

What is shaping culture? Entertain us

By Brett Rogers

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What happens when we run out of shows? Interest in standard television has been dropping with companies like Showmax, Netflix, Prime, Disney and Hulu stealing eyes from TV for years. However, 2020 has had a profound impact on their ability to create content and, while they have been scrambling to find solutions, home creators have started emerging as real entertainment platforms to replace them.

User generated content platforms grew by up to 120% during the early weeks of lockdown.



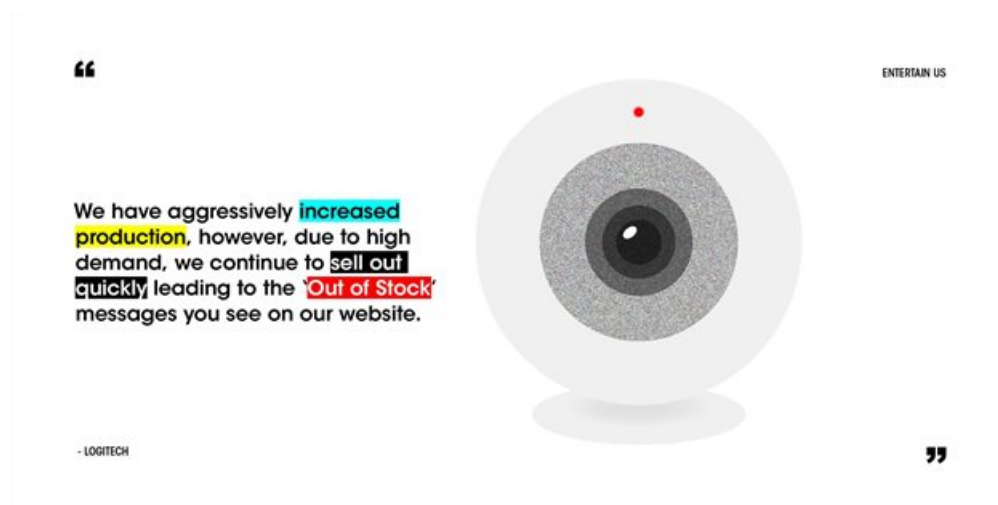
As the coronavirus strolled across the planet, the one thing we had to cling to was a steady stream of shows. But, while we were gorging ourselves on 'all the content', those who created it were not able to work and were not able to create more of these shows for us. Yes, the world might get back to 'normal' some year soon but, until that happens, the volume of big-budget TV shows will take a drop. With that, the home creator is on the rise. They have, of course, been around for a long time, but the enforced lockdown has inspired those who might not have started a content channel to do so and now they are finding themselves even more successful than they might have thought.



Home creators have a connection with their audience that is more personal and intimate, making their fandom a 'special' relationship not seen with major productions whose stars are still out of reach.

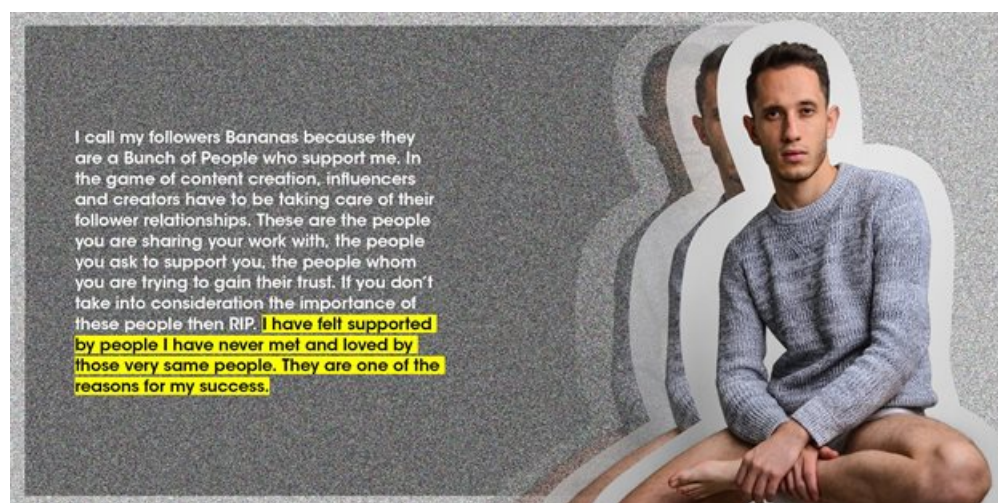
An indication of this trend is the mass of content uploaded to YouTube. The number is almost inconceivable [yes, we know what that word means Princess Bride fans] at 718,320 hours per hour, that means it would take you 82 years just to watch what was loaded in an hour.

This increase in content meant that there has been a massive shortage of webcams globally and, while Logitech are doing their best to keep up with demand, the big guns in the world of cameras are stepping in. Canon, Fujifilm and Panasonic have all created software which enables their DSLRs to function as webcams.



South Africa is no exception to the content creation boom. We spoke with Michael Cost who has been on the content creation wagon since it started. What many don't realise is the incredibly hard work that it takes to create compelling content. Our expectations are high, we expect a good story, clever editing, acceptable sound quality and an interesting story ... all from one person. Yes, some people have assistants, but most are working on their own and creating incredible work.

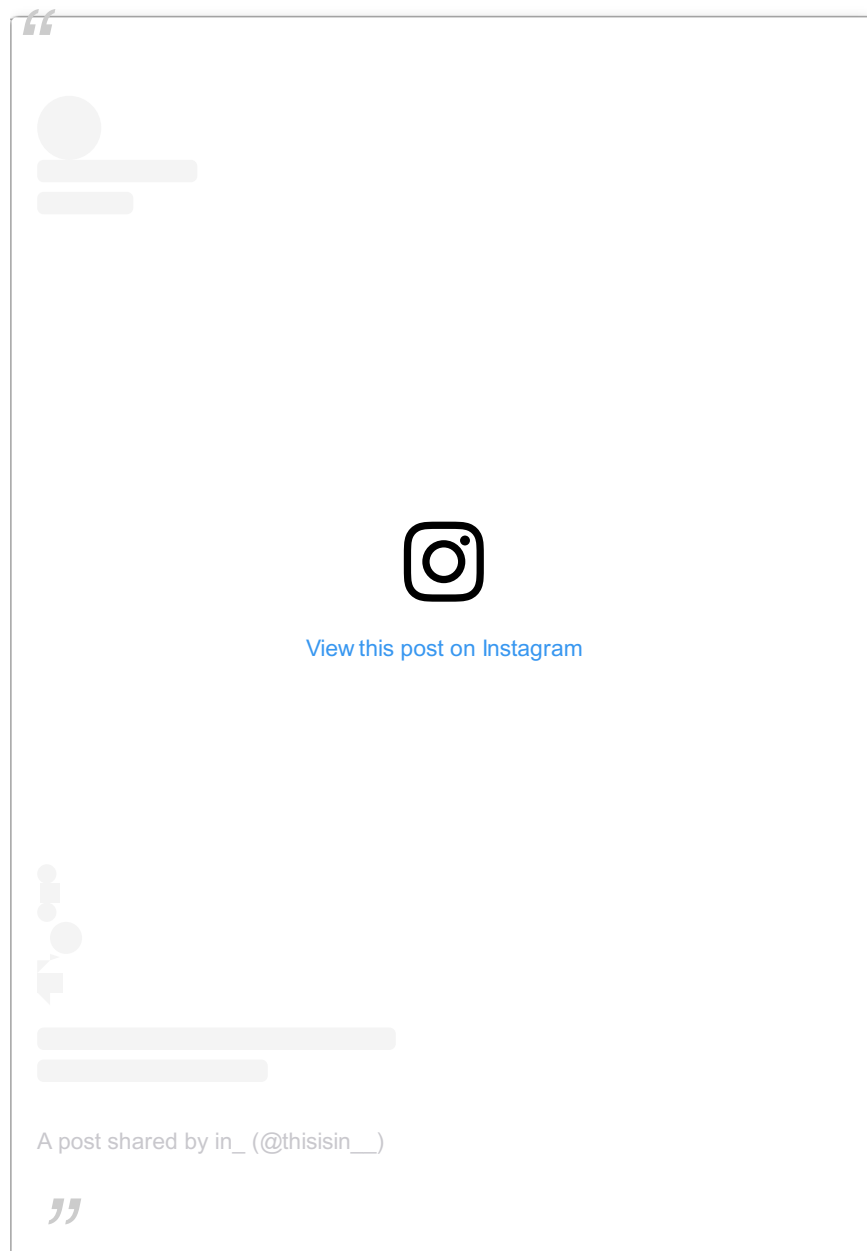
Something we touched on earlier was the connection viewers have with their creators, and how intimate and important it is. They both feed a need in each other that is difficult to get from traditional media. There is instant contact, and a direct personal response.



In 2015 Moshe Ndiki created a video titled #Woozementation which hit such a personal authentic note that it helped launch his career. There was no plot, there was no story arc, it was just a man at his wits end who opened his camera phone and told the world all about how much he was battling, but he had a bottle of crackling to keep him company. Many people in South Africa knew that feeling, and Moshe's endearing sweetness gave us an outlet for our own problems.

During the Canadian lockdown, music nut Sam Pennachio from Vinyl Junkies live-streamed his daily reactions to legendary albums, including Radiohead's OK Computer. He listened live with his supporters and other fans, and the moment of connection and of shared experience was so beautiful that it moved Sam to tears. In such difficult times being able to share experiences with others is a privilege, something we took for granted.

Finally, and perhaps most endearing, was the story of JesseDStreams who fell asleep while streaming on Twitch, and to his surprise when he awoke he found hundreds of people were watching him sleep and were donating money. The video has gone on to have more than 4 million views, the internet wanted to be a part of Jesse's story with millions going to see his sweet smile as he saw all the viewers.



Please support these creators, you can find them here: moshe @mosnendiki, Sam at @vinyljunkies.co, and [at] JesseDStreams on Twitch.

Video streaming is the future, even companies like DStv are turning to it now. But now they are not alone, there are hundreds of thousands of people vying for your attention by creating compelling, thoughtful and oftentimes silly content. These creators are part of a new future of programming and TV will never be the same again.

ABOUT BRETT ROGERS

Brett Rogers, culture lead at Cape Town advertising agency HaveYouHeard and content curator for In_, a channel of content, which showcases cultural forces that are changing the world. It aims to inform, inspire and entertain the viewer and does so with multimedia posts, including podcasts, videos, google trends, mini Q+A's and more. In_ talks to those interested in in-depth cultural exploration and those curious about the world we live in.

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