Project 3:
VSP Content Creators and Community Standards

Debrief presentation

Produced by Yonder

Definitions and Clarifications

Video Sharing Platforms: This research explored a range of websites and apps used by people in the UK to watch and share videos online. Although the term 'video sharing platforms' (VSPs) is used, this research does not seek to identify which services will fall into Ofcom's regulatory remit, nor to pre-determine whether any particular service would be classed as a VSP under the regulatory definition. It should also be noted that the platforms included in this research operate at different scales. This should be taken into consideration when comparing results from users of smaller VSPs against those from users of larger platforms.

Site and App Content: This research explored a range of sites and apps which have video sharing functionalities. Many of these platforms also contain a mix of video and other types of content and allow users to view and participate in a range of ways, of which video sharing is one element.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence in this research is self-reported by respondents who have shared their experiences, recollections and feelings. All respondents participated voluntarily and were free to withdraw their participation at any point during the research process. As such, the evidence is limited by respondents' freedom to decide whether to participate, their ability to recall events, accuracy of that recall and which experiences they chose to disclose.

Background and Objectives

Key project objective:
To understand content creators' experience of community standards on VSP platforms

A deep-dive focus on content creators who monetise their platforms, either though revenue making or gifts, or those who use their channels for brand/personal marketing purposes.

Specific objectives include;

- **Awareness, engagement and perceptions of VSP community standards** – personal interactions with standards, extent to which they are beneficial, reflective, enforced

- **Usage and experiences with standards** – any breaches of rules, or any rules with particular relevance for content creators

- **Monetisation focus** – awareness, engagement and perceptions of rules

- **Social behaviour / etiquette** – what is considered acceptable behaviour, and who is responsible for enforcing
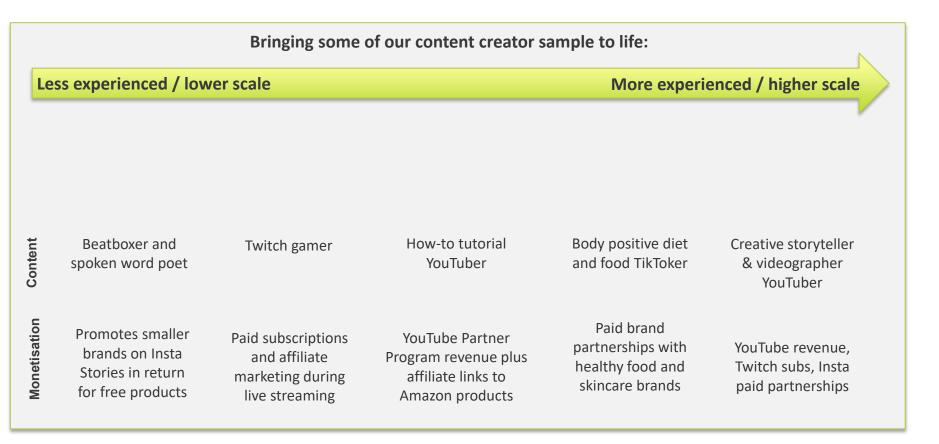
Methodology

Methodology	• 20 x 60 minute Zoom video depth interviews with content creators

Key sample criteria	• All active content creators for VSP platforms • Mix of platforms and content genres • All earn revenue via content shared on VSPs • Mix of those who use platform for marketing / sponsorship / brand advertising, and those who earn money directly from viewers, all within the past 12 months • Mix of age and demographics • Mix of locations (Greater London and Greater Manchester)

Project timings	• Fieldwork completed between 21st September-9th October 2020

Section 1:
Exploring content, community and monetization activity

VSP content creators who monetise are hugely varied in scope

Broad range of content genres, experience levels and follower / viewership levels

Bringing some of our content creator sample to life:

Less experienced / lower scale ➜ **More experienced / higher scale**

Content				
Beatboxer and spoken word poet	Twitch gamer	How-to tutorial YouTuber	Body positive diet and food TikToker	Creative storyteller & videographer YouTuber
Monetisation				
Promotes smaller brands on Insta Stories in return for free products	Paid subscriptions and affiliate marketing during live streaming	YouTube Partner Program revenue plus affiliate links to Amazon products	Paid brand partnerships with healthy food and skincare brands	YouTube revenue, Twitch subs, Insta paid partnerships

Even those with small scale followings have access to monetisation opportunities in some form
Vast majority are not professionals or earning close to a full-time wage from content, and so levels of knowledge and engagement with guidelines and processes can really vary

Building successful communities #1:
VSP content creators focus on personal brand and finding a niche

All content creators have the following key themes in common when developing their communities:

Importance of personal brand	Finding a niche	Plus hard work!
Most recognise that their key 'product' and USP is themselves Take their personal brand seriously; content is typically carefully created and curated	Consciously seek to find a niche, angle or gap vs. other creators Further helps them to stand out and gain a USP – for example, *wrestling chat show, South West London lifestyle*	Most put a lot of pride, time and effort in their content – highly frequent and considered Plus lots of purposeful community interaction
"I'd never post me and the girls out on the town for example, that's not my image" TikTok, 21yrs	*"There's lots of equestrians on TikTok but we realised there's hardly any good funny horse stuff so we decided to make our own" (TikTok, 16yrs)*	*"Seriously it can take days to review the content, photo it, post it, it all takes so much time" (Instagram, 35yrs)*

Most creators are able to find their niche and personal brand within the limits of community standards
But desire to stand out can manifest in a minority pushing or deliberately breaking rules

Building successful communities #2:
Engaging with and learning from three different audiences

Broader content creator community

*All content creators engage with or gain **inspiration from three key audience groups** in order to build their community*

1

Successful creator role models

Content creators learn a huge amount from afar from successful creators, either within their genre or in general on their platform

2

Similar creator peer groups

Content creators value being part of a wider group of likeminded peers – often collaborate and learn from each other
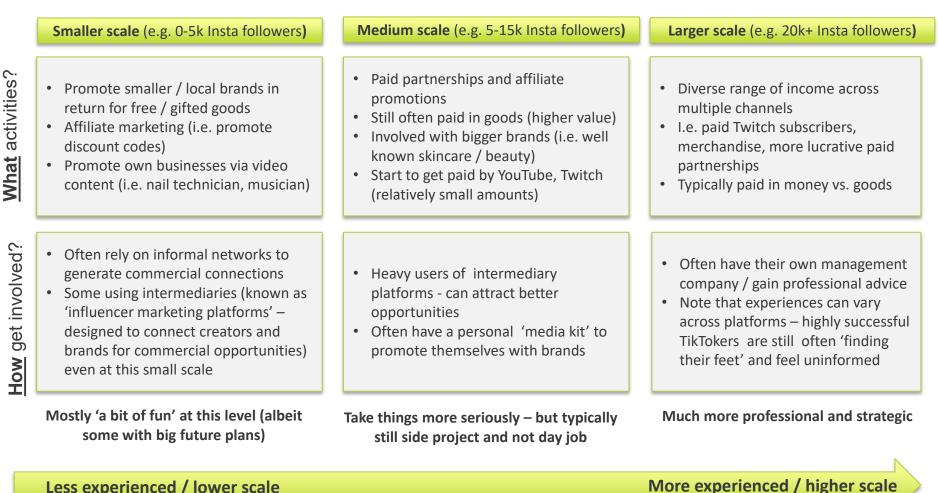
3

Followers / subscribers / viewers

Typically highly frequent engagement. Can be a motivation for content creating per se, also important means of generating monetisation opportunities

Important implications for community and advertising standards – most creators learn 'how' to create from other people rather from more official sources.
Fan interaction mostly positive, but negative and harassing comments are a key challenge for many creators

Broad range of monetisation activities available to content creators; key themes emerge across different experience levels

Smaller scale (e.g. 0-5k Insta followers)	**Medium scale** (e.g. 5-15k Insta followers)	**Larger scale** (e.g. 20k+ Insta followers)

What activities?

• Promote smaller / local brands in return for free / gifted goods • Affiliate marketing (i.e. promote discount codes) • Promote own businesses via video content (i.e. nail technician, musician)	• Paid partnerships and affiliate promotions • Still often paid in goods (higher value) • Involved with bigger brands (i.e. well known skincare / beauty) • Start to get paid by YouTube, Twitch (relatively small amounts)	• Diverse range of income across multiple channels • I.e. paid Twitch subscribers, merchandise, more lucrative paid partnerships • Typically paid in money vs. goods

How get involved?

• Often rely on informal networks to generate commercial connections • Some using intermediaries (known as 'influencer marketing platforms' – designed to connect creators and brands for commercial opportunities) even at this small scale	• Heavy users of intermediary platforms - can attract better opportunities • Often have a personal 'media kit' to promote themselves with brands	• Often have their own management company / gain professional advice • Note that experiences can vary across platforms – highly successful TikTokers are still often 'finding their feet' and feel uninformed

Mostly 'a bit of fun' at this level (albeit some with big future plans)	**Take things more seriously – but typically still side project and not day job**	**Much more professional and strategic**

Less experienced / lower scale ————————————————————→ **More experienced / higher scale**

Section 2:
Awareness and engagement with community standards

Mixed awareness and interaction with VSP community standards

Many VSP content creators do not recall reading or interacting with guidelines

- YouTube creators have higher awareness, due to prompted checklist each time post content

- Low recall of being prompted with guidelines by other VSPs

Most seem to learn standards from the VSP community, or apply common sense

- Copy and model the behaviour of other creators, or search for online advice / how-to guides produced by creators (if do choose to seek information)

- But many don't feel the need to go looking for information – perceive themselves as 'informed heavy users' of VSPs

"I'd just go onto Reddit and find a forum with other creators, they're more likely to give you proper examples of what you can and can't do"
Instagram, 23yrs

Many learn via experience

- Most content creators have unwittingly broken rules at some point, e.g. copyright infringements, swearing

- Learned via content being reported / flagged and then remodelled behaviour

"I had no idea that you couldn't use music until YouTube flagged it"
YouTube, 31yrs

Younger, smaller scale creators can be the least aware

- Yet to learn via experience and also feel have less to lose if content is censored

- More successful / experienced can be more conscious of loss of monetisation, or not wanting to compromise curated personal brand

Broad recognition that community standards are fair and constructive for content creators, and for society as a whole

Most content creators are strongly motivated by freedom of self-expression

As a result, don't want content to be policed in an overly Draconian manner

Nevertheless, most appreciate that rules are designed to help rather then impinge

I.e. help to protect audience groups and content

 Creators themselves can often be the perceived victim of broken rules, i.e. harassment and copyright infringement

Most creators are not knowingly seeking to break community rules

Perceive themselves as carefully curated brands, and mostly trying to attract a mainstream audience; most are able to find their 'niche' in an appropriate manner

Majority of content creators are supportive of the idea of community guidelines per se, and supportive of most specific rules within this

"I'd hate it if people stole my content without giving credit, the rules are there for us as much as anything"
YouTube, 60yrs

"I'm not trying to get banned, the people who follow me are all mums really"
Instagram, 35yrs

Community standards can be breached by creators, either by accident or design

Many creators unwittingly break rules

- Copyright / intellectual property infringement

- Advertising declaration

- Understanding 'where the line is' – some areas of confusion re nudity, language used

- When informed of breach by VSP they then typically remodel behaviour to avoid happening in future
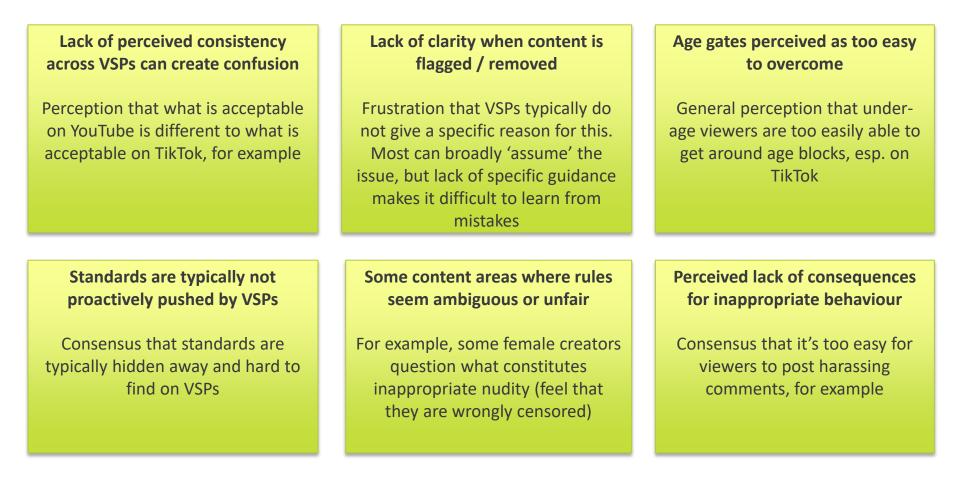
Minority of creators knowingly push boundaries of rules

- Linked to desire to stand out / get ahead

- More likely to be specific genres i.e. humour / meme creators posting content on race, disability, sexual orientation

- Or gaming – deliberately showing copyright / in-beta content

- Can often be young / relatively inexperienced creators

Rule breaking from other creators

- Artificial engagement (i.e. false followers / subscribers) is a key concern for many lower scale creators
- Perception that this provides unfair advantage – goes directly against 'authentic, hard work' ethos of most creators
- Perception that some creators wilfully break advertising guidelines to blur the lines between 'real' and 'paid for' content

Many content creators have issue with the way that standards are enforced by VSPs

Can question the way that these are communicated and policed by VSPs – perceive this to be inconsistent and sometimes ineffective

Lack of perceived consistency across VSPs can create confusion

Perception that what is acceptable on YouTube is different to what is acceptable on TikTok, for example

Lack of clarity when content is flagged / removed

Frustration that VSPs typically do not give a specific reason for this. Most can broadly 'assume' the issue, but lack of specific guidance makes it difficult to learn from mistakes

Age gates perceived as too easy to overcome

General perception that under-age viewers are too easily able to get around age blocks, esp. on TikTok

Standards are typically not proactively pushed by VSPs

Consensus that standards are typically hidden away and hard to find on VSPs

Some content areas where rules seem ambiguous or unfair

For example, some female creators question what constitutes inappropriate nudity (feel that they are wrongly censored)

Perceived lack of consequences for inappropriate behaviour

Consensus that it's too easy for viewers to post harassing comments, for example

'Community power' is welcomed by content creators, but perception that VSPs need to be more proactive and not just rely on this

Content creators welcome when enforcement power is handed to community

- Twitch held up as a positive example – moderators are felt to play a valued and effective role in monitoring and policing viewer content
- Helps to form a sense of shared community and engagement
- Most value having their own easy-access enforcement controls across platforms (i.e. ability to ban / report)

Consensus that VSPs need to be more proactive and hands-on beyond this

- Cannot always just rely on users – inappropriate content still regularly slips the net
- Perception that VSPs could do more to discourage inappropriate content at source, i.e. tighter ID controls

"I have a team of moderators who help me and it works pretty well, they like to be involved and they're quite on it in terms of watching out for swearing and things like that"
Twitch, 29yrs

Section 3:
Awareness and engagement with advertising rules

Broad awareness of the need to declare advertising, with some important gaps

Majority of content creators are aware of the general need to declare advertising activity, if the brand has had an element of control / influence with the content. However, smaller-scale creators are less likely to be aware, and more established creators can lack awareness of some specifics

Smaller scale (e.g. 0-5k Insta followers)	Medium scale (e.g. 5-15k Insta followers)	Larger scale (e.g. 20k+ Insta followers)
Mix of those aware and unaware of rules Often have mindset that rules are not relevant at this small scale (i.e. promotion of smaller local brands), so not really considered in depth	Typically aware of the need to declare advertising, across all platforms Broad awareness of the need to mention 'ad' in content where receive payment in some form and the brand has an element of control (i.e. when tells creator what to say) Can be less aware of some specifics; • If the brand had no control over promotional content (i.e. gifted products.. what constitutes an 'ad'?) • Permissible phrasing / timing of declaration within video content • If 'ad' content is only a small part of the overall content • If rules differ across countries (i.e. US and UK)	Successful creators typically have good awareness Highly experienced across range of monetisation activity Typically have management companies to check content Often have not seen any 'official' rules, however

Understanding of advertising rules typically gained from the VSP community

Vast majority learn from other content creators
- Often copy what other peers do – learn and model behaviour
- If choose to seek out information, prefer creator-generated content and articles, and/or creator forum
  - Provide clear and tangible examples of what is permissible / not permissible
  - Feels 'trusted' – *if successful creators are doing it this way, then should be ok for me*

"There are people on Insta who break it all down for you tell you exactly what need to do"
TikTok, 21yrs

Most have <u>not</u> read any official guidelines
- Wouldn't know where to look – some assume that ASA are in control, but not sure
- Low awareness if guidelines can be found on VSP sites, and little perceived prompting from VSPs about these

"I think the ASA are involved, but not sure where I heard that from"
Instagram, 25yrs

Peer-based learning needs to be leveraged for future communication of guidelines - a key source of information

Peer-based learning creates challenges – some can end up wrongly informed (i.e. if copy those who break rules)

Brands are not always helping content creators with advertising rules

According to some content creators, brands typically communicate how they want their brand / product to be communicated, but do not always communicate the need to declare advertising

"I did a job with River Island, they told me exactly how they wanted me to mention the clothes, but what they don't do is explain the whole 'hashtag ad' thing"
Instagram, 23yrs

"These days everything goes through the management company and I know what I'm doing anyway so there's no worries there, but back in the day brands wouldn't really help"
YouTube, 29yrs

"It's a fine line because I don't want brands telling me what to say if I'm doing a review for example. But I find that sometimes they'll remind you and sometimes won't"
Instagram & Facebook, 28yrs

Lack of brand support not always the case, and some good examples of brands being proactive

But more can be done by brands in general - have a key role to play in helping creators to understand advertising rules

Most content creators agree that advertising rules are necessary, as this helps create content authenticity and a level playing field

Most content creators are **happy to declare advertising and to comply with relevant rules**

Positive authenticity for followers

Most content creators want to act with integrity for the sake of their followers

Take their personal brand and their relationship with fans seriously

Feeling that fans are quick to notice inauthenticity , and this can be a turn off

"Noah Beck promoted an dodgy abs stimulator thing and there was a big uproar from his fans calling him a sell-out "
TikTok, 17yrs

Creates a fair and level playing field for creators

Feel like it's only fair that all content creators play by the same rules

Not fair if other content creators are allowed to pass off advertising content as their own - unfair when people blurring the lines between personal and paid for

Feeling that some larger influencers don't always declare

"It feels like a lot of the bigger influencers are just a series of glossy adverts, it's not always clear where the real-life begins. If they get to be shipped to the Bahamas for free and then pretend its their real life that's not fair"
Instagram, 23yrs

Desire to create a strong and authentic personal brand drives many content creators to effectively self-police their monetisation content

Some confusion around the specifics of advertising rules

Key areas where creators can be unaware or unsure about the rules;

If the brand has no / very little control over content

A common question that content creators have (esp. less experienced) is *what actually constitutes an 'ad'*

For example, if gifted good / services from brands without any requested control of content

Mixed awareness of '#gifted'

Permissible timing / phrasing of declaration within video content

Some notice that others creators wait until the very end of the video before ad declaration– feels a bit misleading

Also some confusion around permissible phrasing for declaration – real mix used across sample

"Shout out to 'x' brand for sending me this product

"I would highly recommend to buy these, get 10% off if you use this code"

"Thanks to River Island for the clothes"

"Please support my channel by visiting these links, provided by Amazon"

If ad content is only a small part of overall content

I.e. if the ad is embedded within a longer piece of creative content (such as long-form YouTube chat) then some can question if a declaration is necessary, and at what point needs to be made

If rules differ across countries

Some point towards seemingly different rules for US creators – given that VSP content feeds are internationally integrated, this can encourage the adoption of US behaviours

Greater clarity of rules can be required across different situations

Mixed awareness of who controls and enforces advertising rules, and what the consequences are if don't comply

Some mentions of the Advertising Standards Authority by more experienced creators

Can be more based around assumption or learning from peers than clear knowledge

Some can assume responsibility might lie with VSPs, but low awareness of any specifics – little recall of any communication from VSPs regarding guidelines

Awareness of 'consequences' is mixed for the less established

Only a few people in our sample were aware of any tangible consequences if go against advertising rules

Typically the more successful;

- YouTuber – received warning from ASA early in career for a creative piece of content created for a company

- YouTuber – received warning from YT for embedding links to products without declaring – had only recently started this revenue stream

Low awareness of any other tangible examples from other creators

Important implications – if not always aware who is in control, and / or what consequences are, this can service as a disincentive to declare

> *"I think that it can't be Instagram or TikTok who make the rules on this just because I know that they aren't part of the normal guidelines "*
> *TikTok, 17yrs*

Good awareness of rules around what brands and products can be advertised – but some perceived 'ethical' grey areas

All aware that not allowed to promote illegal products, or products that are deemed inappropriate / harmful

Common rule of thumb – *"If I can't easily or legally buy this in the UK, I can't advertise it"*

Content creators can question when other (often high profile) creators advertise what they perceive as 'non-ethical' goods

Often relates to diet / beauty products

Key examples provided by our creator sample:

- *Kardashians advertising diet teas, which they believe to have questionable use*

- *Noah Beck advertising an 'ab stimulator' on TikTok*

- *Promotion of diet pills*

Perception that VSP fans are impressionable, and that tighter controls should therefore be in place for what can be advertised

"The Kardashians advertising this diet tea that clearly doesn't do anything, this type of thing I think needs to be looked into. Young kids or anyone who's worried about their weight will probably watch this and think 'I'll try that'"
Instagram, 32yrs

Section 4:
Comparing VSPs - community standards and monetisation rules

YouTube: the most effective VSP in terms of engaging creators with standards – proactive, strict but mostly fair

YouTube

Good prompted communication of guidelines

High awareness of the 'checklist' prompt each time post content – works well as a frequent reminder

Regular email updates to creators

Creator Academy is a popular how-to resource guide for content creation, and guidelines are felt to be clearly interwoven here

"I think my content had part of [a singer's] song on it. It basically highlighted the exact point where there was the copyright issue which is fair enough"
YouTube, 60yrs

Perceived as strict but mostly fair

Copyright infringements immediately flagged – but always clear what element of content infringes copyright rules
Free-from-copyright options in YT Studio (i.e. music) are useful and welcomed

Perceptions that there is generally less offensive content here vs. other VSPs – feels more actively policed

Most are aware that swearing near start of YT videos leads to content being flagged, and this discourages general swearing behaviour

Threat of demonetisation works as a strong incentive

Direct threat of losing income works well to encourage best practice behaviour

Good awareness of YouTube Partnership Programme, but less regarding broader advertising rules

YPP rules and criteria regarded as clear and easy to access – but is a key aim for creators, so have vested interest to search this out

Lower awareness of other advertising rules, as per other VSPs

Instagram and Facebook: perceived to be less proactive with content creators

Low recall of any prompted communication post-sign up

Most do not recall being prompted with any guidelines by Instagram or Facebook since signing up

Sign-up often many years ago, before decided to become content creator

Monetisation: low recall of any specific communication

Those who have access to Swipe Up functionality on Instagram (i.e. when reach 10k followers) do not recall any prompted guidelines

Instagram feels mostly safe and well managed for creators, but some specific issues

Perception that there is less overtly offensive content posted on Instagram – typically more polished / aspirational; creators are able to create their own preferred content bubble

But issues still exist - harassment from followers, ambiguity re nudity rules, and high levels of artificial / fake engagement are key themes

Facebook's association with 'personal' content opens up broader content issues

For this sample, Facebook mostly associated with friends and family, and so taken less seriously as a creator platform

Key platform issues therefore felt to be driven by inappropriate content created by regular platform users (rather than creators) for example those posting hate speech or violent content

"I don't remember them sending anything (when gained Swipe Up), they probably could have used that as an opportunity as that's round about when people start to get serious about advertising and sponsored posts"
Instagram, 35yrs

Twitch: focus on community-centred enforcement of Standards regarded positively, but with some concerns

Nature of Twitch content throws up challenges

Most Twitch creators are posting huge amount of live content

Often reacting to games in real time – high likelihood of swearing

Viewers are also engaged for long periods, so moments of inappropriate feedback are expected

Guidelines are broadly well suited to Twitch context – but with some issues

Twitch perceived to be a little more casual and to allow more creative freedom than other VSPs – i.e. more lenient towards swearing

Most welcome this as fits with nature of live gaming content

Some creators are felt to push boundaries as per other VSPs i.e. posting sexually suggestive content

Focus on community moderation a positive

Twitch creators are making use of fan / subscriber moderators to actively monitor viewer comments

Perceived to work well – effective policing helps to foster sense of community

But recognition that some content still slips the net

Twitch Creators set their own 'house rules'

Creators have their own rules that subs / viewers are expected to adhere to

Creators we spoke to had not directly read Twitch guidelines to produce these – learn from other Twitch creators. Use own common sense

Consensus that this works well as a reminder to viewers to adhere to rules

TikTok and Snapchat perceived to be looser in policing content, and youth audiences pose a particular challenge

TikTok   snapchat

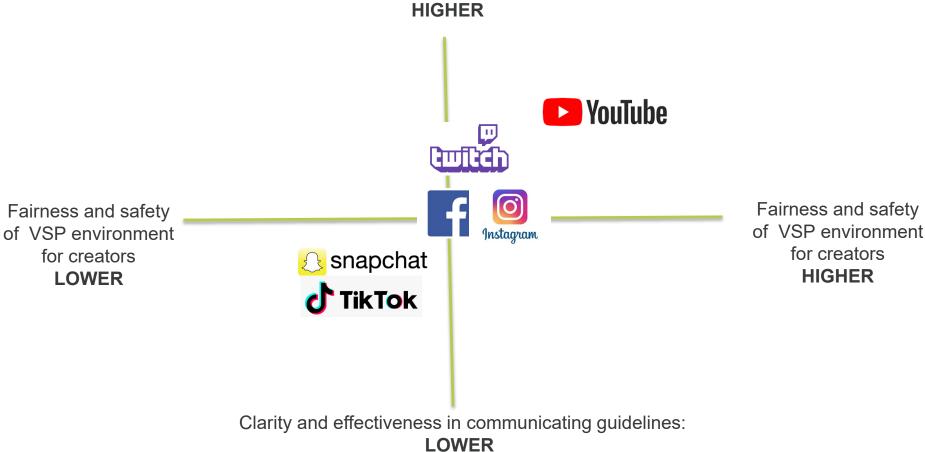| **Success on TikTok can be very sudden – key implications for standards**	**TikTok and Snapchat perceived to be quite open / lax in policing content**	**A very young community poses challenges**
Our successful TikTok creators achieved popularity in a very short period of time (attract high followings within matter of months) Reflects the dynamic nature of the app Take their content seriously, but typically haven't had time / inclination to even engage with guidelines	High awareness of inappropriate content posted by others, that has not been removed from the platform For some creators this could have the danger of 'raising the bar' re what is acceptable (i.e. younger creators who trade in less polished meme / humour material)	Creators aware that typical audience is young and potentially impressionable Majority likely to tailor content accordingly, but some concern about general content that is out there (i.e. nudity / violence) Feeling that adverts can lack tailoring (i.e. diet products that are unsuitable) Feeling that people too young (i.e. under 13) are getting around age limits

Mapping VSPs: YouTube perceived to be relatively clearer and more supportive for creators; other VSPs broadly similar to each other

Clarity and effectiveness in communicating guidelines:
HIGHER

Fairness and safety of VSP environment for creators
LOWER

Fairness and safety of VSP environment for creators
HIGHER

Clarity and effectiveness in communicating guidelines:
LOWER

Section 5:
Community standards most relevant to content creators

Prioritisation of guidelines in terms of relevance for content creators

The following guidelines are relevant for a broad range of creators

Further guidelines are relevant for specific types of creators

Harassment and cyber bullying	Nudity / sexual content
Copyright / intellectual property	Hate speech / attacks on protected groups
Artificial / fake engagement	Further inappropriate content (i.e. violence)
Declaration of advertising activity	

Cyber harassment or bullying: all VSP content creators have experienced to some degree

Content creators from all platforms and genres experience negative, abusive or inappropriate comments from viewers / followers

Perceived to be more pronounced for female creators, especially those who post lifestyle / health and beauty content

Even a small number of comments can have a lasting impact, plus highly visible due to the high engagement creators have with their community

Most see this as an unavoidable 'part of the deal' as a creator

Tools available to block and report are useful and efficient, but this alone doesn't feel like enough

All creators welcome the available VSP tools to block and report users, but general consensus that its still too easy for people to post negative harmful comments

Broad consensus that VSPs need to be more proactive in discouraging and punishing harassment

Creators are seeking VSPs to disincentivise i.e. by having stricter ID requirements that can enable more effective banning of perpetrators

Vast majority of interactions are positive, but small minority of negative comments can have a big impact on creators

"It's like a jungle out there! Insta/YouTube, 32yrs

"Yes unfortunately I get sent comments from time to time, also what I assume to be 'penis pics' but Instagram blurs them out. I can block them easily enough, but you know, really?" Instagram, 23yrs

Copyright and intellectual property: most support strict rules here, but is still a common occurrence to the frustration of many

In general, content creators identify with the importance of safeguarding / recognising ownership of creative content. Nevertheless, can be a common occurrence:

More inexperienced content creators often break copyright rules unwittingly

Often are not aware that not allowed to post copyright material (i.e. backing music or gaming content), but typically receive instant notification from VSP and are happy to learn from this and not do again

Content creators themselves can be the victim

Perpetrators falsely pass off content as their own, or brands falsely associate themselves with the creators in ads (for more successful creators)

YouTube recognised to be positively rigorous at finding and removing these infringements, but can still occur across other VSPs, and cause of frustration

A minority knowingly use copyrighted material in order to gain attention

Often younger and more inexperienced creators who are less focused on building a 'personal brand', i.e. posting gaming content. Content is sometimes but not always reported, and mind set is that its 'worth the risk' to capture attention

Vast majority are supportive of rules around intellectual property, and welcome strict controls here. Threat of demonetisation and removal of entire post works as an incentive. Feeling that more can be done to proactively identify infringements.

Artificial engagement: a top of mind concern for small-scale but ambitious creators

General sense that artificial engagement is a big problem across all VSP platforms, across different forms

"Stream-for-stream on YouTube happens all the time"
(YouTube, 11yrs)

I know another 'mum blogger' and her followers jumped by 5,000 far too quickly, she seems to hardly receive any comments to her posts so I'm quite suspicious
(Instagram, 32yrs)

I think there's a whole industry of sub botting, it's supposed to be banned
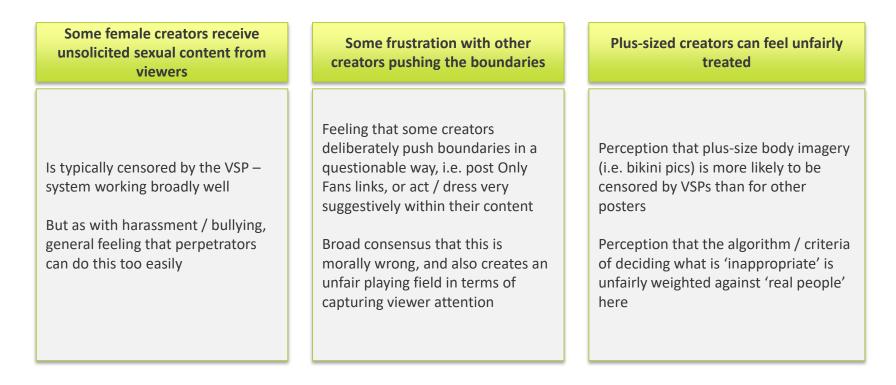*YouTube, Insta, Twitch, Vimeo, 29yrs*

- A big frustration for smaller creators – put a lot of hard work into building community and creating content, so to see people 'jump the queue' in terms of popularity, and then have greater status / access to more monetisation opportunities is a big frustration

- All aware that VSPs 'officially' don't allow this, but general sense that it's not well policed and lots of activity slips the net

- Plus confusion around grey area 'loopholes' that are perceived to be unfair– i.e. *'like my post to enter the contest',* unaware if this is allowed or not

Vast majority are supportive of rules artificial engagement and welcome stricter and more proactive enforcement from VSPs

Nudity and sexual content: most are broadly supportive of rules, but some activity causing frustrations

All are aware of and understand the need for broad rules on posting nude / sexual content – appreciated as a 'core' guideline. However;

Some female creators receive unsolicited sexual content from viewers	**Some frustration with other creators pushing the boundaries**	**Plus-sized creators can feel unfairly treated**
Is typically censored by the VSP – system working broadly well But as with harassment / bullying, general feeling that perpetrators can do this too easily	Feeling that some creators deliberately push boundaries in a questionable way, i.e. post Only Fans links, or act / dress very suggestively within their content Broad consensus that this is morally wrong, and also creates an unfair playing field in terms of capturing viewer attention	Perception that plus-size body imagery (i.e. bikini pics) is more likely to be censored by VSPs than for other posters Perception that the algorithm / criteria of deciding what is 'inappropriate' is unfairly weighted against 'real people' here

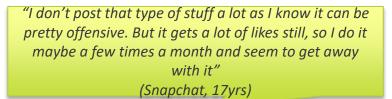# Hate speech and further inappropriate content: rules welcomed, but some deliberately push boundaries

All are aware of and understand the need for broad rules on further inappropriate content such as hate speech, violence, self harm etc.

A small minority of creators deliberately trade in 'edgy' content

- For example, meme /humour content relating to race, disability, sexual orientation

- Often has high shares / likes vs. other content, so this creates an incentive for repeat posting

- Aware that this is broadly breaking rules – some say they 'only do it occasionally' and / or they check comments to see if people are offended and self-censor if generates too much negativity

- These creators are often young and inexperienced (under 18) and can be unaware of the specifics of rules and / or 'where the line is' in terms of appropriateness

Highly inappropriate content from general VSP users can act as a benchmark

- Some younger posters of 'edgy' content point towards more excessively inappropriate content (TikTok suicide used as example) and use this this as justification for what is 'pragmatically permissible' on VSPs

- i.e. *"If they still leave that type of content up, then mine will be fine"*

"I don't post that type of stuff a lot as I know it can be pretty offensive. But it gets a lot of likes still, so I do it maybe a few times a month and seem to get away with it"
(Snapchat, 17yrs)

Vast majority of content creators abide by and welcome these rules. Opportunity to better push exactly what are rules, as some overstep. Stamping down on more graphic content is likely to discourage lower level content too.