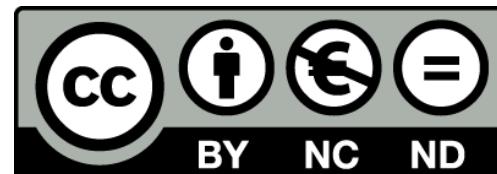


Presentation

Live Streaming

Jason Crouch for Collective Encounters



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Still from NTLive recording of
One Man Two Guvnors

There are a lot of different pulls towards the digital and online spaces at the moment.

Much of what we'll talk about today will be relevant to work you make after the current crisis as much as it is seems urgent now.

There is no rush to put things online, and whilst you may want to pivot to digital as a reasonable reaction to the situation we find ourselves in, there is no reason to sacrifice the quality of the work, or your own professionalism!

The main two bits of advice I'd emphasise for streaming and capture of performance, is that experimentation is everything, and that you can't capture it once it's gone.

If you're working in a performance space like a studio theatre or auditorium you'll experiment/rehearse/reflect to discover boundaries and affordances of that space - the shape of it, the sound of it, the fell of it. Online tools present us with a different set of spaces so its best to become familiar with what they do



Working with a venue can create great opportunities to use and build up a roster of equipment suitable for digital capture. It can also create the support and space to prototype and develop new streaming techniques whilst working alongside production teams and artists.

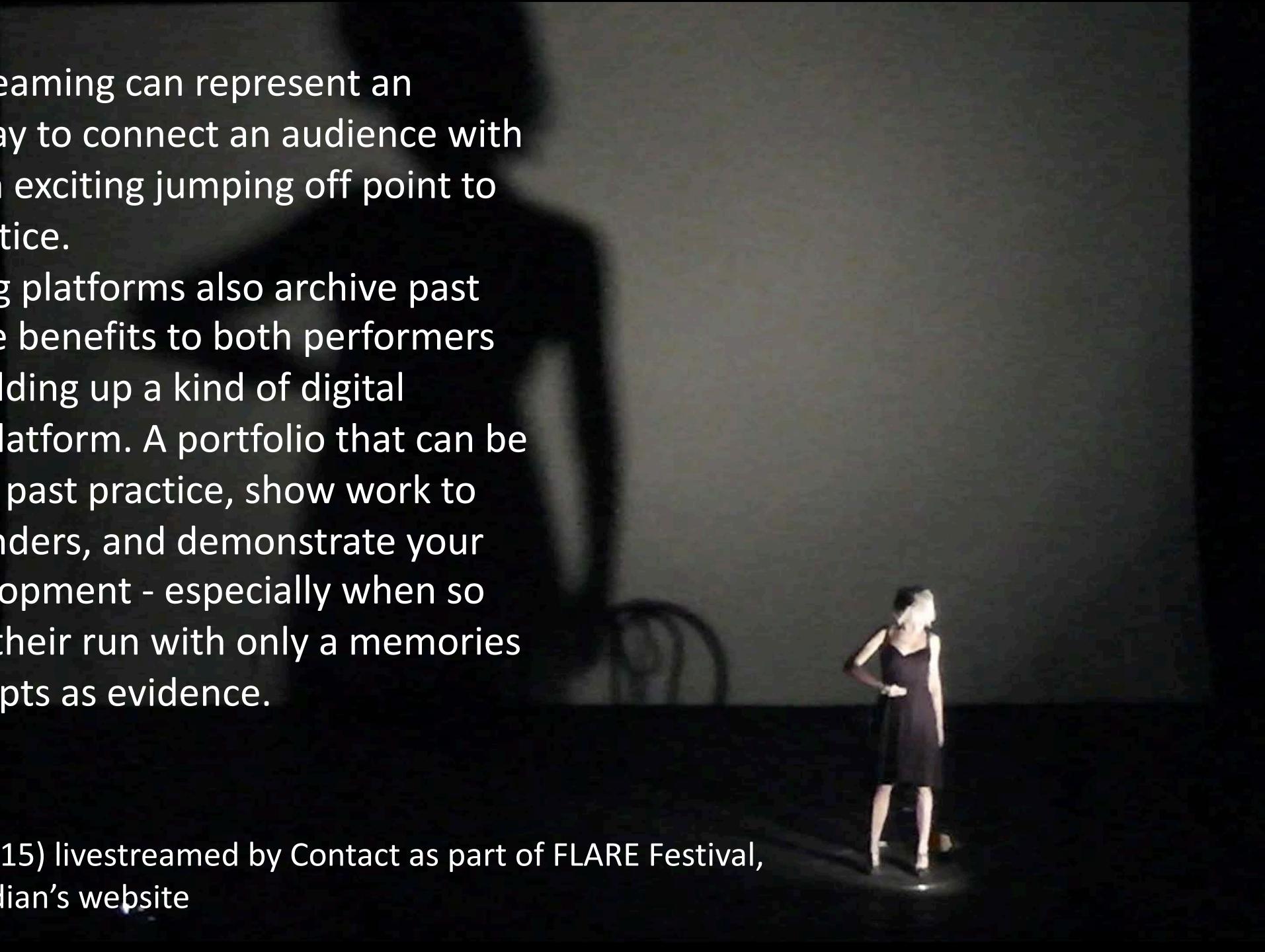




Under the Covers, CYC (2015)
Single camera stream from Contact's Space 2

The importance of this kind of partnership, whether formal or ad-hoc, can't be overestimated.

If you are an artist who's interested in the possibility of streaming or otherwise capturing your work, it's worth trying to partner with a venue. They themselves may be unsure of the best way to work up their streaming offer, and if you are a venue, what better way to develop and innovate in this field than to partner with artists themselves. These kinds of collaborations offer opportunities to pool resources, hardware and expertise in a way that is hugely valuable to all partners. Creating exciting and bespoke methods to document and present new work.



For artists, livestreaming can represent an important new way to connect an audience with your work, and an exciting jumping off point to develop new practice.

As most streaming platforms also archive past streams, there are benefits to both performers and venues in building up a kind of digital portfolio on the platform. A portfolio that can be used to reflect on past practice, show work to producers and funders, and demonstrate your own artistic development - especially when so many shows end their run with only a memories and a box of receipts as evidence.

Sleepwalk Collective (2015) livestreamed by Contact as part of FLARE Festival, embedded on the Guardian's website

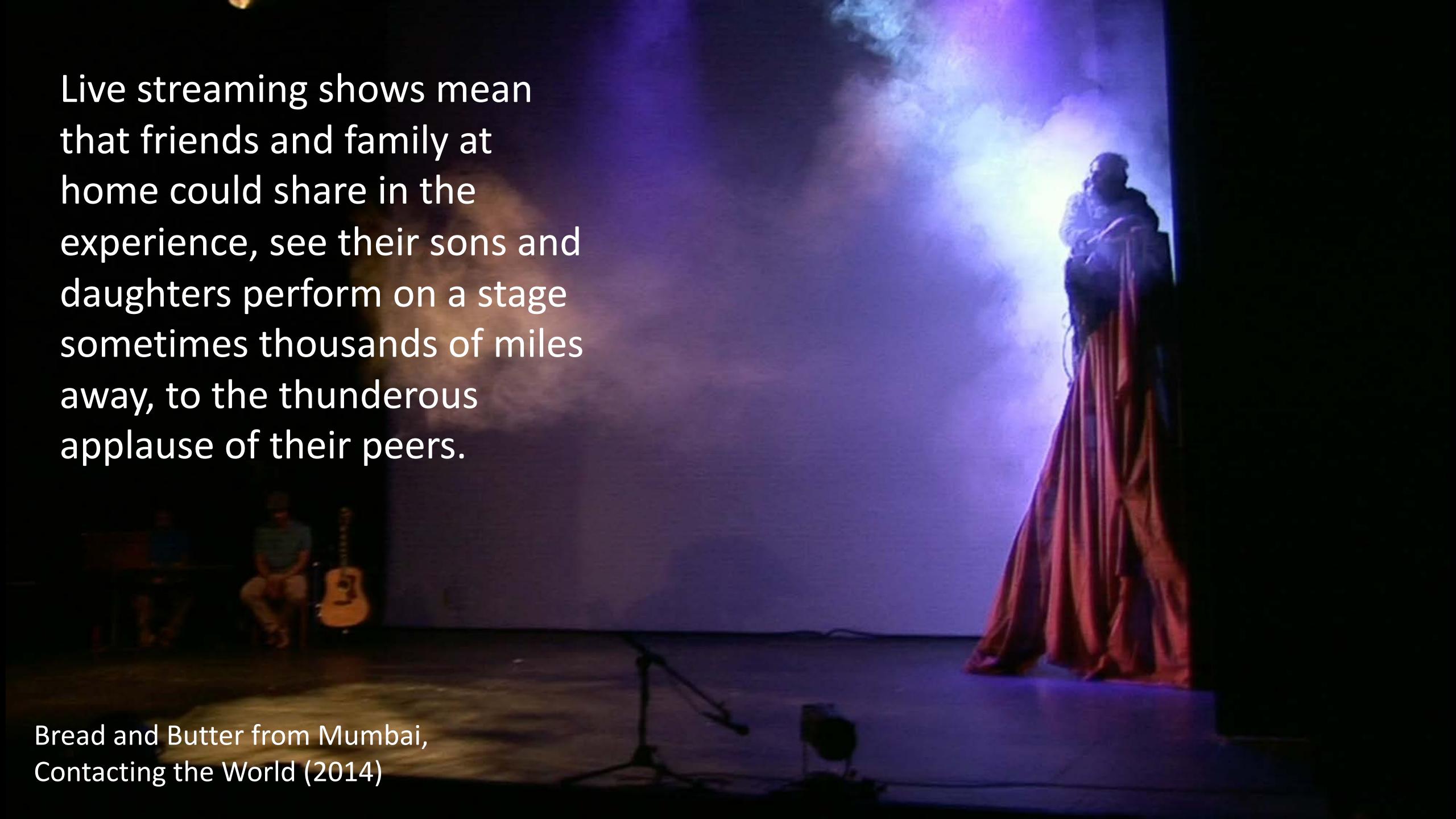
What do we take away from these findings?

- First, there is **no evidence in any of our models that the National Theatre Live screenings have on average harmed attendances at local theatre**, at least in our sample of venues.
- Second, there is **evidence of a boost in theatre attendances in London for populations near cinemas participating in National Theatre Live**.
- Third, **that the impact on non-theatre performances is almost as strong is puzzling and requires further research**.

Nesta Blog, 2014

“What impact does live broadcasting have on theatre attendance?”

Live streaming shows mean that friends and family at home could share in the experience, see their sons and daughters perform on a stage sometimes thousands of miles away, to the thunderous applause of their peers.



Bread and Butter from Mumbai,
Contacting the World (2014)

There are many different ways to livestream and record an event, and no single method is right for all circumstances. It's wise to develop a series of different tools and workflows and figure out what works for the piece at hand.



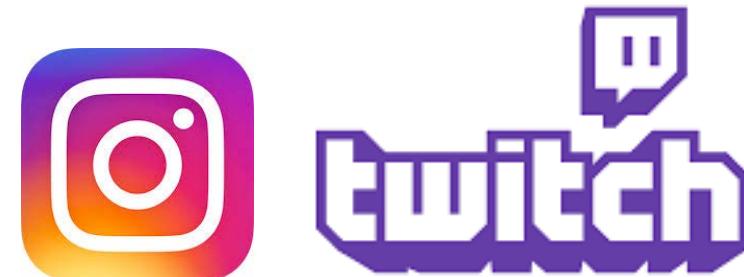
As with any technology, things will likely go wrong - but you'll learn with every misstep.



Pretty much all the affordable live streaming platforms are integrated to a greater or lesser extent with social media. Which means social media is key to its distribution and targeting. There's little to be gained from putting out a stream when no-one is watching, so it's important to let your audience know when you're planning to go live - and to publicise links with plenty of advance warning.

Each live video platform has its own pros and cons. Try them out and don't be afraid to experiment. Most offer ways to hide or password protect the stream, so you don't have to learn your craft in the glare of the public gaze. Unless you decide that's the way you want to do it.

Different platforms have different demographics but this is also up for grabs. E.g. The gamer platform Twitch is now being used by comedians such as Daft Limmy and Richard Herring

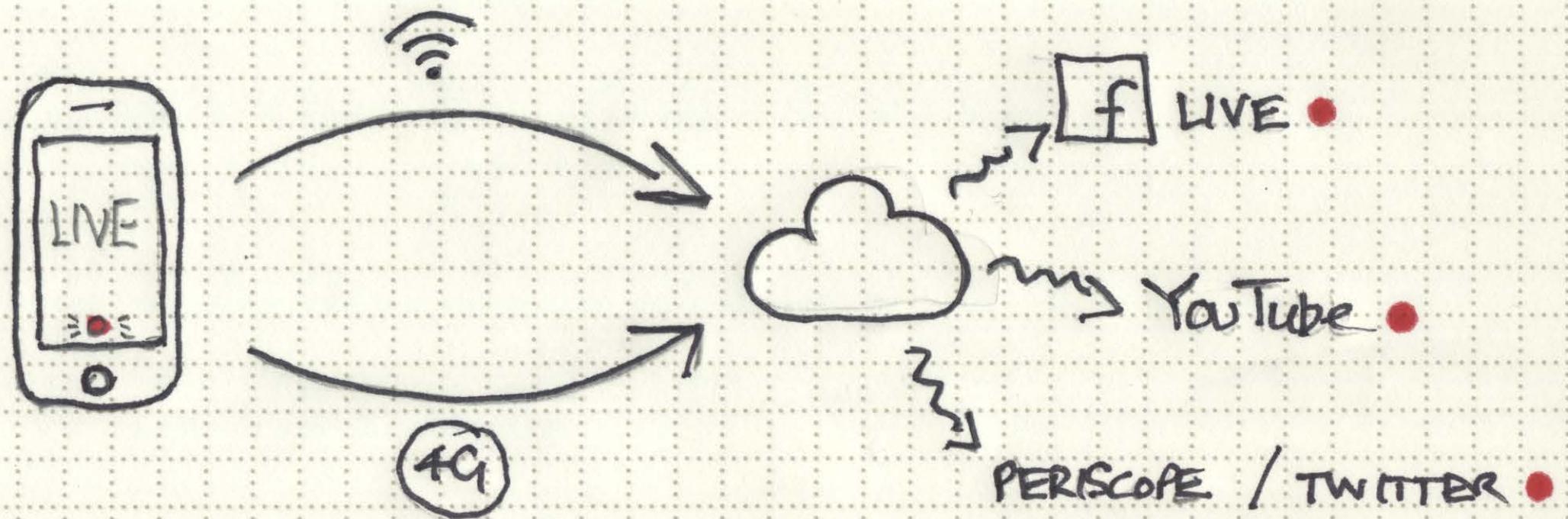


Periscope

USTREAM



Most platforms allow you to stream from a phone or tablet. Going live on Facebook, Youtube, Periscope or Twitter can be as easy as clicking a “live” button right there in the app. The quality of the stream will be defined by the device you’re using. So be prepared to get close to the action to make sure the image is clear, and that your microphone picks up the sound of your performance rather than being drowned out by audience noise.



SIMPLE STREAMING SETUP

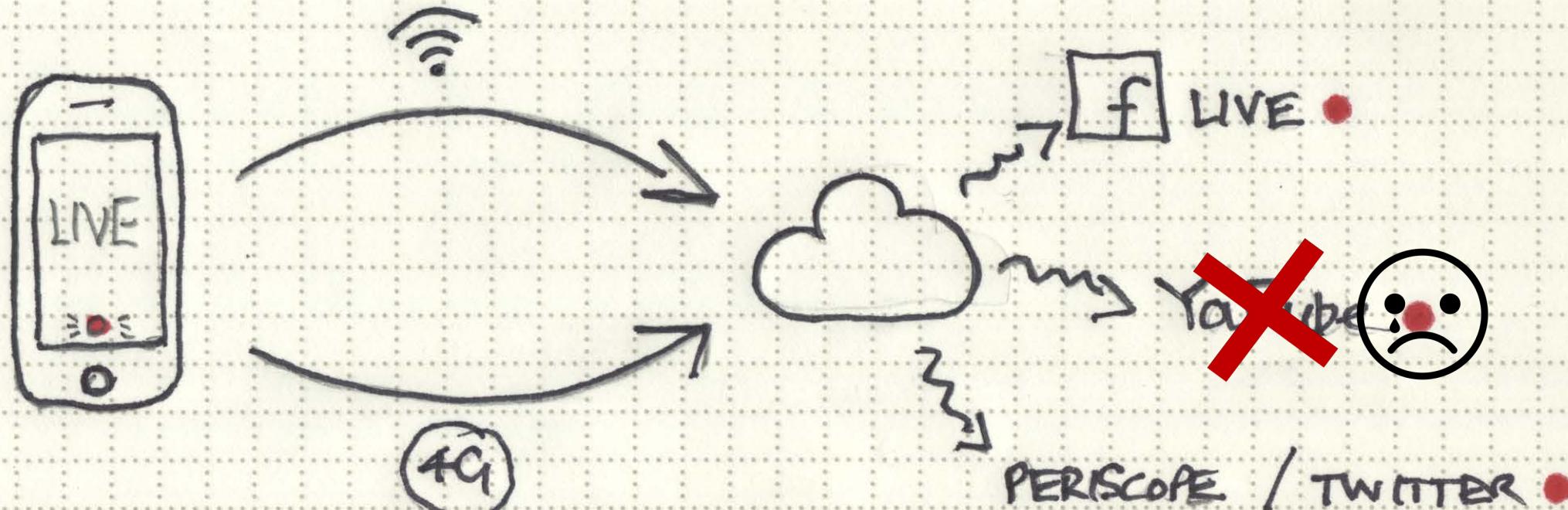
Unless your follower / subscriber count is up in the 1000s YouTube has withdrawn the ability to go live on mobile.

This is also the monetization threshold



We've recently raised the threshold for YouTube Live with a mobile device. To be able to live stream on mobile, your channel will need to have at least 1,000 subscribers.

Note that this eligibility threshold does not apply to other live streaming tools. Creators who have less than 1,000 subscribers will still be able to live stream through [desktop](#) and [webcam](#).

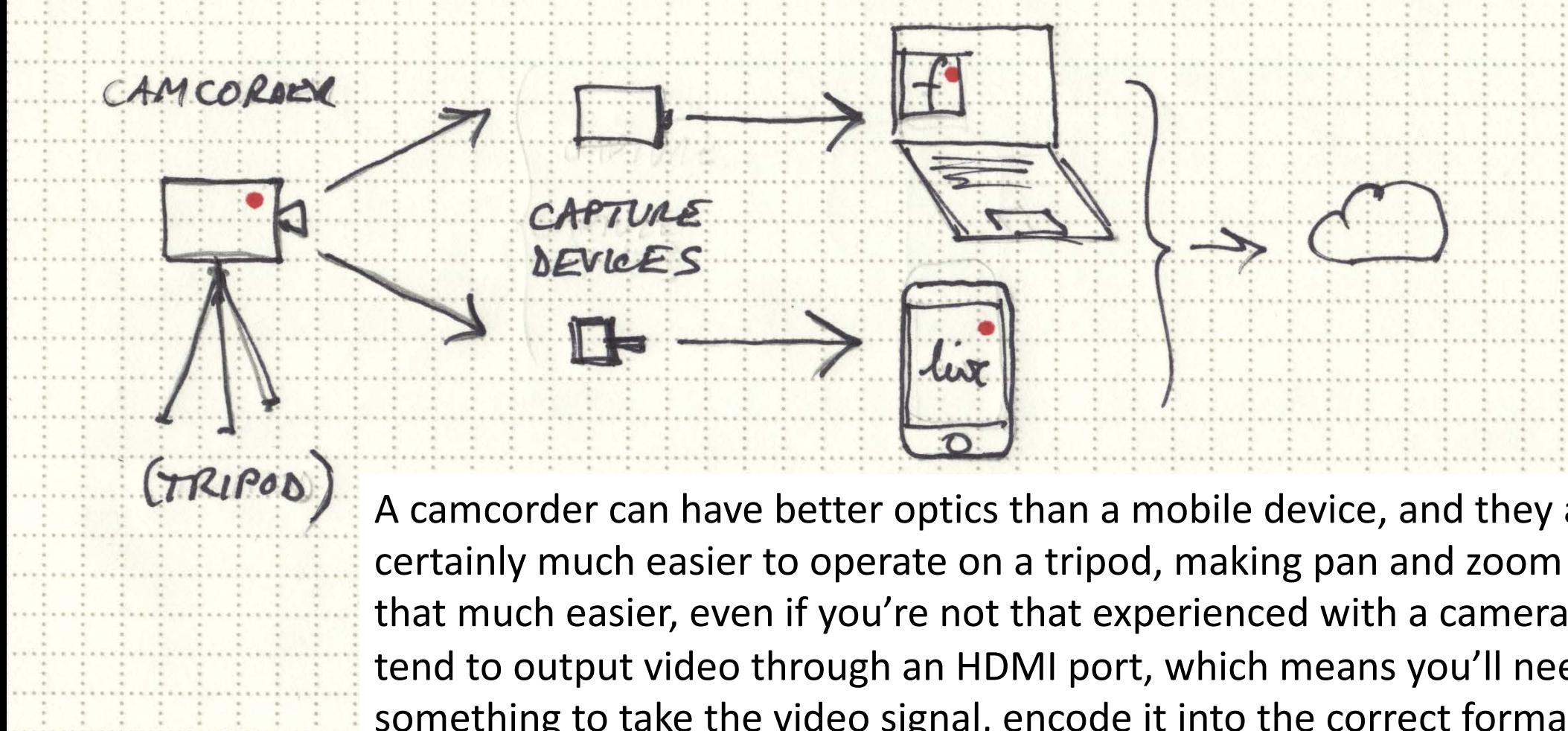


SIMPLE STREAMING SETUP

Preparation and testing

- Test the gear you're using in the way you plan to use it
- Test the internet connection
- Charge your batteries
- Watch the stream!
- Remember there's a delay

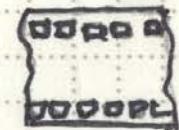
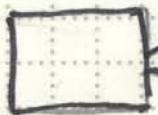
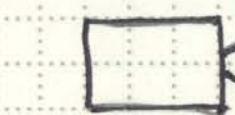
Using a phone or tablet is convenient and simple, but some simple additions to your setup let you step up a gear and bring professional effects to your DIY setup , such as titling and multiple cameras.



A camcorder can have better optics than a mobile device, and they are certainly much easier to operate on a tripod, making pan and zoom effects that much easier, even if you're not that experienced with a camera. They tend to output video through an HDMI port, which means you'll need something to take the video signal, encode it into the correct format, and upload it to your streaming service.

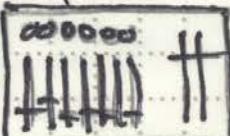
MORE
CAMERAS

LAPTOP
SWITCHER



PREREcorded
ASSETS

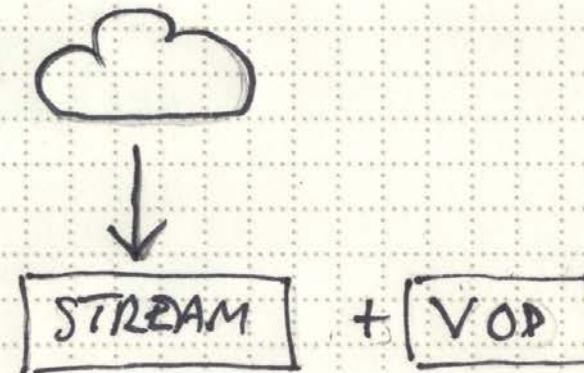
HARD WIRED
INTERNET



MICS + OTHER
AUDIO

SLIGHTLY MORE COMPLICATED
STREAMING SETUP

That said, once you've set up your high tech webcam, you might want to experiment with switching software which works a little like a TV studio on your laptop. letting you add title cards and switching between different inputs.



Commercial software like Wirecast is pretty slick, but it is expensive. There are also low and no cost options like [Wirecast Play](#) (cut down version which only works for YouTube) or the open source and free [Open Broadcaster Software](#). You will need a relatively high spec laptop do the heavy lifting.

There are apps like [AirBeam](#) and [Epoccam](#), which convert mobile phones or tablets into remote cameras operating over Wifi.

Maybe not super reliable, but another way of capturing audience experience.

You might give these to an audience or ask them to download the software and use their own device



Fast. Easy. Video.



EpocCam

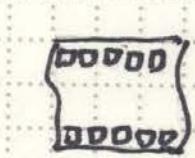
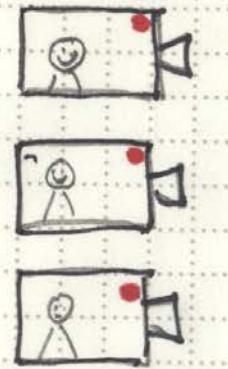
iOS / Android

Turn your phone into wireless High Definition webcam for PC and Mac



Air Beam

OPERATED
CAMERAS

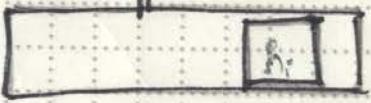
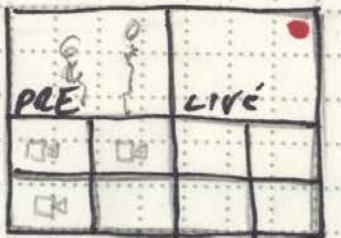


OTHER
ASSETS

TITLING
LAPTOP

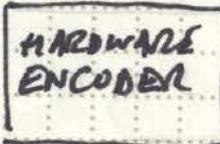
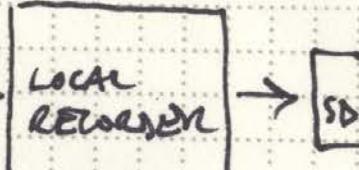
*
SUB OR SURTITLES

HARDWARE SWITCHER



AUDIO SOUNDTRACK

WIRELESS MICS



These types of DIY setup also give you more options to add in a decent quality sound input. With a small sound desk, you can add in multiple microphones, and even a feed from the theatre technician.

Figuring out this kind of workflow will generally mean getting hold of a couple of specialist bits of equipment, but the video and audio hardware you plug into it is standard issue. So any company investment in video and audio gear pays off, and of course cameras and other equipment can be hired or borrowed.

In the setup we developed in the theatre I'd use a hardware video mixer, connecting three cameras (two of which were off the shelf consumer camcorders), and use a laptop for titles. This meant switching from different camera views or inserting title cards was really easy and looked pretty slick.

In this picture similar techniques are used to place BSL interpretation and surtitles.



All of these options combined to offer us pretty high production values without a huge capital spend.

A knock-off NT Live at cost.

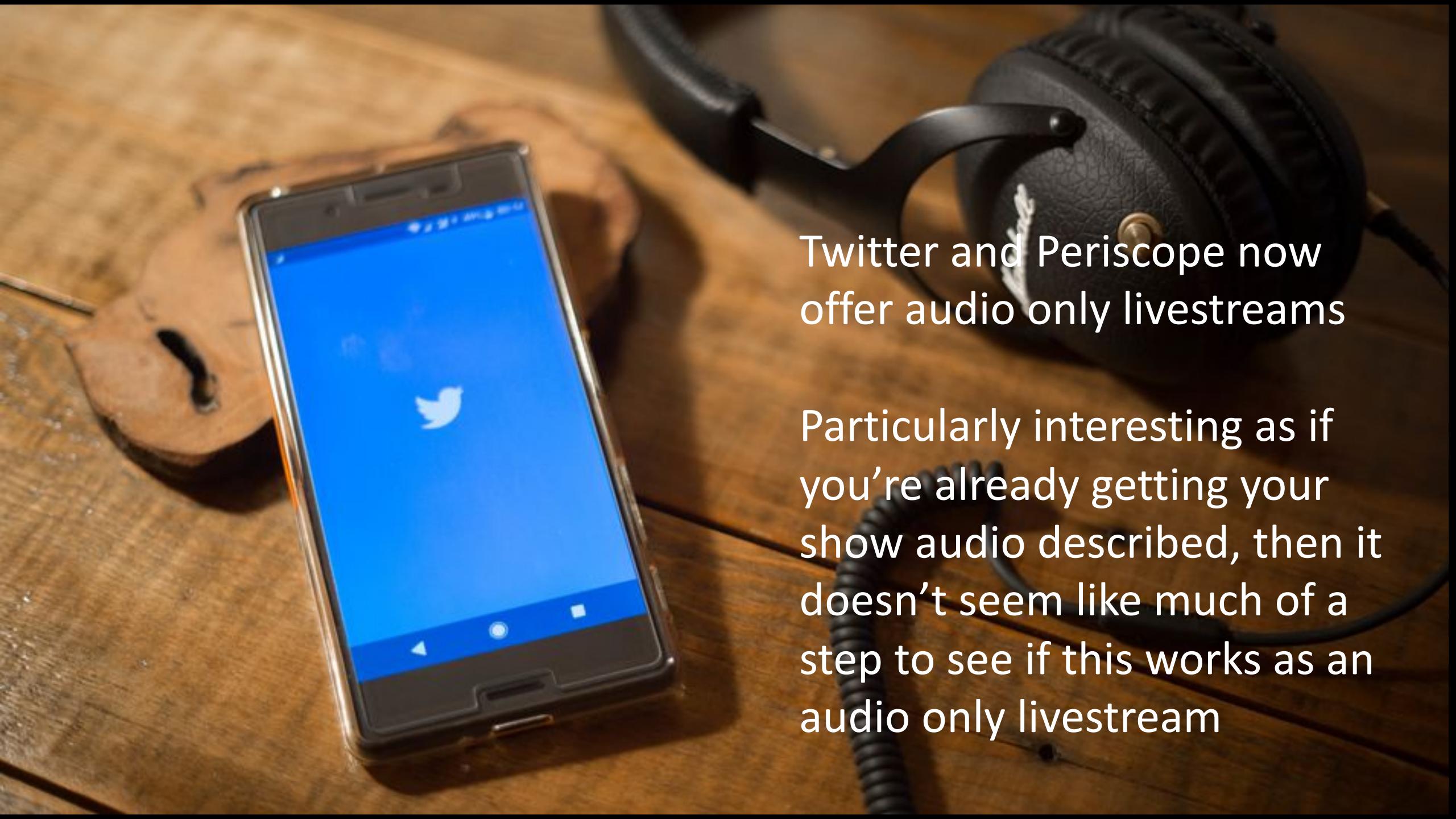
With so many options, and undoubtedly more to come, there is no single right way to stream your event or artwork. Experiment both to acquire skills and knowledge, and to find new ways to engage with your audience and give them the best experience of your work they can have.



FRESH Theatre Company, Contacting the World (2014)

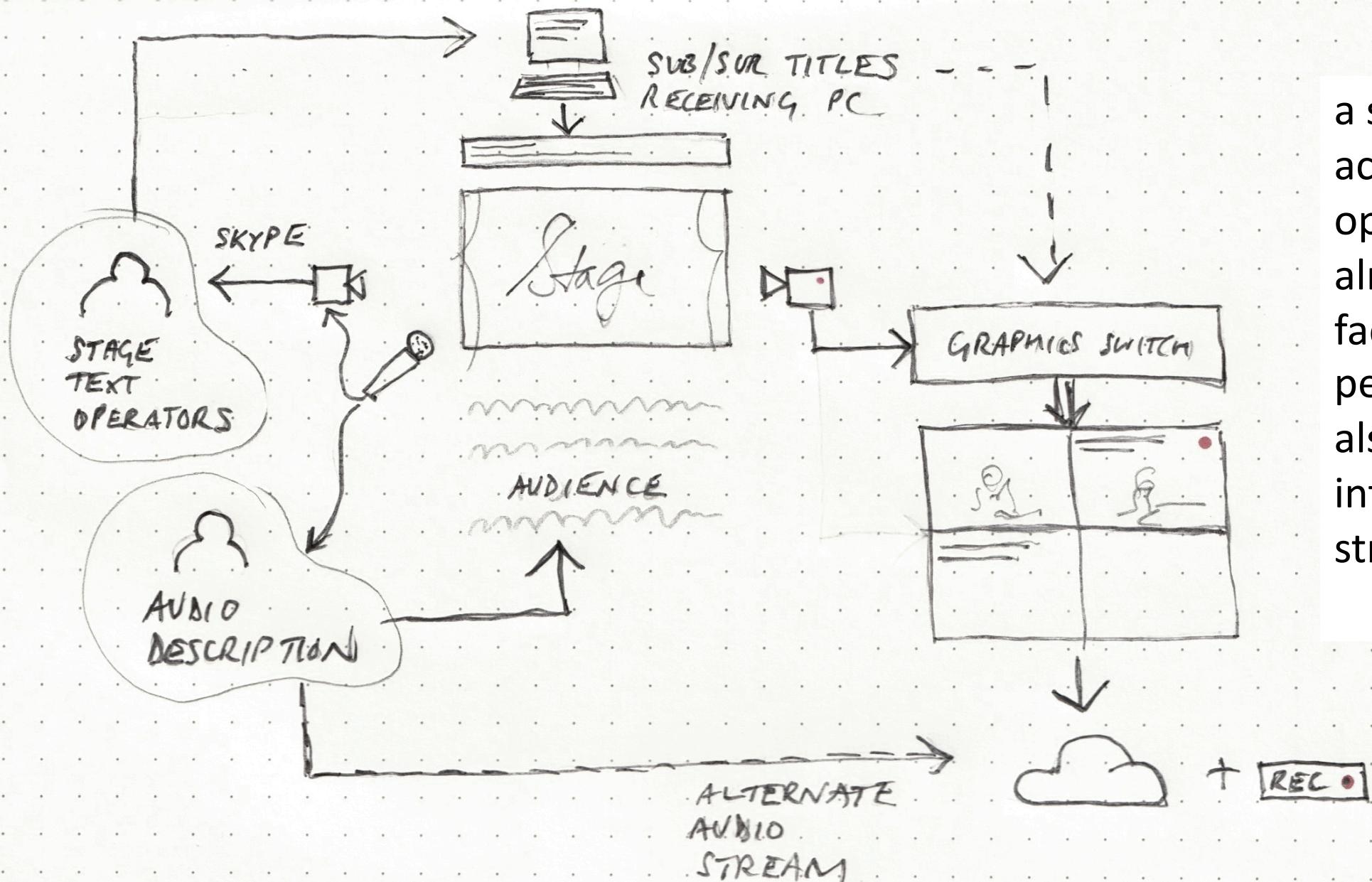
Broad Conclusions

- Involvement of all stakeholders from the start gives the best outcome
- Venue + artists have to acknowledge that there must be a budget line to accompany streaming or capture
- Streaming and capture shouldn't rest on any one technique
- Methods for streaming & capture of live performance are best developed with artists
- Capacity planning and staff training is vital to maintaining a streaming offer
- Expertise must be exercised - the less streaming or capture performed by staff over time, the more likely that expertise is lost and needs to be re-learned
- Outreach projects with artists, venues, staff and audiences will maximise returns - often in unexpected ways
- Integrate access. Providing captions through titling for audiences *inside* the theatre may offer a simple workflow change in order to add these captions to a stream
- Consider copyright issues at the very beginning of the process. Unlike on stage, there is no industry standard method to deal with appropriate licensing of copyrighted content, so it is vital to engage with these issues right at the very beginning

A close-up photograph of a smartphone lying on a light-colored wooden surface. The phone's screen is illuminated, showing the white Twitter logo against a blue background. To the right of the phone, a pair of black over-ear headphones with a coiled cord lies across the wood. The lighting is warm and focused on the phone and headphones.

Twitter and Periscope now
offer audio only livestreams

Particularly interesting as if
you're already getting your
show audio described, then it
doesn't seem like much of a
step to see if this works as an
audio only livestream



a sketch of how accessibility options that are already being factored into the performance can also be added into the streaming mix

