

Twitch vs YouTube: What's Best for Streaming?



In November 2019, popular Twitch streamer [Jack “CouRage” Dunlop](#) announced that he—like Ninja and Shroud, and King Goliathon before him—was leaving leaving the Amazon-owned streaming behemoth for another platform.

Unlike his fellow Twitch expats, however, Dunlop explained that he was moving to YouTube rather than Mixer.

A platform being popular with a certain crowd doesn't necessarily mean it's the right one for you.

If you're a streamer, or if streaming is something that you're considering starting, you might be wondering what it is that's leading these big names to jump ship from Twitch.

Or you might be asking yourself, “Should I stream on YouTube or Twitch or maybe Mixer?” When it comes to creating and sharing content, each of the platforms have their individual strengths, weaknesses, and personalities.

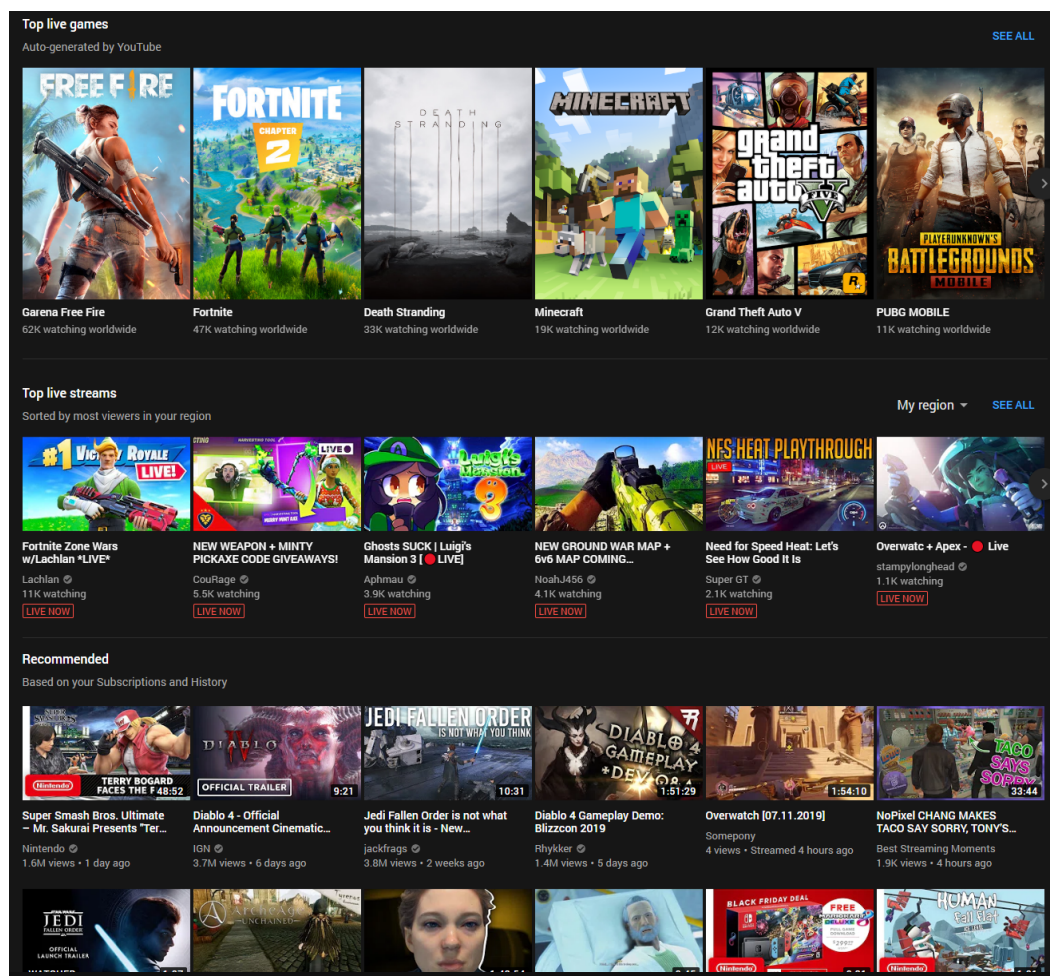
But what's the best platform for streaming?

In another article, we compared [Mixer vs. Twitch](#). But now, let's examine streaming on YouTube vs. Twitch.

Introduction to YouTube as a Streaming Platform

Back in 2015, Google-owned YouTube rolled out a service poised specifically to take on Twitch: YouTube Gaming.

Until that time, YouTube had been known primarily in gaming circles for being a great platform to host static content like Let's play videos, walkthroughs, and other cool content as well as (ugh) trailer reactions.



A look at my current homepage at [YouTube.com/gaming](https://www.youtube.com/gaming)

YouTube was already the leading video platform on the internet, and it had propelled certain gaming enthusiasts to fame (can you say Pewdiepie). As a streaming outlet, however, YouTube had quickly been outclassed by Twitch, even before its acquisition by Amazon in 2015.

Last fall, YouTube began phasing out the YouTube Gaming brand name, and shifted all of the content, channels, and users into the parent service, although you still hear their streaming tech called YouTube Live (Google has a penchant for unoriginal naming).

But don't be fooled into thinking that YouTube's service hasn't improved for gamers since then. If anything, it's better than ever. And it's still the undisputed king when it comes to traditional video hosting.

Meanwhile, Twitch continues to reign supreme in the streaming world. But a platform being popular with a certain crowd doesn't necessarily mean it's the right one for you. Let's take a look at some of the key differences.

YouTube or Twitch: Reaching New Viewers

One of the more substantial differences between the two mega platforms is how they each handle driving traffic to streamers. Take a look:

Browsing top live streams on YouTube

Browsing Twitch

It might not be immediately apparent, but where Twitch's algorithm is basically **pushing the most watched streams** on the service at me by default, YouTube's **serving up a mix of videos**, nearly a third of which have less than 1000 active viewers.

Twitch tends to favor the most popular streams and streamers. That really shouldn't come as a surprise, but as an up-and-coming streamer yourself, it's worth considering.

YouTube may be able to get your stream in front of more new viewers, and if you're also uploading other videos to the service and earning subscribers with, say, your [Let's Play videos](#), YouTube works in your favor by putting that stream in front of your other subscribers.

You'll also notice that YouTube streams each utilize a static thumbnail, so they fit the site's overall aesthetic. By contrast, Twitch basically snaps a screenshot of each live stream and copies it onto the page.

This is not a huge deal, but it means that YouTube streamers have a little more control over their **personal branding**. That's important, as you might remember if you read our post on [How to Become a Sponsored Gamer](#).

As important as these algorithmic and presentational differences are, however, bear in mind that Twitch's overall pool of viewers just can't be beat at the moment. It's a significant difference, too. [Literally three times](#) as many viewers are watching Twitch vs. YouTube.

YouTube or Twitch: Monetization

My current view over at Twitch

When you're starting out, your immediate goals may be just growing your base of viewers, but if your ultimate goal is to make money, you'll need to understand how each platform handles monetization.

We've told you elsewhere [how to make money on Twitch](#), and while the general concepts still apply to YouTube streaming, how YouTube pays content creators and streamers is a bit different.

On YouTube, you earn money either through ad revenue on your videos and streams or through premium subscribers who "join" your channels for \$4.99/month on the service.

YouTube is infamous for de-monetizing content for perceived violations of its often ambiguous terms and conditions, and even some of the most popular creators on the platform occasionally struggle to keep their videos earning ad revenue.

If your content runs afoul of an overly sensitive copyright enforcement service, the burden of proof often lies with you before you can restore your video's monetization.

That said, Twitch also has a bit of a reputation for being, well, twitchy in how they ban users for infractions of their platform's users. YouTube utilizes a three-strike policy, which may feel fairer to users who like to push the boundaries of what they can and can't do on the platform.

At the end of the day, you're going to make the most money when and where you can drive the most traffic, so it's best to choose a single platform to dedicate your time to and begin developing as large a following as possible.

As you're thinking about this, consider what kind of content creation excites you most. Do you want to stream 12 hours a day, 7 days a week? Or are you more of a traditional content creator who just wants to supplement your videos with less frequent or less lengthy streams?

YouTube or Twitch: Other Considerations

If you're leaning towards the latter of the two approaches, YouTube offers a couple cool features that might be worth your time.

First off, YouTube live streams can be easily rewind, which is something Twitch viewers can't traditionally do without some clever workarounds.

Second, YouTube automatically saves all of your streams and posts them to your channel (you can play around with how and where these are saved in your channel settings). The resulting video is kept forever, which means that as you stream over the platform, you're building a permanent library of content for your viewers to look back at.

As is often the case, your own goals and preferences are going to ultimately dictate which platform you should choose to focus on, but for traditional streamers, it's hard to recommend YouTube over Twitch.

Are you making Let's Play videos anyway? Why not stream your play on YouTube and let the platform save your content for you?

However, full-time streamers may not really get a lot of mileage out of these features. Twitch brings much stronger and intuitive chat moderation and controls as well as an army of Amazon Prime subscribers who are basically given free money to throw at one of their favorite Twitch streamers.

Twitch is also ubiquitous. You can stream to it from your Xbox, PS4, PC, mobile, etc., and your viewers can access your streams from any of the same services.

YouTube streaming isn't yet supported from the Xbox One, and mobile gamers need to have over 1,000 subscribers before they're even allowed to stream from their phones.

The Final Verdict

As is often the case, your own goals and preferences are going to ultimately dictate which platform you should choose to focus on, but for traditional streamers, it's hard to recommend YouTube over Twitch.

While you may have a slightly harder time getting the ball rolling on a viewer base on Twitch, the sheer number of potential viewers on Twitch is impossible to argue with.

If your goal is really to hit the big leagues one day, you can't go wrong with Twitch, but you should also sign up for an account [here at Clutch](#) where you can share clips of your streams with our growing community of gamers and content creators. Use our platform to kick start your following at Twitch, and make sure to check out our other guides here [on the blog](#)