

Sony announces Discord partnership

Article

The news: Two weeks after Microsoft's rumored **purchase** of Discord fell apart, Sony has swooped in and **announced** an investment and partnership with the chat platform that will integrate Discord into its PlayStation 5 game console.

How we got here: Discord launched in 2015 as a chat platform for gamers. Six years and a pandemic later, it counts 140 million monthly active users that can communicate with each other via audio, text, or video in invitation-only "servers" on a wide range of non-gaming subjects from **finance** to **music**. But its core audience remains the gaming community that has

embraced its high-quality audio chat, diverse community, and mix of free and premium services.

Microsoft coveted **this community** after its own gaming-targeted streaming platform, Mixer, **failed** to gain enough traction to close ranks with the popular Amazon-owned Twitch livestreaming platform. Discord would have been a perfect complement to its Xbox holdings, but Discord preferred to take its chances on a path that will **likely lead** to an IPO.

Sony saw an opportunity to embed a platform with a huge user base that overlapped with its core users and moved quickly. The nature of the planned PS5 integration is not yet public, but it's likely that Discord will be deeply embedded into the experience. Given the **rapid rise** of social audio, it's probably not a bad investment either.

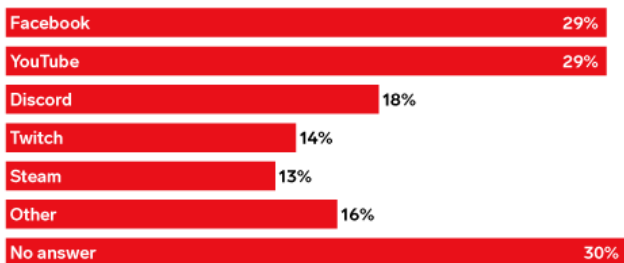
The bigger picture: Although Discord's recent growth has been aided by the pandemic, it already had a large user base of **70 million** in December 2019. Other standalone social audio apps, such as Clubhouse, don't have that track record. As big players enter the video and audio community space—such as Twitter's **Spaces**, Facebook's yet-unnamed **Clubhouse clone**, and Spotify with its **purchase** of Locker Room—that loyal base will come in handy.

Social audio and video standalones that have thrived during the pandemic will need to continue to innovate, not least through new partnerships or products. Discord's PS5 integration is a great example, as is Zoom's **new SDK** that lets other apps embed Zoom as a video chat plug-in.

Expect to audio and video chat become more prevalent in new contexts as the battle to gain audience intensifies.

Which Platforms Do US Gamers Use to Interact with Other Gamers?

% of respondents, March 2021



Note: n=1,091 ages 18+

Source: SurveyMonkey as cited in company blog, March 22, 2021

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