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A book - a media accolade for YouTubers

This is not the first and certainly not the last example of how the internet is giving new impetus to the book market and making children and young adults more familiar with printed books again. The first books written by social media celebrities were already being published five years ago, and the trend continues. YouTubers consider having their own book to be a media accolade. The positive aspect of this for publishing companies is that the authors already bring potential buyers with them in the form of subscribers. This is not an entirely new, but nevertheless an interesting business model with a lot of innovation potential.

What do children and young people do with their smartphones? Making telephone calls is simply old fashioned. Far more popular are games, messaging services such as WhatsApp, or spending time on video portals like YouTube where they become their own program director. There is an abundance of material to do so. It is estimated that 400 hours of videos are uploaded every minute. There are so many videos on the servers of the Google subsidiary that it would take more than 100,000 years to watch them all. And there's no end in sight.

For actors, musicians, athletes or gamers, their own YouTube channel has long been a feature of their digital business card. The current leader among YouTubers is Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg, aka PewDiePie, who has 74 million subscribers as of December 2018. In his [clips](#), he plays video games and comments on them for his fan base, which follows him from one video to the next.





The Mount Olympus of Influencers

The advertising industry has long recognized the relevance of social media channels. With the size of the fan community, the leverage to directly influence buying behavior also grows, rising up to the Mount Olympus of influencers. Clothing, sports shoes, toys, etc. worn or discussed by YouTube stars become an absolute must-have. For children and young adults, YouTubers are authentic – they're like your buddy next door. Brand manufacturers therefore shower YouTubers with products intended to help them make a breakthrough more quickly.

"Fans want to hold a physical token of their idol in their hands. Putting something from them on your shelf, helps them feel closer to that person," assures Katrin Baumer of MedienNetzwerk Bayern. That's why there is more and more merchandise available for sale, including books. In 2012, YouTubers kicked off the trend with „Wir-sind-so-lustig-Jungs“ [“we're so funny guys”], and in 2014 «[Sami Slimani](#)» followed suit with his sisters. Some publishing companies now even specialize in social media influencers. This includes, for example, the Community Editions publishing house. The subsidiary of Bastei Lübbe calls itself the “publisher for social media influencers”, and it ensures that books are optimally placed in all channels.

Collaboration with the publisher results in a coalescence of print, distribution and online expertise to the mutual benefit of both parties. The start-up wants to lure a young audience back to the book market. „Our most successful author duo to date is ViktoriaSarina, who have managed to inspire their online community to read books with their concept ‚Spring in eine Pfütze‘ [Jump in a Puddle]. The circulation goes into the six-figure range, which is, however, also an exception among YouTubers,” notes program manager Lucas Lüdemann.

Click Counts Don't Lie

In general, though, these books are not books in the traditional sense. There is hardly any text, between the book covers, instead there are a lot of photos, illustrations and a few funny sayings or tips on what to do and, above all, what to buy. However, pure fan products without content are no longer popular. The range of content extends from practical guides with autobiographical features through to cookbooks, school calendars and interactive books, according to Lüdemann.

Publishers usually take care of writing the books. They are only too happy to do this, as YouTubers bring their fan base with them – who represent potential readers. They have built-in target groups, and they know who they are and what interests them, because clicks



don't lie. This is because with YouTubers, market research and marketing are part of the overall package.

The Product Offering is Becoming More Diverse

For many YouTubers, a printed book is like a final media accolade, but also enables secondary utilization because a lot of content is already available. A publishing house simply has to form it into a layout, whereby the YouTubers are heavily involved, says Ulrike Metzger from the Fischer Verlag publishing company: „They're involved in every step of the process, with substantial input regarding the design, layout and look.“

The books on offer are becoming increasingly diverse, reflecting the various social media channels, from Facebook to Instagram and YouTube. The one thing all book projects have in common is that they have at least one channel with a large range. Publishing companies believe that books by social media stars will remain popular. One thing is sure: bookshops are full when YouTubers invite their fans to reading and signing events. „We want to open up books as an additional medium to trend-setters, most of whom are only active digitally, in order to expand and solidify their range and target audience as digital influencers,“ says Lucas Lüdemann, who believes that this is just the beginning - there are all kinds of options, even a personalized book from your favorite YouTube star.

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