

Why direct fan relationships are the future for creators

By [Erki Koldits](#)

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Technology has fundamentally changed the reality of being a creator, but while the barriers to entry have been dramatically lowered allowing musicians, singers, and rappers, for example, to produce studio-quality songs in their bedrooms with free software and skills they've picked up online, for all but a select few, this has failed to translate into significant material gains.



Supplied. Erki Koldits, CEO, PopSpot says direct fan relationships are the future for creators

The average musician in South Africa, for example, earns less than R10,000 a month. It's hard to feel even remotely financially secure on such a small amount.

Mutually beneficial, relationships

The degree to which creators' incomes remain unstable was starkly brought home during the Covid-19 pandemic, where many lost their livelihoods entirely.

In desperation, especially as it became clear that help from the government wasn't forthcoming, many turned to their communities of fans for support. Many of the available avenues for doing so, however, proved inadequate.

Fortunately, a new wave of technologies can help here too. Not by further lowering the barriers to entry for creators or providing another avenue for them to promote their output, but by making it simple for them to build direct, mutually beneficial, relationships with their fans.

Brands holding all the power

Part of the problem is that many of the platforms that creators currently use to share their product and promote themselves, simply aren't built with creators in mind.

Even if that was their original intent, most start to feel the pressures of revenue and end up serving investors and shareholders.

As a result social media algorithms show you more posts paid for by brands than original content from your favourite artists.

It's also why musicians and singers end up getting fractions of cents every time someone streams their content.

For their part, brands are all too aware of this disconnect and use it to hold all the power in creator collaborations. They know that, even for creators with reasonably large public profiles, they're often the most significant source of income.

The ecosystem is also overly fragmented, meaning that creators are almost constantly directing fans to other platforms to consume their content. It is, in other words, a situation that suits no one other than the various platforms and their shareholders.

Reimagining the fan-creator relationship

Fortunately, Web3 is paving the way for creators to build mutually beneficial direct relationships with their fans. This decentralised, blockchain-centric vision for the future of the web could eliminate many of the issues presented by the current online options available to creators.

Perhaps most importantly, however, it provides avenues through which creators can build direct relationships with their fans.

Imagine being able to buy your favourite Amapiano artist's new single straight from a post teasing it and knowing that almost all the money goes straight to them.

Or being able to vote on the subject of your favourite graphic artist's next piece, buying an NFT of it and getting a free print in the process.

In a world where the economic realities of social media leave many fans feeling alienated, it's a way to reimagine the fan-creator relationship in new and authentic ways. It also means that creators have a much clearer idea of what their fans want.

And if they take the right approach, creators can leverage those advantages and that knowledge to build more secure incomes for themselves.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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