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Startup School Radio, Episode 2: How Justin.tv Became Twitch

August 4, 2015 · by **Alexis Ohanian**

In Episode 2 of YC's Startup School Radio, a podcast that features stories and practical advice about starting, funding, and scaling companies, Aaron Harris sat down with entrepreneur, investor, and YC partner Justin Kan, and Mathilde Collin, the founder and CEO of collaborative email and text platform Front.

You can hear the episode in its entirety on SoundCloud [here](#) and on iTunes [here](#), and read the full transcript [here](#).

An especially interesting part of Kan's interview details how he and the other founders of Justin.tv decided to focus on two new projects that would become Socialcam, the mobile video platform that was acquired by Autodesk for a reported \$60 million, and Twitch, the immensely live game streaming platform that was acquired last year by Amazon for \$970 million:

***Justin:** Then to make a long story short, we were at a point where we were about 25 people. We were thinking, 'What do we do next?' The site had kind of tapped out. It turns out not everything type of content is good live, right? Only certain types of content are really good live, and so we tapped out all of these, all the live content, and we were having trouble continuing to grow. The site was probably about 30 million uniques a month at that point, which is pretty big website, but it wasn't growing. We started working on some new ideas of things that we could potentially be bigger than Justin TV and one of those was one of my co-founders Emmet came and said, 'Hey guys, I think we should work on the gaming section of Justin TV.' The gaming section was people*

playing video games and other people watching them. At the time, [co-founder] Emmett [Shear]

came and said, 'This is the only content that I actually like on our site.'

Aaron: *How big was that segment?*

Justin: *That was 3% of our traffic.*

Aaron: *Just 3%.*

Justin: *It was just 3%. It was a couple hundred thousand people a month. And Emmett was like, 'This is the only content that I actually want to watch. Let's focus on this content. Maybe we can be bigger.' The rest of us, so out of the four co-founders, I thought, 'Hey that could be something.' The other two co-founders were very skeptical. At the same time we had this other idea, my other co-founder Michael [Seibel]'s idea, which was, let's work on the mobile part because mobile is growing and there's no good way to get videos off of your phone. He was really selling mobile.*

We were at this impasse, right? There were two ideas. We couldn't decide between which one was going to work and so we decided let's do both of these things simultaneously inside our company.

Aaron: *That seems like a terrible idea. Like when we talk to startups and they say, 'We want to do two things at once' and they're a small team we say, 'Bad idea.'*

Justin: *Yes, we definitely tell startups not to do this and I actually think that's right. However, in this case it worked out. "*

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