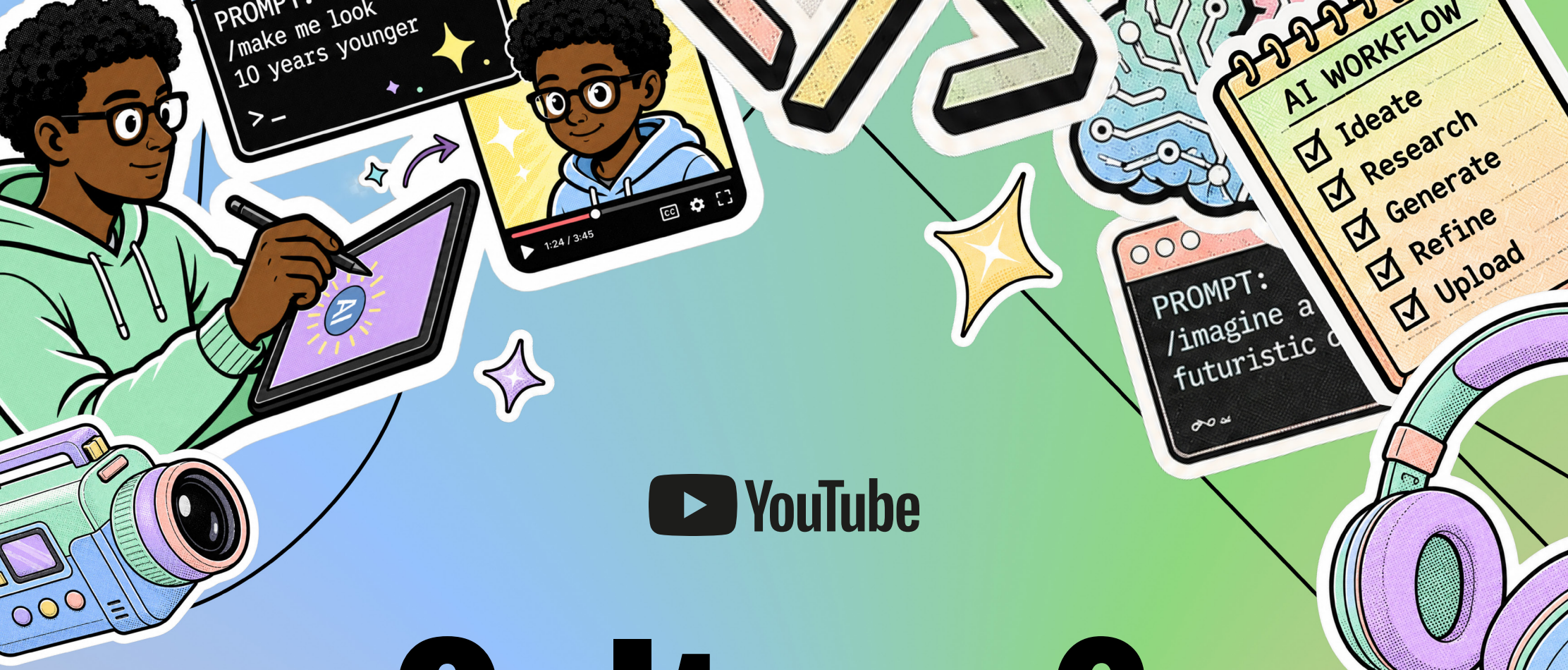
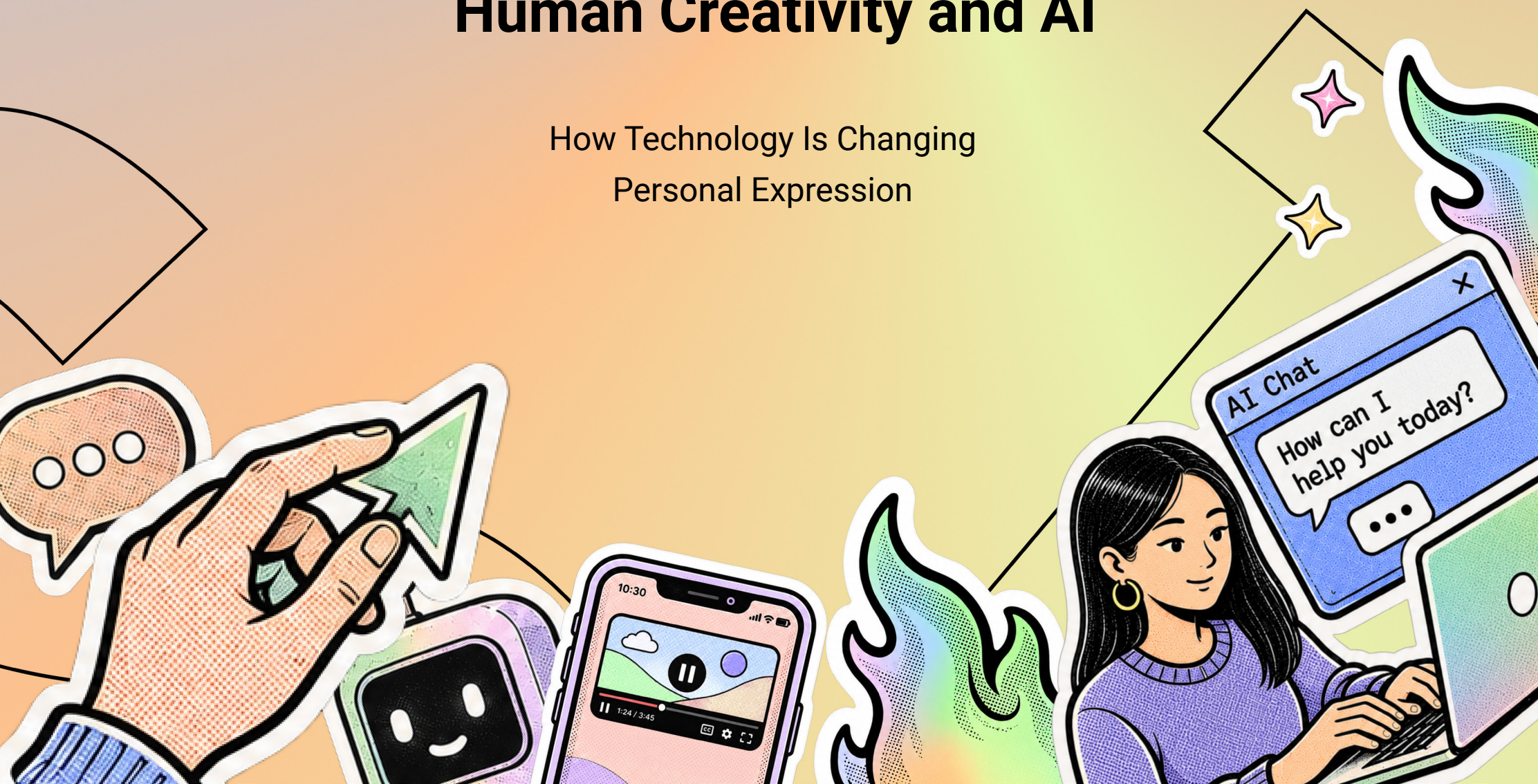


YouTube

Culture & Trends Report

Human Creativity and AI

How Technology Is Changing
Personal Expression



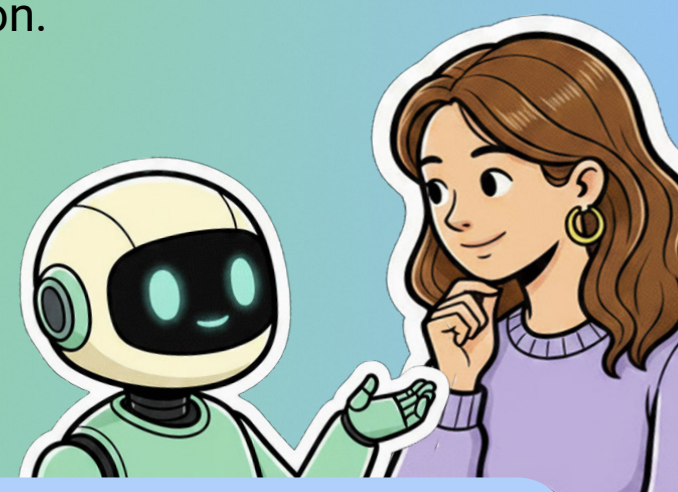
Personal Interests Are Driving Surprising AI Adoption

The introduction of consumer-oriented generative video tools initiated a rapid explosion of generated video. Amid skepticism about the benefits of generative video, many are beginning to use it in a personal capacity. Surprisingly, in a U.S. study of people aged 14–44, 61% of people who have posted videos in the past 12 months said they were interested in using AI to insert themselves into video content.[1]

To understand how people are using generative videos tools better, YouTube's Culture & Trends team reviewed hundreds of generative videos and content trends to identify common themes in what people create, and surveyed people in several countries around the world. The emerging trends and attitudes revealed in the study show people using AI video creation as a tool to look inward and unlock new forms of personal expression.

[1] Google/NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=694 online people aged 14–44.





Exploring Personal Identity

Manifesting identity and emotional states

Sharing Interests and Passions

Sharing personal interests, fandoms, and hobbies

Realizing Expansive Creative Visions

Expressing cinematic creative visions

To learn more about GenAI-powered creativity, the YouTube Culture & Trends team researched the world's major generative video trends from the past year and ran surveys with NRG, asking thousands of people about their interests and attitudes toward generative AI. Respondents were people who are active online, age 14–44.

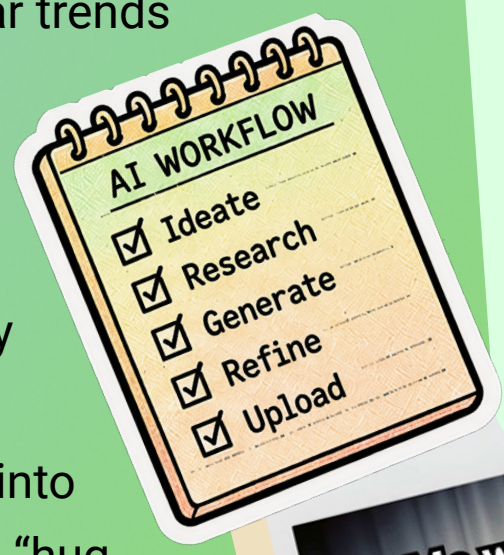
Exploring Personal Identity

Adding yourself to AI content lets you play at being the director of your own life — making yourself the center of a comedy skit, or turning your family history into a period piece. A surprising **72% of uploaders** (surveyed video posters aged 14–44) say they **use AI on videos or images.**[2]

Notably, those posters are incorporating themselves in the work: **more than two-thirds of people who post AI videos say they have featured themselves in their content.**[3] Many popular trends enable uploaders to weave AI imagery into a visual record of their personal identity exploration.

For some AI experimenters, the technology is a way to play with the different aspects of their self-identity and imagine alternate selves. By using it to visualize their complex emotions, people turn knotty feelings into cathartic imagery that others can empathize with. In “hug your younger self” videos, for example, people animate and interact with childhood photos to express emotions that are difficult to put into words. Through comments and video responses, these videos became a social experience that evoked nostalgia and an emotional rapport with other participants.









61%

According to an NRG study conducted in the U.S., **61% of surveyed video posters in the past year** (online 14- to 44-year-olds) **agree that they're interested in using AI to insert themselves into content.**

Source: Google/NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=694 online people age 14–44.

Fast

[2], [3] Google/ NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=694 online people aged 14–44.

Exploring Personal Identity

Visualizing Feelings

People who make AI videos project themselves into different times and places, turning their lived experience into dynamic visual sequences using tools enabled by generative media models like Nano Banana and Gemini Omni. In one trend, people use these tools for digital costume changes, imagining themselves in many roles: a gym teacher becomes a doctor, judge, or superhero in the eyes of his students. A seemingly simple trend becomes a powerful statement on how people perceive themselves.



Restoring One's Past

Old photos don't always "look exactly how it ***felt***," as the creator Chronixel put it. But AI gives people new tools to reconstruct the past, shaking old memories loose and getting back in touch with childhood emotions. The creator PiXimperfect, for example, used AI to restore the one existing photo of his grandfather, creating new color images of him on his motorcycle and at work, attempting to express the essence of a personal memory.



@RosenblumPE

1.96K Subscribers



@SaturdayNightLive

17.2M Subscribers



@PiXimperfect

5.47M Subscribers

Sharing Interests and Passions

The research also revealed many people using generative AI to discover fresh approaches to their personal passions. They can immerse themselves in cinematic scenes, double themselves for content creation, and turn their own sketches into photoreal mock-ups. In all three cases, they achieve a level of fidelity that was once beyond reach, sharing an elaborate vision that speaks to a much broader audience.



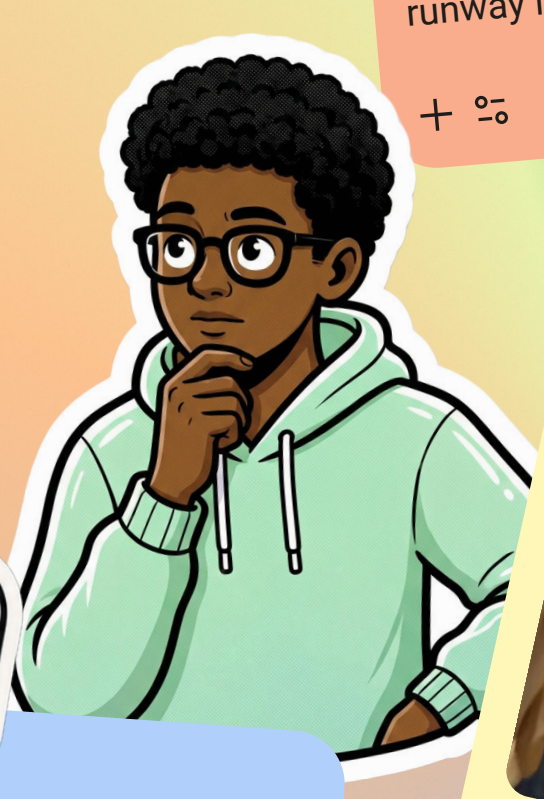
@vivi-imgine

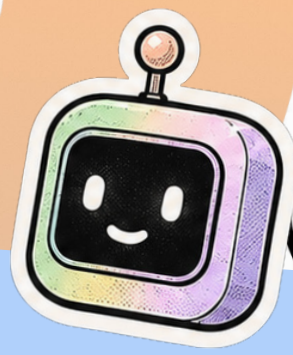
5.04K Subscribers

Prospective designers evolve their sketches into regal runway looks.

Fast







68%

According to an NRG study conducted in the U.S., among the surveyed online 14- to 44-year-olds who posted video content online in the past 12 months and have ever used AI to create or edit an image or video, **68% have used AI to create a video that featured themselves.**

Source: Google/NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=482 online people age 14–44.

Fast



@Xiongsantu

51.4K Subscribers

Fans visualize themselves in realistic, tactile cosplay of their favorite characters.

Fast

Sharing Interests and Passions





@SoheilaKanani

60 Subscribers

Hobbies Brought to Life

Hobbyists are removing the constraints of reality and inventing new possibilities for engaging with their passions. In one of many examples, YouTube fashion designers are making their sketches tangible with concept videos showing the finished garments being worn down a virtual runway.

72%

According to an NRG study conducted in the U.S., **72% of surveyed video posters in the past year** (online 14- to 44-year-olds) **have used AI to help them create or edit an image or video.**

Source: Google/NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=694 online people age 14–44.



Fanfic to Fan Scenes

Within fandoms, creators insert themselves physically into the worlds that fascinate them, generating novel forms of interactive fan fiction. The Minecraft creator Kristufer, for example, uses Google Flow to host ASMR mukbangs from the fictional Steve's Hot Lava Chicken Shack.

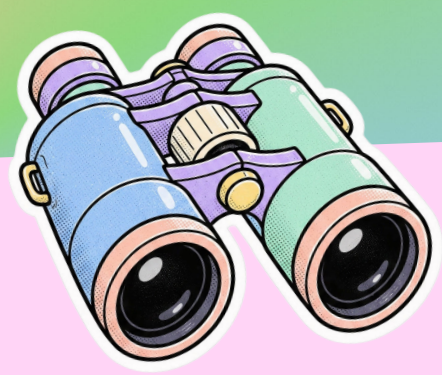


@therealmukbangfoods

2.44K Subscribers

Realizing Expansive Creative Visions

Significantly, a review of the generative AI landscape reveals a new class of AI auteurs seizing the chance to bring whole cinematic universes out of their mind's eye and onto the screen. These inspiring creators are taking on ambitious projects that bear their own creative stamp, attaining a sophisticated and idiosyncratic look on a miniscule budget. A few years ago, these projects would have required the massive resources of a traditional studio to realize the same scope and depth.

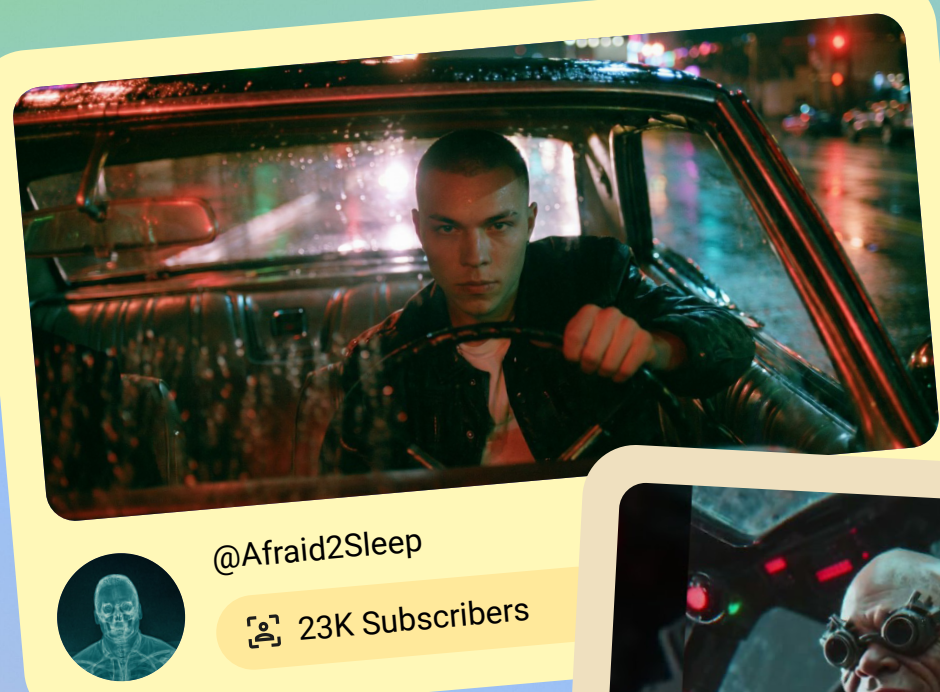


66%

According to an NRG study conducted in the U.S., **66% of surveyed video posters in the past year** (online 14- to 44-year-olds) **agree that they feel inspired to try new AI technologies after watching videos that use them.**

Source: Google/NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=694 online people age 14–44.

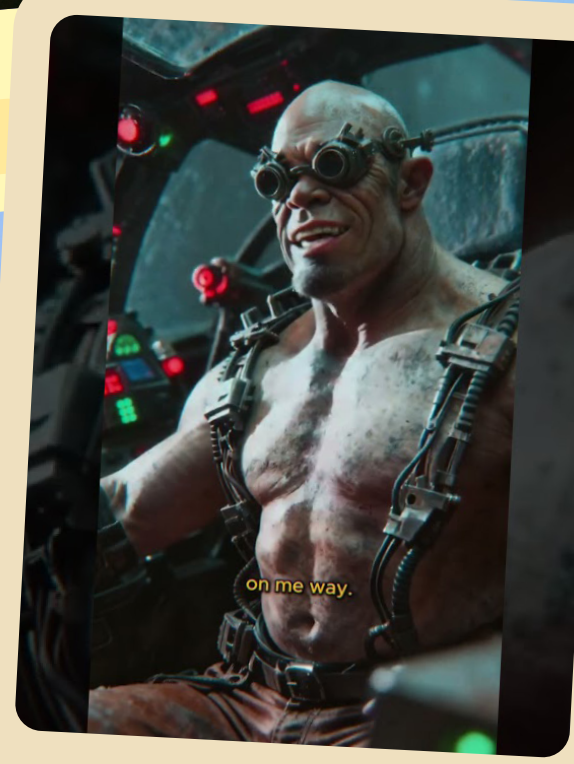
Fast



@Afraid2Sleep

23K Subscribers







@Gossip.Goblin

1.48M Subscribers

New Creative Frontiers

Creators are shaping their own fully-formed cinematic worlds far from the studio backlot. Bringing a curatorial eye and a deep knowledge of genre and film history, they're finding new ways to achieve the effects they want (like realistic lighting on an urban street or intricate sci-fi vessels). Behind the scenes, these channels have continually added new generative tools to their arsenal and built increasingly elaborate workflows. Their high-speed adoption of new techniques has helped them graduate from short clips and trailers to longer-form filmmaking.

Realizing Expansive Creative Visions

These new auteurs are capitalizing on their carefully honed taste to attract dedicated audiences drawn to their highly specific sensibility and visual preferences. Creators like the sci-fi auteur Gossip Goblin have drawn audiences into their ever-expanding vision of a dark future, building up a consistent universe in a succession of short films. Ultimately, these channels push the creator economy from an era of traditional creation toward an era of direction, where audiences prize personal taste and depth of vision over technical feats that are now accessible to anyone.

Professional AI creators spanning different genres — sci-fi, comedy, slice-of-life — are establishing brands through consistency and strong personal voices.



@Gossip.Goblin

1.48M Subscribers

Sci-fi filmmakers like the doomy auteur **Gossip Goblin** and the deadpan comedian **Neural Viz** have earned dedicated fans through their own unmistakable directorial styles.

Comedy hamster **Anxious Kim Hamzzi** turns work-life struggles into comedic bite-size stories.



@정서불안김햄찌

716K Subscribers



ChloeVSHistory makes the past tangible to viewers through vlog-style tours of historical events.

@ChloeVSHistory

404K Subscribers

Surrealist visual art from channels like **Kelly Boesch AI Art** defies description, but is often labeled “dreamcore” or even “visual electronica.”



@kellyeld2323

310K Subscribers

Conclusion



Despite popular skepticism of the role generative tools are playing in video creation, using this technology in content creation is already surprisingly common. Many people are open to using AI to transform their own appearance or examine their identity in a socially driven trend. This willingness to experiment with AI has led to a variety of video formats that visualize personal goals, interests, and memories.

Takeaways

1. Empirical data shows a high appetite for personal adoption, with 72% of video posters saying they are already using AI tools.[4] Rather than a mere utility, content trends show generative AI has become a personal sandbox for expression — allowing people to project alternate selves, restore memories, and visualize complex emotions.
2. Creativity in generative AI is driven by the same force that has always propelled online video: the timeless human need for self-expression.
3. That AI-first creators are now building followings demonstrates that audiences willingly celebrate AI-generated content when they are transparently invited into a creator’s unique artistic vision.
4. As high-production aesthetics become democratized, success shifts from technical execution to curatorial taste. In this "era of direction," audiences prize a creator’s specific, idiosyncratic point of view.
5. Generative AI creativity can be particularly valuable when it deepens the connection between people and their communities, whether it’s creators with expansive creative visions or people with very specific and personal shared interests.

[4] Google/NRG, YouTube Trends Survey, U.S. April 2026, N=694 online people aged 14–44.

