

Not Going Viral: Amateur Livestreamers, Volunteerism, and Privacy on Discord

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In May 2015, Discord was released, which is an instant messaging and digital distribution platform designed for hosting and creating multiple gaming communities. Often touted as a replacement for popular software like Skype or TeamSpeak, Discord offered gamers the ability to voice chat, assign community and in-game roles, and livestream. In recent years, when one thinks of game livestreaming, Twitch.tv (Twitch) is often perceived as the premier platform for hosting and monetizing livestreams for thousands of people at any given time. The lucrative or aspirational model of Twitch conceals how the average streamer on the platform only has three active viewers in any given stream (Taylor 36). Unlike Twitch, Discord communities are usually smaller and invite-only to the specific gaming and game livestreaming servers. Essentially, the difference between popularized platforms like Twitch and smaller communities on Discord revolves around accessibility and community formation. Indeed, viewers or lurkers have always been an integral part of gaming cultures and communities to congeal (Orme 4; Britt and Britt 6). Discord facilitates an interactive livestreaming and voice chat culture where the community creates their own practices, communicative exchange, and rules of conduct for being in a particular server.

This article analyzes amateur streamers and their non-monetized streaming practices and platform use of Discord. Instead of interrogating paid streamers on Twitch or other commercialized livestreaming platforms, this article asks: how does Discord maintain an accessible and non-monetized cultural environment for casual livestreaming and community formation? This article examines three aspects of amateur livestreaming on Discord: 1) the community reward-based model and neoliberal complexities of volunteerism, 2) the impact of no copyright infringement and the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to the rise of amateur livestreamers on

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Discord, 3) the privacy and accessibility as perceived by streamers and users of livestreaming on Discord.

Welcome to Discord: Overview of Livestreaming

Prior to Discord's release in 2015, most gamers used software like Skype or TeamSpeak to achieve synchronous, real-time interaction for major boss fights, in-game events, or community-hosted live tournaments. Although Discord takes up more computer storage and uses more computer RAM than TeamSpeak, Discord has an advanced API and integration that makes chatting, tagging and alerting members, and going live relatively easy. Furthermore, the sheer accessibility of being interactive with livestreaming makes Discord a popular choice for gamers and, since the COVID-19 pandemic, for teachers, study groups, and other previous in-person interactions that had to go digital. The popularity of game livestreaming in the past decade has resulted in burgeoning scholarship that interrogates platforms like Twitch, which houses the majority of moderate to widely famous streamers (Taylor 212; Woodcock and Johnson 5). Imperatively, most Twitch livestreamers do not earn money immediately, and the average streamer as of 2018 had 3 viewers (Taylor 36). Instead of focusing on popular or aspiring livestreamers, it is key to interrogate amateur livestreamers and their viewers who are not monetizing or aiming for corporate sponsorship for their content.

Indeed, most of the time Discord is used as a layperson's way of streaming. Audience or spectator interactions of other livestreaming platforms occur in a close-knit setting as audience members, unless muted or banned by a moderator, can actively talk in a voice channel while watching the stream. Furthermore, voice channels on Discord allow for multiple streams to occur concurrently and audience members to preview and then watch multiple streams based on their current desires. To be sure, the pull for merely showing content is that Discord allows one to simply go live without any technological investments, which circumvents the technological affordances of livestreams like a professional microphone, decent lighting, and a commissioned overlay that are key characteristics of a successful Twitch stream. Oftentimes, on Twitch or YouTube Gaming, streamers will have an entire profile page, overlay, and other customized emojis, which without graphic design or other digital illustration experience becomes expensive to commission. Discord provides a space to build community while maintaining a level of exclusivity, ease of access and entry, and pseudo-privateness.

Livestreaming on Discord is also crucial for fan-made and other copyrighted games, music, and videos. Often, a fan-made emulator or private server of popular games like *Pokémon*, *World of Warcraft*, *MapleStory*, or *Super Smash Bros.* are not allowed to be streamed on Twitch; however, since Discord allows servers to self-moderate and provides a pseudo-private streaming space, streamers can play and have an audience to strategize fan-made games that would otherwise infringe copyright. Although Discord is a Voice over IP – technology that allows voice calls using an Internet provider and connection – instant messaging and digital distribution platform, it exhibits qualities of a social media platform that merely allows its users to socialize, self-moderate their own content, and go livestreaming without any investment or risk of infringing copyright.

Methods

To examine how Discord is used as an amateur, interactive, and pseudo-private livestreaming platform, I participated in several game nights, movie screenings, and casual streaming of games like *Among Us*, *MapleStory* private servers, *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate*, and *Pokémon* emulators across several Discord servers. Throughout this article, I rely on sentiments from conversational chats during livestreams as well as conversations typed out in voice chat text channels, which allows gamers who cannot talk or have access to a microphone to type their response instead. For this project, demographics were not collected regarding gender self-determination, sexual orientation, race, and disability in order to maintain the often-anonymous aura of Discord; however, if discussions around race, gender, and other identities occurred, I attempted to probe and converse during the stream. Most of the servers I had access to and participated in mirrored conversations of live chat, in which conversations not about the game would be glossed over or quickly changed, especially around politics.

As Terri Senft has argued in her influential work on camgirls and microcelebrity, online interactions need to be taken as seriously as physical interactions (16); Senft's provocation is amplified by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has shifted most of one's everyday life to the digital realm. To capture and organize my data, I used MAXQDA Data Management Software to aid in deploying a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss) in the thematic coding of all screenshots and livestreaming conversations. To protect my participants, I followed the Association of Internet Researchers Internet Research:

Ethical Guidelines 3.0 (franzke et al.). Full Discord usernames and names referred to are redacted in screenshots; avatar pictures remain if they are non-human or if explicit permission was obtained. The following codes that pertained to how Discord was being used by amateur livestreamers based on my observational data were the following (underscores symbolize related themes that occurred in unison): Donations, Community, Friends_Content, Access_Difficulty, Privacy, and Gender. My next section briefly discusses relevant literature for this project before proceeding to use the mentioned codes to discuss and analyze neoliberal volunteerism, not going viral and pandemic streaming and privacy on Discord.

Affective Labor & Amateur Gaming Communities

Critical theory has often conceptualized affective and immaterial labor as part of abstract, non-paid forms of labor. For instance, philosopher Michael Hardt defines affective labor as “the creation and manipulation of affects,” which can include and is one of many parts of immaterial labor (96). Immaterial labor encapsulates the production of non-paid or abstract work such as emotions, care work, or knowledge production (Hardt 94). Affective labor is not outside of the economic process and is a product of capital in the current economy (Hardt 90). Here, affective labor is used to understand forms of work that are time and emotionally consuming, yet do not result in any direct forms of monetary compensation. In other words, affective labor refers to the invisible or obscure forms of labor. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize interlocking systems that determine whose labor often becomes and is expected to become invisible or obscure in the backdrop of capitalist production. Feminist scholars like Kyle Jarrett (2015) and Tatiana Terranova (2000) assert that the affective production of culture, particularly relating to digital labor, does not exist outside of entrepreneurial contexts and is deeply embedded in forms of neoliberal logics of individualism and meritocracy.

Feminist scholars, like those aforesaid, have theorized about the expanding role of affective or emotional labor in everyday life, such as talk shows, flight attendants, and, most recently, creative industries like content creators on YouTube, Twitch, or other platforms. Self-help, health, and happiness have shifted from the private (housework) sphere to the public televised sphere (Illouz 22). In *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Alice R. Hochschild examined how emotional or affective work occurs in both the public and private spheres by analyzing flight attendants and bill collectors. Working with affect can

be physically and mentally exhausting like factory or manual work (Hochschild 261). Content creators (e.g., YouTube Influencers) are doing “passionate work” that goes beyond the standard working day as identified by Angela McRobbie. Furthermore, game livestreaming has become a recent gold rush or lucrative business venture given the large reward purses at national esports competitions (Woodcock and Johnson). In other words, content is not merely produced for visibility, but rather is a signpost of carving out a niche and a passionate job for oneself to fall within the pillars of happiness that neoliberalism requires. Indeed, popular content creators and livestreamers use their experience with how they may have had depression and anxiety to maintain the mold of passionate work as a remedy to one’s mental and physical health instead of various labor and lack of structural resources in place.

Amateur gaming communities function under various complexities of neoliberal and affective rhetoric already mentioned, however, they do so without expecting monetary compensation. Communities, generally, are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder). Amateur gaming communities often function like what Brian Britt and Rebecca Britt have called competitive communities of practice. Britt and Britt define competitive communities of practice as balancing “the tension between internal and external competition and cooperation, exploiting the benefits of each without allowing any one influence to dominate and catalyze undesirable behaviors” (5). In other words, competitive communities of practice may compete with one another to get the best gear or be a higher rank on a particular game but will still assist one another.

This competitive community of practice plays out via livestreaming on Discord as both a Let’s Play and walkthrough when other players are struggling on completing content. For instance, Figure 1 is a screengrab from a livestream where the author of this paper was unable to get out of the cave without losing all their Pokémon in battles, as healing items are prohibited in this *Pokémon* fan-made game. Although this server was holding a contest to see who can clear Insane difficulty first, with the winner receiving a special Discord tag and @ notifier, the streamer still showcased a strategy to get out of the cave unscathed. Additional members joined the livestream to discuss strategy and chat during the gameplay. As previous game studies scholarship has discovered, livestreaming viewership, especially during a pandemic, provides a variety of social interactions, exchange of

information and strategies, and various affective or emotional needs (Chen and Lin; Hilvert-Bruce et al.; Orme; Taylor).

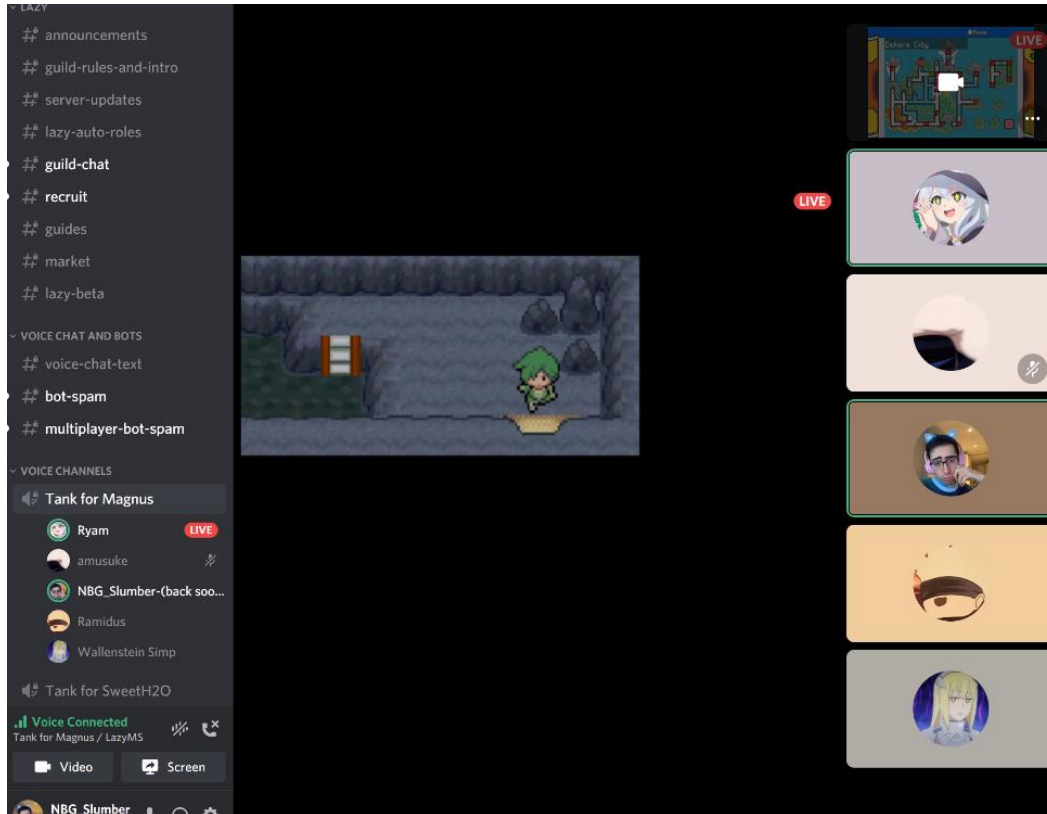


Figure 1. Screenshot from a livestream where the author of this paper requested help on how to complete a Pokémon fan-created dungeon.

Neoliberal Volunteerism: Communal Donations & Personalization

Rather than individual streamers receiving donations or monthly payments, Discord uses a server-wide boosting approach that benefits everyone on the server. Discord uses a three-tier system that unlocks more perks for the entire server community per individual donation or boost (Discord). For instance, if a server receives two boosts, the entire server community receives level one perks, which allows for the expansion of 50 additional emoji slots for a total of 100 emojis. Additionally, it gives everyone on the server 128 kilobytes per second of audio quality for voice chats, allows livestreams to be boosted to 720P and 60 frames per second.

Furthermore, it also gives a custom server invite background along with the ability to make an animated server icon that embodies one's community. Level two requires at least 15 server boosts; the entire server receives level one perks along with livestreams being boosted to 1080P and 60 frames per second. Moreover, all members can now upload files of up to 50 megabytes, which is ideal for short clips from livestreams or other in-game moments. Boosting also allows members to get an individual icon next to their name and changes based on how long they are boosting. My purpose in focusing on Discord's tiered community benefit system here resembles the overall work of community building and how invested people become in their community based on how their avatar icon, roles, or other server benefits change over time. To be sure, the perks and length of support often determine a server's activity and longevity; servers that reach levels two and three are often populous and host in-person and digital events. Finally, individuals who have boosted a particular server for several months will often be asked if they want to become a moderator (mod) for specific events or streams.

Discord provides a monthly cost option to increase and personalize one's experience across servers. The low monthly costs for Discord Nitro-Classic or Discord Nitro is \$4.99 and \$9.99 U.S. per month, respectively. Discord Nitro-Classic and Discord Nitro allows for custom emojis where people can upload or create their own emojis into the server and allows one's profile to have their own animated avatar and claim a custom tag. Furthermore, regardless of server boosting, a Nitro member will always receive two free server boosts, which means they can essentially elevate any server to level one automatically and share benefits with everyone in the server. This is important because this type of approach signals community building on Discord and for life sharing and the importance of emojis a session and customize emojis to relate to people streams.

A major perk of server boosting and monthly subscriptions in relation to community formation are custom and animated emojis. Emojis are popular digital pictograms that can appear in text messages, emails, and across social media platforms and create a communal bond (Stark and Crawford). Like custom emojis or emotes on Twitch or YouTube Gaming for subscribers, Discord emojis are endless and allows anyone within the server to access them. When one goes live on Discord, most servers will have a voice chat text channel for those who do not have a mic or the ability to talk currently so that the streamer(s) and viewers can still see and participate with those muted.

The attraction to both community server boosting and a monthly payment to Discord is ultimately bound to the server-wide rewards and personalization of emojis on a server. Luke Stark and Kate Crawford have argued that emojis embody and represent the tension between affect as human potential and as a productive force that capital continually seeks to harness through a communality of affect that is bound to market logics of capital. Emojis are used to express and exchange various modes of affect such as approval, surprise, and anger. Furthermore, emojis on many livestreaming or gaming-focused platforms are a way of building and sustaining a community. For Discord, emojis are often customized for that specific server based on livestream events, personalities of members, or other viral moments are taken from Twitch, YouTube, or other social media platforms. However, this community is formed through individualized donations or subscriptions, which are part and parcel of neoliberal subjectivity. These individualized donations may benefit the entire server through better sound and video quality and server-wide emoji use but revolves around the individual demonstrating acts of kindness that do are rewarded. Also, individual donators are more likely to be rewarded by becoming moderators of the server or having access to private channels to make server-wide decisions. A donator will often receive a designation on how long they have been boosting a server, but will also be put into their own group, which lets everyone know in the server that they have donated to support and improve the community. This segues to my next section on neoliberal subjectivity and how server-wide perks and emoji use maintain the grammar of happiness that is expected from individuals on various platforms to provide their community.

Additionally, on Discord, community forms through acts of volunteerism that sustain the grammar of happiness within neoliberal subjectivity. Here, subject formation occurs through Discord's platform via unpaid, affective investments and technological positivity. In other words, neoliberal subjectivity is concerned with constructing the individual as a rational, responsible, and positive presence on platforms like Discord. Although the community and group benefit from these donations, the need for the individual to maintain positivity and provide additional resources resonates with what Miranda Joseph has pointedly argued: community and volunteerism constructs a liberal, individualistic, willing, and choosing subject. Indeed, boosting a server is an act of volunteering to help foster the server's community and amplify livestreaming and emoji capabilities, as well as interactions for the entire server. This aligns with Joseph's provocation of volunteerism as constituting a liberal subjectivity at the site for a non-profit

organization (Joseph 113). Although Joseph is talking about non-profit governmental organizations while Discord is a profitable organization, the liberal subjectivity as discussed previously extends to the communal use of emojis and volunteerism for amateur livestreaming communities. For the livestreaming and emoji capabilities to be sustained, the individual must continue to subscribe each month and use their server boost, which is an additional cost, to that specific server. However, as with the various server levels, many smaller to moderately sized servers do not reach level three requirements.

Discord forgoes content moderation and automatically flagging content in favor of having individual servers moderate their own content. The exception is for cases of child pornography, in which images of children are automatically removed by an automated process. Additionally, any server marked as not safe-for-work (NSFW) will not work and be completely censored on iOS devices but will work on their desktop version. For content moderation, Discord servers usually rely on and assign unpaid, volunteer moderators to sanitize and prevent any hate speech via text or emojis throughout regular chat and livestream chats. These moderators are often long-time members of the server and have a temporal investment in ensuring the server's longevity. My next section will dive into the various copyright and access that is afforded via livestreaming on Discord.

Not Going Viral: Copyright, COVID-19, & Access

Those familiar with Twitch and YouTube Gaming likely understand that copyright infringements are a common occurrence of uploaded livestreams or livestream clips. Additionally, fan-made games, ROM Hacks, or private gaming servers are often not allowed to be streamed or monetized on the aforesaid platforms. Since Discord uses a server-based system that allows for a pseudo-private space or invite-only channels, amateur streamers use Discord to avoid copyright claims and removal of content when streaming. Most Discord livestreams are ephemeral and are not archived when a stream concludes unless a streamer was connected to their Twitch concurrently or were using Open Broadcaster Software or another recording method to archive and highlight gameplay. Indeed, livestreaming on Discord occurs under community-oriented practices, especially through the self-assigning of roles.

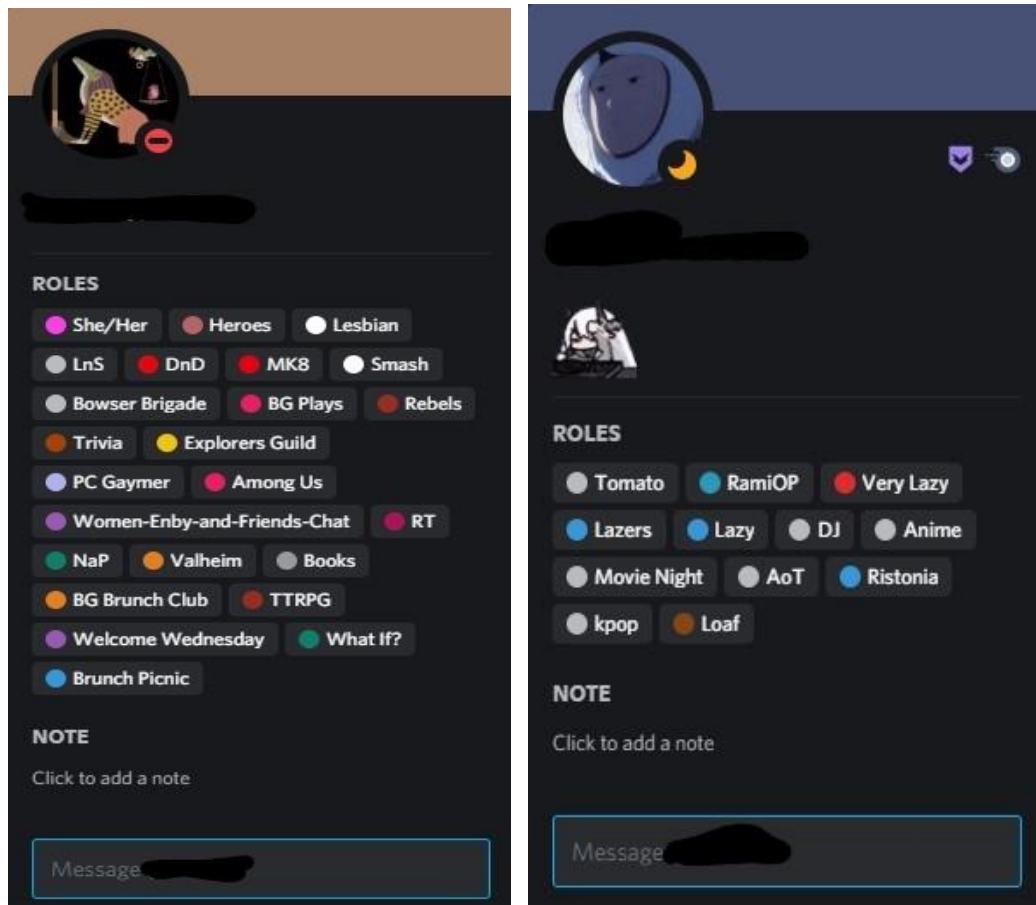


Figure 2A and 2B. Self-assigned roles in Discord allows for the personalization of alerts.

Most of the gaming servers on Discord have self-assigned roles so that one can receive alerts whenever one of their roles is tagged or if someone in that role goes live. Oftentimes, most server channels will have a separate text-only channel that will hyperlink to one's Twitch account or simply mention they are currently playing a game or sharing their screen. In Figures 2A and 2B, two profiles are taken from two different servers. Figure 2A is from a local East Coast Variety Gaymer Discord where one can label their pronouns or sexual orientation along with tags to watch Ru Paul's Drag Race, attend a public gaymer gathering, join a dedicated space and discussion about gender or sexuality, or receive a notification ping if someone goes live in a specific game. Figure 2B is from a *MapleStory* private server Discord

where various in-game events and boss raids along with community anime and movie nights are self-assigned. For instance, these self-assigned roles allow for a variety of communities within the server to congeal that are not necessarily bound to game livestreaming. Discord's screen sharing option became an alternative to screen movies, anime, and other content in addition to game livestreaming. Since Discord has a variety of features, screen sharing a movie or series on Netflix or other streaming servers would occur with relative ease without fear of a copyrighted black screen, reproducing a virtual couch space.

As a response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Discord increased the livestreaming and screen share limit from 10 to 50 people in a channel (Locke). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in schools going online and the loss of many jobs, which, according to the participants, allowed them to be on the platform and livestream casually and more often. With digital interactions being at an unprecedented high on Discord because of the aforementioned reasons, there were more opportunities to casually livestream movies and gameplay for a small audience. Instead of merely voice chatting about an in-game moment, boss raid, or event, folks can simply go live and engage with their friends within two clicks.

During a *MapleStory* private server stream, I asked four people why they stream daily on Discord rather than Twitch and Rina commented at length,

For people who aren't tech savvy all the programs and things you have to get set up to actually stream on twitch might [be] overwhelming. Streaming on Discord is literally like two clicks, and you can stream. I don't have the money since I lost my job at Old Navy because of the pandemic. I can't commission an artist for a cool overlay that I would like to see on Twitch. I guess I could have used a free one, but I guess it really depends on what you're looking for when you're streaming. I don't want fulfillment. I just want to stream content and have fun.

Rina's testimony revolves around access and having fun, which the other spectators agreed with. First, accessibility pertains to ease of use via financial investments, technological affordances, and being authentic. Accessibility was a consensus when I popped in several livestreams and probed about why Discord over Twitch. Having the ability to go live for free and not worry about being aesthetically pleasing were all advantages of streaming on Discord. Accessibility also means one can stream without investing, potentially scarce, financial resources into streaming equipment, custom overlays, and learning how to use various software in conjunction with Discord. Livestreaming on Discord essentially allows streamers

to not emphasize their equipment or spatial set-up to that of professional or burgeoning streamers on Twitch. Livestreamers on Discord can merely click a button, go live, and just have fun instead of focusing on moderating their language to be family-friendly and thinking about soliciting potential subscriptions or one-time donations.

Accessibility also does not compel streamers to spend several hours on content and can showcase or highlight shorter moments of gameplay that one wants their friends to watch. Second, and perhaps more importantly, “I just want to stream content and have fun” dispels the myth around livestreamers aspiring to become professional streamers. Although livestreaming has become a lucrative business, many streamers on Discord simply want to show content have it consumed by their fellow server community. Indeed, this resonates with Adrienne Shaw’s work on gaming culture being defined by the consumption and circulation of video games (42). Additionally, Stephanie Orme has argued that the shared sentiment of a livestream makes spectators just as important, knowledgeable, and valuable members of the community as the livestreamer (Orme 3). Although streamers are not earning an income on Discord, they are engaging in constant knowledge production and exchange of strategies during streams. My next and final section will explore why streamers prefer Discord’s innate privacy over Twitch’s public-facing profiles.

Why Not Twitch?: Spectatorship & Privacy

If the average number of viewers on a Twitch stream is three, then what affordances does Discord offer over the premier livestreaming platform? Indeed, even if a streamer had a few to no viewers, there is always the happenstance of becoming famous on Twitch and earning an income. Besides accessibility and producing content on Discord, amateur streamers referred to privacy concerns and the difficulty in hiding their profile and past streams from the public as well as the comfortable environment of streaming for an audience that they somewhat already know. One streamer, Chris, on a *Pokémon* focused Discord pointed out that,

Going live on Discord means privacy. You can choose whoever you want to watch your stuff because you stream for channels you wanted to join like friend discords. Since im not that much comfortable to share my gameplay with strangers.

Chris's testimony alludes to the fact that Discord does not store one's stream, unlike Twitch. Although one can disable that feature in Twitch, it is not accessible and when first creating a Twitch account, most amateur streamers are unaware that this feature exists. Furthermore, going live on Discord ensures, for most streamers, that one will generally know that the toxicity of random strangers coming into a stream will not exist. Toxicity is quelled via the pseudo-private space of Discord and potential spectators already being interested in the game's genre. Additionally, every Discord server has a set of rules and conduct created by the server admins and moderators that one must read and agree to before having access to other channels and streams. Although going live on Discord entails comfortability among one's spectators, both Twitch and Discord retain similar levels of information and analytics about its users.

The importance of comfortability and privacy around one's audience is a key reason that amateur streamers do not elect to use Twitch, yet this impacts women and femme gamers differently. Ereb, one of the only self-identified women who participated in casual conversations, emphasized Twitch's toxic culture around girl gamers as a deterrent for streaming. Ereb commented,

I would stream on Twitch if I got into it and knew how, but there's a stigma against Girl Gamers usually on that platform. So, I usually stream on Discord where there are people I am more familiar with.

Ereb's statement around the stigma against Girl Gamers on Twitch revolves around a series of policies that the platform has implemented around combating harassment towards women. However, Twitch has often victim-blamed and enforced dress codes particularly for women streamers with regards to full or partial nudity. Although male streamers can often be shirtless or have more of their chest exposed, women streamers who wear tank tops are often seen as simply trying to gain more views instead of gaming. As such and with Discord, showing one's face during a livestream is optional as the content being focused on is the game and strategizing via audio chat rather than thinking about the person's personality or aesthetic. Furthermore, a particular server's spectators will be folks who one is familiar with and who has agreed to the community-formed guidelines.

The community-formed guidelines around spectatorship and privacy also revolve around emojis as well. Some of the most versatile are the infamous Poggers or PogChamp emojis from Twitch. Prior to January 2021 and inflammatory remarks supporting the white supremacist insurrection on the United States capitol, Ryan "Gootecks" Gutierrez was the face of the PogChamp emoji on Twitch as well

as other platforms, like Discord (Verge 1). Twitch proceeded to ban this emoji, yet it still exists and circulates on Discord because of Discord's lax policy around content moderation and having moderation responsibilities fall to individual server owners and their moderators. Still, yelling poggers or responding with a poggers emoji during a Discord livestream is essentially generating an interactive model of communicative technologies that are essential to affective labor practices around privacy and community-formed guidelines.

In other words, the pseudo-private spaces of Discord servers allow conversations around potential problematic emoji use to be discussed among the server owner and admin but is often divorced from political attachments. Emojis during a livestream are apoliticized and seen as mere reactions rather than discussing politics. This is not to say that emojis like the original poggers or that a plethora of racist, anti-Semitic, or homophobic emojis do not exist throughout Discord servers; servers are ultimately responsible for determining what poses harm or potential hate to their members rather than the platform as an entity. However, the moderation and privacy afforded via the use of these emojis revolve around interactive models of engaging in streams that are essential to the free labor practices and continual server-driven content moderation that are the tenets of livestreaming servers on Discord.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, I have used Discord for over five years to chat in real-time with various gamers, gaymers, and colleagues. Additionally, since the COVID-19 pandemic and mass stay-at-home orders in 2020, I have used Discord to casually stream and watch other amateur streamers. Discord provides an accessible, non-corporate format where one does not have to set up a profile or an overlay to stream or host a movie night for their server. Additionally, server admins and moderators can create and manage their own community through a variety of roles and personalized emotes and sobriquets. Indeed, community management occurs through a variety of strategic communicative exchanges that ultimately deepens their knowledge and expertise with one another on an ongoing basis (Zimmerman 911). In other words, the communities that form and are managed on Discord are currently and mostly without corporate involvement, which creates a decentralized network of communal power for Discord servers and amateur streamers.

This paper has provided several benefits of Discord's tiered community benefit system and pseudo-private livestreaming space. Although these are seemingly inclusive practices, Discord's lax moderation policies and variety of privateness allow racism, sexism, and transphobia to run rampant on some servers. First, Discord's lax moderation policies put an onus on the server owners or administrators to have volunteer moderators remove racist, sexist, and transphobic speech and emojis. At the time of writing, only servers that are official Discord partners receive moderation support from the platform. Second, although providing private communities, white supremacist and doxing Discord servers exist. Dubiously so, members of aforesaid servers are known to infiltrate and scrape user content such as Discord handles and server chats and then post it within their home server to potentially dox or harass folks. In 2021, Discord has stated that they have deleted more than 300 servers that were dedicated to hate (Allyn); however, this does not mitigate the actions of using an open-source text and chat exporter and posting the information elsewhere. Furthermore, Discord servers are easily archived, and templates are often generated that will revitalize a deleted server quickly. Finally, if an amateur streamer wanted to potentially earn revenue, they would have to learn an entirely new platform and gain the ability to have a follower, which Discord in its current pseudo-private server spaces does not currently afford the streamer.

Throughout this article, I discussed how communal donations and personalization of individual Discord servers may be outside corporate logics that have subsumed Twitch and YouTube Gaming, yet is still bound within neoliberal subjectivity through individual volunteerism. I then moved on to discuss how streamers did not care about going viral or making an income from livestreaming, but merely producing content and engaging in the circulation of ideas. Finally, this paper contributes to recent critical discourse about livestreaming platforms by expanding the narrative beyond Twitch and YouTube and understanding how non-aspiring professional or part-time streamers conduct expectations around privacy within their community. Interrogating how livestreaming occurs in non-corporatized spaces is imperative to understand how the majority of livestreamers in smaller communities are forming everyday friendships and engaging in strategic communication. The material dynamics that structure amateur streamers and expectations of accessibility and privacy have just begun to be valued in gaming cultures.

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