

KEEPING UP WITH THE INTERNET

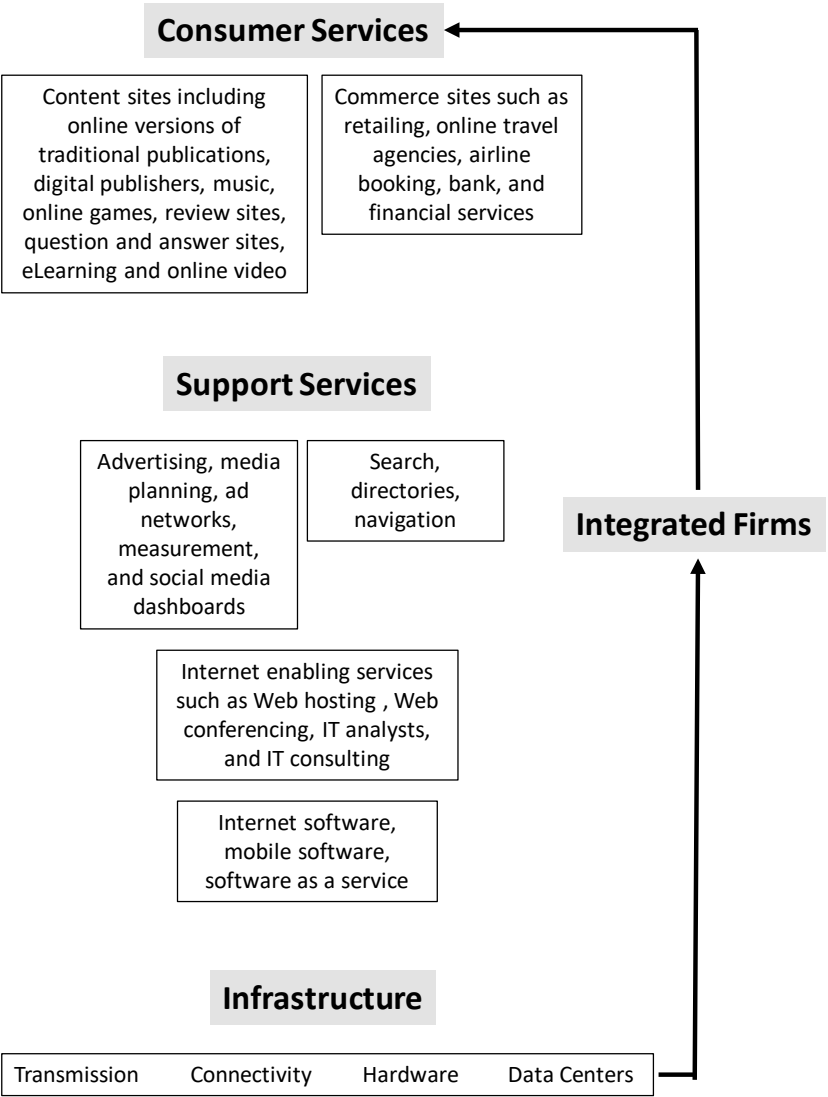
1. How the internet has enabled solo entrepreneurship
2. What the internet is doing to the marketing toolkit

John Deighton, Harvard Business School
Leora Kornfeld, Independent Consultant

Every four years since 2008, the IAB has commissioned us to analyze the size and scope of the market-making internet in the US. Back then it employed 2 million people. Today 7 million.

Its inventiveness has surprised us at each four-year interval. The internet was not a single disruption, but a chain of disruptions, industry after industry, and it's still going on.

Components of the Internet



This week

Consumer Services

Content sites including online versions of traditional publications, digital publishers, music, online games, review sites, question and answer sites, eLearning and online video

Commerce sites such as retailing, online travel agencies, airline booking, bank, and financial services

Next week

Support Services

Advertising, media planning, ad networks, measurement, and social media dashboards

Search, directories, navigation

Internet enabling services such as Web hosting, Web conferencing, IT analysts, and IT consulting

Internet software, mobile software, software as a service

Infrastructure

Transmission Connectivity Hardware Data Centers

Integrated Firms



Solo Entrepreneurship

The internet has eliminated many of the frictions that made it hard to work alone.

Solo Entrepreneurs are Enabled by a Supporting Ecosystem

Retail platforms

Non-retail platforms

General video platforms

Payment platforms

Service platforms

Financing (crowdfunding) platforms

And most recently minting NFTs

Solo Entrepreneurship

We look at this new kind of work in three areas

People who sell something on an **ecommerce** platform,
People who **perform services** offered on other platforms,
The people colloquially known as **creators**.

1. Platforms and Websites for Ecommerce

Platforms:

Amazon solo sellers	100,000
eBay sellers	60,000
Etsy sellers	58,000
Craigslist sellers	48,000

Websites enabled by eCommerce tools:

Shopify sellers	40,000
WooCommerce	20,000
Others	14,000

340,000 full time equivalent jobs



Amazon seller

2. Platforms for Other Services

Airbnb hosts	133,000
Uber and Lyft drivers	280,000
Amazon Flex drivers	70,000
Instacart workers	62,000

- Smaller numbers do delivery for firms like Grubhub, DoorDash, TaskRabbit.
- Or one-off jobs found on Fiverr and freelancing found on Upwork.
- Or as online trainers and instructors on Udemy, Kajabi, and Skillshare,
- Or as online therapists on BetterHelp, Talkspace, and others.
- We also find 100,000 people working independently in more traditional fields like web development, graphic design, and writing.



600,000 full time equivalent jobs

3. The Creator Economy

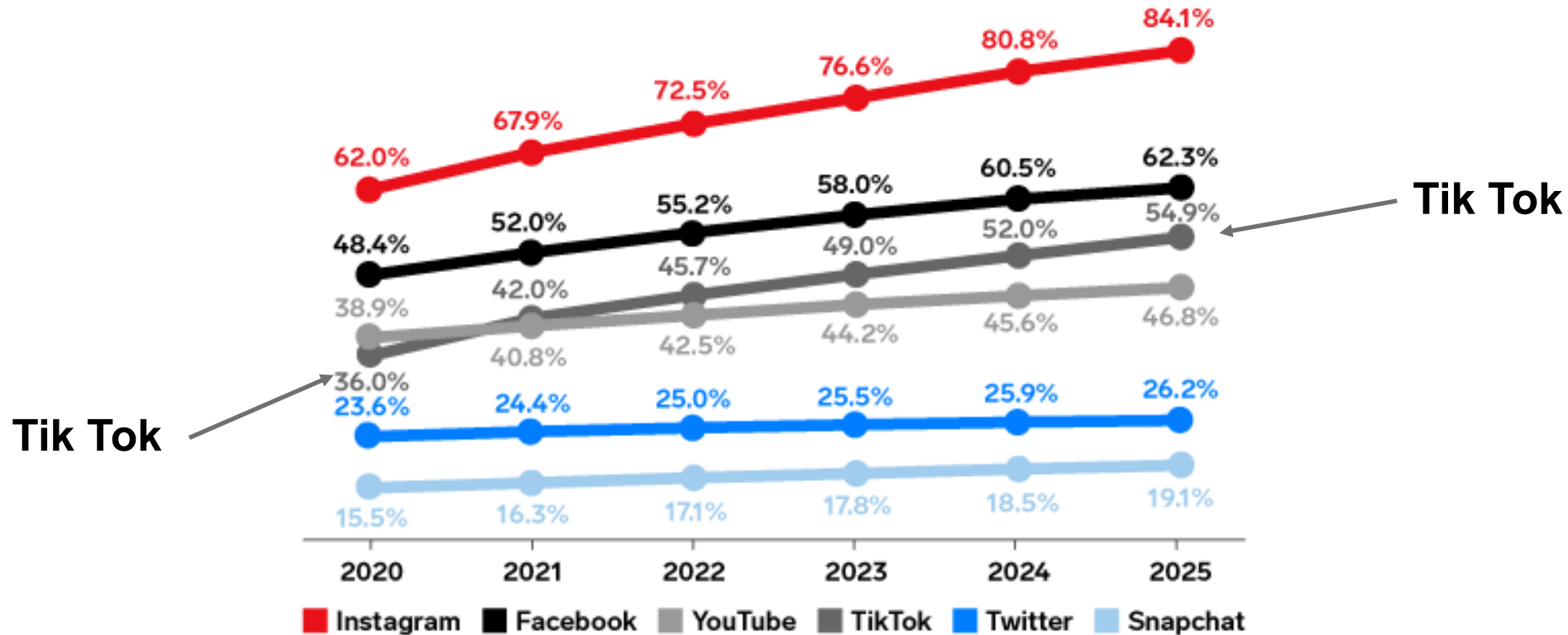
Several million people work, mostly part-time, as performers, writers, designers, and influencers.

- Music is the largest sector by number of creators: tens of millions worldwide
- Online game commentary is large, with Twitch as the largest platform
- Podcasts – now several million; has approached \$1 billion in ad revenue, up from just \$170 million at time of last study in 2016
- Creators/Influencers & Influencer Marketing: YouTube, Instagram, TikTok
- Journalists and writers of fiction & nonfiction use Substack and Medium and can monetize on the platform
- Fiction writers use Wattpad / 90 million monthly users / Brand partnerships division

200,000 full time equivalent jobs

Social Platforms Used by US Marketers for Influencer Marketing, 2020-2025

% of total marketers



Note: companies with 100+ employees; includes both paid and unpaid (i.e., compensation in the form of free product or trips) brand-influencer partnerships

Source: eMarketer, Dec 2021

Tik Tok



More Tik Tok

Jan 18, 2022, 10:00am EST | 977 views

Get Paid To Visit 30 Hotel Brands In 300 Days As Marriott Bonvoy TikTok Correspondent

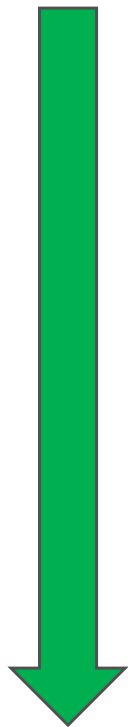


Ramsey Qubein Contributor ⓘ

Travel

Follow

Brand-Created
Content



User-Created
Content

Takeaways

- Of the 7 million people it takes to run the internet, many are not employees. They make up a large and fluid workforce, freer than employees to make their corners of the marketplace.
- They are free because tools now exist to liberate them from office and media infrastructures.
- Solo creators are being recruited as brand influencers.
- And their creative products are being read for cues to contemporary culture.

Next Week

How the internet is
changing the marketer's
toolkit