

Influencers and creator economies: Imaginaries, platform evolution, and commercial value chains

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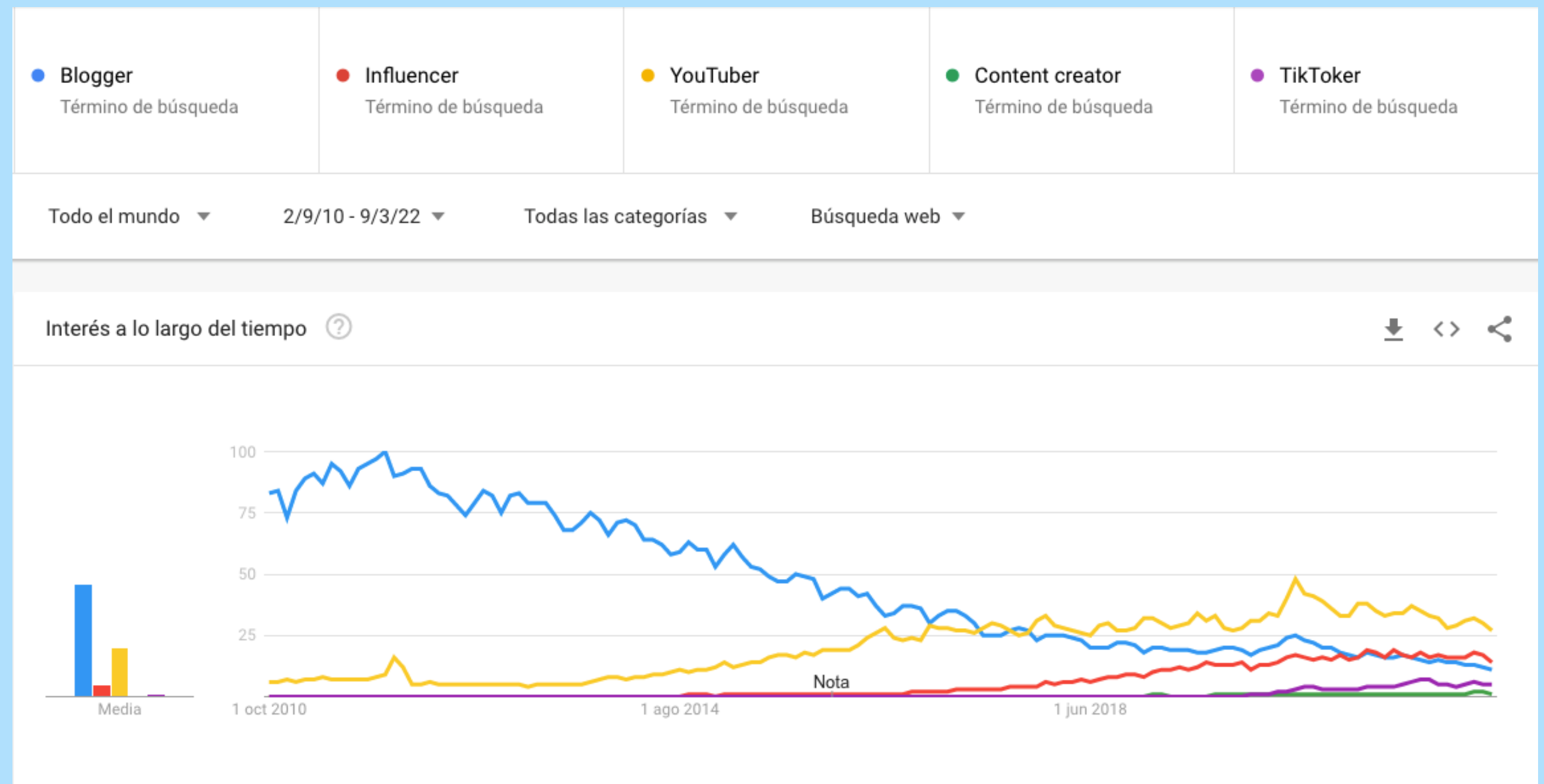


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EVOLUTION OF WORK

CONTENT CREATORS

How Social Media Content Creator Trends Have Changed (2010-2022)



Source: Google Trends

THE CREATOR ECONOMY

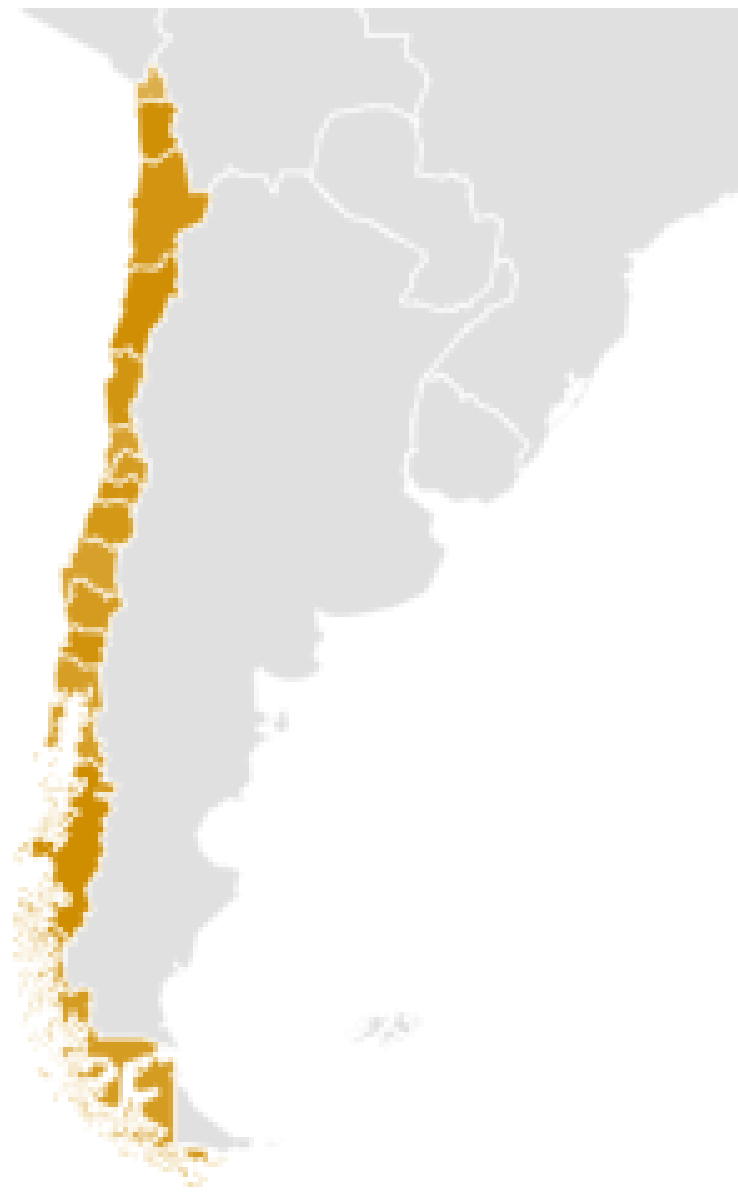
Influencer Marketing Global Market Size



Source: The State of Influencer Marketing (2022). Influencer Marketing Hub.

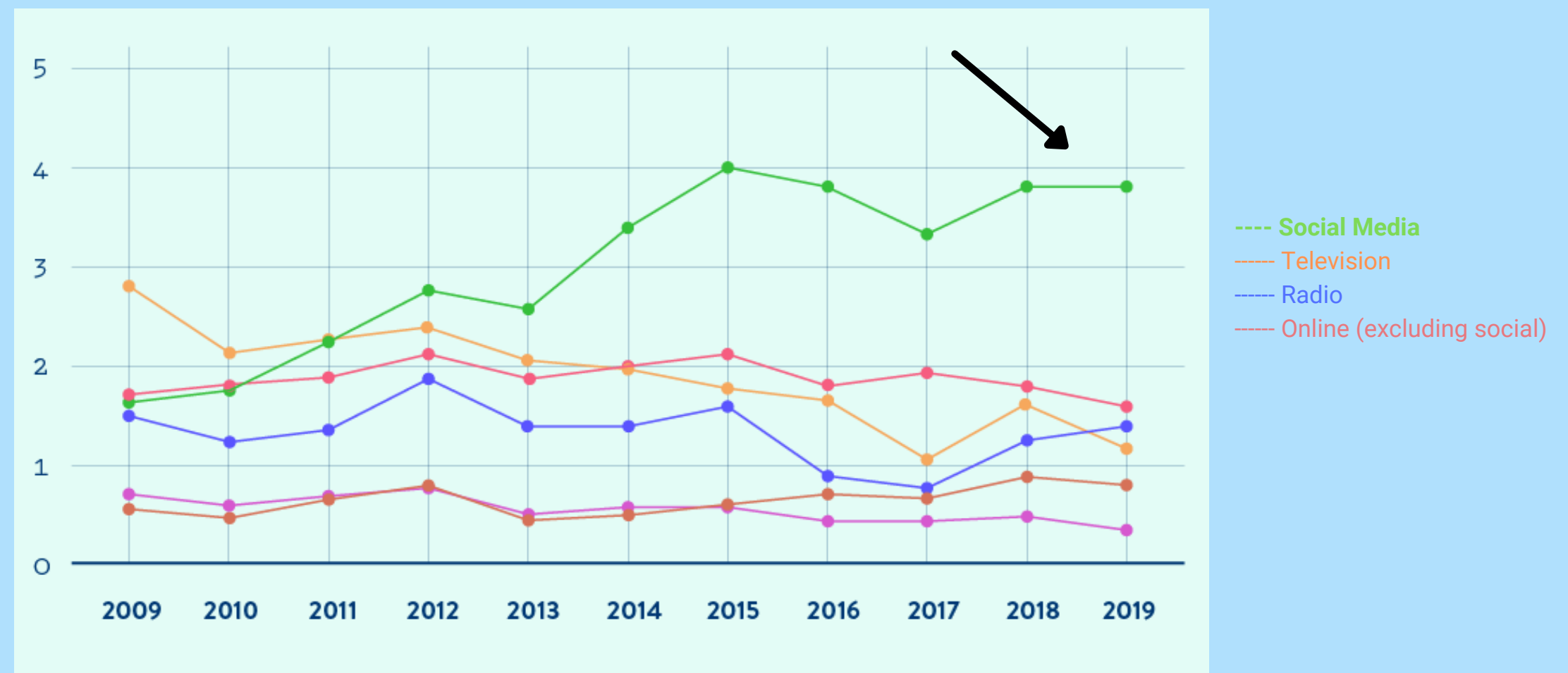
“Brands can now only hope to influence the conversations that people are having about them — and to do so, they are enlisting a growing army of professional influencers who have become a new staple of digital marketing around the world”

Business of Fashion, "The age of influence", 2018



CHILEAN CONTENT CREATORS AS A CASE STUDY

THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA... THE DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA SOURCES



Source: Ciclos UDP Survey (Jóvenes y Participación) (2009-2019). Q: Mean time spent in media daily (hours).

Examining Content Creators Activities Through an Ethnographic Approach

2011-2012

- 9-month ethnography of 16 music bloggers in Santiago
- Participant observation at a branding agency
- Analysis of online content (Blogs/Websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

2014-2021

- 65 Interviews with influencers
- 3-month participant observation at an influencer agency
- Interview with influencer marketing agencies executives
- Analysis of online content (Instagram post and stories N= 740) and promotional material (media kits, reports).



CONTENT CREATORS: BETWEEN VISIBILITY AND PRECARIETY

A number of works have problematized users' negotiations of hyper-commercialized identity online, through examining "self-branding" (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016; Marwick, 2015).

Others sketched the complex and far-reaching labour influencers undertake as they position content production as both an authentic genuine passion and a strategic act of entrepreneurship (Duffy, 2017).

Others explore the precarity creators experiment, depending on platform algorithms and rules to achieve visibility (Cotter, 2019; Bishop, 2019).

AUTHENTICITY AND COMMERCIALISM

How this branch of cultural producers makes sense of themselves and their **activities** as “**ordinary and accessible**” while promoting **consumption**?



INFLUENCER IMAGINARIES

Influencers organize their social world in ways that enable them to **justify moving** between two contradictory poles of **commerciality** and **authenticity**. These navigations necessitate “influencer imaginaries”.

MAKE YOUR
PASSION
YOUR
PAYCHECK

INFLUENCER IMAGINARIES HELP CREATORS TO:

Resolve **information asymmetries** in markets,

Differentiate influencers from **celebrities** and **advertisers** as average people; and

Negotiate self definition with regard to agencies, audiences, and themselves.

INFORMATION ASYMMETRIES

"We give valid opinions from better knowledge, like semi-experts, and help people with information when buying a product. We are a channel between brands and consumers, but closer because we are just normal people. We're not celebrities, but we're knowledgeable, or experts, about certain topics."

Denisse, beauty influencer

"I want to create conversations with people to let them know what they are buying... to know if they are paying a fair price."

Christian, fashion influencer

AVERAGE PEOPLE

"I think it might become dangerous if you exclusively start focusing on [metrics], because I think that ultimately, what we do is a naturalness that brings likes, not the other way around. Not looking for likes, and then making it seem natural."

Natalia, influencer instructor

"The appeal of influencers is that they do what they like. That's what distinguishes [an influencer] from a television celebrity. A celebrity might promote a product she doesn't use, and it doesn't matter because she doesn't need to have that kind of credibility."

Ignacia, fashion influencer

MOVING ACROSS COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

A brand might hire you to do a piece, but what I do is, like, make that bit fun for my followers. That brings the brand closer in the most natural way possible and isn't as aggressive as saying to [...] my audience, 'hey, buy this'."

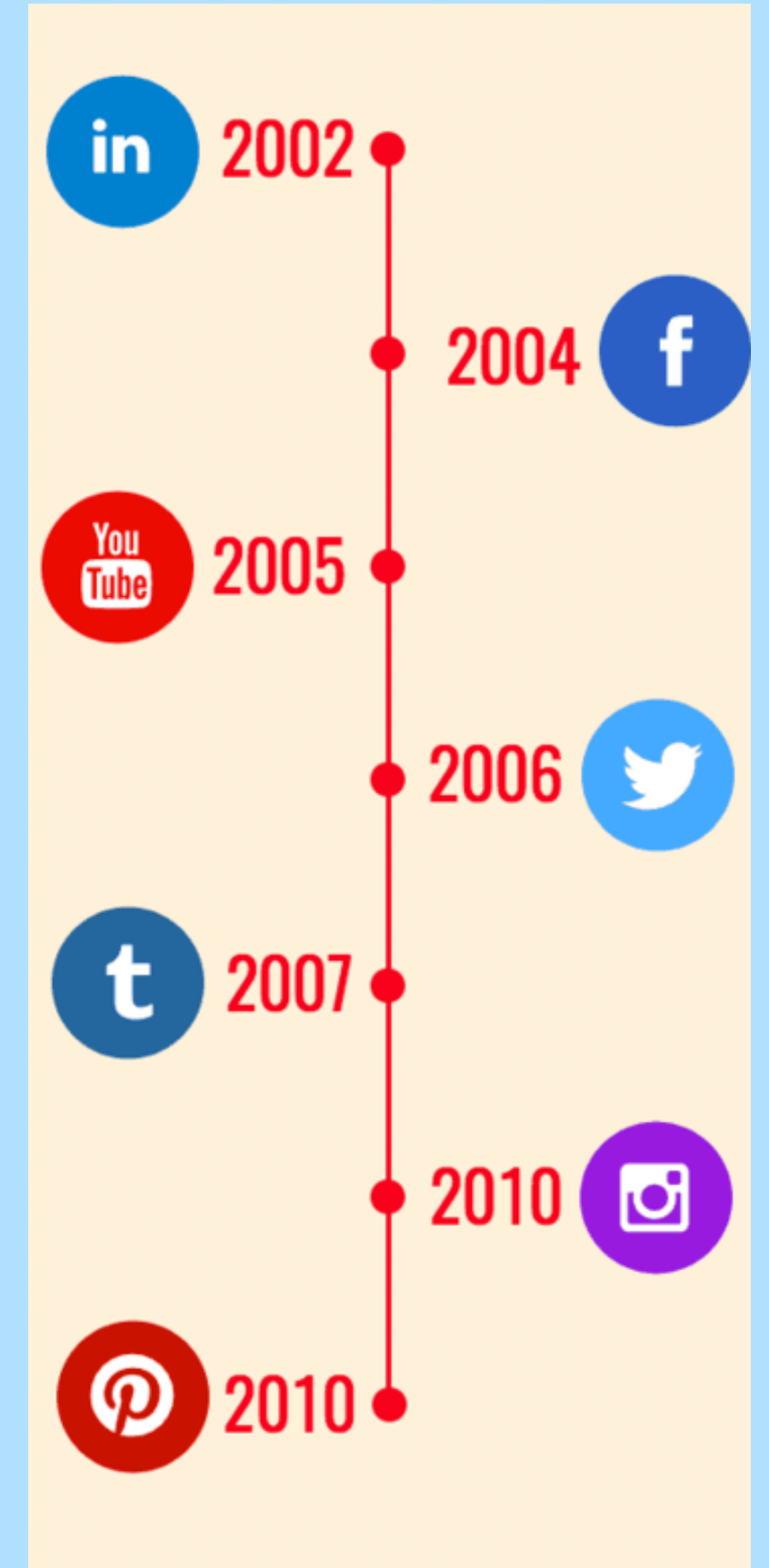
Maria, fashion influencers

"Before, (advertising) agencies were in charge of producing a fantasy; now, I build that fantasy for them. I have the power".

Romina, beauty influencer

A CHANGING TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

How **evolutions in platforms**—including constant updates to their affordances—**shape the activities** and interpretive processes of content creators?



CREATORS EXPERIENCE EVOLUTION IN PLATFORMS

In the form of different **communicative styles**

Temporal **acceleration**

Constant **negotiation with other actors** in the social network through which **commercial activities** are configured

COMMUNICATIVE STYLES

"Having a blog was the basis of everything . . . all my content is there . . . if you didn't have a blog, you're nobody. On Instagram you can invite people to read your content through images."

Andrea, beauty influencer

"For instance, on Instagram I can share a picture of an outfit because Instagram is a visual platform. However, on my blog I write about seven reasons to use that outfit, I can give more details on a blog-post. On Instagram I give less details, only the picture, but I can invite my audience to visit my blog."

Mariana, fashion influencer

TEMPORAL ACCELERATION

"It's fun, (Instagram) Stories are like the new TV, and they are automatically deleted after 24 hours, and everything starts again after that. That's fun. Also, you get instantaneous feedback from your followers."

Javiera, fashion influencer

"A blog with one or two posts per week can survive, but on Instagram, uploading one or two pictures per week, you're dead. You need at least one picture daily."

Ricardo, fashion influencer

CIRCUITS OF COMMERCE

"If you are not uploading content constantly, (Instagram's algorithm) punishes you . . . before that you upload your picture and you can see it immediately, but now depends on the number of people who "likes" the picture and my kind of followers. You can upload a picture and if I don't "like" it maybe I will not see your content for a long time."

Valentina, beauty influencer

MAKING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE CALCULABLE

The screenshot displays the Upfluence website, which is a leading influencer marketing platform. The header includes the Upfluence logo, navigation links for Software, Services, Pricing, Why Upfluence, and Resources, and buttons for Get Started, Or Log in, and EN. The main content area features a large heading: "Grow Your Brand With The Leading Influencer Marketing Platform". Below this, a subheading states: "Create stronger collaborations & generate more authentic content to boost your sales with the leading influencer marketing platform built for ecommerce brands." A form for "Your Work Email*" and a "Get Started" button are present. On the right, a summary of key metrics is shown: 8 Influencers selected, 3.4M Social reach, 122k Estimated engagements, and \$9.2K Estimated budget. Below these metrics, a list of influencers is displayed, each with a profile picture, name, location, and various performance metrics including engagement rate, reach, and follower count.

Influencer	Location	Engagement Rate	Reach	Follower Count
Helena Magill	Hamburg, Germany	97%	3.4M	122k
Sofia Donovan	Paris, France	99%	3.4M	122k
Iris Fabrino	Chicago, USA	97%	3.4M	122k
Vivian	Portland, Canada	93%	3.4M	122k

Source: Valderrama, M; Arriagada, A. (2022). Making social media influence calculable: influencer agencies, algorithmic systems and platforms metrics. Working paper.

NEW PROJECT LATINX CREATORS

Top 25 Latin American Influencers Adored by Their Followers:

Summary

- ▶ 1. Eleonora Pons Maronese aka Lele Pons
- ▶ 2. Mariand Castrejon Castañeda aka Yuya
- ▶ 3. German Garmendia
- ▶ 4. Salice Rose
- ▶ 5. Camila Coelho
- ▶ 6. Olalla Lopez
- ▶ 7. Luisa Fernanda
- ▶ 8. Andrea Espada
- ▶ 9. Bethany Mota
- ▶ 10. Marialejandra Marrero

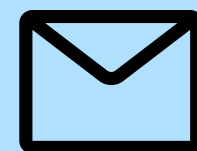


GRACIAS

THANK YOU



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