

Online Live Streaming for Higher Education

Introduction

Platforms for live streaming content have come a long way in the past few years. It has never been easier to start engaging with your community whenever and wherever you are. Whether it is via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or Twitch, there are ample opportunities to bring people together at the same time online.

There is a lot of potential for higher education to utilize live streaming platforms to foster stronger digital communities all year long. Live streaming can be used for major speakers, sporting events, social experiences, academic discussions and more. Most importantly, live streaming can allow students to feel connected whether they are on campus or not.

Start-Up Process

Generally, all you need to start live streaming is a webcam and an internet connection. You can use your smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer and get going right away on platforms like Facebook.

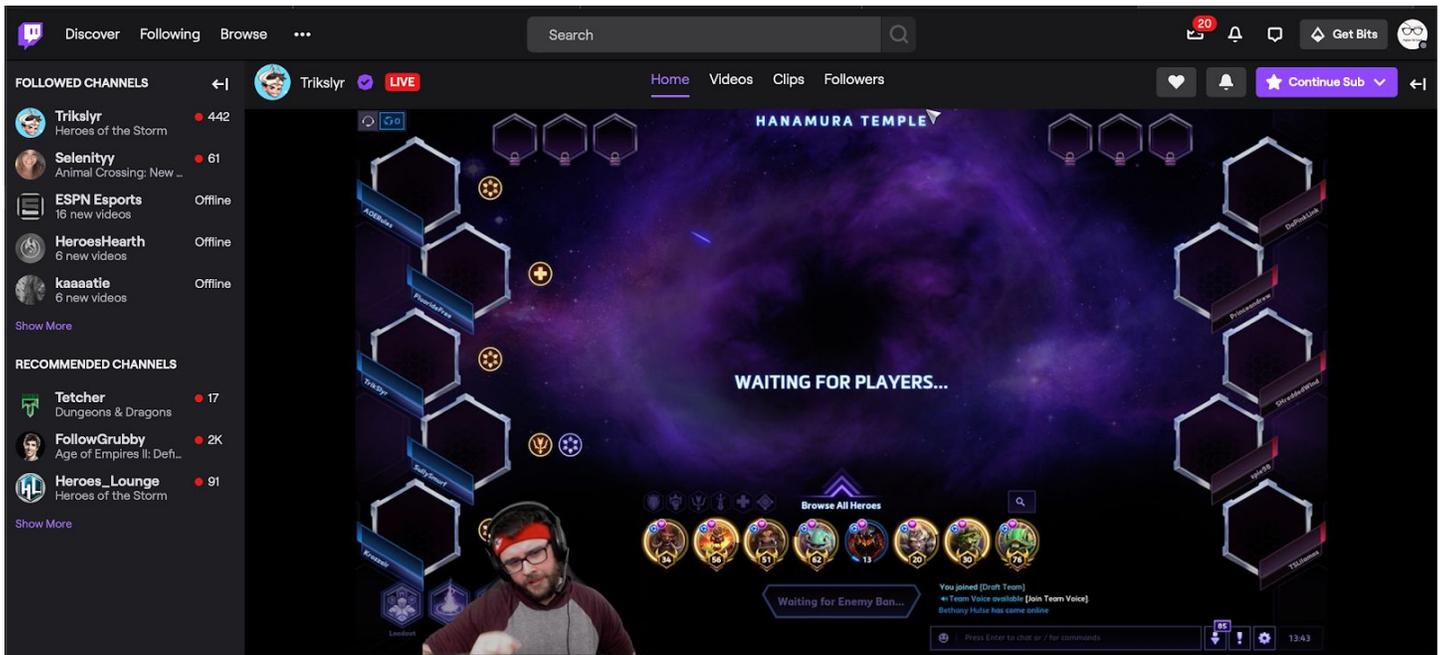
You can get going on any live streaming platform quickly, especially if you already have equipment set up such as a webcam, microphone, and lighting, as well as a good space to broadcast from such as a studio or other room with a good network connection and minimal background noise or distractions.

Platform Considerations

As noted above, you can live stream on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or Twitch.

For Twitch, you need to [download an app](#) to allow you to broadcast your screen and webcam. No additional downloads are needed if you are using the mobile app or website for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube but they are often limited to broadcasting only your webcam.

When using a platform like Twitch, you're able to feature a speaker on video while also sharing your screen. Twitch is commonly used by people to play video games so they can show themselves as they speak to their audience and then also show the game they're playing. Below is an example of what you'd see when watching someone using Twitch to live stream:



On the other hand, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram are more simple, which can be good for impromptu day in the life sort of live streams. You're simply featuring yourself on camera without much other functionality for the presenter.





Pricing Considerations

There is technically not any explicit cost with doing a live stream. The service is available for free as a part of many free social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch).

The more you invest into the production, however, the higher quality the live stream can be.

Here are some items you should consider investing in prior to broadcasting:

- **Microphone** - This should be a USB microphone that can be plugged into your computer or a mixer
- **Audio Mixer** - This allows for you to plug in multiple microphones and manage individual audio levels
- **Webcam** (or smartphone camera) - Try to get something that can capture the highest quality video possible
- **Headset** - This will allow for you to hear your audience well and minimize any audio outputs from interfering with your sound as the presenter
- **Dual Monitor** - This can help when managing a Twitch stream so you can have a screen to present from as well as a screen to manage your streaming dashboard
- **Lighting** - Most people will simply mount a small light onto their monitor and near their webcam so that they can have a strong light and be seen well at all times
- **Graphics** - These would be optional in case you'd like to have a stylized display or unique emojis in your chat
- **Advertising** - You'll need to spread the word about these digital events, so it is helpful to do so via social media paid promotions (since often the stream will be featured on these platforms anyway)
- **Live Streaming Platform** (if you intend to broadcast out to multiple places at once) - You can pay to use tools like Lightcast or Switchboard to host your live stream centrally then feature it simultaneously across your various social media channels.

You may already have access to these resources through your campus marketing and media teams, so be sure to check on what you could utilize for your needs.

Community Guidelines

Whenever you are live streaming, it is important to always have someone moderating the chat. This helps make sure student comments and questions are addressed. You can state community expectations as anyone begins chatting. We suggest reminding students that the campus code of conduct applies to activity in this online space.

Additionally, you may want to limit students from posting links in the chat, have them refrain from vulgar language, and restrict people from spamming the chat with frequent messages or repeating the same message constantly (usually only relevant with large audiences). This is more relevant if you're doing something that is publicly accessible. On Twitch, for example, moderators can delete and ban users who abuse their chatting privileges.



Facilitation

With live streaming the focus is solely on the host, thus it is important to make sure that you as the host are engaging your audience and bringing positive energy to the audience.

Depending on the occasion, you can play music in the background (make sure it is royalty-free), ask questions of your audience and respond to their chat messages as they come in. The feel should be just like it would be in an on campus event: laid back, authentic, and fun.

The end experience should be much like a video conference, only that the host is the sole person speaking while everyone engages via chat. There is still the same potential for sharing videos, documents, digital whiteboards, presentations, etc. You can also record the sessions for future reference.

The opportunities for implementation are endless and alongside the variety of other digital engagement tools available, live streaming can be a useful asset to engage an audience.

For event ideas to Livestream, check out [this virtual corkboard](#).

Resources

[Pros and Cons of LiveStreaming](#)

[Best Comparison of Facebook Live Vs Instagram Live](#)

[Teaching on Twitch](#)



This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Contact Dustin Ramsdell at dramsdell@noodle.com with questions.