

The Rise of Somalia's Vibrant Content Creation Economy

Shakir Mohamed Abdullahi
Somali blogger and content creator

**Somali
Business**



The Rise of Somalia's Vibrant Content Creation Economy

Shakir Mohamed Abdullahi
Somali blogger and content creator

**Somali
Business**

The Rise of Somalia's Vibrant Content Creation Economy

In an era dominated by digital connectivity, Somalia is experiencing a remarkable surge in content creation, a trend that can be attributed to the increasing internet penetration rate and improved access to electricity. This surge has not only led to the emergence of a vibrant community of Somali content creators but has also opened up new avenues for sustainable livelihoods. The internet, with its growing accessibility, is the catalyst for this digital revolution, transforming the creative landscape and contributing to economic empowerment.

With the internet becoming more accessible, a new wave of content creators is emerging from Somalia. These creators, including storytellers, bloggers, artists, and influencers, utilise major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to showcase their unique talents. They share narratives that resonate with local audiences and sometimes reach a global audience. For instance, Nimco Happy, a Somali singer, went viral with her karaoke performance (I Sii Nafta), which led to a record deal. This success story is just one example of how the digital revolution is transforming the creative landscape and contributing to economic empowerment.

The content creation economy in Somalia is not just about opportunities, it's about empowerment. Aspiring content creators and storytellers can

explore diverse mediums, from vlogging and sketching to digital art and writing, to express themselves and the environment around them. The global reach of the internet allows them to connect with audiences worldwide, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural barriers. This empowerment is not just a possibility, it's a reality for many Somali youth who have leveraged their creativity for financial independence and self-employment.

Furthermore, this rapidly expanding industry is not just about creative expression, but also about financial independence and self-employment for many Somali youth. As they produce engaging content, they're attracting brand partnerships, sponsorships, and other monetization avenues, turning their passion into a sustainable profession. The YouTube Partnership Program, Live Gifts on TikTok, and the Facebook Monetization Program are just a few examples of how content creators can monetize their work on social media platforms.

Many Somali TikTokers on the platform perform skits related to social, political, and current issues. These TikTokers have built large audiences, enabling them to approach businesses for product or service endorsements. Content creation can be a viable income source for self-employment in Somalia. [Yusuf Mohamed](#), a Somali content creator, shares his tips for making money from

content creation: “You can make money from content creation, but it depends on several factors, such as the platform, the audience, the quality, and the niche of your content.”



Somalia is experiencing a remarkable surge in content creation, a trend that can be attributed to the increasing internet penetration rate and improved access to electricity. Picture courtesy: Mohamed Yusuf.

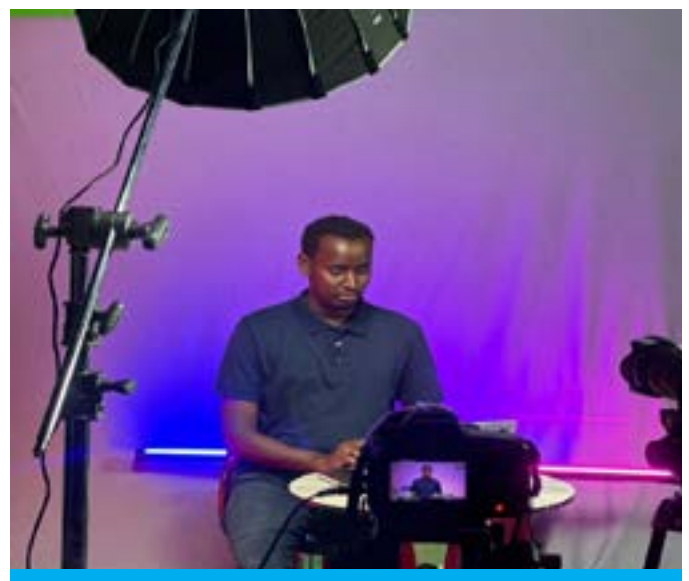
Distinguishing between opportunities on various platforms, he adds:

“Some platforms, like Facebook and YouTube, offer monetization programs that pay you based on your content’s views, clicks, and engagement. Others, like TikTok, allow you to receive gifts from your fans during live streams. However, these platforms have different policies and eligibility criteria that may affect your income potential.”

Challenges

Somali content creators encounter difficulties and obstacles on their path to success, making it a demanding journey for them. Challenges such as limited access to reliable internet infrastructure in certain regions, concerns about digital literacy, intellectual property rights, and payment gateways pose significant hurdles for many creators.

[Mohamed Azhari](#), another Somali content creator, shares his experience of the challenges he faces in making a living from content creation in Somalia. “Both the fanbase of Facebook and YouTube have policies affecting the income from each content. Lacking a global audience, which might bid higher pay on my content’s ad, does not play in my favour, resulting in low income and revenue share from my content’s watch.”



Making a living from content creation in Somalia can be challenging. Courtesy: Mohamed Azhari

Another challenge for Azhari is his country of residence, Somalia, where Facebook does not allow content creators from specific countries like his to monetize on their platform. Furthermore, payment terms and gateways are additional obstacles beneath these barriers. In this context, even if he creates a successful niche to monetize, Somalia's local banks are not internationally valid to receive his payouts, posing yet another challenge.

[Nasra Abtidon](#), a YouTuber with over 800,000 followers, has stated that residing in Somalia and trying to earn money on YouTube is challenging. More than 60% of her viewers are based in Somalia and do not generate any revenue for her. Only 3% and 2.6% of her audience based in the USA and UK, respectively, generate her main earnings from YouTube. Nasra shared this information with another guest YouTuber on her channel and explained that she monetizes her brand as an influencer to sponsor products and services of local businesses.



Making a living from content creation in Somalia can be challenging. Courtesy: Nasra Abtidoon

Revisiting the Classic in the Digital Era

Additionally, the content creation industry in Somalia faces another significant hurdle: the reluctance of big businesses to advertise their products or services online. According to [Mohamed-Nor](#), a YouTuber with nearly ten years of experience, Somali companies still prefer traditional marketing channels like billboards or local radios and are not interested in digital marketing. He believes that if they advertised on YouTube or Facebook, content creators would be able to monetize their content, as the majority of their audiences are based in Somalia.

Another obstacle to the content creation industry in Somalia is the rarity of commercial videos. Zakaria Hassan, a graphic designer, notes that people want to see attractive and creative commercial videos that are at most 60 seconds long. However, these videos have not been widespread, so businesses prefer to use banners and sponsor them on their social media platforms. These challenges emphasise the importance for Somali content creators to be creative, adaptable, and persistent in their efforts to carve out a sustainable career in this exciting and expanding industry.



Content creators in Somalia struggle to secure advertising deals as businesses prefer traditional marketing tools. Courtesy: Mohamed-Nor.

Tips for Success

Yusuf suggests that content creators can generate income by securing sponsorship deals from brands or organisations seeking to promote their products or services through their content. While this avenue can be lucrative, it necessitates a strong relationship with the sponsor, a sizable and devoted fanbase, and a consistent, relevant content theme. Negotiating the terms and conditions of the sponsorship, including duration, frequency, payment method, and creative control, is also crucial.

Experienced content creators suggest that providing systematic training programs on content creation, video editing, digital marketing, and digital literacy would be beneficial for current and aspiring creators. This would help

boost their skills and increase their chances of earning a decent revenue from the online money-making industry. Experts estimate that there are currently 1.5 to 2 million internet users in Somalia, primarily accessing the internet through their smartphones. In this digital age, where the creator economy is thriving, many Somali content creators have the potential to earn a living from their online content, achieving financial independence. However, Azhari emphasises that this can only occur if certain obstacles are addressed. He believes that resolving the payment gateway problem and allowing Facebook and YouTube monetization in Somalia are crucial steps.

Only then can this industry experience significant growth and provide a substantial income source for those seeking to earn money online. In conclusion, the content creation economy in Somalia is flourishing, offering vast opportunities for self-employment and financial independence. However, Somali content creators require assistance in overcoming several structural challenges such as limited access to reliable internet infrastructure, digital literacy, intellectual property rights, and payment gateways that prevent them realising the full reach of the sector's potential. Despite these obstacles, with diligence, creativity, strategic planning, and adaptability to industry trends, Somali content creators can attain success and establish a sustainable livelihood in this dynamic and expanding field.

About the author

Shakir Mohamed Abdullahi is a Mogadishu-based Somali blogger and content creator. He blogs at <https://shamaca.com>

Somali Business

Somali Business