

# [***From Brain-Controlled Devices To How To Attract Gen Zs, These Are The Under 30 Alum Ideas Powering SXSW***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJT-XB71-DXVP-5019-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Forbes Under 30 takes SXSW, plus: How Taylor Cassidy Is Turning TikTok Trends Into Lessons On Black History

**Body**

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Under 30 alum Selena Gomez shares her mental health journey on stage at SXSW in Austin, Texas.

SXSW Conference & Festivals via Getty Images

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If you could enhance one aspect of your brain with AI, would you choose memory or creativity?

That s the question that started SXSW s This is Your Brain on AI: Neurotech's New Horizons session, with panelist and2021 Under 30 Consumer Technology alum**Adam Molnar**.

Molnar took the stage this week to speak about his company, Neurable, a brain-computer interface (or a system that allows users to control devices with brain activity). Right now, he s working on perfecting think-to-text capabilities for mobile phones and more ways consumers brain signals could control software and other devices. While AI is a critical part of Neurable s technology, Molnar understands the importance of regulation in this space: We do have to think about how we re building these systems to make sure they re respecting us, while still allowing for innovation, he said.

Molnar wasn t the only Under 30 alumni to share his story on stage. In a session titled, Mindfulness Over Perfection: Getting Real On Mental Health, **singer, actor and Selena Gomez**said releasing her documentary**My Mind & Me**in 2022 which she shot over a six-year time frame provided her an insane amount of release.

I work in the weirdest industry and I just felt like I didn t fit in, she said on stage. It was her mother, Mandy Teefey (who also spoke on the panel and is the cofounder of mental health startup Wondermind with Gomez and2020 Under 30 Media alumDaniella Pierson), who started the conversations about mental health in their home growing up. Now, the Wondermind team is working on making mental health education more accessible through their articles, podcast, digital content and, Teefey revealed, an upcoming app.

**Dylan Mulvaney,**a2024 30 Under 30 Social Media lister, took the stage next in a conversation about her tumultuous experience with Bud Light. After an April 2023 campaign with the company received backlash from conservative consumers, Mulvaney was subject to death threats and online hate. Mulvaney who this week celebrated her two years of womanhood, a series she started on TikTok after coming out as trans says it s criticallyimportant for brands to recognize the power of diverse creators.

Gen Z is so inherently queer and accepting, she said. That s eventually who your consumer is going to be.

2019 Forbes 30 Under 30 Law & Policy lister**Jerry Ting**shared his own advice for founders based on his biggest challenge building his startup Evisort, which uses AI to automate contracts for lawyers.

Though the company now has $155 million in funding, there was a moment in 2019 when the company almost went bankrupt, he said When investors withdrew money that he was relying on to pay his employees payroll, he relied on his connections in the industry to find a solution overnight. He reached out to an existing investor who signed a terms sheet the very next day, which Ting says is the reason Evisort is here today.

Life is really short, and there s a big dollar sign at the end of the rainbow, especially in AI, he says, but he added that fostering and maintaining relationships with customers, investors and even competitors is the key to future success.

Until next week,

**The U.S. Takes A Major Step Toward Banning TikTok**

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ILLUSTRATION BY FERNANDO CAPETO FOR FORBES; PHOTO BY ROBERTO WESTBROOK/TETRA IMAGES RF/GETTY IMAGES

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Over the last two years, has revealedagain and again how deep TikTok's ties are to its Chinese parent company ByteDance which remains beholden to the Chinese government and how that could pose a risk to national security. On Wednesday, The House of Representatives**passed a bill that could force a sale or ban of the popular social media app**.

**Lister Lowdown**

-2023 Under 30 Food & Drink companyImmigrant Food, which has restaurants in the D.C. Metro area,**launched a crowdfunding campaign on Thursday**. Cofounded by lister Téa Ivanovic, the company prides itself on pairing its food menus with engagement menus, which give customers suggestions on ways they can volunteer with the immigrant organizations the restaurant partners with like Capital Area Immigrants Rights Coalition. The funding campaign requires a minimum of $500 to invest, and Immigrant Food will use the money to open 12 to 15 locations in new cities over the next few years, the company told**Forbes.**

-On February 28,2018 Under 30 Enterprise Technology lister**Lucy Guo announced a $40 million Series A round for her startup Passes**, a platform where creators can offer exclusive content to their followers and make extra income similar to OnlyFans. The new funding was led by San Francisco-based Bond Capital and comes after a $9 million seed round in 2022. Guo previously cofounded Scale AI, now valued at $7 billion, and made the 2023**Forbes** Richest Self-Made Women list with a net worth of $360 million.

-Edtech startup**Empowerly announced $15 million in new funding**on February 21. The2022 Under 30 Education company, cofounded by Hanmei Wu and Changxiao Xie, helps college-bound students prepare their college applications. In addition to the usual consulting services, it offers an AI tool that can score the strength of applications based on essays, grades, test scores and extracurriculars so students know where they might improve. The new round was led by Conductive Ventures and will be used to grow Empowerly s AI products and launch a mobile app. The company has raised $30 million to date.

**Creator Corner**

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Taylor Cassidy is also a host for SiriusXM s TikTok radio and a correspondent for Nickelodeon s Nick News.

courtesy of Taylor Cassidy

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The creator economy is thriving, and couldreportedlybe worth half-a-trillion dollars by 2027. Since the boom of content creation, the**Forbes** Under 30 list has recognized the individuals who have either built their businesses through social media or turned social media into their business. Hear from these entrepreneurs on what it takes to make it on the internet.

Up this week: Taylor Cassidy, a 21-year-old2024 Under 30 Social Media listerwho is best known for her series **Fast Black History,** which teaches her 2.5 million followers on TikTok and Instagram about Black history in one minute or less. She s also received a special honor at the 2020 Streamy Awards for her other show focusing on Black creatives,**Black Girl Magic Minute.**

**The following has been slightly edited for length and clarity.**

**Your content focuses on educating people about Black history. How did you get your start, and why is social media the best platform for this?**

My start posting videos online began when I was in 3rd grade. Around that same time is when I started to notice the difference in how I learned history at school versus at home. At home, Black people were triumphant heroes, royalty, inventors and rockstars, but at school they fell into a tight bottled category of enslaved. By the time I turned 17, I had a successful TikTok account with over 100k followers and two days left until Black History Month 2020. I created a 15-second video about Percy Julian, an incredible Black chemist, and called it**Fast Black History.** The series went viral in a week.

Even though I teach Black history online, I do not believe teaching it is best done on social media. It's best done in schools and in the classroom with a trained teacher. However, because laws continue to be implemented to block authentic, truthful teaching of Black history, social media is a place people flock to fill in the gap.

**People on the internet tend to have shorter attention spans. When trying to educate them on history, what s your strategy to keep them engaged?**

This has been simultaneously the hardest and most fun part of posting history videos online. Over the years, I've grown more creative in how to keep history enticing. My style in telling stories combines costumes, green screen and a comedy sketch format, but sometimes I need more to keep my audience's attention. I take what trends and viral music I'm interested in online and find ways to connect them back to history. For example, a few videos on my feed went viral comparing Doja Cat's appearance to the 1950s performer Dorothy Dandrige. I joined the trend, but instead of stopping the video at their appearances, I used it as a hook to reel the audience into a minute-long history of Dorothy and her influence on breaking barriers for Black performers.

**How often do you do brand partnerships? How do you choose who to collaborate with?**

I work with brands often as a creator and I've had the pleasure of learning over the years what works and doesn't work for me. The two pillars of who I work with comes down to how much they value authenticity and how our missions align. If the brand is coming to me with a message that aligns with what I already promote, it's a yes. If they have no clear understanding of my content and seem to only want me to focus on a product without going deeper, it's a no.

**You re also a radio host for SiriusXM s TikTok radio and a correspondent for Nickelodeon s Nick News. Tell me about how you got those gigs and why you chose to take them on.**

Both of these came from work I'd already done on my TikTok page. During 2020, as more and more dances choreographed by Black creators went profited off of but uncredited, I created a second web-series called**Black Girl Magic Minute,**where I uplifted and highlighted these creators, Black-owned businesses, followers, Black culture news and more in a talk show format. This series opened opportunities to hone my hosting skills with special guests like actor Jeremiah Birkett, creator of Healthy Roots Dolls Yelitsa Jean-Charles and designer June Ambrose. When TikTok Radio was created, they reached out to me to join their list of creators to guide listeners through trending music.

In the same vein, Nick News reached out to me having seen my work on**Fast Black History**. It was an immediate "yes" from me for two reasons. I wanted to be a part of the amazing mission of bringing real stories and education to kids just as I'd done online and I grew up loving shows like**Reading Rainbow**and remember how influential educational shows are for children. Plus, Levar Burton was my favorite TV host as a kid and I wanted to be like him.

**Where do you project the creator economy will be 10 years from now?**

Creators will be the new entertainment industry. With creators running their own channels, series and websites, we are our own production companies and hold all rights to decision making and showrunning. Ten years from now, we will be the new heads when it comes to what succeeds in the media. We've already seen what TikTok can do to ***politics***, the music industry, and how it promotes creatives into success from one viral video. The more brands, networks and streaming companies pour resources into advertising through social media, creators will become the main resource they cannot afford to lose.

**What s your best piece of advice to aspiring content creators?**

Before offering creativity, which is a part of you, to the world, make sure**you** enjoy it first. This way, you will have the drive, persistence and passion to protect it.

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