Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Economics and Management of Arts and Cultural Activities (EGART Program)

Final Thesis

The Impact of Social Digital Platforms on Artistic Production: What is a Content Creator Today?

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Fabrizio Panozzo

Graduando

Emre Güngördü

Matriculation Number: 898191

Academic Year

2024 / 2025

Index

Introduction..... 4

Chapter 1: The Emergence of Content Creators..... 6

- The Increase in Blogging, Youtube and Content Creators
- Craft Consumer and The Content Creator

Chapter 2: Artists vs. Content Creators: Interaction, Consumption, and Mediation..... 14

- Interaction
- Consumption
- Mediation

Chapter 3: Questioning the Genuine Disruption.....27

- Web 2.0 and Democratization
- Knowing Capitalism and Algorithms
- Platform Capitalism
- The Decline of Artistic Communities

Chapter 4: Cases of Individual Creators.....43

- Youtube and the Case of "Mr.Beast"
- Ryan Trahan
- Instagram and the Case of "Kim Kardashian"
- Bretman Rock

Chapter 5: A Case for a New Way..... 57

- What do "Creators" want?
- Feedback Shaping
- Alternative Projects and Platforms

Conclusion..... 65

Bibliography..... 67

Introduction

We have witnessed a sea change in the creation, dissemination, and consumption of content in the digital age. The rise of content creators heralds a new paradigm in media production. This emergence of content creators also changed consumption. Previously, creative expression and artistic production were primarily on traditional media institutions and gatekeepers. Whereas in the past, creation and distribution seemed to be in the hands of corporations and governments, the rise of digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and blogging websites appears to have transferred that power into the hands of the individual. This shift away from traditional structures of production into a more decentralized mode is an act of democratization in the minds of many.

Blogging, YouTube, and other digital content creation have broadened the idea of what art is and can be, what creation means, and how that affects the making and distribution of art. Social media have opened opportunities for content distribution. The platforms enable communities and audiences to be created and engaged worldwide, taking the title "content creator" to a whole new level. We can give examples of forms of expression such as: vlogging, influencing, blogging and so on. This shift has also blurred the lines between professional and amateur production. Running parallel to this transformation, a new form of consumer has emerged to describe those actively participating consumers who create content. They now combine elements of production and consumption. In the old form, there was passive consumption. Today, audiences are creators in an interactive digital landscape. They produce their own content as part of the creation process. However, despite the gains of accessibility and democratization, there are further complications in emergent systems. The presence of platform algorithms, platform capitalism, and digitized monetization is not necessarily visible. Digital platforms foster this illusion of unlimited creative freedom. They do and can place constraints on visibility and engagement. Understanding these dynamics is important to evaluate whether the digital revolution is as liberating as it seems.

The scope of this thesis is to examine these developments through a structured analysis, focusing on the differences and similarities that exist between traditional artists and modern content creators, particularly in their interaction with audiences, their means of consumption, and the role of digital mediation in shaping their work. In comparing these two categories, one sees how things change or, rather, change forms and stay the same. What this means is to assess whether the shift towards digital content creation represents a genuine disruption or

reinforces existing economic and social structures. It probes how Web 2.0 has contributed to the so-called democratization of media, while considering at the same time the impact of capitalist forces, content production design, algorithms, and platform-driven economies and their transformations on artistic communities. Case studies of individual content creators: how different well-known figures-for example, Mr. Beast, Ryan Trahan, Kim Kardashian, and Bretman Rock-approach the space. We will look through these examples at how content creators position themselves in the digital space and build their personas. Finally, we present alternative takes on the current content creation landscape by investigating desires and motivations of content creators themselves. Exploring possible solutions for the limitations imposed by existing platforms: feedback mechanisms, new platform possibilities, and alternative models that place creative expression over algorithmic profitability.

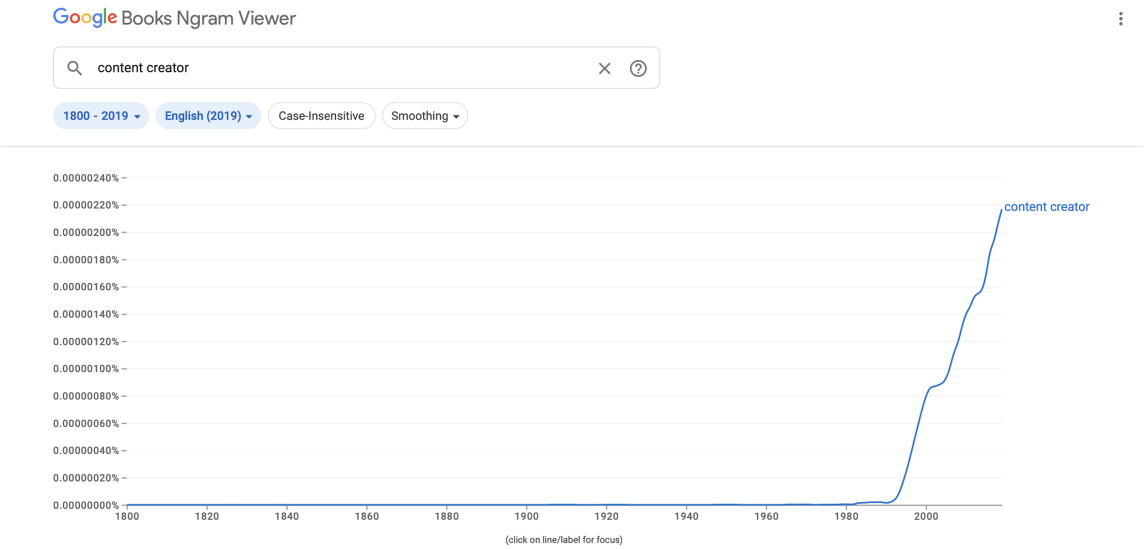
This thesis tries to explain the digital shift in creative production: how historical contexts, economic structures, and individual case studies seek both opportunities and shortcomings in the contemporary content creation ecosystem. The research tries to show ongoing problematic structures and unseen problems that seem like false liberties.

1. The Emergence of Content Creators

The way things are produced, shared, and consumed has changed in the age of Web 2.0. In a way that was never seen before in the digital era. A new generation of digital content creators, (YouTubers, bloggers, and influencers) is a party in this change.

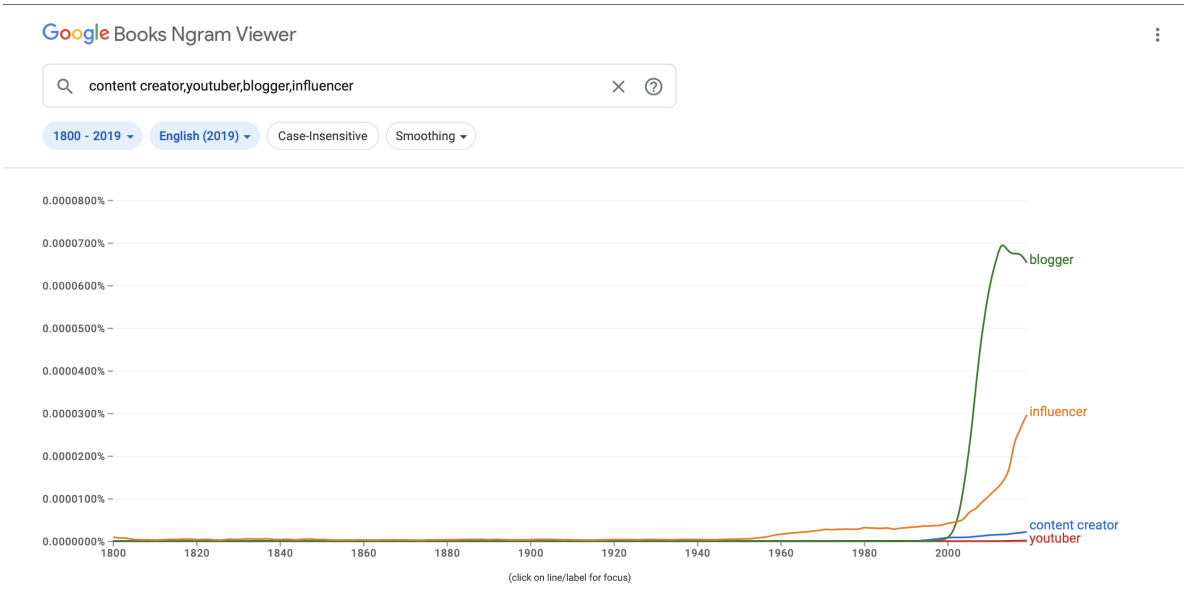
Increase in Blogging, Youtube and Content Creation

The emergence of the term "blogger" initiated a start of a new era in expression of self. Blogging emerged as the first widely available medium for personal expression and information exchange on a worldwide scale in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It intersected in the timeline with the development of the internet and the explosion of personal webpages. An indication of the blogging boom is the sharp rise in the use of the term "blogger" in the early 2000s, according to the Ngram Viewer data. At this time, many people started to use the growing internet as a platform to share. They shared their ideas and stories with others. Before this digitalization and the common use of the internet a selected few had the ability to share: journalists, writers, professionals who worked with newspapers, magazines, or book publishers could share their messages with the public. But the internet gave everyone a chance to speak and be heard. It allowed people from different places and jobs to show their opinions and connect with others around the world. This was an important change because now, anyone could share their ideas without needing special jobs or training, and more voices could join the conversation.



("Google books Ngram viewer," 2023)

The emergence of "YouTuber," a name that emerged with the introduction of YouTube in 2005, followed soon behind to blogger. This was also a pivotal moment in the history of digital content creation. It made video material more widely accepted in the online community. According to Ngram Viewer statistics, "YouTuber" had a sharp increase trend after 2005, demonstrating the platform's significant influence on the production of video content.



("Google books Ngram viewer," 2023)

The term "content creator" gained popularity in the late 2000s and has since become an umbrella term for a wide range of digital creation. "Content creator" now means a person who can make a variety of digital production, from podcasts and social media postings to short films and blogs. This is less specific compared to terms like "blogger" or "YouTuber," which refer to certain categories of digital material. The term's use increased gradually not in a logarithmic way but in a linear way probably due to the fast improvements in digital technology and the spread of social media platforms. The 2010s also saw the emergence of the term called "influencer", which indicates increasing ability of social media influencers to impact consumer choices and influence cultural trends because of platforms such as Instagram.

Historically, The PLATO system which included features like chat rooms and message forums, was introduced at the University of Illinois in the 1960s, marking the beginning of social media (Ngai et al., 2015). Later advancements in digital engagement were made possible by this first step. Usenet and Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) appeared by the 1980s, enabling users to publish messages and start global community debates (Ceulemans, 2012). These platforms could be seen as the forefathers of contemporary social networks and played a crucial role in creating the first online communities.

This started to change drastically in the late 1990s with a shift from static to dynamic online technologies, and from online 1.0 to Web 2.0. Around that time, Blogger and LiveJournal launched, providing people with opportunities to share knowledge and personal experiences without the use of traditional media middlemen (Ngai et al., 2015). As a cultural phenomenon, blogging was the forerunner of influencers and content creators. By the mid-2000s, the development of multimedia sharing sites improved dramatically. In 2006, microblogging was launched by Twitter with its character limit for posting content, while YouTube, founded in 2005, allowed users to upload and share video content (Hayes, 2021). These platforms introduced new narrative methods besides extending the scope of content creation. Moreover, sharing and interaction in real time were enabled by the pervasiveness of smartphones and

mobile apps in the 2010s, as illustrated by sites such as Instagram and TikTok (Ngai et al., 2015).

Social media has transformed the way individuals communicate and exchange ideas. Prior to social media, only well-known individuals or celebrities could connect with big audiences, but sites like YouTube and Instagram enable regular people to become influencers. Influencers are similar to online celebrities in that they attract followers by producing engaging or motivational material. Consider an influencer, content creator or a blogger you follow on TikTok or Instagram; they could post humorous videos, life advice, or stylish attire. These individuals are SMIs, or social media influencers. SMIs build huge followings in a relatively short amount of time, which gives them significant marketing power over public opinion and purchasing decisions. It is the last point that marketing has evolved into (Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020). SMIs' attachment to their followers is a significant precedent that allows them to exert their influence... The stronger emotional bond the SMIs develop with their followers, the more effectively they influence them to accept their product/brand endorsements (Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020).Building relationships with their audience is a key component of social media influencers' success. There is much more to this relationship than just like or following someone's account. Consider a person subscribing to a content producer that offers insightful guidance, motivational quotes, or real life tales. Even though they've never had direct contact with them, they gradually begin to feel as though you know them well. This emotion, which scientists call an attachment mechanism, is a major contributor to the effectiveness of influencers in changing people's beliefs and actions.

A person could be inspired to start exercising by an influencer, content creator or a blogger who regularly discusses their own fitness experience or loads inspirational training videos. Because the content's material speaks to their current life objectives or challenges, they become emotionally involved in it. Because of the trust these relationships build, people are more inclined to get involved with SMI's lives and listen to their advice. They are more likely to purchase a fitness product endorsed by this influencer because they trust the person advertising it rather than the product itself. This system demonstrates the distinctions between influencers and conventional celebrities. Influencers are frequently seen as more personable and approachable than superstars, who may be revered for their notoriety or skill. They discuss elements of their everyday lives.

However, these relationships must be really carefully examined because, at their core, the influencer-audience relationship is a business partnership cloaked as a personal one. The most common ways of making money off these emotional connections include advertisements or corporate partnerships and/or sponsored content. This dynamic complicates the differentiation between connection and calculated manipulation.

The "creator economy," a system where people make money from their online presence through sponsorships, ads, and item sales, was born out of the development of influencers. This change reflects the commercialization of social media, as influencers' audiences' emotional bonds are exploited for profit (Ngai et al., 2015). This dynamic has democratized access to economic possibilities and celebrity, but it has also solidified social media's place within the capitalist system.

Craft Consumer and The Content Creator

The “creator economy” is a big ecosystem in which people make money off of their creative and marketing abilities by creating digital material. This phrase refers to a really wide range of occupations such as influencers marketing specialized goods on Instagram, musicians submitting their work to websites like Spotify or for example travel bloggers recording their travels on Youtube and so on. This ecosystem is still expanding at an exponential rate and was valued at over $104 billion in 2023, double its value since 2019 (Peres et al., 2023, p. 3) Technological developments that have reduced the entry barriers for content creation are driving the creative economy's explosive expansion. Creators now have the ability create content with less money because to tools like AI-driven picture generators, animation software, and virtual music production facilities (Peres et al., 2023 p.4). These technologies not only reduce entry barriers, but also help creators streamline or even automate the creation process (Peres et al., 2023 p.4).

Although the idea of the creator economy was first proposed in the late 1990s, it only really took off after the 2008 financial crisis. According to futurist Paul Saffo, this change marked a turning point in the consumer journey from passive consumption to active value generation (Saffo, 2009). Alternative revenue generating pursuits like freelancing and creating digital content have grown in popularity as a result of the financial crisis, which compelled many people to reconsider conventional work arrangements. The economic, social, and professional

ecosystem that creators work in, including such digital platforms as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Substack, and Patreon. Many social media content producers view themselves as independent contractors within this system who are in charge of their own creative output. In actuality, though they are employed by websites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, Substack, Patreon, and YouTube. These platforms act as employers, determining how their work is seen, how they are paid, and what trends they must work to in order to be relevant. But artists believe they are free agents, but algorithms that favor platform profits over artistic liberty are controlling.

One of the most significant aspects of the "creator economy" is the blurring of lines between consumers and producers. In our current "creator economy", content consumers actively shape what they see by liking, commenting, sharing, and engaging with it; they are no more passive consumers (These active consumers don't like to be perceived as a ordinary consumer, there must be a twist, something conscious.) They have established a immediate feedback system online. They create and immediately see the feedback. However, it appears that creators are free. (their ability to create, distribute, and express anything) is a highly restricted form of freedom. Because practically everything is controlled by the platforms, these so called neutral intermediaries. They make decisions regarding what artists may and cannot say, particularly when it comes to political issues. They choose who views the material, how it is displayed, how much producers are paid, and what trends they must adhere to in order to be relevant. The concept of this blurring must be analyzed in a careful way.

An explanation to this transition/blur is the rise of the "**craft consumer**", a term by Colin Campbell (Beer & Burrows, 2010) that represents a significant break from typical consumer stereotypes. This new sort of consumer enjoys being creative and expressing themselves with the products they buy and utilize. They are more interested and active than previous consumers who used to make impulse purchases. People are no longer just purchasers; or they don't want to believe in such. Now, people are "conscious" consumers who influence and affect the world.

The way content makers and craft consumers collaborate demonstrates how digital culture is evolving. Previously, people who developed things and those who used them had a distinct separation but today's content creator is beyond this distinction. Both creators and customers try to be creative and expressive in their own way. Content creators provide material, while

craft consumers actively participate rather than simply watching, by leaving comments or sharing the content. Colin Campbell observes that craft customers want to put their own touch on the items they buy or use, basically believing they become members of the creation team. Craft creators are the essential source of the emergence of content creators. They opened up an opportunity for today's content creators by combining conventional abilities with digital platforms. This growth has changed the way people see and interact with digital material, making craft consumers critical to the advancement of the modern "content creator".

The emergence of Web 2.0, which is known for user-created content, collaboration, and active participation, has fundamentally altered how we think, how we purchase and utilize products. Beer and Burrows in their text (Beer & Burrows,2010) discussed how these roles are becoming intertwined, calling into question our traditional notions of customer behavior. Everyone may now help create and modify the stuff that we see online. This shift implies that people who use this platforms are no longer only buying products; they are also semi-contributing to their creation, making the process of creating and distributing content something that people believe anybody can participate in. People in this new digital world move from their roles as customers to become a mix of consumer and producer for development and distribution of content, democratizing the digital domain in such a way that there is a participatory culture. This transition, which has been taking place since the early 2000s, can be traced back to the advent and widespread effect of Web 2.0 on content creation and consumption modes.

David Beer and Roger Burrows' comments, in their 2010 work, say the late 2000s and early 2010s as an important moment in the creation of digital culture, saying how these years aided in the creation and consolidation of the content creator position. This time window between 2000s and 2010s marks a moment in the digital domain's evolution, with a blurred line between content creators and consumers. One of the best examples of how craft consumption ideas are traceable in today's world is Etsy. Etsy, which was founded in 2005, is a global online marketplace. Its platform, which makes customers engage with producers directly perfectly captures what can be called as "creative consumerism". A characteristic of this new mode of consumption is engagement that strengthens the bond between buyers and the products they purchase (Palmsköld, 2013). Etsy in this sense offers goods that are creative and artistic not only that but the website is based on Art and craft which represent craft consumerism.. The direct engagement between consumers and sellers made possible by Etsy's feedback channel adds upon the creative industries craft consumer nature. Customers are themselves active

participants in the consuming process because they can submit comments, ask questions, and seek adjustments from the creator in the artistic process. In addition to increasing the purchase's emotional worth, this connection supports the concept of "affective potential," which holds that products' emotional and sensory qualities may stimulate creative thought (Frykman & Frykman, 2016).

Lego is another example of a business that successfully interacts with craft consumers. Lego is a company that started with making wooden toys and modest home goods. Then it changed its product range by using plastic and modular designs. As a result of this development, the business was able to become a market leader for toys worldwide. But Lego than touched into the notion of craft consumer, Lego started an Open Innovation policy to create innovation. Its goal was to match its products with what their consumer wants. Lego started using this strategy in 2003 in order to remain ahead of the competition that arose and decided to open a platform for its products in response to customer input. The platform’s name is Lego Ideas, it is a platform that allows customers to actively participate in the company's product development.. Through this platform, Lego encourages its users to submit suggestions, design new products, and vote on ideas they find appealing. Having its consumer adopt an active role. (Kosasih, 2021).

2. Artists vs. Content Creators: Interaction, Consumption, and Mediation

The difference between traditional artists and modern content creators is becoming harder to understand as the world of art and culture continues to transform into the digital realm. Traditional artists, like painters, writers, or musicians, used to rely on specific ways to share their work with others what we can call mediation, such as through museums, art galleries, or publishing companies. These institutions helped them reach their audience, but they also controled how they could interact with their audiences and how their content would be consumed. Today, modern content creators are people who use the web 2.0 . Social media and other digital platforms to share their work directly with their audience. These creators have a broad range of tool they might make videos, post photos, write blogs, or create digital art.

This change has defenitly made it harder to separate traditional artists from modern content creators because they now do similar things such as creating art and telling stories Now, people don't just watch or read about the content (artistic endeavours) they see. They can also like, comment, and share feeling that they become part of the creative process.

Interaction

The way artists and their audiences used to interact and what is going on today is very different from how "content creators" and their audiences interact. In the past, traditional artists connected with their viewers using mediators like galleries, ageincies, cinemas and with physical media such as paintings, sculptures, or stage performances. Old style relied on just one way interaction. They interacted with their viewers on newspapers, TV or radio. As a result of this the audience received the artist's work passively. They didn't have direct feedback or interaction (Marshall, 2017). In todays norms, content creators use social media platforms like TikTok, Discord, and Twitch. They build two-way relationships with their audiences. These platforms allow fans to comment, like, share. And creators create their own content in response to the audience, making the relationship much more dynamic.

Twitch, in particular, has redefined two-way interaction through its innovative "networked broadcast" model, as described by Williamson (2021).
Unlike traditional media audiences don't consume content passively. Twitch's live streaming format has interaction that is immediate between streamers and viewers. The chat function

allows that. This makes viewers actively shape the content they are watching. A streamer has the option to adjust their gameplay or commentary based on audience suggestions at real time speed. They act in direct conversations with viewers. This realtionship transforms the streaming experience into a two way event. Viewers have a sense of co-ownership. Williamson (2021) says that this dynamic gives audiences an influence over the creative process. Making Twitch different from broadcast media because of its active consumption.

Advancements in technology and the internet have changed how people consume media. By 2011, 73% of homes in Europe had internet access, with even higher rates in countries like Sweden, Denmark, and Finland (Slot, 2013). This widespread internet use allowed platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to take off. These platforms have become essential in creating new types of interaction between creators and their followers. They also made it possible for microcultures—groups of people with shared interests and values in virtual spaces to form (Arvidsson, 2018). P. David Marshall (2017) talks about how David Bowie's career was an example of "productive consumption," in his writings. Bowie used his influence to connect with his fans in a different way. Bowie's connection with his fans was not one-sided. He invited them to be part of his creative process. Which was opposing the traditional way art was consumed at his time. Yet, even Bowie's interactions were limited by the systems and media of his time. Because by nature they were controlled by gatekeepers like publishers or record labels.

Content creators today are no longer limited to basic and linear interactions. Social media platforms allow creators to engage with their audiences in a direct way. Their relationships are much more active. On platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Youtube and Twitch creators can respond to comments actively. They can ask for feedback and even collaborate with their followers. This allows for a deeper connection between creators and their audiences (Kozinets, 2019). Digital microcultures (groups of people who share common values) have also played a role in this shift. Communities on platforms like Discord, Reddit or Twitch often bond over shared content and its interactivity.

The growing presence of these digital microcultures on Twitch shows how the platform fosters inclusivity and community bonding. Williamson, 2021, critically examines the LGBTQIA+ tag on Twitch. It was a kind of digital anchor for users navigating affirming spaces. This feature lets streamers identify their content as relevant for LGBTQIA+ audiences. This

allows viewers to find streams that resonate with their identities. These tags help people reach out to contents inline with them but also help in creating virtual "homes" for marginalized communities. Williamson (2021) emphasizes that these spaces serve as tools for identity performance and group cohesion. This is particularly significant in the context of twitch because community engagements usually go beyond the stream itself. It continues over into private Discord servers than possibly into real-world meetups. These can act as examples to us of how digital microcultures are virtual but can get translated into real, physical ones. Such new digital spaces in the forms of Twitch or Discord have drastically changed the ways through which people enjoy and participate with content by endowing them far more with control than was evident in the ways of older traditional media. Historically, people were merely the passive receivers of artistic work. Modern digital platforms enable users to be more actively engaged in the creative process. They are not merely basic consumers; instead, they believe that they are already co-creators with some agency in the production, interpretation, and distribution of content. For example, streamers might take audience suggestions via polls or stream comments. This level of interaction transforms the role of the audience.

For example, TikTok's editing features allow users to add their creative spin to trends. Turning passive viewers into active participants adding one more level to the possibility of interaction. A study by Arvidsson (2018) talks about how these tools encourage users to co-create content that aligns with their personal identity and cultural preferences. Again, the lines between production and consumption become undifferantiable. This process extends to fan communities. User-generated content like fan art and compilations becomes integral to the cultural ecosystem of the platform (Schau et al., 2009).

These changes reflect deeper socio-cultural shifts. It fortifies the concept of symbolic interactionism, as discussed by Goffman (1959). He talks about how individuals use their participation in digital spaces to perform their identities. Users because they have the interactivity they can express their belonging to specific communities. They can express their expertise about subjects that they feel comfortable in return can enhance their cultural capital within these groups (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, a gamer who creates a highly skilled gameplay montage on YouTube or Twitch might gain recognition and status because of his expertise. His recognition can be in the platform and from peers within their community on physical world. This co-creative dynamic also have problems. Particularly the issue of unpaid

labor when interacting. Platforms benefit financially from user-generated content while offering little in return for the creators' time and effort (Terranova, 2000). Despite this, the cultural value generated by these interactions highlights the transformative potential of digital spaces in redefining the relationship between producers and consumers.

One important concept to understand when thinking about digital communities' interaction is cultural capital. Bourdieu (1984) explains that cultural capital as the knowledge, skills, and cultural knowledge that people use to gain social status. On platforms like Twitch or TikTok, cultural capital is often prooved by using the specific culture of the platform, adaptability to trend and retrovision For example, a Twitch streamer who uses popular memes and jokes that the community understands can gain status in the group (Schau et al., 2009).

Especially, "cultural capital" plays a crucial role in the Twitch ecosystem. In the platform the mastery of platform-specific norms and symbols effect the status and the social rank of the streamer. Williamson (2021) discusses how features like emotes and tags serve as tools for getting established. A streamer who skillfully integrates popular insider jokes can establish a strong connection with their audience according to Williamson. It is their cultural fluency.
This online cultural capital helps communities find eachother, communities who speak the same "cultural language" find eachother.

The logic of interactions and the transactions are no longer just about buying things. It's about showing who you are and what community you belong to. For example, people on TikTok or Instagram often buy products or create content to express their personal identity, show support to a certain group or to fit into a new group. Products are no longer just items you consume, it is an interaction with an identity. They become symbols of identity or at least peoples' inclination to groups. This is a form of "symbolic consumption". Where the things people consume represent the values and identity of the community they belong to (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This process creates a deeper interaction with content because people feel that their choices reflect who they are. This type of community-driven engagement makes interaction an ongoing and consumption a participatory process (Kozinets, 2019).

Despite the improvements in interactions Williamson (2021) points out that these systems often favor established streamers in Twitch, making it difficult for new or marginalized creators to achieve visibility. The constant need to engage with followers can often lead to unpaid labor, as creators have to put in significant time and effort to maintain their presence on these platforms (Cova et al., 2007).There's still a significant power imbalance in the digital space. Well-established creators, like Bowie in the past, who have access to resources and platform control, tend to dominate the space. This raises the question of whether new, lesser-known creators can achieve the same level of success without the traditional systems of support. Even though platforms give creators more control, the commercial aspect of these platforms still limits opportunities for all.

Consumption

Colin Campbell's idea of the 'craft consumer' (Beer & Burrows, 2010) expands the topic to include the larger effects of this transformation, not just for consumers but also for producers in the digital era. This craft consumer, who actively participates in the production process, represents the essence of current content creators that use digital channels not just for distribution, but also for cooperation and immediate feedback from their audience.

The role of information and communication technology (ICT) in this transformation is really big. "ICT has profoundly transformed the way cultural products and services are produced, distributed, and consumed, blurring the distinction between production and consumption" (*Ateca-Amestoy & Castiglione, 2023, p. 644*). ICT has introduced hybrid forms of cultural engagement. Opened up for a new ways of consuming.. ICT has not only changed how cultural goods are distributed but also how they are experienced. Social networking sites such as: Flickr and YouTube demonstrate how the trends of consumption changed. These platforms allows users to receive material but also engage with it. Changing the norm of distinction between consumption and creation. This participatory culture represents a shift from traditional creative production. Before the artist's work was done before it reached its audience the editing was done by third parties. Today, it is a dynamic process the audience's participation influences and shapes the final result in the process, it is faster and more interactive.

In "conventional artist" contexts, the artist's work is often finished before it reaches the public, and the art's value is frequently measured by traditional economic success indicators such as

sales and reviews. The consumption model is linear, with clear distinctions between producer and consumer. However, as techno-capitalism reaches it peak the lines between consumer and producer is also merged into a quantum state. A "**content creator**"s worth is determined by their ability to engage and reach to a community but as a result participation in these platform frequently results in unpaid labor. Users/creators make material, give data, and engage in promotional activities. "ICTs are present before, during, and after the enjoyment of a physical visit to a museum, shaping expectations and modeling different experiences" (*Ateca-Amestoy & Castiglione, 2023, p. 644*).

People now have the ability to arrange their museum visits using specific applications and digital tools. These tools might be applications to learn more about the exhibits. Display the museums movies from their phone. Could be interacting with digital displays. After their visit, ICTs enable visitors to keep in touch with the museum, to review the museum also. Digital tools also break barriers of time and place "anytime and anywhere" (*Ateca-Amestoy & Castiglione, 2023, p. 646*). "Despite the diffusion of new technologies, differences in computer ownership and internet access persist by age, race, income, and education, creating a digital divide" (*Ateca-Amestoy & Castiglione, 2023, p. 646*). Despite this, a participatory culture has been established by ICT and the concept of craft consumer. It is clearly evident that we are moving towards a more fluid state of artistic creation. However, this fluidity doesn't always mean liberation. This shift requires a rethink of how intellectual rights are viewed and managed, and how creators are rewarded in the digital age. By confronting these challenges, producers can harness the full potential of the Internet for distribution and reproduction, ensuring that information scarcity is a thing of the past (Castro et al., 2010).

For example, the fashion industry has experienced craft consumerism through web 2.0. Fashion was a dictated industry with little input from consumers beyond the role of selection before web 2.0. The designers used to create and test it out. However, companies like Nike changed their model where consumers started to have an active role. A prime example is NikeiD (Trefis Team, 2021) which allows consumers to customize their sneakers. Customers can personalize everything from the sole and laces to the stitching and logo placement becoming co-creators rather than passive buyers. Consumption trends increasingly move towards personalized experiences over mass-produced goods. This change is strongly connected to digital tools and new online platforms. In the past, people just followed fashion trends set by designers. But with Web 2.0, buyers can take part in the creative process. This also makes them more loyal to brands because

they feel closer to products they help design. An active consumption emerges. Another example could be how people consume news. In the past, big media companies controlled news. People simply received information. Now, platforms like Twitter (X) can have an interactive news consumption option. News intake nowadays is more active and tailor built. People hunt for and distribute news independently, not wait for official sources.Less trust in professional reporters. But this means more fake news and biased information also. The trend moves from passive consumption to active consumption. With Web 2.0, individuals consume stuff in an unusual ways. Before, someone would just purchase something and use it. They now think they are involved in the process. They consider themselves as decision makers as well as consumers.

Mediation/Platform

Mediation in creative businesses is a bridge between artists, audiences and institutions. They create communication and as a result of that communication create projects for collaboration. In the context of Web 2.0, platforms refer to an online mediator. It is a digital framework that enables interaction, collaboration and content creation among users. In the subject of journalism studies, the idea of gatekeeping first appeared in the 1940s and 1950s. The concept was first proposed by sociologists Kurt Lewin and David Manning White. They proposed that media workers serve as gatekeepers, regulating the flow of information by choosing and vetting content (Lewin, 1947; White, 1950). Lewin introduced the term "gatekeeping" to describe the process of information passing through checkpoints before reaching its final audience. A controlled pathway where decisions are made by individuals within organizations.

In the 1980s, scholars such as Pamela Shoemaker and Tim Vos extended the gatekeeping framework, emphasizing the human element within media organizations. Shoemaker and Vos (2009) analyzed the influence of a couple of factors on decision making processes. One of it is organizational norms, another is editorial policies and external pressures. Gatekeeping in this sense is a process that involves many different checkpoints. It is not a simple thing but a living, changing thing that is affected by many factors. This idea helps us understand gatekeeping. It is not a single process. It works in different ways. Media companies do not work alone. They are part of bigger systems like the economy and the culture. This makes gatekeeping and mediation in general more complex. Because it connects to many different areas and ideas.

The concept of gatekeeping could be expanded to the art market and communication systems. In the art world, galleries, within gallerias curators and on media critics have historically acted as gatekeepers. They determined which artists and works gained visibility. The visibility led to recognition. These gatekeepers (similarly to the examples in journalism) exercise significant power over cultural narratives and market dynamics. For example, Bourdieu (1984) noted that cultural capital plays a important role in the art market, with gatekeepers favoring works that align with established aesthetic system and societal values. Similarly, Becker (1982) explained that art is organized within an "cultural production system". The system defines the role and function of the artist, with gatekeeping mechanisms determining what would be both produced and distributed. Traditional gatekeepers and managers have equally been criticized for perpetuating already existing exclusivities and consolidating power. In effect, digital platforms have increasingly raised these power struggles as points of increased discursive contestation of these gatekeeping systems and traditional forms of exclusion, which are newly enabled through more inclusive and participatory models of distribution. The notion of gatekeeping has been extended across these different domains in light of how changing power dynamics take place within the digital age.

Colin Campbell's idea of the 'craft consumer' (Beer & Burrows, 2010) expands the topic to include the larger effects of this transformation, not just for consumers but also for producers in the digital era. This craft consumer, who actively participates in the production process, represents the essence of current content creators that use digital channels not just for distribution, but also for cooperation and immediate feedback from their audience. The craft consumer exemplifies a participatory approach, where individuals not only consume but also personalize and contribute to the production process. This concept challenges the traditional view of consumption as a passive act, emphasizing the blurred boundaries between creation and consumption seen in digital platforms. Platforms like YouTube empower users to shape content collaboratively, fostering a new kind of creative ecosystem. Colin Campbell’s framework helps to understand these such as twitch or discord as enablers of craft consumption, where users take an active role in shaping the cultural artifacts they engage with. This shift redefines the creator-audience relationship, turning consumption into a co-creative process. The Internet and digital consumer technologies have severely disrupted intellectual-property logic enabling the near costless reproduction and distribution of information commodities. Internet production is more and more finding ways to create low cost alternative production channels to the traditional model. Sophisticated tools have created

new collaborative venues (such as blogs, social websites, and so on) for media production and distribution. This disruption is further complicated by the rise of the craft consumer who often modifies or comments on existing materials challenging traditional notions of intellectual property and ownership. Content creators and craft consumers are operating in a domain where collaboration and remix culture are highly valorized.

In "conventional artist" contexts, the work of the artist is often complete before it reaches the public, and the value of the art is usually measured by more traditional economic success indicators such as sales and reviews. The model of consumption is linear, with clear distinctions between producer and consumer. But as techno-capitalism reaches its peak, the lines between consumer and producer merge into a quantum state. The value of a "content creator" lies in his or her capacity to participate and reach a community, but the flip side is that participation in these platforms usually results in unpaid labor.

In the context of intellectual property, the craft consumer model introduces additional complexities. The collaborative and often derivative nature of digital content creation challenges traditional notions of authorship and ownership. For example, viral TikTok trends often involve users remixing or reinterpreting existing content, raising questions about who owns the rights to the resulting creations. This stands in contrast to traditional art, where the artist retains clear ownership of their work.

An example from the past could be Clement Greenberg. He was a significant player in the art world. His importance is especially for his support of Abstract Expressionism. Greenberg made the case in his writings that avant-garde art. He represented by Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, constituted a rigorously intellectual alternative to the shallowness of popular culture (Greenberg, 1961, pp. 3–21). In an age when their style was still not popular, Greenberg's theoretical framework of Abstract Expressionism as a movement closely linked to modernist ideals “legitimized” the work of these painters. Public opinions of contemporary art were influenced by his cultural capital within the art world. Because of him artist that are deemed “avangarte” by him received institutional backing, including gallery representation and participation in important exhibits (Tomkins, 1976, pp. 112–114) Greenberg’s writing legitimized Abstract Expressionism by making it talked about as avant-garde and intellectually superior to mass culture. His writings published in newspapers and journals acted as gatekeeping mechanisms deciding which artists entered the public sphere of avandgarte.

Today's mediation role is distributed among international platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. and is decentralized but an artist who posts abstract or conceptual art on Instagram, for example, can find it difficult to get seen unless their work fits in with popular aesthetics or receives enough interaction to be picked up by the algorithm. Just like an artist standing outside of the circle in the 1950s of the realm of abstract expressionism. To understand these trends a historical analysis of gatekeepers and mediator organizations would be answering questions of how we transform and where we end up in the end. Mediation has long played an important role in shaping how art and culture are seen, appreciated, and remembered. Throughout history, several forms of mediation have served as gatekeepers and the role of a "platform" shaping creative expression and audience accessibility.

One of the oldest platforms that can be traced in history is "Salon Paris". The birth of what became known as the Paris Salon boomed with the increase of literacy and the middle class. A non-noble Parisian in the early seventeenth century might enjoy paintings and sculptures in churches or the city's architecture. During the 17th century as the power shifted from aristocracy to bourgeoisie a new company emerged: the Paris Salon, which was funded by the illustrious Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture. The Salon became a well-known event as it welcomed an increasing number of visitors in Paris. The Salon's popularity skyrocketed in 1791, when its financing shifted from royal to state organizations. On a single Sunday, the Salon might attract up to 50,000 visitors, with a total of 500,000 people visiting the exhibition over the course of eight weeks. ("Prestige, popularity, and progress: A history of the Paris salon," 2024) The Salon's jury was from conservative artists and they were the ones who decided what was shown or not. Only jury-approved pieces were displayed and artists were required to follow the "Académie des Beaux-Arts" criteria to get promoted. The Salon was known for rejecting new and creative artistic trends that did not meet its criteria. A famous example is Édouard Manet.("Prestige, popularity, and progress: A history of the Paris salon," 2024) The salon famously criticized him severely for his innovative style. The Salon was a political and social institution that shared the beliefs and philosophies of the French government and higher classes. Art shown in the Salon was viewed as a reflection of the country's cultural character. ("Prestige, popularity, and progress: A history of the Paris salon," 2024)

The Salon's approval was really important for an artist's career, and an artist's reputation was linked to their success at the Salon. Artists who were admitted into the Salon were seen to be respectable and deserving of public attention, whilst those who were rejected, such as many Impressionists, were regarded as failures or outsiders. It was basically controlling what was going to be history, what was going to be perceived as art and what was not worthy of attention. It held really high cultural capital and used it. ("Prestige, popularity, and progress: A history of the Paris salon," 2024)

Another example could be the Hollywood Studio System which operated predominantly between the 1920s and 1950s. It acted as a platform for filmmakers, as well as a control mechanism of what gets promoted or not. This system relied on a concept called vertical integration, which means big studios owning production facilities, distribution networks, and cinemas effectively controlling all the channels of movie production. This integration made making high budget and experimental (new technologies) movies possible. ("THE STUDIO SYSTEM 1920s – 1960s," n.d.) An example could be, the success of 1927's The Jazz Singer, ("THE STUDIO SYSTEM 1920s – 1960s," n.d.) which brought synchronized sound to feature films and pushed Warner Bros. . Studios' ownership of distribution networks ensured that the work of its contractual creators reached a large audience. Large-scale productions like Cleopatra (1963) established the system's ability to fund big projects. The 50 most expensive movies ever made, adjusted for inflation, Cleopatra is 15th on the list of most expensive movies released before 1998. ("THE STUDIO SYSTEM 1920s – 1960s," n.d.) The same vertical integration that made the studio system an effective platform also positioned it as a significant gatekeeper in the movie making industry. The "block booking" policy, which required cinemas to buy bundles of the producer firms' movies, made sure that studio productions dominated the cinemas, excluding independent creators from the cinemas.("THE STUDIO SYSTEM 1920s – 1960s," n.d.) Censorship also played a key role. The industry self-implied a rule of conduct called Motion Picture Production Code (Hays Code). Strict guidelines governing the moral and thematic content of movies were created by the Motion Picture Production Code (Hays Code), which was put into effect in 1930 and was in effect from 1934 until the late 1950s. It was expressly forbidden to include any sexual content, especially explicit representations of relationships other than marriage, intercourse, or homosexuality. ("the Motion Picture Production Code," 1930) By the conclusion of the movie, offenders had to be punished since crime could not be praised. Graphic representations of violence were strictly prohibited, and even hinted violence needed to be handled carefully.("the Motion Picture Production Code,"

1930) It was forbidden to make fun of religion and to treat religious organizations and leaders with respect. The industry giants held really high cultural capital and used it to control the industry both economically and culturally.

Another example could be MTV's effect between 1981 and 1990. When MTV started in 1981, it concentrated largely on rock and pop music videos, acting as a platform for artists in these genres to exhibit their work to a larger audience. This strategy of MTV later changed and started to show a wide variety of genres, including rap, R&B, country, and alternative music, in order to adapt to the changing musical scene as its popularity grew. The music video format was made famous by MTV (Barbara, 2023). In the end of the day, MTV controlled the time that certain muscians get and career paths of them by deciding which music videos were shown, when it is shown and how frequently. Similar to how Hollywood studios regulated which stars were promoted, the network's playlist choices have the power to make or destroy an artist. By giving them ongoing exposure, interviews, and behind-the-scenes videos, MTV helped musicians turn into new celebrities. MTV gained as Paris Salon and Hollywood Industry between 1920 and 1950s cultural and economic capital to dictate what gets promoted, what is aesthetic and not what is good music and what is bad music. Because it had a role of as a tastemaker, making itself identify with young culture and redefining how music was viewed, consumed, and evaluated through its visual platform on the tv turning music industry into an audiovisual experience, MTV's influence went beyond its financial strength. MTV had enormous cultural power by influencing popular perceptions of what was "cool", "innovative" or "authentic"(Barbara, 2023).

As technology evolves, many of these historical mediation organizations and their tactics are merging into online platforms. The functions of distributors, curators, and critics are now integrated into a unified system by platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.. For instance, artists now depend on Instagram's algorithm to get visible, when formerly they could have relied on a gallery, movie studio, music studio to attract an audience. Because of this centralization, production, distribution, and consumption are all under the control of the same platforms, which feeds back into their control. This is the biggest vertical integration that was possible in the world. Today's vertical integration controls the creation tools, distribution and consumption. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok use their built-in tools for creating content then the same platforms became the content's main distribution in their platform. Platforms themselves are also the last stop for the viewers,

where they interact with the material that is created and distributed by the platform themselves.

3. Questioning the Genuine Disruption

Web 2.0 and Democratization

Today's content creation captures the economic value of transactional data created by participation consumption, which goes beyond the boundaries of cultural creation. The discourse around "knowing capitalism"(Beer & Burrows, 2010) shows us the ways in which capitalist organizations use this information, causing the monetization of engagement. The economic aspect of user-generated content shows a capitalist foundation that supports the digital era's commercialization of content production.

Social networks have started an very big scale of borderless sharing. Initially it was referred to as user-generated content. These peer-to-peer platforms were celebrated for democratizing and decentralizing digital services. De Gregorio and Goanta (2023) argue they have evolved into highly commercial ecosystems that prioritize revenue generation over participatory creativity. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok in particular. Their algorithms' first goal is the content that aligns with platform-driven trends rather than individual artistic or creativity..

The infamous Fyre Festival provides an example tale for this hybrid media dynamic. It was promoted very much by influencers on social media. The festival was a catastrophic failure that showed an example of the ethical issues surrounding influencer marketing (Gregorio and Goanta, 2023). This event showed the world the potential for online popularity to amplify misinformation. It created an environment to exploit audience trust for commercial gain. These problems are especially apparent in the increasing reliance on monetization mechanisms. For example YouTube's AdSense or TikTok Creator Fund. These tools reward creators for producing ad-friendly, often non-controversial content, potentially limiting the diversity of ideas and expressions (Gregorio and Goanta, 2023). Creators have become dependent on platforms for their paychecks. This transformed their relationship with these platforms into one of economic boss-employee relationship. This dynamic shows us how tech-feudalism limits true creative freedom.

Rank	Platform name	Parent company	Country	Monthly active users, in millions
#1	Facebook	Meta	U.S.	2,910
#2	YouTube	Alphabet	U.S.	2,291
#3	WhatsApp	Meta	U.S.	2,000
#4	Messenger	Meta	U.S.	1,300
#5	Instagram	Meta	U.S.	1,287
#6	WeChat	Tencent	China	1,225
#7	Kuaishou	Kuaishou	China	1,000
#8	TikTok	Bytedance	China	1,000
#9	Telegram	Telegram	UAE	600
#10	Qzone	Tencent	China	600

("Ranked Social Networks Worldwide," n.d.)

We have already entered the rule of tech-feudalism, in which platforms are growing more powerful and wealthy than nations. According to Varoufakis (the person who made the term "techno-feudalism" famous) the rise of massive platform corporations after the 2008 financial crisis is the reason behind this rise. It was caused by central bank policies of US government. It printed money. With its financial institutions it invested this newly printed money in these corporations without the usual pressures of profitability metrics. This process allowed these corporations to grow exponentially, free from the constraints of efficient profitability (Varoufakis, 2023: 96–112).

Varoufakis identifies "cloud rent" as a crucial mechanism of this new techno-feudalism. Having monopoly control over digital platforms enables these corporations get a rent rather than generate profits through traditional capitalism. Dynamics of rent extraction create a feudal-like dependency on dominant platforms. . This reflects a change in power relations, with digital giants having enormous power over public discourse, individuals, and even political results. ("Ranked Social Networks Worldwide," n.d.)

For example, WeChat in China act not just as a social media platform but also integrates financial services into it. Wechat transforms into a near-total reliance on the app for daily transactions, communication, and even political participation. This exemplifies the monopolistic control these platforms exert over individual autonomy and societal functions. Platforms like TikTok use initiatives such as Branded Missions to mediate influencer-brand interactions, further entrenching creators within the platform's monetized ecosystem (De Gregorio and Goanta ,2023). The table

itself shows power relations that mirror the notion of tech-feudalism. Platforms like Facebook and WeChat have more users than many continents have residents, giving them big influence over public debate and individual behavior.

McKenzie Wark's analysis in *Capital is Dead* introduces the concept of a "vectoralist class." Wark describes this group as the emerging ruling class in the web 2.0 economy. A class that is different from traditional landlords or industrial capitalists. Instead of owning physical land or factories, the vectoralist class controls the vectors through which information is gathered, processed, and used (Wark, 2021). The relationship between the vectoralist class and the ruled over, reflects a broader antagonism within the techno-feudal system. Where the production and abstraction of information, manipulation of psychology and analysis of sociology replace traditional modes of industrial exploitation. This framework deepens our understanding of how platform monopolies not only extract economic rents but also establish new forms of class hierarchy rooted in the control of information vectors. Art and content move through these vectors as information. In a digital economy dominated by platform monopolies creative works such as visual art, music, or written content are reduced to data points. They move through these controlled vectors. This process increases the tension between artistic creation as a form of self-expression and its reduction to algorithmically driven data. The vectoralist class does not need to own the content itself but instead controls the infrastructure through which it flows. It shapes how it is distributed, consumed, and monetized. The result is an ecosystem where creative outputs are stripped of autonomy. It is treated them less as cultural artifacts and more as data commodities. In this context, artists and creators are not just participants but lesser actors within a system designed to prioritize rent extraction over genuine creative expression.

The claimed "democratization of production" made possible by digital social media platforms is called into question. Although these platforms have made it easier for people to create content and enabled previously not possible levels of engagement, they are also a tool of capitalist systems that prefer certain kinds of material over others according to their engagement and commercial potential. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google have changed their original purpose as basic communication platforms. They have a big power in deciding which information gets out or not, influencing public opinion and deciding what content is displayed or not shown. This control moves over also to the economic arena, where

they monetize every interaction and data point, having the ability to transform user engagement into a lucrative business. Therefore, Web 2.0's interactive features are not isolated; rather, they are shaped by and a product of the economic processes that impact the production and consumption of information (Beer & Burrows, 2010). For example, the concept of clickbait content is a direct result of these economic incentives. Creators have to to prioritize being clicked and virality over substance to align with platform algorithms. Their goal is to maximize monetization potential. So, the real question is whether the so called “web 2.0 revolution” is indeed a revolution, or is it just a transformation of mediums. When you think about how platforms like YouTube and Twitch operate, it's easy to make a comparison between content creators and 90’s movie executives trying to create a TV program for the widest, common denominator audience to sell the most. Are these digital platforms and their content producers, basically, just copying old media tactics, which aim to appeal to the lowest common denominator in order to maximize engagement and profit, but on the internet? YouTube’s demonetization policies often push creators toward safer, more generic content to avoid losing ad revenue, making a parallel to the past in a possible case of network TV’s aversion to controversial programming. It becomes evident that the current trajectory of digital economies is unsustainable for fostering democratic artistic expression.

Web 2.0 transformation signifies a departure from the old notion of traditional capitalist model of production. However, this departure still is maintaining the same creative concerns under traditional capitalism. For example, the costs of reproducing and distributing an artistic creation are minimal after it has been digitalized. This should, in theory, democratize access to art, allowing for greater involvement and lowering entrance barriers for both spectators and artists. Platform monopolies, have appropriated this very benefit and are using proprietary algorithms and monetization strategies to control the flow of artistic output.

As the production costs decline, distribution power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of powerful platforms. This dynamic is similar to the change talked about by Wark and Varoufakis, where platforms make money by controlling how art is distributed rather than by creating it. Because their work is monetized through attention metrics, ad revenue, and subscription-based models rather than traditional sales, artists are becoming more and more reliant on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Spotify.

It becomes clear that democratic artistic expression cannot be supported by the current trajectory of digital economies. The internet has changed from a decentralized network to a

centralized and commercialized area with small exception safe zones. This made the libertarian dream into a feudal nightmare.

Knowing Capitalism and Algorithms

Digital platform marketers have a powerful story to tell when they portray themselves as liberating forces against traditional media establishments, supporting individuality and artistic expression. But this representation usually hides the complex censoring systems built into content rules and platform algorithms. Contrary to the platforms' liberating ideals, content that differs from these algorithmic preferences or violates vaguely specified content restrictions may be demonetized or even banned. An example could be Youtube's demonetization policies which are very vague and creators often criticizes but nonetheless have to comply with them. This inconsistency between algorithmic control and autonomy promises shows a kind of censorship. Digital platforms use algorithms select material for user preferences, but in reality, can exclude specific voices and viewpoints under the pretense of neutrality. This is in contrast to the clear constraints enforced by conventional media gatekeepers. (Gillespie, 2018; Noble, 2018)

Under the cover of user experience and platform rules, this control mechanism represents a new kind of authority that is less apparent and vulnerable to challenge from content providers (Pasquale, 2015). Therefore, despite the fact that digital platforms assert democratization of content production, the underlying regulations and algorithms impose a type of censorship that calls into question the fundamental principles of this freedom.

What is "digital freedom" today? From the start, several social media platforms took a stance and emphasized the obvious benefits of connecting people and creating a new "creative space". Then social media companies have increasingly recognized the importance of content moderation for a variety of reasons. These reasons could be the need for removal of offensive or illegal content for the users overall protection. However, the content management remains a difficult topic. Critics contend that platforms' moderation policies and procedures are non-transparent and inconsistent. Much of human communication uses irony, sarcasm, humour, and idiom to give different meanings and intentions, and is contextual and culturally sensitive. What may be friendly "banter" between friends might appear to be serious insult to an outsider(Cobbe, 2019). We should be cautious not to overestimate the capabilities of

understanding human communication of these automated moderation systems, in any form, are typically defective and inconsistent (Cobbe, 2019). The impact of these algorithmic constraints on creative freedom is significant.

This in turn is forcing creators to self-censor, never knowing whether their work will be flagged or demonetized by the algorithms. As Focault would say, the concept of "digital freedom" in today's online ecosystem must be viewed through power dynamics and governance. The nature of the internet, taken over by a few commercially managed platforms, has replaced the once-open venues of democratic possible ways with centralized sites of surveillance and corporate control. The critics insist that moderation procedures are mostly confusing and inconsistent. They feel unable to seize the subtlety of human communications.

Foucault defines the apparatus as a heterogeneous ensemble of discourses, institutions, laws, administrative measures, scientific claims, philosophical beliefs, and other elements that collectively establish a system of power relations in a certain domain. This notion is critical in understanding how power operates and is wielded in the social media platforms. (Cobbe, 2019)

An example of algorithmic control could be given on the case of Uber's usage of its platform. Uber, markets itself as a provider of "flexible employment". Preaching that they give the ability to work where and when they want to its drivers. with weekly pay as an incentive. (A company survey found that 85% of drivers valued this flexibility) Uber refers to drivers as "driver-partners," emphasizing a partnership rather than an employer-employee relationship. (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016) However, drivers often perceive this terminology as insincere or irrelevant, and at times leverage it to negotiate for greater autonomy. This language is a perception of mutual commitment, despite significant power and information asymmetries. Their drivers' work is tightly controlled by algorithms dictating how, when, and where they operate within the platform. Real-time data-driven monitoring enforces conformity through performance metrics. It creates an environment of continuous surveillance and behavioral control by the algorithm. At the same time, Uber shifts economic risks to drivers. Their drivers bear the burden of fluctuating income. They have to pay for vehicle maintenance and fuel costs. The platform retains control over revenue streams. (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016) The opacity of algorithms make the drivers fall into a difficult position to make an informed decision. The drivers lack insight into how decisions around pricing or ride allocation work. Surge zones for them are random made and so on. The new age problem

with algorithmic platforms whether it be Uber, or Youtube they make the participant think that they are in fact peers, however there is a asymmetrical power relation within the platform in reality. (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016)

Algocratic systems (Danaher, 2020) a term determined by Danaher frequently undermine rational autonomy by eroding the intelligibility of decision-making processes. Algorithms operate as "black boxes" (Burrell, 2016) today. They conceal their personal logic from those whose lives their decisions touch. Such opacity narrows the scope of individuals' informed and reasoned choices. For instance, YouTube uses algorithms for video recommendations. It works by ranking the metric of engagement higher than diversity or meaningful content. Many users end up consuming hours of video material that this algorithm curates. But they don't know the decision-making process. They are uninformed and cannot understand or interrogate the algorithm (Danaher, 2020).

This "epistemic opacity" (Pasquale, 2015) forces individuals to rely on systems that limit their ability to rationally assess the options presented to them. In creative domains, artists face similar challenges when platforms like Instagram prioritize engagement-friendly content, such as viral trends over unique or unconventional styles. This undermines creators' autonomy by steering their choices toward algorithmic preferences consciously or unconsciously. Manipulation is a significant dimension through which algocratic systems affect freedom (Danaher, 2020). They exploit cognitive biases and personal data. These systems deploy a dynamic and personalized form of behavioral influence that operates not publicly but in an undetectable way behind the eye sight of the public . Such systems shape user behavior in ways that benefit the platform while limiting individual autonomy. For example, TikTok's algorithm optimizes for engagement. It wants users to create short and visually engaging content that aligns with its metrics. This manipulation extends to audiences who are drawn into addictive scrolling patterns tailored to their preferences. Similarly, Facebook's content prioritization algorithms amplify sensationalism and polarizing posts. Giving birth to environments where constructive dialogue is preferable for creators in favor of high-engagement fights. This form of manipulation challenges traditional ideas of autonomy by eroding individuals' ability to act as the authors of their own lives, free from external coercion (Danaher, 2020).

Domination happens when one person controls what another can do. Algocratic systems make this apparent. They make people depend on hidden algorithms for important things like jobs or services. This creates unfair power on the hands of billion dolar companies. The “content creators” must follow the platform’s rules to stay visible or get what they need.

For example, Uber drivers are always watched by an algorithm. The algorithm decides how much money they make and what jobs they get. Drivers cannot see or control how this works. Spotify is another example of this unknown nature. It uses algorithms to pick playlists and decide which music people hear. This makes artists have no choice but guess what will become popular next or which trends will get noticed. They have little to no choice to follow the rules. Etsy marketed as spaces for independent creators forces it users to understand the popularity metrics and continually guess trends and what would make their content reach the maximum number of users. This dynamic of "micro-domination,"(Danaher, 2020) where small-scale dependencies aggregate into significant constraints on autonomy. The impact of social platforms on online conversation is already significant. These platforms shape the information environment based on their own criteria and financial interests by algorithmically personalizing content streams and making certain communications boom while suppressing others. They also have an impact through their company policies. On their mission statements. They make design and features to amplify the maximum engagement. Their terms of service shapes the conditions under which online discourse occurs and define the boundaries of acceptable communication.

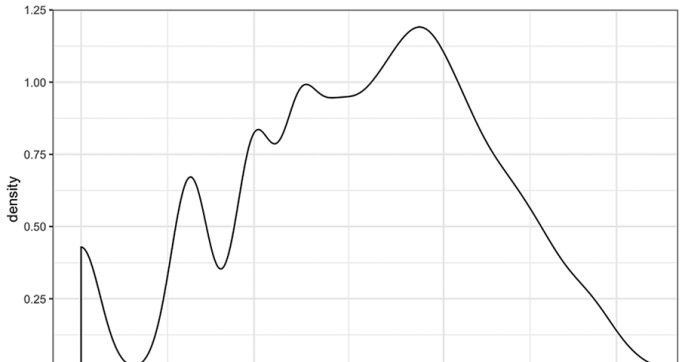
Through their terms of service, community standards, and algorithmic moderation, social media platforms seek to build their own "truth regimes" (Cobbe, 2019). These platforms have a lot of power by algorithmically shaping reality and controlling social relationships, as well as having big influence on awareness and interpretation of current events. The implementation of algorithmic censoring enables social platforms to play an interventionist role in upholding these regimes of truth. Unlike traditional human moderation, which may reduce or limit the exposure of specific information, algorithmic methods can completely silence messages, even in private messaging services. This capability gives platforms a lot of control over public and private messages, making their influence really big and controlling into everyday life and adding commercial agendas into online speech. This situation creates problems about the possible sense of our uniformity on the internet. The business mindset that drive social media platforms frequently favor broad mainstream appeal and advertising satisfaction above the inclusion of diverse, non-mainstream, or minority perspectives.

To address these challenges, a real crowd monitoring strategy should lead to decentralization and community empowerment. Instead than depending entirely on hierarchy, algorithmic control, this model would allow users to monitor and moderate their own spaces in a collaborative manner. This strategy relies heavily on peer review, communal decision-making, and transparent, democratic mechanisms for defining and maintaining a new set of internet norms. This move not only redistributes power from corporations to consumers. It also shows Foucault's view of power as distributed and relational. A decentralized crowd-monitoring system distributes power across the community. It allows for more just moderation. Users empower themselves to influence the rules and practices that govern their interactions, instilling a sense of ownership and accountability.

Platform Capitalism

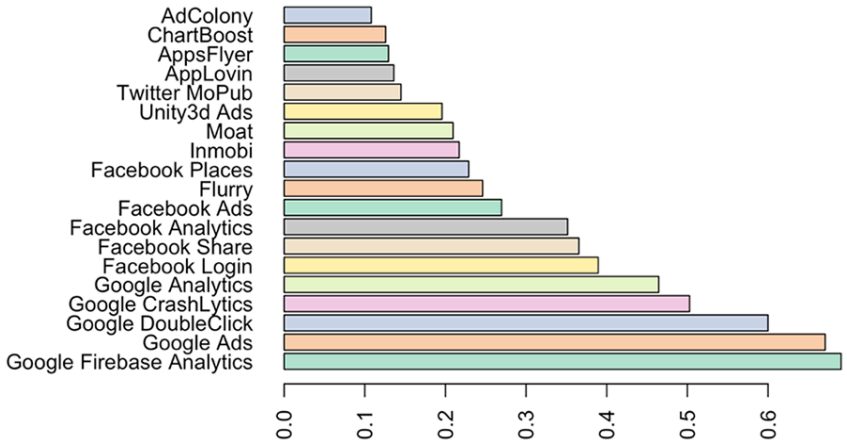
Platform capitalism has created a dynamic of monopolization, giving us a result, in an environment in which tech giants, although competing for consumers and decreasing costs, have become interdependent.

Facebook and Google, as winners of the new app economy, provide a wide range of services that increase their revenue. These platforms added several capabilities into their SDKs, (a set of tools for third-party developers to use in producing applications using a particular framework or platform) resulting in more technological integration and dependency across the mobile ecosystem. This connectivity is crucial for app developers who rely on these services to make their apps functional and in a condition to earn money. However, this system supporting this integration is unevenly distributed, with certain digital businesses taking a big portion of the market.Tobias Blanke and Jennifer Pybus conducted study on the mobile ecosystem's interdependence, titled The Material Conditions of Platforms: Monopolization Through Decentralization (Blanke & Pybus, 2020).



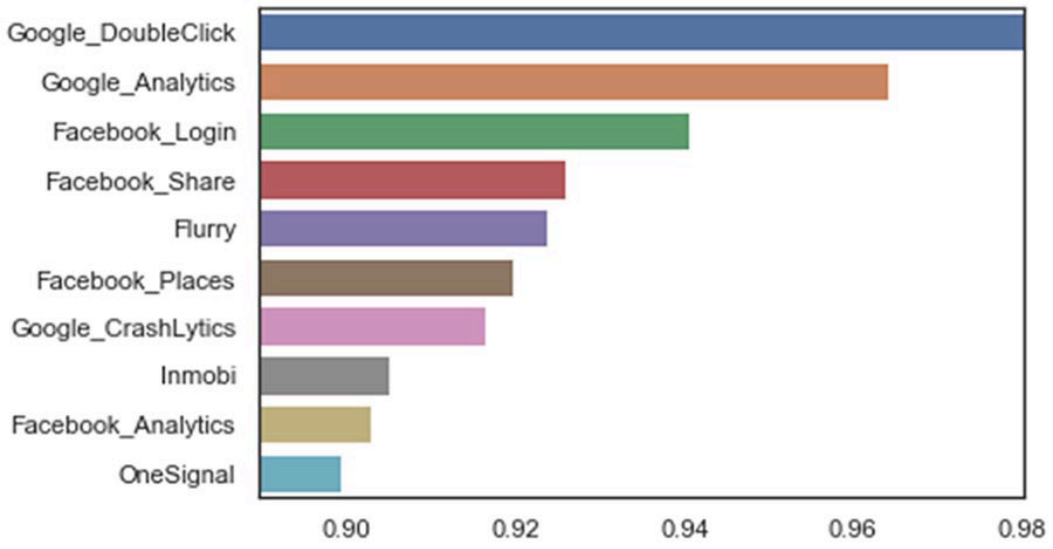
(Blanke & Pybus, 2020)

The "Zones of Data Translation (ZDT)" study attempted to conduct an analysis of the mobile ecosystem by looking at almost 7,000 Android manifest files. These manifests include the structure, information, components, and needs of applications. The study produced a large dataset containing over 45,000 records of services in applications, after evaluating over 5,600 apps from three sources: Google Play's most downloaded list, the US Haystack study, and the European Exodus Privacy Project.(Blanke & Pybus, 2020)



(Blanke & Pybus, 2020)

The investigation revealed that 194 SDKs from various third parties are utilized in these apps, although their distribution varies. Most SDKs appear in fewer than 5% of apps, following a power law distribution in which a few "super-SDKs" predominate. On average, apps incorporate at least 2.5 third-party SDKs, with 20% integrating at least four SDKs and 10% utilizing six or more. (Blanke & Pybus, 2020)



(Blanke & Pybus, 2020)

The survey emphasized Google and Facebook's dominance in the SDK ecosystem, with Google Firebase Analytics being used in roughly 70% of applications. Other major players like Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Chinese giants Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent were more in the second plan. (Blanke & Pybus, 2020)

Companies such as Facebook and Google actively manage the infrastructures that facilitate economic and cultural involvement rather than competing for market share in the old sense of capitalism. These platforms function as "digital cantons," with vast influence over developers and creators who depend on their ecosystems, as Varoufakis states (Varoufakis, 2021 p). . Google Firebase Analytics, which leads the SDK market with 70% application adoption, serves as an example of this (Blanke & Pybus, 2020). These platforms make sure that content producers and app developers continue to rely on their services. They accomplish this by making their tools such as Facebook's SDKs and Google Firebase Analytics components that a developer not only must use but also always take into mind while making new integrations. Developers are unable to thrive without these tools because they are too integrated or too big to fail. Their widespread use gains them more use and it is a cycle that cannot be broken from inside of the cycle.

The dynamics of feudal societies are really similar to this logic. Lords dominated access to resources and serfs have dependency to them for economic survival. Content producers and app

developers have to conform their work to the guidelines and features of prevailing platforms (their new lords) giving up artistic independence in exchange for visibility. This relationship describes how platform tools and algorithmic curation combine to influence how users engage with and perceive content on digital platforms. Platforms curation together with its tools create a not really easy to distinguish form of dependence or new age serfdom.

Additionally, algorithms are crucial in determining what material users view on sites like Facebook. These algorithms develop a sort of "identity" for consumers by keeping track of their preferences. The platform then presents users with material that it believes they would find interesting. This strategy frequently results in consumers only seeing content that aligns with their own opinions and interests (Papa & Ioannides, 2023). It creates a closed loop. This technique, known as "selective exposure," unknowingly stop people's ability to learn about novel or varied concepts. Rather, people are continuously exposed to the same content, which limits the opportunity for artists to present unique or experimental works (Varoufakis, 2021). These systems are particularly hard on artistic communities. Platforms have authority over what content is viewed and how it might generate revenue. For instance, information that generates more clicks, views, or advertisements is frequently given preference by algorithms. This implies that content producers are under pressure to produce work that aligns with the platform's objectives, even if it lacks originality or creativity (Papa & Ioannides, 2023).

By investigating the co-occurrence of SDK services, it is clear that big internet firms such as Google and Facebook are technically dependent on one another and other services. The top 20 SDK co-occurrences are all from Google and Facebook, demonstrating their dominance in the ecosystem. (Blanke & Pybus, 2020) So, Monetization drives the app industry, with Facebook generating 90% of its ad income from mobile by late 2019. Other SDKs, aside from the dominating Google and Facebook, are introducing specialty monetization services to compete.(Blanke & Pybus, 2020)

Monopolies in the tech industry wield significant power over artistic communities. By controlling distribution channels. They have the power to affect visibility through algorithms. They are the ones who decide on monetization policies. Companies like Google, Amazon, and Facebook control the tools necessary to build new platforms as well as the platforms for interaction. It could be analyzed as centralization of power under technofeudalism. By maintaining control over key resources, like as website hosting platforms, cloud computing

services, or software development kits (SDKs). These businesses guarantee that all creative and commercial activity passes through their ecosystems. Because this structure creates not dependencies on one level but on multiple levels it dominates both its creators and its audiences. For example, developers who want to make a new app or service need to use the tools that these platforms offer. They have to use the software integration frameworks from Meta, Amazon Web Services (AWS), or Google's cloud services. These are commercial services and they do not want you to get fully independent and always maintain a need relationship for further development. They are made to integrate the new service or app into the platform's broader ecosystem. Developers are not only paying for a service when they use AWS or Google's APIs for hosting. They are also committing to the policies and priorities of the platform owner forcefully. This "landlord-tenant" (Varoufakis,2021) situation in which the owners of the platforms take on the role of digital landlords, charging creators and companies rent. The rent includes strategic and technological control in addition to money they extract.

The Decline of Artistic Communities

Social media platforms, such as YouTube and Twitch use complex algorithms. They have multiple revenue-sharing models. They have a big influence on content distribution and advertising revenue and content creator behavior. These algorithms and revenue-sharing structures generate conflicts between control and autonomy for content creators, which influences their outputs.

Unlike traditional media, where content is bought by media houses, social media content is usually free. Content creators aim to create content with their personal goals, which can include attention, self-marketing, or monetization (Hödl & Myrach, 2023).These creators function as platform-dependent people, relying on social media platforms to reach their audiences(Hödl & Myrach, 2023) . As part of a platform, social media environments involve content creators, passive users, and advertisers, each playing a crucial role in the ecosystem(Hödl & Myrach, 2023). The connections that exist between platform owners, users, content providers, and marketers are what make social media owners so successful. In addition to supporting content creators that produce interesting content to draw in and keep users, platform owners also supply the algorithms and infrastructure needed to customize

user experiences. By this way when people interact with the content, these consumers generate data that platform owners can utilize to improve their offerings and customize their advertising. In order to successfully focus their campaigns, advertisers rely on this data, while content providers gain from its promotion. In turn, platform monetization and advertisement partnerships bring in money for content creators.

Apart from algorithmic control, certain social media platforms employ revenue sharing as a tactical instrument to lead content creators' actions with the platform's goals. The goal of this approach is for, despite the fact that content creators are not conventional workers, they behave in the best interests of platform owners, in order to maximize gains. Platforms incentivize the creation of higher-quality content by offering financial rewards. Creating an incentive towards a specific type of category, nevertheless, can have contradictory results. For example, user-generated material has decreased while professionally created content has increased as a result of YouTube's revenue sharing policy of 2018 (Hödl & Myrach, 2023). Creators face uncertainty about whether low engagement is due to algorithmic distribution or audience disinterest (Hödl & Myrach, 2023). Content becomes more standardised as a result of revenue sharing arrangements either by algorithmic control or monetary incentives , which encourage content producers to create content that complies with audience tastes and platform algorithms. Because they are thought to be less likely to get the required engagement to be commercially viable, unique, specialized, or experimental works are frequently discouraged, which reduces the diversity of content that offers the innovative potential of producers. Furthermore, the prospect of financial gain places a great deal of financial pressure on “content creators" to produce material that performs well based on the platform's metrics. This pressure frequently leads to creative compromises, where artistic integrity is given up in exchange for interaction and income. A free market mentality is fostered by this competitive atmosphere, which marginalizes many outstanding creators.

This can be furthered by understanding the case of DeviantArt: once an established online space for artists, it underlines the challenges creative communities have to put up with while adapting to commercial shifts ("decline of DeviantArt," 2024). YouTube and Twitch make their money through ads and view counts. They have rules and algorithms in place that try to keep them on longer and more engaged with the content. This can make it hard for creators to do new or different things because they have to focus on what makes them money and what views they receive. DeviantArt began in 2000 as a place for artists to display their work. They

could get feedback and connect with other creators like themselves to form communities. Unlike other, newer platforms like Youtube or Facebook, DeviantArt was more oriented toward artistic experimentation and collaboration rather than commercial interests of the creators themselves ("decline of DeviantArt," 2024). By the mid-2010s, the platform started to decline in relevance as competitors such as Instagram, YouTube, and Twitch rolled out features that better served the needs of contemporary creators. DeviantArt, as a website, struggled to keep pace with the rapidly changing digital landscape and started losing its user base along with relevance. One of the major reasons DeviantArt failed to live up to expectations was the limited monetization options on the platform. The site relied on subscriptions and print sales, which were quite insufficient for content creators who sought financial stability. Commercial sites like YouTube and Twitch offered solid revenue-sharing opportunities. They allowed creators to earn money through ads, viewer subscriptions, and sponsorships. The monetization features attracted creators looking for reliable sources of income, which led them to abandon DeviantArt's community-centric model since it was limited by its revenue. Another big issue was DeviantArt not doing a good job of surfacing content. Unlike Instagram or YouTube, which use algorithms to bring up popular or engaging content, DeviantArt did not have systems in place to increase the visibility of its creators both within and outside the platform. The stagnation in culture and technology significantly contributed to the decline of DeviantArt. It has never renewed its UI or added features that could be comparable in their excitement to the experiences available at newer platforms. The result is a general perception of DeviantArt being far less desirable compared to other services that sport Instagram's visual sheen, YouTube's video capability, and Twitch's real-time engagement features. Artists needed to relocate to websites that value user experience and business more. For-profit websites with a lot of money backing them were preferred. This only continued to polarize DeviantArt's community. DeviantArt's decline serves to illustrate a growing emphasis on personal success and profitability in today's rocky global economy.

It turned creation upside down in a bid to win by their calculus of revenue-sharing models. They fostered and created content that did well per the measurements on the platforms. In so doing, they sacrificed originality and diversity. DeviantArt used to be a common place for such diverse artistic expression. But because it couldn't keep pace with the financial stresses and audience-based incentives of these new platforms, the site's user engagement fell, as did creative exploration.

The fall of DeviantArt reflects wider patterns in the digital content landscape. It shows algorithms and monetization strategies shape artistic endeavors. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Twitch offer creators remarkable access to audiences and income opportunities but also come with limitations that restrict their freedom. However artist are forced to migrate to the same platforms that do not have an artistic community in mind in order to have economic gains. This dynamic has led to an unstable gig economy for creators. It has fluctuating income. Necessity for constant change platform regulations.

4. Individual Cases of Creators

Youtube and the Case of “Mr.Beast”

The market size of the creator economy is around $100 billion, and more than 50 million people are working as content creators on various platforms around the world(Choi et al., 2023). Van Dijck(Choi et al., 2023) said that "YouTube did not produce any content of their own; they merely accommodated the distribution and storage of content produced by their users"(Choi et al., 2023). Creators, who are producing content in the platform, are an essential part of the creator economy platform in generating creative content and vitalizing online communities (Choi et al., 2023). Essentially, Youtube has in some sense replaced the role of the mediator hold by TV companies. Despite its substantial role in the platform, the algorithm's working mechanism is often neither transparent nor comprehensible to creators. Web content creators make sense of algorithms through the development of folk theories based on experience. And yet, very few creators ever succeed. Only 4% out of 50 million creators earn a decent living income. (Choi et al., 2023) In both creation to maintain the standard of content and sustaining online communities, the "content creators" have become an integral part of the creator economy. YouTube supports creators through initiatives like creator funds and tools that help them understand their performance. Creators are heavily influenced by the algorithms of YouTube, which are often invisible and hard to ignore since usually the creators rely on the money they will earn from YouTube. To understand what is a "YouTuber" or what is successful in YouTube we cannot separate the algorithm from the creator. A recently conducted study by a mixed-methods approach involving semi-structured interviews and participatory design workshops presents the findings from their 14 "youtubers" with various ranges of channels, including: Computer science, Vlog, Music playlist, Beauty & Fashion, Beauty, Single-person households, Pop music review, Journalism & News, Marketing & Ads, IT & Travel, Car review, Animation (Choi et al., 2023)

This research has divided creators into 2, according to whom the algorithm has "blessed" or "doomed" them. All of them refer to the algorithm as a cryptic and all-powerful being that determines one's fate(Choi et al., 2023). Because there was never an openly explained

algorithm guideline, all of the creators refer to times they experienced "algorithm blessing" where they had sudden increase in views, subscribers, or activity/interaction in general. The participants became more aware of the algorithm after its effects were felt but were uncertain how to replicate the effect again (Choi et al., 2023). With its potential notwithstanding, the algorithm did not always behave the way these participants had anticipated. One negative effect mentioned about the algorithm in this regard was to suggest videos to the wrong audience. In emphasizing this general lack of algorithmic support, participants talked about feeling "doomed by the algorithm" when they felt the platform had deceived or abandoned them. All people tried to beat the algorithm in the hope of an "algorithmic blessing", but in fact, every time catching consistency within an algorithm did fail. In fact, a lot of participants also expressed suspicion that an algorithm does not serve values to help them exploit more opportunities for self-expression creativity. The dissatisfaction with the algorithm for favoring fun and addictive content rather than educational content was voiced by some (Choi et al. 2023), thus leaving his channel with fewer opportunities to be "blessed" by the algorithm. Two types of Youtubers-a critical finding within the research-were identified as working with/for and working against the algorithm. Initially, all participants attempted to take advantage of the algorithm. However, when those attempts failed over and over they started to "ignore" the algorithm and trends all together. It is very common that creators find themselves in a compromising position between the content they want to create and what was trending. Those who chose money before their creative output have been found using 3 distinct methods, one of them is the Halo Effect(Choi et al., 2023), which is trying to benefit from a positive algorithmic boost they've experienced before.

If they have received an unordinary boost before they try to replicate the features of that video such as title and thumbnail or try to create a series with that video.

The other one is "Experimentation"; they would just experiment with YouTube. They would try approaches or concepts, like changing the format of the video or the timing of posts, to see how the algorithm would respond. A strategy based on action and reaction. And last but not least is asking advertisers' preferences and adjusting their content by advertisability or relatedness to products. Since the YouTube Partners Program, which relies on ads, is the main source of income, they felt a wider range of adverts would be allowed through the YouTube algorithm, which would favor uncontroversial content. Examples include a content creator stopping the creation of content related to diversity, like LGBTQ issues, as he felt that advertisers would not be receptive to that and it would reduce his chances of monetizing it. Another opposite reaction was to also ignore the algorithm and focus on creative integrity

since the algorithm was not showing what it wanted. Since the algorithm was not clear about what it prefers, creators had a hard time choosing a creative direction. They often opted for funny content over the more considered or informative films they wished to produce, because they felt compelled to adjust their work to perceived algorithmic preferences. Even making creative compromises doesn't always mean success, though. As the algorithm was described, it was unpredictable. Content producers were not happy with the algorithm's impact on their outcomes after producing and editing their work. Most viewed was performance determined, to a large extent, by algorithm beyond their control; thus, hard work alone could hardly guarantee performance. They couldn't understand performance data and began losing faith in the system through not knowing whether their material's success was the result of their work or the algorithm. A video "Do What You Can't" ("DO WHAT YOU CAN'T," 2017) on YouTube is made by filmmaker and YouTuber Casey Neistat. Neistat gives a message of pushing boundaries and rejecting conventional limits, doing what you can't normally do in conventional media in YouTube. However, the empirical data shows that the success ratio in YouTube is very low. The traits needed are much more complex than just creative directions or courage to go against the trends.

The top non-brand Youtubers today are, in order, "MrBeast, Vlad and Niki, Like Nastya, PewDiePie, Blackpink" 2024. There must be something these people share other than artistic creativity. It must have been a result of the platform expertise, audience engagement, and content specialty. No matter it is a game genre, entertainment genre, they have optimised the algorithm changes, build communities and their personal brand. A research made by Ellen Franssen (Franssen, 2015) examines the communication tactics used by three popular beauty vloggers to establish and grow their personal brands on YouTube. Through an analysis of their content, interaction strategies, and partnerships, this research may help shed light on the success of the persona "Mr.Beast" ("MrBeast," 2012). The research question "How do popular beauty vloggers use communication strategies on YouTube to help build their brand? " and its related sub-question "How does success work over YouTube? " Will give us the answer.

Although "Mr.Beast" is not a beauty vlogger, the general dynamics of YouTube "success" should have intersections. The text (Franssen, 2015) introduces the concept of "celebritization" that describes how beauty vloggers become something more than people but a brand, their names representing specific expectations from their audience. This same "celebritization" finds its place in MrBeast's rise to fame. The name MrBeast has become a brand in itself. It made

people feel that his name was synonymous with over-the-top challenges and his style of programs. The audience of MrBeast knows his name is a sign of large-scale entertainment often regarding cash giveaways or record events. Other than that, he has other brands such as Mr.BeastBurger, Feastables, and Beast Philanthropy, which is his charity organization. This evidences how celebrity can spread from off the digital influence into using their already existing brand to sell fast food, chocolates, or their personal foundation. As you can see, Mr.Beast initially created a persona brand, which then later was converted to actual product brands. Turner, (Turner 2013, p. 74) highlights how social media allows vloggers to take "personal control of their public presentation", a main factor that sustains a sucsessful online persona, an authentic and coherent brand image. For beauty vloggers, this equates to making deliberate decisions regarding their online shows of relatability. MrBeast controls his public image very carefully, ensuring that his persona based around a generous and relatable person. He always ramps up to consistently projecting this character in his videos. Even while having the enormous scale of his videos and financial muscle, MrBeast always clings to his fabricated character in his interactions by presenting himself as an "average guy".

This fabricated authenticity, just like the image management amongst successful beauty vloggers, is the distinguishing factor in most cases between success and failure. The audience does sometimes punish over/extraordinary deviations from the "average". Tolson, gives focus to the previously stressed participatory culture and the craft consumer (Beer & Burrows 2010), where he stands out the interactive character of YouTube by underlining how creators are in direct interaction with their audience. Beauty bloggers, for example, always need the involvement of the audience through comments, messages, and live streams, thereby giving them a connection to the common guy/girl. This is also important in the brand success of MrBeast: he involves his audience with his videos in terms of participating in challenges, receiving donations, and even philanthropy. MrBeast here aims to create a sense of community, making his viewers feel like active participants in his success.

This development of digital culture is representative of the broader shift with Web 2.0, that Beer and Burrows (Beer & Burrows, 2010) observe as a key moment in the rise of interaction and user-generated content. YouTube is singular in its structure that creators do, unlike other platforms like TikTok or Twitter, where shorter content formats encourage longer times of video time. According to Chen (Chen, 2013), YouTube provides a better choice of

"self-expression and self-presentation" which have a chance to develop personal branding and self-marketing.

Ryan Trahan

An new and emerging YouTuber versus an established one can have major differences, one has developed with the platform the other is navigating through it. That's why other than Mr.Beast or Pewdiepie, an emerging YouTuber can give us some dynamics that we have not seen in the established ones.

Ryan Trahan's ("Ryan Trahan," 2013) brand is built around storytelling, and relatable content. Particularly through his viral series like "Surviving on $0.01" ("I Survived On $0.01 For 30 Days," 2022) where he does social experiments. He consistently presents himself as approachable and genuine this is appearing to be a general trend among young Youtubers in general. Much like corporate brands, personal brands must be "simple, clear, and consistent" (Shepherd, 2005). Simplicity comes from his reliableness. Being relatable enough that viewers forget they're watching a YouTuber who is earning his income in on their attention. Ryan's brand plays perfectly into the modern consumer's craving for genuine connection. When it comes to personal branding, corporate branding practices originally developed for products and companies are applied to people. Product branding transforms into personal branding in this context. Personal branding thus becomes important to doing business (especially in the celebrity field) (Chen, 2013). The most successful mode of cultivating strength and uniqueness is relatability among successful youtubers. In personal branding, the individual is selling himself or herself as a companies marketing department. In Ryan Trahan's case, like with successful beauty vloggers, his persona becomes his business. His ability to attract sponsorships, monetize his content, and grow his audience is because he builds a strong personal brand. He feeds his followers so called genuine connection which in return gains him regular followers, which is then used later as capital to convert it into sponsorships.

In this context of YouTube, fan engagement is a crucial aspect of building and maintaining relationships between creators and their audience. This applies not only to beauty vloggers but also to the YouTubers that we have talked like MrBeast and Ryan Trahan, who have both mastered engagement strategies to grow their channels. As seen with beauty vloggers, fan engagement is the primary way to keep a personal dialogue going between creator and viewer,

creating a sense of intimacy and interaction that drives loyalty and growth (Sashi, 2012). For both MrBeast and Ryan Trahan, engaging with their fans plays a critical role in their success.

For both MrBeast and Ryan Trahan, the secret of their contact with their fandoms is in an individualized approach to content. They address their audiences just as if speaking directly to a friend; an approach that straightaway creates an emotional bond between creator and audience (Sashi, 2012). MrBeast often thanks his fans for everything, especially in milestone videos, either for reaching a certain amount of subscribers or showing off a new philanthropic effort. Framed as him "giving back" to the fans, these huge giveaways and charity on his behalf set them up as the reason he's been able to be successful. His open declaration, on an even deeper emotional level, makes the viewers feel appreciation for themselves and acknowledged for that fact; in this sense, Ryan Trahan does very much the same but on a far smaller scale, almost heartfelt and humbling as well, wherein his thank yous mostly talk about how they enable him to continue creating freely and remaining independent. Similar to the beauty bloggers, Ryan takes the time to thank his followers in such an humble and thoughtful manner that they understand his appreciation for their continued support means literally the world to him. The two creators after the beauty bloggers underscore that it is their followers who are their reason for success, which would enhance the effective commitment : Sashi 2012. Both are manifestations of a certain archetype on YouTube, examples of highly contrasting strategies around fan engagement, content creation, and personal branding that MrBeast's cemented status versus Ryan Trahan's up-and-coming career represents. Indeed, they take two different archetypes, one which fits current algorithm and crowd requirements on YouTube. As a leading figure on YouTube, MrBeast is the representation of the Hero archetype through his content and brand, which are based on grand achievements, philanthropy, and huge challenges. He builds his strategy around inspiring people and presenting himself as one who tries to solve impossible tasks for the benefit of others.

For both MrBeast and Ryan Trahan, the secret of their contact with their fandoms is in an individualized approach to content. They address their audiences just as if speaking directly to a friend; an approach that straightaway creates an emotional bond between creator and audience (Sashi, 2012). MrBeast often thanks his fans for everything, especially in milestone videos, either for reaching a certain amount of subscribers or showing off a new philanthropic effort. Framed as him "giving back" to the fans, these huge giveaways and charity on his behalf set them up as the reason he's been able to be successful. His open declaration, on an even

deeper emotional level, makes the viewers feel appreciation for themselves and acknowledged for that fact; in this sense, Ryan Trahan does very much the same but on a far smaller scale, almost heartfelt and humbling as well, wherein his thank yous mostly talk about how they enable him to continue creating freely and remaining independent. Similar to the beauty bloggers, Ryan takes the time to thank his followers in such an humble and thoughtful manner that they understand his appreciation for their continued support means literally the world to him. The two creators after the beauty bloggers underscore that it is their followers who are their reason for success, which would enhance the effective commitment : Sashi 2012. Both are manifestations of a certain archetype on YouTube, examples of highly contrasting strategies around fan engagement, content creation, and personal branding that MrBeast's cemented status versus Ryan Trahan's up-and-coming career represents. Indeed, they take two different archetypes, one which fits current algorithm and crowd requirements on YouTube. As a leading figure on YouTube, MrBeast is the representation of the Hero archetype through his content and brand, which are based on grand achievements, philanthropy, and huge challenges. He builds his strategy around inspiring people and presenting himself as one who tries to solve impossible tasks for the benefit of others.

From these datas, the most successful and most recurrent archetype on YouTube is the "Everyman/Everywoman" archetype. The most successful creators revolve around creators who present themselves as ordinary, authentic individuals, connecting with their audience by being approachable, relatable, and real. The Creator archetype comes alive with the idea that "if I can do it, so can you,"Creators with this archetype present themselves as real and imperfect, which makes them approachable. The tone is often casual, conversational, and intimate. It feels like the viewer is hanging out with a friend. Many YouTubers develop their success on simple, personal content reflecting everyday experiences: whether beauty tutorials, daily vlogs, or lifestyle advice on games and challenges. The "Everyman" archetype is dependent so much on stories, especially personal stories showing experiences shared with the audience. A sense of community is built within which viewers find themselves in the journey of the creator. Now, embracing such vulnerability is not quite as straightforward as it might seem. It is tempting to say that these YouTubers reject the polished, flawless persona of traditional media figures, opting instead for a raw, "authentic" image. However, this very embrace of imperfection becomes its own form of performance, no less staged than the polished personas they claim to reject. The Everyman/everywoman doesn't reject the role of the celebrity; rather, they redefine it by flipping the power dynamic. Vulnerability becomes the

new currency. Take Emma Chamberlain (Emma Chamberlain, 2016) for example. She cultivates an image of the awkward, disheveled teen, someone who seemingly stumbles through life just like her audience. However, this "awkward teen" persona has led to brand deals, product lines, and a lifestyle far removed from the average person she projects. Emma lives in luxury, hobnobbing with celebrities, attending exclusive fashion events, and running a lucrative business empire—all while maintaining the appearance of being the relatable, everyday girl next door. Similarly, PewDiePie (Pewdiepie,2010, who rose to fame through humble gaming videos, often engages in self-deprecating humor, positioning himself as just another guy on the internet. But in reality, he's an immensely wealthy multimillionaire, with influence that stretches across global media platforms. His vulnerability and open mistakes have endeared him to fans, but his financial standing puts him in a completely different stratum from the very viewers who find him relatable. This very performance of imperfection is what keeps his audience hooked, despite the fact that he now exists in a rarefied, elite space. In today's capitalist ecosystem, these YouTubers are not just content creators; they are brands, and their profitability is directly tied to maintaining a positive, inoffensive image. Inserting themselves into political or religious debates would introduce risk—risk to sponsorships, brand deals, ad revenue, and audience engagement. In order to maintain their income they have to be risk averse, work within the algorithm. They in-return turn into a filtered redacted version of a person. Youtube is a game where if the creators want to be successful most of the time they have to be relatable to the average guy/girl in order, even if they are multimillionaires.

Instagram and the Case of "Kim Kardashian"

Instagram started as a photo-sharing application where users could post images and follow others, interacting through "likes" and comments. However, in 2012, it was acquired by Facebook for $1 billion , thus marking the beginning of commercial changes and rapid growth that the platform witnessed. Later, Instagram expanded its features to include sharing short videos, which then became the groundwork for later innovations. One of the biggest evolutions came in 2016 with the launch of Instagram stories. With time, Instagram added more and more features. In 2020, they introduced "Reels" in an attempt to try to compete with TikTok. Businesses also found Instagram. They created the business profiles and the shopping feature, which made it easy for the brands and the influencers to sell their products directly on the application. This turned Instagram from a social platform into a major shopping and

marketing hub. Today, Instagram is not just a photo-sharing application. It has stories, live videos, Reels, messaging, and shopping. Creators or their more instagram appropriate name are highly influenced by Instagram's algorithms, which is difficult to avoid since the influencers mostly rely on the economic benefits they get from Instagram. In order to understand what is an instagram influencer or what is "trendy" on Instagram, we cannot separate the algorithm from the creator. Instagram's algorithm is designed to present the user with content that interests them, according to how they use the application. It functions a little differently depending on if the user is scrolling through the feed, stories, or reels, but the general idea is to make things addictive and engaging (Rusli, 2012). For the feed, Instagram shows the user posts from the people that the user is following, but also suggests content from accounts that the user may like based on what they have clicked on previously. It looks at things like what kind of posts they are possible to like, comment on, or share, as well as how popular the post is overall. When it comes to Stories, Instagram ranks them based on who's stories the user had watched the most and who they have interacted with. If someone always watches someone's stories or have replied to them before, their stories will appear closer to the front. Reels are more focused on keeping the user entertained, even if that means showing content from people they don't follow. As reels has a commercial side. This also benefits businesses and influencers. Since Reels can reach users who aren't following the account, it's a great way for brands to promote their products or services to a wider audience. Instagram's algorithm helps businesses by pushing their content to people who are "likely" to be interested, based on their previous data set. On Instagram, more than on YouTube, people often need to turn themselves into a sort of "celebrity" to catch the attention of people scrolling. These people have something in common beyond artistic talent: they become experts at using Instagram, engaging their audience, and focusing on a specific type of content. They constantly adapt to algorithm changes and learn how to optimize their posts so they reach more people. Over time, they build a personal brand or image that draws people in, making others want to follow them and see what they'll post next. To understand the influencer, and instagram we must analyze what is the "internet celebrity" (Abidin, 2018).

Social media platforms such as instagram have created new opportunities for both individuals and brands to expand their influence, increase visibility, and generate money. Fame was once a straight road through traditional media such as movies, television, or music has now been turned by the ability to build a personal brand online and turn it into a profitable business. These are the new "internet celebrity" or "influencers" but nowadays

internet celebrity cannot be pinpointed to one group. Many traditional celebrities who originally gained fame through established entertainment industries have seen the commercial value of digital platforms and have switched their focus to online spaces. These individuals used their fame but then started to talk with their audience more directly through social media.

Even brands have realized a way to get more reach through influencers and social media. Rather than just traditionally advertising through TV or print media, companies nowadays use influencers to promote their products. Traditional media outlets also moved with the times and adopted the social media stars into their fold. Most of the popular influencers these days get to guest in a number of television shows, movies, or even collaborate with other famous celebrities. What's more, influencers and internet celebrities also delve into the business aspect of their fame by releasing their own line of products. Beauty influencers (Franssen, 2015), for instance, release their own makeup or skincare products; fitness influencers sell workout plans, supplements, or athletic wear. Addison Rae's Item Beauty, Emma Chamberlain's Chamberlain Coffee, and so on. Indeed, as said, "10 Influencers Creating Their Own Companies" (2020), these influencers are not just promoting brands, they are becoming brands themselves.

Kim Kardashian's rise to global fame can be a case study in how traditional celebrity culture has evolved in the age of social media, especially platforms like Instagram. She is a perfect example of an internet-era celebrity who has skillfully navigated the digital platforms. Her family's reality TV show, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* (2007) (Umbraphile, 2007), made her initial fame. Reality TV is where her celebrity archetype begins to deviate from the traditional model. Unlike film or music stars, reality TV celebrities do not rely on a particular skill or talent to gain attention; they often rely on either their relatability or their radical personality.

As social media platforms like Instagram gained prominence in the early 2010s, Kim Kardashian quickly adapted, recognizing its possibilities for self-promotion and audience interaction. This transition was crucial to her development as the influencer archetype. Its most common ancestor from traditional media is, as we talked, the reality show.

In the old, conventional medial landscape, celebrities had been alienated from their audiences through publicists and agents, who controlled so much of what was revealed. Their image

managed through interviews, magazine covers, and red carpet appearances-and there was little access to their lives on a daily basis. The social media age changed that dynamic, offering that direct line into celebrities' personal lives. Kardashian saw in that shift an opportunity and became one of the first major celebrities to use Instagram not just as a promotional tool but as a means to build her brand. The visual nature of Instagram perfectly fit Kardashian's personal brand. Her feed was a curated gallery of her glamorous lifestyle, replete with photos of high-fashion outfits, luxury vacations, and peeks into her daily life. And unlike the much more professionally done photography of celebrities in traditional media, Kardashian's Instagrams felt more personal, an invitation into her life. The platform also afforded her control of the narrative. No longer was her image entirely the creation of reality TV producers. Kardashian could now present herself exactly as she wanted to be seen. This "self-curation" is one of the hallmarks of the influencer archetype, and Kardashian was among the first to perfect it. Whereas the origin of Kardashian's fame started from her presence in reality TV, her eventual use of social media platforms-most notably, Instagram-allowed her to morph that fame into a personal brand. Her first success monetizing her fame came with the release of her mobile app, Kim Kardashian: Hollywood, in 2014 (Spangler, 2024). The game was a huge success and grossed over $200 million in revenue in its first few years. The game involved helping a fictional character through a world of events and celebrity interactions to rise to fame, much like Kardashian's own rise in fame. The success of the game proved that Kardashian could monetize her public persona into a business that reached well beyond TV appearances and endorsements.

This set the stage for her next business ventures: the KKW Beauty line and SKIMS shapewear: On top of that various other brand collaborations. Each of these products capitalized on her influence on social media, where she could promote them to millions of loyal followers with a single post. Modern influencer equation is turning your followers into customers successfully. Influencers, like Kardashian, are not just people who are famous for being famous. They are businesspeople who use their platforms to generate income, often by partnering with brands or creating their own product lines. Kim Kardashian, could be one of the perfect example who embodies the archetype of the instagram influencer. Kardashian understood early on that social media offered a way to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and control her own narrative. Unlike traditional celebrities, who interacted with fans primarily through intermediaries like interviews or appearances, Kardashian built her brand on direct engagement with her audience. Kardashian’s ability to turn her visibility into revenue through

product endorsements, brand collaborations, and her own product lines is central to the influencer model. Over the years, Kardashian has shown a remarkable ability to adapt to changing trends in social media and marketing.

Kardashian's ability to turn her fame into a business empire has had a ripple effect on the influencer industry as a whole. In many ways, she represents the perfect synthesis of celebrity and commerce. She has created a model where personal branding and product marketing are one and the same. Every post, every outfit, and every product she promotes feeds into the larger Kim Kardashian brand.

This model has been embraced by countless other influencers, who now see Instagram and other social media platforms as tools for building their own businesses."Kardashian archetype: the idea that online fame can be monetized".

Bretman Rock

Bretman Rock is a beauty influencer and content creator who initially gained fame through the use of platforms such as Vine and YouTube. The perfect example of the new up-and-coming influencer, Bretman has blended humor and content creation to build his fame. Not so unlike Kim Kardashian, whose celebrity predated the medium and was built, to an extent, with traditional media outlets and reality TV, the rise of Bretman Rock is only on this platform and very precisely due to that: being able to converse with very specific communities because of the way in which he spoke of beauty and himself through humorous asides. The early makeup artist, small-content creator known as Bretman Rock created tutorials of beautiful tips joined by comic comments.

One of the most important aspects of Bretman Rock's internet fame is related to the feeling of community that he creates. While Kim Kardashian appeals to international audiences largely due to connotations of luxury and exclusivity, Bretman Rock's fame comes from appeal:. He is close to the "LGBTQ+" community as well as beauty enthusiasts who consider him a symbol of freedom of self-expression and identity. This affinity for niche communities is an identifying characteristic of many influencers in the growth phase on social media platforms. By not reaching out for the broadest appeal from inception, Bretman Rock benefits from his niches. Bretman has been able to grow an ardent fan base that is increasingly growing because of his capability to provide a sense of belongingness and representation to these communities. The

rise of influencers like Bretman Rock suggests a shift in the way internet fame is constructed. Unlike old celebrities whose fame is usually based on mass media channels and wide appeal, contemporary influencers often gain platform influence through specific groups of interest. This allows them to build a powerful and engaged following of fans before targeting a wider audience. In contrast to the social landscape of pictures of unattainable life and beauty, Bretman Rock stands out as one of the most raw influencers. He has not attempted to be or pretend anything apart from himself, many times deriding the beauty standards surrounding him, and does not take himself seriously. All of it resonates with his audience. This is crucial for growth influencers, considering that their younger audiences are particularly Gen Z, who prefer authenticity over the airbrushed perfection characteristic of social media influencer generations. The ability of Bretman to be humorous and even disorderly with his content helps him build a closer relationship with his followers who think they are seeing the "actual" Bretman Rock. Just like Kim Kardashian, Bretman has turned his online presence into business. He has teamed up with Morphe, one of the largest players within the beauty industry, for a makeup range in his name and has become the face man for various collaborations in fashion and beauty. However, what puts Bretman apart from more mainstream influencers is the approach he takes towards such business ventures. Bretman Rock also belongs to a class of "exotic\\ " (ABIDIN, 2018, p. 33) internet celebrity, at least regarding cultural background and identity. Being a Filipino-American, Bretman can bring his minority identity to the fore. His background is so inextricably enmeshed with his content that very often, he speaks about his heritage and the challenges he faced while growing up within such a culturally diverse but often underrepresented community. To most of his followers, particularly those coming from either marginalized or minority backgrounds, Bretman's success represents pseudo-social meaning. He does manage to bring this sort of exoticism into the equation that audiences probably would not otherwise see very often by managing to meld his cultural identity with his content. On the other hand, the intersectionality of his ability to navigate and represent a myriad of multiple identity categories further positions him as an emerging influencer, even more so at the crossroads of the dynamics existing nowadays within inclusivity, social justice, and authenticity. The Instagram archetype of the cyber celebrity-through figures like Kim Kardashian and budding influencers like Bretman Rock-fuses in one particular way the performance and perception that allow users to forge fame through various forms of capital: exclusivity, exoticism, exceptionalism, and everydayness.

Each of these qualities speaks to the different forms of capital that sociologist Pierre Bourdieu writes about: social, cultural, and economic (Abidin, 2018, p. 35), each carefully tacked through by influencers in making an image that speaks to their audience. In this Instagram archetype, exclusivity shines as an important form of capital, with audiences drawn by promises of wealth, luxury, and experiences in short supply.

This is most apparent in the lives of influencers that promote a high-end lifestyle, such as the "Rich Kids of Instagram" phenomenon ("Rich kids of Instagram," 2012). Influencers such as Kim Kardashian skillfully deploy exclusivity with images and video of her exclusive access to designer goods, vacations in mansions, and being part of exclusive social classes. Kardashian's posts often feature her private jets, multi-million-dollar homes, and designer wardrobe-all serving to glamorize a life that is about as unreachable as it is desirable to most of them. It is an optical feast for wealth in order to build a dream that engulfs the eyeballs. The exclusivity archetype calls to its followers through participation-not just envy or admiration-but in a world so far away from their own. In that sense, exoticism in the Instagram archetype is utilized by those influencers who use their cultural difference or unique aesthetic to find a way to differentiate oneself in such an over-saturated world. Apart from exclusivity, which is based on money and status, exoticism is based on cultural capital.

Bretman Rock is a social media celebrity who combines Filipino-American heritage with over-the-top personality and at least partially embodies the exoticism archetype. Being a queer Filipino male in the beauty industry defines him as an outlier, especially to viewers who might consider him from a culture or identity that is "victimized". His unapologetic embracing of his cultural background fuses with his humor and authenticity, making him exotic in the eyes of many viewers. A difference that would create interest and curiosity-on one hand, people of similar backgrounds will feel seen and visible, and for the rest, novelty is created. Finally, exceptionalism in the Instagram archetype is attributed to the influencers who present themselves as masters of some sort of craft and who are followed by their followers due to perceived exceptional skill or talent. In that respect, exceptionalism underlines unique personal features distinguishing an influencer from the average person, whereas exclusivity is based on lifestyle and material capital, and exoticism on cultural difference.
Whereas, emergent influencers are more skills about niches such as the current case in points of beauty and the art of creating content-exceptional in Bretman Rock. In these examples here, Kim Kardashian has no apparent skills that differentiate her other than through being an "own

parody." Everydayness for them all centers on stuff to do with routines, journeys on fitness, or home layouts showcasing their particular competencies of reflecting the day-in and day-out experience common for their audiences. That's the strength of everydayness: it's relatable, and people find themselves through the influencer. It connects emotionally more with influencers than the kind of influencer portraying an aspiration or unattainable way of living.

4. A Case For A New Way

What do “Creators” want?

One of the most talked challenges faced by content creators on platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram is the opaque nature of algorithms. Creators struggle to understand how and why their content performs well or poorly. “Participants desired the algorithm to be aware of the complexity and flexibility of their channel identity and understand them.” (Choi et al., 2023) (the research is based on Youtube, however not understanding the algorithm is a recurring theme in also TikTok and Instagram) Said the feedback section of the research called “Creator-friendly Algorithms: Behaviors, Challenges, and Design Opportunities in Algorithmic Platforms”. Adding, Participants find it challenging to provide the algorithm and platform their true identities since they are unsure of how the algorithm would identify them. A creator suggested an'algorithm test board' where creators can create their videos before uploading with the algorithm, to confirm whether it is an algorithm-friendly channel or not (Choi et al., 2023). The participants in general want to make objective and informed decisions based on concrete evidence. They agreed that they no longer wanted to depend on their assumptions when understanding algorithmic behavior. They envision a platform of the future where creators and viewers have insight into how content is being evaluated, promoted, or limited, creating an understanding and reducing the unpredictability of content performance. This would ideally create a space where creators feel supported, not only as participants in a market but as informed partners within the platform's ecosystem. Another recurring problem that creators point to in the feedback section is how the creators feel restricted by the metrics, mainly forced to do what the algorithm favors. This reduces originality or artistic quality, given views, interaction, likes, trends, clickbait, and so on. This makes the creator helpless to balance their own creative values against the need for them to create content that the platform will favor. Participants wanted the algorithm to support their experimental attempts, such as by guaranteeing high performance or returns stating "If creators upload a new type of content, I think the algorithm 'must' expose it in a separate section, such as the current 'Discover New' section". It, therefore, begs a lot of conflict for creators who feel they may "lose their identities" in the process of making algorithm-friendly content-as this places pressure on mathematical metrics on views, trends, and audience retention other than passion or artistry. Ultimately, creators seek recognition not only in terms of the performance metrics involved but also the effort and time invested in something meaningful.

The opaque nature of algorithms creates not only technical and creative challenges but also significant psychological stress. Creators often burn out trying to meet the expectations of an algorithm that is both unpredictable and uncommunicative. The study points out that the creators "express frustration about not being able to make the content they want or failure to focus on creating new, high-quality, or diverse content. The constant hassle of pleasing an invisible audience through an opaque system creates anxiety, burnout, and a lowering in quality of work. Besides, not knowing or controlling how their content is being sold can also make the creator alienate from their creative selves. The burden of "losing their own identities" in a situation of minding the algorithm versus keeping the creativity intact is one that creates perpetual fear in their minds (Choi et al., 2023). However, most creators in such a situation lose their creativity to the trend of algorithmic results and make what algorithms will show and end up losing their actual creative direction. There have been several proposals on addressing problems brought by the opaqueness of algorithms. The most frequent proposal put forward has been making the algorithm more transparent for the creators so that they may understand why such content ranks higher than others. However, the study also reveals that the move to make the algorithm more transparent has its effects. For example, creators might start making "similar content that optimizes for what the algorithm would prefer" (Choi et al., 2023). This worsens due to the lack of insight into the ranking of the content as the creators reported that "it is difficult to either quantify the subjective creative outcome or interpret reasons for performance," thus leaving them powerless and frustrated. The constant try to change content to get better performance may even make creators feel they are "abandoned by the algorithm," a feeling that disheartens them from continuing working. Further, the pressure on reduced, numeric measures like views and likes does not reflect the creativity and value placed on the work; hence many creators have reported that they were underpaid and cannot pursue their passion. This has seen some creators complain that the algorithm "distracts" them from focusing on their content, thus bringing about conflict between algorithmic success and maintaining artistic identity. As a result of this highly stressful environment, the creators have been advised that the platforms could alleviate such pressures if they provided more supportive, transparent, and collaborative algorithmic tools that enhance solidarity rather than competition.

A more promising path lies with making algorithmic feedback better by making it in a way supportive of creativity-for example, to allow creators increased detail on what kind of algorithms their content serves them, so as not to make them begin to game such a system

themselves. The ideas range from the introduction of qualitative reward systems considering creativity, complexity, and novelty of content, to rewards pegged to quantitative measures such as the number of views and likes. In this respect, creators will be rewarded not necessarily for their popularity but for the quality of work. Then there is also the possibility of creating "solidarity networks" among the creators themselves, where exchange of strategies, experiences, and support is possible. This can help reduce the psychological toll of algorithmic uncertainty. Building these networks would help offer a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation that many creators face, particularly early in their career when they struggle to get traction on platforms.

Early-stage creators "struggle with getting their channel on track or improving their work since they have less chance to be exposed to the public or get feedback" (Choi et al., 2023). Perhaps one such development is the inclusion of beta-viewers who would provide constructive feedback and support before the creators are fully launched to the broader platform audience. This allows the creators to get a better feel for how to work and strategize, without having the immediate pressures that come along with an algorithm-driven ecosystem.

Feedback Shaping

Platforms like LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram must balance objectives that satisfy diverse stakeholders such as consumers, creators, advertisers, and platform operators. In normal consumer-focused recommendation systems, models like collaborative filtering, matrix factorization, and deep learning aim to predict what content appeals most to users. These models analyze vast amounts of user data to show content recommendations that maximize clicks, views, or interactions. By tracking patterns of consumer engagement, they optimize for relevance and personalized experiences, thereby ensuring that users remain active and engaged on the platform. These consumer-centered approaches are great for platform activity, but that is onside of the story.

Developing similar models that prioritize creators requires a distinct approach because creators' needs and motivations diverge significantly from those of consumers. Creators are often driven by feedback, visibility, and opportunities for monetization, which directly impact their decision to continue producing content. This causes unique challenges in measuring how feedback motivates creation and ensuring that platform recommendations reflect both consumer and creator needs. Modeling for creators is less straightforward, as the relationship

between feedback and creation is not immediately measurable. While consumers' preferences and interactions can be observed through actions like likes, clicks, or comments, the creator's motivation is more complex and influenced by factors such as long-term engagement, content evolution, and audience development (Tu et al., 2019).

To address these, LinkedIn (Tu et al., 2019) tested which offered valuable insights but lacked the robustness needed for scalable, platform-wide implementation. This heuristic-based utility primarily relied on basic feedback indicators such as likes and shares to approximate the impact of consumer engagement on a creator's likelihood to produce more content. Early results from this heuristic model underscored the potential for supporting creators' needs, showing increased content creation among users. However, as platform environments evolve and content ecosystems become more complex, the limitations of a heuristic approach become evident. Creators' motivations are not uniform, and their responses to feedback vary widely based on their goals, content type, and audience.

The shift from consumer-only optimization toward a multi-objective framework introduces a creator-side utility based on feedback sensitivity, which measures how likely a creator is to produce more content with feedback. This feedback sensitivity metric reflects each creator's unique motivation and engagement with their audience, allowing for more tailored support. By integrating this creator utility into platform algorithms, LinkedIn and similar platforms can balance the value provided to both creators and consumers, creating a more good content ecosystem. This approach recognizes the interdependency between content creation and consumption acknowledging that content growth is essential for long-term engagement and platform sustainability.

LinkedIn's initial experiments with heuristic models showed the promise of this two different approach but also highlighted the need for more nuanced, data-driven methods. A model-based approach to feedback-driven creator utility offers several advantages over heuristic methods. It provides greater predictive accuracy by incorporating individual creator behavior, past feedback patterns, and engagement history. And it allows for a more adaptive system, where feedback sensitivity can be adjusted based on real-time data, knowing changes in creator engagement over time. Third, it enables platforms to make "fine-grained" optimization that can target creators at various stages of their journey from new creators looking to build an audience to established creators aiming to maintain engagement. This

adaptive, multi-objective approach is critical as social media platforms seek to foster a content-rich environment that serves a broad range of stakeholders while ensuring creators have the motivation and support to continue contributing actively.

Alternative Projects and Platforms

While the Commercial Platforms represent a dominant sector of the market, there does exist alternative models as sites of creative freedom. Alternative platforms resist this dominant model in that they highlight aspects of privacy, collective involvement, and non-commercial values.

"Face to Facebook" by Paolo Cirio and Alessandro Ludovico, is an important work of digital insentive, as it's an attempt of resistance against the commodification through platforms:. The project is to collect one million Facebook profiles, reappropriating them into a mock dating website in an effort to critically comment on the commodification of personal data use and try talking about the problem of privacy and consent in contemporary platform giants. This is quite an act of critical art which really shows that digital projects might challenge the ways in which the use of platforms exploits user data for profit. This project, by taking data from Facebook, has something to say against the classic storytelling of social media platforms as spaces of connection and creativity. Instead, it shows how they function as tools of surveillance and turn transitions into profit. The mock dating website http:// Lovely-Faces.com will be acting like a critique, forcing viewers to take a look at practices that are unethical, which classic big platforms do every day. This whole project tries to tell something about consent, personal data ownership, and the part played by technologies within modern societies. The current project directly collides with Big Tech by adopting Big Tech methods used for the purpose of the accumulation of digital personal data by it against them-perhaps expose possible privacy infringements and manipulation of personal data: a form of best-practice critique targeting current platform hegemonies.

Another example is the platform “Cara” ("Cara," n.d.) . It was created to protect artists from AI-generated art and data gathering. It gives importance to human creativity by blocking AI content and with hopes of a community focused on artistic integrity. Cara’s rejection of algorithm-driven visibility metrics creates a different environment without the pressures of

validation. Cara creates a safe and logically functional space for current artists to resist commodification by rejecting algorithmic system of ranking and selecting and AI saturation, offering a practical and privacy-focused platform for artist in contrast to mainstream platforms.

The Platform Cooperativism movement is another example, but it urges the development of cooperatively owned and democratically controlled digital platforms. Contrary to venture capital-driven corporate models, these would have another objective in mind, such as fairly paid working conditions, equally owned platform structure, and community-driven goals, ensuring a powerful alternative in the digitized economy. This movement addresses the structural issues of digital platforms, proposing models where users are stakeholders with decision-making power. By emphasizing different style governance and transparency, it opposes the profit-driven motives of traditional platforms. The movement emphasizes ownership and governance structures, promoting platforms that are collectively managed by their users rather than by corporations. It offers a structural alternative to how platforms are operated, focusing on equity and democratic participation.

Another such project is Project Anonymous. It allows for the place showing work freed from commercial rules and burdens. The fact that the users on this platform could post their artworks anonymously eliminates any pressure for branding from other people and provides time to explore newer ideas and ways. On one side, anonymity opens challenges of traditional views upon ownership and identity in art. This will create a very particular situation in which one can have completely unfiltered artistic expression. That is mainly what makes it so revolutionary: its refusal of mechanisms for external validation. An idea of likes and followers does not exist on the platform. Artists will share work without the normally expected norms of "success" established by other platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. It encourages being a risk-taker, gives room for experimentation, and it will result in a more vibrant, dynamic artistic community. The conventional model of artistic success, bound with personal branding, is taken out of the equation.

Finally, Platforms like Discord and Reddit is an emerging platform that is the least commercialized, for artistic collaboration and community building without the algorithmic pressures on platforms like Instagram or TikTok. On Discord, channels such as “Art Club”("Art club," n.d.) and “The Studio Lounge” ("studio lounge," n.d.) there are monthly creative

challenges and interactive events. They have real-time engagement. Some artist collaboration projects that are announced. On a similar logic, Reddit's subreddits like "r/Art" ("Art," n.d.) and "r/DigitalArt" ("Digital Art," n.d.) offer spaces for sharing work. They can get geniune feedback from viewers and other artists. More than that, there is a chance to engage in discussions under posts. These platforms function as repurposed spaces for artistic expression. This gives an environment of support creativity more than other platforms where engagement is usually is more of a priority in reddit because there are usually more people with usernames than real personas their end goal is not to promote themselves. Discord's real-time communication capabilities make it ideal for collaboration or co-operation on a project with a group of people at the same time. Reddit's discussion-based format gives chance of critiques. More people discuss and share useful resources frequently. Both platforms provide alternatives to algorithm-driven visibility logic. Unlike other platforms that are build with different set of goals such as Project Anonymous or Cara., these platforms are not built for the sake of resisting commodification, but instead repurposed by communities themselves.

The change that comes with the platformification of creative sector comes with it own set of advantages and disadvantages. Platforms in their nature have a paradoxical situation on the one hand there is a list of advantages but these advantages themselves are what being used to also create disadvantages. For example if we go over the advantages there is an always cost that it comes at. The promise of accessibility makes people think that anybody may present their work to a worldwide audience. Their location or financial status do not matter in this sense just an internet connection is enough. However, there is a darker side to this democratization. Because platforms use algorithms to maximize engagement Because these data that is engaged is immediately convert into advertising income. Exposure is determined by interaction metrics that doesn't get distributed in equally. As a result, creating art becomes a never-ending battle for recognition. Artists are required to follow trends, work hard for an algorithmic favor. The most sensational, divisive, or emotionally charged content is amplified by algorithms a feedback loop is created that you have to adapt. The logic is again the 1920s hollywood logic an artist cannot dictate what goes on in the platform.

Another advantage that is cannot be taken for granted is cost-effective distribution. Creators have the ability to avoid classic idea of the "art middlemen" by using platforms like YouTube, Spotify and Instagram, which lowers the cost of distributing their work near to zero. Another

video, another song, another picture creation process has nearly zero cost. The content creators or the artists don't win money from this zero marginal cost equation and they have to take actual costs of their projects while for example a youtuber spends more money to create content than youtube's expenditure on maintaining that video. Many artists now have a different business model to survive these platforms. Creators are increasingly using the platforms as tools to create a brand and create awareness , rather than depending on the platform as their main source of living income. Because of YouTube's monetization policy YouTubers want to become famous and visible through their material so they may use it to get sponsorships, brand partnerships, or sales of items rather than earning "views converted to money". Similar to this, Spotify musicians don't make a sustainable living on streaming royalties. Instead, they utilize the network as a marketing tool to attract followers, which then converts to revenue from item sales, live performances, and exclusive content.

One of the most interesting and loved features of digital platforms is the capacity to create and get immediate interaction with a community or a fan group. The demands of platform metrics and monetization strategies transform the connection between creators and audiences into a commodified transaction. Because they are motivated to keep people interested, creators sometimes act to act and do things in order to get interactions back. Platforms such as Reddit and Discord, flourish as venues for deeper, decentralized relationships. Because Reddit's subreddit structure gets outside of this commodification a little bit.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the shift in artistic production wrought by digital platforms and how, within this shifting context, artistic production was replaced by content creation. It has discussed the rise of the content creators and how content creators differ from artists. It also discussed blogging, YouTube, and the craft consumer movement to examine how digital tools foster self-expression. It does so by examining how artists and content providers interface with one another, the shifting consumptions in between the former, and positioning digital platforms to mediate the two. Check whether these digital platforms have changed how power is distributed yet do not fundamentally allow more democracy-check capitalism, algorithms, and guidelines set at the platform affect creators' abilities. Case studies of popular content creators such as MrBeast, Ryan Trahan, Kim Kardashian, and Bretman Rock were examined to look at personas of platforms. A key focus in this research was that of democratization. While anyone can create and publish anything on digital platforms, they at the same time control what people can see, and how artists are remunerated. The guidelines of the platforms define what is "good"; they are the ones to decide what will go viral. While digital platforms are seemingly open to all, they simultaneously constrain creativity on many levels. Creators forfeit creative agency in return for increased visibility by following the norms and trends of the platform. Another key theme in this thesis which relates to this is the controlling role of the platform regarding the content. Whereas once publishers, galleries, and studios decided upon what art ever saw the light of day, today digital platforms are the new middlemen. While they truly allow more to create content, they also fully control and call the shots as to what will be seen or monetized. Major tech firms make use of algorithms which determine what eventually comes up in people's feeds, decreasing the chance for smaller creators to make it big. This easily becomes an issue if the kind of content a creator makes does not fit into what the platform wants, and making money or reaching an audience becomes a problem. Basically, it is hard for them to build lasting careers in these digital spaces. These case studies represent how each creator has risen to these challenges differently: MrBeast through viral philanthropy, Ryan Trahan through stories, Kim Kardashian through social media brand building, and Bretman Rock through personality-driven content. These creators have proved that one needs strategy, adaptability, and business acumen to make it big on digital platforms. By doing so, they at the same time show the selectivity of fame-that only a few creators reach high levels of visibility or financial success. The future of digital creation is at the mercy of society's regard for artistic work. For the time being, success is measured through likes, views, and shares on

these platforms, none of which is a true determinant of quality or artistic merit. There needs to be more support for alternative platforms and creator-friendly policies that would allow digital artists to work in a sustainable manner. Platforms centered around collaboration, fair pay, and artistic freedom could create a better environment for content creators. This thesis thus contests the idea of digital platforms as empowering creators. Besides offering opportunities, they introduce new challenges. Understanding how capitalism, algorithms, and digital policies shape creativity is important. If we want a better future for online creators, we need to think beyond existing platform models and support systems that prioritize creativity and fairness. By doing so, the digital creative economy will evolve in a manner that is good for creators and audiences alike.

Looking ahead, the future of digital creativity depends on how society values artistic work. Right now, platforms measure success through likes, views, and shares, but these numbers do not always reflect quality or artistic worth. More support for alternative platforms and creator-friendly policies is needed to ensure that digital artists can work sustainably. Platforms that focus on collaboration, fair pay, and artistic freedom could create a better environment for content creators.

In conclusion, this thesis questions the idea that digital platforms truly empower creators. While they provide opportunities, they also introduce new challenges. Understanding how capitalism, algorithms, and digital policies shape creativity is important. If we want a better future for online creators, we must think beyond current platform models and support systems that prioritize creativity and fairness. By doing this, the digital creative economy can evolve in a way that benefits both creators and audiences.

Bibliography

1. *Ngai, E. W. T., Tao, S. S. C., & Moon, K. K. L. (2015). Advances in social media research: Past, present and future. Industrial Management & Data Systems, 115(5), 769–802. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-03-2015-0075*
2. *Ceulemans, P. (2012). The impact of technology on social behavior. Retrieved from https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/lib/thesis/2012/2012ceulemansp.pdf*
3. *Ki, C. W., Cuevas, L. M., Chong, S. M., & Lim, H. (2020). Influencer marketing: Social media influencers as human brands attaching to followers and yielding positive marketing results by fulfilling needs. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 55, 102133.*
4. *Google books Ngram viewer*. (2023). Google Books. https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=content+creator&year_start=1800&year_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3
5. *Google books Ngram viewer*. (2023). Google Books. https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=content+creator%2C+YouTuber%2C+blogger%2C+influencer&year_start=1800&year_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3
6. *Peres, R., Schreier, M., Schweidel, D. A., & Sorescu, A. (2023). The creator economy: An introduction and a call for scholarly research. SSRN Electronic Journal. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4663506*
7. *Saffo, P. (2009). Get ready for a new economic era. McKinsey Quarterly 26.*
8. - Arvidsson, A. (2018). Culture and economy in the age of social media. Routledge.
9. - Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste. Harvard University Press.
10. - Bruns, A. (2008). Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and beyond: From production to produsage. Peter Lang.
11. - Goffman, E. (1959). The presentation of self in everyday life. Anchor Books.
12. - Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide. NYU Press.

13. - Kozinets, R. V. (2019). Netnography: The essential guide to qualitative social media research (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

14. - Marshall, P. D. (2017). The celebrity persona pandemic. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 20(1), 99–109.

15. Williamson, C. (2021). *Twitch.tv and its LGBTQIA+ tag: A digital ethnography investigating how interactions between streamers and viewers contribute to community building* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=sociologydiss

16. - Schau, H. J., Muñiz, A. M., & Arnould, E. J. (2009). How brand community practices create value. Journal of Marketing, 73(5), 30–51.

17. - Terranova, T. (2000). Free labor: Producing culture for the digital economy. Social Text, 18(2), 33–58.

18. - Toffler, A. (1980). The third wave. Bantam Books.

19. - Arnould, E. J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer culture theory (CCT): Twenty years of research. Journal of Consumer Research, 31*(4), 868–882.

20. - Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste. Harvard University Press.

21. Greenberg, C. (1961). *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*. Beacon Press.

22. Tomkins, C. (1976). *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Penguin Books.

23. Source: Greenberg, C. (1939). Avant-Garde and Kitsch, Partisan Review.

24. "Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in group dynamics: Concept, method, and reality in social science; social equilibria and social change. *Human Relations, 1*(1), 5-41. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872674700100103"

25. “White, D. M. (1950). The “gatekeeper”: A case study in the selection of news. *Journalism Quarterly, 27*(4), 383–390. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905002700403”

26. Ateca-Amestoy, V., & Castiglione, C. (2023). Live and digital engagement with the visual arts. *Journal of Cultural Economics, 47*(4), 643–692. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-022-09466-3

27. *Prestige, popularity, and progress: A history of the Paris salon*. (2024, January 18). TheCollector. https://www.thecollector.com/history-of-paris-salon/

28. *the Motion Picture Production Code*. (1930). University of Missouri–St. Louis. https://www.umsl.edu/~gradyf/theory/1930code.pdf

29. *THE STUDIO SYSTEM 1920s – 1960s*. (n.d.). soma.sbcc.edu. https://soma.sbcc.edu/users/davega/xNON_ACTIVE_CLASSES/FILMST_101/10_STUDIO_ERA/THE_STUDIO_SYSTEM_GOLDERN_ERA.pdf

30. Barbara, S. (2023, July 5). *How did MTV change the music industry: A historical analysis*. Li2Net Green. https://www.greenlinnet.com/the-mtv-revolution-transforming-the-music-industry

31. - Bruns, A. (2008). Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and beyond: From production to produsage. Peter Lang.

32. - Bucher, T. (2012). Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook. New Media & Society, 14(7), 1164–1180.

33. - Cova, B., Kozinets, R. V., & Shankar, A. (2007). *Consumer tribes*. Routledge.

34. - Marshall, P. D. (2017). The celebrity persona pandemic. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 20(1), 99–109.

35. - Kozinets, R. V. (2019). *Netnography: The essential guide to qualitative social media research. Sage.

36. - Schau, H. J., Muñiz, A. M., & Arnould, E. J. (2009). How brand community practices create value. *Journal of Marketing, 73*(5), 30–51.

37. - Slot, M. (2013). *The Internet and Society*. Emerald Group Publishing.

38. Beer, D., & Burrows, R. (2010). Consumption, Prosumption and participatory web cultures. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *10*(1), 3-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540509354009
39. Rei-Anderson, C. (n.d.). Copyright, commodification and the structure of digital media economies: Independent Podcasting in context. https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.22961156
40. Castro, H., Alves, A. P., Serrao, C., & Caraway, B. (2010). A new paradigm for content producers. *IEEE Multimedia*, *17*(2), 90-93. https://doi.org/10.1109/mmul.2010.26
41. Giovanni De Gregorio & Catalina Goanta. (n.d.). *Content Monetization*. Yale Law School. https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/center/isp/documents/contentmonetization_ispessayseries_2023.pdf
42. Slot, M. (2013). The Extended Media Consumer Online media consumption, production and use in an age of participation. Erasmus University Rotterdam.
43. Iosifidis, P., & Wheeler, M. (2020). Modern political communication and Web 2.0 in representative democracies. *The Liquefaction of Publicness*, 110-118. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429450259-14
44. *Ranked Social Networks Worldwide*. (n.d.). Visual Capitalist. https://www.visualcapitalist.com/ranked-social-networks-worldwide-by-users/
45. Varoufakis, Y. (2023). *Technofeudalism: What killed capitalism*. Random House.
46. Wark, M. (2021). *Capital is dead: Is this something worse?* Verso Books.
47. Cobbe, J. (2019). Algorithmic censorship on social platforms: Power, legitimacy, and resistance. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3437304
48. Hödl, T., & Myrach, T. (2023). Content creators between platform control and user autonomy. *Business & Information*
49. Fourmentraux, J. (2006). Internet artworks, artists and computer programmers: Sharing the creative process. *Leonardo*, *39*(1), 44-50. https://doi.org/10.1162/002409406775452177

50. Riglietti, R. J. (2017). Project Anonymous: When Anonymity meets Artwork. *University of Rhode Island*.

51. Trefis Team. (2021, April 16). *How NIKEiD is helping Nike's push for greater profits*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2015/07/09/how-nikeid-is-helping-nikes-push-for-greater-profits/

52. Choi, Y., Kang, E. J., Lee, M. K., & Kim, J. (2023). Creator-friendly algorithms: Behaviors, challenges, and design opportunities in algorithmic platforms. *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, *32*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581386

53. Rosenblat, A., & Stark, L. (2016). Algorithmic Labor and Information Asymmetries: A Case Study of Uber's Drivers. *International Journal of Communication 10(2016), 3758–3784 1932–8036/20160005 , 1932803620160005*, 3758–3784.

54. Danaher, J. (2020). Freedom in an age of Algocracy. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Technology*, 249-272. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190851187.013.16

55. Blanke, T., & Pybus, J. (2020). The material conditions of platforms: Monopolization through decentralization. *Platform Studies Journal*, 12(3), 45–50.

56. Papa, V., & Ioannides, N. (2023). Platform affordances and algorithmic curation: Do they empower or disempower users' civic participation? *The Communication Review*, 17(2), 12–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2023.2186680

57. *The decline of DeviantArt*. (2024, November 11). Monday Bulletin - Weeky News and Insights. https://mondaybulletin.com/art/the-decline-of-deviantart

58. Franssen, E. (2015). Building brands on Youtube: Communication strategies of three successful beauty vloggers. Master Media Studies – Media & Business Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Erasmus University Rotterdam.

59. Cha, M., Kwak, H., Rodriguez, P., Ahn, Y. Y., & Moon, S. (2007). I tube, you tube,everybody tubes: analyzing the world's largest user generated content video system. IMC'07, 1-14.
60. Chau, C. (2010). YouTube as a participatory culture. New Directions for Youth Development,2010(128), 65-74.
61. Chen, C. P. (2013). Exploring personal branding on YouTube. Journal of Internet Commerce, 12(4), 332-347.
62. *DO WHAT YOU CAN'T*. (2017, March 7). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG7dSXcfVqE&t=157s
63. Turner, G. (2013). Understanding celebrity. London: Sage.
64. Tolson, A. (2010). A new authenticity? Communicative practices on YouTube. Critical Discourse Studies, 7(4), 277-289.
65. Shepherd, I. D. (2005). From cattle and coke to Charlie: Meeting the challenge of selfmarketing and personal branding. Journal of Marketing Management, 21(5-6), 589-606.
66. Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media.Management Decision, 50(2), 253-272.
67. *MrBeast*. (2012, February 20). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/@MrBeast
68. *Ryan Trahan*. (2013, October 27). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/@ryan
69. *I Survived On $0.01 For 30 Days*. (2022, June 1). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEqi3VVLYkg
70. *Emma Chamberlain*. (2016, June 14). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/@emmachamberlain
71. *Pewdiepie*. (2010, April 29). YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/@PewDiePie

72. Rusli, E. M. (2012, April 9). *Facebook buys Instagram for $1 billion*. DealBook. https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/facebook-buys-instagram-for-1-billion/
73. Abidin, C. (2018). Internet celebrity: Understanding fame online. Emerald Group Publishing
74. *10 Influencers Creating Their Own Companies*. (2020). Cloudflare. https://theinfluencermarketingfactory.com/10-influencers-creating-their-own-companies/
75. Umbraphile. (2007, October 14). Keeping up with the Kardashians (TV series 2007â??2021) â? 2.9 | Family, Reality-TV. IMDb. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1086761/
76. Spangler, T. (2024, January 4). 'Kim Kardashian: Hollywood' mobile game to shut down after almost 10 years — and generating hundreds of millions in revenue. Variety. https://variety.com/2024/digital/news/kim-kardashian-hollywood-game-shuts-down-1235861543/
77. *Rich kids of Instagram*. (2012, October 25). The Silhouette | McMaster University's Student Newspaper. https://thesil.ca/rich-kids-of-instagram/
78. *Q&A: How TikTok's 'black box' algorithm and design shape user behavior*. (2024, April 24). UW News. https://www.washington.edu/news/2024/04/24/tiktok-black-box-algorithm-and-design-user-behavior-recommendation/
79. Ionescu, C. G., & Licu, M. (2023). Are TikTok algorithms influencing users' self-perceived identities and personal values? A mini review. *Social Sciences*, *12*(8), 465. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12080465

80. Boeker, M., & Urman, A. (2022). An empirical investigation of personalization factors on TikTok. *Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3485447.3512102
81. Taylor, Samuel Hardman, and Mina Choi. (2022) An Initial Conceptualization of Algorithm Responsiveness: Comparing Perceptions ofAlgorithms Across Social Media Platforms. Social Media + Society 8: 20563051221144322.
82. Tu, Y., Lo, C., Yuan, Y., & Chatterjee, S. (2019). Feedback shaping. Proceedings of the 25th ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery & Data Mining, 2241-2250. https://doi.org/10.1145/3292500.3330764
83. *Art club. (n.d.). Discord. https://discord.com/servers/art-club-595738125595050024*
84. *Cara. (n.d.). cara.app. https://cara.app*
85. *The studio lounge. (n.d.). Discord. https://discord.com/servers/the-studio-lounge-805831366406438912*
86. *Face to Facebook*. (n.d.). Paolocirio. https://paolocirio.net/work/face-to-facebook/
87. *Vision & advantages*. (n.d.). Platform Cooperativism Consortium. https://platform.coop/about/vision-and-advantages/
88. *Digital Art*. (n.d.). Reddit. https://www.reddit.com/r/DigitalArt/