

Voices of Influence

Perceptions of content creators on identity, market, and responsibility



This study investigates how Brazilian digital content creators perceive the ethical, economic, and institutional challenges associated with their professional activity. Based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with 24 content creators, Reglab and Redes Cordiais, with support from YouTube Brazil, sought to incorporate empirical evidence into the debate regarding the digital content creators. Among the main findings of the analysis, we highlight:

The profession's identity crisis

Digital content creation is perceived as a consolidating professional activity, marked by disputes over legitimacy and social framing. Many reject the term "influencer," associated with stereotypes of superficiality and indiscriminate advertising, preferring categories such as "content creator" or "communicator" to assert competence, responsibility, and public value. This dispute affects credibility with the audience, positioning toward brands and agencies, and the capacity to organize minimum parameters for professionalization and recognition.

The influence market, ethical dilemmas, and the professionalization challenge

Advertising is a significant source of income for content creators in general and is often permeated by ethical dilemmas and asymmetries in relations with brands and agencies, manifesting in non-transparent negotiations and extended payment terms. This commercial vulnerability is further aggravated by dependence on digital platforms, which are essential yet considered lacking in transparency. Consequently, creators advocate for greater institutional organization of the sector, including minimum contractual parameters.

The cost of public exposure and the impact on mental health

Managing public exposure directly affects creators' mental health. Participants report constant pressure for performance, dictated by engagement metrics that demand an uninterrupted presence on social networks to avoid losing relevance. This scenario also includes the toxicity of the digital environment, where creators face negative comments and hate speech, often without adequate moderation support.

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