

# Russian teenager behind hot website Chatroulette

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A man surfs the web at an internet cafe. A Russian teenager has been identified as the creator of Chatroulette.com, one of the hottest -- and most unusual -- new websites on the Internet.

A Russian teenager has been identified as the creator of Chatroulette.com, one of the hottest -- and most unusual -- new websites on the Internet.

The New York Times reported that Andrey Ternovskiy, a 17-year-old high school student in Moscow, is the founder of Chatroulette, which generates a live webcam connection between a user and a random stranger.

The newspaper over the weekend published an email exchange with Ternovskiy, whose site has drawn a lot of publicity in recent weeks and even the attention of Fred Wilson, a well-known venture capitalist with Union Square Ventures and Flatiron Partners.

Wilson, in a weekend blog post, said he was going to "reach out to Andrey and offer him a visit" to New York City.

"I'm still not sure if this is something we should invest in, but I'd sure like to meet this guy. He reminds me of many great young entrepreneurs we've worked with and his story sounds so familiar," Wilson said.

Wilson also touched on some of the attractions and drawbacks of Chatroulette, which has been denounced by some critics as a hotbed of exhibitionism and voyeurism.

"There certainly is a disturbing amount of perversion and sexual innuendo on Chatroulette, but there is so much else," he said.

"The Internet is this huge network with over a billion people worldwide on it," Wilson said. "Chatroulette feels like a pretty cool way to take a quick trip around that network, meeting people and talking to them."

Ternovskiy told the Times that he created Chatroulette for "fun" because he and his friends had gotten bored talking only to each other.

"So I decided to create a little site for me and my friends where we could connect randomly with other people," he said.

Ternovskiy said he was writing all of the code for the site himself and that relatives had helped him pay bandwidth and server hosting bills.

He said most of the users of the site are in the United States.

"Everyone finds his own way of using the site," he added. "Some think it is a game, others think it is a whole unknown world, others think it is a dating service.

"I think it's cool that such a simple concept can be useful for so many people," Ternovskiy said.

The young Russian developer told the Times he was aware "some people are using the site in not very nice ways" and that he was "really against it."

"Others do really unbelievable things I could never think of," he said. "They make up songs about strangers and sing to them, draw them, listen to music, broadcast them their own music."

"Two groups of teenagers can party together. That's just great in my opinion," he said.

Chatroulette was launched in November and attracts as many as 20,000 users a night, according to the Times.

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