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## **Value Production on Social Media Platforms**

**Legal, Ethical and Policy Issues of Open Data,  
MSc Data Science, AUEB**

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## Abstract

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The purpose of this essay is to explore social media platforms as a source of revenue for content creators and other users. Three platforms, that their users are expected to create content - mainly - in the form of video, are examined: YouTube, TikTok and Instagram's IGTV. As the case studies of the three platforms progress, we present regulation analysis of the platforms in the form of the four modalities, sectoral legal analysis using the input/ processing/ output model as well as their value production models for different types of users and creators. While the main focus is on value production and revenue making, we also explore copyright and community guidelines issues as content monetization blockers.

## Introduction

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The 2000s brought a social media explosion, leading to billions of highly connected and interlinked people producing content and sharing it one with another[1]. That explosion was the reason for the birth of a new profession: “being a social media influencer”.

Chances are that all of us follow one or more influencers on social media and if we don't we, surely, are at least familiar with the concept of what being an influencer is. In order to create a foundation for our analysis, let's define the term “influencer” in the context of social media. Literally, an influencer is someone who has influence over others, which comes from established credibility that this individual has in a specific area. As a result, the larger the audience and the more engaged it is, meaning the more the audience interacts with the influencer's content, the better the service's of the influencer are considered. The next question is who is concerned about the influencer's quality of services. In order to answer it, we need to think of social media as a marketplace, where people offer their salesman skills to companies. The companies lease these skills as an exchange for an audience for their advertisements. The skill leasing makes “influencing” a paid service and therefore, being an influencer can be considered a real job.

The purpose of this essay is to explore social media platforms, the ways that interaction, between companies, influencers and users on these platforms, generates economic value and how this interaction is regulated. For the current analysis, we chose to examine three social media platforms, meant for uploading video-content: YouTube, TikTok and IGTV.

Therefore, we conclude that the main question we attempt to answer in this essay is:

*“Can video-creation social media platforms be used as a source of income?”*

## Theme

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When talking about a profession, whether the profession is the one of a lawyer, the one of a lumberjack or the one of an influencer, we tend to look at it, first and foremost, by the **economic scope**. That does not mean there are no other ways to look at the subject. There is the aspect of **technology**, a very important aspect, since platforms that use the most advanced technologies are the hosts of creators and users. The new profession we examine was created thanks to or because of technological evolution. It is also a **social** issue, since there are concerns regarding the never ending marketing, of new and old goods and services, that takes place on social media and how we are constantly encouraged to consume. Finally, there are **legal** concerns since all the things we mentioned should be officially regulated.

This essay mainly focuses on what concerns the most of us: how influencers make revenue through social media, without overseeing technological, social and legal aspects.

## Key Questions

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Let us reminisce about the main question: “*Can video-creation social media platforms be used as a source of income?*”. Other questions rise and need to be answered in order for the main one to be answered as well:

*What are the value production models of the platforms under study and how do they affect different types of users?*

*Are there conditions under which you can monetize your content?*

*Are there conditions under which the monetization of your content can be blocked?*

*Is copyright an issue on monetization?*

*How is content monetization currently regulated?*

## Social Media Platforms

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As mentioned before, the main focus of our case studies are three social media platforms, on which users upload content they create, YouTube, TikTok and IGTV. More specifically, how content monetization on these platforms can lead to creating a source of income. For this purpose, we should first understand how content is created and at what point and in what content could be monetized. Therefore, we need to have an overview of what these services are, how they can be used by creators, how they can be used by passive users and what functionalities and interactive features they offer.

### YouTube

YouTube is an online video-sharing platform, founded in 2005 and bought by Google in 2006[2]. Unregistered users of YouTube can watch videos. Registered users can view videos, give feedback using like/ dislike buttons, comment on the videos, reply to other comments, subscribe to channels and receive notifications and updates about these channels. They can also upload their own videos and be the receivers of the actions mentioned. Most content is uploaded by individual users but there are also companies like VEVO that offer their content on YouTube platform. Creators on YouTube Partner Program can monetize their content and earn advertising revenue from Google AdSense, a program that targets ads according to site content and audience. Most videos are free to watch, but there are exceptions, including subscription-based premium channels, film rentals, as well as YouTube Music and YouTube Premium subscriptions, that offer ad-free content.

### TikTok

TikTok is a Chinese video-sharing social media platform that launched in 2017 in the form of Android and IOS app. The Chinese version of TikTok is called Douyin and was first released in September of 2016. TikTok became available worldwide in 2018, when it merged with

another Chinese social media app, Musical.ly. Videos' themes vary among dance, fashion, comedy, education, commentary and others, while their duration lies between 3 seconds to 1 minute maximum. As of October 2020, TikTok had over 2 billion mobile downloads worldwide[3]. TikTok users can film and edit their videos, add filters, captions and background music using the app. App offers libraries of filters, stickers and background sounds. Users can follow their favorite creators, like videos and comment on them. Direct messaging is also available. There is not, yet, a way for direct content monetization, although TikTok announced "Creator Fund", a way for creators to make revenue on the app, in 2020.

## IGTV

Instagram TV or IGTV is a standalone video application, launched in 2018 by Instagram. IGTV runs on Android and iOS smart devices. Even though it is a standalone app, basic functionalities are embedded on Instagram app and website. IGTV users login with their Instagram account. They can upload videos of maximum duration of 15 minutes and maximum file size of 650 MB using their smartphones, or videos of maximum duration of 60 minutes and maximum file size of 3.6 GB using the website version. Videos' orientation can be either vertical or horizontal. Videos are available as soon as they are uploaded. When activated, an IGTV tab appears on users' Instagram profile pages. As with Instagram videos, users can like IGTV's videos, comment and reply to other commenters[4]. There is not, yet, a way for direct content monetization although there are plans for creation of ad-based content monetization.

## Regulation Analysis

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The core theme of the essay is content monetization on video-sharing social media platforms. As mentioned, briefly, in the previous section, YouTube offers direct content monetization, that is based on video views and therefore advertisement views (more on Value Production Models section). TikTok and IGTV do not have this option yet. Nevertheless, the presence of an individual on a social media platform and the creation of content can bring revenues in indirect ways, such as brand deals and usage of affiliate website links, and therefore, we consider that presence as an opportunity for revenue. In this section we attempt to break this opportunity for revenue down to four modalities, law, market, social norms and technology, that regulate it.

### Law

Producing content on a social media platform comes with the responsibility of following the platform's guidelines. Otherwise, the platform could stop monetization and/ or ban the creator. Guidelines are usually based on laws. An example of law that regulates content monetization is Copyright Law.

A straightforward definition of copyright is that it is the right to copy. That right belongs to the original creator of a work and anyone the creator chooses to grant the right. Copyright laws formally regulate copyrights and these laws apply on content creation on social media as much as on other aspects where copyright is present.

As with any other law, each country has a version of copyright law and therefore there is no such thing as international copyright law. However, there is an international agreement governing copyright, adopted in Berne, Switzerland in 1886, known as Berne Convention[5]. As of today, there are 179 signatory countries. The agreement deals with the protection of works and the rights of their creators, providing them with the means to control how their work is used, by whom, and on what terms. It is summarised in three basic principles[6]:

- National treatment: every signatory country agrees to give foreign works - works published outside the country - the same protection as to the ones originating from the country.
- Automatic protection: any work is copyright protected from the moment it is created.
- Independence of protection: works are not limited to copyright regulations of country of origin.

Fair use is a way of reusing copyright protected material, without the owner's permission. It is an exception to copyright law, allowed only under special circumstances, these being commentary, criticism or news reporting. Fair use was originally a common-law doctrine in the United States, until it was formally incorporated in U.S. law in 1976[7]. The Berne Convention, on the other hand, does not reference fair use explicitly, but allows certain limitations and exceptions on economic rights and refers to them as free uses.

Social media platforms give their own definitions of copyright and fair use and inform their users on what happens on occasions of infringement and how infringements are spotted. In the case of YouTube, when a video receives a copyright strike - a copyright violation note - the monetization revenues are taken from the uploader of the video and are transferred to the owner of copyrights. YouTube's policy allows up to three copyright strikes - copyright violations - before suspending an account[8]. Regarding TikTok, content that infringes other's copyright may be removed. The account may be suspended or terminated for multiple copyright violations[9]. IGTV's policy is no different. A user's account may be removed after multiple violations of copyright policy[10].

## Market

In order to see how the market regulates monetization of content on social media we will present the case of YouTube - so called - Adpocalypse. In 2017 many advertisers, such as Walmart, Pepsi and Johnson & Johnson, pulled out from YouTube when they found their advertisements being placed on videos that promoted extremist views or hate speech. That was damaging not only for YouTube's reputation but also for their revenues. That forced YouTube on creating a more strict policy on what content is considered "advertiser friendly". Videos that are not categorized as advertiser friendly are either under limited monetization or completely demonetized. Using this example we saw how the market can affect monetization on social media platforms[11], [12].

Market is also concerned about the creators' engagement. Companies want to work with those creators that have a highly engaged audience. They have access to tools that they can use to check if a platform is truly beneficial to be used for advertisement purposes.

## Social norms

Users of social media platforms have the ability to interact with creators through comments and like/ dislike reaction buttons. More comments and more reactions mean more engagement. A creator with high engagement is attractive to advertisers. But a creator whose engagement comes from negative comments and dislikes is not that attractive to advertisers. That comes from the simple fact that advertisers use the creators/ influencers as a means to reach an audience which is potential customers for their products or services. As a result, viewers and fans as a whole, are the reason that content monetization exists in the first place and while creators try to keep them satisfied, in order to stay monetized, they are regulated by a social norm.

Guidelines on platforms are a form of use of social norms to regulate users' behavior even though they are based on laws. But since guidelines are often ignored, platforms also use social norms in order to inspire their creators to follow the guidelines and, therefore, continue to monetize their content. Various campaigns that aim to inform on copyrights and fair use on social media platforms could be classified in the modality of social norms. The famous "*Don't copy that floppy*" campaign, that was launched in 1992, features a rap song that aimed to inform teenagers on the topic of piracy[13]. Anti-copyright infringement campaign "*Piracy. It's a crime.*", also known as "*You wouldn't steal a car*", became public in 2000[14]. In 2011, YouTube uploaded a video named "*YouTube Copyright School*" starring popular cartoon characters from Happy Tree Friends[15]. These campaigns aimed to be funny and attractive so that they would be shared among internet users, in order to serve their greater



purpose, that was to inform users about copyright law. Except for these cult internet moments, platforms continue the attempts to inform their users. Since they are aware that not many read the terms, conditions and guidelines they still try to find more attractive ways. For example, YouTube Creators channel on YouTube has a whole series of videos that break down the terms of copyright and fair use.

## Technology

Technology can be used in order to identify violations of law in video content and therefore, can act as a regulator.

Most platforms, give the option to their users to file complaints for copyright violations:

- YouTube's Copyright Takedown Notice

The way for a copyright owner to inform YouTube manually that material they own is used without their permission on YouTube platform, is by filling a webform meant for submission of copyright infringement notifications. YouTube encourages copyright owners to check whether use of material happened under fair use/ fair dealing or other copyright exceptions[16].

- TikTok's Report for Copyright Infringement

Users of TikTok can file a report for Copyright Infringement if they feel that their copyright is violated by uploaded content or users. The platform advises their users to try and resolve their issues personally before filing reports[17].

- IGTV's Copyright Report Form

Instagram and therefore, IGTV users can also file reports for copyright violations. The owner of the copyrights or someone authorised should be the one to file the report[10].

YouTube also has a whole system of processes and algorithms that are used to identify use of copyright protected material:

- Content ID

Content ID is aimed for copyright owners with complex management needs, such as record labels, that file valid copyright claims frequently. It is a tool that targets to ease intellectual property management. A Video uploaded on YouTube platform is scanned and the content is compared to that in YouTube's database for possible matches with copyright protected material. If matches are found, the copyright owner can choose to block the video from being viewed or to claim part or all ad revenue that otherwise would belong to the uploader or to even track the video's viewership statistics. The uploader, on the other hand, can stop the monetization of the video, remove the copyright protected portion of the video or the whole video or file a dispute in the case that it is believed that copyright protected material was used under fair use exceptions of copyright law. Use of the Content ID tool requires a deep understanding of the copyright system and also has requirements of eligibility, meaning that it is not available for all creators[18].

- Copyright Match Tool

The tool locates full reuploads of videos, regardless of the privacy settings that the owner has chosen. The actions that the owner of copyright can take are to email the uploader of the video, to request immediate removal of the video or give a 7-day notice for the removal

or take no action. The technology used by the tool is similar to Content ID. Tool is available for creators who have applied and shown they need a scaled rights management tool and on the Studio Copyright page for all channels in the YouTube Partner Program[19].

- Content Verification Program

Content Verification Program targets copyright owners that have a frequent need to remove content from YouTube. It is, essentially, a tool for users that are in frequent need of Copyright Takedown form. Owners can search for material they believe is infringing and issue many copyright takedown requests simultaneously[20].

Except from copyright violations, YouTube uses algorithms to check if videos match the advertiser friendly policies, meaning that they check if ads should be placed on a video or not. Algorithms also check the viewers' engagement, by looking at the comments, likes, and whether the entire video is being watched. Finally, algorithms look at the channel and creator as a whole and check whether the creator makes consistently accurate monetization decisions. In all cases, YouTube can remove the ability of a creator to monetize with ads[21].

Continuing on the topic of engagement, there are technologies that are used to quantify and overview engagement. Social Blade is a website that tracks social media statistics and analytics. It covers a variety of social media platforms including YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. It has a grading system, similar to American School's A, A+, B etc., that is used as an indicator of influentiaity of an account[22]. That grading along with other analytics is open to the public. Here, there is a connection to market modality, since that technology can be used by companies to evaluate the different creators and choose who to work with.

# Value Production Models

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## YouTube

### How does YouTube make revenue?

The majority of YouTube videos are free for the users to watch and therefore the platform attracts millions of users per day. That makes it a very attractive marketing place for various advertisers. YouTube embeds advertisements on videos that gain various amounts of views and the advertisers pay YouTube according to the amount of views their ad received. Ads can be targeted to a certain demographic and that is amongst the benefits of being advertised on social media platforms. Advertisers can also pay for their own video to be promoted on users and again pay YouTube accordingly. Finally, advertisers can place advertisements on panels shown next to or below videos, that when clicked lead to the website of the advertiser. Here, the advertisement earns revenue through a mix of clicks and views. YouTube also offers premium services, such as YouTube Premium, for which users pay a subscription in exchange for exclusive content with no advertisements[23].

### How do independent creators make revenue on YouTube?

We saw how YouTube makes revenue. What about the users of YouTube? Do they upload their content for free? Actually, they can make revenue through the YouTube Partner Program by one or more of the following ways:

- Advertising revenue: Revenue that comes from ads that are placed on the creators' videos. They are paid according to the videos' views.
- Channel memberships: Channel subscribers can choose to pay a monthly fee for exchange of special perks that the creators offer.
- Merchandise shelf: Creators' fans can browse and buy official branded merchandise that's showcased on watch pages.
- Super Chat & Super Stickers: Creators' fans pay to get their messages highlighted in chat streams.
- YouTube Premium Revenue: Creators get part of a YouTube Premium subscriber's subscription fee when they watch their content.

These features have each a set of requirements in order for the creator to be eligible to use them. These requirements could vary among the age of the creator, channel subscriptions etc.[24].

Another way to make revenue is by partnering up with third party companies. In exchange for a product review, product showcase or other service in the form of video content, the creator/ influencer can receive a certain amount of money by the company whose product/ service is advertised. YouTube platform asks their users to indicate when working with a company on a sponsored video through the "video contains paid promotion" checkbox. These videos are still eligible for ads[25]. Also according to the countries' laws that the creator is registered as a taxpayer, they may need to clearly disclose the partnership for transparency reasons.

## How do companies make revenue on YouTube?

Companies can use YouTube as a platform where they can advertise their products and services. The ways are described on the first paragraph of this section. The stream of money is the exact opposite. The company gains revenue by being advertised. That is a more indirect way of gaining revenue. A direct way is similar to independent creators' case.

In the case of large companies, like record labels, there is another way that they make revenue. These companies usually own music, movies, video games or other copyright-protected material, unlikely to simple creators. Let's say that a creator uploads a video that contains any amount, even seconds, of copyright protected material without having the proper license. Then, the Content ID system can identify the portions of the video that are copyright protected and give the adsense earnings to the legal owner[26]. Even if the Content ID system fails, the owner can make a manual claim and again gain portion or all revenue of the claimed video[27].

## Can monetization be suspended on YouTube?

Monetization can be suspended on individual videos or on a channel as a whole. YouTube has the ability to remove ads from old videos and not put ads on future videos if Community Guidelines, Terms of Service, Copyright, and Google AdSense program policies are violated. These policies apply to anyone in, or looking to apply to, the YouTube Partner Program[28].

Let's state an example of suspended monetization. As we saw in the previous paragraph, YouTube can indeed stop monetization of videos based on their copyright policy. A major problem that independent creators have with this policy is that it is allegedly often abused by the owners of the copyrights. Creators claim that they use the material under fair use. Unfortunately, fair use is defined only in copyright law of the United States, while other countries mention it as fair dealings. Nevertheless, fair use, fair dealings or free use are abstract terms, which make algorithms and softwares incapable of determining whether the use of someone else's material is fair or not. This can only be determined by court and it is something that YouTube makes clear in their guidelines. YouTube encourages creators to avoid using copyright protected material if they do not want to lose their videos' monetization[29].

## TikTok

### How does TikTok make revenue?

One way TikTok makes money is by selling advertisement space/time to companies. In June of 2020, the app launched TikTok for Business as a way for brands to run their own ads within the app. There are various categories of ads:

- In-Feed ads: They appear between videos while users scroll through their For Your Pages and they look just like any other normal TikTok video.
- Brand Takeover ads: Ads that appear full screen when a user enters the app.
- TopView ads: A slightly delayed version of BrandTakeover ads.
- Branded Effects Ads: Brands can create sharable stickers, filters, and special effects on TikTok.

- **Branded Hashtag Challenges:** They allow brands to create their own hashtag and challenge, then pay to have the tag show up in people's Discover feeds.

Even before ads, TikTok made money via TikTok Coins. These are an in-app currency that users can buy with real money and then use to purchase virtual gifts for their favorite TikTok creators. Those creators can exchange the gifts for actual money. Of course, TikTok takes a portion of that money[30], [31].

### **How do creators make revenue on TikTok?**

Except for the TikTok Coins system mentioned above, TikTok launched a \$200 million fund to pay creators in summer of 2020. Fund recipients receive regular payments throughout the year, and according to TikTok the fund will get larger. Only people aged 18 or older qualify for the fund[32]. Concerning Europe, UK, Germany, Italy, France and Spain based users that are 18 years or older, meet a baseline of 10,000 followers, have over 10,000 video views in the past 30 days and post original content in line with TikTok's Community Guidelines, are eligible for the fund. The amount that is targeted towards European market is \$70 million. As with other social media platforms, creators are allowed to partner with brands and post sponsored content.

### **How do companies make revenue on TikTok?**

Businesses cannot get direct revenue from TikTok. One way for a business to use the platform is by creating a business account and by producing content that advertises the business. This way, stronger bonds are created with the clients and the business can be made known to a wider audience, since TikTok pushes videos to all users even if they do not follow the specific account. Businesses are also allowed to partner with creators and be advertised through their content. Both ways of revenue making are based on engagement with clients that leads to sales, rather than direct sales.

### **Can monetization be suspended on Tiktok?**

Regarding TikTok, content that infringes other's copyright may be removed. The account may be suspended or terminated for multiple copyright violations[9]. Even though content is not directly monetized through ads as in the case of YouTube, an account suspension is an indirect way of demonetization.

## **IGTV**

### **How does IGTV make revenue?**

Instagram makes revenue by selling ad space to companies who want to be advertised. That ad space is either between Instagram stories, or on users' feed and the target users are selected based on their demographic and preferences. Since the focus of the analysis is IGTV we will focus on it and not Instagram platform as a whole. As of 2020 there is not a way for IGTV to bring direct revenue to Instagram. The value of IGTV comes from the content their creators produce and upload. That content brings engagement to the platform. It gives the creators space to upload content, their more lengthy videos, that otherwise they would upload on platforms such as YouTube. The fans of the creators will stay on

Instagram's platform, if they do not feel there is added value on other platforms and that is what increases the engagement.

### **How do independent creators make revenue on IGTV ?**

Instagram launched IGTV in 2018 but there was not a direct way for their users to make revenue until 2020, when IGTV announced IGTV Ads program. The program is still in an experimental phase and only a few selected users have ads on their videos, of selected brands and currently only in the USA. The plan is for ads to appear when a user clicks to watch an IGTV video from the preview button in their feed. The ads will be mobile-optimized vertical videos and last up to 15 seconds long[33].

The reason for this initiative was the inability of Instagram to attract creators because of its lack of monetization options, contrary to competitive platforms such as YouTube. The only way for users to get monetary benefits from their content is by teaming up with companies and producing sponsored videos. While Instagram allows this, they declare that sponsored content needs to follow the terms of the platform and that they have limited to no responsibility for this content. Users are also asked to acknowledge their brand deals[34].

### **How do companies make revenue on IGTV ?**

As for users, there is not a way for companies to make direct revenue on IGTV. They can pay creators/ influencers to create content that advertises their company. Again, they need to follow Instagram's guidelines. They can take advantage of the platform in order to communicate with their clients and create stronger bonds with them, since IGTV prioritizes their videos, showing first videos of accounts that users already follow.

### **Can monetization be suspended on IGTV?**

IGTV's policy is similar to TikTok's. They can remove accounts that violate copyright policy repeatedly[10]. Again, it is a form of indirect demonetization, since the creator will not be able to upload content and gain revenue.

## Sectoral Legal Analysis

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For this section, we use the input/ processing/ output model in order to present the key legal issues in relation to the content monetization on video-sharing social media platforms. For our analysis we consider as data the video that a creator wants to upload on a platform

### Input

We consider as input the attempt of a creator to upload a video on a platform and monetize it. Users should consider that when uploading on social media they must not violate the platform's guidelines, otherwise they will not be able to gain monetary benefits from their videos, or even worse, their content and/ or account could be suspended. Generally, they should avoid violating copyrights, hate speech and scenes of violence and profound language.

### Processing

We consider as processing the automated verification process of a platform that classifies a video as suitable for monetization or not. What algorithms search are indicators that a video should not be uploaded (e.g. copyright violation) or that the content of the video is not advertiser friendly. Generally we could say that algorithms search for violations of law, in order for platforms to not get in legal trouble for hosting illegal content. In a previous paragraph we focused on copyrights. Other legal issues in the processing of content could be raised for the existence of hate speech, terrorist messages, violence and radical political opinions in videos. In 2016 the European Commission launched the Code of Conduct together with four major companies, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube, in an effort to respond to the increase of racist and xenophobic hate speech online. EU law defines hate speech as the public incitement to violence or hatred directed to groups or individuals on the basis of certain characteristics, including race, colour, religion, descent and national or ethnic origin[35]. Therefore, social media platforms should seek to remove hate speech from their content in order to not violate the EU's directions.

### Output

We consider as output the uploading of a video that leads to monetization revenues. It is possible that even if a platform allows the uploading of a video it could still face legal problems. First of all, monetization leads to income that is taxed and thus, creators/ influencers must declare any revenues in their personal income tax return and, where applicable, they must include VAT on any invoices they issue. The details, of course, change based on the country that the creator is being taxed[36]. Another possible legal issue could come up if something that should not have, is uploaded, either because the algorithms did not catch cases of violations (YouTube case) or because there are no algorithms to catch violations and the creator should not have uploaded the video (TikTok and IGTV). One case is the violation of copyright that is presented in detail in the Regulation Analysis section, Law paragraph. All three platforms that we examine offer options for their users to declare that their copyrights are violated, by sending certain forms.

## Conclusion

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In this section, we will sum up all the outcomes of our analysis. We examined three platforms, YouTube, TikTok and IGTV, that their users are expected to create video content and this content can be monetized in different ways.

Monetization is affected and thus regulated by two factors which we can define using the four modalities, law, market, social norms and technology. The first factor is whether a video should exist on a platform, meaning if a video follows or not the platform's guidelines. Guidelines are based on law, and therefore a video should not violate copyright law or laws about hate speech, terrorist messages, violence and radical political opinions in videos, otherwise it cannot be monetized or exist on a platform at all. Platforms are very strict regarding law violations through videos, since they, as hosts of content, are also responsible for it. As market we consider the companies that use social media platforms to be advertised. Market is also concerned about law violations and controversial content, therefore creators that want to work with companies or put ads on their videos need to be careful on what they post. Market has a big leverage on social media companies since it is what gives these companies revenues. Social norms either in the form of guidelines or in the form of campaigns are used in order to inform creators on what is acceptable to post and what not. Technology is used in order to automatically check if a video follows the guidelines or to remove videos that do not follow the guidelines.

The second factor that regulates content monetization is engagement. Engagement is quantified by technology through algorithms and analytics. Technology quantifies the engagement - comments, likes and views - that as ways of interaction are classified as a form of social norms. Market pays attention to engagement, because engagement can be translated to reach to audiences that are potential customers for products and services.

We saw that the modalities of a regulator are not independent one with another. In order to sufficiently define a regulator we need to see how the different modalities interact on the same regulator.

Regarding ways of monetization, currently only YouTube, out of the three, offers direct monetization through ads placed on videos. TikTok has announced a fund targeted for creators. Creators will be paid according to their viewers' engagement. IGTV also plans to launch an ad-based monetization strategy. All three platforms allow their users to partner up with other companies and indirectly monetize their content. Companies can also make revenue on YouTube, either by monetizing their content or by placing ads and making their products and services known to wider audiences. Of course, the social media companies also make revenue. They offer free platforms in exchange for users' demographics that they can sell to advertisers. They only offer advertisers the reach to certain demographics. They do not sell their users data though, since that would make them lose their competitive advantages.

Finally, we saw the process of uploading a video in an input - processing - output schema and located possible legal issues in that schema. The content itself could cause legal issues.



The content should not violate copyright law or include violence, hate speech or dangerous messages. The monetization could also cause legal issues, since it creates incomes for users and it should be declared to the government and be taxed.

Let's reminisce about our main question: *"Can video-creation social media platforms be used as a source of income?"*. We usually consider "social media influencing" a very prestigious job, but in reality value production on social media is rather complex, since it is regulated by numerous different factors that affect it and legal issues could come up at any point of value production chain. Nevertheless, the answer to our question is that social media platforms can, indeed, be used as a source of income, without it meaning that we can underestimate it as a process.

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