



How you can be famous on the Internet by next week



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Double rainbow, which has garnered more than 34 million views to date. (YouTube)

Today, all of us can get our 15 megs of fame – some people can even upgrade to 15 gigs of it.

It seems social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube allow almost anyone the potential for celebrity. And it's not just a place where kittens go to become famous.

Adele, Andy Samberg, Justin Bieber – just a sampling of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of names that were discovered online.

But, you don't even need any talent to be celebrated these days. You can share a video of a rainbow. You can Kim Kardashian it and make a sex tape (sorry, can't include that link). Or you can be Rebecca Black (and I refuse to include that one).

Of course, there are many names you probably haven't even heard of, such as Smosh and Jenna Marbles. Between the two e-lebrities they have over 2.2 billion views, likely making them two of the hundreds of YouTubers who the company says earn at least six figures a year.

Celebrity is so engrained in our cultural consciousness that we yearn to create it and fan the fame. Whether we like it or not, this is a core component of our value system.

A 50-year study from the University of California found that fame is the No. 1 value underscored by TV shows popular with 9- to 11-year-olds. The researchers explained that the biggest changes happened between 1997 and 2007, when Facebook and YouTube exploded in popularity.

In 1997, the study noted community and benevolence as the top two values transmitted via pop culture, with fame ranking second last at 15. By 2007, fame hit first, followed by achievement, popularity, image and financial success. Community feeling and benevolence fell to 11 and 12.

And if you can't be famous these days, at least you could help someone get there.

In a Ted Talk that shockingly has yet to go viral, YouTube trends manager Kevin Allocca addresses how "any one of you could be famous on the Internet by next Saturday."



But with over 72 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute, only a tiny percentage of you will be.

So Allocca lists three factors that are at play: Unexpectedness, tastemakers and communities of participation.

Unexpectedness is something that stands out. From there, tastemakers – like Ellen DeGeneres – can bring these videos to a larger audience.

When the talk show host saw 8-year-old Sophia Grace Brownlee and her 5-year-old cousin perform a Nicki Minaj song online, she wanted them on the show right away. Since, Brownlee has reached over 58,000,000 views on her channel alone – while closing in on 200 million views on The Ellen Show channel – and has received offers from Disney and Nickelodeon.

The most interesting piece of the journey to virality is the community participation, where Allocca notes that we become part of the phenomenon, either by spreading it or by doing something new with it.

"And we all now feel some ownership in our own pop culture," said the trends manager in his talk.

Still, no sooner do people become viral stars than they disappear like viral warts. Remember Chris Crocker's "Leave Britney alooooone!" The former talk show sensation is now left alone too. And Antoine Dodson? Who? Exactly.

In an age where links are books and computers are TVs, love, money and celebrity are just a click away.

But it still doesn't mean that links are really books, that computers are really TVs, and that the love, money and celebrity you get are always real.

Yes, social media says you can be a star; the same way everytime you purchase a lottery ticket you can be a winner.

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POLL

Do you want to be a YouTube celebrity?

14%
Yes, it would be awesome!

45
votes

34%
No, it's not worth my time

112
votes

8%
Depends on whether I'm famous or infamous

26
votes

11%
Never really thought about it

37
votes

32%
Maybe if I can make some money

107
votes

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