

Rush for the web

Background and Hints for an Educational Context

Rush for the web is a game on web-monetization that educates players around the basics of the concept by simulating some practical examples of monetizing content through its gameplay.

In this game, players assume the role of a creator persona and attempt to release a project and monetize it simultaneously over the web. The simulation navigates players through a series of situations where they have to make critical decisions that have a lasting impact over their monetization journey.

Game Design

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Independent creators, why are they important?

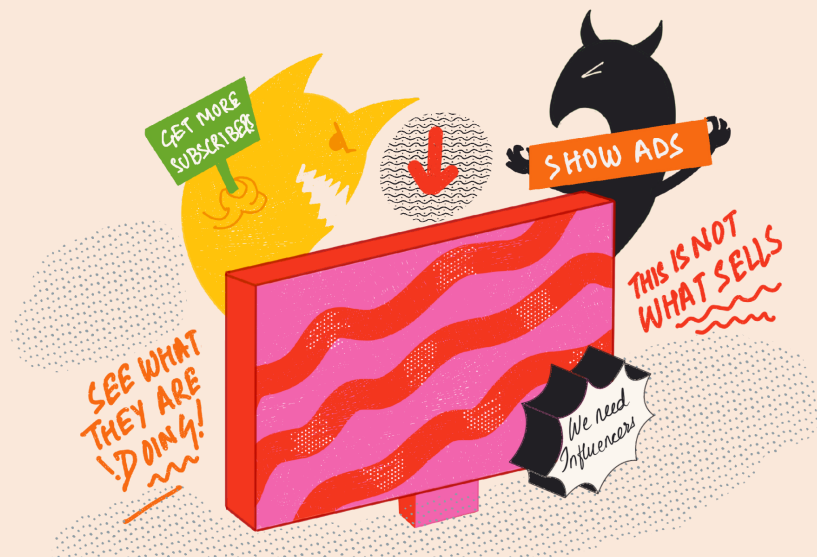
Let's start with who an independent `Indie` creator really is. They are someone who –

1. are individual who create content and are owners of their content
2. do not take support from investors or cater to anyone's interests, but their audience's
3. do not aim to cater to the mainstream media

Our societies are gradually being pushed towards homogenization, which in turn is making us lose our idiosyncratic specialties as well as our cultural history and heritage. Individual creators, through their content, often bring in the concerns, beliefs, expertise and perspective of the communities and school of thoughts they represent. They act as an amplifier for the voices of their community members so they get heard, therefore making this world a more equitable and colorful place to live in.

Technology, and specifically the Internet plays a big role in empowering these creators by providing them with a platform to host their content on. The challenge is, the platforms do little to support the `Indie` creators remain independent and owner of their content. Their primary concern is their own revenue, and not the impact that the rules imposed by them could have on the creators.

Challenges posed by big-tech

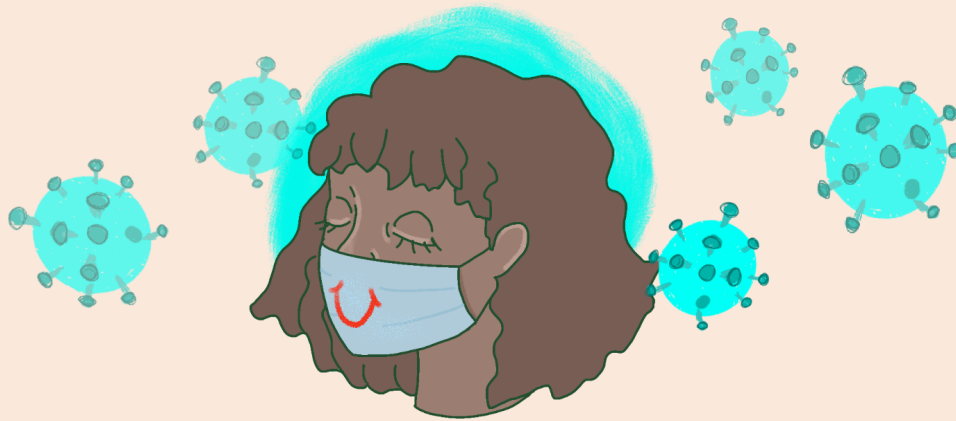


In recent times, the frameworks of the digital platform for hosting content appears to have overpowered the voices of these creators and forced them to adhere to a certain standard, that pushes towards homogenization, in order to increase the reach of their content and therefore make a living out of their work. When a person is struggling with the most basic

needs in their life, it is hard for them to get inspired to produce high quality and unique content.

The curation algorithms used by the popular platforms identify the content that has the maximum reach and response, and uses that data from there to form a baseline that is later imposed as standards on other creators. To ensure revenue, many creators give in to the dictation of the algorithms at the cost of losing the originality of their content.

Impact of the pandemic



With the lockdowns imposed during the ongoing pandemic many industries suffered a major blow in revenues and shrunk considerably. This resulted in millions of people losing their jobs and having their livelihoods disrupted. This resulted in two kinds of trends in the content creation industry:

1. Many of those affected used the power of their smartphones to set out to become content creators.
2. The existing creators have to bring a major shift in their methods to adjust to the new quarantine rules and lockdowns.
3. The lack of financial benefits made a lot of creators give up the control of their content and play by the rules of the platforms such as YouTube to sustain their livelihood

The industry suddenly flooded with new creators and the competition between them all increased, paired with the everyday stress of dealing with a pandemic. This began to affect their mental health, thereby impacting their productivity.

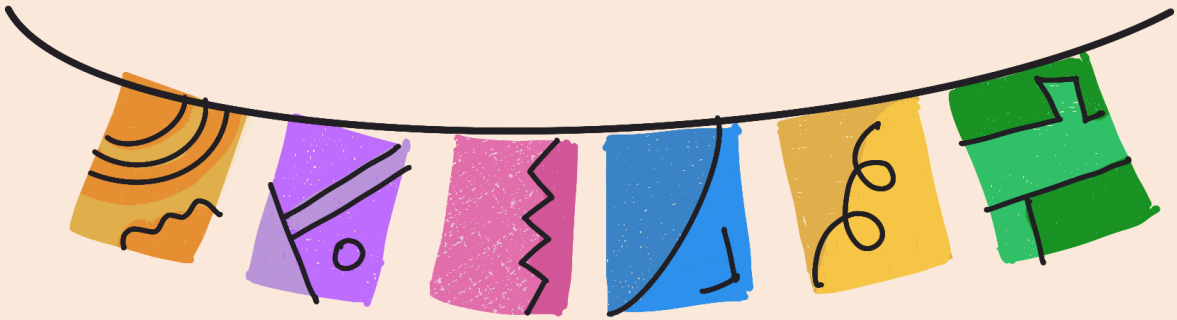
Challenges in monetizing your content

When a creator sets out to put their content out on the world wide web for others to consume, they have to go through a maze of decisions that tie into one another. At the very moment, the choices often appear obvious and sometimes even wise. As the moment nears when it comes down to monetizing the content, creators often feel trapped and obliged to play by the rules of the platforms and letting go of the very core reason they once chose to become a content creator.

An ability or education to look at the situation from a bird's eye view could help them understand the pending consequences of their actions on the go. To quote an example, if creators are mindful of their intentions with the reusability and discovery of the content, they can start paying attention to the licenses they apply to their work and the support that the platform is providing for open sharing. This way, if at a later stage they would want to open their content for a wider use by other artists, they should be able to do that with peace, rather than constantly worrying about plagiarism.

- a. **Currency supported in your country** - It is important for creators to be paid in a currency that they could actually use in the real world. Opting from platforms that provide a wide range of supported currencies is limited to the big tech platforms, because they could afford to manage the infrastructure. Coil changed this. It allows users to exchange the payment currency to one they find more useful.
- b. **Reach of your content** - The authenticity and the quality of the content should ideally be the factors to decide the reachability of content. However, curative algorithms have changed this and the more compliant to platform standard a content is, the more discoverable it gets. In the gameplay of this Rush to the web, we want to showcase the power of authenticity.
- c. **Consistency in your content** - Being able to churn our quality content without burning out in the process is crucial to maintain your presence on the web, and therefore the fan following.
- d. **Translating the reach into revenue** - Creators cannot be expected to be as good at marketing themselves as they are at creating. They often need some support from the platform they use and from the community they work with to generate revenue for their work.

Power of community



The creator community thrives on inspiration. When the platform does not encourage openly sharing of inspirations and resources among the creators, they are pushing for an inorganic and unhealthy dynamic among them that often result in rivalry.

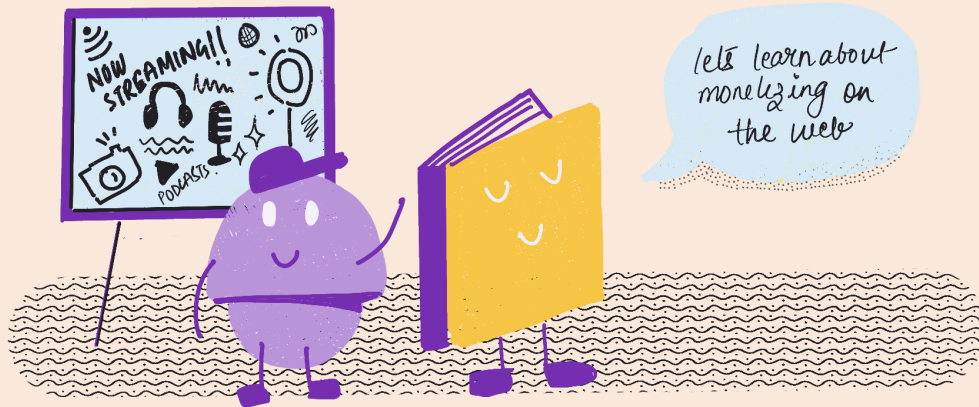
There's nothing that creators gain out of these unhealthy competition, but the platforms do. For a community of artists and creators to do well, it is important for them to surround themselves with people who can provide creative actionable feedback and with whom they can exchange their resources and ideas, resulting in the entire community growing together.

Besides the obvious, there are also other well-established reasons for fostering a community of creators:

1. **Shared engagement**- When creators that cater to a common interest support each other, they boost each other's chances to successful monetisation by sharing their pool of audience. This brings down the friction for first time creators when it comes to member acquisition, which is the hardest part of the process.
2. **Curation**- The support of the community often translates into candid and actionable suggestions. When the feedback is coming directly from the audience that matters, instead of the curative algorithm, it is much more usable and way less exploitative for creators.
3. **Opportunity creation**- Sometimes, thinking of outcomes in a specific format and around a specific interest could become a blocker for creators. When creators of different expertise come together to collaborate, they bring the best from their worlds and have the potential to put together a more flavorful content.



Using this game as an educational tool



This game can be used as a tool to educate and inspire young and upcoming creators to be prepared for the challenges ahead. It has been designed to simulate the real world experiences that creators get exposed to when they begin their journey.

It highlights the bottlenecks in the path to monetize content over the web and also provides suggestive solutions to the same. Playing this game also pre-disposes players to the alternative decision routes for creating content, leveraging themes and marketing content on the go.

We have broken down the activity into distinct steps for the convenience of the moderator.

Setting the context

Before starting to play the game, it is important to encourage participants to get into the creator mode so they are actively thinking within the context and also paying attention to the details of the game beyond the capacity of a regular player.

Ice breaker - Start off with some starter questions such as:

1. What was the last piece of content you created?
2. How do you draw inspiration for your next project?
3. What challenges are you facing with monetising your content on a platform of your choice?

The responses could be followed by a short discussion for better engagement.

Game introduction - Introduce players to the game through the following excerpt:

Rush for the web is a game on web-monetization that educates players around the basics of the concept by simulating some practical examples of monetizing content over the web through its gameplay.

Mention that the game could be played with a maximum of 6 players. Other participants could participate as spectators.

Assigning roles

Assign 6 players one persona each. Then request them to add blanket characteristics to the assigned personas by drawing cues from their personal attributes by answering the following questions:

1. What motivated you to become a <persona>?
2. What kind of themes do you specialize in?
3. Arrange the following in the order of your preference: Reach, Impact, Monetary benefits

Make it clear to the players that they have to engage in future conversations and negotiations keeping in mind their attributes.

Facilitating dialogues

Decisions - The gameplay calls for choices and decisions to be made in the processes. Encourage participants to vocally rationalize the decisions they're making to establish their stand through the game.

Negotiations - There's also room for negotiations when a player is looking to exchange a project card with a willing co-player. Keep a check on the terms of the exchange to keep it non-exploitative.

Retrospection

The learnings of the game should eventually be talked about and each participating player should share their account through a personal lens. One way to ensure that everyone is seen and heard is to go around the table seeking a comment on the learnings that each player had and how they'd translate them into a change in their process.



“Rush for the Web” as a Toolbox for Remixes

"Rush for the Web" considers itself an open project. All content, the game design, the rules, the illustrations and the layout files as well as the source codes for the electronic components are available under open licenses. In an educational context, "Rush for the Web" can also be used as a "creative kit" to create new content and encourage a creative process.

The individual resources can be found here:

- Illustrations, drawings, logos, covers
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1un2gPCrImOT5vGhtNzHkIxXIYmWAIgPL>
- Layout files for cards, playmat, reference cards etc.
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1okMxyH2_LJdLMnPyXVvGIBpzXnngKVGO
- Rules (English)
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YxwZSbiFGg100uRhP5iBjsXvUEVTS11tuNKPWI-tSZE/edit>
- Rules (German)
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o249DzyznY3WjQUvBQbyxks0MyISb4Tj9JrydEsfES4/edit>
- Sourcecode for card generator, app and app backend
<https://gitlab.com/projectlaunchpad>

If you use this material in your projects, we would be happy to hear from you:

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