

Tyler Goldner

Professor Richard

ENGW1111

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### Live Streaming Influence

In the digital landscape of today's society, a captivating transformation is occurring. One that captivates the hearts and screens of countless children and young teens. The stage is set. The audience does not gather in a grand theater, but instead a virtual realm where they can watch their favorite creators play games. With every click and keystroke, these platforms alter how people come to know, love, and eventually purchase video games. This paper will seek to demonstrate the potential downsides of this live streaming revolution for game development. This will be shown with increased power disparity between indie developers, negatively affecting the influence of game design, and the impact on the gaming community.

The rise of live streaming services have caused triple-A developers to garner an even larger advantage over indie developers, which negatively impacts the development of new and unique games. The three main ways triple-A developers receive large advantages from live streaming are through increased marketing and advertising, increased sales and visibility, and increased player testing. For marketing and advertising, triple-A developers have a large marketing budget which allows them to hand out more test demos for their game, and pay streamers to play their game live on stream. This causes the majority of the audience on Twitch and Youtube to watch the new game that releases because the most popular streamers are being paid by the triple-A companies to try their new game. This causes indie developers to struggle to promote their games effectively because the smaller companies don't have the ability to pay big

streamers out of pocket, they lack the coordination of a large marketing team, and don't have the same brand association as the large companies (Perks). This causes indie games to receive less attention and traction when they release. Big streamers don't have enough of an incentive to deviate from their normal streaming content to help showcase the indie content because they will not have as many streamers and will make less money.

Sales and visibility is another advantage triple-A developers receive over indie developers because of live streaming services. Indie developers often struggle to sell their games on most marketplaces because of the lack of attention they receive from their inability to advertise as effectively as larger companies. Triple-A companies however have a larger marketing budget in order to advertise their game more prominently, but also receive a large amount of public viewing from Youtube and Twitch. Every time the game is played on a live streaming service, that is a large amount of free advertising that is more effective than reading a review (Johnson). Advertising from live streams also causes the viewer to have a greater sense of personalization because they are able to engage with the game for a greater length and can also guide the stream (Evangelho). This causes indie developers to struggle with having enough advertising for their game to be found, which then causes them to struggle to make enough income from their game. This has an impact on game development as a whole because new unique games will not be able to be played by gamers if the companies go out of business.

With more streamers and viewers watching the large triple-A games, these companies have more people playtesting their games which allows the product to become more refined than indie developed games. Watching and streaming games becomes an extension for playtesting which is valuable for developing games that need to be continually updated to better respond to player reception (Parker). Triple-A developers have a large advantage in the amount of data and

bug reports the game receives because of live streaming which hurts the sales and game quality of indie developed games. Indie developers struggle because gamers consider their games less fully developed than traditional triple-A titles which will hurt game development as a whole.

Furthermore, live streaming services negatively impact game design with the influence it has on the types of games publishers release and maintain. The two ways live streams influence game design is with the conformity of streaming genres, and the lack of creativity from large developers. For large streamers, certain genres of games are better for viewers to watch because the ability to run a chat allows the viewer to feel they are participating in personalizing or control of the game. As a result of prominent streamers focusing solely on specific game genres to maximize their viewership and earnings, this trend prompts both major and independent game developers to concentrate their efforts on creating games within these favored genres. This is because they are more likely to receive free advertising from these influential streamers. This can cause an oversaturation of certain game genres which can be very annoying for the players. This hurts game development as a whole because it causes uniformity among all game companies, and removes creativity from the developers.

The other way live streaming shapes game design is it encourages large developers not to innovate. With all game developers trying to make a new game in an oversaturated genre, there are already lots of different games these companies can use as inspiration for mechanics and designs. Most of the new games made by triple-A developers use what is so readily available, and modify pre existing mechanics and features from other games. This makes all the games made by triple-A developers feel like they are cookie-cutter designs which are very similar and generic to every other game in its genre.

The rise of live streaming has had a major impact on the gaming community as a whole. It has caused a decrease in game sales, diminished excitement for new releases, and decreased the search for unique games. With the rise of live streaming and anyone being able to watch someone play a new upcoming game release, people may decide they don't need to purchase the game to feel the rush of excitement. *The impacts of live streaming and Twitch.tv on the video game industry*, said that "the dedicated viewer could potentially tune into a stream when the streamer begins playing a new game, watch the entire game being played, and then feel satisfied that – having seen the complete game – there is no longer any pressing need to make a purchase of the game" (Johnson). This decrease in potential customers buying games causes game development to make less money than they normally would, and would hurt the creation of new and unique games from their development teams.

Additionally, live streaming has hurt the gaming community because gamers are less excited when a new game releases due to the ease of the rise of early release demos and the ease of watching the game at any time. The rise of developers sending game demos to live streamers to play the game before it has been released to the public has negatively impacted the release of the game. Players are able to watch all the unique mechanics and features that are new to that game before it releases, diminishing the excitement and rush of being able to learn about the game hands-on. This causes the gaming community to feel bored by the game already when it's finally released to the public, and hope the developers hid more content to be released for the public on a later patch. This negatively impacts game development because the large developers are pushed by gamers to make the most content possible in a short amount of time in order to keep the game feeling exciting and maintain their player base.

Finally, the gaming community was shaped by the rise of live streaming as there is now a decreased search in people looking to purchase new games. Many gamers, after watching the new game be streamed on Twitch or Youtube, become discouraged from choosing to purchase new games because of how similar and generic they feel to every other game in the genre. This discourages gamers from buying new video games which harms game development because the large companies producing games are not going to be able to fund as many games to develop with this decrease in sales.

In conclusion, live streaming services has had a large impact on game development because of its impact on the gaming community and industry. While these platforms have provided more ways for developers to receive advertising for their game, this has also caused many people who would have purchased the product to not. While live streaming has changed how games are experienced, it also causes significant challenges for the industry. Balancing the benefits and drawbacks of live streaming is crucial to maintain a growing and healthy game development industry.

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