

# FAST TAKE **NEWS BRIEF**

## LIVESTREAMING IS COMING OF AGE

A new generation of apps is putting livestreaming back in the headlines, but are consumers ready to adopt the technology? The launch Meerkat, as well as faster mobile data speeds and an increasing demand for video content, may finally mean yes.

A new generation of apps - most notably Meerkat - is bringing livestreaming to mobile, and users may finally be ready to adopt

## THE HISTORY OF LIVESTREAMING

Though livestreaming has technically been around for years, it has never been widely adopted by consumers beyond the gaming community and the different iterations of Chatroulette. Various companies, from Ustream to Google, have attempted to mainstream the idea of the livestream, but most users continue to forego real-time broadcasting in favor of publishing edited content after the fact (à la YouTube). This has largely been an effect of sluggish progress in taking livestreaming technology mobile; clunky websites, slow mobile data speeds and high costs have kept livestreaming shackled to the desktop, where live content doesn't vary enough to draw audiences en masse. Brands, publishers and organizations, on the other hand, have made livestreaming a part of the content mix, but have struggled with finding turnkey solutions to do it successfully.

## WHAT IS IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF LIVESTREAMING

Data is faster and cheaper than it has ever been, and apps like Snapchat and Twitter have made us comfortable with live, unedited publishing. Enter Meerkat: a new, free mobile app that makes livestreaming so simple that new users can be signed up and livecasting within seconds. It is also integrated with Twitter, cutting out the need for a separate sign-up process, instantly connecting users with their Twitter followers and automatically tweeting when a livestream begins. Like Pinterest, it is Meerkat's close integration with an existing and thriving platform (in this case, Twitter) that is allowing its user base to rapidly take off, with close to 45,000 streams on Twitter in the 8 weeks since Meerkat launched. While other apps have failed to bring their audiences to the livestream, Meerkat brings the livestream to the audience. It is worth noting that Meerkat was initially an experiment created by the development team at Israeli startup Air, which focuses on instant livestreams on multiple platforms, not just Twitter.

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## SNAPSHOT: THE MAJOR PLAYERS IN LIVESTREAMING

Platform	Key Details
Meerkat	Relatively low but rapidly growing user base. Twitter specific, but easy to use. UGC friendly, mobile first. No cloud storage or YouTube integration. Once a livestream finishes, the video is gone.
Ustream	One of the most adopted and oldest streaming sites, serving 80 million+ users. Ad supported but option to upgrade.
Twitch	Allows gamers to broadcast their gameplay live in a chatroom-style environment. Recently purchased by Amazon for nearly \$1 billion.
Periscope	Recently purchased by Twitter and still in private beta. Features are rumored to be similar to Meerkat's. May eventually embed directly in tweets like Vines.
Bambuser	Free for individuals, requires a license for commercial use. A partnership with the Associated Press allows users to automatically submit broadcasts for use as UGC.
Livestream	Biggest scale, more publisher and brand focused. Works across many platforms. Clunky to set up in comparison with UGC and mobile oriented instant livestream next generation.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR BRANDS

The rise of instant livestreaming brings numerous possibilities for marketers, and there is still plenty of time for low-cost experimentation, since no platform has yet to achieve widespread adoption like Twitter or Facebook. Livestreaming can be a fantastic way to bring live events to life on digital platforms, offer behind-the-scenes access, or serve as a Google Hangout alternative. A number of content outlets (e.g. CNN) have eagerly experimented with Meerkat, hoping to leverage early adopter status to their advantage. As the ability to broadcast is democratized by livestreaming, on-the-ground reporting will increasingly happen not only via text-based tweets, but also by live-streaming. There are plenty of marketing implications for product launches, live events and even real-time customer service.

Twitter has already purchased a live-streaming app, Periscope, that is in very limited private beta. It remains to be seen whether or not Twitter will make it more difficult for developers to use their API in favor of their own tool. Currently, there is no reason why brands couldn't promote an instant livestream using Promoted Tweets. Meerkat also allows for scheduling; it can be presumed that Periscope would do the same. If Periscope is integrated into Twitter's Cards system, it could also allow for distribution across their MoPub mobile display network eventually.

Down the road publishers and Twitter may look at livestreaming for sponsorship opportunities. Now is the time for marketers to experiment with livestreaming via apps like Meerkat to understand how the public is using them, and determine what works for specific brands.

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