

# R&D Outsourcing

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## Profession - streamer: how to make hundreds of thousands on streaming games



Play all day long and earn many times more than an office clerk: this scenario became real thanks to the development of streaming - live broadcasts of online games

The income of the 27-year-old American Ninja reaches \$ 500 thousand a month, top Russian streamers still earn 1-2 million rubles a month, but they already collect thousands of live viewers. The world of streamers is very closed - they are reluctant to respond to offers of cooperation, and advertisers are often afraid to work with 20-year-old gamblers. RBC magazine

spoke with three popular streamers and found out why they don't have time to spend their earnings, how to get up on the streams if you're a girl, and why Twitch will beat YouTube.

Streaming like new oil

MakataO Stream - PUBG Earnings - 180-230 thousand rubles. per month (hereinafter - the assessment of the RBC magazine) (Photo: from the personal archive of Dmitry Pustovarov)

To meet with the most famous player in Russia in PUBG (PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds), the correspondent of RBC magazine flew to the city of Ukhta in the Komi Republic. At two o'clock in the afternoon here is a dark polar night. TripAdvisor calls the eternal flame the local entertainment number 1, and the residents of Ukhta are proud that Roman Abramovich studied at the local institute. "I live alone, there is especially nowhere to go, so online games are the best leisure for me," admits Dmitry Pustovarov, better known as MakataO.

The 26-year-old Pustovarov was educated as an engineer for oil and gas field equipment, served in the missile forces and got a job in a boiler room at a mine in the village of Yarega, neighboring Ukhta. On weekends, he worked as a DJ at weddings. Dmitry became interested in computer games at school, and at the institute he began to spend all his free time at the computer. He played the tactical shooter Battlefield and even joined a semi-professional team.

The first accrued from the salary is 100 thousand rubles. Pustovarov spent on a computer that played high-quality online games. In 2016, he took the nickname MakataO and decided to stream himself on the Twitch platform. The video and audio quality was terrible, there was no webcam, and in the first few days not a single person came to the broadcast. He did not give up and went on the air every day, developing a special tactic: "The evening hours, when viewers come from work and school, are busy with large streamers, it's useless to compete with them. Therefore, I chose an unpopular time: morning, when the Far East was connected. " After the night shift in the boiler room, I drove home, had breakfast and at about nine in the morning sat down at the computer for 8-10 hours.

"I know what it means to carry bags and interfere with cement, so sitting in a chair in front of the monitor did not seem to be a problem for me," he says. The audience grew, soon the first donations (donations) from the audience began to come. "I didn't perceive streams as a way to make money, I just liked to play, and I wanted to find a viewer," says Pustovarov. - Mostly twenty, fifty rubles came, and when the first 500 rubles arrived, I thought: wow, I can pay for a communal apartment with this support!

A sharp rise in the popularity and income of Pustovarov happened in 2017, when the PUBG game in the battle royale genre was released: gamers parachute onto the island, looking for equipment and weapons there in order to kill other participants and stay alive. Through an acquaintance, Dmitry took out a key to the beta version and started streaming. The number of viewers at the peak of the broadcast has grown from 30-40 people several times, and with them the volume of donations. Six months later, the number of MakataO subscribers exceeded a thousand, and he began to think about changing jobs. "I realized that I only go to work because all normal people do that," admits Pustovarov. Taking a month off, he streamed 10-12 hours a day: it turned out that donations can bring more than the main job. Dmitry quit his job, and now, according to him, he earns several times more than the previous salary, which was not bad by the standards of Ukhta.

"Generous donations can spoil streamers. Why should I do anything at all, negotiate with advertisers, if I am already earning \$ 8-10 thousand thanks to viewers? - argues Artur Avakyan, co-owner of the Stream Pub agency (promoting streamers on Twitch and YouTube). - A streamer can live anywhere - for example, in a small Russian town, where the average salary is 8-10 thousand rubles. The difference is almost 70 times. "

Over time, several advertisers came to him (pizzeria Papa Johns, manufacturer of gaming accessories HyperX, etc.), and on the page with streams Twitch began to advertise itself, although 95% of the revenue still comes from user donations. According to Pustovarov, the welfare in streaming directly depends on the will of the viewer, and he approaches the selection of advertisers very carefully. "On Twitch, you communicate directly with the viewer. If you make a deal with your conscience, how can you look into the eyes of the chat then? " - he reasons.

For a year of streaming, PUBG MakataO managed to represent Russia in the World Championship in this game, become the most watched PUBG streamer in the CIS and the eighth

- in the world. In Ukhta, Pustovarov is recognized on the streets. "It seems to me that I still work at the plant, only it refines not oil and gas, but time into human emotions," says Dmitry.

According to market participants, MakataO's income in good months reaches 230 thousand rubles. (Dmitry himself refuses to discuss his earnings). Pustovarov is saving up to move to Moscow, where he plans to move to his girlfriend. "I am Korobochka in life, doing what I love and not squandering my earned money on all sorts of cinema and cafes makes me happy," he says. He has no clear professional plans yet. "I understand that this activity is not for life, but while luck is rushing, you need to use it. The market is far from its peak, so something tells me that I will be late here. "

"Like the first sex"

Gnumme Stream - Hearthstone Earnings - 250-500 thousand rubles. per month (Photo: Arseniy Neskhodimov for RBC)

Interview 33-year-old Roman Oleinik, who is also a Gnumme streamer, asks to appoint no earlier than five in the evening - at which time he just wakes up. In their lifestyle, streamers are somewhat similar to club goers: they get up in the late afternoon, stream 8-12 hours, and go to bed in the morning. "You can't go anywhere at night, it's kind of dumb to walk, except perhaps to a convenience store for

groceries," Roman admits. - But an office Muscovite also has no life: 10-12 hours to work with the road, after - a serial. Routine..."

Oleinik studied at the University of Engineering and Economics in St. Petersburg with a degree in state and municipal administration - he jokes that he was educated as a bribe-taker. During my studies I got hooked on collectible card games. In 2013, Hearthstone was announced - a new collectible card game, but online. "A friend got two keys from the beta somewhere, so I decided to give it a try. I downloaded it - and it started - I played voraciously for several weeks," Oleinik recalls.

By then, he had already watched the growing Twitch streams of World of Warcraft (WoW) and decided to stream his game in Hearthstone. "I don't remember the first stream, but I suspect it was like the first sex — fast, messy and awkward," Roman smiles. I was streaming without a camera, staged recordings of "Leningrad" in the background. To recruit viewers, Oleinik went through the thematic forums with the announcement and took part in the Hearthstone tournament among the CIS countries, taking first place. A couple of months later, several dozen people watched the Gnumme broadcasts (Roman chose his nickname from the name of the dwarf race in WoW).

Roman graduated from the university, but decided that he did not want to be an official, and went to work in a bank for the starting position of a client manager: in five years he changed three places - Renaissance Capital, Citibank and Alfa-Bank. Combining streaming with office work became increasingly difficult, and in 2016 he quit. Several thousand people have already watched Oleinik's streams, the first advertisers (QIWI and AMD) came, and earnings on streams seriously exceeded the salary in the bank. "Most streamers are very young people, they live with their parents at their expense and therefore experience powerful psychological pressure," says Oleinik. - I was already an adult boy, it was easier for me in this sense.

The first two and a half years of streaming Roman behaved very eccentric: shouting, swearing, hitting the table with the keyboard: "Who usually watches streams? Male schoolchildren. What are they interested in? Dirty jokes and screaming morons in the frame, splashing saliva on the webcam. " So Gnumme gained about 10 thousand viewers on each broadcast and got into the top 3 game streamers in Russia.

But in the same 2016, I decided that it was time to change: "I realized that I was going somewhere not there - I reviewed the streams, and even somehow felt ashamed". He announced on the air that now there is a certain level of communication on the channel - without bearded anecdotes and genital topics - and everyone who does not agree can safely go to the ban. From 10 thousand people, its audience dropped to 3-4 thousand. "I lost people, but I started sleeping peacefully," Oleinik admits. At the same time, income almost did not fall: large advertisers more often look not at the number of viewers, but at the streamer's reputation. He speaks evasively about the amount of income - from 100 thousand to 1 million rubles. per month. According to market participants, now Gnumme receives from 250 thousand to 500 thousand rubles. per month.

"Many are scared by the lack of stability: if they don't get money, they don't get it — no. It's not like that for large streamers," says Oleinik. "I have four monetization channels, they are jumping, but together they create about the same financial picture every month." According to Roman, the streaming market will grow exponentially: "The current 30-year-olds are used to watching TV in the evenings - football or Dom-2. And teenagers who grew up playing games will soon reach the paying age and bring the streaming market to the top. "

Bad player is good streamer

Olyashaa Stream - conversational shows Earnings - 100-250 thousand rubles. per month (Photo:

Viktor Yuliev for RBC)

Online games are considered to be more of a man's hobby, but Twitch's face is becoming more and more feminine - the proportion of girls on the site when

s approaching 30%. A streamer girl is more often associated with a busty model showing extremely deep cleavage and collecting donations from male viewers. "There is a merchant for every product, there is nothing wrong with that. But girls also want to be personalities, not boobs and asses, so the content is changing: there are many who are really good at playing online games, singing, drawing or just chatting, gathering thousands of viewers," says streamer Olyashaa, one of the the most popular girls on Russian-speaking Twitch.

Olga Saxon, 25, is an IT specialist by education, graduated from the Moscow State University of Instrument Engineering and Informatics. It didn't work out with computers, and after graduation, she got a job as a service representative at the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca: she sold medicines to pharmacists in pharmacies. "Nobody believes, but I'm an introvert, and it was very difficult for me to just walk in from the street and push something to a person," Olga recalls. A month later, she suffered a nervous breakdown, but after a course in a neurosis clinic, she returned to work and even got a promotion.

Saxon lived with a young man who was fond of online games and watched streams on Twitch. "I had no idea what this Twitch was and who streamers were. But I watched a couple of Gnumme broadcasts and got hooked too," she recalls. A few months later, the young man invited Olga to stream herself. "I was wildly afraid and said that nothing would work out. But then I thought: the maximum I am losing is a few thousand rubles for a microphone and a webcam, and I decided to take a chance." In 2015, only games could be streamed on Twitch, and Saxon chose the easiest option for themselves - the Hearthstone game. The first viewers managed to gain quite quickly: there were still few girls on Twitch at that time. "It is much easier for girls to start: everyone walks in and sees what she has to offer, but not many make their way to the top."

Saxon does not hide the fact that her streams went, rather, thanks to her appearance and presentation. "I have a gift from God - it is bad to play any games. This gave rise to a bunch of memes, many wrote "get out of Hearthstone", but I never pretended to be an esports player," she admits. Olga combined streaming with work: she was released at around four o'clock, walked home and sat at her computer for three to four hours. This did not bring much income: in the first six months she received donations for 3 thousand rubles.

In 2017, Twitch introduced the ability to stream talk shows [IRL tab - In real life], Saxon switched to them, and soon it was covered by a boom in popularity. "Once I go to the stream and see that I have some unusually large online - at the moment 700-800 people are watching. I say: guys, what happened, who are you all?" - Saxon recalls. It turned out that the influx of audience was provided by her joke about the vibrator ("I constantly break equipment. You can ask my vibe ... the player!"), Which was posted in the "VKontakte" group "Angry schoolboy".

A couple of days later her stream was watched by 4 thousand people: the video with a joke got into another popular group on VKontakte, Video Dol \*\*\* ba. "I thought - oh my God, I got up on a joke about a vibrator, and people from " Video Dol \*\*\* ba "are just my audience, class!" - Olga laughs. But thanks to the hype, the number of viewers by the end of the summer reached 10 thousand people even for top game streamers. Mostly schoolchildren were connected, but there were also wealthy adults: once someone transferred her a donation in the amount of 100 thousand rubles.

Olyashaa quit her job and became a real icon for her viewers: her mail is littered with poems and love letters, fans study all the details of her life and even watch at the entrance. "I come, and there the

guys are standing and freezing. Basically everyone wants to be photographed, but I'm somehow uncomfortable - people have been waiting for me for hours. I called the most adequate for tea, although later my friends told me that I was crazy, "says Saxon.

Over time, the wave subsided, out of 10 thousand online viewers, 3-4 thousand remained. The biggest drop in Olyashaa's audience happened when she announced that she was meeting with the popular YouTube blogger Pleasant Ildar (2.3 million subscribers). "Many people think - I'm 10 thousand at the beginning now, I'll write to her in VK, she will go on a date with me and we will have an affair. And when you openly say that you are busy, this audience falls off. " When the couple broke up, Saxon's views returned to their previous level.

According to Olga, her income ranges from 100 thousand to 250 thousand rubles. per month. About a third of the revenue comes from donations, slightly more than half comes from paid subscriptions and advertising on Twitch, and 10% comes from advertisers. Olyashaa, unlike game streamers, broadcasts not 10-12 hours, but 4-5 hours, there is enough time for the rest of his life. "I have another problem: I have money to go somewhere, but how can I not stream for a week? I'm starting to break down, "she says.

#### Business on the air

Streaming online games in Russia began in the late 2000s. At first, Dota 2 and WoW players were based on small platforms Justin.tv and GoodGame, and in 2011 they launched

I'm Twitch, quickly overtaking other sites. In 2014, the service bought Amazon for \$ 970 million. Today, Twitch has about 2 million streamers and 15 million daily viewers. "Each streamer is a separate small business," argues Artur Avakyan from Stream Pub. "They need to be taught how to talk to people and respond to messages, tell them that no one will pay them for advertising in cash: register an individual entrepreneur, if you are under 18, ask your mother to [register]."

There are four main content monetization schemes at Twitch.

1. Donates from viewers.
2. Paid subscriptions to the channel (cost \$ 4.99, allow you not to see ads, sometimes open access to chats for subscribers and prize draws). The income is divided between the streamer and Twitch - the larger the streamer, the more share goes to him.
3. Third Party Advertisers. They can buy native (the streamer sits in a T-shirt with the brand's logo) or voice (pronounces the agreed text during the broadcast) advertising, banners with the logo in the broadcast picture, pre-rolls and post-rolls, a link to a product, and creative integration into an advertising campaign.
4. Advertising from Twitch - advertisers buy it from the site, and it itself distributes videos between streamers.

While Twitch is inferior to its main competitor YouTube in terms of advertising budgets, the effectiveness of advertising here is noticeably higher, market participants assure. "From an economic point of view, it is more profitable for the agency to work with YouTube than with Twitch: there is more audience coverage and a higher cost-per-view," Avakyan says. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of advertising on Twitch is noticeably higher, he says. "Streamers enjoy a tremendous degree of trust. On a live broadcast, it is impossible to cut and edit anything - a person is what he is: he experiences emotions, swears, rejoices, eats, speaks with his mother on the phone. For the audience, this is not an abstract blogger, but a friend, "the expert explains.

According to him, this significantly improves the sales funnel: significantly more Twitch viewers reach the purchase stage than YouTube. "I have a very 'tube' community: if I tell them to click on a link, they will click because they understand that it is important to me," confirms Olyashaa.

This same feature has turned streamers into experts in the closed market of online games: they are more willing to listen to their opinion about new products and trends than to specialized gaming media. "This is the magic of live broadcasts: real-time mode and the ability to influence what is happening on the screen. When you read the magazine, you get only the information that the author gave you, and you can ask the streamer a question and get an immediate answer to it," says MakataO.

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