

Who profits when marginalized communities create?

Copyright, digital platforms and the creative economy

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This study investigates the following research question: how do monetization mechanisms, copyright frameworks, and value intermediation processes operated by digital platforms influence the ability of creators from urban peripheries to convert circulation into asset-based income and economic autonomy? Using a qualitative approach that combines in-depth interviews and desk research, the study analyzes the structural barriers that prevent the transformation of digital platform visibility into financial assets and real sustainability for these creators from the peripheries of São Paulo.

Key Findings:

Predominance of active income over asset-based income

The economic sustainability of creators from urban peripheries depends almost exclusively on direct and continuous labor, such as live performances, technical services, and commissioned production. In contrast, income derived from the authorial catalog, such as royalties and revenue shares from content use, is described as residual, unstable, and insufficient to ensure material livelihood, regardless of the creator's career stage.

"Today, if I don't perform or provide services, I don't earn anything. The work alone doesn't pay the bills."

Informational asymmetry and documentary opacity

Copyright management in the digital environment is marked by a lack of transparency and unequal access to information. Creators report difficulties in interpreting monetization reports and understanding platform calculation criteria. The absence of formal documentation and specialized legal advisory support reinforces the vulnerability of these artists, making learning about the market a reactive process based on trial and error.

"The report is packed with numbers, but I don't understand how that turns into what I receive."

Professional advancement without asset accumulation

There is a structural dissociation between increased digital reach and financial consolidation. While the work circulates and generates value, the financial return to the creator is diluted by extensive intermediation chains and a lack of mastery over technical registration mechanisms, such as the ISRC. Visibility operates under the logic of hope labor, where present work is fueled by an expectation of future returns that rarely materialize.

Limits of digital democratization

Although platforms have reduced technical barriers to distribution, they do not redistribute the generated value in an equitable manner. The cultural inclusion provided by the circulation of works from the peripheries does not automatically translate into economic inclusion.



Access the full study [here](#) and learn more!

