

# **The intersection between gaming, gambling, and social media platforms in the case of five Danish gambling streamers on Twitch, Kick, and YouTube**

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## **Keywords**

streaming, gambling, gaming, Twitch, YouTube, Kick, gambling operators, social media, platforms, gaming culture

## **INTRODUCTION**

As European policymakers are increasingly confusing gambling, games, and social media in their attempt to legislate young Europeans' access to digital citizenship (Euractiv 2026), it has increasingly become essential to understand to what extent games, social media, and online gambling practices are related to each other (Abarbanel and Johnson 2020; Thorhauge and Nielsen 2021). This confluence of games and gambling is further corroborated by the tendency of what used to be legitimate gaming news sites that have now been taken over by parasitic SEOs who takes over high-authority websites to rank low-quality content. Following this acquisition, these gaming news sites then promote gambling streamers (Ryan 2026), thereby directly bridging gaming content with online casinos and betting. In this view, the presence of gambling streamers playing online slots games on gaming-oriented platforms such as Twitch and YouTube reinforce the perception that games, gambling, and social media are intertwined (Johnson and Jackson 2025). Yet the question remains to what extent phenomena such as gambling streamers operate within video game related online contexts or if their affiliation with games are tenuous if not entirely arbitrary. To better answer this, this presentation investigates the disseminative strategies of five Danish gambling streamers – i.e. what tagging labels and outreach methods they employ on Twitch and YouTube to gain more viewers – and to what extent their actual content streams are connected to 'video games'.

This presentation tests the hypothesis that gambling streamers derive from, are embedded in, and affiliated with online video game cultures (Muriel and Crawford 2018). Between April 2023 to August 2026, we have compiled a set of quantitative data of the five most popular Danish gambling streamers on Twitch and YouTube, where we scraped their YouTube accounts for API platform data and collected 94 Twitch streams and 945 YouTube videos. All five streamers are white Danish men in their 20s or early 30s. We use this dataset to identify to what extent their algorithmic, disseminative strategies are connected to online gaming culture, such as categorizing their gambling streams on Youtube as 'Gaming' or listing their live streamed

gambling on Twitch as a video game rather than the ‘Slots’ category. Our findings reveal that all four gambling streamers categorize their videos on YouTube as ‘gaming’ while circumventing any legal punishment by the Danish Gambling Authorities by setting the videos to require viewers to be 18 years of age. We use the site Twitchtracker.com to provide a history of each of the five gambling streamers to pinpoint what content they have streamed over time and to what extent video games were part of their streaming offerings and when they pivoted to primarily streaming online gambling.

We complement our quantitative data with a qualitative content analysis of 233 hours of Twitch and YouTube videos where we identify the specific instances where video games as a phenomenon and activity are brought up during the streams, and if so, what the nature of the conversation around gaming are. This qualitative dataset reveals that gaming does not take up the majority of conversation, but instead is only brought up as a leisure activity on par with chatting about football or going to the movies. I.e. the conversations around games across all five gambling streamers are not affiliated with what is considered traditional gaming culture. Our results show that while the five gambling streamers do employ algorithmic strategies associated with games to gain more viewers, the actual streams treat gaming more as a normalized leisure activity as part of broader, mainstream youth cultures. Meanwhile, our historical contextualization of the streamers reveal how their origins were partially through live-streaming video games where they would later pivot towards mainly if not solely streaming online slots. Thus, the presentation’s preliminary findings help uncover the intersection between gaming and gambling and social media in the case of five online gambling streamers, where video games are not directly related to the gambling content, but the platform relations to games and their historical associations with video game culture have meant that there is a sort of background radiation of gaming emanating from each of the streamers.

## **BIO**

Emil Lundedal Hammar (PhD) is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Communication at the University of Copenhagen. His research expertise intersects between game studies, political economy, critical race theory, and cultural memory studies, where his doctoral thesis addressed how digital games, race, colonialism, and political economy intertwine to reinforce dominant understandings of the past. His current research focuses on labor conditions in the Nordic game industries, theories of imperialism applied to the global games industry, and most recently, the financialization and platformization of media cultures for the Level Up Your Money Game project.

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## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The author does not have any potential conflicts of interests.

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