

# Emerging Strategies for Engaging New Audiences

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Children's Cabinet

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Creator Journalism Project

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At Harlem Children's Zone

EdRedesign  
OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



## Our Field Demands Better Storytelling to Engage New Audiences

We hear from practitioners, policymakers, communities, and funders—all stakeholders in the cradle-to-career place-based field—that they need better storytelling about the work to explain, educate, engage, inspire, and demonstrate impact.

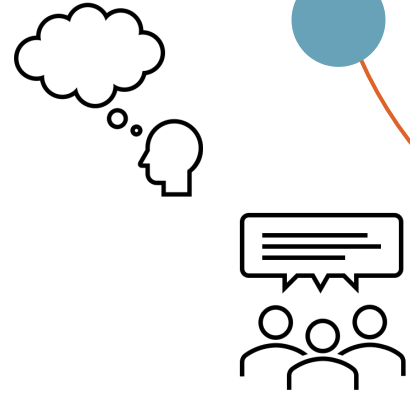
**Questions:** How do we develop a creative and innovative approach to breakthrough storytelling for our field? How do we engage new audiences in our work and elevate community and youth voice?

### Some New Approaches:

- The Creator Journalism Project
- CPAL's Lab Report

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

– *Ralph Waldo Emerson*





## The Critical Next Step...

...in EdRedesign's national field-building work is to develop a storytelling strategy that can uplift the stories of local communities and the field's successes, shift the national consciousness, and drive change. In particular, this strategy needs to prioritize reaching young people, families, and communities who are the focus and voice of this work.

Specifically, we need to reach people where they are consuming news: **YouTube** and other video platforms.

# The Creator Journalism Project

## Funded by The Hearthland Foundation

**The Hearthland Foundation** was founded by Steven Spielberg and Kate Capshaw in 2019 to harness creativity and nurture moral imagination in service of our country. The Foundation works alongside many to help create a more just, equitable, and connected America.

Their **three areas of focus** are:

- Building a shared democracy
- Telling an honest and generative narrative about this country
- Fostering a culture of accompaniment

## The Concept

We have a unique opportunity to create breakthrough storytelling on YouTube through a partnership between EdRedesign, The Hearthland Foundation (as a foundation uniquely rooted in storytelling, creativity, and narrative in service of building a shared democracy), James Watson (as a practitioner in the field and an experienced journalist), and Fire-Works & Co. (as a proven leader in YouTube project development).

The Creator Journalism Project is a bold initiative to bring together Cradle-to-Career Place-Based Leaders and YouTube Creator Journalists to develop an innovative and sustainable strategy for delivering Creator Journalism on YouTube about the place-based field.

# The Deliverables




- An investable 2-year **Strategic Plan** for long-term, sustainable Creator Journalism about the cradle-to-career place-based partnership field on YouTube and related media
- A **pilot video** to illustrate how Creator Journalism can deliver storytelling that will attract new audiences and help the place-based partnership field break through into the national consciousness

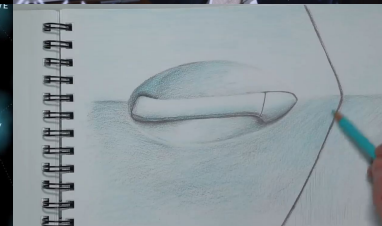
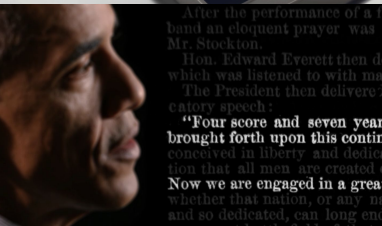
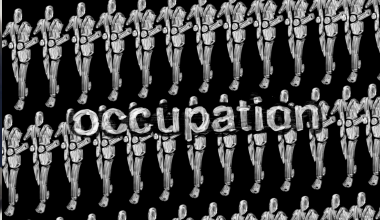
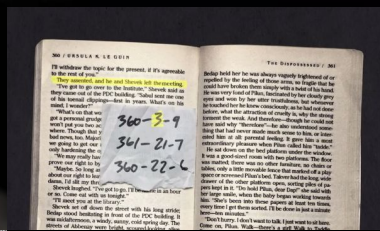
# creator journalism 101

lessons from the content mines





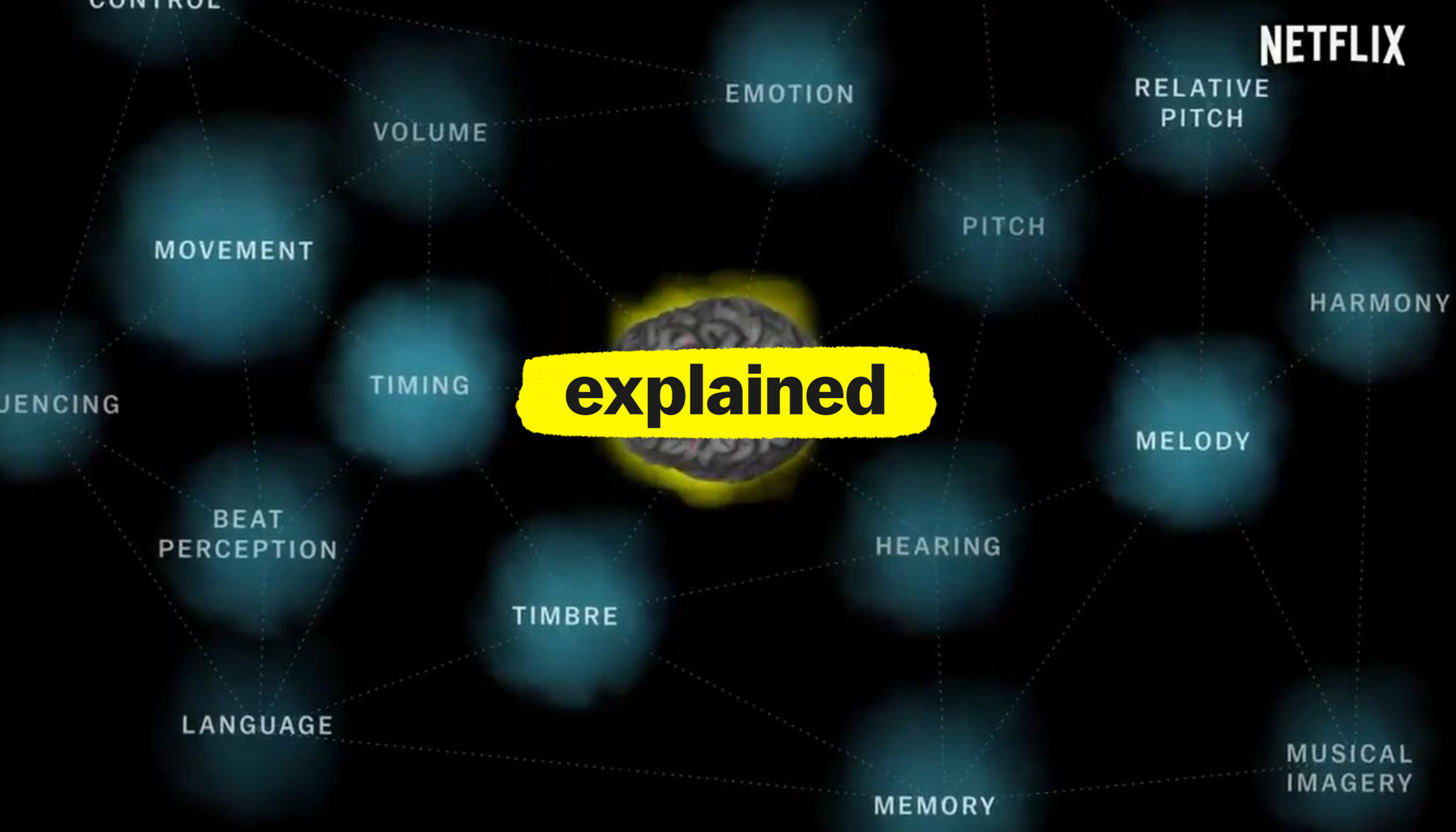
# Fire-Works



curiosity • clarity • creativity









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## Johnny Harris •

@johnnyharris · 5.9M subscribers · 406 videos

Independent journalist making videos that help you better understand the world...[more](#)

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# Why the best journalists on YouTube are all former Vox employees

The company became a skunk works incubator that invented its own language of visual storytelling.



SIMON OWENS

JUN 03, 2025



## Howtown •

@Howtown · 941K subscribers · 75 videos

The "How Do They Know" show from journalists Adam Cole and Joss Fong ...[more](#)

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## Phil Edwards •

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# let's define terms

creator journalism: the business of telling timely, true stories on big social-video platforms, usually independent of any large institution.

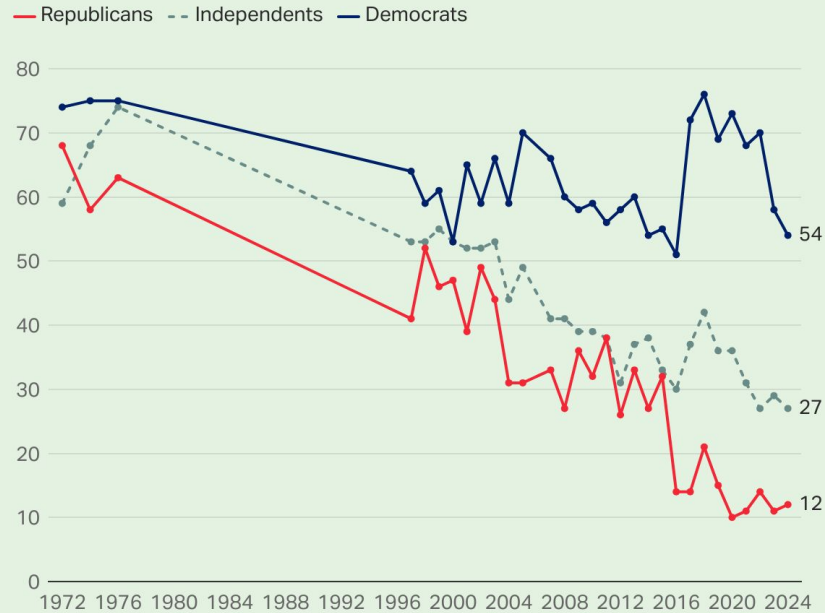
**online, creators are more  
important than institutions**

creator journalism: the business of telling timely, true  
stories on big social-video platforms, **usually independent of  
any large institution.**

## Partisans' Trust in Mass Media, 1972-2024

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media -- such as newspapers, TV and radio -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or none at all?

**% Great deal/Fair amount**



# VULTURE

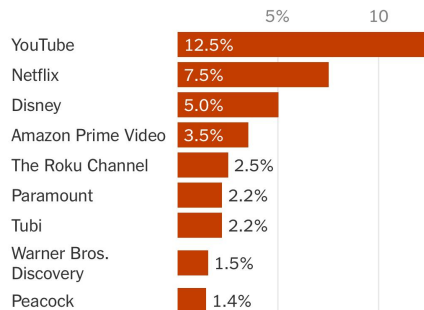
THE HOLLYWOOD ISSUE

## Even Netflix Is Jealous of YouTube Many like to pretend they didn't see the platform winning the streaming wars. Industry insiders say otherwise.

By Josef Adalian, who has covered the television industry since 1992

Eight years later, YouTube's dominance has only grown. In April, the Google-owned platform accounted for a record 12.4 percent share of all TV viewing, far ahead of Netflix (7.5 percent), which took second place among streamers. And YouTube is not just outpacing other streamers: In its past three monthly reports, Nielsen says YouTube ranked as the No. 1 distributor of television content, period, beating Disney. During the first

### Share of television time spent watching streaming by type



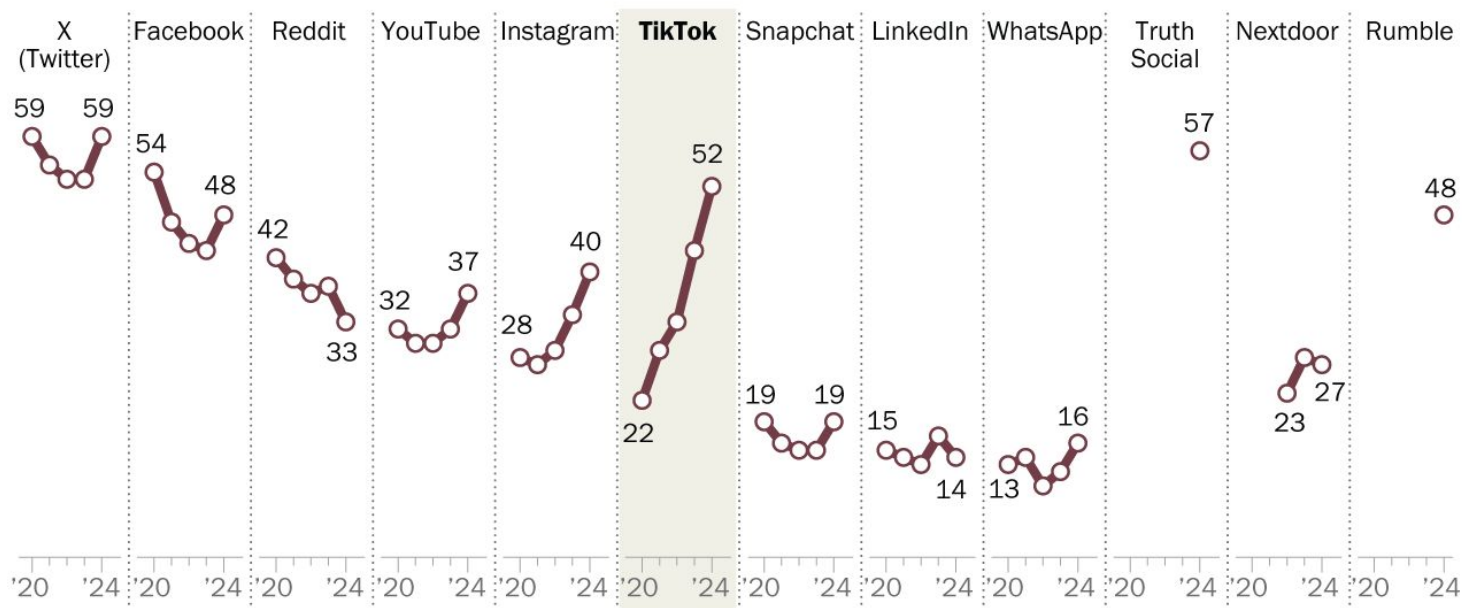
Source: Nielsen • By The New York Times

creator journalism: the business of telling timely, true stories on **big social-video platforms**, usually independent of any large institution.



## Share of TikTok users who regularly get news on the platform has more than doubled since 2020

*% of each social media site's users who **regularly** get news there*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 15-Aug. 4, 2024.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

creators are winging it  
re: standards & practices

creator journalism: the business of telling timely, true stories on big social-video platforms, usually independent of any large institution.

lesson #1 from the content mines

# a curiosity-driven story is more important

Are you selling something, or are you answering a  
question your audience actually has?

save your money on that million dollar studio  
and spend more time **being useful for your viewer**



lesson #2 from the content mines

# **visual evidence is our unfair advantage**

video is the real “show-me” state



## Distribution

## Animal feed

## Farming process



Source: FAO, 2014  
Data: Quantitative-Data



lesson #3 from the content mines

**your voice is your most  
valuable asset**

A photograph of a modern office hallway. The hallway has a light-colored tiled floor and a white ceiling with recessed lighting. On the left, there are several glass doors with metal frames. A fire extinguisher is visible on the wall. In the distance, a red "EXIT" sign is illuminated. The word "There's" is overlaid in large white text on the right side of the image.

**There's**

lesson #4 from the content mines

**this is where people learn  
now, ignore at your peril**



59M views



## NYC is Suffering from Halalflation

141K views • 5 months ago



Zohran Mamdani for NYC

Chicken over rice now costs \$10 or more. It's time to make halal eight bucks again. Sign up to canvas: ...



this is where  
our project comes in



### **Where this project might lead:**

**YouTube series** with a Creator Journalist (or team of Creator Journalists) who would cover the C2C PBP field

**YouTube channel** with a dedicated production team and a rotating cast of non-exclusive Creator Journalists contributing stories on the C2C PBP field

**Creator Journalism Fellowship** at EdRedesign as a platform for facilitating cross-pollination between Creator Journalism and the C2C PBP field

**Talent Pipeline** for both Creator Journalism and C2C PBP fields. Storytellers need realistic options besides clickbait. With us, they could make positive impact with their work while raising the profile of the C2C PBP field on the platforms where young audiences are discovering the world, including potential careers.



# The Lab Report **DALLAS**

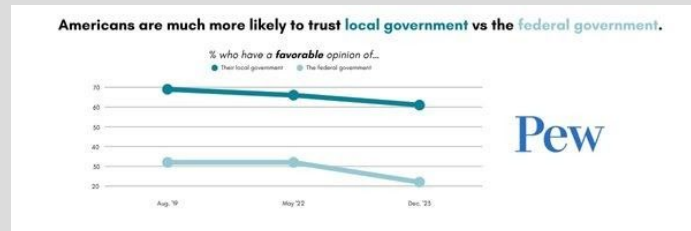
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# Local & trustworthy is a powerful narrative change strategy

*“Where journalists are paying attention to concrete impact... it’s mostly understood in terms of political changes, putting focus on legislation, policy and elections.*

*These things matter, for sure, but they are abstract—something we engage with only when we have the time to think past our basic needs.*

*Yes, democracy dies in darkness. But so do people. Which are we prioritizing?”*



Just 22 percent of Americans express a favorable view of the federal government. Meanwhile, a significant 61 percent hold a positive opinion of their local government.


The pattern extends to local media, creating a critical opportunity and responsibility for local journalism.

# Let's be willing to ask over and over again, "What's working, what's not, and why? And for whom?"

*While other local outlets rightly cover the public meetings of the day, The Lab Report will focus on which debates carry longer-term consequences, following them through sustained reporting that helps shape a fuller understanding of the issues affecting families in our city.*


*We want to paint a picture of how decisions, data, and on-the-ground realities interact over time, especially when the answers aren't simple.*

*That kind of journalism—committed to evidence, real-world impacts, and the messy truth—has never been more urgent.*

The Lab Report **DALLAS**  
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Helping the city understand itself: Housing Education Poverty Public Safety Explore By Trending Topics

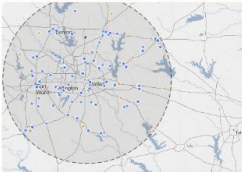


HOUSING

**Net Gains: The surprising link between basketball courts & safety in neighborhoods**

As local officials debate annual budget priorities, new data illustrates how a simple court often outperforms pricier safety programs

DATA POINT



# Q&A

