

Meerkat vs. Periscope: Live-streaming app battle & buzz

March 27 2015, by Barbara Ortutay

This Friday, Oct. 18, 2013, file photo shows a Twitter app on an iPhone screen, in New York. Twitter bought the company behind live video-streaming app Periscope earlier this year for a reported \$100 million. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

Download Periscope, Twitter's [just-launched](#) live video-streaming app, and you'll find people broadcasting all sorts of mundane stuff: waiting for AT&T to fix their wiring, getting out of bed in Silicon Valley, looking outside their office window in Chicago.

Watch the videos, and you might ask yourself, is this really the next big

thing?

It could be. Check back in a few months, and you'll likely see much more enticing content. After all, the first tweet, sent by co-founder Jack Dorsey in 2006, simply said "just setting up my twtr." Now nearly 300 million people tweet photos and messages every month for work, play and social commentary.

Twitter bought the company behind Periscope earlier this year for a reported \$100 million. The launch comes in the heels of rival Meerkat's breakout at the South By Southwest Interactive tech gathering in Texas. The simple app allows people to live stream anything at the touch of a button and dominated conversations at the festival. The app used to let users automatically tweet live streams too, but since buying Periscope, Twitter limited Meerkat's access.

Meerkat, rightfully worried about becoming second fiddle so quickly, announced Thursday that it scored an additional \$14 million in venture capital funding.

Here are a few things to know about the emerging trend of live video streaming.

WHY NOW?

Meerkat and Periscope are not the first live-streaming apps by any means. But they are emerging as more people are shooting video with smartphones and sharing their experiences on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and a slew of other platforms. And when it comes to business marketing, smaller, emerging services might be more effective than getting lost in the shuffle on big social networks, according to Forrester Research.

"Marketers who prioritize investments in Facebook and Twitter's over-fished waters are missing a big opportunity to engage with customers on smaller social networks with emerging platforms like video," Forrester's James McQuivey and Julie Ask recently wrote.

MEERKAT VS. PERISCOPE

Meerkat was one of the big surprise hits of SXSW earlier this month. The app initially let users automatically tweet live streams to their followers, but that came to a halt after Twitter acquired Periscope and limited Meerkat's access to its service. While the two have many similarities, the automatic linking with Twitter followers gives Periscope a big leg up.

Other differences: Meerkat streams are public-only and live-only. Periscope lets users limit who can see their broadcasts and offers viewers the opportunity to send heart icons to streamers, akin to Facebook's "Like" button. Video streams also can be saved to replay later.

Neither app works without Twitter—you'll need an account to get started. Facebook, so far, has been silent on this front.

POTENTIAL?

Remember when sharing a photo of your breakfast seemed like a crazy thing no one would ever want to do? It wasn't that long ago. Live streams might seem equally crazy now, only to become second-nature in just a few months. From news broadcasts to travel adventures and birthday parties and weddings shown to far-away relatives, the possibilities are all there. All you need is a Twitter account and a solid Internet connection on your smartphone. For companies, there's major potential for advertising and a way for brands to connect directly with customers.

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