

5. Platforms: monetization and terms and conditions

This section analyzes some aspects of the terms and conditions of a selection of stream platforms, as well as their content moderation methods, which are critical for the governance of the contents ecosystem in Argentina, and, therefore, critical for creators. The analysis aims to compare selected platforms, with special focus on the monetization schemes and the so-called demonetization filters related to contents deemed inappropriate.

CETyS | UdeSA (2023), Content platforms and creators in Argentina: analysis of the value chain and production and monetization modalities. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10908/23188>.

The first part of the section proposes a general description of a selection of platforms, identifying relevant success metrics and formats. The second part focuses on monetization schemes. The last part takes the issue of monetization schemes to the debates about platforms terms and conditions.

General characterization of the main platforms

Table 2 proposes a very introductory descriptive matrix of the main content platforms in Argentina. It makes a distinction between the main authorized formats, key indicators of the activity and number of users in the country. The formats considered are not comprehensive: ephemeral stories and permanent posts (sponsored or not), videos (in short vertical, short horizontal and long horizontal formats), video streaming (vertical or horizontal), podcast, record, song and streaming.² The key indicators of the activity are followers, likes, engagement, number of visualizations, times the content was shared, subscribers, permanence in videos, retweets and replies. Some additional indicators are considered in special cases.

2. In this report we work with the following definitions of formats according to their duration: i) short video: up to 3 minutes; ii) medium video: 3 to 15 minutes; and iii) long video: more than 15 minutes.

Table 2 – Characteristics of the main platforms in Argentina

Platform	Main formats	Most relevant indicators	Users
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Image posting, sponsored and not sponsored Short vertical video Ephemeral story Vertical video streaming 	Followers, likes, engagement, visualizations, permanence in videos, times shared, sales in marketplace	24,700,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long horizontal video Short horizontal video Short vertical video (Shorts) Horizontal video streaming Ephemeral story Podcast 	Paid and unpaid subscribers, visualizations, permanence in videos, permanence in channels, engagement, times shared	31,700,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertical video 15 seconds Vertical video 60 seconds Vertical streaming Ephemeral story 	Visualizations, permanence in videos, engagement, followers, choreographies, remixes	11,340,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record Song Playlist Podcast Event streaming 	Reproductions, likes, follows, addition to playlists	2,439,705 single monthly users, not paid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post with image Post with text Video Ephemeral story 	Followers, likes, times shared, engagement	28,400,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tweet Tweet thread Audio-stream 	Followers, likes, retweet, engagement, replies, new metrics for professionals	5,900,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal video streaming Horizontal videos 	Subscribers, visualizations	Data unknown






Source: Own creation based on observation by Datareportal (2022) and Start.io (2022).

In the first place, we see that there is a limited variety of formats, associated to the distinct characteristics that have turned each platform into a product that audiences understand and find attractive (short vertical video, as in TikTok and Instagram, or

medium or long horizontal video, as in YouTube); and, in the second place, that there is a quite uniform set of relevant metrics for traffic analysis, regardless of some case by case differences, inherent to its specific characteristics (such as the weight of remixes and music choreographies in TikTok, or the content leading to the sale of products published on Instagram Shop).

Moreover, regarding the second point, evidence says that, even though each platform has different metrics that allow it to control the performance of the content, the extent of engagement is particularly relevant in any platform. According to a poll by NeoReach (2022), creators see engagement as the most powerful success factor in all platforms vis a vis the money/remuneration available or the followers and subscribers base they have. Table 3 shows what factor is considered the most important one in some selected platforms (NeoReach, 2022). What that involvement by audiences entails is less clear: in Twitter it will be clicking on a link and replying a tweet, whereas in Instagram it may be commenting an ephemeral story or a sponsored post offering a contest to followers.

Table 3 – Platforms success measures according to creators' perception

Platforms	Money	Followers / Subscribers	Engagement
	34.1%	8.4%	57.5%
	29.5%	15.4%	55.1%
	40.7%	7.4%	51.9%
	33.3%	0%	66.7%
	0%	33.3%	66.7%

Source: NeoReach (2022) based on 2000 people interviewed globally

Competition to monetize

The most important method platforms have to draw alluring contents is to offer creators different ways to monetize their content directly, or at least enable the broadcast of content that is attractive to sponsor by third parties (brands).

We can make a distinction between those who are based on indirect monetization (agreements with third parties) and those who enter directly through the platform. Direct mechanisms are royalty income (in the case of some verticals such as #music), advertisement, paid subscriptions, micro-donations, direct contracts with some creators, special funds for creators and products sales. Table 4 summarizes the options available in general in a stylized manner.

Table 4 – Monetization schemes made available in platforms

Direct monetization	Indirect monetization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement income • Copyright royalties • Paid subscriptions • Micro-donations • Products sales in endogenous marketplace • Creators funds • Direct contracts with creators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements with third parties for sponsored contents • Agreements among third parties for sponsored events • Agreements among third parties with long-standing sponsors • Marketplaces in external platforms

Source: Own creation

Requirements and thresholds to make monetization possible

For each direct monetization method available there are different requirements that set up some entry barriers. In general, they become clearer for creators with the passing of time, as mastering them implies a learning process and, at the same time, complying with them entails crossing a minimum threshold in terms of audience development.



Affiliate

A minimum of 500 minutes of streaming **x** 7 different days of streaming **+** 3 simultaneous views on average **+** 50 followers in the last 30 days.

Partner

A minimum of 25 hours streaming **x** 12 different days of streaming **+** 75 views on average in the last 30 days.

In particular, these requirements are imposed when there is a wish to monetize content through advertisement. For example, in the case of **Twitch**, it implies becoming an “affiliate” or “partner”, something that is far from easy. These categories differ in the fee percentage paid to Twitch for their revenue. To be an “affiliate”, it is required to generate a minimum of 500 minutes of streaming, during seven different days of streaming, counting three simultaneous views on average and adding 50 followers in the last 30 days. To be a “partner”, a minimum of 25 hours streaming is required, 12 different days of streaming and 75 views on average in the last 30 days.

Another similar case is that of **YouTube**, which also has its “partners” program that gives access to monetization through advertisement. In this case, the requirement to be part is to have a minimum of 4,000 hours of visualization in the last 12 months and at least 1,000 subscribers. This program, besides the possibility to monetize, gives creators access to special assistance channels for them, as well as a tool to identify coincidences with other videos of the platform (Copyright Match Tool), to identify the creations (Content ID) and the coincidences with other videos of the platform (Copyright Match Tool).



Partner

A minimum of 4,000 hours of visualization in the last 12 months **+** at least 1,000 subscribers.

Creators funds

Some platforms have implemented funds specifically seeking to motivate the creation of some type of content. Its strategic sense is often to promote the development of new products and audiences, for example, when a platform gets to a market, or when it adds a new format. In that sense, it meets an objective similar to direct contracts with creators, even though with another complexity, legitimacy and scalability. In general, funds impose some requirements, such as reaching a minimum number of hours of visualization and followers. Now then, terms and conditions and minimum thresholds are not always so clear.



Funds between USD 100 and 10,000, depending on the performance of its videos.

Guidelines:

Videos should have the right format + be original + do not have watermarks, logos or metadata of other networks.

An example of a fund created on the occasion of a diversification of a platform portfolio is **YouTube Shorts**. It was implemented in 2021, and it had funds between USD 100 and 10,000, depending on the performance of its videos in “shorts” format. The program did not have a specific growth threshold, but it was adjusted each month based on the performance of the different participating videos. However, it established some clear guidelines, for example, that videos should have the right format, be original, do not have watermarks, logos or metadata of other networks (such as the data of TikTok channels that some creators broadcast in YouTube). In this case, it was not demanded that the channel should have been previously monetized, but it can happen in other funds (YouTube, [2021](#)).

On a global level, there is greater diversity of funds intended for the promotion of a given content, as is the case of Instagram Reels Play Bonus. However, not all these funds are available for creators based in Argentina. Also, some years ago TikTok implemented its own Creators Fund, which it committed to give £ 231 million in a period of three years. This fund is reserved for creators with over 10,000 followers and whose videos have over 100,000 visualizations during the previous 30 days, even though it does not apply to Argentina.

1. Monetization in Argentina

Argentina has some specificities as a medium-sized market for platforms. Many of them have offices in the country, but not all the monetization or programs functionalities are fully enabled, at least in comparison with other, bigger markets, such as the United States, or other neighboring countries with a bigger population, like Brazil or Mexico.



Monetization mainly from the payment with products to promote or generate performative activities or make their presence at events monetizable.

For example, except for the sale of products in an endogenous marketplace, monetization in **Instagram** is almost totally indirect, by means of sponsoring agreements by third parties (brands), while in other countries the direct monetization is available through paid subscriptions and micro-donations. In the case of the less consolidated creators, that indirect monetization comes mainly from the payment with products to promote (also known as “gift-giving”) or simply as a means to advertise themselves and then generate performative activities or make their presence at events monetizable.

YouTube is perhaps the most developed case and with the greatest diversity of monetization sources and programs given its presence in the country for over 18 years. However, monetization comes mainly from advertisement income. Besides, creators may obtain revenue from paid subscriptions, micro-donations, merchandising sale, agreements with third parties and visualizations of premium members. Creators get 55% of the advertisement income. The amount of that income is determined according to the winning offer of the advertiser, which can vary depending on users and their interests, as well as the time of the year and the country where they are.



Creators may obtain revenue from paid subscriptions, micro-donations, merchandising sale, agreements with third parties and visualizations of premium members.



Monetization comes from micro-donations and paid subscriptions, as well as agreements with third parties, advertisements and referral products.

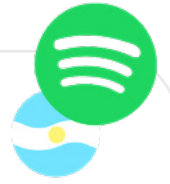
In **Twitch**, monetization comes from micro-donations and paid subscriptions, as well as agreements with third parties, advertisements and referral products. Besides, some of the most important creators obtain revenue by means of private contracts with the platform, which establish a base number of hours and days they have to stream per month. Creators get 55% of income through advertisement. Now, monetization is not lineal. Twitch has two programs: Partners and Affiliates. Both of them enable monetization and require a minimum number of subscribers, streaming hours and visualizations. They differ in the extent of those requirements, as the category of Partners is more exclusive than Affiliate, and in the fees Twitch charges creators for their revenue.

For **TikTok**, the only monetization scheme available in Argentina until 2022 was indirect: through agreements with third parties. However, micro-donations are allowed in other countries. As we mentioned, a Creators Fund has been recently implemented.



Only monetization through agreements with third parties.

In **Spotify**, monetization works differently from the rest of platforms. Creators obtain revenue based on royalties for recording and publication. To have access to this, it is necessary to include a record label or a copyrights collecting society, because Spotify does not interact with artists but with those societies, record labels or distributors. Smaller, decentralized artists can have access to intermediaries recommended by Spotify to post their songs and have a standard rights management. Conversely, in other countries, creators may obtain revenue based on paid subscriptions to their podcasts.³ Even though creators do not get direct revenue from advertisement in the platform, Spotify uses that income as part of their royalty payments.



Revenue based on royalties for recording and publication through a record label or a copyrights collecting society.



Monetization opportunities are advertisement income in videos and agreements with third parties.

In the case of **Facebook**, another of the longest-standing platforms, monetization opportunities in Argentina are advertisement income in videos and agreements with third parties. In other countries, paid subscriptions are also available. Advertisement income varies according to the advertiser and the number of visualizations. However, as the use of this platform is usually more social or as a sales and advertisement platform, in general, creators do not resort to this platform as their main means of monetization, but they use it as another piece in their positioning strategy.

Finally, in Argentina it is not possible to monetize directly in **Twitter**, only by means of agreements with third parties. However, in other countries, paid subscriptions, micro-donations and advertisement income in videos are available.











Monetización solo indirecta vía acuerdos con terceros.

Tables 5 and 6 present a summary of the information described so far. Table 5 shows a simplified comparison between the monetization schemes available in Argentina by selected platforms. Table 6 adds (whenever evidence was found) more elements for analysis, such as monetization schemes beyond Argentina, creators funds available and special programs for creators, as well as information available about charges on advertisement income.

3. It is interesting to point out that this limiting factor in Argentina has an impact on creators' preferences, as was the case with @EIMetodoRebord, who started streaming exclusively through YouTube.

Table 5 – Simplified comparison of the monetization schemes by platform in Argentina

Monetization source								
Advertisement income	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Copyright	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Direct contracts	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Creators funds	✓✗ (*)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Micro-donations	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Paid subscriptions	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Marketplace	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Agreements with third parties	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Own creation. Note: (*) no longer available.

Table 6 – Detailed comparison of the monetization schemes by platform in Argentina

Platform	Monetization schemes	Programs for creators	Creators funds	% advertisement for creators
	<p>Indirect, through agreements with third parties</p> <p>Other schemes not available in Argentina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid subscriptions • Micro-donations 	<p>Does not have</p> <p>It offers special tools and functionalities for creators.</p>	Reels Play Bonus (not available in Argentina)	Creators do not obtain advertisement income.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements • Paid subscriptions • Marketplace. • Micro-donations • Visualizations by premium members • Agreements with third parties 	Partners	Youtube shorts	55%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid subscriptions • Micro-donations • Advertisements • Agreements with third parties • Referral products • Private contracts with the platform 	<p>Partners and Affiliates</p> <p>* Partners pay lower fees than affiliates.</p>	Does not have	55%
	<p>Indirect, through agreements with third parties</p> <p>Other schemes not available in Argentina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro-donations 	<p>Creator Next</p> <p>(Not available in Argentina yet)</p>	Creators Fund 1 billion USD (not available in Argentina)	Creators do not obtain advertisement income.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright royalties <p>Other schemes not available in Argentina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscriptions to podcasts 	<p>Does not have</p> <p>It offers artists, managers, record labels and distributors functionalities for creators</p>	Does not have	Advertisement income is part of royalty payments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements with third parties • Advertisement income <p>Other schemes not available in Argentina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid subscriptions 	Does not have	Bonus fund (not available in Argentina)	Payments vary depending on advertisers and number of visualizations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid subscriptions • Micro-donations • Referral program 	Does not have	Does not have	Does not have
	<p>It does not have direct monetization for creators in Argentina.</p> <p>Other schemes not available in Argentina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro-donations • Advertisement in videos • Paid subscriptions 	<p>Does not have</p> <p>It offers special functionalities for creators, such as the tip button</p>	Does not have	Advertisement income is only obtained in videos (not available in Argentina), but the percentage for creators is not specified

Source: Own creation



Monetization in “freemium” platforms

In some cases, for example, YouTube and Spotify, the possibilities for monetization are influenced by the “freemium” model the platform has. Users may choose to use them for free, with the cost of visualizing advertisements from time to time, or else pay a monthly subscription, so they can avoid advertisement interruptions when they watch content. With this model, visualizations of videos monetized through advertisement in YouTube do not show advertisement to users of the paid service and, therefore, their visualizations are counted in a different way when creators are assigned payment. YouTube creators get a percentage of the monthly payment of these users based on the visualization time destined to their videos.

Monetization and appstores

A special case of platforms are the appstores of the predominant operative systems, Android and iOS, in cell-phones (see Table 7) and their corresponding associated stores: Google Play and Apple Store. They are not mentioned in the modeled value chain image because their rules, except for the case of podcasts, are conditioning for apps (they can be charged a percentage of the subscriptions to paid internal channels downloaded through that store), and they affect only indirectly the creators of some apps or the decentralized one (The Verge, [2021](#)). Table 7 summarizes some aspects of both cases which impact on the creators’ dynamics.

Table 7 – Appstores and their role in the value chain for certain content

Actor	App monetization income
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes 30% of purchases of digital goods and services in some apps. It takes 15% of the subscriptions after one year. • Podcasts: Cost of 19.99 for being there. It takes 30% and, after a year’s subscription, it takes 15%.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes 30% of the purchase of digital goods and services in some apps. It takes 15% of the subscriptions after one year.

Source: Own creation

2. Terms and conditions, and “demonetization” filters

Each platform has its own terms and conditions, which set the rules both for audiences and for creators. Among other key aspects for content creation, here is where thresholds to classify creators, to have access to monetization and even to agree on a production contract with a platform are established. These terms and conditions also set the moderation and management of intellectual property conditions, and what we can call (for the sake of simplicity) “demonetization filters” or control of permitted content.





In the last years, the content moderation mechanisms by platforms have increased, in their role of intermediaries between creators and users (Bustos, Palazzi, Rivero 2020). Each platform sets some parameters about “appropriate” content. This is so due to different reasons according to the platform, but, in general, they prevent users from finding content that is inappropriate or can hurt their sensitivity, and they look to prevent the distribution of hate messages that can be polarizing or lead to misinformation. Thus, even though what is appropriate content can vary from one platform to another -we can say, for example, that OnlyFans has more lenient restrictions than YouTube-, none of the platforms allows users to make publications with no restrictions at all. Besides, some platforms restrict the content that can be monetized even more strictly than the rest of the content that can be distributed in the platform, as is the case of YouTube. That is to say, there are videos that do not meet the conditions to obtain advertisement income but do meet the conditions to be found on the platform.

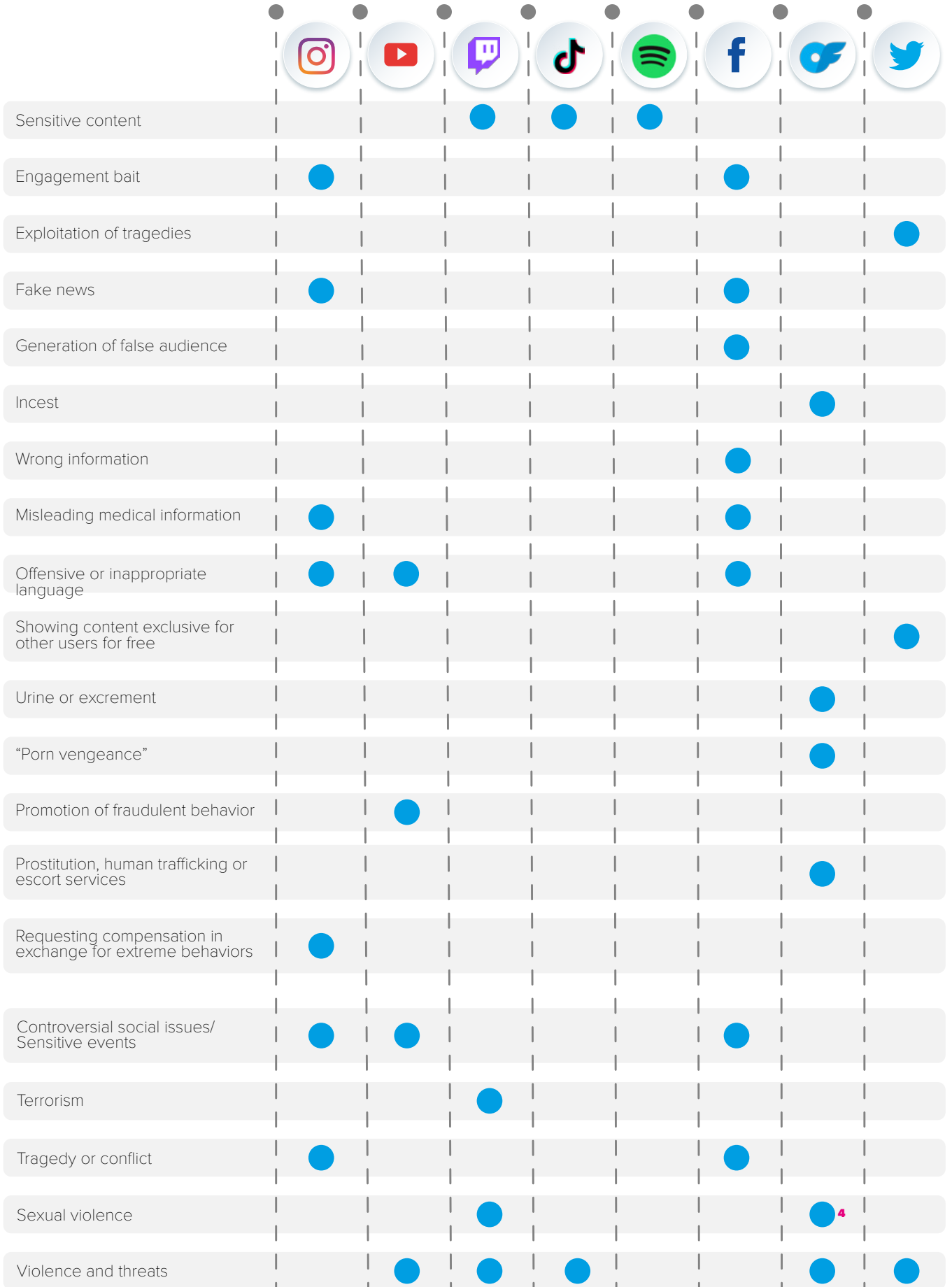
For creators who seek to obtain an important part of their revenue through direct monetization, it is very relevant to know these limitations when they create content. Likewise, as in some cases it is not easy to predict if the content will be in some of the prohibited categories or not, creators often end up learning by trial and error what content is monetizable, and to what extent they can show some elements.

On the other hand, for creators who diversify their strategy in different platforms, it is important to take into account the differences of permitted content. In fact, the same content may be associated to two prohibited items in different platforms (as the non-monetizable categories are not defined in an identical way between platforms, but they somewhat overlap), or the content may be permitted in one platform but not in another.

In Table 8 we break down the filters by which content may stop being monetizable or be eliminated from each platform.

Table 8 – Inappropriate content according to platforms

								
Harassment			●					
Sexual or suggestive activity	●	●				●		
Questionable activities	●					●		
Fraudulent activities						●		
Illegal activities			●	●	●	●		●
Dangerous or harmful activities		●		●	●			
Self-harm or suicide							●	
Bestiality							●	
Self-destructive behavior			●					
Misleading content			●		●			●
Outrageous or degrading content		●						
Explicit content	●			●		●		●
Content that is inappropriate for children or families		●						
Non-original content/ copyright infringement	●	●	●	●		●		●
Pejorative content or inciting hate or violence		●	●	●			●	
Content that shows or suggests the purchase of, or promotes the use of restricted or illegal products and services.								●
Content related to firearms		●					●	
Content related to drugs		●					●	
Content related to tobacco		●						



4- In the case of Only Fans, the specification of what can be considered in this category includes: rape, lack of consent, intoxication, sexual abuse, torture, sadomasochism, genital mutilation, necrophilia.