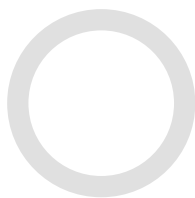


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HOME TO CREATORS
VIDCON
2018



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VidCon, the world's largest annual gathering of online "creators" features top and mid-tier video influencers on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Twitch and Snapchat alongside their fans at The Anaheim Convention Center in California (with the average attendee age likely half that of Cannes). Launched in 2010 by the **Vlogbrothers, John and Hank Green, VidCon now attracts upwards of 30,000 people. Earlier this year VidCon was acquired by Viacom for an undisclosed sum, and while the executive team remains in place, VidCon continues to operate independently.**

What Happened?

VidCon 2018 Tracks



COMMUNITY TRACK



CREATOR TRACK



INDUSTRY TRACK

This year VidCon ensured there was a clear separation between creators and an ever increasing and excited fan population. Unlike in the past, when creators were deluged by young often screaming fans every step of their way, organizers placed fans and industry leaders in the convention center adjacent to the Hilton, while creators and their networks were down the highway at the Hyatt (with shuttles set up for quick appearances before being whisked to relative safety).

VidCon contended for the first time with a rival convention headed by Tana Mongeau, a YouTube creator miffed that she hadn't received a top-level Featured Creator badge. TanaCon, as it was called, quickly devolved into chaos as too many fans tried to pack into a small Marriott Anaheim ballroom. There was no perceptible impact on VidCon attendance.

Facebook took the opportunity to pitch its new IGTV platform which launched on Day 1 to Instagram creators, both in their creators lounge at the Hyatt and with a big display on the convention floor.

Finally, VidCon founder Hank Green announced the launch of the "VidCon Emerging Creator Grant Program" to gift a one-time \$2,000 grant to an emerging online video content creator every week during the next year.

Major VidCon Themes:

Increased Brand Presence

Brands continued to have a growing presence on the convention floor:

- Invisalign bought back their popular ferris wheel, plus a candy wall and a trampoline experience strategically situated in the outside plaza.
- Nickelodeon had a spectacular Double Dare activation, recreating the iconic challenge show on the floor for fans to participate ahead of the show's relaunch.
- United Airlines set up an instagram-ready snowy background to highlight travel opportunities away from sunny Orange County.
- Adobe and Canon both highlighted creator ready digital tools.
- Films screened included: Teen Titans Go:The Movie, Love Simon, and Mama Mia: Here We Go Again!

What Marketers Should Know

VidCon is becoming a key place to launch new products and increase brand exposure to influencers on the floor and even included giftbags in the creators lounge. While the primary audience is Gen Z, many attendees come with chaperones in tow, hence brands like United, Serta and others finding favor there.

YouTube Grumbles

As YouTube continues to re-jigger monetization policies and thresholds, up and coming creators in particular are feeling the pinch as it is a harder to climb to become successful. This was a huge reason for the announcement of the 'VidCon Emerging Creator Grant Program' which is meant to counteract the impact of these moves as well as Facebook's algorithm changes and other forces that are making it harder to get from micro-influencer to mid-level or higher. The only requirements to apply: you must create content on YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Twitch, [Musical.ly](https://musical.ly), Facebook, Tumblr, Pinterest, or your blog; have been uploading two videos per month for at least six months prior and earn less than 150,000 views per video. That list of platforms shows that many creators are actively looking to diversify beyond YouTube..

What Marketers Should Know

YouTube is still a huge part of the video influencer world with a well-developed group of Multi-Channel Networks (MCNs) with many ways to buy around and integrate into content. However, with new creators becoming frustrated and other platforms increasing offerings, there are opportunities to reach new audiences elsewhere.



“I kind of expected online video to develop into its own thing, and it has. But I didn't expect that it would start to look more and more like television, while television would start to look more and more like online video.”

- JIM LOUDERBACK, GENERAL MANAGER, VIDCON

Major VidCon Themes (Continued):

Platforms Courting Creators

Platforms increased their courtship of the creator class – seeing an opportunity to build the same kind of heavily engaged fan/creator ecosystem. While YouTube dominated the first few years of VidCon, this year showed them as one of several major platforms.

- Facebook stepped out their presence dramatically with IGTV and Facebook Watch on the convention floor, a creators lounge and execs like Instagram co-founder, Mike Kreiger on hand.
- Twitter sponsored the main stage, several other stages and the green room.
- Twitch was there for the first time and was part of a larger Amazon presence. Their lounge allowed creators to record live broadcasts to their Twitch channels.
- Snap was also a first-time sponsor, with 3D Bitmoji specifically for VidCon attendees to add to the videos they share in its app and Bitmoji themed swag for creators.

What Marketers Should Know

Platforms like Facebook and Snapchat which were once indifferent to influencers are now eager to find ways to increase their presence – ways that will include brands gaining access to help them monetize. The upside for brands is that Instagram and Snap can deliver audiences that can augment or be harder to reach on YouTube.



“We think we’re in trouble if the creativity and passion of the last ten years starts to be beaten down by the new established powers, whether that’s agencies or networks, or even VidCon, with it’s [sic] necessarily finite invites...We just want to make things a little easier because we know this is hard.”

-HANK GREEN, CO-FOUNDER, VIDCON

Major VidCon Themes (Continued):

Taming the Wild West

The hurdles to monetization on YouTube and views on Facebook's platform are in part due to efforts by those platforms to create more brand-safe environments. At the same time when it comes to influencers, major advertisers like Unilever CMO, Keith Weed are declaring their intention to "increase transparency and help eradicate bad practices throughout the whole ecosystem." As a result, influencer representatives and partners such as Fullscreen, Studio 71, and WhoSay were clear with brand attendees about their technological solutions to detect follower buying by creators, and to ensure a brand-safe environment.

What Marketers Should Know

Marketers must insist on assurances that representation of influencer follower numbers are genuine and that partners have technology to detect follower fraud. It's vital as well that content is vetted and brand safe and that partners have a standard FTC compliance structure in place.



"I feel like a lot of social media nowadays, they're trying to one-up their competition. We like social media because they're different from one another, and if they're being too similar to one another, we're going to delete those apps because the features are already there in another app....You don't need that many apps with similar features if one app is going to have it all."

-ANONYMOUS TEEN VIDCON ATTENDEE QUOTED IN DIGIDAY

Vidcon and the Future of Content

The growing size and power of VidCon, and its acquisition by Viacom all point to the audience led shift away from exclusively ad supported and studio funded content towards mobile-first, creator driven content on non-traditional platforms. Modern marketers must understand this attention shift particularly in reaching up and coming audiences like younger millennials and Gen Z on their purchase journey. The benefits for brands extend beyond finding creators to partner with and gaining insight into younger consumers. Platforms at VidCon are focused on the power of content and are there to show off the latest and greatest features beyond paid media. Brands who want to understand what consumers will be doing in video and the right way to create organic content strategies have a real opportunity to explore and learn at this growing industry event.



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