

# Periscope extends beyond phones as Twitter ups ante on video

13 October 2016, by Michael Liedtke



In this June 29, 2015, file photo, Lauren Simo, left, answers questions during a weekly forum streamed via Periscope on the smartphone of Toby Srebnik, Fish Consulting director of social media, at the company's offices in Hollywood, Fla. Twitter is taking the smartphone shackles off its live-video service Periscope as part of the struggling company's attempt to broaden its audience. The Periscope Producer feature announced Thursday, Oct. 13, 2016, will allow media companies and other users to pipe live video feeds directly into Twitter, without using a smartphone to record the images. (AP Photo/Alan Diaz, File)

Twitter is taking the smartphone shackles off its live-video service Periscope in its latest attempt to broaden its audience.

The Periscope Producer feature announced Thursday will let media companies and other users pipe live video feeds directly into Twitter, without using a smartphone to record the images. Since its debut early last year, Periscope had been confined to live video feeds taken on a smartphone.

During Producer's testing phase last week, a Florida television station showing live video on its website used the new tool to redistribute the same feeds on Twitter. To start, Producer will be limited

to a small group of media companies such as Disney's ABC News and major brands such as Louis Vuitton. Others can apply for approval at [t.co/periscopeproducer](http://t.co/periscopeproducer) .

Periscope CEO Kayvon Beykour said Producer will be available to all comers soon, something that he acknowledged could lead to unauthorized redistribution of live video. Piracy has been an issue dogging Periscope since people began using the service to broadcast live video of movies and TV shows with their smartphones.

The Periscope extension ups the ante on Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's bet that the increasing popularity of online video will help widen the messaging service's appeal.

Twitter already has been streaming more news, entertainment and sports events, including the National Football League's Thursday Night games for 10 weeks during the season. Twitter hopes to build a following beyond people who rely on the service to tweet their thoughts and keep tabs on what's happening around the world. Dorsey sees Twitter evolving into the go-to place for watching live video in a digital town square where people can share their opinions with each other.



In this Wednesday, April 24, 2013, file photo, Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey speaks at a campaign fundraiser, in New York. Twitter is taking the smartphone shackles off its live-video service Periscope as part of the struggling company's attempt to broaden its audience. The Periscope Producer feature announced Thursday, Oct. 13, 2016, will allow media companies and other users to pipe live video feeds directly into Twitter, without using a smartphone to record the images. The Periscope extension ups the ante on Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's bet that the increasing popularity of online video will help widen the short-messaging service's appeal. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File)

Internet companies young (Snapchat) and old (Facebook) are scrambling to get on the live video train, though there are no easy ways to make advertising money off of them yet. That's coming, though. Some companies are already experimenting with livestreaming for marketing purposes. Automaker General Motors, for example, launched out its electric Chevy Bolt EV using Facebook Live earlier this year. Media outlets, meanwhile, are livestreaming coverage of the presidential debates in ways not seen in any previous election.

With the latest move, Periscope joins other livestreaming services such as Twitch and YouTube that allow for broadcasts from sources beyond users' smartphones. Facebook, meanwhile, has so far stuck to a mobile-only strategy. But even with Periscope's expanded capability, Facebook has an advantage with a larger audience.

Since the end of 2014, Twitter has picked up just 15 million monthly users to expand its audience to 313 million people through June. During the same stretch, Facebook gained 319 million users to extend its reach beyond 1.7 billion people.

In an effort to distinguish Twitter from Facebook, Dorsey has been trying to position it as the "people news network"—though with little success since he replaced Dick Costolo as CEO 15 months ago.

Things have been looking so bleak that Twitter's

board last month hired investment bankers to woo suitors that might be interested in buying the San Francisco company, according to published reports that cited unnamed people familiar with the matter. The prospective bidders included Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc., as well as Apple Inc., Salesforce.com and Walt Disney Co.

The possibility of a sale tantalized investors until other media reports made it seem unlikely that Twitter will strike a deal soon. With a sale apparently off the table, the company's stock has dropped by nearly 30 percent in the past week. The shares fell 20 cents to \$17.85 in early afternoon trading Thursday.

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APA citation: Periscope extends beyond phones as Twitter ups ante on video (2016, October 13)  
retrieved 25 September 2020 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-10-periscope-twitter-ups-ante-video.html>

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