

Creator economy statistics 2026

The numbers that actually matter for 2026, pulled from public sources and cited so you can use them. Market size, US creator spend, where the money goes by creator tier, how much consumers trust creators and what fraud costs. Every figure links to a named source below. Cite the original source directly.

Market size

\$37B

US creator economy ad spend in 2025, +26% YoY

IAB

~\$44B

Projected US creator ad spend in 2026

IAB

4x

Creator spend growth vs the broader ad market

IAB

\$21.10B

US social creator revenue in 2026, doubling since 2022

EMARKETER

\$32.55B

Global influencer market in 2025, up from \$24B in 2024

INDUSTRY

~\$480B

Goldman Sachs creator-economy TAM projected by 2027

GOLDMAN SACHS

The IAB figure is the broadest, since it includes paid amplification of creator content. eMarketer counts revenue flowing to creators, a narrower scope. They are not directly comparable, which is why both appear here.

Where the money goes

49.9%

Share of US creator spend going to nano and micro creators

EMARKETER

59%

Creator revenue from sponsored content in 2026

EMARKETER

24.4%

Creator revenue from platform payouts

EMARKETER

8.2%

Creator revenue from affiliate marketing

EMARKETER

The headline shift: spend has moved from a few large creators to a long tail of small ones. Nano and micro creators went from under a fifth of US creator spend a few years ago to roughly half today.

Consumer trust

58%

US adults who have bought a product on a creator endorsement

NAD / BBB

This single number is the engine of the whole channel. It is also exactly what fake or misrepresented audiences quietly drain, which is why verification matters more as spend grows.

Engagement and fraud

~3.7%

TikTok average engagement rate in 2025

INDUSTRY

~0.48%

Instagram average engagement rate in 2025

INDUSTRY

7x

Roughly how much higher TikTok engagement runs vs Instagram

INDUSTRY

15-20%

Long-running estimate of social followers that are fake or bot

INDUSTRY EST.

The platform engagement gap is about 7x, so a single cross-platform engagement benchmark is useless. Judge a creator against the benchmark for their platform and tier, since an engagement rate far off that benchmark is one of the clearest fake-follower signals.

Regulation

~\$51,744

FTC maximum civil penalty per endorsement violation

FTC

\$337.3M

Returned to US consumers by the FTC in 2024

FTC

Aug 2024

FTC final rule banning fake reviews and testimonials

FTC

Each non-compliant post can count as a separate violation. The 2024 rule explicitly covers AI-generated fakes. Disclosure obligations now extend to AI-generated content too. Platform "paid partnership" tags alone are not treated as sufficient disclosure.

Sources

1. IAB, 2025 Creator Economy Ad Spend & Strategy Report (US creator spend \$37B in 2025, +26% YoY, ~4x media growth, ~\$44B projected 2026).

2. eMarketer, Creator Trends 2026 Summit and February 2026 forecast (US social creator revenue \$21.10B in 2026; nano and micro 49.9% of US creator spend; revenue mix 59% sponsored, 24.4% platform, 8.2% affiliate).
3. National Advertising Division, BBB National Programs (58% of US adults have purchased due to an influencer endorsement).
4. Federal Trade Commission (endorsement-violation civil penalty, inflation-adjusted; \$337.3M returned to consumers in 2024; August 2024 Final Rule banning fake reviews and testimonials, including AI-generated).
5. Goldman Sachs (creator economy total addressable market projected toward ~\$480B by 2027, from around \$250B in 2024).
6. Industry engagement benchmarks and long-running fraud estimates, 2025 (TikTok ~3.7% vs Instagram ~0.48% engagement; 15 to 20% of followers estimated fake or bot, incl. Influencer Marketing Hub).

Figures are reported as published by the sources above as of June 2026. Measurement scopes differ between sources and are noted where relevant. This page links to no competitor and reproduces no third-party report; it summarizes published figures with attribution for industry reference.

Read the full analysis

These numbers point to one thing: creator spend is growing far faster than the verification brands apply to it. We unpack that gap in [The Verified Creator Report 2026](#).



About this content

Editorial, verification and review standards for this page.

PUBLISHER

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VERIFICATION STANDARDS

Every creator on the [KALO IQ database](#) is hand-verified by our 15-person verification team before being listed. We exclude bots, fake-follower accounts and creators outside the US.

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