

The State of the Creator Economy

Key data and trends shaping 165 million+ creators, a \$250B industry, and the AI-powered future of content production.

Data period: January 4 – February 3, 2026 | Sources: Epidemic Sound, Billion Dollar Boy, Grand View Research, Kantar & more

\$250B+

Creator economy market size
Projected \$480B by 2027

165M+

Creators joined since 2020
64M+ on YouTube alone

61%

Creators now work full-time
19% plan to launch a business

1 The Burnout Crisis

Creator burnout is at **crisis levels**

52%

experiencing burnout

37%

have considered **quitting** due to burnout

55%

Financial instability
Ranked most severe burnout factor

40%

Creative fatigue
Pressure to always produce fresh ideas

31%

Demanding workload
Too much to do, too little time

27%

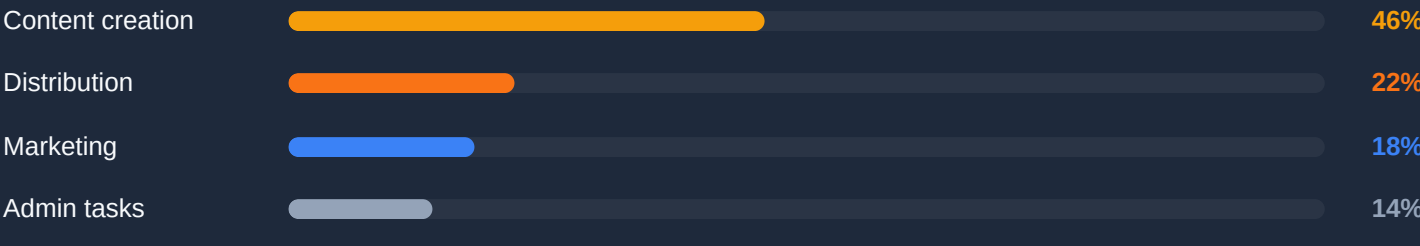
Constant screen time
Always on, always connected

46%

on actual creation

The 46% Problem

Creators spend less than half their work time actually creating content. The rest is consumed by administration, distribution, and marketing tasks.



2 AI Adoption Is Nearly Universal

91%

of creators are integrating AI into their workflow

94.5%

using AI for at least one task

28%

expect AI content to dominate in 2–3 yrs

☐ Chatbots for brainstorming & scripting **30%**

☐ Adaptive music tools **28%**

☐ Auto-transcription **27%**

☐ Video editing assistance Growing

☐ Caption generation for accessibility Growing

3 Top Creator Challenges

68%

Unsatisfied with their income

64%

Struggling to grow their audience

58%

Facing monetization struggles

45%

Lack knowledge & time to improve

43%

Balancing creative work & revenue

41%

Maintaining a consistent schedule

4 Industry Shakeup

Entertainment Layoffs

The ongoing workforce crisis

17K+

entertainment jobs cut in 2025 — up 18% from 2024

41K

LA entertainment jobs lost over 5 years

- Disney: 8,000+ (part of \$7.5B cost-cutting)
- Paramount Skydance: ~2,000 post-merger
- Warner Bros. Discovery: ~1,000
- LA on-location production down 13.2%

Platform Upheaval

TikTok divestiture & YouTube policy shifts

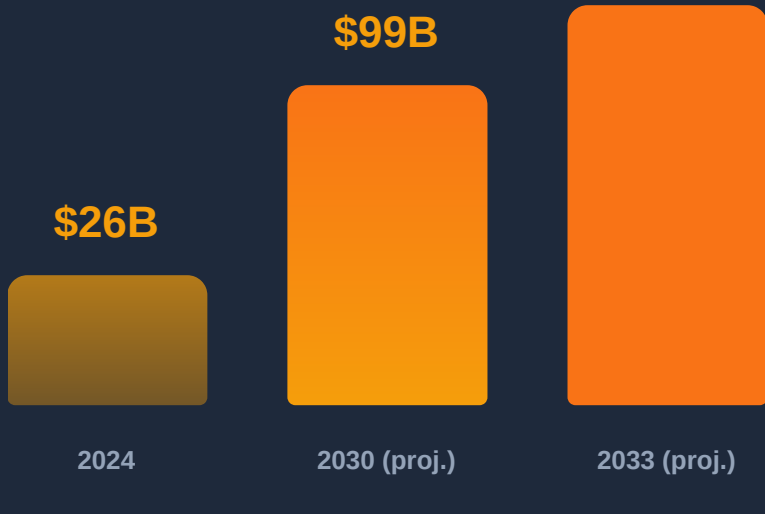
170M

US TikTok users affected by divestiture

- TikTok US sold to Oracle + Silver Lake consortium
- YouTube cracking down on “inauthentic” AI content
- 55% of 18–39 yr olds replacing streaming with social
- 339M US streaming subs but churn rising to 5.5%

AI in Media & Entertainment: Explosive Growth

The AI in M&E market is on track to nearly 4x **\$123B**



24.2% CAGR through 2030

5 Gaming: The AI-First Vertical

Studio AI Adoption

Devs using AI in workflows **90%**

Believe GenAI reshaping industry **97%**

Studios using AI (some capacity) **73%**

Where AI Is Used Most

Code generation / debug **47%**

Playtesting / balancing **47%**

Localization / translation **45%**

Procedural world gen **37%**

Content moderation **37%**

6 Streaming Snapshot

339M

US streaming subscriptions (+10% YoY)

4.1

Average services per household

52%

Say subscriptions are “too expensive”

5.5%

Monthly churn rate (up from 2%)

The Defining Deal: Netflix + Warner Bros.

\$82.7B acquisition creating a content mega-platform and a two-tier industry

\$82.7B

Enterprise value

\$72B

Equity value

45 days

Committed theatrical window

Late 2026

Expected close

The Market Is Moving. Are You?

With 91% of creators using AI but lacking strategic guidance, and 52% facing burnout, the need for operational infrastructure has never been clearer. The window for specialized M&E AI consulting is 12–24 months.

CREATE MORE. MANAGE LESS.