

Live streaming?

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I am aware that quite a lot of people got quite excited recently when Steve Keen suggested that he, I, and maybe Danny Blanchflower, plus others, should do some public meetings together.

For me, this week's event with Faiza Shaheen was, in a very small way, the equivalent of the pub gigs that comedians do before they go on tour to test out their material. Were public meetings of this sort both a good idea and a good use of my time? These were the questions I posed for myself.

There were some obvious reasons why the meeting worked. A reasonable crowd was attracted. They seemed to enjoy it, and so did Faiza and I. The feedback was good. I was pleased to help Faiza's campaign. All those reactions were really positive.

That said, I felt quite tired all day yesterday as a result of leaving for London at around 5 o'clock on Monday after what was already a long day's work and then grabbing a takeaway before doing the talk before getting home, not much before 11. Such is my current work regime, which usually starts at around six in the morning, that this was an abnormally late night for me.

In practice, I do not think that my productivity was much impaired yesterday as a result. I managed to get quite a lot done on our videos and the work I'm doing for Accounting Streams and the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency. That said, I am aware that if I were to take on many meetings of this sort at present, that would either seriously upset my work routine or require some major changes in it, which are not possible, at least at present. I am finite, and do also like the odd break from work. I can, therefore, foresee problems arising.

In that case, I wondered whether live-streamed, internet-based meetings might be an alternative way to reach out to those who are interested in the work that I am doing.

The set-up costs in terms of both time and money for such meetings would almost certainly be lower than that required for face-to-face meetings, which is an advantage.

At the same time, I am well aware that these arrangements require careful setup and control. There is a real advantage to having a host who does least know something about the subject being discussed. There is also a need for some moderators, with those people having the job of weeding out the online trolls who almost inevitably seek to crash these events.

Precisely because YouTube is harder to control than other platforms, I doubt that I would use it for such events, but there are alternatives like Streamyard.

The format is, almost invariably, that the chair introduces the live stream and poses some initial questions to the main participant, who would be me. Then, either the host or the moderators would choose questions to be answered. These are not put verbally but are instead asked via a chat box, and follow-ups would also have to be entered in that way. That way, interaction can be achieved, albeit not as easily as in a meeting, but the result is that a dialogue can be created that I hope might be interesting.

I am not, as yet, thinking of meetings with guests, but that could follow if the initial format worked.

As with the public meetings, I am not promising anything here as yet. I am simply doing some initial research to see if this idea might have a broader appeal than doing public meetings, not least because a regular following for these events could be created if they took place, say, every fortnight. They would most likely be at 7 pm on a weeknight to allow those who work the chance to have a meal before settling down for the evening.

If you have a moment, could you answer the following questions about this? These are grouped so that problems with multiple answers can be avoided. Thank you in anticipation. And I stress that if these meetings did happen, they would be published on YouTube after the event for those who missed them.

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