usually try to post pictures with them on my public social media. You don't know what kind of weirdos would be out there and would stalk your family. Basically just be paranoid. [laughs] I am pretty paranoid about people finding out where I live especially given that I live in a very small town. So it would be very easy to find me especially given that I have a very uncommon last name. So be paranoid, don't share your personal information on the internet, make the people that you're living with aware of what you're doing, and what could be possible. Get friendly with your local police station, and also make your mods aware. 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. So I think that's everything that I could think of.

Alex - 40:09

All right, so what is next? Do you have any plans in mind for what you'd want to do after live streaming or are you just going to run this gig as long as you can?

K4iley - 40:18

I mean, I'm just going to stream as long as possible until I get sick of it, but in terms of like IRL jobs I would really love to be a makeup artist. As I've expressed earlier, I'm very passionate about makeup, I'm super into it and would love to try and be a makeup artist maybe on the side, maybe pursue something with music if the right opportunity struck me. Apart from that, maybe just go to college and figure out what kind of major I would want to take.

Alex - 40:53

Okay, so for the last question here, do you have any tips, tricks, suggestions, encouragement, and advice. Anything that you could offer to a newer streamer who is just coming to this platform and looking to take things seriously.

K4iley - 41:11

Stay positive, be kind, be supportive of other people basically just overall keeping a positive mindset. Play what you enjoy, what makes you happy, but also what makes other people happy, and try not to get discouraged. It can be very easy to be discouraged in streaming, but try your best to keep your head up.

Alex - 41:36

All right. You think there's anything else that you'd want to add?

K4iley - 41:41

Uh no, no, I think that's everything.

Alex - 41:44

All right. Well, this has been great. I will stop the recording now.