

# The creator economy flexes its muscle at CES

## Article

**The news:** CES isn't just about consumer electronics anymore. The creator economy had a massive presence at this year's show, including a new "Creator Economy and NFTs" conference track.

We sat in on two sessions, "Welcome to the Creator Economy 2.0" and "Power Platforms: The New Tech Powering the Creator Economy."

**What we learned:** Five big themes for 2023 dominated both conversations, which featured key names in the creator industry, including **Mekanism's** chief innovation officer **Brendan**

**Gahan, Pietra's CEO Ronak Trivedi, and Cameo's co-founder and CEO Steven Galanis, among others.**

- **The democratization of data:** Brands need to break down the barriers and give creators access. “The more data they have, the more successful creators will be,” said **Ricky Ray Butler**, CEO of **BEN Group**.
- **The influence of AI:** Creators and marketers shouldn't feel threatened by the rise of AI-generated content. Instead, AI can be a powerful tool to help spark more creativity (think **ChatGPT**) and can augment creator-led content.
- **Technology to empower brand-influencer relationships:** “Partnering with creators is a human-to-human experience. How can we [create new tools] to make that as efficient as possible?” said **Instagram's** head of business marketing, **Bridget Evans**.
- **Third vs. first-party platforms:** Creators need both. Social media helps creators build their audiences and gives them opportunities to monetize through brand partnerships and other revenue streams. First-party platforms give them more control over their data and business.
- **Creators as brands:** Creators no longer want to only create content; they want to build their own businesses. And they're not just creating T-shirts and candles; they're pitching unique products that add value to their communities.

**The big picture:** The creator economy has infiltrated almost every industry and is reshaping how consumers think about work and making a living. One in 4 US consumers ages 16 to 25 plan to become a social media influencer, per a July 2022 study by digital marketing agency HigherVisibility.

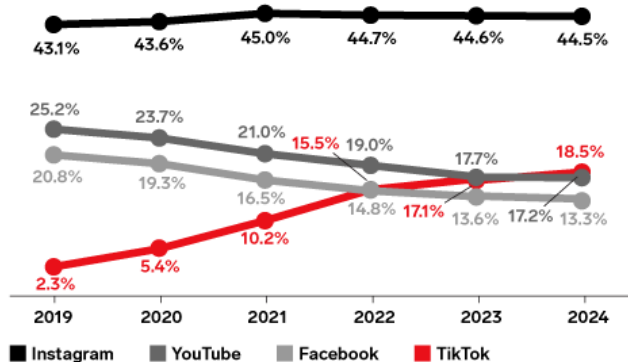
“The world of the creator economy is just the new economy,” said creator **Samir Chaudry** of **Colin and Samir**. “It's about building audiences first and then figuring out how to monetize.”

**Yes, but:** Investment in the creator economy is reportedly slowing, and the social platforms are streamlining or shuttering some of their initiatives as they bring creator monetization in-house and refocus on products that directly relate to driving ad revenue. While the creator economy is clearly alive and well, it's not immune to today's economic reality.

- **Facebook** has sunset its live shopping feature **as well as Bulletin**, its **Substack**-like subscription service for creators.
- **Instagram** ended its affiliate marketing program and is promoting its new **Creator Marketplace** as the best way for creators and brands to work together instead.

## US Influencer Marketing Spending Share, by Platform, 2019-2024

% of total influencer marketing spending



Note: payments made to influencers or their representatives to promote products and services primarily on social media and other platforms featuring user-generated content; excludes noncash payments such as free products or trips; excludes paid media  
Source: eMarketer, July 2022

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**Advertiser takeaway:** As the economic downturn continues to weigh down ad budgets and disrupt industry norms, creators provide a cost-effective and inventive way for brands to reach their audiences through boosted content. Meanwhile, creators will be brands' ticket into a crop of new Gen Z-focused apps, including **BeReal**, that **may not offer advertising options** when they launch their monetization models.

- Plus: Estimates of the number of creators worldwide now range between 50 million and 200 million, many of whom consider brand partnerships the primary way they want to monetize. That means brands have a wide portfolio of content producers to work with—and more tools than ever to help them connect with those creators and launch campaigns.

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