1 Interview Guideline

Introduction Hello. Thank you for your interest in participating in our study! My name is $NAME$, and I am a research assistant at $INSTITUTION$. This project is in collaboration with $ANOTHER INSTITUTION$. We're trying to mitigate the privacy and security issues of content creators in Pakistan. To quickly go over how today's study is going to work, we will start with a brief verification of your status as a content creator. Then I'm going to ask you questions about your experiences with online content creation work. Our conversation should not take more than an hour. Feel free to let me know if you don't want to answer any questions, and we'll move on to the next question or we can stop the study, just let me know. If you have any questions about me or the study, we can talk about them first, then I'll ask your consent to start the recording and we'll start. [pause for questions] Are you ok to start the recording?

[Potential administrative questions]:

- What will the study be used for?

  The purpose of this study is to understand the digital safety and security needs of Influencers. Our findings can be used to identify areas of improvement and to offer context-dependent security advice for Influencers.

- How secure is my data / how will my data be anonymized / etc?

  The recording of this interview is uploaded to our secure $INSTITUTION$ cloud. We are legally bound by research ethics and data privacy under the $NAME OF REGULATORY AUTHORITY$ Regulations. The anonymity and security of our participants is of the highest importance to us, but as mentioned in the consent form that you saw and agreed to in the screening survey, you have the right to stop the interview and withdraw your data at any time if you change your mind. The interviews and emails to you regarding it will be deleted within 12 months and only the anonymized data will be retained (apart from your email address if you choose to be on the list to be kept informed of publications). If we come across anything that compromises your anonymity, that piece of information will be redacted and replaced with a generalized version of what you say.

(1) Verification Section Before we begin, we'd like to start by confirming your role as a content creator to make sure that you match our criteria for the project.

- Please list all the platforms you use to post and create content.

- For each platform, how many posts do you create in a week?

- How many sponsored posts do you create for each platform in a week?

- For each platform, give an estimate of your follower/subscriber count.

- What ways do you employ for each platform to keep your reach desirable?

- When did you start receiving compensation for your social media content? And are you still actively receiving compensation for your social media content?

- How much of your annual income would you estimate is earned through the content you post on social media?

- Do you have multiple accounts on the same platform that generate your revenue?

- Could you give us an aggregate percentage of how much income you generate from all your accounts combined?

- Do you have any civilian jobs? How much do they contribute to your annual income?

(2) Defining their Work We would like to begin with a few baseline questions about your experience with content creation.

- How would you define your job title? Influencer, content creator, etc? *(this is how we determine what to call them moving forward)*

- You mentioned that you are active on [platforms]:

- What kind of influencing content do you create on [platforms]?

- Can you describe or characterize the audience or niche your influencing content caters to?

- Can you tell us what age demographic your followers fall in?

- Could you describe a typical day/week for you in terms of your influencing/content creation work?

- Does anyone help manage your online presence on any of the platforms? Who?

  - What aspects of your online presence do they help with?

- Do they have access to any of your creator accounts? If so, which and why?

- Who has access to your personal gadgets (mobile tab etc)?

- How long have they been helping you manage your online presence?

- Why did you primarily hire them?

- Have they worked for more than what they were initially hired for? [If yes] Why is that?

- Do you work with others in order to create content or do your influencing work? [prompts: someone who takes pictures, someone who replies to messages on your behalf, editor]

  - (if they talk about collaboration) What type of content do you and the person(s) you mentioned collaborate to create together?

  - How did you find someone to help you / evaluate whether you wanted this particular person? Can you tell me more about your experience with this?

  - Do you share your credentials with this person / how do you collaborate?

- How does being a ¡platform¿ creator/influencer impact your life? Both positively and negatively. [Prompts: sleeping routines, relationships, civilian jobs, family life, finances, education, mental health]

- Are there certain people in your life who you don't want to know about your work? (If yes) How do you try to prevent them from finding out?

- Are there any specific topics you avoid talking about on your platforms, If yes then what and why?

- What are the main challenges you would say you face as an influencer?

(3) Safety and Negative Experiences We would now like to discuss safety while influencing and some of the more negative experiences you've had doing influencing work if any.

- What does safe or being/feeling safe mean to you as an influencer content creator?

- What are the things that make you feel vulnerable or unsafe (both in the digital and real world)?

- What does privacy mean to you as an influencer content creator? What would be private for you and would be ok to make public? (prompt only if the answer to the firs question is vague)

- As a content creator/influencer, would you say your work affects you more physically or mentally?

- As a content creator, what are your biggest digital and physical concerns? (probe if need be: including hate and harassment)

  - What are you worried will happen as a result of [concerns]?

  - Who are you most worried might do these things to you?

  - What have you done to address this? How effective has it been?

  - Did you reach out to anyone? How did they help you?

- Do you do anything to maintain your safety online as an influencer that you didn't do before you started content creation? How did you learn these strategies?

- Have you ever had negative experiences doing influencing work using [platform(s)]? What about any negative experiences offline, "in real life"?

  [digital and physical safety prompts only if needed: Privacy and Security, Deep or cheap fakes, Misinformation or conspiracy theories, Hate/ harassment,Account takeover - Hijacking, Monetization redirected, Impersonation, Stalking, Bullying, trolling, Personal content being leaked, Excessive negative reviews]

  [Follow up if not] Do you know anyone who has ever experienced anything negative, online or in real life, while doing influencer work?

  - If yes, please describe this/these incident(s). Remember that you do not have to mention any personal or sensitive information.

  - Which platform(s)? Was this experience happening across platforms or just once?

  - Can you tell us who did this to you? Do you think you know the reason they did this with you?

  - Can you tell us how you responded to it? What happened as a result of what you did?

- Would you say you had to go through these experiences because of your personal traits? Such as your beliefs, faith, or characteristics? Why?
- Did these experiences impact the people around you? Your family and friends for example? How often do you go to them for counsel on your online life?
- How have these experiences informed your impressions of these platforms?
- Do you feel you will ever fall in the same situation again? Why is that? Will the wisdom you have gained as a result of previous experiences help you mitigate the problem as fast as possible?

- Considering your experiences as a creator across platforms, can you think of any experiences with digital or physical threats that you chose to ignore? What happened?
- As a creator, do you think there is anything unique when it comes to hate and harassment (digital or physical) one might face? Does this happen across platforms?
- Do you think digital and physical safety concerns or experiences are an inevitable part of being a creator, including hate and harassment? Why/why not?
- Can you imagine a world as a creator where you would NOT experience those concerns? What would that be like?
  - (if they can) What aspects of that world would you cherish the most?
  - (if they can't) Why does that feel impossible to imagine?

(4) Defense and Mitigation Strategies

- Earlier, we talked about experiences that cross a line. What is that line for you?
  [itemsep=0pt,topsep=0pt,parsep=0pt]Do you have different expectations for the other platforms you're on? Why/why not? Which platforms do you feel are not doing a good job of addressing these concerns?
- You mentioned some specific examples above:
- Have you generally changed your behavior/activities/thinking as a creator due to your digital or physical safety concerns or experiences - including hate and harassment?

- How did you learn these strategies to increase your safety? When did you start adopting them?
  [Probe 1: Offline]
- Have you changed any of your behaviors in real life, in the physical world because of these concerns or experiences?
- Can you tell me about a time that happened? Why did you decide to change this?
- Was this a result of one particular event or multiple Experiences?
  [Probe 2: Online]
- What about online, have you changed your behaviors on social media platforms?
- Can you tell me about a time that happened? Why did you decide to change this?
- Was this a result of one particular event or multiple experiences?
  [Probe 3: Content Change]
- Did you change anything about the content you make?
- How do you feel like your content has changed [If it hasn't changed] Have you ever considered changing the things you post, or the information in them?
- Do you wish you didn't have to change your content because of these concerns?
- How important a role does safety play in determining how you plan future content (vs other concerns, what gets views, the direction you want to develop your brand, etc.)

Mindsets

- Have you ever left or considered leaving a platform that you created on due to these concerns or experiences? Can you tell us more about the thought process that led you to take those steps? [Probe] What was the final straw?
- Was there anything else you considered doing before leaving the platform?
- When you left this platform, did you consider leaving any others? Why/why not? [if they stayed on other platforms] why did you decide to stay on some platforms but not others? Was there anything special about the platforms you stayed on?

- How would leaving platforms impact your income? Were finances a concern when thinking about leaving?

- How has leaving the platform affected how safe you feel, if at all?

- What is the situation now? Did you return to the platform? If so, why?

Resources

- Are there any platforms you feel do a good job of protecting you from digital or physical safety threats or hate and harassment? Why?

- Are there any platforms that you feel don't do a good job of protecting you from these threats?

- What are some things you do to stay safe online? Where did you learn how to do that? How effective do you think it is?

- What are the best things creators can do to protect themselves from digital safety threats?

- What do you do when you have a safety concern? Who or what do you turn to? Are there any resources you use when you have safety concerns?

  [can probe on]

  – 2FA (if they use, probe) What type - (e.g., text codes, app generator like Authenticator, hardware security key), On what accounts

  – Password manager (if they use, probe) What type - Browser's built-in password manager (e.g. Chrome, Firefox, ...), Standalone app (e.g. 1Password, LastPass, ...)

  – Security checkup

  – Different password across creator accounts

  – Moderation tools (if they use, probe) What type - Word filter lists, Blocking, Use of moderators

  – Platform guidelines

  – Lawyers or experts to help navigate experiences

  – Documentation of threats online - record keeping

  – Advice guides (e.g., Security Planner or EFF's Surveillance Self Defense)

- Do you feel you're well equipped to handle these types of threats yourself?

- Have you had experiences with digital or physical threats including hate and harassment that caused you to seek support or resources? If so, what happened? What made you decide to seek support? How did you decide to do that?

- Have you ever come across a situation where you felt it was necessary to get the authorities involved? Did you involve them? Why/why not? [if yes] how helpful were they? Were they well equipped to help you?

- Are there any communities or groups of people you turn to when you have safety concerns?

  – Can you describe the group?

  – How did you come across them?

  – How helpful do you feel like they are?

  – Are there any rules associated with being in the group? Who is allowed to join?

  – Is there anything that could help make it easier for you to find support groups?

- Would you expect a platform to help you find other people to talk to?

Hypotheticals

- Are there any resources or support that you think could help you feel safe and supported moving forward?

- Are there any suggestions or advice people gave you that you didn't take but wish you did? (precautions, digital steps)

- Thinking about what we discussed today, is there any information that you wish you knew when you first started creating? How would you have wanted to learn about this information when you were first starting out? What would you have paid attention to?

- Imagine a world where there's a resource for creators on digital and physical safety. If that existed, what would you want it to cover?

- Ignoring technical constraints, what would wish for [Magic wand question]?

Debriefing Is there anything else you would like to share with us that you have not gotten a chance to mention yet? Thank you very much for speaking with me today! Two final questions for you: Do you know someone who might be eligible and willing to take part in the study? Are you interested in being notified of the results of the study + any publications or presentations made about this study? Thanks again. I'm going to turn off the recording and then I'll check your payment method with you.