

FEW LIVESTREAMING APPS BEYOND FACEBOOK LIVE

NEW YORK: Live video is growing more popular as a way for families to share big moments with far-away loved ones and for artists and athletes to connect with fans. Livestreaming has also made the news in recent weeks as House Democrats used Periscope to broadcast a sit-in over gun control after the Republican majority cut off television cameras. It was also got attention when a Minnesota woman used Facebook Live to stream footage of her dying boyfriend after he was shot by police. And it might come up during the Olympics if spectators and athletes livestream events publicly - a violation of ticketing and Olympic rules and a challenge to the billions of dollars TV companies pay for rights. Below are some of the most popular ways to livestream from your phone:

FACEBOOK LIVE

Anyone with a Facebook account can livestream anything using Facebook's app. To use it, tap the empty box where your status update would go. A menu should pop up with the option for "live video." A couple of taps later, you are live, broadcasting to your friends. You can change the privacy setting to make your live video public, too. The video is available for replay once you are done. You can delete it or save it on your phone if you want.

PERISCOPE

The Twitter-owned video-streaming app made its debut about a year ago, well-timed with the exponential growth of people watching and taking videos on their smartphones. You can broadcast to select followers or the broader public. You can share your precise location or keep it private. Viewers can send comments, and streams can be shared on Twitter, Facebook or other social media services.

MEERKAT

Seventeen months ago, Meerkat was the darling of the South By Southwest Interactive tech confab, seemingly destined to make livestreaming the next hot thing. Then came Periscope and Facebook Live, and Meerkat's popularity dropped. The company is no longer focused on livestreaming and has instead "pivoted" - Silicon Valley speak for shifting resources elsewhere when your first (or second, or third) idea doesn't work.

YOUNOW

You sign in with their Twitter, Facebook, Google or Instagram account to stream live videos. YouNow also lets you "discover talented broadcasters" and video chat live with people around the world, as its website touts. Music is an especially popular broadcast topic, but you'll find the usual stuff as well, such as people livestreaming themselves as they sleep. Zzzzz.

TWITCH

The Amazon-owned livestreaming service started off as a way for gamers to stream their gameplay and show off their skills. Now, Twitch is broadening its reach. It has added channels in its "creative" area for people to broadcast live music, drawing, programming and so on. You can pay a subscription fee for certain benefits on channels, and even tip performers. People can livestream from traditional computers, too - not just smartphones, as most other services require. - AP



ANAHEIM: In this Thursday, June 23, 2016, photo, Erick Armas, left, captures video of, from right, Jordan Hoyle, Violet Summersby, George Padilla and Sue Evelyn Gil, who were live broadcasting from the live.me booth at VidCon, an annual convention for the fans of stars from YouTube, Vine, Instagram and other video platforms, at the Anaheim Convention Center.



CANTON: This photo provided by the SutherlandGold Group shows Casey Cooper at his home in Canton, Ga., on the "Coop3r Livestream Set." — AP photos

BOOM IN LIVE VIDEO HELPING FEW CREATORS MAKE A LIVING EMERGING AS A LUCRATIVE CORNER OF THE INTERNET

ANAHEIM: Casey Cooper is one of the most famous drummers on the planet right now. He has a million followers on YouTube, and his flaming-sticks drumming cover of Ellie Goulding's "Burn" is insane. But he'd just prefer you skip his recorded performances and instead catch him live - on streaming video, that is - because he can make more money that way.

Live video is fast emerging as a lucrative corner of the internet where artists can profit from fans who tip lavishly in order to rub virtual shoulders with their favorite broadcasters. Startups such as Ampli.fi and YouNow are helping foster a digital economy around live video. Now, deep-pocketed tech goliaths like Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat are joining the party. Different performers have different reasons for preferring live video. Cooper, 24, says fan tips can bring in much more than his hundreds of millions of views on YouTube, where copyright holders claim the ad revenue for use of their underlying songs.

Recording labels haven't reached into live performers' tip jars as they can't really replace downloads or streams of songs. A handful of sites including YouNow have registered to pay songwriting royalties, but the fee is minimal, according to the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. Cooper's first session on Ampli.fi, a musician-focused streaming service, netted him nearly \$100 in about an hour.

Power to the people

"It's so powerful," says Cooper, who broadcast his live show from his home in Canton, Georgia. "People will say, 'Please, please, please just shout me out. Say my username.'" Such intense fan interaction is one reason internet and media companies are jump-starting their live-video efforts. Facebook is spending tens of millions of dollars recruiting celebrities such as Kevin Hart and Gordon Ramsay for shows on its Facebook Live system. YouTube

just announced the ability to go live from your mobile phone. And cable giant Comcast is among several companies that invested \$15 million in October in YouNow, a live-streaming service popular among teens.

How popular? Just ask Sandra Alvarez, a 14-year-old student from Los Angeles who says she used to spend \$50 a month - more than half her allowance - tipping broadcasters on YouNow. She would get notified whenever one went live; with some, she says, she would tune in "basically every time." Some services like upstart Live.me cultivate such devotion by rewarding Alvarez and other followers with daily dollops of digital currency that they can use to buy their favorites virtual gifts.

Recorded live

But live video isn't always easy to watch. Broadcasts on Twitter-owned Periscope are regularly over before many people even find out about them. Live video requires habits that feel like a return to the old days of broadcast TV. So more companies are giving users a way to save and share recordings - though at that point they're not really live anymore, of course.

Facebook Live stored its videos from the start. That allowed Candace Payne's giggling live selfie of trying on a Chewbacca mask to become an internet sensation with 160 million views since May, making it Facebook's most popular "live" video so far. Periscope is testing the ability to save videos longer than the customary 24 hours by adding a "save" hashtag to a stream title. YouNow is adding "Moments" for viewers to share snippets of streams.

Fan energy into money

The big question is whether and how live video can turn into a real business. One revenue source is advertising. Twitter, for instance, will stream 10 Thursday Night Football games in the coming season and has already

sold 60 percent of its ad spots. But the real prize could be tapping into the spontaneous urge for fans to support small-scale streamers with whom they feel an instant, real-time connection. It's a little like tipping buskers, but with the convenience of credit cards and the distance of the internet.

Many fans will pay \$5 a month to get VIP status with an artist, says Ampli.fi founder Bart Decrem, a serial entrepreneur who sold a mobile game startup to Disney in 2010. That mostly just gets them a gold star beside their username in the chat room - though that boosts their chance of being noticed by the artist. "It's completely intangible," Decrem says. "That's the most powerful thing."

Weekend at Bernie's

Such intangible economics have helped 71-year-old Bernie Katzman and his wife Mindy escape their workaday lives of teaching and nursing. From their home in Jacksonville, Florida, he plays keyboards and sings - his left hand on a Steinway, his right on a synthesizer. She chats and sometimes cooks healthy dishes. It's been nearly a year since their 22-year-old son introduced them to Twitch, an Amazon-owned streaming service that is mostly devoted to live playback of videogame battles. "We thought (Twitch) was a neuromuscular issue," says Mindy, 51. "We had no idea what streaming even meant."

The Katzmans now have more than 190,000 followers, among them nearly 500 subscribers paying \$5 a month. Add in the tips, including \$5 a pop to guarantee that Bernie plays a song request, and it provides a healthy supplement to retirement income. Fans regularly send pictures of their pets and ask marriage advice, which the couple - now married 29 years - gladly provides. All told, it's a full-time job for both of them. "This has been an unbelievable adventure," Bernie says. "We are pioneers in the field of streaming." — AP



NEW YORK: This June 27, 2015, file photo shows the Hulu logo on a window at the Milk Studios space. — AP

HULU DROPPING FREE VIDEO AS IT PREPARES CABLE TV ALTERNATIVE

NEW YORK: Hulu is dropping the free TV episodes that it was initially known for as it works on an online television service to rival cable TV. Free episodes - typically the most recent four or five episodes from a show's current season - will be gone from the site within a few weeks. Instead, Hulu is making free episodes available through Yahoo.

While Hulu started as a free site, supported by advertising, free video has become increasingly more difficult to find as Hulu tries to lure viewers into a subscription - \$8 a month for a plan with ads, and \$12 without. In recent months, visitors to Hulu.com have been presented with prominent links to subscribe, with links to free video buried in a menu after signing in. And free episodes haven't been available on Hulu's mobile apps or streaming-TV devices, just on Hulu.com from a traditional computer. Now, they won't be on Hulu.com at all.

Devotees of Hulu's free on-demand videos will be able to find them by visiting the new Yahoo View site from a computer. The Yahoo site will not have free episodes of CW shows such as "Arrow" and "The Flash," as Hulu has been offering, because CW has a broader deal with Netflix instead. Yahoo says it will have the past five episodes of ABC, NBC and Fox shows available. The Fox shows will appear eight days after their TV airing, as is the practice at Hulu.com now. Yahoo will also have some older CBS shows.

Licensing restrictions

The episodes on Yahoo are not currently available on a phone, although Yahoo is working on a mobile web version and an app. Yahoo says the mobile version will be free, but it may not have all

the same video as the desktop computer site because of content licensing restrictions. Hulu says relatively few people watch the free videos. It now has about 12 million subscribers who pay for original shows, the entire current seasons of some network shows and access to Hulu's library on mobile and streaming-TV devices like Roku.

Hulu also plans to launch a live online TV service next year. It would show broadcast and cable channels in real time, without making viewers wait until the next day for episodes. In a move that could make that service more appealing, Time Warner Inc. recently took a 10 percent stake in Hulu, joining the TV and movie conglomerates - Walt Disney Co., 21st Century Fox and Comcast's NBCUniversal - that already owned it. Time Warner plans to contribute some of its channels, including TNT and TBS, to the new service.

Several other companies already offer live, paid TV over the internet, including Sony and Dish. DirecTV plans a service for later this year as well. Yahoo also has broader ambitions for View. It wants to add video from other Yahoo properties and from other networks and studios. However, its previous attempt at an online video hub, Yahoo Screen, shut down in January, despite having new episodes of the cult comedy "Community" after its cancellation by NBC.

Verizon, which is buying Yahoo to help the phone company grow a digital advertising business, makes TV episodes and short videos available on its go90 mobile app. Phil Lynch, the head of media and content partnerships at Yahoo, says that as the deal gets closer to closing early next year, it "makes sense that we have integration discussions." — AP

GAMING BOOST TEENS' SCHOOL RESULTS: AUSTRALIAN STUDY

SYDNEY: Playing online games may boost teenagers' school results while spending time on social networks such as Facebook could do the opposite, according to an Australian study. The research, based on the performance of 15-year-old Australians in the globally recognized Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, looked at the relationship between internet usage and educational outcomes.

"The analysis reveals that children who regularly use online social networks, such as Facebook, tend to obtain lower scores in math, reading, and science than students who never or hardly ever use these sites," it said. "Conversely, the analysis shows that those students who play online video games obtain higher scores on PISA tests, all other things being equal," the study published in the International Journal of Communication said. The study said it was possible that children who were already gifted in maths, science and reading were more likely to play online games.

But it added that while both gaming and socializing used time that teenagers could otherwise spend studying, video games "potentially allow students to apply and sharpen skills learned in school." "Students who play online games almost every day score 15 points above the average in maths and 17 points above the average in science," study author Alberto Posso said yesterday.

"When you play online games you're solving puzzles to move to the next level and that involves using some of the general knowledge and skills in maths, reading and science that you've been taught during the day."

Students who used online social networks on a daily basis scored 20 points lower in maths than a student who never used this type of social media, according to the study, which used the PISA ranking for 12,000 pupils from 2012 and controlled for other influences. "Students who are regularly on social media are, of course, losing time that could be spent on study-but it may also indicate that they are struggling with maths, reading and science and are going online to socialize instead," Posso said.

Internet usage among teenagers is considered particularly high in Australia where 97 percent of 15 to 17 year olds say they frequently go online. Some 78 percent of the children in the sample used online social networks almost every day or every day. Use of the internet was not bad in itself, and Posso, from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, suggested teachers consider incorporating popular video games into their lessons - "as long as they're not violent ones." He also said other factors also need to be considered, with skipping school every day about twice as bad for results as using Facebook or chatting online daily. — AFP

TEEN WHO POSTED WEAPONIZED DRONE VIDEOS FIGHTS EXPULSION

NEW BRITAIN: A teenager who posted online videos of flying drones shooting a gun and a flamethrower in his backyard appeared in court Monday to fight his expulsion from Central Connecticut State University. Austin Haughwout, 19, is suing university officials in an effort to return to school, and on Monday in New Britain he challenged the process that led to his expulsion, WTIC-AM reported.

Central Connecticut State officials say Haughwout was kicked out for threatening to shoot people at the school. An attorney for Haughwout says what some may have interpreted as threats were actually jokes, protected by free speech. Haughwout believes his drone videos were the real reason he got kicked out. School officials have denied that.

Haughwout uploaded the widely viewed videos to his YouTube channel last year. One shows a flying drone equipped with a handgun firing rounds. Another shows a flying drone with a flamethrower lighting up a spit-roasting turkey. Both videos were recorded in the family's yard in Clinton. The videos led the Federal Aviation Administration to subpoena Haughwout and his father late last year, saying the

weaponized drones were capable of causing serious injury to people or property. Haughwout and his father, Bret Haughwout, refused to comply at first, saying the subpoenas violated their constitutional right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures and questioning the agency's authority to regulate recreational drones.

Last month, a federal judge in New Haven ordered the Haughwouts to comply with the FAA subpoenas. Austin Haughwout has been in and out of the news over the past two years. Clinton police announced in June that they charged him with enticing a minor with a computer, attempted sexual assault and possession of child pornography after police say they found child porn on his cellphone. His lawyer has called that arrest warrant "overly broad" and suggested that Clinton police had it out for his client because of the drone videos. Last year, Clinton police charged him with assaulting officers. The case remains pending. In 2014, a woman was charged with assaulting Haughwout because she was upset he was using a drone to record video above a beach in Madison. Haughwout posted footage of the confrontation on YouTube. — AP