

## 04.27-Life is but a stream

### Winner takes all: Life is but a stream China's new craze for **live-streaming**

A new way of bringing colour to **dreary** lives

Feb 9th 2017

#### Vocab

1. **live-streaming** n. 直播

2. **dreary** adj. 沉闷的;枯燥无味的;令人沮丧的 If you describe something as **dreary**, you mean that it is dull and depressing.

e.g. They live such **dreary** lives. 他们的生活如此乏味!

#### Sentence

Life is but a stream

有一句话叫 Life is but a dream 生命不过是一场梦

这里意思也相同, 生命不过是一条河流

**Life Stream**: 生命之泉; 生命之流; 生活流; 生命之河

LAST YEAR ZHAO XINLONG, aged 25, and his wife and baby boy moved from his parents' farm into a **mid-rise** apartment in town. It has been a tough **adjustment**. Luan County is a **rustbelt** community on the polluted **outskirts** of the steel city of Tangshan in north-east China. Mr Zhao's monthly income from driving a taxi has **plummeted** by more than half in the past couple of years, and he has not found it easy to make friends in his new **abode**.

#### Vocab

1. **mid-rise** adj. 中高层的

2. **adjustment** adj. 行为或思想的) 调整, 转变 An **adjustment** is a change in a person's behaviour or thinking.

e.g. He will have to make major **adjustments** to his thinking if he is to survive in office. 要想保住这份工作, 他就必须在观念上作出重大的转变。

3. **rust belt** n. 衰退地区, 铁锈地带 (指美国等已陷入经济困境的老工业区) In the United States and some other countries, **the Rust Belt** is a region which used to have a lot of manufacturing industry, but whose economy is now in difficulty.

e.g. ...in the **rust belt** of the midwest. 中西部的铁锈地带

4. **outskirts** n. 市郊; 郊区 **The outskirts of** a city or town are the parts of it that are farthest away from its centre.

e.g. Hours later we reached the **outskirts** of New York. 我们几小时后到达了纽约市郊。

5. **plummet** v. 数量、比率或价格) 骤然下跌, 暴跌 If an amount, rate, or price **plummets**, it decreases quickly by a large amount.

e.g. In Tokyo share prices have **plummeted** for the sixth successive day... 东京股价已连续第6天猛跌。

6. **abode** n. the place where sb lives 住所; 家

e.g. homeless people **of no fixed abode** (= with no permanent home) 无家可归的人

( 没有固定居所 )

But when he gets online in the evening, he becomes a different person: Zhao Long'er, an **entertainer**. Using Kuaishou, a Chinese video-sharing and live-streaming app, he **broadcasts** to a live audience of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of fellow Chinese every night. Taken together, they add up to more than 100,000. Many of them are diaosi, people who **mockingly** identify themselves as losers in **dead-end jobs**. Online he can **relate to** them, telling them stories, dirty jokes, whatever is on his mind.

### Vocab

1. **entertainer** n. (娱乐节目) 表演者; 艺人 An **entertainer** is a person whose job is to entertain audiences, for example by telling jokes, singing, or dancing.

e.g. Some have called him the greatest **entertainer** of the twentieth century. 有人曾称他为20世纪最伟大的艺人

2. **broadcast** v. to send out programmes on television or radio 播送 (电视或无线电节目); 广播

e.g. The concert will be **broadcast live** (= at the same time as it takes place) tomorrow evening. 音乐会明晚将现场直播。

3. **mockingly** adv. 取笑地; 愚弄地

4. **dead-end** n. a point at which you can make no further progress in what you are doing 绝境; 僵局

e.g. He's in a **dead-end job** in the local factory (= one with low wages and no hope of promotion). 他在当地工厂的工作是没有前途的。

5. **relate to** v. 产生共鸣; 认同 If you can **relate to** someone, you can understand how they feel or behave so that you are able to communicate with them or deal with them easily.

e.g. I think it is important for children to have brothers and sisters they can **relate to**... 我认为对孩子们来讲有可以相互理解沟通的兄弟姐妹很重要。

### Sentence

Many of them are diaosi, people who mockingly identify themselves as losers in dead-end jobs.

主干: Many of them are diaosi

后面的成分都是对 diaosi 的解释了

Occasionally advertisers pay him small sums to put commercials out over his stream, including things like weight-loss products and “gold” jewellery from Vietnam. Most of his followers are also from north-east China. They chat with him online and sometimes give him digital **stickers** representing things like a beer that fans buy online and can be converted into cash. The individual amounts are usually small, but they **add up**. Live-streaming his life earns Mr Zhao about \$850 a month, twice as much as his day job.

### Vocab

1. **sticker** n. (正面有字或画的) 小贴纸, 不粘胶贴纸 A **sticker** is a small piece of paper or plastic, with writing or a picture on one side, which you can stick onto a surface.

2. **add up** PHRASAL VERB 短语动词 积少成多; 聚沙成塔 If small amounts of something **add up**, they gradually increase.

e.g. It's the little minor problems that **add up**. 就是小问题才会累积。

Twinkle, twinkle, little stars

### Sentence

歌词作副标题

The internet has **amplified** people's interest in the world's biggest stars, helping their fans feel a little closer to them, thanks to social media. But it has also made it possible for anybody to become a little star in their own corner of the universe, connecting **intimately** with **subsets** of fans. In much of the rest of the world the most popular of these are teen **idols** on YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. Most people over 25 would struggle to name a YouTube star other than possibly PewDiePie, a Swedish gamer with a global following of more than 50m.

### Vocab

1. **amplify** v. 增强；加强 To **amplify** something means to increase its strength or intensity.

e.g. The mist had been replaced by a kind of haze that seemed to **amplify** the heat...薄雾散了，取而代之的是一种似乎更添酷热的烟霭。

2. **intimately** adv. 熟悉地；亲切地；私下地

3. **subset** n. 小组；分组；子集 A **subset of** a group of things is a smaller number of things that belong together within that group.

e.g. ...**subsets** of the population such as men, women, ethnic groups, etc.男性、女性、种族等人口的细分

4. **idol** n. a person or thing that is loved and admired very much 受到热爱和崇拜的人（或物）；偶像

e.g. a **pop/ football/ teen, etc. idol** 流行音乐偶像、足球明星、青少年的偶像等

China's **craze** for personal live-streaming runs far deeper, into third-tier cities and remote rural areas where the internet is the one and only fun and cheap place to **hang out**. These personal broadcasts are not simply videos that fans watch, but more interactive experiences. The fans make requests, chat with their idols and give them virtual gifts. Many of those watching are small-time live-streamers themselves. They are turning each other into mass entertainment.

### Vocab

1. **craze** n. (一时的)狂热，风行 If there is a **craze** for something, it is very popular for a short time.

e.g. ...the **craze** for Mutant Ninja Turtles... 《忍者神龟》的风靡一时

2. **hang out** v. 闲逛，逗留 If you **hang out** in a particular place or area, you go and stay there for no particular reason, or spend a lot of time there.

e.g. I often used to **hang out** in supermarkets...我过去经常在超市里逛个没完。

3. **interactive experience** n. 互动式的体验

### Sentence

These personal broadcasts are not simply videos that fans watch, but more interactive experiences.

这里 not...but...构成结构，不但...还....

It is a big and growing business. China's live-streaming industry more than doubled in size last year, with revenues of around \$3bn, according to Credit Suisse, a bank. More than 100 companies now offer the service, providing the platform for

performers in exchange for a **hefty** cut of their earnings (one, YY, is publicly listed on NASDAQ, with \$269m in **gross** revenues from live-streaming in the third quarter of last year, a year-on-year rise of more than 50%). That compares with box-office **receipts** for the Chinese film business, the world's second-largest, of \$7bn last year. Of the 710m people with internet connections in China, nearly half have used live-streaming apps.

### Vocab

1. **hefty** adj. 体积、重量或数量) 巨大的 **Hefty** means large in size, weight, or amount.  
e.g. If he is found guilty he faces a **hefty** fine. 如果被判有罪, 他就要面临巨额罚款。
2. **gross** n. a total amount of money earned by sth, especially a film/ movie, before any costs are taken away (尤指影片的) 毛收入, 总收入
3. **receipt** n. a piece of paper that shows that goods or services have been paid for 收据; 收条  
e.g. Can I have a receipt, please? 请给我开个收据, 好吗?

### Sentence

China's live-streaming industry more than doubled in size last year, with revenues of around \$3bn, according to Credit Suisse, a bank.

主干: China's live-streaming industry more than **doubled** in size last year with revenues of around \$3bn 这里 with 表示的有, 具有, 作介词: 有, 拥有(某种特征或所有物) Someone or something **with** a particular feature or possession has that feature or possession.

according to Credit Suisse 解释数据来源

a bank 解释 Credit Suisse

Many in the audience are diaosi looking for free entertainment and sometimes a **substitute** for **romance**. Women outnumber men as live-streamers, but most of the audiences are male. The government has imposed guidelines aimed mostly at the **seamier** side of the business, like the **erotic** eating of bananas (now banned). The most successful live-streamers tend to be **attractive** young singers of either sex, who can sometimes muster millions of fans. The most popular of them earn more than \$1m a year, almost all of it from virtual gifts, but most of them are lucky to see a few hundred dollars a month, broadcasting anything from eating meals to visual **pranks** to **warbling** tunes requested by fans. Mr Zhao **laments** that to boost his earnings, he has to tell more dirty jokes.

### Vocab

1. **substitute** n. ~ (for sb/ sth) a person or thing that you use or have instead of the one you normally use or have 代替者; 代替物; 代用品  
e.g. The course teaches you the theory but **there's no substitute for** practical experience. 这门课教的是理论, 但没有任何东西能代替实践经验。
2. **romance** n. 浪漫; 爱意; 温馨 **Romance** refers to the actions and feelings of people who are in love, especially behaviour which is very caring or affectionate.  
e.g. He still finds time for **romance** by cooking candlelit dinners for his girlfriend... 他仍然会找时间为女友准备烛光晚餐, 制造浪漫。
3. **seamier** 丑恶的 (seamy 的比较级 **seamy** adj. (seam·ier, seami·est) unpleasant and immoral 污秽的; 肮脏丑恶的

e.g. the **seamier side of** life生活的阴暗面

4. **erotic** adj. showing or involving sexual desire and pleasure; intended to make sb feel sexual desire 性欲的；性爱的；色情的

e.g. an erotic fantasy 性幻想

5. **attractive** adj. pleasant to look at, especially in a sexual way 性感的；妩媚的；英俊的；诱人的

e.g. I like John but I don't **find him attractive** physically. 我喜欢约翰，不过我认为他长得并不英俊。

6. **prank** n. a trick that is played on sb as a joke 玩笑；恶作剧

e.g. a childish prank 幼稚的恶作剧

7. **warble** v. (*humorous*) to sing, especially in a high voice that is not very steady (尤指用颤音高声) 唱

e.g. He warbled his way through the song. 整个歌曲他是用高颤音唱的。

8. **lament** v. (*formal*) to feel or express great sadness or disappointment about sb/ sth 对...感到悲痛；痛惜；对...表示失望

e.g. In the poem he laments the destruction of the countryside. 在那首诗里他对乡村遭到的破坏流露出悲哀。

Live-streaming emerged in China after the financial crisis of 2007-08, as internet companies with **questionable** business models looked for a way to survive. Six Rooms, or [6.cn](#), may have been the first to offer live-streaming as a service for a mass audience. It was one of numerous YouTube-like video-sharing businesses (YouTube itself is blocked in China) burning money in 2008 and failed to secure a new round of funding. In desperation its CEO and co-founder, Liu Yan, turned to live-streaming.

### Vocab

1. **questionable** adj. 可疑的；不可靠的；有问题的；不确定的 If you say that something is **questionable**, you mean that it is not completely honest, reasonable, or acceptable.

e.g. He has been dogged by allegations of **questionable** business practices... 他一直被那些指控他有不正当商业行为的说法所困扰。

2. **secure** v. (经过努力)获得，争取到 If you **secure** something that you want or need, you obtain it, often after a lot of effort.

e.g. Graham's achievements helped **secure** him the job. 出色的成绩帮助格雷厄姆拿下了这份工作。

### Sentence

It was one of numerous YouTube-like video-sharing businesses (YouTube itself is blocked in China) burning money in 2008 and failed to secure a new round of funding.

主干：It was one of numerous YouTube-like video-sharing businesses 这里 it 指代前文的 Six Rooms, YouTube-like 像 Youtube 一样的

(YouTube itself is blocked in China) 括号里的可以直接自己成为一个句子结构，事实上，这里就相当于是一个从句的形式而已。

and failed to secure a new round of funding. 并列结构 it failed to ...

In 2007 Mercedes-Benz, a carmaker, had paid 300,000 yuan (\$39,000) to his site to live-stream an event, and his company had developed an inexpensive way to provide such a service on a wider scale to allow people to chat with each other and exchange virtual gifts. That helped make personal broadcasting a social game

which could be **monetised** in a way not **replicated** on major social platforms of the West. In China, as well as in South Korea and Japan, where live-streaming has also caught on, virtual items have long had an underlying monetary value.

### Vocab

1. **monetized** v. *[with obj.]* convert into or express in the form of currency 把...转换成货币; 使货币化

2. **replicate** v. **=duplicate** (formal) to copy sth exactly 复制; (精确地) 仿制

e.g. Subsequent experiments failed to replicate these findings. 后来的实验没有得出同样的结果。

3. **catch on** PHRASAL VERB 短语动词 时兴; 流行 If something **catches on**, it becomes popular.

e.g. The idea has been around for ages without catching on. 这个观点已经提出来有年头了, 可是一直没被广泛接受。

4. **monetary** adj. connected with money, especially all the money in a country 货币的, 钱的 (尤指一国的金融)

e.g. **monetary policy/ growth** 货币政策/增长

### Sentence

In China, as well as in South Korea and Japan, where live-streaming has also caught on, virtual items have long had an underlying monetary value.

主干: virtual items have long had an underlying monetary value.

In China, as well as in South Korea and Japan 都是描述位置

where live-streaming has also caught on 这个非限定性定语从句是对地点的修饰, 先行词就是 China, South Korea, Japan

Now that the business model has been **proven**, all the Chinese internet giants have entered the live-streaming business. Pioneers like YY and Six Rooms must compete with bigger social platforms like Tencent. Six Rooms was **acquired** by a Chinese entertainment **conglomerate** for close to \$400m in 2015, but Mr Liu, 44, remains the CEO. He has been using machine learning to work out what kinds of live-streamers inspire the most **devotion** from fans and get the most virtual gifts, down to preferences for facial features, tone of voice and **regional provenance**. He plans to **unveil** an even more **ambitious** effort soon: hired performers whose **traits** are determined, and perhaps enhanced, by machine learning. **At this rate**, life on the long tail of entertainment may start getting more difficult for rustbelt dreamers.

### Vocab

1. **proven** adj. tested and shown to be true 被证明的; 已证实的

e.g. It is a proven fact that fluoride strengthens growing teeth. 氟化物可以强化生长中的牙齿, 这是已证明的事实。

2. **acquire** v. to obtain sth by buying or being given it 购得; 获得; 得到

e.g. The company has just acquired new premises. 公司刚购得新办公楼。

3. **conglomerate** n. a large company formed by joining together different firms 联合大公司; 企业集团

e.g. a media conglomerate 大众传媒联合体

4. **devotion** n. 深爱; 挚爱; 仰慕 **Devotion** is great love, affection, or admiration for someone.

e.g. At first she was flattered by his **devotion**. 刚开始他的爱慕让她感到荣幸。

5. **regional** adj. of or relating to a region 地区的; 区域的; 地方的

e.g. regional variations in pronunciation 发音的地区差异

6. **provenance** n. the place that sth originally came from 发源地；起源；出处  
e.g. All the furniture is of English provenance. 所有这些家具都是英国货。
7. **unveil** v. 公布；推出；出台 If you **unveil** a plan, new product, or some other thing that has been kept secret, you introduce it to the public.  
e.g. Mr Werner **unveiled his new strategy this week...**沃纳先生本周公布了其新策略。
8. **ambitious** adj. determined to be successful, rich, powerful, etc. 有野心的；有雄心的  
e.g. a fiercely ambitious young manager 雄心勃勃的年轻经理
9. **trait** n. 特征；特点；特性 A **trait** is a particular characteristic, quality, or tendency that someone or something has.  
e.g. Creativity is a human **trait**. 创造力是人类的一种特性。
10. **at this rate** *adv.* 这样地话, 这样地

This article appeared in the Special report section of the print edition under the headline "Life is but a stream"

Life is but a stream  
全民直播

A new way of bringing colour to dreary lives  
点亮暗淡生活的新方式

LAST YEAR ZHAO XINLONG, aged 25, and his wife and baby boy moved from his parents' farm into a mid-rise apartment in town. It has been a tough adjustment. Luan County is a rustbelt community on the polluted outskirts of the steel city of Tangshan in north-east China. Mr Zhao's monthly income from driving a taxi has plummeted by more than half in the past couple of years, and he has not found it easy to make friends in his new abode.

去年，25岁的赵新龙（音译）离开父母的农舍，带着妻子和出生不久的儿子搬到镇上的中层楼房里。适应新的生活并非易事。赵新龙居住的滦县位于钢铁重镇唐山市郊，这里污染严重，落后衰败。几年里，赵新龙开出租车的收入骤减，还不到原来的一半，并且他觉得来到镇上后也很难认识新朋友。

But when he gets online in the evening, he becomes a different person: Zhao Long'er, an entertainer. Using Kuaishou, a Chinese video-sharing and live-streaming app, he broadcasts to a live audience of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of fellow Chinese every night. Taken together, they add up to more than 100,000. Many of them are diaosi, people who mockingly identify themselves as losers in dead-end jobs. Online he can relate to them, telling them stories, dirty jokes, whatever is on his mind.

但是到了晚上，赵新龙摇身一变，成为化名“赵龙儿”（音译）的网红。利用视频分享和直播软件“快手”，他每晚会对准数百名观众直播，有时观众可达数千人。他的观众加起来有十万人，其中大多是“屌丝”（很多工作没有前途、认为自己很失败的人会用这个称呼自嘲）。“赵龙儿”跟他们脾气相投，给他们讲故事，讲黄段子，想到什么说什么。

Occasionally advertisers pay him small sums to put commercials out over his stream, including things like weight-loss products and “gold” jewellery from Vietnam. Most of his

followers are also from north-east China. They chat with him online and sometimes give him digital stickers representing things like a beer that fans buy online and can be converted into cash. The individual amounts are usually small, but they add up. Live-streaming his life earns Mr Zhao about \$850 a month, twice as much as his day job.

有时候广告商会给赵新龙一笔小钱，让他在直播里给减肥产品、越南金饰（译者注：黄金含量很低）等商品做广告。他的粉丝大多也来自中国东北，他们和他聊天，送他虚拟啤酒这样可以换成现金的礼物。每个粉丝赠送的礼物不值多少钱，但加起来还挺可观。赵新龙每月通过直播可赚850美元左右，两倍于白天工资。

Twinkle, twinkle, little stars

一闪一闪小明星

The internet has amplified people's interest in the world's biggest stars, helping their fans feel a little closer to them, thanks to social media. But it has also made it possible for anybody to become a little star in their own corner of the universe, connecting intimately with subsets of fans. In much of the rest of the world the most popular of these are teen idols on YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. Most people over 25 would struggle to name a YouTube star other than possibly PewDiePie, a Swedish gamer with a global following of more than 50m.

网络增加了人们对大明星的兴趣，让粉丝得以通过社交媒体接近明星。但同时，它还让每个人都有机会成为自己那一方天地里的小明星，并与自己的粉丝亲密互动。在世界其他地区，最火的小明星往往是YouTube、Instagram和Snapchat上的青少年偶像。但对于大多数25岁以上的人来说，除了拥有5000万粉丝的瑞典游戏玩家PewDiePie之外，他们难以说出其他YouTube网红的名字。

China's craze for personal live-streaming runs far deeper, into third-tier cities and remote rural areas where the internet is the one and only fun and cheap place to hang out. These personal broadcasts are not simply videos that fans watch, but more interactive experiences. The fans make requests, chat with their idols and give them virtual gifts. Many of those watching are small-time live-streamers themselves. They are turning each other into mass entertainment.

而在中国，直播热深入到了三线城市和偏远乡村。在那些地方，互联网是唯一一个又有趣又便宜的娱乐方式。粉丝们看直播，不光有图像，还能跟主播互动。他们会向主播提要求，跟主播聊天，还会送出虚拟礼物。很多观众自己也做小主播。他们相互追捧，成为大众娱乐的一部分。

It is a big and growing business. China's live-streaming industry more than doubled in size last year, with revenues of around \$3bn, according to Credit Suisse, a bank. More than 100 companies now offer the service, providing the platform for performers in exchange for a hefty cut of their earnings (one, YY, is publicly listed on NASDAQ, with \$269m in gross revenues from live-streaming in the third quarter of last year, a year-on-year rise of more than 50%). That compares with box-office receipts for the Chinese film business, the world's second-largest, of \$7bn last year. Of the 710m people with internet connections in China, nearly half have used livestreaming apps. Many in the audience are diaosi looking for free entertainment and sometimes a substitute for romance. Women outnumber men as live-streamers, but most of the audiences are male. The government has imposed guidelines aimed mostly at the seamier side of the business, like the erotic eating of bananas (now banned). The most successful live-streamers tend to be attractive



young singers of either sex, who can sometimes muster millions of fans. The most popular of them earn more than \$1m a year, almost all of it from virtual gifts, but most of them are lucky to see a few hundred dollars a month, broadcasting anything from eating meals to visual pranks to warbling tunes requested by fans. Mr Zhao laments that to boost his earnings, he has to tell more dirty jokes.

直播是个蒸蒸日上的大产业。据瑞信银行（Credit Suisse）的报告显示，去年中国直播行业规模扩大了一倍多，产值约达30亿美元。现在有100多家公司提供直播服务，它们给主播提供平台，从他们的收入中抽取高额分成（其中，已在纳斯达克上市的YY公司去年直播业务的毛收入为2.69亿美元，同比增长超过50%）。中国直播业收入可与电影票房媲美，中国电影业规模位居世界第二，收入达70亿美元。中国的7.1亿网民中，近半数都安了直播软件。许多直播观众都是“屌丝”，他们想不花钱寻个乐子，或是求个情感寄托。主播中女性居多，但观众大多数是男性。政府出台了管控直播平台淫秽内容的指导政策，比如禁止挑逗性地“吃香蕉”这种行为。最成功的主播往往是年轻有魅力的男女歌手，他们的粉丝有时能达数百万人。最火的主播年收入逾百万美元（几乎全部来自于收取虚拟礼物），不过大部分主播一个月能赚几百美元就不错了。他们直播的内容什么都有，应粉丝要求，他们会直播吃饭、恶作剧或者表演颤音。赵新龙失望地说，为了多赚点钱，他不得不多讲黄段子。

Live-streaming emerged in China after the financial crisis of 2007-08, as internet companies with questionable business models looked for a way to survive. Six Rooms, [or6.cn](http://or6.cn), may have been the first to offer live-streaming as a service for a mass audience. It was one of numerous YouTube-like video-sharing businesses (YouTube itself is blocked in China) burning money in 2008 and failed to secure a new round of funding. In desperation its CEO and co-founder, Liu Yan, turned to live-streaming.

中国的直播行业出现在2007-2008年金融危机之后，那时，一些互联网公司对自己的商业运营模式尚不明确，四处寻求出路。“六间房”应该是第一个向大众提供直播服务的平台。“六间房”是众多类似YouTube的视频分享网站之一（YouTube本身在中国被禁止）。2008年，该平台在经历巨额亏损后没能获得新一轮融资，情急之下，“六间房”的创始人兼首席执行官刘岩决定转型做直播。

In 2007 Mercedes-Benz, a carmaker, had paid 300,000 yuan (\$39,000) to his site to live-stream an event, and his company had developed an inexpensive way to provide such a service on a wider scale to allow people to chat with each other and exchange virtual gifts. That helped make personal broadcasting a social game which could be monetised in a way not replicated on major social platforms of the West. In China, as well as in South Korea and Japan, where live-streaming has also caught on, virtual items have long had an underlying monetary value.

2007年，奔驰公司向“六间房”支付30万元（约3.9万美元）来直播一场活动。后来，“六间房”开发了低成本途径来将直播服务扩大，让人们可以聊天、交换虚拟礼物，进而使个人直播成为社交游戏，其盈利模式在西方主流社交平台上无法实现。在中国，还有直播同样流行的日韩，虚拟物品早就隐含了货币价值。

Now that the business model has been proven, all the Chinese internet giants have entered the live-streaming business. Pioneers like YY and Six Rooms must compete with bigger social platforms like Tencent. Six Rooms was acquired by a Chinese entertainment conglomerate for close to \$400m in 2015, but Mr Liu, 44, remains the CEO. He has been using machine learning to work out what kinds of live-streamers inspire the most devotion

from fans and get the most virtual gifts, down to preferences for facial features, tone of voice and regional provenance. He plans to unveil an even more ambitious effort soon: hired performers whose traits are determined, and perhaps enhanced, by machine learning. At this rate, life on the long tail of entertainment may start getting more difficult for rustbelt dreamers.

看到直播的商业模式行得通，中国所有网络巨头都进入了这个产业。像YY和“六间房”等先驱必须和腾讯这样的大型网络平台竞争。2015年，“六间房”被中国的一家娱乐集团以4亿美元收购，但44岁的刘岩仍担任首席执行官。刘岩利用机器学习技术研究观众对主播脸部特征、语调和地域的喜好，试图找出最吸粉、收到礼物最多的主播类型。他还计划进行更加宏伟的计划：雇佣具有机器学习技术得出的特征的主播，并且经过机器学习的反馈让他们不断强化这些特征。照这样发展下去，在娱乐行业金字塔底端的落后地区主播将越来越难生存。