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2nd Edition

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Tee Morris

Content creator since 2005; video gamer since 1980

Foreword by Emme Montgomery (@negaoryx)

Twitch

2nd Edition

by Tee Morris

FOREWORD BY **Emme Montgomery**
(@negaoryx on Twitch)

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Twitch® For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

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Foreword

When I began streaming in the summer of 2016, I had never so much as watched a single Twitch stream before I installed OBS and went live for the first time. I didn't know what moderators were, or alerts. (I tried to search how to set them up by asking "How can you make follower names pop up on your twitch stream" because I didn't know they were even called alerts in the first place.) In hindsight, it's a wonder I stuck with streaming at all as I was so lost in those early days.

I fell into a steady rhythm of streaming shortly thereafter, but my struggle to learn the ropes on the fly was constant and stressful as I embarked on a whirlwind of a ride that would end up becoming my long-term career. I wish I had access to a wealth of knowledge like the one before you, carefully curated by a long-term industry professional like Tee, when I started out.

I'm Emme Montgomery, although you may know me better by my online handle *negaoryx*. I've experienced the highs and lows of being a full-time Twitch streamer: I've gone viral multiple times, partnered with incredible brands for sponsored campaigns, had a billboard promoting my Twitch channel in Times Square, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for various charities from fundraising live on my Twitch channel. I've also dealt with streaming through devastating personal loss and intense burnout and struggled through tech troubleshooting more times than I could possibly count over my six years on Twitch.

I met Tee through a mutual streamer friend and was immediately impressed not only by his dedication to his own content but by the clear passion he has for helping others begin their own streaming journeys, as well. When he reached out to me with the possibility of writing the foreword for this revised edition of *Twitch For Dummies,* the first thing I did was pick up a copy of the first edition. I had never read it before and, to be honest, was unsure how valuable such a book could be in the age of the internet, when a seemingly infinite wealth of knowledge is constantly at our disposal. I didn't realize how wrong I'd be until I began reading.

Maybe you're someone who's interested in starting streaming but hasn't taken the plunge just yet. Maybe you're an up-and-coming streamer who's looking to level up your content. Or maybe you have a loved one who's getting into streaming and you just want to understand their field better (in which case you're my *favorite* kind of person — good on you for being so supportive). No matter why you've

picked this book up, I'm confident that creators at any stage of their journey can take away something valuable from this text.

Streaming is still an emergent industry deeply rooted in tech, which means that changes and advancements happen quickly over time, as new equipment and features are rolled out on a frequent basis. In this revised edition of *Twitch For Dummies*, Tee guides you through the fundamentals that are valuable for any streamer to know, along with the up-to-date information to catch you up to speed on how Twitch operates today. From deep dives into social media and networking with other streamers to technical setups, Twitch etiquette, and everything in between, Tee thoroughly and concisely walks you through each step you'll take as you carve out a space for yourself online.

The note I'd like to end on is a friendly reminder to remember that everyone utilizing the same information and advice doesn't mean everyone ends up making the same content. Take the guidance and knowledge given to you in this book and implement it with your own perspective and voice to make your stream something wonderfully, uniquely you. Never stop learning and growing.

I'll see you on Twitch!

— Emme Montgomery (@Negaoryx)

Introduction

If you play video games — regardless of your age, your platform, or your preference for first-person shooter or massively multiplayer online games — you may have noticed they offer a feature for sharing your gameplay. *What is that?* you might wonder before jumping into your game. Weeks later, that Share Your Gameplay option is still nagging at you. The only way you can quell your curiosity is to go online and do a little digging, where you discover this thing called *streaming*.

Now, if you've been involved with content creation for as long as I have (see Wiley's *Podcasting For Dummies* for all the details), you know that, in the early days of podcasting, streaming was taking hold despite many technological barriers. Processing speeds. Graphics cards. Internet connections. If the stars aligned, you *might* get a video feed on your computer matching the quality of a convenience store security camera. In 2005.

Then technology evolved. New computers performed not only faster but more efficiently. High-speed internet became more common. And developers who created the hardware and software for streaming made the technology more accessible. Then along came Twitch.

I'm sure my own reaction wasn't too different from yours. *Twitch? Sounds serious. Have you consulted a physician?*

Twitch For Dummies, 2nd Edition, takes a deep dive into an exciting entertainment platform that's known for featuring video games but offers so much more. Beginning with the question at the forefront of your mind — *What is Twitch?* — this book guides you through the processes of how to stream, how to present yourself, and how to effectively get your word out to audiences everywhere.

About This Book

My own journey with Twitch begins with *another For Dummies* book I wrote about podcasting. It was at the end of 2004 when I was introduced to podcasting by Michael R. Mennenga and Evo Terra, the hosts of a science fiction literary talk show, *The Dragon Page*. Both of them were telling me about this amazing new

thing coming to the internet called podcasting. Audio and video content could be distributed easily to anyone in the world, through either a computer or a portable device like an MP3 player.

With Mike and Evo's help, I launched *MOREVI: The Chronicles of Rafe & Askana* on January 21, 2005. Since then, I have been podcasting a variety of material, ranging from fiction, to podcasting tips, to D&D sessions. Nearly two decades of content creation and four editions of *Podcasting For Dummies* (penned with Chuck Tomasi) later, I'm looking for new and interesting technology and techniques that challenge my creative abilities.

Along came another friend of mine, Matthew J Drake, who suggested I take a look at Twitch.

Matthew patiently explained to me — *repeatedly* — what Twitch was all about. As the host of a *StarCraft* channel at the time, he had me intrigued — until he mentioned the "S" word: *streaming*. I knew streaming, be it audio or video, to be incredibly twitchy (pun not intended, I swear) and dependent on your computer's processing power. Even with cutting-edge hardware, results might not be what you would expect if your internet service was subpar. The only trusted streaming services were available from media companies charging six or seven figures for the capability to stream an event live, and even then, watching these streams remained device-dependent.

"That was *then*," Matthew insisted. "Technology has changed." I remained skeptical. But when I returned to playing video games, Matthew again urged, "You should get on Twitch." And he said it again. *And again.*

So this journey I find myself on — and this particular title — is all his fault.

How to Use This Book

Twitch For Dummies, 2nd Edition, should be these things to anyone who picks it up and reads it (straight through or by jumping around in the chapters):

- A user-friendly guide on how to assemble a studio, become a producer, and stream video games, creative projects, product demos, or self-help sessions
- A terrific reference for choosing the right hardware and software to put together a professional-looking stream

- The starting point for the person who knows nothing about working with video and audio; editing, recording, and hosting streams; or turning a computer into a broadcasting studio
- A handy go-to "think tank" for any beginning streamer who's hungry for new ideas on what goes into a good stream
- A really fun read

There are plenty of answers in these pages, and if you find the answers too elementary, I provide you points of reference to research. As with any *For Dummies* book, my responsibility is to give you a foundation on which to build your channel and grow from there. I offer, alongside other streamers, a thorough guide to streaming.

I feel the need to also mention that I feature just a fraction of the streamers that are on Twitch. You may not know, and you may think, *Why didn't you talk to [insert favorite streamer here]?* While you may not know the streamers featured throughout this title, I do, and what I've learned from them I hope to pass along to you.

Icons Used in This Book

So you're trekking through the book, making some real progress with developing your stream, when suddenly these little icons leap out, grab you by the throat, and wrestle you to the ground. (Who would have thought streaming was so action-packed, like a Bond movie, huh?) What do all these callouts and icons mean? Glad you asked.

TIP

You see this a lot on my own stream: I'm in the middle of a discussion and I suddenly have one of those "Say, that reminds me" moments. Tips are handy little nuggets of knowledge that are good to have in a toolbox and may even make your stream a little tighter than average.

REMEMBER

If a moment in this book is something akin to a "Seriously, you can't forget this part!" factoid, I mark it with a Remember icon. You're going to want to pay close attention to these puppies.

WARNING

Sometimes I interrupt my own train of thought (again, something that happens often on my stream) with a *"Taihoa, Bro"* moment — and this is where I ask for your undivided attention. Warnings are reminders to not try this at home because you'll definitely regret it.

Beyond the Book

If you're looking for a quick reference either while reading or after finishing this book, you can get a little more helpful Twitch-related information on www.dummies.com, where you can find a Cheat Sheet for Twitch. Go to www.dummies.com and type *Twitch For Dummies* in the Search box.

In addition to the *For Dummies* website, this book is written by someone who streams on a regular schedule. If that doesn't come as a complete shock, I'll blow your mind yet again: This writer would love to talk to you.

From your browser of choice, visit https://twitch.tv/theteemonster and follow or subscribe to me, Tee Morris. While I'm live, I'll be more than happy to answer your questions. *Within reason, of course.* For example, if I'm in the middle of a *Destiny* raid or if I'm facing off with one of Khan's patrols in *Ghost of Tsushima,* and you pop into my Chat and say, "I'm new to streaming and I'm trying to figure out if I should invest in an Elgato Stream Deck or a new microphone first," it will take me a red-hot second to talk to you about it. Still, I invite you to pay me a visit with any questions about content creation.

Where to Go from Here

At this point, many *For Dummies* authors say something snappy, clever, or even a bit snarky. Chuck and I did that often throughout the editions of *Podcasting For Dummies* (Wiley), and I continue that tradition in this book. But my best tongue-in-cheek material is saved for the pages inside, so here's a more serious approach . . .

If you want to hop around the book, that's your decision, but I suggest planting yourself in front of a computer and starting with Chapter 1. I recommend a few links you should check out, show you how to put together a bare-bones Twitch channel, and then help you start working on that stream of yours. Along the way, I talk to other Twitch streamers and ask their advice and suggest streams that can educate, inspire, and enlighten you. Through it all, I work with you to create engaging, original content.

Where do you go from here? Out into the Great Wide Open, my friends. So, buckle up. It's going to be a heck of a ride.

1 Getting Your Game On

IN THIS PART . . .

Set up your Twitch account and creating a complete profile.

Explore the Twitch platform by watching and following those who are already established on Twitch or working to do so.

Put together a simple streaming setup using your gaming console.

Launch your Twitch Channel, setting schedules for your stream and notifying people you are live.

Critique your first streams and consider the options for you and the content you create.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Discovering what streaming is
- Finding out what Twitch is
- Creating a Twitch account
- Following and subscribing to Twitch channels

Chapter 1

Welcome to the World of Twitch

You ever look around and think, *How did I get here?* I know — that's a fairly deep question to kick off a *For Dummies* book, but I've been doing this a lot lately. Technology, on the whole, is pretty awe-inspiring in how it evolves over such a short amount of time. When you find your niche, it's also amazing to see how advancements that were considered out of reach, if not impossible, are now plug-and-play or a quick click of an OK button away.

Maybe that's how you're feeling right now about this copy of *Twitch For Dummies*. How did I get here? Maybe you've heard of Twitch before, and you quickly dismissed it because you're not a gamer. Or maybe you are very familiar with Twitch, and you're thinking, *"Yes, It's my time."* On the surface, Twitch may appear to be a gamer's haven reserved for mouse-and-keyboard warriors with lightning-quick reflexes. Look a little deeper, beyond the *Call of Duty* and *League of Legends* channels, and you will find streamers who have made some impression in society by raising money for charity, teaching audiences how to cook carnitas, recording podcasts on science, politics, or pop culture, and even helping others in their creative or personal development endeavors. (See Figure 1-1.)

Whatever the reason, you're here. You are ready to get your game, your passion, or message out to the world. So I'm going to help you set yourself up on the platform that takes content creation to another level.

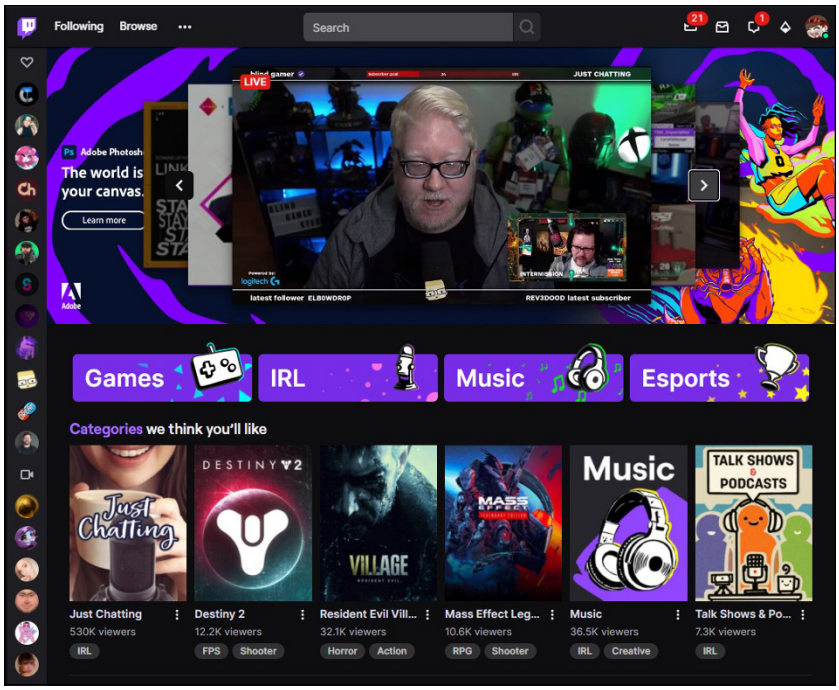

FIGURE 1-1: Twitch is known for gaming, but it also features creatives of all backgrounds sharing their passions on an interactive platform.

TIP

One way to decide what kind of stream you want to host is to take a look at other streamers and see how they present their content. You can keep it simple, make a wish list of tricked-out effects, or go full tilt into streams that easily rival ESPN in the way of production value. There's no "one way" to stream, but finding inspiration from other streamers is a great way to develop your own stream.

Creating a Twitch Account

There are two schools of thought when it comes to creating a Twitch channel: *I need the latest and greatest studio gear, the fastest supercomputer on the market, and a full-on production set and crew in order to create a stream of broadcast industry quality that will make people flock to my channel!* school of thought. You also have the *Huh . . . I've got a Broadcast Gameplay option on my console and a pretty decent headset. Why don't I give it a go?* school of thought. Both are equally valid approaches to streaming, sure, but there are a lot of other disciplines and strategies in between. The real questions are how far do you want to go, and will it be worth it — both financially and emotionally — to go that far?

These are the tough questions of Twitch but allow me a moment to dispel a few misconceptions about streaming right off the bat: Streaming does not demand that you convert your basement into a broadcasting studio. You do not need a set, lighting equipment, or multiple cameras to stream. You do not have to invest thousands upon thousands of dollars to share your gameplay. (I mean, you *could*, but why not crawl before running a sprint against Sha'Carri Richardson?)

Streaming on Twitch is not rocket science. In fact, here's a quick rundown of how to launch a Twitch channel:

1. **Set up an account on Twitch with a preferred email account and phone number.**
2. **Find on your gaming console where you can broadcast your game.**
3. **Select something to play.**
4. **Start streaming on Twitch.**

If you're thinking, *Now, hold on a minute — if streaming is that simple, then why is this book so chonky?* Well, yes, I did gloss over a few details here, but streaming on Twitch *is* that simple. The details of putting together your own Twitch channel start in Chapter 3 and wrap up in Chapter 9; the rest of this book walks you through all the geek-speak you need to begin assembling your audience and keeping them engaged. You find out how to build and improve your stream and what to do with all this content you're generating. Peppered throughout this love letter to my favorite social platform are recommendations from other streamers because this book isn't just about me. There are some wicked talented people on Twitch. I am most fortunate that some of them took time to talk to me about their journeys.

We've got a lot to do, so let's get cracking.

Press X to begin: The basics

So, with the quick approach I described earlier, you can have a Twitch account activated and running within moments, but that's all you'd have: an empty space with the most basic of contact info and no details to speak of. Right now, you're thinking, *Okay, but when do I start streaming?* I'm going to have you pump the brakes there, Squirrelly Dan. Let's start from *the beginning* and then spend some quality time filling in the blanks and understanding this platform.

Here's how you get started:

1. **Go to `http://twitch.tv` and select from the top-right side of your browser window the Sign Up option to open the form shown in Figure 1-2.**

TIP

You can still watch Twitch streams without being signed up with the platform. However, if you want to take advantage of the Chat features, you need an account.

2. **Come up with a username for yourself on Twitch.**

   This is how you will appear in Chat. Your username can be a nickname you go by, a play on words, or your own name. There are a lot of different ways you can approach the username. Just make sure you're not violating any terms of service (TOS) in creating it.

WARNING

When establishing a username for yourself, avoid picking something overly generic. Usernames like "Fortnitelover01" and "LeagueLegends2245" aren't going to stand out in a crowd and will lead to a branding change if your channel grows into something bigger. Additionally, if you are constantly changing your handle, it can become problematic for people to find you — and, yes, trust you — on Twitch. For more on this, see the sidebar "Branding 101: Your username" later in this chapter.

3. **Create a password.**

4. **Enter your birthday.**

   Again, this is based on an honor system, but the birthday requirement is there to verify your age and ensure it's within the TOS established by Twitch. For more on Twitch's TOS, visit `https://twitch.tv/p/legal/terms-of-service/`.

5. **Enter a valid mobile phone number or email.**

   You must provide both email and phone number in order to verify you are not creating an anonymous account. This was introduced to help stop Hate Raids (which I cover in Chapter 14).

6. **After reviewing the TOS and privacy policy and completing the verification steps, click Submit to finish the application.**

You now have a place on Twitch, but the current state of your account is a lot like the state of a newly launched Twitter account, where the profile picture and bio are blank, and the username is your Twitter handle. When you come across Twitter accounts like that, you can't avoid a hint of skepticism as to how genuine they are.

So begins the work of completing your Twitch account. If you forge ahead without tending to these details, you will find growth lacking, ease of use a little elusive, and overall performance a challenge. Maybe these details feel tedious, but completing them will grant you a deeper understanding of the platform. The sooner you sort them out, the better first impression you'll make.

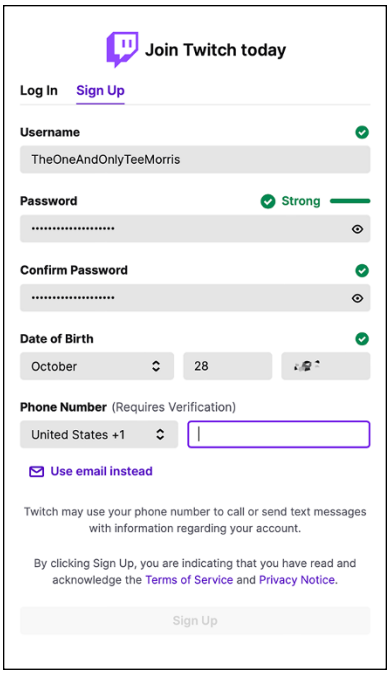

FIGURE 1-2: Setting up a Twitch channel takes only a few minutes and is free.

"New Twitch, who dis?": Completing the Profile

When you're signed into Twitch with a newly minted account, you have a blank slate where you begin assembling a persona for yourself. The *Profile* is where you introduce yourself to the public, often through a brief bio and maybe a few visual touches like a photo or a banner image.

Think of the Profile as the interior decoration of your house. When people walk into your home, they understand quickly what kind of personality you have. That's what you're going to build right now:

1. **Go to your Twitch account on `http://twitch.tv`, select from the top-right side of your browser window the Account Status drop-down menu, and click Settings (located near the bottom of the drop-down menu) to enter your Twitch account's Profile.**

Your Account Status is always visible on the Twitch website. It tells you what is happening on your channel and shares your activities with friends. You can also go Invisible or enable a Dark Mode scheme for the Twitch website. At present, the icon looks like the default, which is shown in the margin here.

2. **Find a good profile picture best representative of you.**

   The photo can be anything (within reason), but it should be a simple image easily identified at a small size. Twitch recognizes images in JPEG, PNG, and GIF formats. The dimensions of the image should not be larger than 10MB in file size.

TIP

   As with other social media platforms, the best profile pictures are simple, basic images. You want backgrounds that aren't too busy and photos that are taken in close-up. So long as you can tell what the image is at a glance, you have a good profile picture.

3. **Upload a profile banner image that sets the tone or atmosphere for your account and Twitch channel page.**

   Twitch recognizes images in JPEG, PNG, and GIF formats. The dimensions of the image should not exceed 1200 x 480 pixels or be larger than 10MB in file size.

   When done, your settings should resemble something like my profile, shown in Figure 1-3.

4. **Scroll down to Profile Settings and set up your display name for customized capitalization.**

   For example, my username is "theteemonster" but "TheTeeMonster" is how I want it displayed.

5. **Scroll down to Bio and write up a brief biography of who you are.**

6. **Click the Save Changes button to accept your changes.**

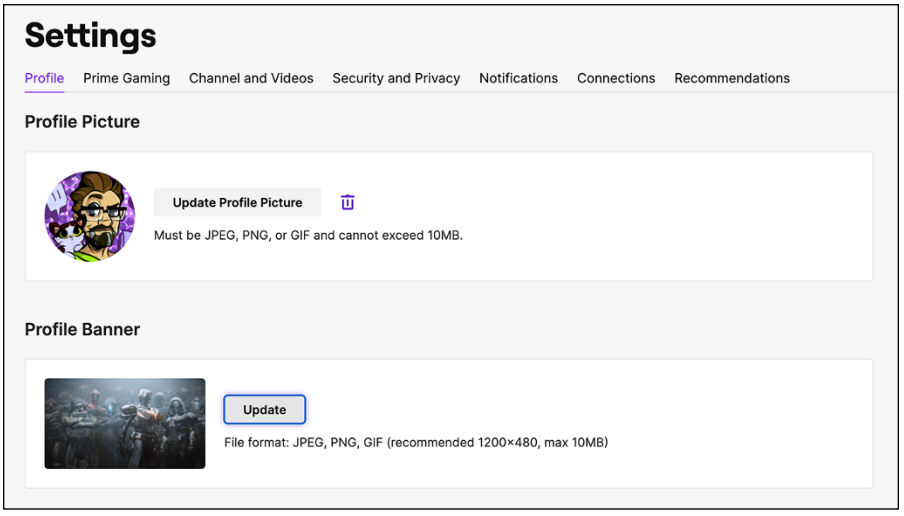

FIGURE 1-3: When completed, your settings should look something like Tee's, pictured here.

BRANDING 101: YOUR USERNAME

Rarely when you launch into a new online platform — or even social media, for that matter — does the notion of "branding" come to mind. When I talk about branding, I'm not referring to the kind of branding you would do with a cow as depicted in Westerns. Branding is, in a nutshell, your online identity. For example, my screen name on Twitch is "TheTeeMonster," which connects with my PSN and Steam accounts, TheTeeMonster. When I go live, notifications are sent out on Twitch. Even before going live, I drop promos about it on my TeeMonster Twitter account and Instagram account, TheTeeMonster.

See the pattern here with usernames? This is branding. And it does matter.

By focusing on branding, you make it easier for people to find you, as well as identify you, on Twitch. This consistency helps you strengthen your online identity as well as your online brand.

You want to make it easy for people to find you online. That's why you may want to think a few steps ahead and find a name that can work across several platforms. I talk more about branding and other ways of promoting yourself positively in Chapter 13.

The Profile section of your settings is now complete, and when people visit your channel, either online or through the Twitch app, they will see a full profile as opposed to the default settings. It's always wise to put your best foot forward, you know?

REMEMBER

If you decide that Twitch is not for you, go to the bottom of the Settings section and follow the link offered in the Disabling Your Twitch Account section. Never leave a Twitch account (or any social platform, for that matter) unattended. Otherwise, malicious hackers can crack into that account and do some damage to your name and reputation.

You still have a few more details to take care of, but you're off to the right start.

All in the details: Channel and Videos settings

Once your profile is complete, you can progress to the right of the Settings options. The Twitch Turbo option, simply described, is a subscription service connected to your Twitch account that offers special deals and perks for membership, such as ad-free viewing, longer online archives for past streams, and much

more. Continuing past this, you have Channel and Videos, where you set specific details about your Twitch channel. While you now have an active *account*, that isn't the same as having an active *channel*. There's a subtle difference, and in Channel and Videos you set parameters that help you manage your Twitch channel once content creation begins.

REMEMBER

You may notice a subtle change in the user interface (UI) here. Twitch offers everyone access to a *Creator Dashboard*, a UI that's dedicated to helping you with content management, community management, and a whole lot of other details you'll want quick and easy access to. Throughout the following steps, you'll be jumping between Twitch and your Creator Dashboard:

1. **From your Settings page, click the Channel and Videos option.**

   To access this section from Twitch, click the Account Status drop-down menu and select Creator Dashboard; then select Settings ➪ Channel.

2. **You can double-check your username, display name, and bio here. Scroll down to Social Links (see Figure 1-4) and add the five most relevant places for people to find you online.**

   The social links will appear underneath your stream when you're live on Twitch. They can also be found in your About section when visitors go to your Twitch channel.

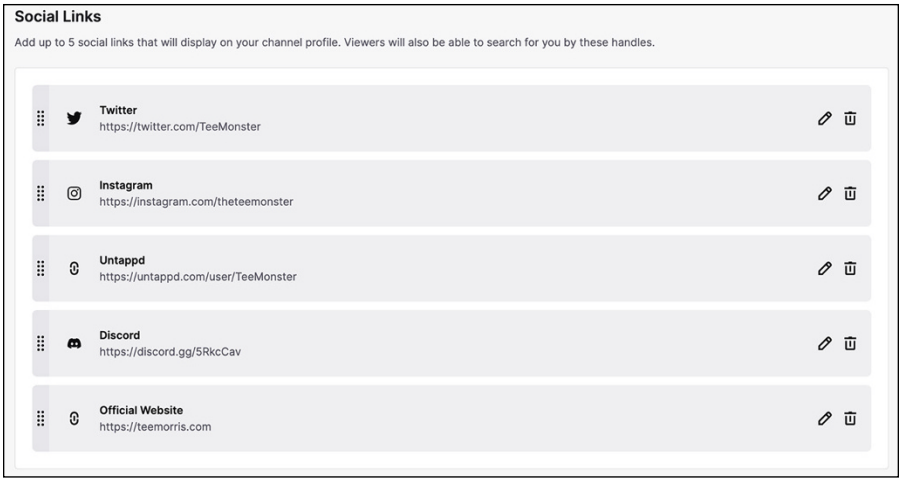

FIGURE 1-4: Social links give visitors to your channel other places to connect with you online.

3. **Scroll up to the top of the Channel page and select Brand to review your profile picture, select any color themes you want to apply, review your profile banner, and — at the bottom of the Brand page — upload a video player banner.**

The video player banner is an image that works as your channel's placeholder when you aren't streaming or hosting another streamer's channel. Twitch recognizes images in JPEG, PNG, and GIF formats. The file size should not exceed 10MB.

TIP

The video player banner shown in Figure 1-5 was created using Photoshop. Being able to use Photoshop, Canva, or other image editing tools benefits your Twitch channel, so find something in your budget that allows you to learn, master, and apply image editing skills.

FIGURE 1-5: When choosing a video player banner, consider an image that informs people of your stream, such as a schedule change or upcoming special event.

4. **Scroll to the top of the page and click the Schedule option.**

   If you have an idea of what your streaming schedule is going to be, you can map it out here, complete with links to your games or topics of choice. This will appear on your Twitch channel as a handy guide for people to follow. Time zones are even localized to your viewers, wherever they are in the world.

TIP

When you first start as a Twitch streamer, schedules can (and should) be fluid, but the basics should be there so people know when to catch you live. I go more into setting up a schedule in Chapter 5.

5. **Scroll to the top of the page and click the Featured Content option.**

   You can scroll to review the options of Auto Hosting (what your channel shows when you aren't live), your Streamer Shelf (other streamers you recommend), and your Teams (other streamers and organizations you collaborate with).

   It may be some time before you have a Channel Trailer, the first option offered under Featured Content, but when you're ready, you can upload it here. I go into creating a Channel Trailer (and its longer version, Highlight Reels) in Chapter 11.

You've taken care of a few of the details, and your account is beginning to take shape. Make note at this point of two other sections of your Creator Dashboard: Stream and Moderation. Both sections are key in not only controlling your stream but making your Chat a positive, fun place to be. These sections are going to be places you will frequent. I talk about them more later in the book — Chapter 8 and 14, if you can't wait.

Controlling the signal: From privacy to connected third parties

Twitch, and social media as a whole, is all about sharing. That's the truth about all these platforms: You reap what you sow. So, garbage in? Garbage out. Quality talk? Quality stream. Twitch, as I stated earlier, is an investment on an emotional as well as a financial level. But what if there are details you don't want to share, or visitors to your channel you don't want to share with? I would be the first to tell you: If you want to keep it private, keep it offline. *And there's nothing wrong with that*. There is no Prime Directive of Content Creation saying you will be cast out if you don't share everything.

It's good to know what's running by default, and exactly what kind of control you have over your Twitch experience, so here are the final steps you need to take to keep control of your account:

1. **Return to your Account Status drop-down menu in the upper-right corner of the window and select Settings ➪ Security and Privacy.**
2. **The Contact section is where you find your confirmation email and phone number. Make sure the Enable Additional Account Creation option is deactivated.**

   If you limit your accounts to one account per phone number and email, Twitch channel creation is easier to track.
3. **In the Security section, click the Edit Two-Factor Authentication option to activate or confirm that you are running two-factor authentication.**

   Two-Factor Authentication is where, along with your password on Twitch, you enable an app like Authy (`https://authy.com`) to generate a security key on your phone. This additional layer of security is extra protection for your account, which is something I and other streamers *strongly* recommend. This (along with the advice from Step 2) will stop any would-be hackers' attempts to compromise your account.
4. **Review the Privacy settings to confirm how you want people to reach out to you.**