

PlannerTech

New platforms make it possible to live-stream your next meeting, walking tour or public event

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Just before you thought we couldn't get more 'instant' online, along comes a new app from Twitter to live-stream your every move (or lack thereof). Thanks to Periscope we can now watch someone having a BBQ, another person singing to Taylor Swift in the car and another drinking their morning coffee. It can be pretty mundane footage at times, but Periscope's relevance to planning shouldn't be underestimated.

If you've been following the hype, or signed up already, you would have noticed the ability for Periscope to give us access to people's lives, quicker and easier, than we ever have before. Since its launch, I've been watching, interacting and sharing my own content to better understand this rapidly evolving subculture of digital users.

As part of the ur[BNE] Festival in April, I worked with QLD and ACT Young Planners to deliver a cross State collaboration using Periscope. The aim of the 'Ideas Rumble' was to solve place activation issues in pre-identified urban spaces across the different States. The use of live-streaming enabled us to 'be in the space' with the QLD team, who were introducing us to the square at the Queen Street and Albert Street intersection, and the ACT team, who were showing us The Gazebo at Tuggeranong. The insights gained from this live-streaming enabled us to identify (and potentially speak with) different audience groups, understand the urban-design morphology of the place and give us a sense of the place character – which pictures often fail to communicate.

While Periscope was used throughout the Ideas Rumble, Twitter and Padlet were also used as complimentary and collaborative tools for communicating each team's thoughts and ideas for improving the public spaces. In its most simple form, Periscope enables the sharing of content across state borders, in real time and at little expense.

Five ways Periscope can be used by planners

The Ideas Rumble was just the beginning – it highlighted one way planners can use

Periscope to their advantage. Here are five more:

1. Stream conferences, events and public forums with local decision makers and experts.
2. Take the community behind the scenes and invite them to remotely explore your workplace, construction site or parkland opening. Periscope did this themselves, with authors showing Periscope community the areas they write in. The series was called #WhereIWrite.
3. Keep clients and the community informed with planning news with a weekly Periscope update – same time, same day each week.
4. Ask for feedback in real time – like I did while writing this article – and ask the Periscope community, or just your followers, for feedback on designs, policy and strategy.
5. Selling places: consider a social media strategy for 'selling liveability' and review what makes products, like Periscope, go viral. Then implement your learning into your place design.

Lessons learnt so far

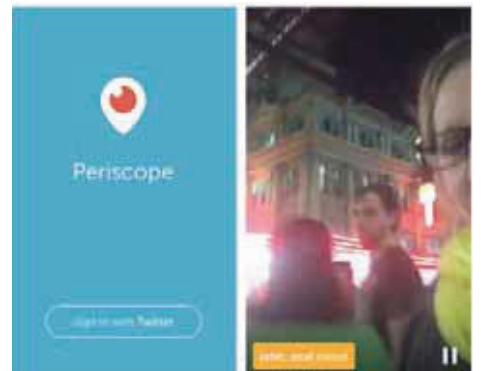
In providing these examples, it's also important to understand the parameters around new technology and risks associated with its use. Here are a few insights gained from my experience on Periscope so far:

- Use your regular iPhone camera (including front-facing for 'selfie' style) or iPad (you can use the iPad case stand for extra support);

- Film interesting content and introduce what you're seeing, replying to comments and engaging with users (like a webinar but much easier);
- An option within Periscope allows you to toggle on/off tweet option, which means you can decide which videos you'd like shared via Twitter;
- Periscope saves live-streams so they can be included in future presentations or added to your website;
- Watch out for issues with copyright infringement (avoid game of thrones streaming and stick to planning); and
- Block users that are inappropriate or trolls.

As we can see, live streaming, like digital technology itself, is evolving quickly. When barriers such as entry and costs are low for uptake of these new apps, they quickly become popular and are embraced by the public.

I've spoken before about the need for planners to take up new technology quickly – and Periscope is the latest example. Following in the footsteps of clunkier, older versions of live streaming, such as Skype, Google Hangouts and, most recently, Meerkat, Periscope gives us the opportunity to better understand our urban spaces. This is the new infrastructure we need to consider when designing new places or engaging communities ■



Periscope screenshot of welcome page and 'Ideas Rumble' [Source: www.periscope.tv]