

# Content Creation with Generative AI: How Do Content Creators Responsibly Use Generative AI Tools?

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The rise of Generative AI (GenAI) has demonstrated significant potential to improve productivity and foster creativity among content creators, social media influencers with large audiences on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. However, as GenAI tools became increasingly integrated into creative workflows, significant concerns have emerged about potential risks and harms, including misinformation, social biases, and threats to authenticity. While prior research in HCI and CSCW has documented the pressures content creators face within algorithmic ecosystems, relatively little is known about how creators practically manage responsibility work when using GenAI tools. To address this gap, we conducted semi-structured interviews ( $N = 16$ ) with content creators active on popular social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, examining their motivations, practices, and specific challenges related to responsible GenAI use. Our findings reveal that creators' motivations for practicing responsible AI use span personal reputation management, audience trust-building, and broader social responsibility. However, they face persistent tensions, as integrating GenAI significantly intensifies conflicts between responsible AI practices and the pressures of visibility, engagement, and monetization imposed by platform algorithms. Content creators are required to perform extensive and often invisible responsibility work, which directly conflicts with the rapid production cycles and engagement demands of algorithm-driven platforms. Based on these insights, we propose concrete socio-technical design implications at the individual, community, and institutional levels, advocating solutions that shift responsibility beyond individual creators alone.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing** → **Empirical studies in HCI**.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Generative AI, Content creators, Responsible AI, Responsibility work, Interview

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

Recent advances in Generative AI (GenAI), including large-scale text-to-image [77, 78] and text-to-video generation models [86], have reshaped content creation by enabling diverse outputs from simple prompts. These tools lower production costs, reduce technical barriers, and broaden opportunities for creative experimentation [53, 63]. Within this rapidly changing landscape, content creators—individuals who produce and distribute cultural content on digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram and build their own media identities and brands [106]—have increasingly started to integrate GenAI into their workflows [4].

At the same time, the rapid spread of GenAI-generated content has introduced several risks, including the dissemination of misinformation [6, 13, 32, 45, 59], the circulation of fake news [2, 87], copyright infringement [43, 51], and the reinforcement of social biases [17, 97]. These risks may be further intensified by content creators, whose outputs are often rapidly disseminated to large audiences and significantly influence public discourse and social perception [35, 54, 60, 73].

Unlike traditional creative professionals such as writers, designers, or corporate users who work within structured organizations and receive institutional support, content creators independently manage the entire lifecycle of their work—from planning to uploading—[31, 38, 47, 101], and most operate as self-employed individuals without formal backing [70, 71, 83, 89]. In this context, content creators need to independently address issues specific to GenAI—such as hallucinations, algorithmic bias, privacy violations, and misinformation, a reality supported by prior research showing that creators often shoulder responsibility without formal guidelines or institutional oversight [21, 51, 80].

More recently, studies have begun to examine independent artists' use of GenAI and their ethical considerations, such as addressing AI bias and ensuring transparency in AI use [56, 88, 105]. While these studies provide valuable insights, they do not fully capture the concrete practices of responsibility that content creators on algorithmically driven platforms such as YouTube and Instagram must navigate. In particular, they have yet to account for the responsibility work creators undertake as they grapple with algorithmic visibility, platform norms, financial sustainability, and the pressures of maintaining continued popularity and influence.

Content creators rely heavily on algorithmic metrics such as views, likes, and subscriber counts, and face ongoing pressure to produce content, respond to emerging trends, and maintain high audience engagement [9, 17, 36, 38, 109]. Platform algorithms particularly favor provocative, sensational, or sometimes misleading content [28, 29, 82]. Such algorithmic pressures also shape creators' transparency decisions; for example, some intentionally avoid disclosing sponsorship details clearly in order to maximize their visibility [69, 81, 108]. Prior research in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) has primarily examined the ethical dilemmas posed by such algorithmic pressures, particularly in the context of sensationalized content production and opaque sponsorship practices. However, the recent emergence of GenAI significantly expands and complicates the scope of creators' ethical responsibilities beyond producing provocative or revenue-oriented content. Despite this shift, existing literature has not sufficiently examined how creators concretely manage these newly emergent, multidimensional ethical tensions and responsibilities when integrating GenAI tools into their workflows.

This study addresses this gap by empirically investigating what we refer to as "*responsibility work*". We define responsibility work as the ongoing labor through which creators anticipate, identify, mitigate, and manage potential harms in GenAI-enabled content creation environments. This research explores the concrete practices and challenges content creators encounter when responsibly incorporating GenAI into their content production processes, guided by the following research questions:

- **RQ1:** What motivates creators to practice responsible AI use in GenAI-powered content creation?
- **RQ2:** What practices do creators engage in to enact responsible AI use?
- **RQ3:** What challenges do creators face in practicing responsible AI, and how do they manage these challenges?

To address these research questions, we conducted in-depth interviews with 16 content creators, focusing on concrete examples of tensions and responsibility work encountered during their use of GenAI.

Our findings reveal that content creators are motivated to practice responsible AI use by managing their personal reputation, building audience trust, and addressing broader social responsibilities. Yet, creators also face substantial pressure to undertake additional, time-consuming tasks associated with responsible GenAI use, including fact-checking, proactive content moderation, transparent disclosure of AI-generated content, and managing privacy. These responsibilities, often invisible and uncompensated, frequently conflict with the productivity demands imposed by platform algorithms and audience expectations, significantly intensifying creators' ethical tensions and overall workload. Moreover, in the absence of formal ethical guidelines and adequate institutional support, creators typically find themselves either independently navigating these complex ethical challenges or forming online communities to collaboratively develop practical strategies for responsible and ethical GenAI use.

This study makes several contributions. First, it provides an in-depth understanding of the specific motivations, practices, and challenges that content creators face as they responsibly integrate GenAI into their workflows. Second, it emphasizes the necessity of moving beyond individual responsibility toward establishing collaborative, socio-technical support systems at both the platform and community levels. Third, by identifying content creators operating within highly algorithm-dependent environments as a distinct user group and explicitly differentiating their experiences from those of creative professionals who generally receive greater institutional support, this study expands existing discussions in HCI and Responsible AI (RAI), highlighting the unique challenges these creators face. Based on these insights, we propose targeted socio-technical design recommendations and policy implications aimed at fostering a more responsible and sustainable content creation ecosystem.

## 2 Related Work

### 2.1 Content Creation in Algorithmic Ecosystems

Research in HCI and CSCW has extensively explored the complex interplay between creators' motivations, platforms, algorithms, and creative practices. Creators are motivated to create content for various reasons, including intrinsic motivations such as self-expression [23, 46, 85] and inspiration [84]; social motivations such as contributing to communities [8, 14, 18, 33, 91], activism [19], and social interaction [84]; and economic motivations such as securing income [38, 64, 102]. These creative activities unfold within an ecosystem in which audience interaction, the use of production tools, and the performative dimensions of self-expression are tightly interconnected [64]. Within

this ecosystem, content creation is shaped by the interaction between creator intentions, platform logic, and algorithmic infrastructures, making it a complex sociotechnical practice [84].

Among these factors, visibility serves both as a valuable resource for achieving various creators' goals and as a constraint that exposes them to risks [20]. Platform algorithms are opaque and volatile, producing "algorithmic precarity", which undermines creators' economic and emotional stability [24]. To cope with algorithmic opacity, creators rely on "algorithmic gossip" [9]—communal, socially informed theories and strategies about recommendation algorithms shared through private groups, informal chats, and even fan interactions. In parallel, they collectively develop and circulate folk theories [79]—informal, experience-based explanations that make sense of unpredictable algorithmic behaviors, explain sudden drops in visibility, and guide tactical adjustments in posting practices. Within this uncertainty, recent work shows that creators adapt not only their content strategies but also their broader strategies to algorithmic demands [17, 25, 52]. For example, creators often revise content and metadata or restructure production processes to boost visibility [10, 41, 64], and they conduct iterative experiments on their channels to test alignment with algorithmic preferences [17]. Collectively, this body of work demonstrates how algorithms shape creators' motivations and practices, generate invisible forms of labor through visibility and precarity, and bind content production to broader survival strategies.

More recently, scholars have also examined ethical considerations surrounding algorithmic governance and responsible content creation [9, 25, 38, 109]. Studies highlight, for example, that platforms incentivize divisive, negative, or provocative content to enhance visibility [28, 29, 82]. Gallagher and Hernandez show that YouTube creators often craft content strategically based on platform rumors and speculation about algorithmic preferences, prioritizing perceived algorithmic favoritism over authenticity [29]. Similarly, Duffy and Meisner argue that creators frequently feel pressured to privilege visibility and popularity, implicitly sacrificing authenticity in the process [25]. Other studies note the ethical dilemma influencers face when explicitly disclosing sponsored content: while disclosure fulfills their responsibility for authenticity, it can simultaneously erode follower trust and engagement, ultimately harming creators' economic and social benefits [26, 50, 69, 81, 100, 108].

While prior studies have provided valuable insights, they have primarily focused on conflicts surrounding the production of provocative or sensational content and the disclosure of sponsorships. However, the recent rise of GenAI introduces qualitatively new ethical challenges, including factual inaccuracies (hallucinations), algorithmic bias, privacy violations, and complex demands for transparency in AI usage. These challenges generate new forms of responsibility work for creators. Accordingly, it is necessary to examine how the adoption of GenAI transforms responsible practices, what new difficulties it poses for creators, and what kinds of tensions they experience in the process. To address this gap, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of how creators perform and manage responsible content creation practices in GenAI environments.

## 2.2 The Impact and Potential Risks of Generative AI in Content Creation

Recent advances in GenAI have reshaped creative practices, demonstrating applicability across multiple stages of the creative process—from idea generation [3, 16, 30, 57] to image and video production [61, 77, 86]. Studies also show that GenAI can generate visual and textual content from minimal prompts [53, 95], underscoring its potential to streamline creative workflows.

Building on these research explorations, recent HCI studies have introduced a variety of GenAI-based tools tailored for content creators. Some tools focus on transforming long-form media into more accessible formats; for example, PodReels converts lengthy podcasts into concise summary videos [94], and Lotus generates condensed scripts and audio from long videos [7]. Other systems support automated video creation and editing. Ma et al. [65] introduce a video editing chatbot that

automates labor-intensive editing tasks using LLMs, while Doc2Video synthesizes video prototypes directly from documents to support AI-assisted video generation [15]. Likewise, ReelFramer generates scripts and storyboards that help creators translate news articles into short-form videos [93]. Collectively, GenAI tools reduce the cost of content creation and lower skill barriers through their user-friendly design and efficient workflow [63]. GenAI also enhances social media video creation by streamlining tasks such as scriptwriting, visual and audio generation, and editing [4].

However, the proliferation of GenAI adoption in content creation has introduced several critical societal challenges [27, 74, 75]. These include the spread of misinformation and fake news [2, 6, 13, 32, 45, 59, 87], copyright infringement [43, 51], and the reinforcement of social biases [17, 97]. AI-generated content may unintentionally perpetuate prejudice by portraying certain social groups in exaggerated or distorted ways, thereby escalating social tensions through harmful or offensive representations [98]. Moreover, inadequate data governance and oversight can lead to serious privacy violations [12]. Taken together, these risks can be exacerbated by content creators, whose works often spread quickly to vast number of audiences and shape public discourse and social perception [35, 54, 60, 73].

Nevertheless, existing research on GenAI and content creators has primarily focused on identifying the potential risks associated with GenAI and emphasizing the importance of responsible content creation. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the concrete challenges that creators encounter in their attempts to use GenAI responsibly. To address this gap, this study aims to investigate the specific difficulties content creators face in the process of responsibly integrating GenAI into their practices, as well as the motivations and strategies they employ to navigate these challenges.

### 2.3 Understanding Responsible AI Practices

Researchers in HCI and CSCW have actively examined how professionals apply responsible AI principles in the workplace and the challenges they encounter [39, 58, 66, 68, 76]. Prior work has analyzed how AI developers address risks and ethical issues [39, 66, 68], and how UX designers incorporate trust and ethics into design [92]. Madaio et al. [67] further found that practitioners largely learn about responsible AI through informal peer exchange and self-directed learning, underscoring the limits of formal organizational support. Varanasi and Goyal show that, due to limited organizational support, responsibility for adopting Responsible AI practices often falls on a few motivated individuals, who must rely on informal peer discussions or self-driven efforts to navigate RAI values [90].

More recently, this focus has expanded to non-practitioners and knowledge workers. For example, Angie et al. [103] found that knowledge workers largely rely on informal learning, peer exchange, and self-directed practices, rather than formal and structured training, to understand and enact responsible AI use. Similarly, Kapania et al. observed that researchers employed LLMs across multiple stages of their work—including ideation, data analysis, and paper writing—while simultaneously encountering issues such as privacy, intellectual integrity, and overtrust. Their study revealed that researchers learn to use AI responsibly not through formal training or structured education, but through lived experiences, peer learning, literature, and collegial discussions [49]. Together, these studies highlight the diverse pathways through which knowledge workers learn and practice responsible AI, offering important insights into how such practices are cultivated in everyday work.

Recent work has also begun to examine how independent creators and artists use GenAI and manage its ethical implications. Studies of artists and creative communities highlight concerns about GenAI's impact on productivity, creativity, and authenticity [104], as well as resistance to data scraping, calls for transparency, and conflicts with authorship and creative ethics [1, 62]. Building

on these concerns, some research points to emerging responsible practices, such as restricting GenAI to “assistive” uses or debating whether to disclose its application [105], and proposals for governance mechanisms like consent, credit, and compensation to protect creators’ rights over their work [56]. Notably, Taylor et al. [88] analyzed how queer artists employed GenAI to both surface and challenge the normative assumptions and biases embedded in these models. They identified strategies such as prompt repetition, obfuscation, and model chaining that artists used to resist censorship and bias, showing how GenAI became a site for both constraint and creative resistance. This line of work illustrates how artists begin to engage with its responsible use by embedding broader social and ethical critique into their practice.

Beyond traditional artists and creative communities, recent work has also examined platform-based content creators who operate within algorithmically mediated social media environments. These studies explore how content creators on platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram recognize and negotiate ethical issues—for example, what kinds of concerns they raise when integrating GenAI into their workflows [5, 48, 63]; how the adoption of AI-generated voice on TikTok increased output but also raised issues of authenticity and trust by producing shorter, more negatively toned videos with less self-disclosure [107]; and how GenAI has enabled non-experts to easily generate and disseminate misinformation, thereby intensifying ethical risks [34]. While earlier work has shed light on this issue, the specific motivations, practices, and challenges they face in attempting to use GenAI responsibly remain underexplored. Content creators, however, operate in algorithmically mediated environments without institutional oversight or support [21, 51, 80]. Their work is deeply shaped by pressures such as algorithmic visibility, monetization uncertainty, and productivity demands [9, 31, 38, 101, 109], which impose distinctive ethical burdens. To address this gap, our study shifts the focus to the everyday responsibility work performed by content creators within algorithmically mediated platform environments, investigating how they integrate GenAI into their workflows and the practices, challenges, and coping strategies they adopt.

### 3 METHOD

#### 3.1 Participants

A total of 16 content creators participated in our interviews, detailed in Table 1. We collected participants’ demographic information, including age, gender, platform focus, content domain, years of experience, and commitment level, to contextualize creators’ backgrounds and to understand how these characteristics might shape their perspectives and practices around responsible GenAI use. Among the interview participants, 8 exclusively operated YouTube channels, 3 exclusively operated Instagram channels, and 5 operated multiple platforms simultaneously. In terms of platform preference, 10 participants primarily focused on YouTube, 5 predominantly used Instagram Reels, and 1 primarily utilized TikTok. These channels covered a wide range of topics, including research, design, psychology, AI, tech, and lifestyle tips. Of the 16 participants, 10 identified as male and 5 operated technology- or AI-related channels. Because our study focused on creators with experience or interest in using GenAI, the recruitment process naturally attracted participants already experimenting with these tools, which may partly explain the inclusion of several technology-oriented creators. The average age of the participants was 32.6 years ( $SD = 6.3$ ), and their production experience ranged from 1 year to 10 years. Of the 16 participants, 4 were full-time creators and 12 were part-time creators.

To recruit participants with substantial experience in content creation, we invited individuals who met the following criteria: (1) content creators who have actively maintained a social media such as TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube channel for at least one year, (2) creators with a minimum of 1,000 followers on the platform, (3) creators who generate income both on-platform, such as through



Participant ID (Gender, Age)	Types of Content Created	Duration of Production	Platforms Worked	Subscribers (Main)	Commitment Level
P1 (M, 29)	Video editing tutorials	1 year	YouTube	43.2K	Part-time
P2 (M, 43)	AI tools tutorials	over 10 years	YouTube	1.1K	Part-time
P3 (F, 31)	MBTI personality content	2 years	Instagram	11K	Part-time
P4 (F, 25)	Design & lifestyle videos	3 years	YouTube, Instagram, TikTok	97.6K	Part-time
P5 (M, −)	Math & ML education	4 years	YouTube	1K	Part-time
P6 (M, 33)	Basketball news analysis	1 year	YouTube	9.8K	Part-time
P7 (F, 39)	IT reviews & news	7 years	YouTube	81.8K	Part-time
P8 (M, 25)	AI tools content	1 year	YouTube	34.9K	Full-time
P9 (F, 35)	Research & PhD life	1 year	Instagram, YouTube	28K	Full-time
P10 (M, 31)	Digital AI portraits	1 year	Instagram, YouTube	8.1K	Part-time
P11 (M, 27)	Technology content	3 years	YouTube	1.2K	Part-time
P12 (M, 39)	Daily-life vlogs	1 year	YouTube	4.3K	Full-time
P13 (F, 31)	Daily-life vlogs	4 years	TikTok, YouTube	67.1K	Part-time
P14 (M, 36)	Comic & art videos	2 years	Instagram	1.3K	Part-time
P15 (F, 23)	AI-generated artworks	6 years	Instagram	5.3K	Part-time
P16 (M, 42)	Local food & event guides	5 years	YouTube, Instagram, TikTok	3.6K	Full-time

Table 1. Information about interview session participants, including their demographic details, content types, platforms they were working on, number of subscribers, and levels of commitment

ad revenue, viewer support, and platform-based earnings, as well as off-platform through activities like content creation courses or other revenue streams. Participants were recruited through three primary channels: (1) social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, (2) online community platforms at various universities, and (3) direct email invitations to video creators with a business email on their channel.

To ensure the recruitment of participants with a wide range of experiences as video creators, we included a pre-screening questionnaire link in the recruitment postings and invitation emails. This survey collected information about the participants’ employment status (part-time or full-time), the type of content they create, the AI tools they use, and whether they have considered ethical issues.

### 3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

We conducted 90-minute semi-structured individual or group interviews with one to three participants via Zoom. Based on the creators' schedules and availability, we decided whether to interview individuals or groups before conducting the interviews.

The interviews were divided into three main sections. In the first section, we introduced the focus of the study and explored how participants used generative AI in their content creation process and how AI impacted their production. In the second section, we discussed the ethical challenges participants faced when using GenAI, their attempts to resolve these issues, the challenges they encountered with existing resources, and the strategies they employed to overcome these challenges. The third section focused on the participants' motivations for using AI responsibly, the obstacles they faced, and the conflicts between these motivations and the barriers they encountered.

Before conducting the interviews, we reviewed the participants' channels to tailor the questions to the specific characteristics of their videos and the tools they used. The interviews were conducted in English or Korean, with participants joining from the United States, South Korea, and India. Each participant was compensated with a gift card, either from Amazon or Starbucks, valued at around \$40 USD. All interviews were conducted under the guarantee of full confidentiality. Participants were informed prior to the study that they could skip any questions they felt uncomfortable with or leave the interview session at any time for any reason. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interview. This study was approved by our institution's IRB (Institutional Review Board).

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The interview sessions were transcribed using Zoom, Otter.ai, and Clova Note, and all transcripts were stored in Google Docs. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed either in English or Korean, with Korean transcripts subsequently translated into English. All data were analyzed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach [11].

In the initial open coding stage, three researchers carefully read transcripts, took notes, and coded the data, resulting in 361 codes. Each transcript was reviewed by at least two researchers, and the team held regular meetings to compare insights and discuss emerging ideas. As coding progressed, related codes were iteratively clustered and developed into higher-level themes. This process surfaced recurring patterns in participants' narratives such as how they approached creative work with GenAI, motivations for responsibility work, the types of responsibilities they negotiated, and the challenges they encountered. The research group held regular collaborative sessions to discuss emerging codes, resolve discrepancies and ambiguities in the codes, and iteratively refine our codes based on these discussions. Following the principles of reflexive thematic analysis, we did not calculate inter-rater reliability, as collaborative interpretation and repeated team discussions were central to generating codes and themes [11, 72].

Ultimately, this process generated 40 first-level themes, which we clustered into 14 second-level themes and then synthesized into 4 third-level themes. These four overarching themes capture: (1) the generative content creation pipeline (Section 4.1), (2) creators' perceptions and motivations for responsible AI use (Section 4.2), (3) responsibility-related practices (Section 4.3), and (4) challenges in implementing responsible AI use (Section 4.4). We present these themes in detail below.

## 4 FINDINGS

### 4.1 The GenAI-Driven Content Creation Pipeline

Participants used GenAI tools during various stages of content creation, including planning, production, editing, and post-management. Table 2 summarizes the GenAI tools used across different



stages of content creation. While GenAI significantly streamlined aspects of the workflow, it also introduced concerns that led some participants to resist or limit its use at certain stages of the creative process. Creators, while enjoying the benefits of GenAI-induced efficiency, also managed to navigate the ongoing tensions and trade-offs when deciding when and how to use it.

**4.1.1 Planning.** In the planning stage, creators brainstorm ideas and determine the direction of their content. GenAI proved to be a powerful ideation tool. Participants frequently used systems including ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude to explore various topics and gather relevant information. They also relied on these tools to generate draft scripts or suggest narrative structures. For instance, P14, who produces humor-focused content using GenAI-produced images and videos, noted that *"I frequently use ChatGPT in the very early stages of creation, and I'll use it to kind of augment and maybe add more detail to the story than I had initially thought."*

Other participants also described how GenAI enhanced their creative planning. P7 explained, *"I mainly use this in the idea planning stage. Even if we talk about the same thing, I tend to get ideas about the order in which it should be done or how to do something like this."* P6 similarly shared, *"I think I get a lot of inspiration about content ideas from AI. By talking to ChatGPT about something like 'what do you think about this idea,' I often come up with another idea for my next content. Every time I talk to ChatGPT, I somehow manage to generate new directions, and I think that's the biggest help."* P8 added that AI served as a useful feedback partner during brainstorming, noting, *"When I'm working on the video, I'm planning it. I always ask questions when I come up with an idea. I now explain it verbally, and AI provides feedback about it, whether it's text or voice, so I do a lot of the process of receiving feedback."*

However, if AI-generated content was not thoroughly fact-checked, there was a risk of inadvertently incorporating misinformation into the final product. P11 was reluctant to use GenAI for idea planning, saying *"I don't always get the correct output that I want... sometimes it gives wrong answers. That can be scary, right, if we completely trust AI."* Several participants were also reluctant to use GenAI during the planning phase since they worried about their heavy reliance on GenAI weakening their creativity or leading to plagiarism. P10 admitted, *"I have a really bad habit of relying on AI 90 to 100 percent... our thinking power is really going down."* Similarly, P14 reflected on how GenAI sometimes displaced his own creative vision: *"I'll go with what [ChatGPT] says instead of what I had envisioned myself. In that facet, maybe a loss of creativity..."* P12 even resisted incorporating AI into the creative planning stage, noting: *"I didn't use it specifically during the creative planning process, because for core parts like creative ideas and storytelling, my own direct experiences matter more. And I worry that since AI has no emotions, it might create provocative content without regard to means or methods."*

P16 further underscored these concerns by pointing to structural risks: *"GenAI sometimes directly copies existing advertisements or videos. As a result, there is no creativity, and plagiarism problems occur."* Consequently, some participants intentionally limited or avoided the use of GenAI during this stage, consistently reflecting on whether AI was genuinely enhancing their creative process or inadvertently beginning to replace their own judgment. This intentional self-monitoring allowed creators to consciously preserve their creativity, originality, and unique personal style.

**4.1.2 Production.** GenAI also played a role in the production stage. Participants used tools such as CapCut and Veed.io to automatically convert long-form videos into short-form clips. Others employed platforms like Midjourney and Runway ML to generate images or video snippets based on textual prompts. Background cleanup tasks, including detecting and removing unnecessary faces or objects, were streamlined through AI-powered editing features embedded in tools such as CapCut and Veed.io. P4, who produces daily life and design-related content, noted *"If the background is distracting or there are too many unnecessary elements, I use CapCut or Veed.io to automatically*

Stage	GenAI Tool Used	Example Applications
<b>Planning</b>	ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Wrtn AI	Topic ideation, brainstorming feedback, script drafting, narrative structuring
<b>Production</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midjourney, Runway, Luma AI, Lalamu, CapCut, Veed, Vrew, Suno AI, Clova, Whisper</li> <li>• ElevenLabs, Sync</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate images, video scenes, music, subtitles</li> <li>• Voice synthesis for narration and voice cloning, and lip-sync alignment</li> </ul>
<b>Editing &amp; Upload</b>	TubeBuddy, vidIQ, Midjourney, DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, ChatGPT	Title generation, description generation, thumbnail image/text ideas
<b>Post-management</b>	Comment Analyzer–ChatGPT	Understanding audience response, performance analysis, data-driven refinement

Table 2. Summary of Generative AI tools used across content creation stages.

*reframe or crop the content.*" Additionally, speech recognition tools like Naver Clova and Whisper auto were used to generate subtitles, while voice generation tools such as ElevenLabs and SyncLabs supported the creation of narration.

Despite these benefits, participants highlighted the ethical complexities of using AI during production. For instance, AI-generated visuals could unintentionally reproduce biased or stereotypical depictions of certain groups, which prompted creators to actively filter or revise the outputs. P16 was reluctant to use GenAI during this stage, arguing that it could not capture human authenticity and instead produced outputs that seemed artificial: *"I mainly use ChatGPT for idea planning. And I don't use it during the production process. That's because I've tried it a few times ... but there are too many signs of artificiality now."* Beyond concerns about authenticity, P16 also emphasized that GenAI often overrepresents men or portrays gender in stereotypical ways, underscoring the need for careful review. For example, he explained: *"AI, to give an example, discriminated against black people. [...] Doctors are mainly men, and nurses are mainly women. [...] But in reality, that may have been true in the past, but it may not be the case now."* Similarly, features such as face removal and subtitle generation raised concerns about privacy and identifiability, requiring creators to consider the potential for information leakage. P1 chose not to use GenAI for subtitle generation, explaining, *"If I entrust the subtitles to GenAI, can my personal information really be protected?"* Responsibility in this stage involved not only improving production efficiency but also ensuring that the resulting content was respectful, accurate, and ethically sound.

**4.1.3 Editing and Upload Preparation.** GenAI supported a wide range of post-production tasks. Participants commonly used tools such as ChatGPT to draft titles, descriptions, and thumbnails, refining them further before uploading their content. P5 noted, *"I use Midjourney sometimes for thumbnail image generation when I don't have time to draw."* Other creators relied on tools like TubeBuddy for A/B testing and vidIQ for metadata optimization, aiming to enhance content visibility and platform performance. P16 explained, *"Tools like TubeBuddy and vidIQ also offer thumbnail A/B testing features. If you upload multiple thumbnail samples, the AI determines which one attracts more viewers' attention. These tools use AI functionality to conduct thumbnail A/B tests and analyze which titles or descriptions result in better visibility."* Additionally, P2, who creates content related to AI tools, stated, *"At the upload stage, we ask the AI to generate a list of about 20 to 30 suggestions for elements such as thumbnails and titles, and then use those as a basis."*

At this stage, responsibility considerations primarily centered on transparency and authenticity. Creators carefully deliberated over whether and how to disclose the use of AI in their creative

process. Some participants explicitly indicated AI involvement through video descriptions or on-screen subtitles, recognizing their audience's right to be informed. At the same time, concerns arose regarding AI-generated titles or thumbnails that could drive engagement but compromise honest representation. P16, for example, hesitated to use GenAI for thumbnail creation, stating: "AI-generated thumbnails may attract more clicks, but they are often exaggerated compared to the actual video. I think this can undermine trust." Similarly, P12 refrained from using GenAI for titles, remarking: "If I use the AI-recommended titles solely to boost views, viewers may feel deceived. In the long run, I don't think it's good for the channel." Thus, creators sought to strike a careful balance between leveraging the performance benefits offered by AI and maintaining the trust and authenticity of their content.

**4.1.4 Post-management.** Participants noted that responsibility extended beyond the moment of publication. After releasing their content, creators actively monitored audience reactions and analyzed viewer comments to inform future planning. P6 stated, *"When I see comments, I come up with another idea."* Similarly, by leveraging GenAI to understand audience responses, P8 emphasized, *"I refer to the number of views and audience reactions when planning my next content. It's also important to identify which parts drew the most interest from viewers."* A consistent concern among creators was maintaining transparency about AI involvement over time. Even when content appeared authentic and human-made, failing to clearly disclose AI use could cause confusion or undermine audience trust.

P14 mentioned that *"we need something to discern what's AI generated versus what's real, because we're getting to a point now where, even though AI is not perfect, it's pretty good. And it can be misleading"* Consequently, participants highlighted the importance of ethical reflection not just during content production, but also as part of an ongoing commitment to fostering transparency and building long-term credibility with their audience. In addition, participants noted that ethical and policy standards related to AI-generated content were learned through interactions in online forums and shared experiences among fellow creators. They also adjusted their standards of responsible practices through interactions with advertisers and advertising agencies, thereby gaining insights into industry norms and expectations concerning AI-generated content.

## 4.2 Motivations and Meanings of Responsible GenAI Use

Participants expressed various motivations for practicing responsible AI use in their content creation. Broadly, these motivations fell into three categories: (i) to protect their channel and personal reputation, (ii) to build and maintain trust with their viewers, and (iii) to fulfill their social responsibility as creators by considering the broader impact of their content.

**4.2.1 Individual Level: Reputation Management.** Participants emphasized that producing responsible content was important in order to avoid situations that could damage their reputation as creators. P9, whose channel offers PhD-related content, explained: *"Once you become a creator, I believe there's no right to be forgotten. That's why I make an effort to ensure that when I use GenAI, the information is accurate and not harmful."* They filtered out misinformation and biased content to protect both their viewers and their reputation within the research community. For many, ethical use of AI was a necessity to avoid negative outcomes. P7, who creates IT-related news and informational videos, described how platform policies shaped their use: *"If I get three strikes, I'd have to shut down my business channel. That's why I can't afford to take risks with misleading or harmful AI content."*

P1 also expressed a desire to avoid being featured negatively in the media due to AI misuse. P4 and P9 noted they would refuse to use AI tools that could damage their brand image. Participants emphasized that responsible AI practices were viewed as important for sustainable growth. While AI could boost short-term metrics through sensationalism, they were wary of the long-term risks.

P16 warned: *"If someone creates content using fake news to make it more provocative, their channel could eventually get banned if someone reports it. Some creators don't realize this and only care about views. Later, they're like, 'Why can't I monetize my channel?'"*

**4.2.2 Relational Level: Audience Trust.** A key motivator across interviews was the desire to build content that their audience could trust. P10, who creates GenAI content such as portraits and digital art, shared their experience with the risks of generating biased images. They emphasized that biased content can lead to audience disengagement: *"If a channel keeps posting biased things, people will stop engaging. That's why staying authentic is so important. If they lose trust, it's hard to get it back."* For these creators, responsible use of GenAI was not merely an ethical stance but a necessary practice for fostering community engagement and loyalty. P4 and P11 noted that while ethical content creation requires more effort, it is crucial for long-term success. As P11 put it: *"If you create content that's good for the user and ethically sound, it will grow naturally."*

**4.2.3 Societal Level: Social Responsibility.** Many participants expressed a strong sense of social responsibility and a desire to contribute to a healthier digital culture, beyond their personal creative interests. Participants recognized the broader effects of content on society. P10 reflected: *"If we are creating good content that doesn't harm anyone, then it's good for monetization too. But if we use AI for blackmail or negative stuff, that's not okay. It doesn't send a good message to future generations who want to learn about AI."* These creators saw themselves not just as content producers but as contributors to the integrity and sustainability of the broader digital ecosystem.

### 4.3 Everyday Practices of Responsibility

Alongside content creation, participants actively engaged in invisible forms of responsibility work within their GenAI-assisted workflows. Rather than treating AI merely as a technical tool, they approached its use with a sense of ethical responsibility, employing four key practices:

**4.3.1 Ensuring Content Quality and Safety within Creator-driven AI Workflows.** Participants carefully checked the accuracy, bias, and harmfulness of AI-generated content in order to maintain audience trust and protect their channel's reputation. Fact-checking and source verification were the most commonly adopted responsible practices among participants. Multiple participants repeatedly reviewed the accuracy of AI-generated information rather than simply accepting it, to avoid conveying misinformation to viewers and damaging their brand's reliability.

Content creators function as providers of diverse knowledge and information. For them, trust in their content is a crucial element. If a creator loses trust with their viewers, it can severely damage the channel's reputation and lead to long-term negative consequences, such as declining subscriber numbers. Moreover, once trust is compromised, it becomes extremely difficult to rebuild. Hence, participants were particularly cautious in ensuring the accuracy and safety of their content. For this reason, creators actively reviewed AI-generated content and thoroughly performed fact-checking as part of responsible content creation practices. For example, P6, who creates basketball-related content, was highly sensitive to hallucinations generated by AI, explaining:

*"Yes, in terms of ChatGPT hallucinating me, I am pretty sensitive. Every time, I fact-check with Google to get the facts right. [...] For example, if I look for the house price of an NBA player and ChatGPT says, 'the house in LA is worth this much,' I use Google to cross-check it."*

P7, who has a background in journalism and works in corporate public relations, was particularly cautious given that their content could be interpreted as official information:

*"Since what I say or do becomes official, getting something wrong is very risky for the company, so I need to study or verify more carefully. Rather than just accepting what the*

*AI gives me, I always double-check whether the AI correctly understands what I already know clearly. I test the accuracy by asking questions I already have definite answers to, so I can confirm what information is reliable and what should not be used."*

P13, who creates daily-life vlogs, mentioned that viewer feedback alerted her to incorrect information, prompting her to invest more effort into ensuring accuracy in subsequent content creation: *"When subscribers first leave comments about incorrect information, I realize that I would have caught things I missed if I had researched more broadly. I say to myself, 'Oh, I missed something,' and it seems like next time when I create content, I try to spend more time ensuring the information is more accurate."*

In addition to information accuracy, participants screened AI-generated content to avoid potential bias or harm. Participants were particularly cautious about sensitive topics, such as religion, gender, and emotions, recognizing the potential impact such issues could have on viewers. P10, who creates image-based content using GenAI, explained their cautious approach as follows: *"It is the users who have to ignore those things which are not correct, and we need to adopt the right-oriented things I can say. [...] I usually try to avoid those results which are not perfect or like it is harming any religious or any sentiments of people."* P11, who produces technology-focused content, highlighted gender bias in AI, stating: *"The main ethical challenge nowadays... is gender-based challenges... somewhere in AI, they are going to more focus on the man as compared to the woman. So this is again, the same challenge I'm just finding in the AI." "There is a bias in the AI and that is nowadays a problem." "We can just use AI as a supportive right hand... but we should apply our wisdom."*

These examples illustrate how participants examined AI-generated content, demonstrating ethical sensitivity by considering broader social and cultural contexts. This proactive approach went beyond mere technological use, exemplifying responsible practices aimed at ensuring trustworthiness and safety throughout the content creation process.

#### **4.3.2 Preserving Creative Integrity and Human Agency in AI-assisted Content Creation.**

Participants engaged in a number of practices to avoid excessive dependence on AI, striving to maintain their unique creative styles and expressive identities while preventing unauthorized copying or plagiarism. Some creators intentionally distanced themselves from AI or temporarily suspended its use to safeguard their creative autonomy. Content creators operate channels that express their unique personalities and styles, directly connected to their personal brand identities. This differentiation is closely tied to long-term economic outcomes, such as increased subscribers and viewership. Thus, creators were acutely aware that losing their individuality and creativity, essentially their own "voice," could diminish their content's appeal, ultimately resulting in financial losses. In other words, a creator's originality was perceived as a core asset directly linked to their economic success. Given these concerns, participants made deliberate efforts to preserve their creativity and originality despite the convenience offered by AI technologies. For instance, P8, a YouTube creator focusing on AI-related knowledge, explicitly expressed his intention to reclaim his personal creative methods rather than completely relying on AI:

*"So now I feel like I'm continuing to develop myself, and as a result, the purpose of my work seems to have changed a bit. [...] I think I need to keep evaluating myself, what percentage of this work is mine or AI work.", "Now I try to develop my own style rather than rely entirely on AI."*

Similarly, P4, who produces daily life and design-related content, was concerned that over-reliance on AI could damage the distinctive identity of her channel. Therefore, she actively managed her creative process by extensively rewriting AI-generated outputs to preserve her unique voice and tone:

*"If AI did everything, it might be convenient, but my videos would become too similar, and that's not what I want.", "I use AI to assist with grammar and structure, but I always rewrite to keep my voice and tone."*

P13, a daily-life vlogger, described her increasing dependence on AI tools. She expressed anxiety that arose whenever she did not personally verify AI-generated information, even though she knew it was accurate, highlighting the necessity of maintaining a distance from AI to retain creative autonomy: *"Even though I know I'm right, I feel anxious if I don't confirm it at least once with ChatGPT. [...] That's why I think it's necessary to have some time away from AI."* Meanwhile, creators like P14, who produces humor-focused content using GenAI-produced images and videos, and P3, who creates personality-type character design content with GenAI, strictly avoided modeling or reproducing real individuals or real-life situations. These strategies not only prevented potential ethical and legal issues, but also helped to protect their long-term reputation and profitability. Unauthorized copying or imitation of other people's characters or real individuals could severely damage a channel's credibility. In particular, copyright infringement or disputes over image rights could lead to legal accountability and loss of audience trust, ultimately resulting in substantial decreases in subscribers and revenue. Reflecting on these risks, P14 explicitly emphasized his principle of never modeling real individuals or situations in his creations. Although tempted at times to use popular actors' faces in his AI-generated works, he refrained to safeguard his channel's long-term reputation and value:

*"I've been tempted at times to use, like, an actor's face in one of my AI creations... but I don't. But I have seen others that do... I make sure everything I create is not modeled after any real-life individual or real-life situation."*

Likewise, P3 expressed concerns about potential misunderstandings when generating images with AI, choosing instead to entirely avoid AI-generated images to prevent accusations of copying other creators' characters: *"If I generate images using AI, I'm worried people might think I copied someone else's character. So, I avoid using AI and draw everything myself."* These examples illustrate participants' deliberate decisions to limit or exclude AI as merely an assistive tool in order to preserve their unique voices and creative authenticity. This approach represents responsible practices actively aimed at maintaining human agency as creators.

**4.3.3 Transparency and Information Control in Content Creators' GenAI Practices.** Participants recognized the importance of disclosing the use of AI in their content creation processes. Disclosing whether AI was used was considered not only a minimum ethical standard but also crucial for earning audience trust, as loss of trust could damage their channel's reputation, leading to severe long-term consequences such as rapid loss of subscribers. Thus, participants made deliberate efforts to ensure viewers accurately understood the extent of AI involvement in their content and the specific ways AI assisted in the process. For instance, P9, a YouTube creator producing content about PhD life and research experiences, emphasized that presenting AI-generated content as if it were entirely human-made was among the most unethical actions a creator could take. They remarked: *"The most unethical action is presenting something entirely created by AI as if I made it myself."* They also described continuously evaluating AI's contribution to their work, stating:

*"I constantly ask myself how much AI contributed to this work and how much was my own effort. I believe that this ratio should also be clearly disclosed to the audience."*

These statements reflect participants' perceptions of AI transparency disclosure as an ongoing process of continuously assessing and sharing the degree of AI involvement, rather than merely a one-time declaration. P10, who creates content across multiple platforms, highlighted the usefulness of labeling features like 'Meta generated' provided by platforms such as Facebook and Instagram:



*"I think some guidelines or something... In Facebook or Instagram, you can see one option, 'Meta generated'. Okay, so an AI-generated label is there. You can turn on that label, and that is really helping people to identify the things over the internet or social media."* In addition, P8 and P14 advocated for moving beyond a binary approach of simply declaring "used AI" or "didn't use AI." They emphasized the necessity of 'multilayered transparency,' which includes clearly communicating the proportion of human effort and detailed context of content creation. P14 suggested: *"It would be useful to have a label indicating what percentage of the content was created by humans and how much human effort was involved."* This viewpoint illustrates a responsible ethical practice aimed at providing audiences with comprehensive transparency, encompassing not only AI usage but also the broader context and extent of human involvement in content creation.

Additionally, P16, who utilizes AI-based narration and voice dubbing, criticized the current lack of platform-based support around clear AI disclosure, noting: *"Content made with AI definitely needs clear disclosure. Right now, even if I use voice dubbing tools like Clova, I often just use them without explicitly mentioning AI involvement. But there's no clear toggle or indicator anywhere saying, 'This voice was generated by AI.'"* Participants thus called for greater transparency beyond basic AI disclosure, emphasizing the importance of clearly communicating the manner and extent of AI's involvement in the content creation process. They highlighted the need for platform-level policies and practices to establish more detailed, multilayered transparency standards to genuinely build audience trust.

**4.3.4 Managing Privacy Risks in Creators' GenAI-driven Workflows.** Participants were aware of the risk that AI tools could unintentionally expose or learn sensitive personal information during content creation. If AI-generated content unintentionally included sensitive details such as real names, locations, family members' faces, or brand names, it could compromise personal privacy and potentially result in legal liabilities for the creators. Such privacy breaches could damage audience trust, negatively impact subscriber relationships, and ultimately cause significant economic risks such as loss of subscribers and revenue over the long term. To proactively prevent these risks, participants adopted specific strategies from the earliest stages of content production, carefully managing and minimizing any potential for unintended information leakage. For example, P7, who creates branded collaboration content, deliberately avoided inputting sensitive brand or product names directly into AI systems, opting instead for more general descriptions to eliminate unnecessary leakage of information. They explained:

*"When collaborating with brands, I avoid directly entering specific brand names or product details into the AI and try to replace them with more general terms. By doing this, I minimize the risk of sensitive information unintentionally leaking out, especially if the content is later used in different contexts."*

Similarly, P16, who creates local event and dining content, frequently includes information about brands, personal details, places, and events in their videos. They expressed strong concern that AI systems could unintentionally learn and reuse sensitive personal details. To mitigate this risk, P16 strictly avoided inputting personal data into AI systems from the outset: *"If I input personal or sensitive information into AI, it might unintentionally learn or use this data later in my content. Because of this risk, I avoid entering personal information altogether unless it is absolutely necessary."* Additionally, P11, who produces technology-related content, emphasized the severe damage that unintended exposure of sensitive data could cause to a creator's reputation. They rigorously review AI-generated outputs to ensure that no sensitive details are inadvertently included. Overall, participants balanced transparency regarding AI usage with meticulous control of sensitive information. These practices demonstrated responsible management of privacy and trust, effectively preventing

potential legal and economic risks associated with unintended information leakage in AI-generated content.

#### 4.4 Content Creators' Challenges in Practicing Responsible GenAI Use

Beyond their motivations and everyday practices, creators described several structural conditions that made it difficult to sustain responsible use of GenAI. These conditions stemmed from platform algorithmic logics and the accelerated pace of content production, while the lack of support further constrained creators' ability to enact responsibility. Together, these factors interacted to produce ongoing tensions that continually shaped how creators negotiated responsibility within their GenAI-assisted workflows.

**4.4.1 Survival in an Algorithmically-driven System.** The content creators in our study were clearly aware of their responsibility in using AI and made active efforts to put this into practice. However, the working conditions faced by creators added additional constraints that made maintaining such a sense of responsibility particularly challenging. In particular, creators experienced significant tension and conflict between the practical pressures for survival and economic success on platforms and their ethical responsibilities. Participants emphasized that these ongoing tensions and conflicts continuously hindered their efforts to practice responsible AI use, highlighting the following specific challenges.

Content creators faced a significant dilemma: balancing audience expectations and preferences with responsible AI usage. Although participants recognized that transparently disclosing AI involvement was ethical and responsible, they frequently faced negative reactions or criticism upon doing so. This largely stemmed from the public's negative perceptions and prejudices against AI-generated content. For example, P9, who produces content about PhD life and research experiences, acknowledged that transparently disclosing AI use is the ethical course of action. However, they expressed concerns that such disclosure could lead viewers to underestimate their creativity: *"I worry that if I say I used AI, people will think I'm less creative."* This example illustrates how creators using AI grapple with issues related to self-esteem and identity. Explicitly revealing AI involvement can lead audiences to question the creators' originality and authenticity, potentially harming the channel's credibility and long-term brand image. Similarly, P14, who produces humor-based content using AI-generated images and videos, shared unexpected negative responses despite clearly disclosing AI involvement:

*"I disclosed that it was made with AI but people didn't like that. I received hateful comments even though it was humor content.", "There is stigma around AI content... even if it's ethical and humorous, people don't like it because it's AI. That's not because of what I've created, but because of what others have done. And the algorithm doesn't distinguish that."*

Additionally, P16 pointed out that even decisions around disclosing the use of AI-generated content are influenced by algorithmic pressures: *"Nowadays, YouTube says you should disclose AI-generated content. But many people don't because they're worried disclosure might reduce their views."*

These statements highlight the difficulty creators experience when attempting to maintain a balance between responsible AI disclosure and audience preferences. Because openly disclosing AI use could trigger negative reactions and damage the channel's reputation, creators experienced internal conflicts during decision-making processes. Ultimately, they found themselves constantly navigating delicate strategic compromises between ethical responsibility and audience expectations.

Content creators heavily rely on platform recommendation algorithms to determine how widely their content reaches subscribers and viewers, directly impacting their ability to earn revenue and

sustain their livelihoods. Particularly with the emergence of GenAI, creators can easily produce realistic deepfake videos or content containing believable but inaccurate information (hallucinations), significantly intensifying the conflict between ethical responsibilities and economic survival. For instance, P16, who creates local dining and event guide content, clearly described how advertiser demands for high view counts often compel creators to prioritize provocative AI-generated content over ethical considerations: *"Advertisers usually set prices based on subscriber numbers, or explicitly state in contracts, 'You'll only get paid if this video reaches at least 100,000 views.' Ultimately, with money directly in front of us, the temptation to create provocative or misleading AI content inevitably increases."*

Similarly, P8, who produces informational content about AI tools, explained that although he initially tried to maintain personal ethical standards when using GenAI, over time he increasingly produced provocative and sensational AI-generated content to maximize audience engagement: *"In the past, I focused on creating AI content aligned with my own ethical standards, but nowadays I pay more attention to audience reactions, such as views and comments. Eventually, ethical considerations are increasingly pushed aside, and creating more provocative AI-generated content becomes my priority to attract audience attention."*

These examples highlight the continuous tension and conflict creators experience in the GenAI environment between adhering to platform-driven visibility and revenue pressures, and practicing responsible content creation. Consequently, creators faced a structural dilemma, frequently experiencing pressure to balance ethical convictions with economic demands imposed by algorithm-centered ecosystems.

**4.4.2 The Speed Trap of Content Production.** One of the most significant structural pressures faced by content creators was the demand for rapid content production within algorithm-driven platform environments. Participants emphasized that frequent posting and quick updates were perceived as important strategies to maintain competitive advantage. However, responsible AI practices such as verifying accuracy required considerable time, slowing down the content production process and by extension, reducing revenue. Consequently, participants found themselves constantly balancing their ethical responsibilities and the practical need to rapidly update content. For example, P15, who uploads AI-generated art and design, highlighted productivity as the top priority on platforms, stating, *"Productivity is the priority—that is the primary thing to think about."*

Similarly, P13, who shares everyday life vlogs edited with AI tools, explained that efficiency and speed were their main priorities, leaving little room for in-depth ethical reflection:

*"From a creator's perspective, reducing time and enhancing efficiency are priorities, so I often don't have enough room to deeply reflect on ethical impacts." "Strictly adhering to ethical guidelines is realistically very challenging, because it's difficult to secure sufficient time in the actual production process."*

Likewise, P6, who produces basketball-related content, described a noticeable slowdown in content creation speed due to the necessity of cross-checking information provided by AI tools against sources like Google: *"I spent a lot of time cross-checking the facts. It was pretty time-consuming."*

Additionally, P3, who creates psychology and personality-related AI-generated images and videos, noted the fundamental tension between ethics and profitability, stating: *"When faced with a conflict between ethical responsibility and economic profitability, I believe nearly nine out of ten people will ultimately choose the path that enhances productivity and generates greater revenue, rather than prioritizing ethical considerations."*

These examples clearly illustrate that content creators experienced deep dilemmas arising from the inherent time-consuming nature of producing ethically responsible content and the competitive

pressure to update content rapidly within platform environments. Ultimately, creators often felt compelled to continually seek practical compromises between these conflicting demands.

**4.4.3 High Impact, Low Support: Individual Learning for Responsible Use of GenAI.** Content creators use GenAI tools to produce influential content that reaches broad audiences. However, they often lack the necessary legal, institutional, and editorial support to effectively implement ethical practices and ensure content reliability. In particular, due to the absence of specific and clear guidelines from platforms or institutions, creators faced pressure to independently develop and learn their own standards for responsible AI use. Within this context, creators experienced the additional challenge of forming their own communities to fill the gaps left by inadequate institutional support, exchanging norms and sharing best practices or lessons learned. Many participants reported frequently relying on self-directed learning due to the lack of sufficiently clear guidelines on responsible content creation. For example, P9 highlighted this gap by stating:

*"While there are clear international ethical guidelines in academic writing, there are no such standards for content creation. Consequently, creators naturally focus more on the benefits of AI rather than ethical concerns."*

Similarly, P15, who uploads AI-generated art and design content, expressed frustration with the lack of available resources on responsible AI use: *"There aren't really many tools or guidelines out there. So I just rely on my own experience and judgment to figure out what's okay to use."* Some participants actively sought external resources such as podcasts or books but found few practical educational channels specifically tailored to content creators. P13, who uploads daily-life content edited with AI, stated: *"I actively seek out podcasts and books that discuss the pros and cons of AI, but in reality, there aren't any channels where content creators can properly learn ethical AI practices."*

Similarly, P16, who creates local dining and event guide content, mentioned the tedious necessity of individually reviewing platform policies to establish their own guidelines. P3, who produces psychology and personality-related AI-generated images and videos, also criticized existing guidelines as being overly broad and complex, making them difficult to apply practically.

Recognizing these issues, participants emphasized the urgent need for systematic and concrete educational programs. For instance, P11, who produces technology-related content, argued that even creators with limited technological knowledge require education on responsible AI use, stating:

*"What we need most is an in-depth educational program accessible to everyone, focusing on ethical AI use and prevention of data misuse. This education should be provided at a corporate or government level."*

Despite their efforts to acquire ethical AI knowledge independently, content creators faced burdens due to the lack of clear support structures, leading to considerable trial and error. To alleviate these challenges, participants acknowledged that individual efforts alone were insufficient. They emphasized the importance of sharing experiences within creator communities and collectively developing standards of practice. For example, P8, who creates AI-tool-related content, explained:

*"Because platforms and institutions don't provide clear guidelines, we need to form their own communities to share standards and practices for responsible AI use and content ethics."*

Additionally, P16 described how creators within their YouTube community share insights and ethical standards: *"We have a group chat room among YouTubers, where we frequently discuss and share information on responsible AI use and content creation. By observing mistakes made by other creators or advertising companies, we often learn what practices to avoid. Within our community, we regularly discuss these ethical issues and exchange ideas on how to enhance our responsible practices. While platforms like Google Community provide spaces to ask AI-related questions, responses there*

*typically come from general users rather than experts, as professionals rarely engage in these forums."* These examples highlight the urgent need to establish systematic support systems at organizational and practical levels, moving beyond individual learning and trial-and-error, to support responsible AI practices effectively among content creators.

## 5 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Negotiating Between Algorithmic Visibility and Responsibility

Previous research in HCI and CSCW has demonstrated how algorithmic pressures structurally compel workers to undertake additional, often uncompensated ethical responsibilities, commonly referred to as "responsibility work." Such work involves continually interpreting, performing, and negotiating ethical obligations amid opaque platform systems and shifting social expectations. Platforms and algorithms further exacerbate the individualization of responsibility by delegating accountability to individual workers without offering clear guidelines or sufficient institutional support [22, 37, 44, 55]. This body of work suggests that content creators, as platform-dependent workers, are likewise subject to such algorithmically-driven responsibility work. Yet, how this plays out in the context of emerging GenAI tools remains underexplored.

Prior studies indicate that creators pursue diverse motivations such as self-expression [23, 46, 85], monetization [38, 64, 102], and community contribution [8, 18, 91], with visibility serving as a key means of achieving these goals. Across these pursuits, visibility serves both as a vital resource and a limiting constraint [20]. Such pressures and motivations often encourage the production of provocative or sensationalized content, generating significant ethical dilemmas [25, 26, 29, 40]. Creators may obscure sponsorship disclosures to maximize visibility [69, 81, 108] or omit negative experiences to maintain engagement, which creates further tensions around authenticity and responsibility [50, 100].

While this prior work offers valuable insights into creators' motivations and dilemmas, discussions remain limited on how content creators navigate newly emerging forms of responsibility work and the challenges they face when integrating GenAI tools into their creative workflows. Our study empirically investigates the specific ethical responsibilities and tensions encountered by content creators adopting GenAI. Our findings reveal that integrating GenAI tools intensifies existing tensions between responsible AI practices and the demands of platform algorithms. Creators engage in extensive and often invisible responsibility work, including continuously verifying content accuracy, proactively managing algorithmic biases, transparently disclosing AI usage, and comprehensively addressing privacy and security issues. These additional responsibilities frequently clash with rapid content production cycles and algorithmic demands driven by engagement, creating substantial practical barriers to effectively implementing responsible AI practices. Therefore, responsibility work associated with GenAI usage extends well beyond producing merely non-provocative or authentic content, requiring more complex ethical efforts.

Furthermore, due to the absence of formal ethical guidelines and adequate institutional support from platforms, content creators voluntarily form online communities to collaboratively learn and share responsible AI practices, highlighting how responsibility work transcends individual efforts to encompass collective, community-level collaboration. Creators also face ethical dilemmas related to transparency in AI disclosures. Transparent disclosure risks provoking negative audience reactions, potentially harming credibility and reputation, while nondisclosure raises ethical concerns and risks undermining audience trust. Thus, decisions about AI disclosure are influenced by broader socio-technical factors, including creators' relationships with their audiences, economic pressures, algorithmic incentives, and inherent characteristics of GenAI technology itself.

Our study reveals that relying solely on individual accountability is insufficient to achieve sustainable and effective responsible AI practices. Instead, we emphasize the need to move beyond individualizing responsibility work and instead establishing systemic, socio-technical frameworks involving platforms, creator communities, audiences, and policymakers. Future research and policy should focus on restructuring platform incentives and developing concrete institutional and technological support mechanisms, ultimately fostering a fair, sustainable, and genuinely responsible content creation ecosystem.

## 5.2 Design Implications for Supporting Content Creators' Responsible AI Use

This study demonstrates that content creators bear a substantial burden of responsibility when integrating GenAI into their workflows. In the absence of clear platform guidelines or institutional safeguards, creators are required to independently interpret, perform, and negotiate ethical responsibilities. To move beyond the individualization of responsibility, this study proposes design implications tailored to the context of content creators that support responsibility work across three interrelated levels: individual, community, and institutional.

**(1) Individual-Level Support:** We found that content creators primarily rely on self-directed learning to understand and implement responsible AI use, thus increasing the burden in carrying out responsibility work. In particular, accessible tools that support creators in evaluating and anticipating the ethical implications of AI-generated content remain limited.

To help address this challenge, practical tools could be designed to integrate naturally into content production workflows. For example, drawing from prior research that explored how LLMs can assist AI practitioners in simulating diverse stakeholder perspectives before system deployment [96], a similar approach could be adopted for content creators. Such systems might allow creators to input their content and receive automated suggestions about potential individuals or groups of content consumers groups, who may be affected, along with anticipated harms or social consequences. This could help creators reflect on ethical impacts and make more informed decisions prior to publication.

In addition, incorporating ethical checklists into the content publishing stage may encourage creators to conduct fact-checking or bias detection before uploading. Prior work has demonstrated that checklist-based tools can be effective in supporting ethical decision-making [68].

Standardized labeling systems for AI-generated or AI-assisted content could also help creators intuitively communicate AI usage to their audiences. Transparency tools that are adaptable across different stages of content creation—such as planning, editing, or subtitling—may align with creators' goals to clearly convey the scope and context of AI involvement [42].

Furthermore, interactive learning modules embedded in creator environments like YouTube Shorts or Instagram Stories could help normalize ethical reflection by enabling creators to independently explore and resolve ethical dilemmas. This approach is consistent with prior work on interface design principles for supporting non-expert users' ethical judgment in GenAI contexts [95, 99], and aligns with calls for more systematic educational and regulatory support for responsible AI use [103].

**(2) Community-Level Support:** Prior research has shown that community support can play an important role in helping creators respond to platform algorithms. For example, Bishop analyzed how algorithmic gossip among creators helps to fill informational gaps about algorithms and confront power imbalances [9], while Register et al. emphasized that peer communities exchange advice on algorithmic transparency and content authenticity, thereby supporting more stable relationships between creators and platforms [79]. Our study extends this line of work by demonstrating that community support can also play a critical role in cultivating and promoting responsible uses of GenAI.



We found that in the absence of formal support, creators have independently formed informal peer communities where they exchange knowledge, strategies, and ethical norms for responsible AI use. These communities serve as an essential mechanism for sustaining ethical practices, yet they often lack structured infrastructure and long-term support. To enhance these efforts, platforms or neutral third-party organizations could establish infrastructures that facilitate knowledge-sharing and the collaborative development of ethical norms among creators. For example, dedicated spaces such as a "Creator Commons for Responsible AI Use" could support creators in defining and evolving responsibility work collectively. In addition, systems for anonymous discussion of ethical dilemmas and curated archives of AI use cases or adverse outcomes could help normalize responsible reflection as part of everyday practice. Furthermore, these community-based spaces could include interactive channels where experts such as ethicists, legal advisors, and content policy professionals participate. These experts can offer real-time guidance and feedback when creators face complex ethical or legal questions.

We also found that some creators engage in responsible AI use by collaborating with their audiences to identify and refine inaccurate AI-generated content. Based on this insight, platforms could develop collaborative content moderation systems in which creators and viewers jointly manage content quality and trustworthiness. Rather than relying solely on basic content flagging, platforms might consider implementing interactive tools such as a "Content Responsibility Dialogue System" that allows viewers to raise specific concerns and creators to respond promptly. Such systems can foster mutual trust and support shared responsibility for ethical content practices across the platform ecosystem.

This approach resonates with the case of Turkopticon, a community-driven review system developed by Amazon Mechanical Turk workers, which demonstrated that ethical infrastructures can be built and sustained independently of platform governance [44]. Similarly, prior work on YouTube creators sharing algorithmic risk coping strategies in community forums shows that informal communities can effectively co-construct and practice shared ethical standards [64].

**(3) Institutional-Level Support:** Our study shows that although creators intend to use GenAI responsibly, they often feel that algorithmic pressures hinder rather than support such ethical practices. In particular, platform revenue models and visibility-driven recommendation systems tend to favor fast-paced and provocative content, meaning that efforts to use AI responsibly may actually be penalized. As a result, creators face structural dilemmas in which they must choose between long-term trust and social responsibility on the one hand, and short-term survival in competitive environments on the other.

For responsible practices to be sustainable at the individual or community level, structural alignment at the platform and policy levels is essential. Prior research has also argued that leaving ethical responsibility solely to individual influencers is insufficient [26, 108], emphasizing that regulators and platform policymakers must strengthen rules and guidelines on transparency and accountability in sponsorships and brand collaborations to protect audiences and vulnerable groups [50]. Building on these insights, our study highlights the need for new forms of structural support and institutional mechanisms in the context of GenAI use.

For example, platforms could introduce incentive structures that reward ethical behavior. These may include algorithmic boosts for responsible content, or visibility mechanisms such as transparency badges or verified ethical creator labels, which help surface and acknowledge creators who demonstrate ethical integrity. At the policy level, it is critical to establish clear standards around GenAI content disclosure, transparency in model bias and data sources, and accountability mechanisms for AI-related harms. These measures can help creators operate with clarity and confidence under legal and ethical guidelines. Therefore, it may be beneficial to establish collaborative

governance structures and policy-making processes involving diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, platforms, creators, and researchers, to support the development of ethical guidelines and regulations that are both adaptive to technological change and grounded in real-world practices.

## 6 LIMITATIONS

This study focused on creators from the United States, South Korea, and India, which may not represent the general population and could limit the generalizability of the results. The participants in this study generally had prior exposure to or awareness of AI's potential harms. However, research is also needed on how to motivate creators who are less inclined to engage in ethical or responsible content creation, or who may not be interested in these topics at all. Additionally, the findings reflect the current state of generative AI tools used to assist content creators, but given the rapidly evolving nature of this space, they may not fully capture all possible scenarios. As the content creation landscape continues to evolve and new policies regarding ethical AI use emerge, ongoing research will be necessary to help creators adapt.

Our research primarily focused on creators using social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Given the higher user base and visibility infrastructure of YouTube, it is plausible that YouTube creators were overrepresented relative to the ones from other social media platforms in our sample. Since different platforms have distinct policies and guidelines, the findings may not be universally applicable across all platforms. Future research should validate these insights with creators operating in a broader range of platform environments. Our sample also included several early-stage creators who had been producing content for just over a year. GenAI has lowered barriers to entry, and it is possible that some of these creators entered the creator ecosystem because GenAI tools made content production more accessible. Their shorter experience, compared with more established creators, may have influenced how responsibility work manifested in our findings.

Moreover, although our sample included not only technology-focused creators but also those from diverse domains such as arts, lifestyle, sports, design, and local guides, the participant pool was still skewed toward male creators, with some specializing in technology or AI-related content. Given the nature of this research topic, it is possible that creators already familiar with or experimenting with GenAI were more likely to participate, which may have led to their perspectives being relatively overrepresented. While these accounts offer valuable insights into early contexts of GenAI use, the demographic skew may have biased the findings toward more favorable or optimistic framings of GenAI adoption. This represents a limitation but also provides important insight into understanding the early contexts in which GenAI is actually being used. Future research should address this by improving gender balance and deliberately including creators from non-technical domains with lower technology adoption rates to expand the scope of perspectives studied.

## 7 CONCLUSION

This study conducted interviews with 16 content creators to explore the challenges, coping strategies, and underlying motivations they face when attempting to responsibly integrate generative AI into their content creation processes. The findings revealed that creators were strongly motivated to practice responsible AI use in order to protect their channel's reputation, maintain audience trust, and ultimately contribute to positive societal impact. However, they encountered persistent ethical tensions and conflicts arising from pressures to produce content rapidly and from incentive structures embedded in platform ecosystems. To practice responsible AI use, creators adopted a range of strategies including self-directed learning about ethical responsibilities, community-based knowledge sharing, and developing their own systems for fact-checking and incorporating viewer

feedback into content review. Nevertheless, these efforts largely remained at the individual and voluntary level. In the absence of clear platform-level ethical guidelines and institutional mechanisms to support collaborative responsibility among creators, the ethical burden fell disproportionately on individual creators. Therefore, future research and practical efforts should focus on developing explicit and actionable ethical guidelines and support systems at both the platform and policy levels. In particular, establishing structural foundations that enable collaborative responsibility among creators and between creators and viewers is essential. Such structural support is critical for enabling creators to sustainably practice responsible AI use and, in the long term, fostering a healthier and more sustainable content creation ecosystem.

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