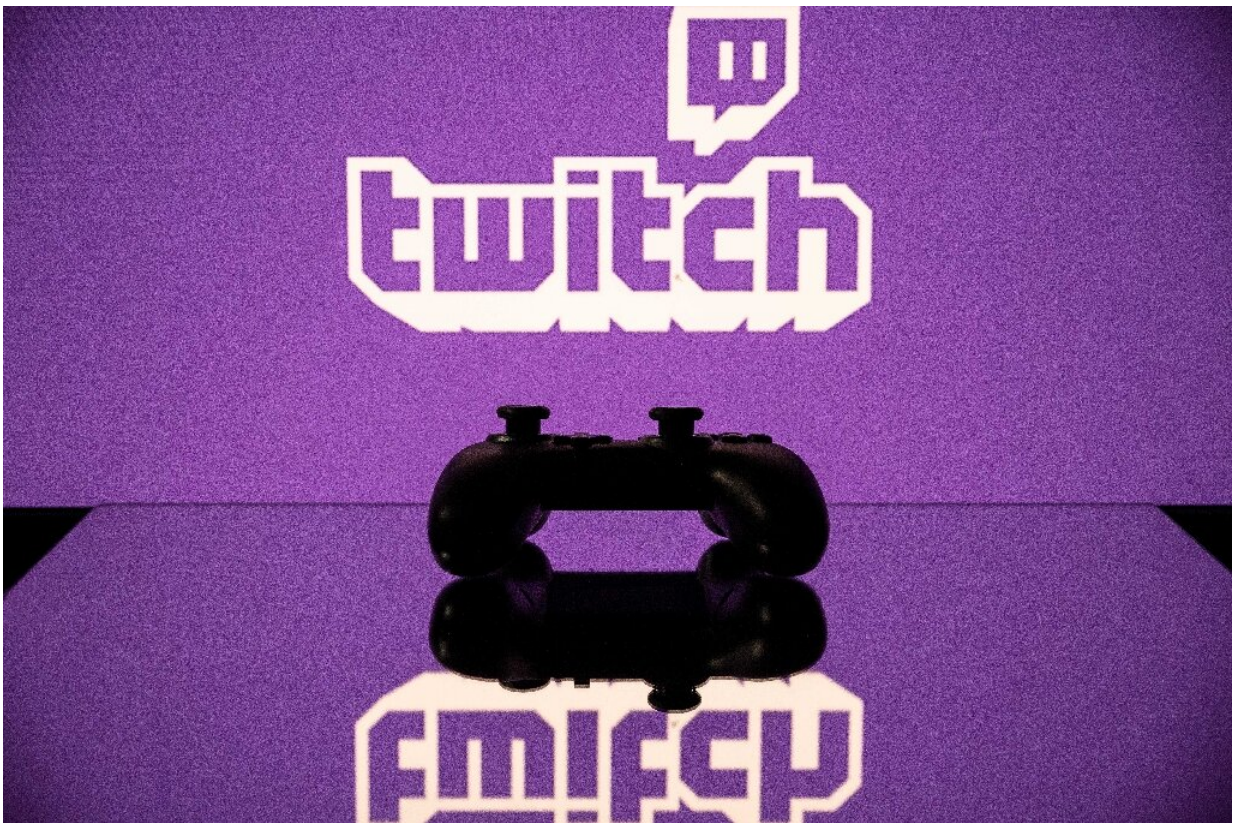


Twitch video gamers go offline to protest 'hate raids'

September 1 2021



Users of the Twitch gaming platform staged a digital walkout to protest abuse on the site.

Users of Twitch, the world's biggest video game streaming site, staged a virtual walkout on Wednesday to voice outrage over barrages of racist,

sexist and homophobic abuse on the Amazon-owned platform.

The extent of the protest remained unclear, but a TwitchTracker website indicated that there were nearly 4,000 fewer channels streaming at Twitch than the daily average for the week.

In recent months the phenomenon of "hate raids"—torrents of abuse—has been making life increasingly unpleasant for minority users of Twitch.

The protest organized using the social media hashtag #ADayOffTwitch was intended to get Twitch to do more to protect streamers from attacks.

"You won't see anything on Twitch from us today," tweeted esports organization @skelpesports. "The platform has a hate raid problem and it needs (to be) fixed."

A Twitch spokesperson said the platform is working to improve tools for protecting accounts from abuses.

"We support our streamers' rights to express themselves and bring attention to important issues across our service," the spokesperson said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"No one should have to experience malicious and hateful attacks based on who they are or what they stand for," the spokesperson added.

Twitch plans to meet with streamers it partners with as "ambassadors" next week regarding the situation.

"I implore you all to make time to support BIPOC and marginalized creators today," tweeted one of those ambassadors, @AshleyRoboto, using an acronym referring to Black, indigenous, and people of color.

"I want Twitch to do better," she added.

Twitch noted that it has published a Safety Center page detailing tools for protecting against attacks, and met with streamer RekItRaven, who took part in organizing the virtual walkout.

"We rushed it because it was no longer just about hate raids, but targeted individuals were having their personal information spread on Twitch," RekItRaven told AFP.

"We pushed the timeline up because it became dangerous," added the streamer, who is black and identifies as a gender non-binary.

Sick of racial slurs and messages referring to the Ku Klux Klan, Raven recently started a Twitter hashtag, #TwitchDoBetter.

The hashtag has become a magnet for complaints over the past month, largely from female, non-white and LGBTQ players, that Twitch is failing to stop internet trolls running amok—all while taking 50 percent of streamers' earnings.

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Citation: Twitch video gamers go offline to protest 'hate raids' (2021, September 1) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-09-twitch-video-gamers-offline-protest.html>

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