The uploading lifestyle

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In the past, the world economy was based on producers and consumers. But now it's shifting toward creators, and that is triggering a profound impact on both society and technology. That, in turn, is leading to an "uploading lifestyle" that will create a boomerang effect on technology.

Up until the 1950s, we had a producer economy in the U.S., where manufacturing was the dominant employer. That started shifting in the 1950s to a consumer economy, where consumer spending started driving both employment and mass production. Now, we're well into a new stage of economic evolution, as the "creator economy" takes hold.

In this economy, the world is shifting to people who are no longer just passive consumers of things produced by others. Rather, we now have people who are both producers and consumers at the same time, where normal people engage in actions every day that create value.

Enabled by the Internet and social networking, this kind of creator can upload a video that gets hundreds of millions of views on YouTube, or hold a livestream that generates large numbers of simultaneous viewers and tips. The viewership generates influence, and that influence is a ticket to a lucrative career in the attention-based social economy that has arisen from social networking.

The impact is clear in subcultures such as video games. Players once interacted with disc-based games on game consoles that were offline. This kind of interaction model worked fine with Internet services that emphasized download speeds over upload times. The most that players would do was download a digital copy of a game and play it offline.

But now those consoles are connected and social. It's easy with both console and PC games to both play online and livestream the gameplay at the same time. Those gamers now require high-end equipment that is capable of faster interactivity for the game as well as an ability to simultaneously upload video of that gameplay to audiences that can be amassed and monetized.

This kind of behavior model changes the video gamer from a pure passive consumer of packaged goods to a creator, someone who takes the original product, modifies it with their own additions, and then shares it again as a new product with customized appeal for mass audiences.

A gamer who livestreams gameplay to friends is a good example of this kind of creator.

It might seem that watching someone else play games is boring. But the rise of esports has made it more exciting to watch celebrity gamers show off their insane abilities. [Twitch has more than 100 million viewers](#) a month, with 50 percent of them in the 18 to 34-year-old category. The top five games are getting 80 million hours per week of viewing.

The esports player and influencer

Sawyer Lewis, an 18-year-old college student in Northern California, has built an audience and is starting to generate revenues from his expertise in playing Fortnite and Destiny, two online shooting games. He records his own videos as he plays and streams to a live audience on Twitch. He won five major tournaments playing Destiny, and he has transitioned to broadcasting Fortnite gameplay on a daily basis. He is a living example of an online content creator, influencer, and gamer -- and someone who fully embraces the uploading lifestyle.

Another kind of creator is a video editor. Or the animation editor. Using cloud-connected video production tools from Adobe software to Maya, these professionals rely on the power of the cloud to process the complex imagery that they produce, and then they upload it for shared viewing.

Lewis is not alone. The number of esports enthusiast fans will grow 15.2 percent from 143 million in 2017 to 165 million in 2018, while the number of occasional viewers will grow from 192 million in 2017 to 215 million in 2018, according to market researcher [Newzoo](#). By 2021, the esports enthusiasts will reach 250 million and the occasional viewers will reach 307 million. That represents growth from a total of 335 million in 2017 to 557 million in 2021.

The social media manager

Justin Choy, a Los Angeles resident in his 20s, lives this kind of life as the social media and content marketing manager at the esports team Gen.G. Choy was an online game fan and music marketing expert who parlayed that knowledge into a job at the esports team. He is in charge of managing a team that records video of the Seoul Dynasty team in the Overwatch League, and he manages the team's social media accounts as well.

Every week, the team plays competitive esports tournaments for the Overwatch League, which draws millions of views every week. The video crew captures film in mini-documentary style, so that fans can see what it's like to be a competitive gamer at the highest level. The five-member starting squad plays every day at a team house, but they consume so much bandwidth that Choy can't upload videos from the house.

Instead, Choy disperses the video team to their home locations, and they upload video to the cloud so that he can review it. Then he offers his editing tips for the funniest videos and directs the video editors to chop down and edit the videos for publication. Once it's done, the team uploads the video to the social media sites and Choy shares it as widely as possible.

This uploading life is all consuming, as the players practice or play seven days a week. And the crew of seven video editors and sound experts works with only one of multiple Gen.G professional esports teams.

Twitch's number of unique monthly broadcasters expanded by over 30 percent from 2015-17. This growth trajectory, however, inflected positively on the heels of popular Fortnite and PUBG, with unique broadcasters growing at near 60 percent year-to-date in 2018.

The modder

Still another creator is the modder, or someone who takes a computer game and creates a custom version, or mod, which is then played by others. Roblox has a virtual world that invites modders to create their own games, and it paid out more than $30 million in 2017 to those modders for generating traffic in the virtual world.

Alex Balfanz, a 19-year-old from Florida, started playing Roblox about nine years ago. Last year, he started working on a Roblox game called Jailbreak. After four months of work, he released it. After three months, the game had been played more than 210 million times. For each time the cops-and-robbers game is played Balfanz gets a credit in Roblox. And he can convert those credits to real money.

Balfanz did an internship at Roblox in the summer of 2017, and he plans to study artificial intelligence at Duke University. He has already generated enough money from his Roblox games to pay for it.

Intel has emphasized this kind of behavior model as a key source of demand for its ever-more-powerful microprocessors, and Nvidia talks about it for driving demand for its graphics chips. But it also puts demand on all of the technology infrastructure as everybody changes their behavior.

These people aren't just anomalies. They're the vanguard of a new economy. This uploading life is only going to get bigger.

The infrastructure has to evolve to meet their needs. That means they need powerful computing capabilities not only at the edge in their homes and offices, but also in the cloud. They need symmetrical or near-symmetrical Internet connectivity, where uploading can be as fast as downloading.

When it comes to Internet connectivity, many people choose to use Wi-Fi to connect many of the devices in their homes. Those connections are getting overloaded, even with new mesh extenders and routers.

But home networking standards such as MoCA have an advantage over other kinds of broadband connections. MoCA 2.0 has a download speed of 1 gigabit per second, with similar upload performance, which is of particular importance in the age of two-way video distribution.

And not everybody can string CAT5 cable or bring fiber into their homes. Those people might be well served by the existing coax already in the home.

Gamers need low latency, especially for fast gameplay interactions. If you drill down on Mixer in particular, you can see that it beats Twitch with low-latency times. That enables streamers to communicate with their audiences in real-time, allowing them to notice tips or act on information from the audience in a timely manner, which is critical for a real-time game and real-time game broadcast. MoCA's latency is less than 3 milliseconds.

Gamers may not have access to the main computer in a home, or the main TV. They may have to play in the garage or a basement or a bedroom. Those rooms may very well be connected by cable or Ethernet, but they probably don't have sufficient Wi-Fi connectivity.

Conclusion

The age of uploading has begun, as every player, broadcasters, video editors, and others who wish to become the king of social media. This has catalyzed a creator economy that is transforming the kind of jobs that the new generation is undertaking. And that, in turn, is changing everyone's appetite for new technology and the demand for Internet access. Uploading is part of the new culture, and it is here to stay.

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