Machinima, one of YouTube's biggest and oldest channels, goes dark

Nearly every video on Machinima's popular YouTube channel has seemingly been deleted following its sale to Fullscreen Media earlier this week.

The channel currently has 18 videos listed on its channel, although most of those videos don't actually play. Those videos are official Machinima productions, not independent uploads from creators who worked under the company's multi-channel network Machinima Creators banner. A report from TubeFilter stated that Fullscreen's acquisition "will result in the layoff of Machinima employees – with some joining other units within WarnerMedia and Otter – though it is unclear how many staffers these cuts will ultimately impact."

Following the acquisition earlier this week, a Fullscreen representative told *The Verge* that it wasn't commenting at the time, it did say that "both Fullscreen and Otter Media [Fullscreen's parent company] have a lot of great stuff coming down the pipeline over the next few months." They did not offer any information at the time about whether Machinima's videos will remain on the channel.

A representative for Otter Media told *The Verge* that they are "focused on creating new content with the Machinima team, which will be distributed on new channels to be announced in the coming months."

> *"In the meantime the Machinima network of creator channels continues to showcase the talents of the network," the*

> *representative said. “As part of this focus on new content, we have pivoted from distributing content on a handful of legacy operated channels.”*

“It almost feels like it isn’t real.”
YouTube creators and users noticed the main channel’s barren presence on Friday afternoon. Machinima, which was founded in 2000 and launched its official YouTube channel in 2006, massed more than 12 million subscribers over the past decade. Machinima operated multiple businesses alongside its main YouTube channel, including Machinima Creators. Although the company’s future has been rocky since 2016, when it was acquired by Warner Bros., it wasn’t until this week that creators were blindsided by news that Fullscreen Media, one of the most popular YouTube-adjacent companies, had acquired Machinima.

The only heads up many Machinima Creators received from the company came from an email sent by Fullscreen’s general manager, Beau Bryant. The letter, which was uploaded to Twitter via many Machinima Creators, states that Fullscreen’s team is “going to great lengths ‘behind-the-scenes’ to ensure a smooth and efficient transition.”

“Machinima is now operating under the Fullscreen banner.”
Creators like Oliver Hull, who operates a YouTube channel with more than 1.4 million subscribers and has worked under Machinima Creators banner for years, told *The Verge* via Skype it took multiple emails to get his Machinima contact to respond to his questions about their future.

“Rest assured that you are still part of Machinima, it’s just that Machinima is now operating under the Fullscreen banner,” a rep from Machinima told Hull.

The general attitude among creators like Hull and his friends is one of “general disappointment,” Hull told *The Verge*. He describes his experience with Machinima as “getting the bare

minimum out of them," explaining that if he "desperately wanted to contact someone, I've been able to." Hull added that Machinima has never skipped out on a payment, but added that there's been nothing but "minimal communication."

Machinima is part of an older YouTube era – one where multi-channel networks were necessary for creators, and companies like Google were investing $35 million in production houses like Machinima. Creators have been turning away from multi-channel networks like Machinima, Disneys' Maker Studio, and Fullscreen, as YouTube's made it slightly easier for creators to monetize their channels on their own. Machinima became a relic of YouTube past, and when AT&T finalized its purchase Warner Media in June 2018, Machinima became one of the digital networks that Warner Media shed under its new parent company.

> *Otter Media really just went and deleted Machinima, Happy Hour, Respawn, Realm, Prime, Inside Gaming, ETC, everything. Jesus H, what a massive kick in the dick to everyone that ever contributed to those brands.* ***pic.twitter.com/btem0WhAys***
>
> *— Jeremy Azevedo (@Dangersharkz)* ***January 19, 2019***

As Machinima seemed to become less integral to Warner Bros., and as multi-channel networks became more irrelevant to YouTubers, creators like Hull started setting up their own, independent channels. Hull told *The Verge* he was worried something like this might happen and, considering that everything can change overnight, is happy that he has a second channel that's monetized and completely his own.

"It almost feels like it isn't real," Hull said. "Other than the email I got this morning and other creators talking about it, there's been no communication. It's really weird."

While Hull is moving over to Fullscreen, other creators' futures aren't as clear. *Minecraft* YouTube creator Tyler 'Logdotzip' Pappas and fighting game creator Maximilian 'Dood'

Christiansen were dropped by Machinima following content ID claims on their older videos, according to *TubeFilter*. This means they were effectively fired, and had to go through YouTube to remonetize their channel and earn AdSense revenue. The process can take months, but in wake of similar situations at companies like Defy Media — another multi-channel network that went under, leaving creators unsure of their future — YouTube has been making a better effort to help creators ensure they can continue to earn ad revenue.

“‘Twas truly a blessing to work with so many talented people who have moved on to better things.”
“Our main channel has been monetized once again,” Pappas tweeted one week after being dropped. “We are still awaiting monetization on our other two channels, but that should be sorted in the next couple hours. I want to thank everyone who reached out to help or showed their support.”

On Twitter, the community is just as in the dark about the situation as ever. Creators who used to work with Machinima but have since moved on have expressed their sympathy for others still trying to figure out what’s happening. Machinima represented YouTube’s early promise for creators, and its disappearance is a final farewell to a bygone era.

“I echo everything my friends & former Machinima employees have said about this shitty situation,” Twitch streamer Scott Fisher tweeted. “Can’t say I’m surprised by it though. ‘Twas truly a blessing to work with so many talented people who have moved on to better things.”

Update January 19th, 4:23 PM ET: *The story has been updated to include Machinima’s statement.*

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/19/18189611/machinima-youtube-fullscreen-warner-bros-multi-channel-network