

THE STATE OF THE CREATOR ECONOMY

ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC, SOCIETAL, AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF YOUTUBE IN THE US IN 2020



ABOUT OXFORD ECONOMICS

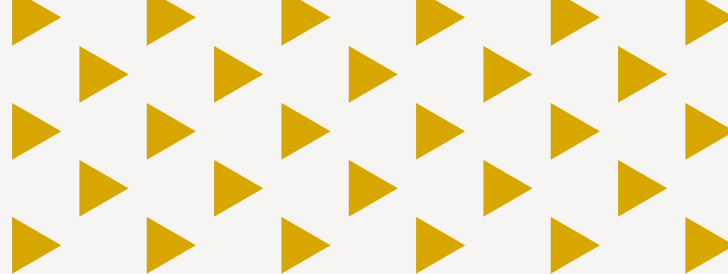
Oxford Economics was founded in 1981 as a commercial venture with Oxford University's business college to provide economic forecasting and modelling to UK companies and financial institutions expanding abroad. Since then, we have become one of the world's foremost independent global advisory firms, providing reports, forecasts, and analytical tools on more than 200 countries, 250 industrial sectors, and 7,000 cities and regions.

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highly skilled in a full range of research techniques and thought leadership capabilities from econometric modelling, scenario framing, and economic impact analysis to market surveys, case studies, expert panels, and web analytics.

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FOREWORD

SUPPORTING THE NATION THROUGH COVID-19

Americans have lived through some extremely challenging times over the past two years, as COVID-19 disrupted school, business, and home life. Against this backdrop, YouTube asked Oxford Economics to conduct an updated investigation of the platform's economic, societal, and cultural impact in the US.

Building on our rich history of researching, measuring, and communicating the impact of technological change, we worked with YouTube to evaluate the support it provided to users, creators, and businesses during the pandemic-affected year of 2020.

The overarching message of this report is one of resilience by a diverse set of American creators, businesses, and users who use YouTube to connect across the US and the world. It shows the value that YouTube brings as a resource for learning, entertainment, and information as the country emerges from this dark episode.

Andrew P Goodwin

Director of Applied Economics
Oxford Economics



TECHNOLOGY INFORMING CULTURE

“I think of YouTube as part of an innovation ecosystem, ...a video watering hole that we all gather around to look at the reflection, sometimes of ourselves, and sometimes of other things that we’re interested in. So what YouTube did is it brought the moving visual and made it a revolutionary change comparable to the invention of modern newspapers at the turn of the century. We’re now in the process of folding this technology into our culture, and the more advanced the technology, the more opportunities it presents, and it’s really up to us as individuals, as communities, and as a society to decide how we want to use those platforms.”

— Paul Saffo, Futurist and Consulting Adjunct Professor, Stanford University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

YOUTUBE'S IMPACT IN THE US

Every day, YouTube helps Americans start new businesses, learn new skills, and enrich their lives. Creators use YouTube to share their talents and passions, whether that is making music, cooking food, sewing, or cutting and styling hair. YouTube provides economic, societal, and cultural benefits for Americans at home and abroad.

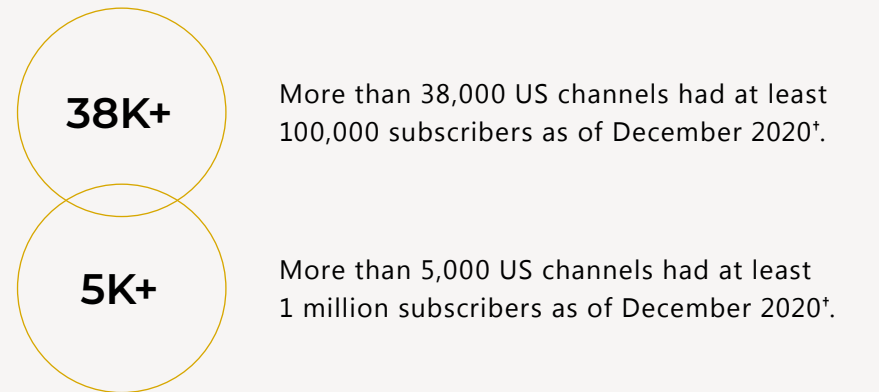


[†] Source: YouTube data as of Dec 30, 2020.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION



A PLATFORM FOR CREATORS



A WEALTH OF BENEFITS



ECONOMIC IMPACT

In the US, creators generate revenue locally and overseas through YouTube, supporting a broad range of American businesses and workers—from production companies to restaurant workers and retail store associates.

Individuals use YouTube as a springboard to learn new job-related skills and advance their careers.

Businesses use YouTube to build vital connections to customers, uncover new growth opportunities, and train staff members.



SOCIETAL IMPACT

Americans look to YouTube for information and educational resources, as a platform to enrich their learning.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many users in the US turned to YouTube for help sustaining their businesses and adjusting to new social norms.



CULTURAL IMPACT

People use YouTube to discover new music, arts, and entertainment.

American creators use YouTube to share content with audiences around the world.

The platform provides the opportunity for anyone to start a channel, which helps diverse and undiscovered talent thrive, both in the US and abroad.

INTRODUCTION

THE CREATOR ECONOMY

YouTube supports an ecosystem of creators who earn revenues both on and off the YouTube platform. This ecosystem also encompasses creators' employees, as well as businesses and freelancers in their supply chains that earn a substantial portion of their revenue from creators.

WIDE-RANGING IMPACTS

YouTube lets creators come together to empower their communities, teach others, and turn their skills into successful businesses. The platform enables Americans, from farmers to financial planners, woodworkers and even media companies, to reach audiences around the world, providing a solid base on which to thrive and grow. This sustains jobs and income within

the creative ecosystem and economic activity that reaches far outside of the YouTube platform.

YouTube's creative ecosystem contributed \$20.5 billion to the American economy and supported 394,000 jobs in 2020 (up 23% and 14% from 2019, respectively). That economic impact shows up in four ways: **direct**, **indirect**, **induced**, and **catalytic**.

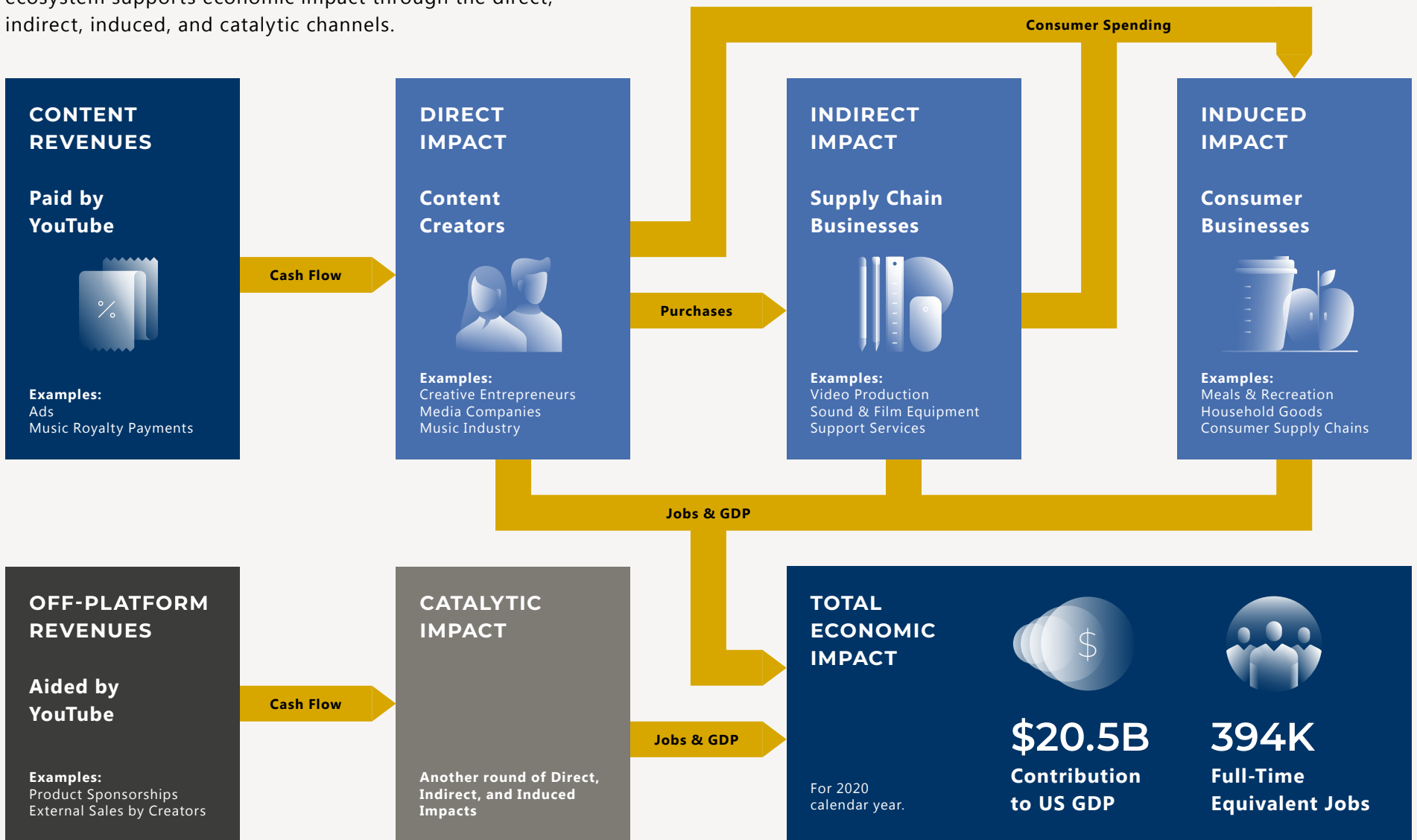
YouTube enables American content creators to reach a large domestic and international audience. This supports substantial economic value for creators who receive income from the platform, for example as they are paid a share of the revenues from advertising placed alongside their videos. YouTube's **direct economic impact** incorporates the GDP and jobs this income supports amongst creators.

In producing content for YouTube, creators spend money on goods and services in their supply chains, which also stimulates an **indirect economic impact**. In turn, creators and workers employed in YouTube's creative ecosystem or its supply chain go on to spend their earnings. This activity generates a further **induced economic impact**.

YouTube creators also earn revenues from other sources that are helped by their YouTube presence, including product sales, brand partnerships, or live performance engagements. These "off-platform" revenues have a **catalytic impact** on the economy, stimulating further direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

This flowchart is a visualization of how YouTube's creative ecosystem supports economic impact through the direct, indirect, induced, and catalytic channels.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

THE HOME OF CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

Creative entrepreneurs, as defined in our study, are YouTube creators with at least 10,000 subscribers to their largest channel, or those with fewer subscribers who either earn money directly from YouTube, earn other income helped by their YouTube presence, or permanently employ others in support of their YouTube activities.

SUSTAINING CAREERS IN CREATIVITY

Through the YouTube platform, creative entrepreneurs have the opportunity to share their ideas and access free resources and infrastructure to support growth. Ultimately, that growth can turn people with ideas into thriving business owners, generating income on and off the YouTube platform through things like revenue sharing, branding opportunities, and merchandise sales.



“YouTube has opened up doors that I wouldn't have been capable of having in my life.”

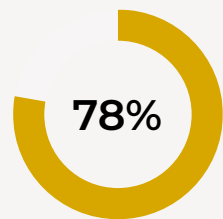
— Creator, 18-24, AZ, 500K+ Subscribers

“YouTube has helped me to work when I want and where I want. I love it here!”

— Creator, Female, 25-34, MD, 10K+ Subscribers

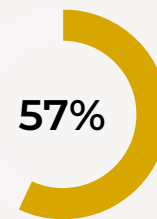
“Without YouTube, I would not have been put into a space where other companies could find me and book my talents. I now have a show on Netflix thanks to the exposure from my YouTube channel.”

— Creator, Male, 35-44, CT, 1M+ Subscribers



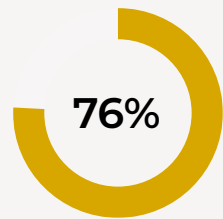
CAREER DEVELOPMENT

78% of creative entrepreneurs said YouTube has had a positive impact on their professional goals.



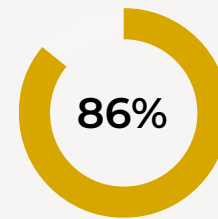
ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

57% of creative entrepreneurs indicated that YouTube had brought them additional opportunities away from the platform.



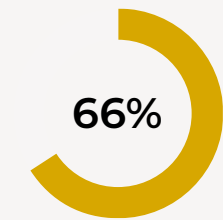
CREATIVE FREEDOM

76% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube gives them the opportunity to work in a way that suits their needs.



A STANDARD OF QUALITY

86% of creators agreed they feel a strong commitment to produce high-quality content.



A SELF-SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

66% of creators with more than 50,000 subscribers to their most popular channel agreed that they can live in the US and build a self-sustainable business on YouTube.



OPENING DOORS

60% of creators agreed that YouTube provides an opportunity to create content and earn money that they would not get from traditional media.

 / [His & Her Money](#)

BUILDING GENERATIONAL WEALTH TOGETHER

Once high-school sweethearts, Talaat and Tai McNeely started their life together with substantial debt. They had worked hard together to change that—raising three children in the process—and they wanted to share their experience in hope that it might help others. So the couple launched a YouTube channel.

The channel was a quick success, earning them \$6,000 the first year to \$30,000 the second. Today their business brings in over half a million dollars annually, and YouTube is a primary source of that revenue. Beyond the monetary success, Talaat and Tai are humbled by the messages they receive from viewers all over the world. Some celebrate how they have increased Black representation in the financial literacy industry, other viewers say the channel has helped them to realize their own

financial freedom. Some even write to share that His and Her Money has helped to save their marriage.

Talaat and Tai now frequently speak at conferences, offer financial courses, and an ebook, but they still credit YouTube as the driving force in building their company and achieving their goals, while helping countless others to do the same.



“We’re an African American family and we didn’t see a lot of people like us in the financial literacy business. We’ve been able to change people’s lives, change people’s marriages, and serve in a way that we would not have been able to without YouTube.”

— Talaat & Tai McNeely, Chicago, IL

 / [April Wilkerson](#)

THE SELF-TAUGHT CRAFTSWOMAN

When April Wilkerson could not afford the furniture she wanted, she picked up her first tool and got to work. She fell in love with woodworking instantly and was soon uploading DIY tutorials to YouTube. Her step-by-step instructional approach made her channel a favorite in the space and eventually she became a full-time YouTube creator.

April now has seven full-time employees and sells woodworking plans and merchandise online. She bought a shop called The Wood Shed as an event space for woodworking, milling, and workshops, as well as retail sales and distribution. She is also the co-host of a new show on the History channel alongside Tim Allen and Richard Karn. Nonetheless, April and her team attribute around 80% of her revenue to YouTube, directly or indirectly.

In addition to building a thriving business, April enjoys inspiring others with no experience in the industry to pursue their passion, especially young girls and boys. Parents often send April pictures of projects they are working on with their kids, and young boys and girls often approach her at live events to share how her videos encouraged them to pick up their first tool and try their hand at the craft.



“My YouTube channel is the economic backbone and foundation of my business. YouTube took me from a hobbyist to a full-time maker with three wildly successful businesses, seven full-time employees, and a TV show!”

— April Wilkerson, Austin, TX

ECONOMIC IMPACT

EMPOWERING BUSINESSES TO GROW

YOUTUBE GIVES SMALL BUSINESSES A BIG BOOST

Owners of businesses of all sizes use YouTube to reach a wider audience and share their creative passions. Quality content that informs, educates, and entertains lets them build an organic audience that they can then convert to customers, while paid advertising gives them higher visibility to potential customers on the domestic and international level. On the flip side, consumers are able to seek out that same content and, rather than just reading reviews of products or services, they can see them in action and hear directly from the business owner, saving themselves time, energy, and money.



“It has made our business strategies more creative.”

— Business, Media & Entertainment, CA

“YouTube ads increased our company publicity all around the world.”

— Business, IT & Telecoms, TX

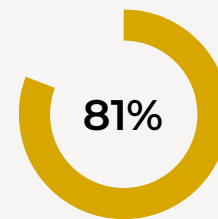
“YouTube is one of the best assistants for growth. Also, it is being underutilized by most companies and it could save them money.”

— Business, Healthcare, MN



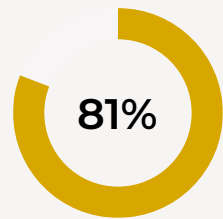
PROMPTING GROWTH

80% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube has helped them to grow their customer base.



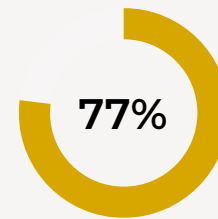
MAKING IMPRESSIONS

81% of small and medium businesses who advertise on YouTube agreed that YouTube ads have helped them grow sales.



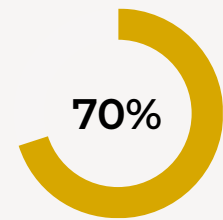
A TOOL FOR TRAINING

81% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that it is a convenient and cost-effective way of providing staff training.



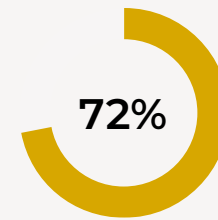
IMPROVED VISIBILITY

77% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that being on YouTube helps customers to find them.



CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

70% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that it helps them to better understand their customers.



A STRATEGIC PARTNER

72% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube has been a strategic partner in driving business growth.

 / [Chris Bossio](#)

THE GLOBAL BARBER

When Chris Bossio opened his first Headlines barber shop in Tampa, Florida, the aftermath of the 2008 recession resulted in a slow start for the business. Chris spent downtime teaching new techniques to other barbers in his shop. His business partner suggested he create a YouTube channel, and his very first video connected with thousands of viewers who also wanted to learn barbering skills. That is when things started to change.

Headlines began to see an uptick in business, as each new video brought more views and subscribers, which led to more customers at the barbershop.

In less than five years, Chris was able to expand with seven additional Headlines shops, and more than 70 barbers turning out 3,500 cuts a week. He also manages a line of hair care products called Tomb45. When the COVID-19 pandemic

threatened small businesses around the world, Chris says his YouTube channel and customers from his channel were instrumental in helping him keep the lights on. He also still regularly uploads tutorials to his YouTube channel, for his hundreds of thousands of subscribers. Chris credits the fans and followers he has amassed through YouTube for still filling the chairs of his shops all over town today.



“My business partners said we have to get you on YouTube to get your reach beyond these four walls. Our YouTube subscribers started becoming our clients. YouTube took us from a local barber shop to a global brand in just over five years.”

— Chris Bossio, Tampa, FL

 / [Millennial Farmer](#)

TRADITIONAL FARMING, MODERN PLATFORM

Zach Johnson knew he would have to adapt to thrive in a farming industry that was completely different from the one his ancestors experienced more than 150 years ago. He saw a huge disconnect between farmers and consumers, and widespread misinformation about farming practices. Zach was thus inspired to start a YouTube channel to address both.

He posted about everyday farming experiences, discussing important issues and helping people better understand where their food comes from. His easy going style instantly resonated with viewers and other farmers.

When Zach got his first revenue check for \$92, he was thrilled. Now, almost five years later, he has more than 800,000 subscribers and his YouTube channel brings in up to five times the revenue of his crops. Zach works with sponsors,

hosts two podcasts, and speaks at events. He also recently raised more than \$65,000 to train first responders on how to help keep farmers safe.

Zach admits that farming is not always seen as a glorious job, but he is reaching and inspiring an entirely new audience through YouTube. Most importantly, he is securing the future of his family's farm for the next generation.



“When I started this, I had no idea that actually making money on YouTube would ever be a thing for me. We ended up making more money through YouTube than through the actual farm. Biggest shocker of my life.”

— Zach Johnson, Lowry, MN

CULTURAL IMPACT

ENRICHING CULTURES & COMMUNITIES

CREATING CONNECTIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD

YouTube provides a vehicle for local creators to reach international audiences, and for Americans overseas to stay connected with what is happening at home. The platform also helps surface American culture across the country, with open access to content produced by local creators. YouTube helps Americans from all backgrounds and walks of life to preserve and celebrate their heritage, share the richness of their culture, and build thriving businesses based on their skills and passions.



“YouTube has helped me in many aspects of my life. I watch it daily. It provides entertainment, relaxation, humor, knowledge, and skills.”

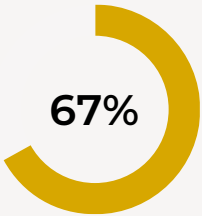
— Female, 55-64, New Orleans-Metairie, LA

“YouTube is the future of media consumption, learning, and more. I feel like an investor when making content for YouTube.”

— Creator, Male, 45-54, OH, 50K+ Subscribers

“The only real social media platform you can earn income from. YouTube allows me to express my creativity and be able to help the local community with what I do.”

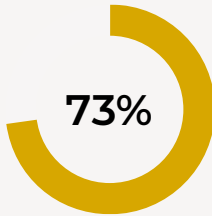
— Creator, Male, 25-34, FL, 10K+ Subscribers



67%

IMPROVING SEARCHABILITY


67% of users agree that they can easily find American content on YouTube.



73%

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

73% of creators who, on average, spend ≥ 35 hours per week on their channel agreed that the YouTube community encourages them to create “diverse and innovative” content.



80%

EXPANDING REACH

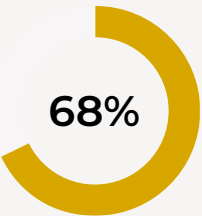
80% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube helps them share their content to international audiences they would not otherwise have access to.



68%

BUILDING A BROAD COMMUNITY

68% of creators agreed that YouTube helps them build an international community they normally would not have access to.



68%

CREATING OPPORTUNITY

68% of music, media, and entertainment companies with a YouTube channel agreed that the platform is essential for breaking undiscovered artists.



78%

REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

78% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube helps them reach new audiences across the world.



DEMOCRATIZING CREATIVITY

“This democratization of not just distribution but creation is not just the rising tide, it is a tidal wave growing for the last five years and we’re just beginning now to see what that implies. I think it’s going to further unbundle and enable a whole new class of content creators that are even further removed from our generation of singer-songwriters playing in Greenwich Village in a smoky club hoping to run into a [label executive].”

— Larry Miller, Director of Music Business Program at NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development



 / [Supaman](#)

SHARING APSÁALOOKE CULTURE THROUGH MUSIC

Growing up, hip hop was a major influence in Supaman's life. He started writing songs and rapping to tell his Apsáalooke culture's stories from his own perspective. The first time he performed hip hop lyrics in traditional dance attire, the audience loved it. An elder told him, "You showed that you were proud to be Native and [the young people] listened because you were speaking their language. That's powerful. Keep doing that." The look became his signature.

Supaman says that his tribe's language and traditions are slowly being eroded, generation by generation. That is why he took his message to YouTube, to reach young people in his community and across the world, spreading a positive message and educating kids on the richness of Apsáalooke culture.

Now with over 10 million views, Supaman credits his YouTube channel with at least 60% of his bookings and 50% of his revenue, directly or indirectly. The reach of his channel has helped him to spread his message, promote other Native artists, and even create a scholarship fund through merchandise sales. Most of all, he says, it has allowed him to provide for his family and to become an activist and advocate for his community.

"YouTube has helped me become an activist for my community. Through the platform I'm not only able to promote myself, but other Native artists. The most meaningful thing I do is knowing my music is impacting people in a positive way."

— Supaman, Billings, MT



SOCIETAL IMPACT

A RESOURCE FOR BUILDING NEW SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES

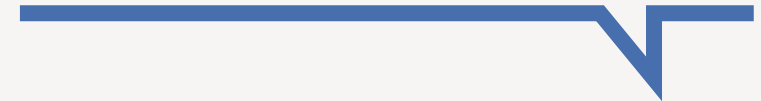
A PLATFORM FOR LEARNING

Parents, students, and teachers recognize the educational benefits of YouTube—in the classroom and beyond. Adult learners also see YouTube as a useful resource for building on their formal education, gaining new skills, and expanding their knowledge. When the COVID-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented changes, many Americans turned to YouTube to stay connected, informed, and entertained.



"YouTube has been very helpful to me in learning how to do something I otherwise wouldn't have the confidence to try."

— Female, 18-24, AL



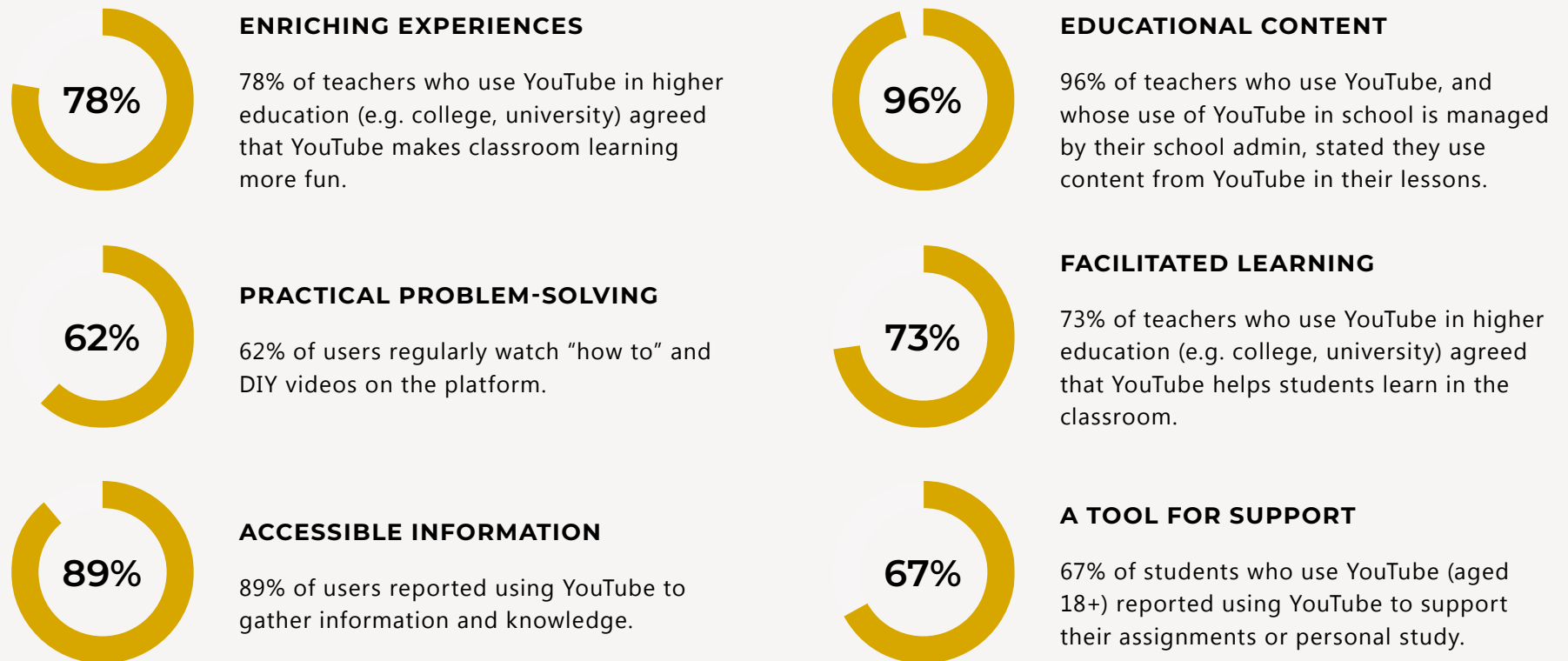
"YouTube has taught me many things from tutorials to educational videos."

— Female, 25-34, Winston-Salem, NC



“It is one of the best sources to get [relevant] information. For me, it is an essential educational platform and all of this is for free. I think it is irreplaceable.”

— Male, 25-34, Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA



 / [Mimi G Style](#)

SEWING UP A MILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESS

When Mimi was 12 years old, her aunt taught her to sew. Later, struggling to support herself as a young mother while dealing with homelessness, sewing became an outlet and a necessity. She built a community through a blog, then started posting instructional sewing videos to YouTube. Within a year, Mimi had over 100,000 subscribers and soon launched a subscription-based online school—Sew It! Academy. She kept class costs low to be accessible to as many students as possible.

Mimi now has six employees, over 30,000 Sew It! Academy monthly subscribers, a fabric company, and licensing deals bringing in more than \$1 million a year in revenue. She says YouTube accounts for 15-20% of that directly and another 30-40% indirectly. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, her business continued to grow and empower others in 2020. Subscribers

used her tutorials to make masks for themselves and frontline workers. Some used sewing as a short-term income. A former police officer who was injured on the job turned to Sew It! Academy and now owns her own clothing label.

While Mimi is proud of her businesses, the biggest reward has been helping others support themselves in difficult times—just as her aunt did for her.



“YouTube opened up so many doors that I never would have been able to open on my own. I never imagined myself helping so many people create a new business or get past their own traumatic experiences using sewing.”

— Mimi G, Atlanta, GA

 / [See Jane Drill](#)

EMPOWERING DIY-ERS AT EVERY LEVEL

Leah Bolden has always loved working with her hands. When she began a career in construction, she faced discrimination from male coworkers, but never let it deter her. After decades on the job, Leah pivoted to teaching, and eventually posted her first videos on YouTube—tips on plumbing, electrical, and other common home repairs.

Initially, her goal was simply to create free videos that everyone could understand and feel empowered to replicate. In 2015, a video of tricks for using a tape measure went viral, quickly racking up over 18 million views. That is when Leah realized what a powerful tool YouTube could be.

Today, Leah is a full-time YouTube creator with nearly 1 million subscribers, sponsorships, and a new line of branded tools in the works. She attributes over

65% of her income to YouTube. But the most rewarding thing is regularly hearing from subscribers who say her videos have empowered them to do their own repairs, which they otherwise simply could not have afforded to source out. Others say her videos have helped them excel in their apprenticeships or jobs. Leah says that knowing her work is helping so many others is what makes it special.



“YouTube enabled me to go from posting educational tutorials to becoming a full-time creator impacting people around the world. It has enabled me to stay employed as I’ve gotten older while empowering other people to take care of their homes.”

— Leah Bolden, Cleveland Heights, OH

SOCIETAL IMPACT

A PLACE TO BELONG

CONNECTION FOR ALL

The word “community” can mean many things. YouTube’s creator community helps people all across the globe to connect with others with similar values, interests, and passions. This is especially important for people who may feel underrepresented or disconnected in the places they live. The YouTube platform helps to promote change by giving community members a place to engage, inform, raise awareness, and share information and experiences.



“It helps me to connect with others around the world with similar interests.”

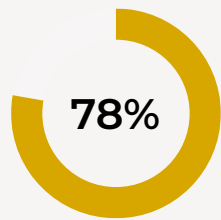
— Male, 45-54, Washington, DC

“It has just been there for me when I didn’t have anything else.”

— Non-Binary, 18-24, Kodiak, AK

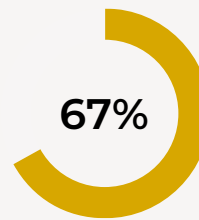
“Being a full-time YouTuber has allowed me to amplify a positive message in a niche community I am growing in.”

— Creator, Male, 35-44, TX, 50K+ Subscribers



CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY

78% of YouTube creators with more than 1K+ subs to their most popular channel said their role has positively impacted their relationships in the communities they identify with.



HOME TO DIVERSITY

67% of users agreed that YouTube is home to diverse content.



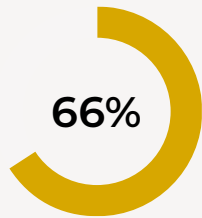
CREATING FOR A CAUSE

63% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube has increased their ability to influence the causes they care about.



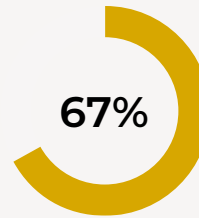
AN OPEN PLATFORM FOR ALL

US users were most positive about the fact that YouTube is an open platform where anyone can upload content (when asked about various aspects of YouTube).



PROMOTING VOICES

66% of female creators agreed that YouTube gives underrepresented voices a platform.



A PLACE TO BELONG

67% of creators who earn personal or business income related to their YouTube presence feel they have a place to belong as a YouTube creator.

 / [Made With Lau](#)

CELEBRATING FAMILY HERITAGE THROUGH FOOD

When Randy Lau's business was shuttered by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, he and his wife worried about how they would afford to continue living in the Bay Area with a baby on the way. Randy decided he could put his engineering degree and tech background to use while home, filming his dad—Chung—making his favorite Chinese recipes.

After filming a few videos with his dad, Randy officially launched their channel, Made With Lau, in September of 2020. On November 15, Randy was notified that they were eligible to monetize the channel, and the next day he was elated to earn \$3.57. By March 2021, Made With Lau was earning around \$10,000 a month. Today, the family earns around 60-75% of their monthly income through the YouTube channel. Randy hired a translator to help with subtitles and an editor to produce more content.

The family is talking with publishers about creating their first cookbook.

Of all the things Randy has done in his career, he says this feels like the most successful and fulfilling. Not only are the Laus building a successful business, they are growing closer together and preserving their family's culture in the process.



“It's a way for me to make sure our Chinese traditions aren't lost forever, while celebrating my parents and thanking them for everything they've done. YouTube has allowed us to deepen our relationship as a family, and our relationship has never been stronger.”

— Randy Lau, Concord, CA

 / [101Rabbits](#)

FURRY FRIENDS LEAD TO A THRIVING BUSINESS

Haley Elmhurst was 12 when she got her first rabbit. She learned how to care for them and eventually started a YouTube channel to share what she had learned. She named it 101Rabbits. At first, it became her escape.

Diagnosed with a variety of conditions at a young age, Haley struggled to socialize and make friends and after graduating from school, she was not able to work a traditional job.

However, her channel's success soon allowed her to create a career working mostly from home, where she feels most comfortable. She has since opened an online store for rabbit toys and products, and later a brick-and-mortar location. She now manages five part-time employees, and partners with local rabbit rescues to provide foster rooms and safe homes.

Today, 101Rabbits brings in almost half a million in annual revenue. Haley attributes more than one-third of 101Rabbits' website traffic and 60% of in-store revenue to YouTube, directly or indirectly. But more than a successful business, 101Rabbits has become an avenue for Haley to connect with others with the same or similar conditions, as they inspire and encourage each other to find hope rather than doubt.



“I didn’t want to go on disability or be held back in my career just because of [my disability, POTS]. Through YouTube, I was able to make a lot of friends that I wouldn’t have otherwise and I have an income that can support me full-time.”

— Haley Elmhurst, Stevens Point, WI

SOCIETAL IMPACT

HELPFULNESS DURING COVID-19

WEATHERING AN UNPRECEDENTED STORM

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, no one was exempt. Beyond the physical and financial impacts experienced around the world, the emotional and psychological ramifications were devastating. During this time, YouTube enabled creators to sustain their businesses, or to start a new business when their previous source of income was interrupted or cut off completely. YouTube also continued to serve as a place for people to connect in new ways and for users to access authoritative news sources, discover relevant information and inform or enhance their own lives.



“It has improved my mental well-being over this pandemic.”

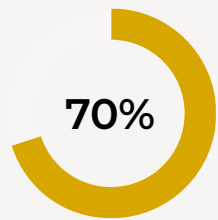
— Non-Binary, 18-24, Winston-Salem, NC

“YouTube is extremely entertaining, especially during the COVID-19 times, also very educational on ‘how to do’ or repair questions.”

— Female, 65-74, Memphis, TN

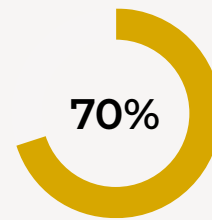
“I love YouTube, and since the last year has been difficult for all, I am grateful for YouTube helping me get through.”

— Male, 55-64, Bloomington, IN



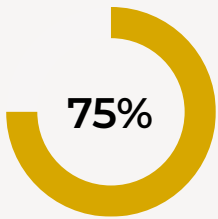
A HELPFUL RESOURCE

70% of users agreed that YouTube has been helpful since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



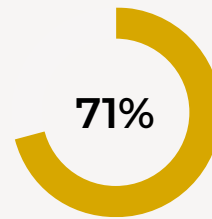
CREATORS HELPING OTHERS

70% of creators agreed that they have used YouTube to help others as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



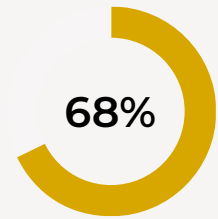
SUPPORTING WELL-BEING

75% of users who are positive about YouTube’s impact on personal well-being agreed that it’s had a positive impact on their mental or physical health since the COVID-19 pandemic began.



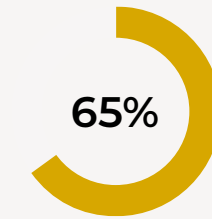
ADAPTING TO NEW NORMS

71% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that its use during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped their organization adapt.



INCREASING REACH

68% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that its use during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped their organization reach new customers or audiences.



SUSTAINING BUSINESS

65% of small and medium businesses who use YouTube agreed that it has helped them sustain their business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

 / [The Psych Show](#)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES, BECOMING A RESOURCE

Growing up, Dr. Ali Mattu suffered from such terrible anxiety that he did not speak to anyone outside the home. He would later discover that his condition had a name: selective mutism. At the time, Dr. Mattu coped by spending as much time as possible with his big brother, who always made him feel at ease. That compassion inspired him to pursue a career in clinical psychology, to help others the way his brother helped him. In 2008, his brother died by suicide. Dr. Mattu wanted to honor his brother's memory while reaching as many people as he could. A patient mentioned a psychology video on YouTube, and Dr. Mattu realized that could be the solution.

Today, Dr. Mattu shares weekly videos on psychological science through YouTube, hosts a call-in show, and posts live videos. In the COVID-19 pandemic,

as people struggled with everything from loneliness and isolation to family illness and death, Dr. Mattu's messages became all the more important. He never imagined how healing it could be for others to hear his stories. But now, knowing that his message has the potential to reach that one person who really needs it, is what keeps him creating.



“I can only see 20 to 30 patients a week, but my channel has 100,000 subscribers. Seeing all the positive feedback from viewers, I realized how important it was for people to see that it's okay to not always feel okay.”

— Dr. Ali Mattu, San Francisco Bay Area, CA

 / [Trenton & Heath](#)

DISCOVERING NEW AVENUES FOR BUSINESS

When brothers Trenton and Heath Potter bought a shoe shop with their father in 2014, what started as a side-project quickly turned into a career. The business had always relied on local patrons, but the brothers knew there must be other ways to share their knowledge and reach more customers. In May of 2019, they uploaded their first video to YouTube.

The brothers soon saw an uptick in business—from around \$100,000 in revenue to more than \$500,000 in the first year. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the brothers say they were fortunate to already have so much traction on YouTube. They feel that YouTube was essential in keeping them afloat, attributing as much as 95% of current business to their YouTube channel and its 250,000-plus subscribers.

One of the most satisfying experiences for Trenton and Heath is hearing how they have inspired others. Some are prompted to shop more thoughtfully, buying quality shoes built to last decades rather than a year or two. Others have opened shoe businesses, or started their own shoe-themed YouTube channels—impacts the brothers never imagined.



“When COVID hit, a lot of places had to shut down for that time. If we had not started our YouTube channel a year before that, I can confidently say our business would have closed down without those online orders.”

— Trenton Potter, Nashville, TN

INDEX OF STATISTICS

BY THE NUMBERS

ECONOMIC IMPACT

YouTube's creative ecosystem supported **394,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs** in the US in 2020.

In 2020, the total contribution of YouTube's creative ecosystem to **US GDP** was **\$20.5 billion**.

More than 38,000 US channels had at least 100,000 subscribers as of December 2020[†].

More than 5,000 US channels had at least 1 million subscribers as of December 2020[†].

One in three urban users who have actively looked for a new job in the last 12 months use YouTube to help them explore alternative job or career opportunities.

81% of small and medium businesses who advertise on YouTube agreed that YouTube ads have helped them grow sales.

72% of businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that it helps them to better understand their customers.

81% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that it is a convenient and cost-effective way of providing staff training.

77% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that being on YouTube helps customers to find them.

72% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube has been a strategic partner in driving business growth.

78% of creative entrepreneurs said YouTube has had a positive impact on their professional goals.

57% of creative entrepreneurs indicated that YouTube had brought them additional opportunities away from the platform.

*The survey findings presented in this report are based on three anonymized surveys of US-based respondents, comprising 12,700 users, 1,489 creators, and 504 businesses.

[†]Source: YouTube data as of Dec 30, 2020

80% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube has helped them to grow their customer base.

70% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that it helps them to better understand their customers.

80% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that the ease of access to information on YouTube makes their employees more productive.

81% of businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that being on YouTube helps customers to find them.

82% of businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube has helped them to grow their customer base.

66% of creators with more than 50,000 subscribers to their most popular channel agreed that they can live in the US and build a self-sustainable business on YouTube.

60% of creators agreed that YouTube provides an opportunity to create content and earn money that they would not get from traditional media.

SOCIETAL IMPACT

Nearly half of users reported that they use YouTube to learn how to fix a practical problem.

63% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube has increased their ability to influence the causes they care about.

67% of creators who earn personal or business income related to their YouTube presence feel they have a place to belong as a YouTube creator.

65% of small and medium businesses who use YouTube agreed that it has helped them sustain their business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

73% of teachers who use YouTube in higher education (e.g. college, university) agreed that YouTube helps students learn in the classroom.

78% of teachers who use YouTube in higher education (e.g. college, university) agreed that YouTube makes classroom learning more fun.

78% of YouTube creators with 1,000+ subscribers to their most popular channel said their role has positively impacted their relationships in the communities they identify with.

67% of students who use YouTube (aged 18+) reported using YouTube to support their assignments or personal study.

70% of creators agreed that they have used YouTube to help others as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

68% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that its use during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped their organization reach new customers or audiences.

71% of businesses who use YouTube agreed that its use during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped their organization adapt.

67% of creators who receive business income related to their YouTube presence agreed that they have used YouTube to grow opportunities away from the platform as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

62% of users regularly watch “how to” and DIY videos on the platform.

89% of users reported using YouTube to gather information and knowledge.

70% of users agreed that YouTube has been helpful since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

75% of users who are positive about YouTube’s impact on personal well-being agreed that it has had a positive impact on their mental or physical health since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

96% of teachers who use YouTube, and whose use of YouTube in school is managed by their school admin, stated they use content from YouTube in their lessons.

CULTURAL IMPACT

US users were most positive about the fact that YouTube is an open platform where anyone can upload content (when asked about various aspects of YouTube).

78% of small and medium businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube helps them reach new audiences across the world.

81% of businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube helps them reach new audiences across the world.

73% of creators who, on average, spend ≥ 35 hours per week on their channel agreed that the YouTube community encourages them to create “diverse and innovative” content.

67% of creators agreed that YouTube helps them export their content to international audiences they would not otherwise have access to.

76% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube gives them the opportunity to work in a way that suits their needs.

86% of creators agreed they feel a strong commitment to produce high quality content.

68% of creators agreed that YouTube helps them build an international community they normally would not have access to.

67% of users agree that they can easily find American content on YouTube.

80% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube helps them share their content to international audiences they would not otherwise have access to.

68% of music, media, and entertainment companies with a YouTube channel agreed that the platform is essential for breaking undiscovered artists.

66% of female creators agreed that YouTube gives underrepresented voices a platform.

67% of users agreed that YouTube is home to diverse content.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

YOUTUBE'S CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM

YouTube supports an ecosystem of creators who earn revenues both on and off the YouTube platform. This ecosystem also encompasses creators' employees, as well as businesses and freelancers in their supply chains that earn a substantial portion of their revenue from creators.

CREATOR

Anyone who uploads one or more videos of any subject matter to YouTube, whether they earn revenue or not as a result.

CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR

YouTube creators with at least 10,000 subscribers to their largest channel, and those with fewer subscribers who either earn money directly from YouTube, earn money through their YouTube videos from other sources, or permanently employ others in support of their YouTube activities.

USER

Anyone who views video content on YouTube for any purpose, at least once a month.

BUSINESS

The types of businesses included in the analysis vary according to claim. Our business survey gathered insights from businesses that own a YouTube channel; those that advertise on YouTube; and those that use YouTube for other reasons, such as staff training. Note that these groups are not mutually exclusive and a business may fall into two or more of these categories.

SMALL & MEDIUM BUSINESS (SMB)

A business with less than 500 employees.

METHODOLOGY Q&A

How did we estimate the GDP contribution of YouTube’s creative ecosystem?

The total pay-out from YouTube in 2020 was estimated using results from our survey of US-based YouTube content creators and published information on music industry revenues.

Off-platform revenues for creative entrepreneurs were estimated from the survey of US creators, and off-platform revenues for music and media companies were estimated from business survey responses.

We estimated the direct GDP contribution of creative entrepreneurs by subtracting intermediate costs from revenue associated with YouTube activity (the “production” approach). The direct GDP contribution of music and media companies was estimated by applying a standard GDP:output ratio to the revenue estimates.

We then used an “input-output” model—in essence, a table showing who buys what, and from whom, in the US economy—to estimate both the supply chain (indirect) and worker spending (induced) impacts. In line with standard practice for these types of study in the US, we used the IMPLAN model for this purpose.

Our results are presented on a gross basis: in other words, they do not consider what the resources used by content creators or stimulated by their expenditure could alternatively have been deployed to do.

Do the results exclude any activity connected with YouTube?

Our estimates exclude the economic contribution of YouTube’s own operations, and the benefits that businesses receive from increased sales as a result of advertising on YouTube.

How did we estimate the total jobs supported by YouTube?

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs supported amongst creative entrepreneurs were estimated from survey responses relating to the weekly hours spent working on YouTube. We only included responses from creative entrepreneurs who spend at least eight hours per week working on YouTube. Jobs supported amongst creative entrepreneurs’ permanent employees were also estimated from survey responses.

Jobs supported by media and music companies, and through indirect and induced impacts for all types of creator, were estimated by applying productivity assumptions to the GDP results.

Note: The case studies presented in this document were provided by YouTube.



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