In 2014, Disney acquired Maker Studios, a YouTube-based multichannel network, for $675 million. Under Disney, Maker Studios no longer provides some 60,000 YouTube creators with support by promoting their channels and selling ads. Instead, Maker focuses on no more than the top 250 YouTube content creators with a large following in order to build billion-dollar franchises in the new on-demand TV space. One Maker Studios' early success story was YouTube megastar PewDiePie, who with 100 million subscribers has the largest following. In 2017, however, Disney cut ties with PewDiePie following his publication of videos in which he made inflammatory remarks that were not in line with Disney's values.

In 2019, Disney made by far the largest acquisition in its history in its purchase of 21st Century Fox for $71 billion, adding movies studios, characters, and network assets, as well as control of Hulu. Fox's large library of entertainment hits combined with Disney's should provide synergies, but it is yet to be seen if this forward integration strategy will pay off in the long term. For example, it has real costs from investing in new resources, as well as lost revenue from Netflix licensing fees, cable fees, and possibly even movie tickets, as it seven studios cannibalize each other's sales.

Innovation and Technology

Soon after Iger took office, he firmly believed that media companies like Disney needed to start thinking more like technology companies. For example, he made a deliberate decision not to have a corporate-level CTO and assigned this position to himself, and appointed a CTO for each of the four segments. Iger also included more technology expertise on Disney's board of directors. He invited Twitter and Square co-founder Jack Dorsey, BlackBerry CEO John Chen, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, and Steve Jobs who joined the board when Disney acquired Pixar in 2005, and became Disney's largest shareholder.[57]

In 2016, Iger made another bold technology move by acquiring 33 percent interest for $1.1 billion in BamTech, a platform that allowed Major League Baseball to stream content to consumers directly via the Internet. In particular, BamTech is a content management and distribution business with a streaming platform that allows for direct-to-consumer programming. In 2017, Disney agreed to invest $1.58 billion for an additional 42 percent share in BamTech bringing its ownership stake up to 75 percent.

The relatively small acquisition for Disney allowed Iger to build its in-house streaming services, Disney+ and ESPN+, and thus to compete directly with other streaming content distributors such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. With it, Disney is a fully vertically integrated media company that produces and distributes its own content, in addition, to using content selective licensing deals.