# Virtual creators transform online culture with billions of views and growing influence



A recent report from YouTube sheds light on the burgeoning influence of Virtual Creators, also known as VTubers and CGI influencers, who are transforming the landscape of online content creation. Once considered a niche curiosity, these animated personas have grown into a cultural movement that is redefining how creativity, identity, and authenticity are expressed in the digital era.

According to the Culture & Trends Report published by YouTube, Virtual Creators have amassed an impressive average of 50 billion annual views related to VTuber content over the past three years. In 2024 alone, just 300 Virtual Creators on YouTube have garnered over 15 billion views, with approximately 1 billion of those views coming from U.S. audiences. This surge underscores their ascent from a novelty to a dominant force in content innovation.

The report classifies the virtual creator ecosystem into four primary categories:

VTubers: These are anime-inspired avatars, often affiliated with agencies such as hololive, who engage audiences through live streaming and interactive fan engagement.

Gaming Virtual Creators: Leveraging game engines like Roblox and VRChat, these creators fashion characters that participate in both digital and real-world trends.

Virtual Artists: This group includes entirely digital musicians such as Hatsune Miku and AI-generated performers like Naevis from the K-pop group aespa, who perform exclusively in virtual form.

Virtual Humans: Hyperrealistic avatars exemplified by figures like Lil Miquela and Code Miko, designed to closely resemble real-world influencers and performers.

These virtual identities are brought to life through a combination of live motion capture, computer-generated imagery (CGI), video game engines, and artificial intelligence technologies. As the tools and platforms for creating digital personas become increasingly accessible, the barriers to entering the virtual fame arena are diminishing, leading to broader participation.

Interestingly, despite their synthetic construction, virtual creators are frequently regarded as more authentic than traditional media figures. A 2024 survey conducted in the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region found that 61% of respondents felt that YouTube creators—virtual ones included—came across as “authentically themselves.” This paradox, where the absence of a real face allows for a more genuine expression of identity, is central to the appeal of virtual creators.

The divide between niche interest and mainstream popularity is narrowing swiftly. For example, the hololive New Year Game Festival, showcasing over 50 VTubers, achieved global trending status, highlighting how virtual personalities are becoming core to YouTube’s most followed content. Moreover, corporate brands are increasingly collaborating with virtual creators, as seen with Hatsune Miku’s participation in a McDonald’s Japan advertising campaign and her virtual appearances at major events like Coachella and the Fortnite Festival.

The YouTube report thus highlights a dynamic, swiftly evolving creative domain where technology and storytelling converge, marking Virtual Creators as a defining element of contemporary digital culture.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://blog.youtube/culture-and-trends/youtube-culture-trends-report-virtual-creators/> - This YouTube official blog post details the rise of Virtual Creators, highlighting that 300 Virtual Creators amassed over 15 billion views in 2024, including about 1 billion views from the U.S., corroborating the scale and influence of VTubers and CGI influencers discussed.
* <https://www.youtube.com/trends/report/> - YouTube Culture & Trends Reports page provides ongoing analyses of creator trends including Virtual Creators, supporting the context that Virtual Creators are a significant cultural movement transforming online content creation.
* <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/youtube-report-rise-virtual-influencers/745841/> - This article discusses YouTube's report on the rise of virtual influencers such as Hatsune Miku and Code Miko, verifying the classification of virtual creators including Virtual Artists and Virtual Humans featured in the article.
* <https://www.trendwatching.com/trends-and-insights/monetization-devotion-and-individualization-youtubes-culture-trend-report-2024> - Trend Watching's summary of YouTube's annual Culture & Trend Report supports the notion of changing fan culture and authenticity in creator identity, which aligns with the survey finding that 61% of respondents feel virtual creators come across as 'authentically themselves.'
* <https://www.youtube.com/trends/report/2024-year-on-youtube/> - This global YouTube trends report offers insights on creator innovations and the growing popularity of VTubers and virtual creators, reinforcing claims about their role in redefining online creativity and their technological underpinnings.