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Final Project Proposal: Analyzing the Top 200 Streamed Games on Twitch from 2016 to

2023 and the Pandemic Timeline

Mandatory lockdowns and the enforcement of social distancing left people with a

yearning for community and entertainment. For many people, Twitch was the most optimal way

to cure the withdrawals of social physical interactions. Twitch is a livestreaming platform that is

widely known for gaming content. Users with the necessary software and equipment can

broadcast content, referred to as streamers, and other users can interact with the content as well.

The platform skyrocketed in viewership during the national lockdown due to COVID-19. As

more people joined the Twitch space, the content landscape transformed into more than a gaming

spotlight. Categories such as Just Chatting, Food and Drink, Live Music, Creative Arts, and

Coworking became popularized. Twitch served as a medium to bridge connections between

streamers and viewers. This project explores the trends of the top streamed categories of Twitch

and how they change according to the world offline.

Changing viewership and content is important to understand for both commercial and

entertainment purposes. Tracking this data unlocks the ability to predict when streaming on

Twitch is more or less viable, and how susceptible it is to being affected to events such as the

pandemic. Twitch offered an immersive method to still experience restricted activities such as

traveling, dining, and live entertainment. Many streamers and viewers built communities

centered around these experiences. Additionally, gaming was a prominent way for people to

socialize and entertain each other. The rise of multiplayer games of all skill levels was popularized as encouragement for socialization.

This project will investigate the changes in the top streamed categories from 2016 to 2023. Exploring these trends forecasts virality of content and the success of a video game. Social network consumption drastically changed during the pandemic. COVID-19 ignited a surge of globalization on Twitch. This project will explore the changes in the top categories during the pandemic and how that correlates to current events and cultural shifts offline.

The data that will be utilized in this project consists of the top 200 streamed categories every month from January 2016 to September 2024. In total there are 21,000 entries that consist of the game name, the month, the year, hours the game was watched, hours the game was streamed, the peak amount of users watching, the peak amount of channels streaming the game, average number of views, average number of channels streaming in the category, and the viewer to channel ratio. The only qualitative variable is the game name. Game names can be repeated if the game enters the top 200 again but will be associated with different viewership and streaming values. The data will be analyzed in parallel to the CDC Museum's timeline of COVID-19. Comparing the trends in top streamed categories and the timeline of the pandemic illustrates the rise and fall of each category.

This project will examine the trends in video games and categories that were streamed before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Through regression analysis, this project will be investigating if non-gaming content will reign and surpass all time high games, such as League of Legends and Fortnite. Furthermore, what kind of games consistently stay at the top? To answer these questions, these games will need to be tracked over time and investigated for a common theme. The data also has entries for other categories that are not game related rising to

the top. In addition, we will illustrate the rise in viewership transitioning into lockdown and if that viewership was maintained after the mask mandate was lifted. To examine these trends, the relationships between number of viewers and number of hours streamed needs to be studied. This relationship will also need to be measured over time. Using R, the data will be filtered and fitted to models to present these changes.

       The pandemic had an exponential increase in viewership during the pandemic. Twitch served as a unique environment to build communities and experience a piece of humanity that was largely barricaded by masks, social distancing, and germs. The cultural shift to a primarily online social life increased the demand to produce and consume content. Twitch now includes many categories that non-gaming content creators can post in and viewers who seek content outside of gaming can also visit these categories. This project will evaluate the trends in top games and categories streamed and how that aligns with the demands of people during the pandemic timeline.