

FROM OPPORTUNITY TO IMPACT

ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC,
SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL
BENEFITS OF YOUTUBE IN THE UK



Every day, YouTube helps people learn new skills, start businesses, create jobs, and enrich their lives. This study by Oxford Economics assesses the full economic, societal, and cultural impacts of the world's most popular video-hosting website in the United Kingdom, combining sophisticated survey techniques and economic modelling.

Around one billion hours of YouTube videos are watched every day across the world. In the UK, these views generate substantial revenues for YouTube creators and other businesses—which in turn support economic activity and jobs in their supply chains, and throughout the wider economy.

In 2019, we calculate that YouTube's creative ecosystem contributed approximately:



£1.4 billion
to UK GDP

OUR METHODOLOGY

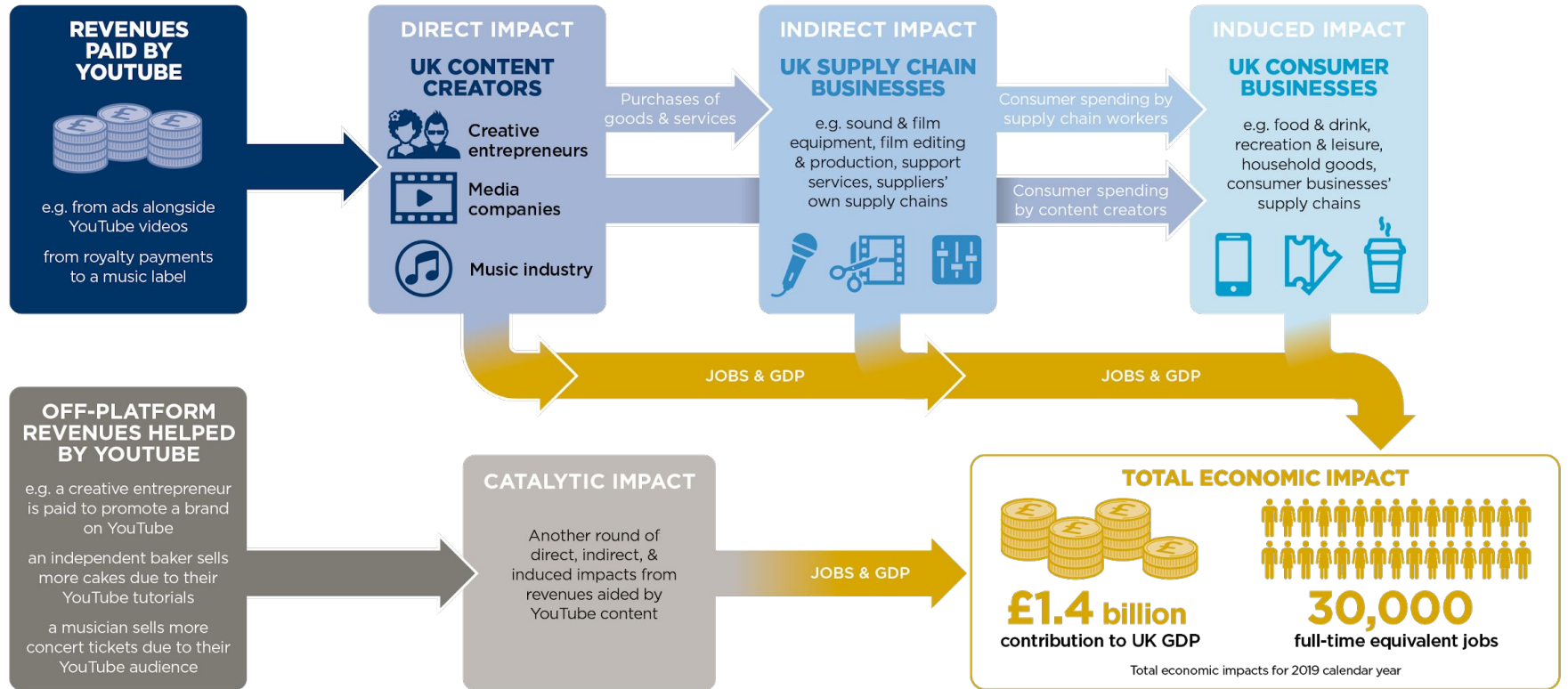
Oxford Economics' economic modelling used survey results and published data to estimate the contribution of YouTube to headline economic metrics such as GDP and employment. We undertook four anonymised surveys comprising 6,000 users, 1,100 creators, and 500 businesses. All respondents were based in the UK and, as such, all of the statements in this document relate specifically to YouTube's impact within the UK.

Over the following pages, we present the results of our economic modelling and other key findings from our research. We also present a series of personalised case studies of successful YouTube creators based in the UK.



30,000
FTE jobs across the UK

THE TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF YOUTUBE'S CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM



THE HOME OF CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

YouTube's "creative entrepreneurs" find opportunities and economic success in the UK both on and off the platform.

74% of creative entrepreneurs said that YouTube has had a positive impact on their professional goals.

62% of creative entrepreneurs indicated that YouTube had brought them additional opportunities away from the platform.

81% of creative entrepreneurs agreed that YouTube gives them the opportunity to work in a way that suits their needs.

“The beauty of YouTube is you can launch your own channel, you can upload your own video, and you can distribute it to just about every platform in the world with immediate effect. It's also very good for large media organisations that can aggregate huge audiences. [And it's] good for entrepreneurs. I've built a business in seven years from nothing to £40 million revenue, hopefully, we'll make this year. And so, new companies have been created.”

Andy Taylor, CEO and co-founder of Little Dot Studios



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

GRIME DAILY (GRM DAILY)

Grime Daily (GRM Daily) launched as a YouTube channel in March 2009. Just over 10 years later, the channel has more than 3.2 million subscribers and has received 3.5 billion views. Beyond its YouTube channel, GRM Daily has grown into a mini media empire responsible for launching countless careers and hit records. It has also created a variety of spin-offs, including a record label and clothing line. This focus on entrepreneurship was made possible by YouTube and the very direct way that it permits creators to build a strong connection with their audience. GRM Daily not only represents a success story within black British business and culture, but it has become synonymous with grime and rap. Over the years, GRM Daily has helped to nurture some of the biggest UK acts and has even launched its very own music awards.



A PLACE TO LEARN

In both their personal and professional lives, YouTube empowers UK users to develop a huge range of skills and knowledge—enabling them to save money, acquire qualifications, and even jumpstart careers.

6 in 10 users state they use YouTube to learn how to fix a practical problem.

Nearly 1 in 3 users reported saving money or time as a benefit of using YouTube.

79% of UK teachers who use YouTube stated they use content from the platform in their lessons.

“YouTube saves time for both teachers and students, if effectively utilised. It saves repetitive teaching hours, as videos can be accessed by students any time. YouTube also helps students to comprehend a topic more quickly, and we have seen that students’ engagement levels and learning potentials have increased. It also facilitates discussion among students, and the completion rate of their assignments has increased.”

Science teacher at an English secondary school

CHINELO AWA

Chinelo Awa is a lawyer and entrepreneur who, after deciding she wanted to spend more time at home as a mother, transitioned into baking. Chinelo began looking for formal courses but soon turned to YouTube to learn virtually everything she knows about baking—from fondant monkeys to sharp edges, to different types of buttercream. Chinelo now runs her own award-winning cake business, Good Cake Day, and is the founder of “The BLUSH Project” (BLUSH stands for Beautiful, Loved, Unique, Special, Human). This is a humanitarian initiative which matches local bakers in Nigeria to local orphanages so that children can receive free birthday cakes.



DRIVING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

YouTube's accessibility offers opportunities for creators of all demographics from all over the UK by eliminating costs and circumventing traditional media processes. The diversity of this creator population is mirrored by YouTube's highly diverse content library, which connects users of all backgrounds with culture of all kinds.

69% of users agreed that YouTube enables them to view content they would have been unable to access through traditional media.

76% of the UK media and music companies surveyed who use YouTube agreed that the platform encourages diverse creators of content.

65% of minority creators agreed that YouTube provides a platform to share life experiences and educate others.

JESSICA KELLGREN-FOZARD

Jessica is an LGBTQ+ vlogger and presenter who challenges stereotypes. She is deaf, visually impaired, and has two inherited rare conditions, EDS and HNPP. Since joining YouTube in 2016, Jessica has created videos of her life with disabilities and chronic illness in a positive, uplifting but educational way, combining her story with her passion for "Old Hollywood". Jessica's passionate vlogs are a prime example of a creator using their platform not just to inform but also to empower, helping her amass more than 50 million views and over 750,000 subscribers along the way.



“We are an international non-profit organisation which posts video stories about clean water and how to maintain good hygiene in people's day-to-day lives. We use light-hearted, humorous content to highlight our global programmes in ways that grab the attention of the audience. Our videos are also beneficial in transforming the lives of poor communities by educating them in hygiene programmes. We are definitely able to reach new audiences through YouTube. Many people are online and eager to watch YouTube videos, as they can build a sort of emotional connection when they are watching.”

Digital Content and SEO Manager for a global charity

HELPING BUSINESSES GROW

YouTube can enhance employee performance and help businesses connect with more customers at home and abroad—increasing revenues, supporting jobs, and improving productivity.

81% of businesses with a YouTube channel agreed that YouTube has helped them to grow their customer base.

79% of businesses with a YouTube channel agreed the platform enables them to reach new audiences across the world.

76% of businesses with a YouTube channel suggested their YouTube presence helps customers to find them.

“YouTube is a vital platform for video sharing, especially for companies like us that operate online services only. We save a lot by hosting our content on YouTube—and we’re also earning well through it, so it’s beneficial in both monetary and non-monetary terms. On all the videos we post, the engagement rate is very high. Moreover, we are also using YouTube promotion tools, like video annotation, end boards, playlist, and banners, to bolster our channel growth.”

YouTube Manager for a major UK TV company

PLAY SPORTS NETWORK

Since launching in Bath in 2012, Play Sports Network (PSN) has amassed more than 5.7 million subscribers and 1.4 billion views across twelve channels. PSN has created separate channels for road cycling, road racing, mountain biking, electric bikes, triathlons and technology. More recently PSN has continued its global expansion by launching localised channels in Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. It is a rapidly growing media company with over 200 employees globally and has recently received a major investment from Eurosport-Discovery.



WHAT USERS AND CREATORS TOLD US ABOUT YOUTUBE

AN AID FOR BUSINESS

“Once I began making videos on YouTube 15 years ago, my business started growing and has steadily grown in direct correlation to the channel. It has enabled me to grow from a one-man shed to a business employing over 15 skilled people, and enabled me to teach countless others in-person and through the channel.”

Creator, 35-44, South West England, 250-500K subscribers

“YouTube has enabled me to build a business of my own from scratch. It has taken hard work, effort, courage and skill... I believe YouTube enhances the business world, and gives everyone a fair chance to create the kind of business that truly expresses their personal skills and attributes, as well as their creative ability.”

Creator, 35-44, South West England, 10-50K subscribers

A TOOL FOR LEARNING

“YouTube has transformed my life, making me a world-recognised drummer, educator, and acknowledged expert in electronic drumming... I now work with many bands, am sponsored by drum/cymbals manufacturers, and help a major manufacturer develop their electronic drum software... I have much to be grateful to YouTube for.”

Creator, 55-64, East Midlands, 1-10K subscribers

“My autistic daughter was non-verbal until around 2½. YouTube videos helped her learn to form words without having to look at faces, which she found awkward.”

User, 35-44, rural Wales

“Just finished a BSc and YouTube was really helpful in my revision. I have also learned new skills that have helped me work as a freelancer. It is a great place for learning about new technology and keeping current.”

User, 45-54, East Midlands

SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

“I have an autism diagnosis which I am happy to share. Before YouTube, I was unable to have a conversation with more than two people. After years of work talking on camera, I have overcome many of my issues and can now talk with reasonable confidence. This, and many other aspects of YouTube have changed my life forever.”

Creator, 18-24, North East England, 1-10k subscribers

“I’m unable to do a traditional job for health issues – YouTube has allowed me to make a living without having to use government handouts.”

Creator, 18-24, South East England, 10-50K subscribers

“Being 69 and still having to work because my pension is minimal, I find the income I receive [from YouTube] is very helpful. I also like that I get positive vibes for the social interaction I have with similar-aged viewers.”

Creator, 65-74, North East England, 1-10K subscribers

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.

Headquartered in Oxford, England, with regional centres in London, New York, Frankfurt and Singapore, Oxford Economics employs 400 full-time staff, including more than 250 professional economists, industry experts, and business editors. Our global team is 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.

Oxford Economics is a key adviser to corporate, financial and government decision-makers and thought leaders. Our worldwide client base now comprises over 1,500 international organisations, including leading multinational companies and financial institutions; key government bodies and trade associations; and top universities, consultancies, and think tanks.



METHODOLOGY Q&A

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

The total pay-out from YouTube in 2019 was estimated using results from our survey of YouTube content creators based in the UK and published information on music industry revenues.

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 pay-out estimates.

We then used an input-output model (in essence, a table showing who buys what, and from whom, in the UK economy) to estimate both the supply chain (indirect) and worker spending (induced) impacts. Oxford Economics' UK input-output model is based on underlying data from the Office for National Statistics.

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 the 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 the 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 are based on information provided by YouTube.

