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PROFESSOR ANDREW SMITH AND VAPORSPACESTL: SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS AND RAISING MONEY FOR CHARITY

November 4, 2020

By Anna Ostmann

I recently sat down with Lindenwood's Dr. Andrew Smith, a professor in the School of Arts, Media, and Communications, on a video call to discuss his work with a Twitch channel (an online platform for live video streaming) called VaporspaceStL. Vaporspace is a music livestream that is all about "Vaporwave, future funk, and more underground electronica, paired with the most aesthetic visuals." The channel's goal is to "showcase artistic talent in St. Louis and the Midwest" with high quality music and visual production.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the channel has become a great way for artists to perform and share their work when live performances became impossible. One of the main goals of the channel is to "grow the [vaporwave music] scene, and with over 1.4 thousand followers, the channel has proven very successful in supporting artists and providing a growing platform for their music." In addition to its normal livestreams, Vaporspace has hosted several livestreams to raise money for a few different charities and causes, including Doctors Without Borders and Cure (an organization that raises money for Glioblastoma Foundation and the ALS Association), as well as for UnicornRiot (an independent and impartial non-profit news source).

Regarding his role in the channel, Dr. Smith described himself as a "visual producer, coordinator, and editor," helping produce consistent and professional livestreams that showcase the artists' talents and contribute to the channel's overall success. This role includes developing themes for different streams and working with the artists to create visuals to match their music, aesthetic, and overall artistic "brand." He explained that many of these artists were unfamiliar with video and visual media and that he has helped guide them through the process of producing visuals to pair with their music, while making sure to clarify that his role is to be a producer, not a creator, and that the artists have control over their own images.

As a professor teaching media literacy and content-driven social media, Dr. Smith is familiar with helping students of fashion, music, and more to create their own brand and market themselves and their skills through social media. He explained that, during the

16 weeks of a course, he essentially acts as a “free consultant” for his students and assists them in developing their personal brands. It seems like his work with VaporspaceStL is simply one of several ways Dr. Smith shares his expertise with others to help them on their road to success.