



What's driving  
games viewership?

# Games reached a new level of influence and audiences in 2020

Blog ▾

## Over 2 Billion Gaming Tweets in 2020!

By @rdotchadha  
Monday, 11 January 2021

2020 was the year we were all at home. And the year where we all played video games more than ever before. For the first time ever, there were more than 2 BILLION Tweets about gaming throughout the year. This is up 75% from 2019, with a 49% increase in unique authors.

## TheGrefg hits 2.4 million record viewers on Twitch

Fortnite Streamer Grefg attracted millions of synchronous viewers on Twitch while he revealed his official skin in the game.

Entertainment - News Parth Gada January 12, 2021



## Marco Asensio wins Fifa tournament for Real Madrid, watched by 170,000 fans

- Madrid forward has been out all season with knee injury
- Competition raises £129,000 to fight coronavirus



▲ Marco Asensio, celebrating here after scoring for Real Madrid against Espanyol in September 2018, beat Altor Rubal of Leganes in the final. Photograph: Quality Sport Images/Real Madrid via Getty Images

“Video-game industry revenues grew so much during the pandemic that they reportedly exceeded sports and film combined”

- Business Insider, December 2020

# With serious investment from outside figures and brands

**Nike signs its first esports sponsorship deal**



**David Beckham's esports team lists on LSE for £41m**



**Games and esports  
are no longer a  
niche interest**

# Streamers are commanding the attention of millions of fans at a time, to watch live.










The average Twitch viewer watches 95 minutes of streams per day

In Q2 2020 Twitch had an average concurrent viewership in excess of 2.34 million people

71% of Twitch's users are millennials.

**TwitchMetrics**

### The Most Followed Twitch Streamers, February 2021

#1		<b>Ninja</b> Partner EN Variety Seen 2 days ago	16,710,591 followers
#2		<b>Tfue</b> Partner EN Minecraft Seen 6 hours ago	9,985,574 followers
#3		<b>shroud</b> Partner EN Rust Seen 8 hours ago	8,948,618 followers
#4		<b>Rubius</b> Partner ES Variety Seen 13 hours ago	8,246,729 followers
#5		<b>xQcOW</b> Partner EN Variety Seen 8 hours ago	7,612,062 followers
#6		<b>auronplay</b> Partner ES Variety Seen 21 hours ago	7,350,295 followers
#7		<b>Myth</b> Partner EN VALORANT Seen 14 hours ago	7,284,307 followers
#8		<b>pokimane</b> Partner EN Variety Seen 14 hours ago	7,248,802 followers
#9		<b>TheGrefg</b> Partner ES Fortnite Seen 18 hours ago	6,652,523 followers

Naturally, many people ask:

What motivates people to watch someone else play video games?



And the answer is:

What motivates  
people to watch  
someone else play  
~~video~~ any games?



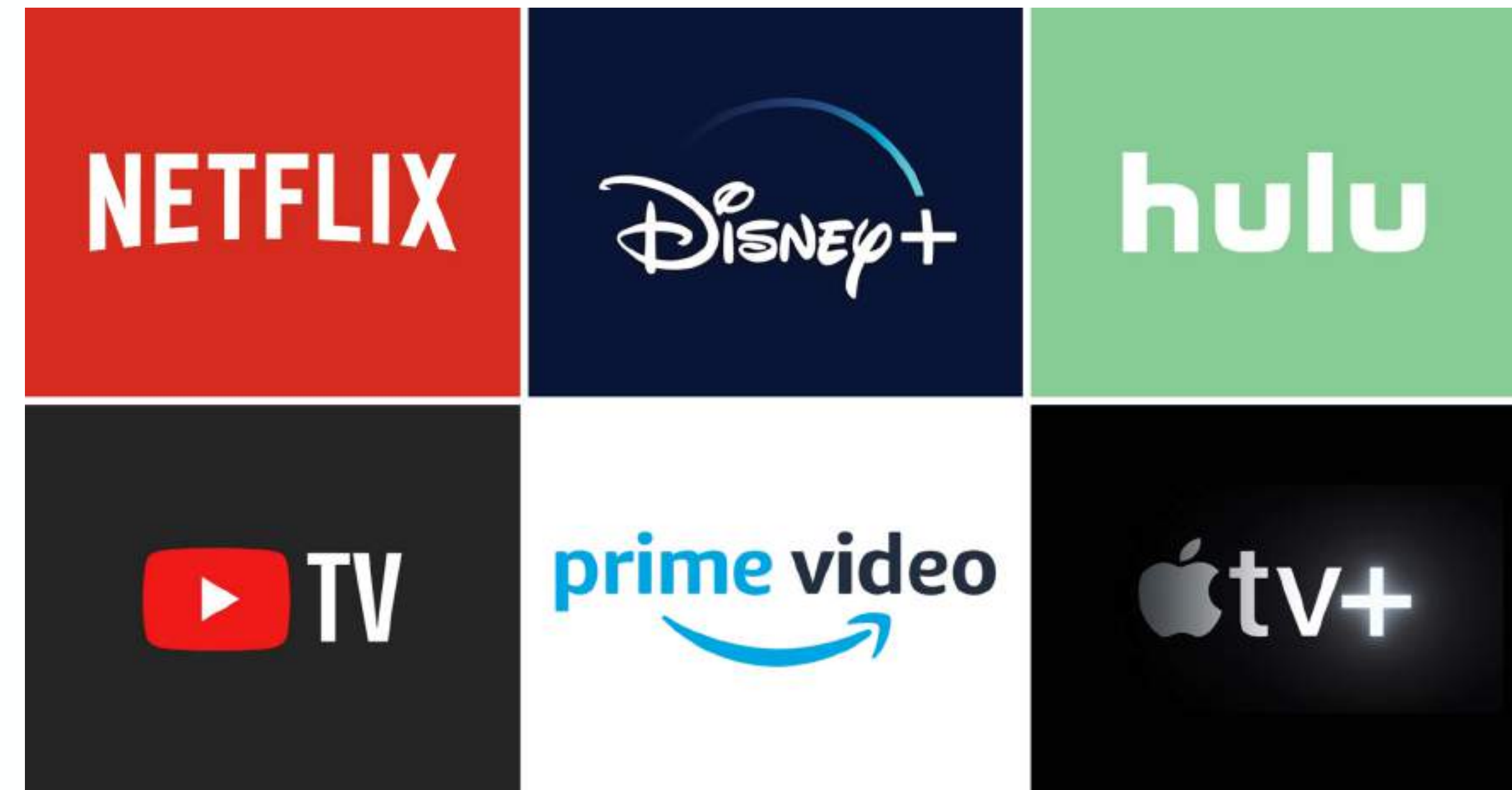


When it comes to streams and esports, there are three gaming-specific trends to keep in mind

Trend One:

**Unlimited entertainment**

The entertainment landscape has become increasingly fragmented, with paywalls abound



Streams and esports act like a soap-opera or real life sports, with never-ending possibilities - for free

**What is the appeal of watching streaming of people playing games? [/r/games reddit]**

“I watch for the insight and commentary of the person more than the actual game. It feels like a radio talk show with gameplay footage to help me understand their story.”

“Sometimes it's just for entertainment's sake, like watching sports on television.”

“Sometimes they're just entertaining or funny. Sometimes they're showing some useful or helpful tips and strategies. Occasionally, I want to see a game that I have no interest in playing due to genre or something, but I still want to know how the story goes, or I heard it's good.”

“I suck at playing most games, I like watching people who are better than I. Better casting lends to a better experience as well.”

“I'm in college and don't have a tv, so I use streams as background noise some times.”

SUB HEADLINE

The BudLight Knight has his own channel on Twitch and participates in challenges, while giving away beer to viewers

**BUD LIGHT.**



Opportunity for brands:

Consider how stream talent or partnerships can be used as a channel in their own right.

Trend Two:

**Virtual worlds — real  
community**

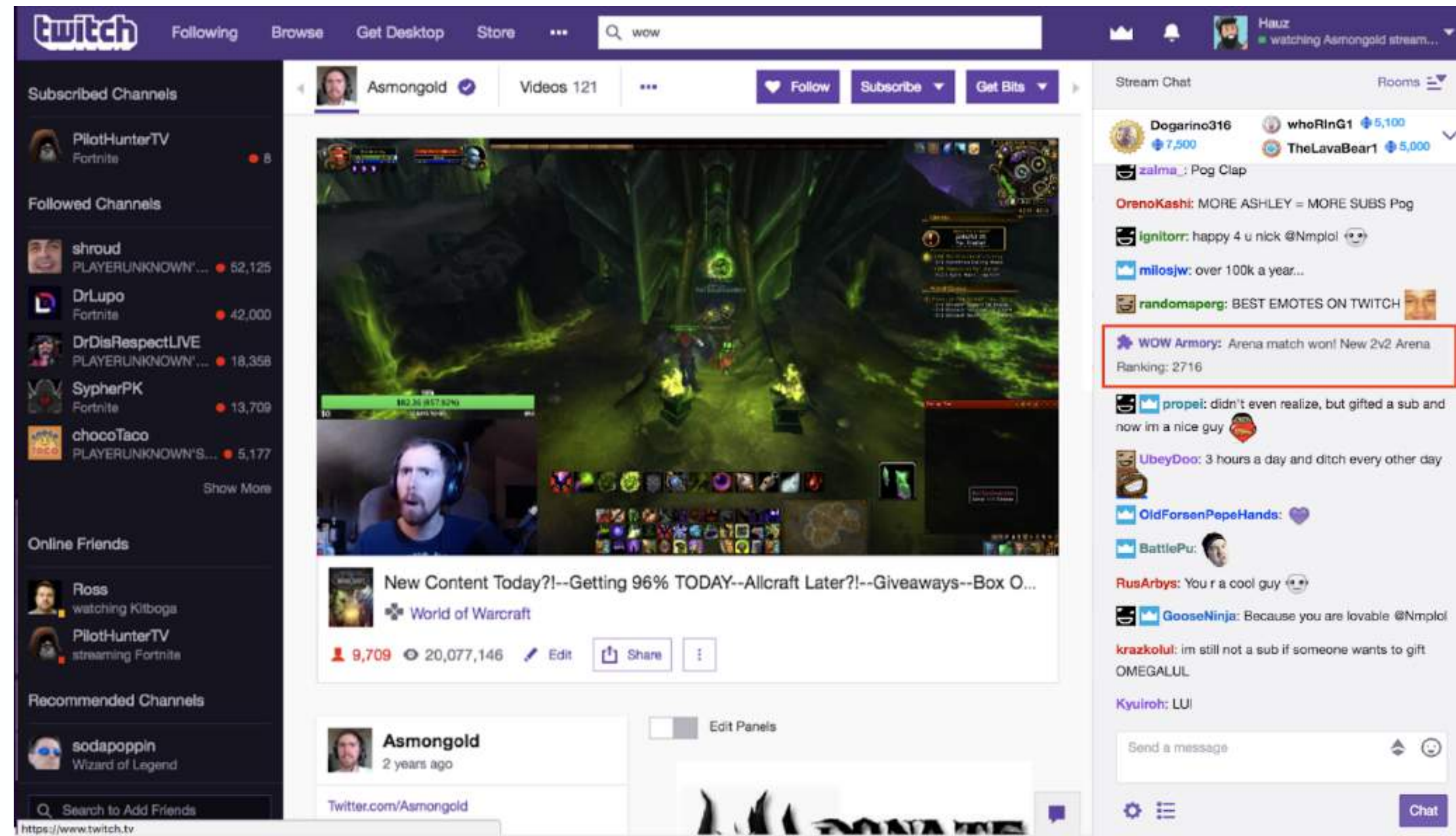
**Streamers provide  
a friendly and  
familiar face in an  
increasingly lonely  
world.**





# And streaming is a communal activity —viewers and streamers engage back and forth or with each other.

Stream fans share in the highs and lows of the streamer as they play. The chat can become its own community hub with in-jokes and references, custom emotes / actions or to steer the streamer's play style.



UberEats gave Ninja's fans and viewers money off for each Fortnite kill he made during a stream



Opportunity for brands:

Recognise that streamers are social hubs with engaged communities and think about ways you can give them something of value.

Trend Three:

**Accessible escapism**

The events of 2020 put our need for escapism higher than ever, and games provide an easy route into new worlds.

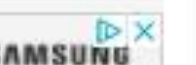
If you need to go for a walk ... why not wander around a video game?



▲ Animal magic ... a scene from Lost Ember where players are part of a posthuman world. Photograph: Mooneye Studios

Escape the lockdown by losing yourself in the stunning virtual landscapes of walking simulator games

Advertisement



# However, escaping reality still presents real-world obstacles

## Cost of gaming equipment and the games / content itself



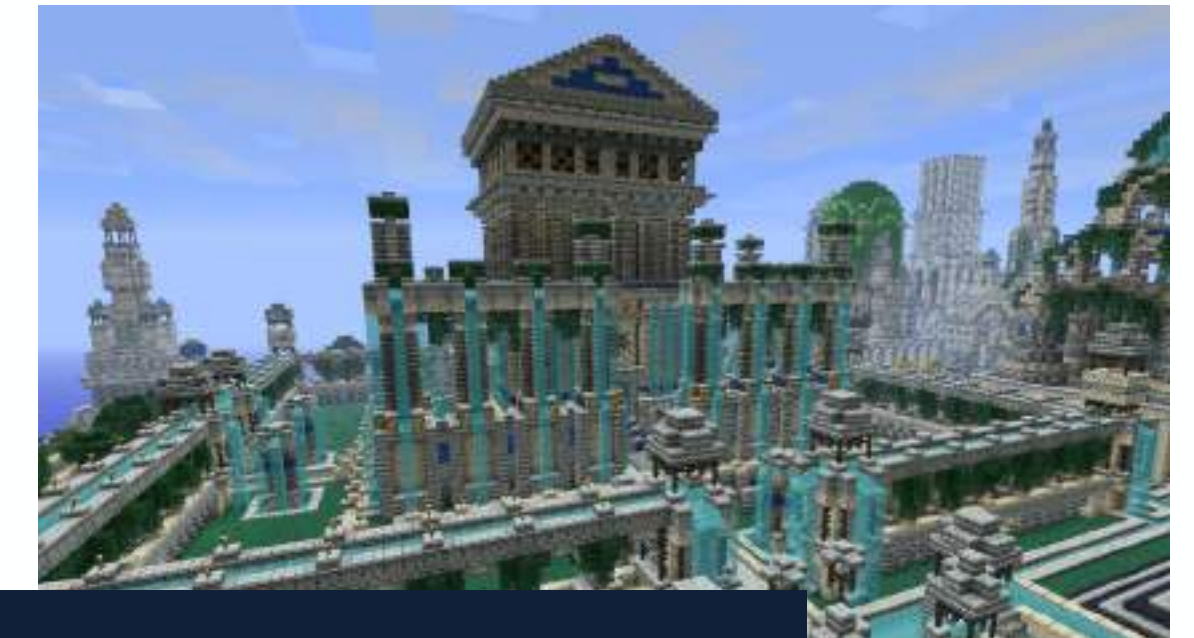
“Personally, I started watching Twitch because I couldn’t bring myself to pay money for another game I’ll never get even halfway through”

## Time investment required to learn or master games



Digital Combat Simulator — a popular ‘study sim’ where players need to learn real world fighter jet procedures and manuals.

## Skill required to create or compete at top level

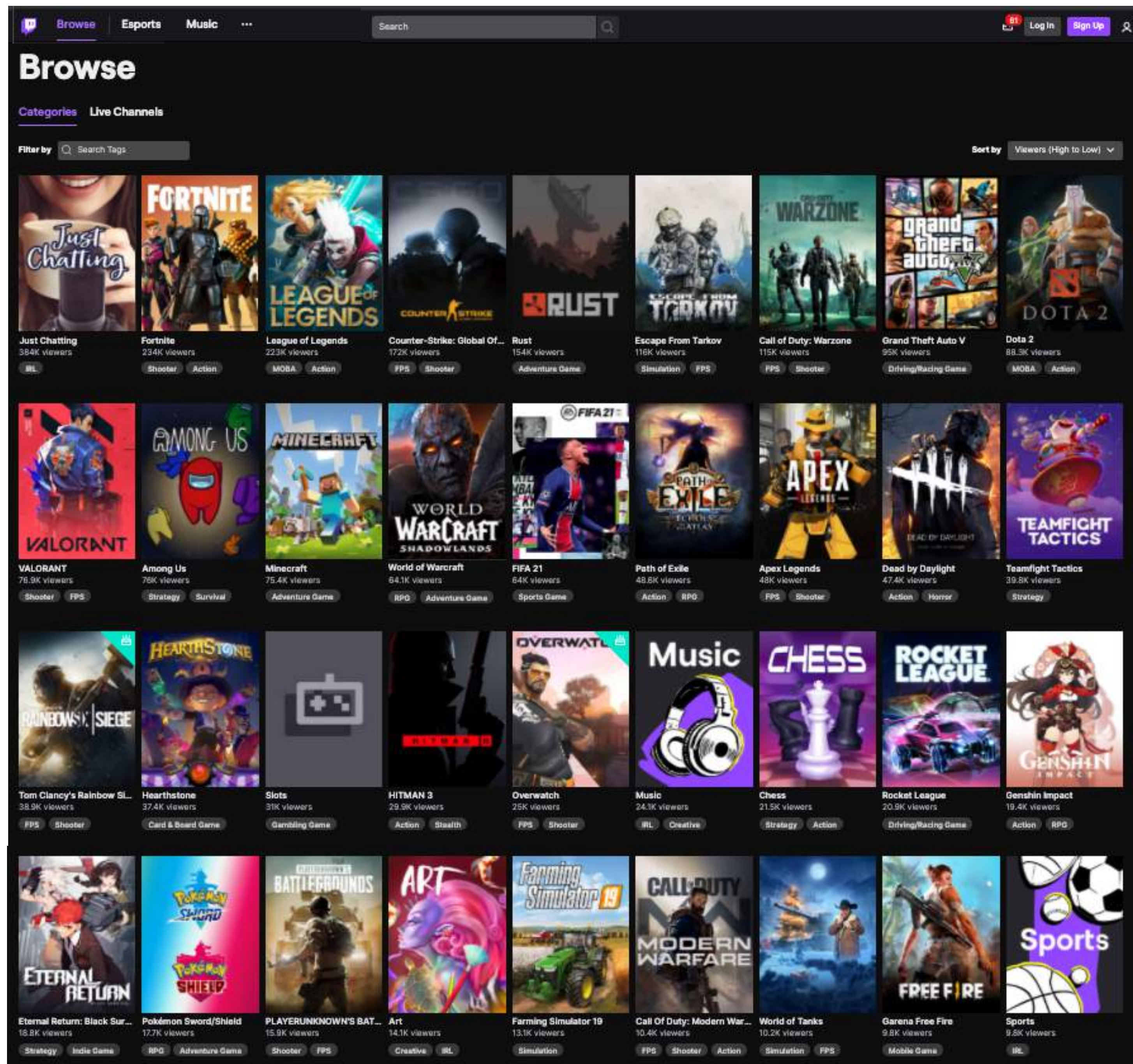


How fast is fast? Some pro gamers make 10 moves per second



— NaNo, a top StarCraft II player from Sweden, now wears wristbands to help protect against wrist injuries—one of the risks that comes with playing the game at a blinding speed. — Justin Chon / E! Online

Whereas streams offer a plethora of entertaining escapes, from Fortnite to Farming Simulator...



Travel New Zealand created a fake open world-style game experience game to promote tourism, seeded through streamers

100% PURE  
NEW ZEALAND  
PRESENTS

PLAY PLAY  
NZ NZ





Opportunity for brands:

Consider how games and streams can enable your brand to give audiences an experience they would never be able to have, even virtually.

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