

From Discovery to Devotion: The Evolution of Gen Alpha & Z **Fandoms**



How to Build Lasting Connection
in an Era of Fluid Fandoms

What We'll Cover

You'll discover what drives fandom evolution, the six phases every fandom moves through, and how to engage authentically at each stage.

Understanding The Opportunity

1.

What Are Fandoms

2.

Fandom Lifecycles

3.

The Lifecycle In
More Detail

The Fandom Lifecycle Playbook

4.

How to Engage with
Your Fandom

5.

Fandoms in 2026,
What's Next?

6.

Brand Lessons

Look out for **Highlights** and **Brand Actions** ⚡
throughout the report!





The Lowdown

Fandoms are no longer static – they're fluid, conversational, and driven by continuous talkability and shareability. **Brands can't just build awareness and walk away.**

1.

Talkability is your primary job. The most successful fandoms generate ongoing conversation through posts, likes, detailed lore, creator content, and memes that fans can debate, contribute to, and share. If your brand or campaign isn't designed to spark conversation, you're missing the foundation of modern fandom engagement.

2.

Fandoms are more fluid than ever – and that's an opportunity. Over one in three kids and teens abandon fandoms, but they often return. This creates a strategic imperative: design campaigns that can activate dormant fans, not just acquire new ones.

3.

Meet fans where discovery and deepening happen. YouTube, Roblox, Netflix, Disney+, and TikTok are where many kids and teens trial and engage with fandoms. But don't forget other platforms, Discord, Pinterest, and Reddit are all fandom-rich. Brands looking to align with existing fan bases need youth-specialised audience intelligence to show up effectively in these spaces.

4.

Exits aren't random, and re-entry has clear triggers. New content, friends returning, crossovers, and nostalgia bring fans back. Smart brands design ramp-on/off strategies that keep the door open for rediscovery rather than treating exits as permanent losses.

What We Set Out to Learn

Gen Alpha and Gen Z are shaping culture from the ground up – forming passion-fuelled communities that influence what they watch, play, and buy.

Understanding these audiences is no longer about simple demographics – it's about mapping the full journey of fandoms, across gaming, CTV, creators, and beyond.

Building on the impact of our initial study in 2024/5 we wanted to dive deep into fandoms to understand how they start, evolve, and decline.

We mapped the complete fandom journey so that brands can understand how and when to leverage fandoms with their engaged and passionate audiences for maximum impact.

The Study:

We spoke to N = 1072 fans aged 4 – 18 years old in the UK. Survey respondents needed to use social media or online video platforms at least once a week.

We also conducted 8x in-depth interviews with creators including Kam and Krya, Lewis Family/Lively Lewis Show, Wallace Family/Stella Show, Hew Moran, Birdo, The McCartys and two creators that chose to keep their responses anonymous.

- 1072 respondents
- 4-18 year olds and parents
- 8x in-depth interviews with well-known content creators

- ✓ Mapped how fandoms evolve across channels
- ✓ Identified the role creators play in fandom journeys
- ✓ Explored cross-platform engagement
- ✓ Provided a practical playbook on how to leverage them with SuperAwesome's Audience Intelligence

Understanding The Opportunity: What are Fandoms?



FANDOM (NOUN):

An IP-Led Community of Shared Interest

Let's Break That Down

Any **IP with a strong following**, which fragments into numerous **sub-fandoms** (e.g. Roblox Steal a BrainRot, Roblox Dress to Impress, LEGO Star Wars Fortnite)

A group of people who **connect over content** and anticipate new releases

Who **intentionally and continuously watch**, checking in regularly with content

Creators See Fandoms as Strongly IP-Led, with Content Drops Key to Maintaining Interest

And whether the product is with a toy, whether the product is with new music, in our case, new videos, it has to be some product, something new because we know kids' attention spans are not that long
Kamdenboy & KryaBoo



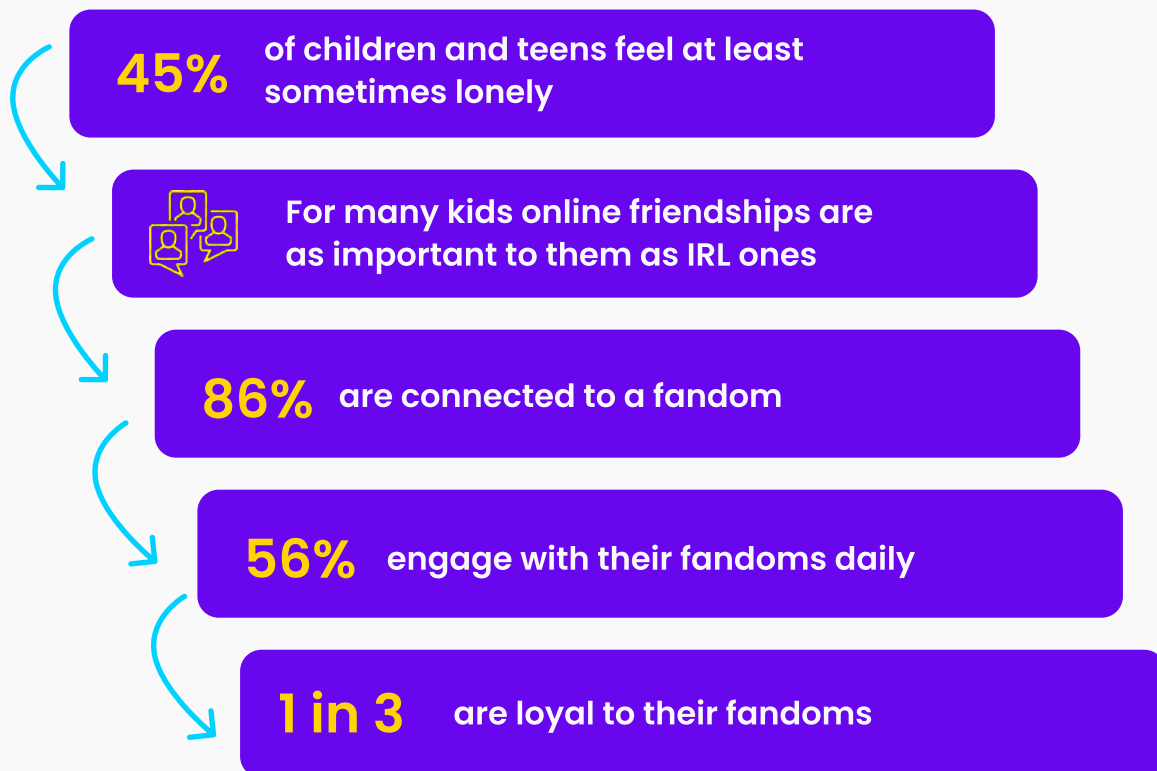
Any intellectual property that has a following behind it
Hew Moran



Why Fandoms Matter

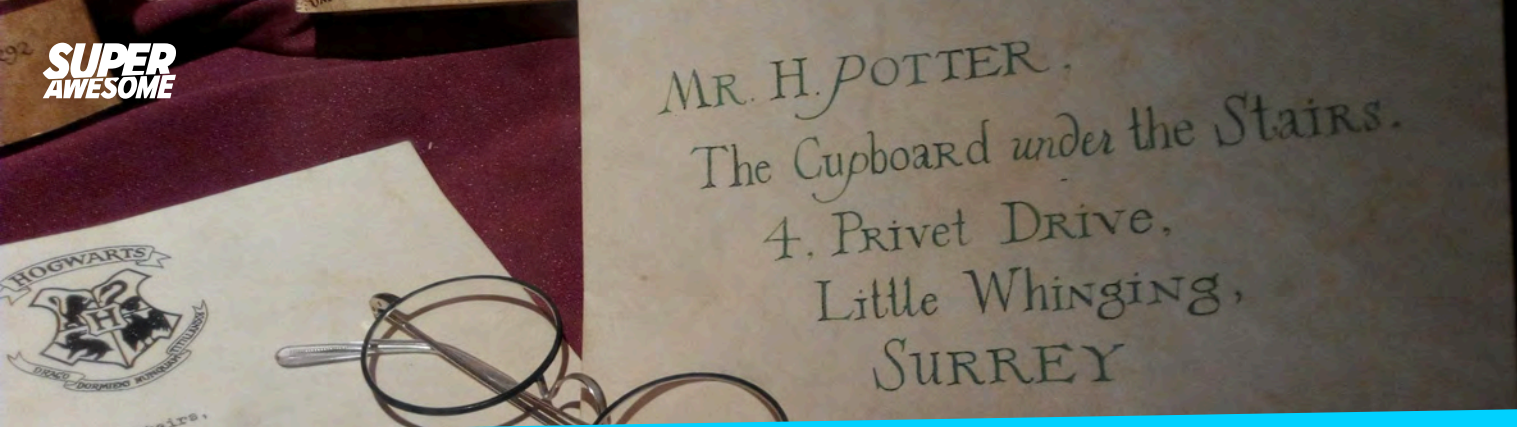
As kids and teens search for connection and community, many are discovering a powerful sense of belonging through their fandoms.

The fandom lifecycle has evolved in this new era of digital complexity and plays a pivotal role in **creating connection**, by generating talkability and **creating communities** that **drive loyalty** and **brand dividends**.



Source: SuperAwesome, Fandom and Passion Study, 2024 | Siva N. Loneliness in children and young people in the UK. Lancet Child Adolesc Health. August 2020.





WHY FANDOMS MATTER

Case Study: Harry Potter

While sustained negative press and toxicity in fandoms is hugely damaging, a fandom of this size has a significant buffer. It's a testament to its juggernaut status that **only 1 in 10 have left the fandom**. BUT given the percentage of teens that feel alienated and disappointed, it will be interesting to see what effect this has on generational loyalty, when the time comes for those teens to pass down beloved fandoms to their children.

”

"So I marked down Harry Potter in the Owl House is my fandoms that I'm not into anymore. I'm not gonna talk about the Harry Potter just 'cause everybody knows why I wouldn't follow Harry Potter anymore."

Boy, 18



r/transgenderUK · 2d ago

Harry Potter needs to be left in the past

When sorting through my Lego collection yesterday I looked at the Harry Potter stuff and it repulsed me that I've contributed towards her wealth and therefore hate towards my brothers and sister's.

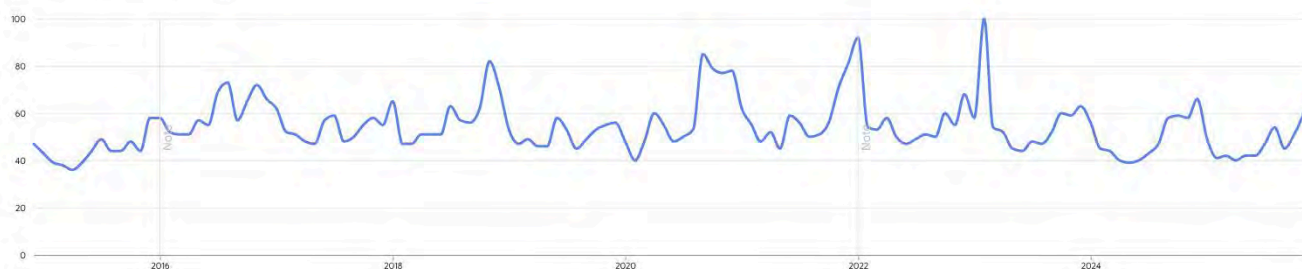
331 votes · 75 comments

7th

in 2025's top fandoms amongst 4 - 18 year olds

Interest over time ⓘ

United States · 1 Dec 2014 - 30 Nov 2025



Fandoms Through the Ages

Fandoms have evolved and modern fandoms go beyond conversations into wider experiences that reward fans deeply



1970s to 1990s

Driven by **IRL conversations** and **physical tokens** or **badges**



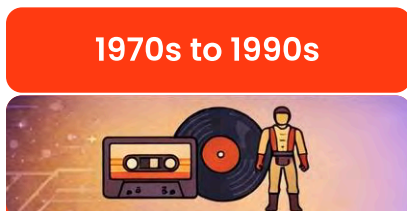
2000 to 2010s

Conversations moved from friendship groups and fanzines to **online influencers** and **Reddit forums**



2025

Fandoms exploded across **online platforms**, **UGC**, **memes** and **IRL experiences**, multiplying both reach and volume



1970s to 1990s

♥ Badges / Pins

📄 Posters

🧸 Toys

🗣️ Word Of Mouth

📖 Fanzines

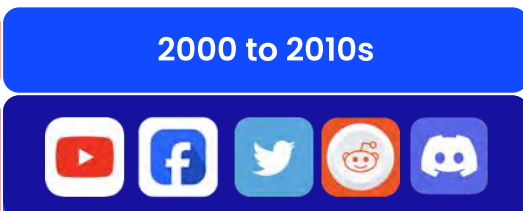
🎵 Music Magazines

🎬 Movie Theatres

📺 Linear TV

💿 Records & Cassettes

🎫 Concerts



2000 to 2010s

♥ Badges / Pins

📄 Posters / Device Backgrounds

🎮 Toys & Video Games

🗣️ Word Of Mouth

💬 Online Communities

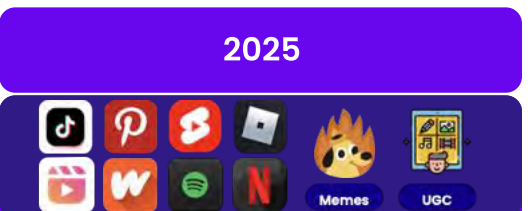
🎵 Digital Music Magazines

🎬 Movie Theatres & DVDs

📺 Linear TV & YouTube

💿 CDs & iPods

🎫 Concerts & Online Concerts



2025

♥ Digital Identity

📄 Posters / Device Backgrounds

🎮 Toys & Video Games

🗣️ Word Of Mouth

💬 Online Communities

🎧 Podcasts & Digital Magazines

🎬 Streaming Services

📺 YouTube & Social Media

💿 Music Streaming Services

🎫 Concerts & Online Activations

Understanding The Opportunity: Fandom Lifecycles

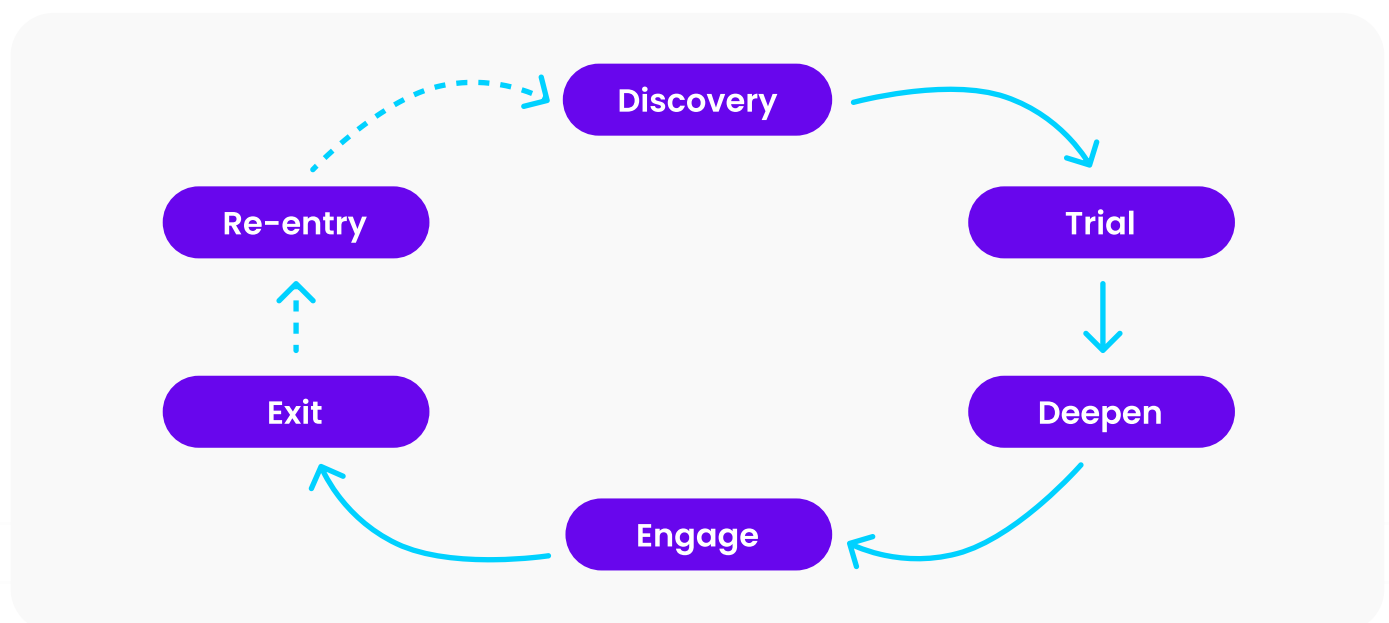




The Fandom Lifecycle

The fandom lifecycle has **6 distinct phases**. For most fandoms, this is strongly fuelled by content and talkability.

Brands need to ensure that there is always something to engage their fans and keep them connected to their community to maintain a strong fan base. While those collaborating with fandoms need to know when the optimal moment is.



Example: How fandoms travel across ecosystems

1. Discover with friends across social & gaming platforms
2. Watch short clips
3. Join conversations (**Community & UGC**)
4. Follow creators/official pages across platforms
5. Sometimes buy merch / attend events (**Badging**)
6. Exit/re-enter on new content drops or discover new fandoms

Fandom Journeys

In the experimentation and trial phase of fandom development, **YouTube** emerges as the primary discovery and sampling environment, cited by over one third of kids and teens as the platform where they first engaged with their top fandom. **Roblox**, **Netflix**, **Disney+** and **TikTok** round out the top five discovery platforms.






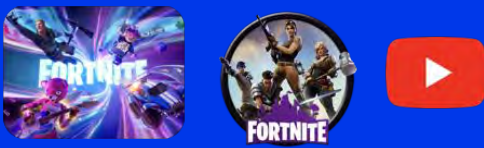


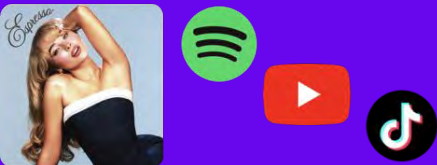
After engaging with creator content, the fandom cycle accelerates. **41%** of UK kids and teens go on to consume more fandom content, while **32%** talk about it with friends, **32%** deepen their engagement with creators and **19%** purchase merchandise.

Whether aligning with a major entertainment release, a gaming community, or a creator-led beauty or fashion fandom, brands can use lifecycle signals to identify when and where to show up, maximising impact during moments of cultural momentum rather than relying on sustained long-term loyalty.

Source: SuperAwesome, Evolving Fandoms, Q34, Kids 4-18 from the UK, September 2025, Base: N=1072. Parents answered on behalf of children under 9.

Example Fandom Journeys





Discover / Trial Deepen / Engage Exit / Re-entry

<p>Girl Age 9</p> 	 <p>Has always loved stuffed toys</p>	 <p>Collection has grown, with YouTube for inspiration but the fandom has depended from connecting with friends on Roblox and Messenger kids</p>	<p>Still collecting</p> <p>An old fandom was Disney Princesses which she grew out of, but she would go back to it if her friends did</p>
<p>Boy Age 10</p> 	 <p>Introduced by a friend, started to play and had fun</p>	 <p>Stays engaged because the game is fun and enjoys the consistent new content. Many friends also play. Has many items on his account and watches YouTube to improve</p>	<p>Still active in Fortnite</p> <p>Fortnite has replaced Super Mario Bros as it is 'better'</p>
<p>Female Age 18</p> 	 <p>Social media hype led to her being more on her radar</p>	 <p>Keeps releasing new material, which feature on Spotify, YouTube and TikTok</p>	<p>Still an active fan</p> <p>Former fandom Animal Jam, played until middle school, grew out of, but could see returning to for a fun, one off play</p>

The Power of Eight

For most verticals **8 is a golden age** of discovery, when kids are moving from young childhood and into pre-teen and teenagedom.

These fandoms carry them through transitional phases, helping them find belonging at a critical stage of development.

		Average age of fandom discovery	Average time since joining fandom
	Video Games	7.8	3.3
	Movies & TV Shows	8.1	3.2
	Streaming & Online Platforms (e.g. Netflix, Disney+ , YouTube, Twitch)	8.2	3.6
	Sports Team & Athletes	6.8	5.1
	Music & Performers	9.2	3.1
	Toys & Collectibles	4.6	3
	Books & Literature	6.6	3.1
	YouTube & Influencers	8.6	3
	Fashion & Beauty	7.6	3.4
	Education & Entertainment	6.6	3.3
	Anime & Manga	7.2	2.7

Source: SuperAwesome, Evolving Fandoms, Q13b, Kids 4-18 from the UK, September 2025, Base: N=1072. Parents answered on behalf of children under 9.





WHY FANDOMS MATTER

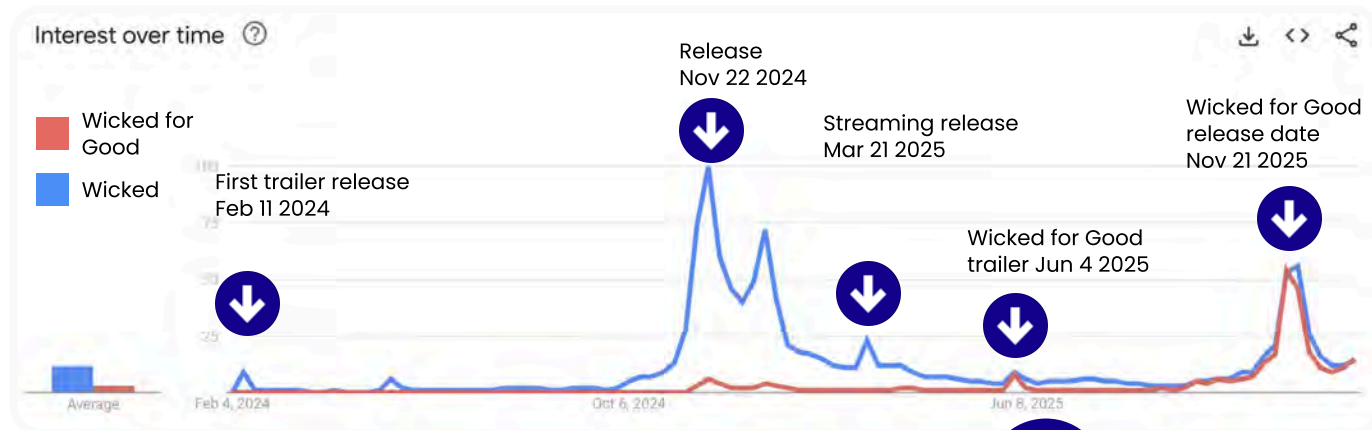
Case Study: Wicked

The movie has **taken a fandom and made it stratospheric, twice**. Where the musical theatre production remained the domain of musical theatre fans, the movie has opened this up to millions of people globally, creating a legion of new fans, content and a cultural moment, that brought in a new generation.

”

“So I first got into Wicked because I am a musical theatre fan and Ariana Grande, who’s a very famous singer, I’m a huge fan of her. I went to go see the movie at the cinema after listening to the soundtrack when it released, and I’ve been completely hooked ever since. I have joined Reddit and Discord communities for it, r slash Wicked, r slash Wicked movie. And I’ve joined, you know, like fan servers on Discord and I continue to listen to the soundtrack at least once per day”

Girl, 18



Brand Action

Shift the mindset to encourage fan owned curation and creation to boost excitement and keep the content wheel turning



A NEW KEY STEP – ONLINE COMMUNITY AND CREATION

Today, fandoms are universally accessible and democratised like never before. Changing what it means to be a fan. A fandom is a place to belong and to contribute, growing and showcasing skills as part of the experience.

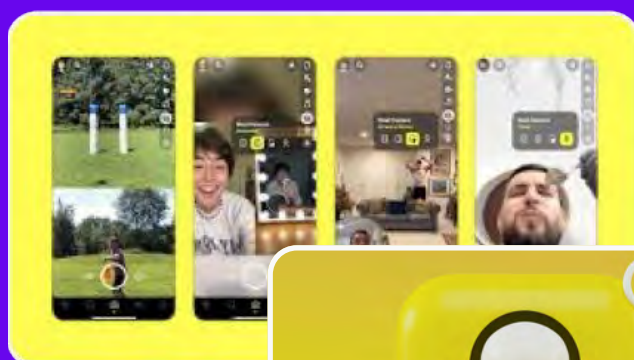
It's hard to go deep if you have no one to geek out with... but algorithmic content has made it easier to find and connect with like-minded people.

Fans now have the tools to create and meaningfully add to the fandom in a way that was not possible before, changing how fans show up.

Source: SuperAwesome, Gen Z: Mastering Discovery in the Age of the Algorithm, USA, 2023.

Emojis, memes, and video sharing: the next step in the evolution of communication

Youth today can communicate entirely without ever saying or typing out a single word.



The Fandoms Lifecycle Playbook: The Lifecycle in More Detail



1. THE DISCOVERY PHASE

A Social Experience

The social and community aspect of being a fan is a strong driver for discovery, with over half of first exposure coming from another fan.

The role of YouTube and social media (for teens) is also critical, as creators make their recommendations feel personal.

"I really like Roblox. And how it started was my brother actually taught me how to play it when I was like three or four. And I, my cousin actually got it and then I liked teaching her how to do it."

Girl, 10

”

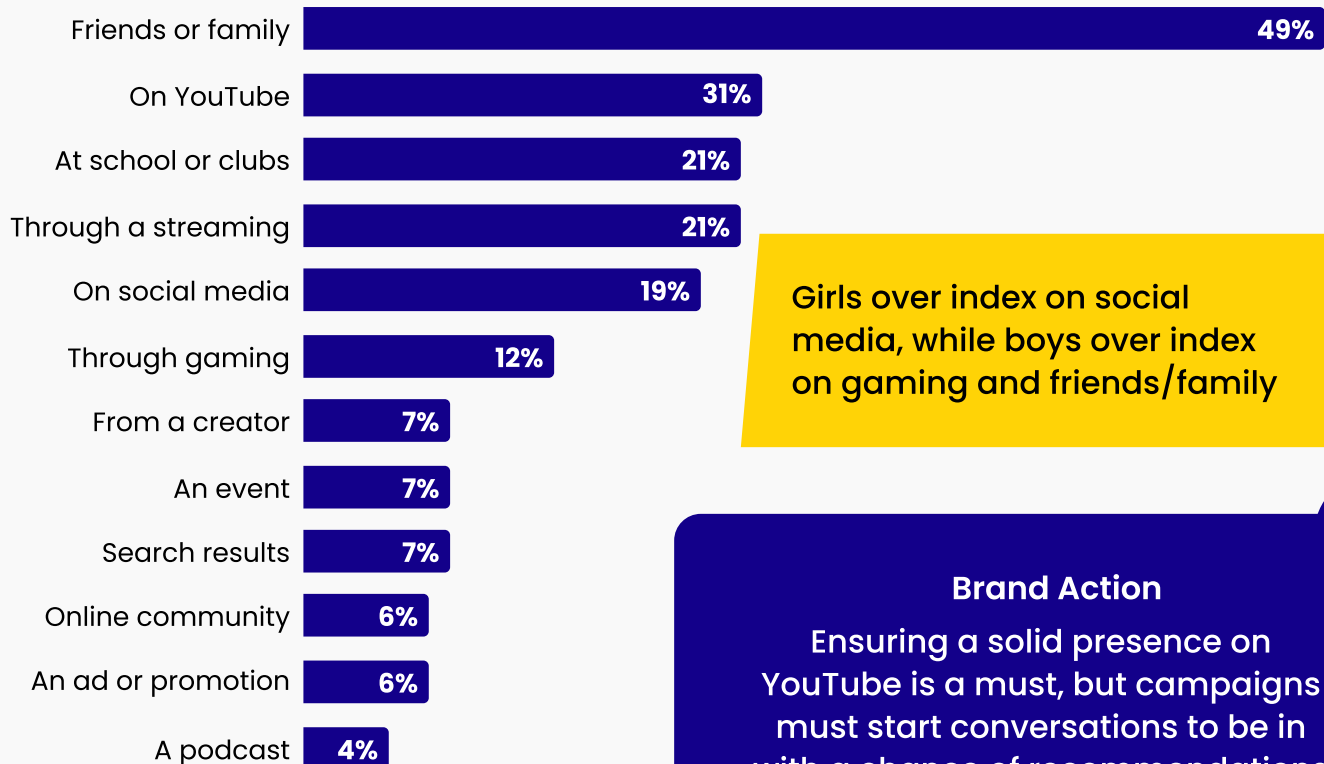


"have seen several TikToks and Instagram reels on the subject [Love is Blind] as well, that everybody is just loving the, the way that they pick the people and how the, they become familiar with each other. And the TikToks is what made me go search the series out on Netflix"

Girl, 18

”

Q: How did you first find out about it ?



Girls over index on social media, while boys over index on gaming and friends/family

Brand Action

Ensuring a solid presence on YouTube is a must, but campaigns must start conversations to be in with a chance of recommendations

Discovery Has Broadened



2. THE TRIAL PHASE

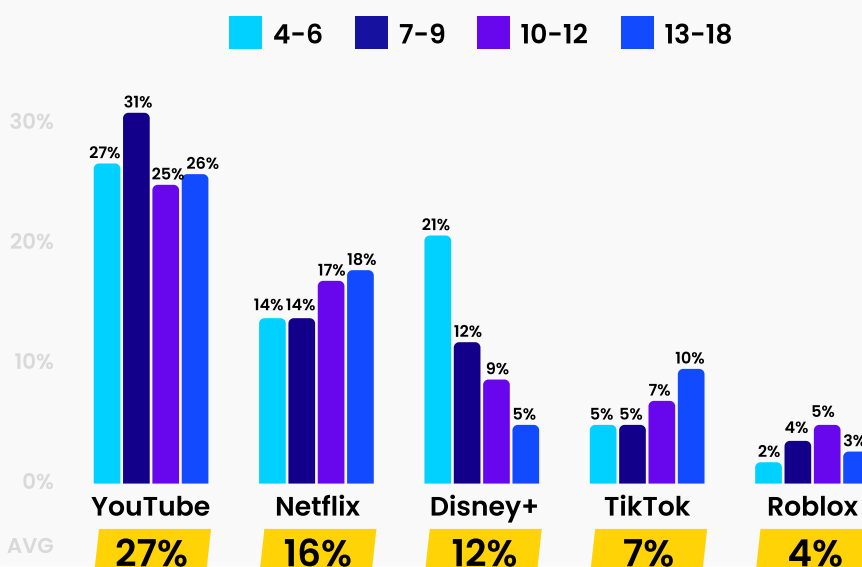
Experimentation Is Key, Often Spawned by YouTube

During the trial phase, the ability to engage beyond the initial platform is critical to move it on from a single encounter.

Connection with video (**2 in 5**) and game (**1 in 4**) content is essential, while building conversations with family and friends (**43%**) strengthens the community.

These core actions are especially important for the under-9s, while tweens and teens start to engage on social platforms, at events and in fandom communities.

Where did you first engage with your fandom?



Brand Action

Tailor your omni-channel fan engagement by age. YouTube will reach everyone, while Roblox is a key channel for kids and tweens. CTV is useful for initial IP engagement

3. THE DEEPEN PHASE

A Combination of Community Building, Content and Confidence

The deepen phase relies on a combination of factors that fulfil emotional and developmental needs. The sense of community and belonging that comes from a fandom cannot be underestimated, especially when it connects you to your existing friends as well as new ones.

Building new skills and experiencing personal growth are key motivators.

Importantly, no fandom would grow without ongoing content, whether from the original source or created by the army of fans producing UGC (another powerful way to connect within a fandom).

Q: What things made you even more interested or excited about it over time?

My friends got into it too	42%
I got better at it	28%
I saw it trending online	24%
New content came out	24%
I bought merch or collectibles	24%



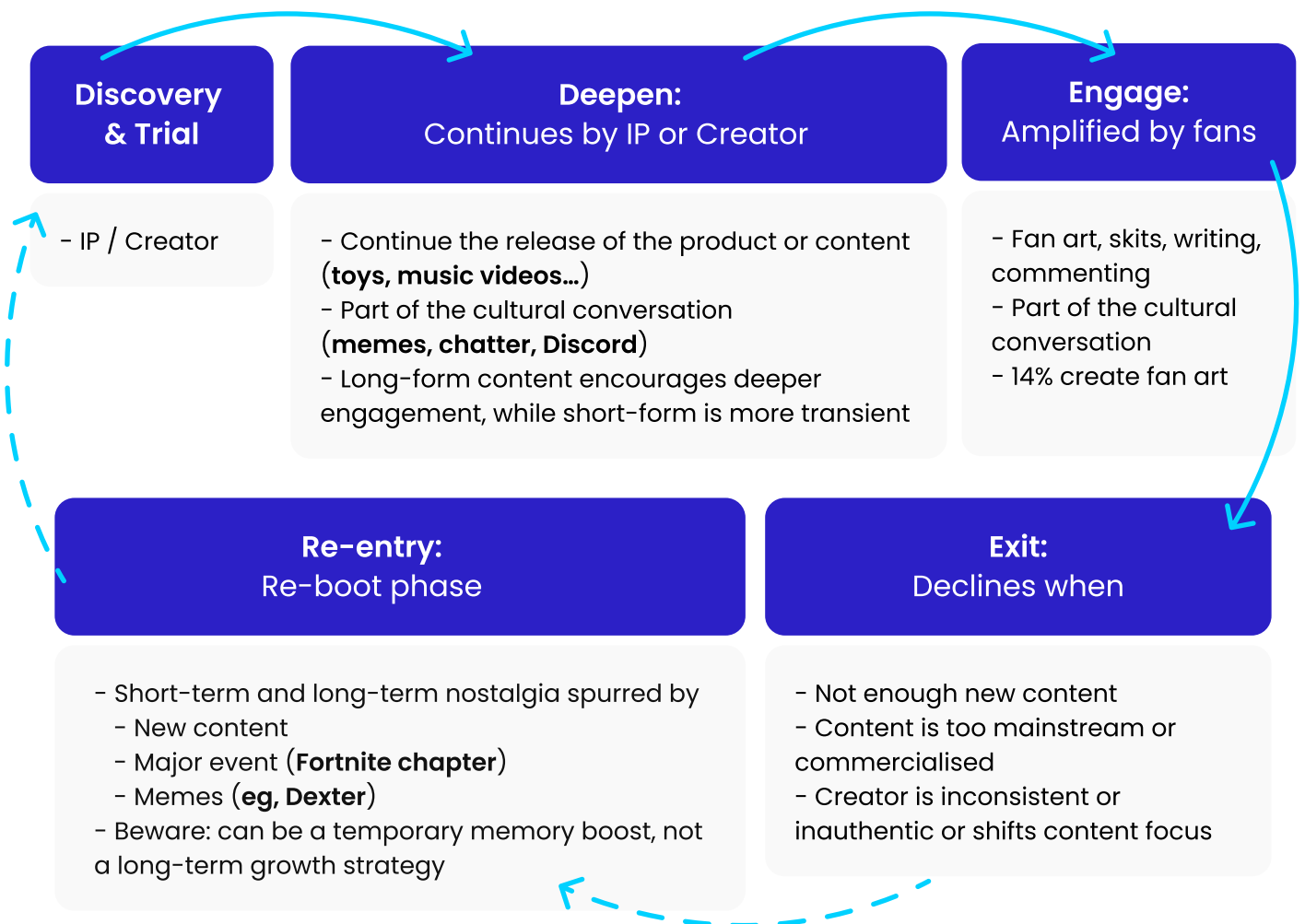
Brand Action

Foster emotional connection and enable growth by making it talkable, use creator content and UGC

Kids are more likely to buy merch & collectibles, while teens are more likely to join online communities and create UGC

3. THE DEEPEN PHASE

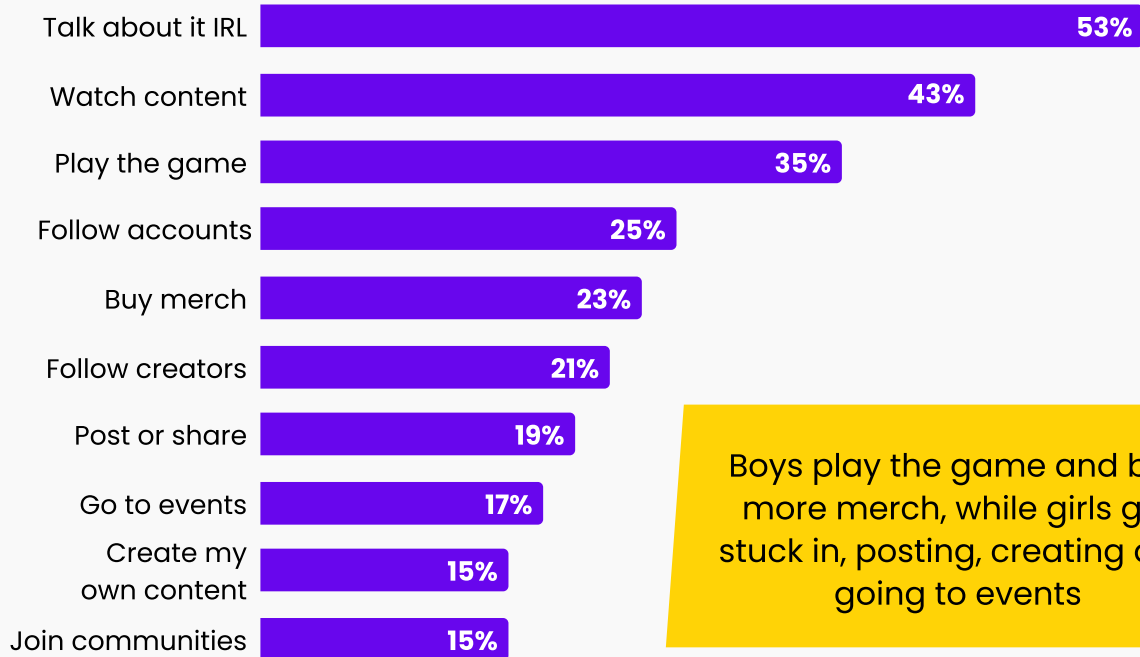
Creators Play a Pivotal Role



4. THE ENGAGE PHASE

The Most Committed (Obsessed) Phase of Fandom

Q: What do you do now as part of being a fan?



Boys play the game and buy more merch, while girls get stuck in, posting, creating and going to events

Source: SuperAwesome, Evolving Fandoms, Q20, Kids 4-18 from the UK, September 2025, Base: N=1072. Parents answered on behalf of children under 9.

Once they're in, fans do what propelled their fandom so far: they talk about it with friends and family and watch content.

The engage phase is a committed one, from spending money on merch and toys to spending time in deep immersion in the lore of the fandom on official accounts or following creators.

Creating content to add to the lore is a key part of an engaged fandom for some, too, which fuels the content wheel and keeps engagement high for others.

Brand Action

Embrace creators to add content and lore, and celebrate fans who add their interpretations, too

4. THE ENGAGE PHASE

Badging and collecting is a really important part of the Engage Phase, demonstrating commitment to their fandom and outward expression of belonging

”

"I mean, I am wearing a Kilo shirt. Okay? Like I literally have merged..."

Girl, 18



81%

Spent at least something in the last three months to support their fandom.

28%

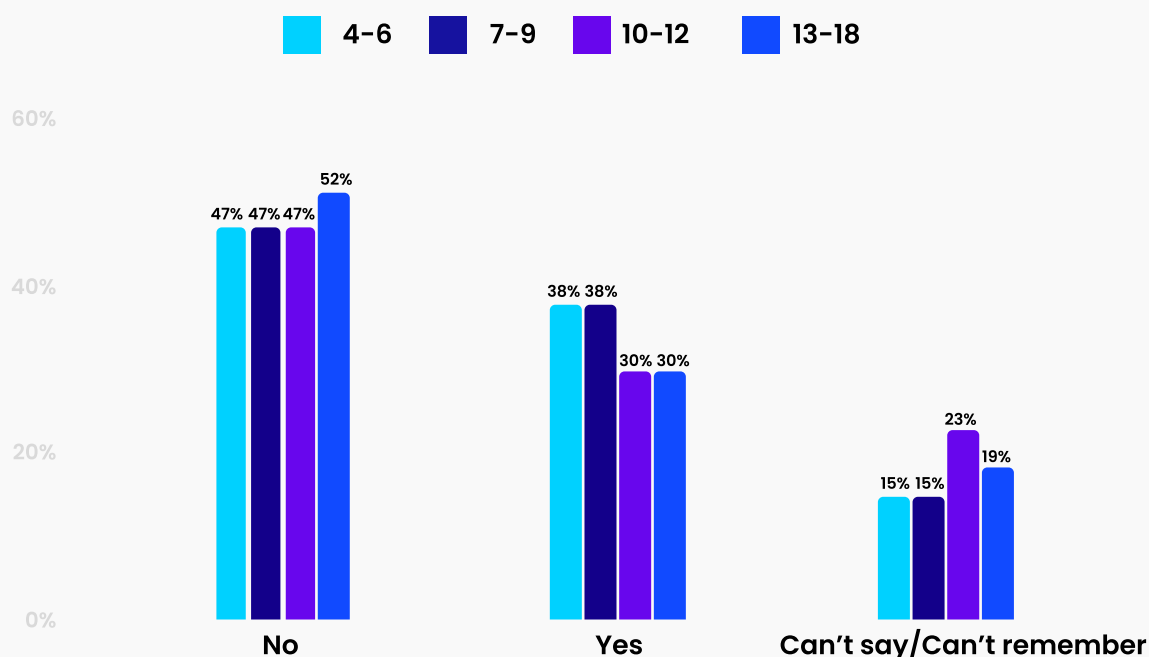
have spent at least £100.



5. THE EXIT PHASE

1 in 3 abandon their fandoms at some stage, with the highest churn happening between 4 and 9 years old

Q: Are there fandoms you used to follow or be part of, but aren't interested in anymore?



Brand Action



Prepare for the age drop-off by having a ramp-on/off strategy to survive this transition

5. THE EXIT PHASE

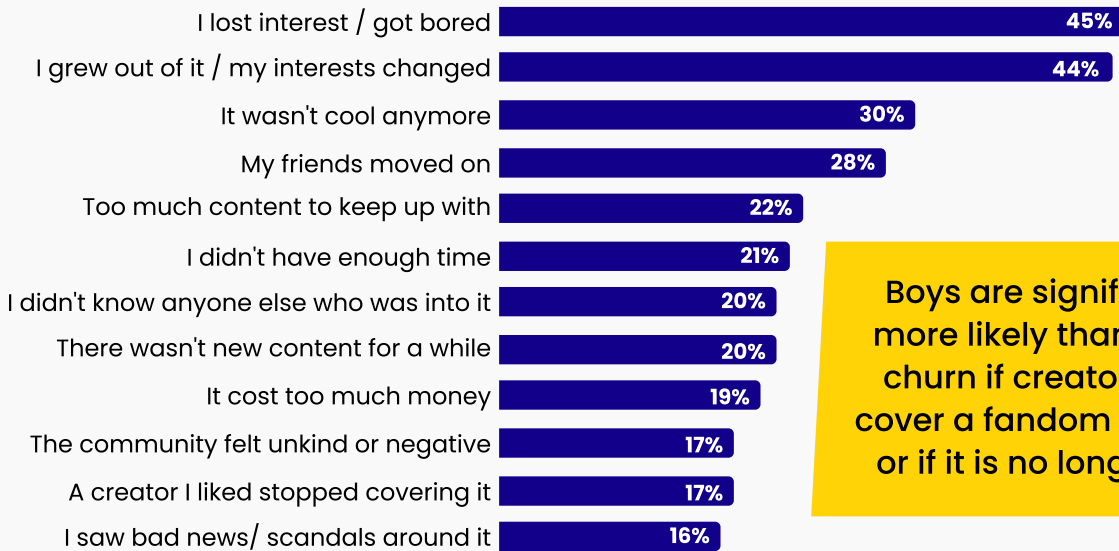
Strongly Influenced by Age as Kids Grow Out of Content

”

“I mean, when I, when I stopped playing Roblox, so I was about, I would say eight, eight and a half years old, and I stopped playing it because it was babyish and my friends were not into it anymore.”

Boy, 12

Q: Why did you stop following [fandom]?



Boys are significantly more likely than girls to churn if creators don't cover a fandom anymore or if it is no longer cool

Brand Action

As kids get older, the need to connect with others grows, making friends a key exit factor for the 10+, while those 7+ start worrying about what's cool. Make sure you give them reasons to stay

Source: SuperAwesome, Evolving Fandoms, Q24, Kids who have past fandoms 4-18 from the UK, September 2025, Base: N=357 | VQ21, VQ26, Kids 4-12 from the USA, August 2025, Base: N=95. Parents answered on behalf of children under 9.



5. THE EXIT PHASE

Teen Spotlight

Maintaining Teens

On top of making sure there is right amount of relatable content for teens, **taking care of the brand reputation and fan community is essential** to hang on to teens.

They're plugged into social media, highly sensitive to communication missteps and are unforgiving. **Missteps here can create irreversible damage.**

22%

Too much content

14%

Toxic community

10%

Bad news and scandals

15%

Creator stopped making content

6. RE-ENTRY

Re-Entry Can Act as a Fandom Reboot, but **Nostalgia Alone Rarely Creates a Lasting Connection**

Coming back to a fandom someone has left isn't as clear cut as determining why they left it, though content and connection are, once again, the two biggest drivers.

Q: What things made you even more interested or excited about it over time?

Friends getting into it again	32%
New season / update / release / new content	24%
Nostalgia / I miss it	20%
If it started trending online again	19%
Better community feel	18%
A creator I like recommending it	17%

Boys are looking for new ways to interact while girls are more motivated by nostalgia

Teens need new content to revisit a fandom while crossovers work best with u12s



Brand Action

Understanding exit reasons is key to building a successful re-entry strategy if maintaining a consistent content cycle that keeps fans engaged is not possible



The Fandoms Lifecycle Playbook: How to Engage with Your Fandom



Brand Questions: Are You Talkable?

1.

Is your brand / IP talkable? Are you in the right places to generate that conversation?

2.

Does it have a detailed lore/canon or backstory to keep the conversation going?

3.

Are you leveraging memetic culture or creators to create continuous talkability?

Optimising Fandoms for Collaborations

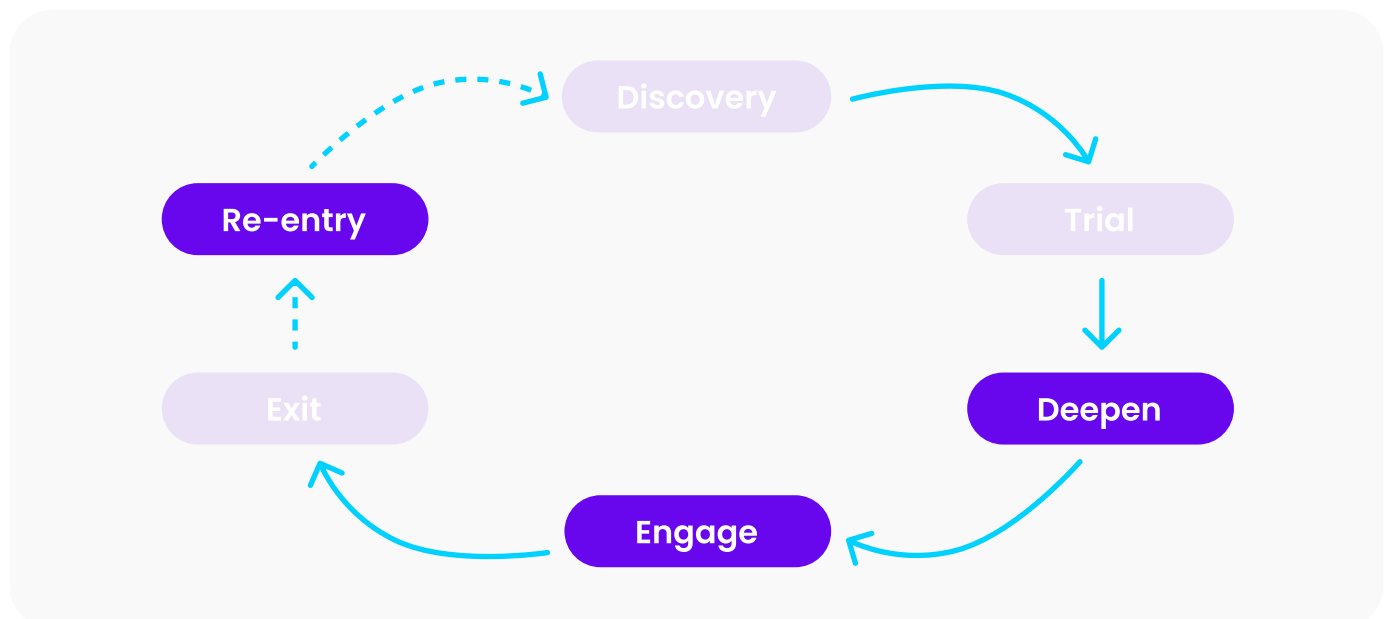
Fandom collaborations are particularly effective, being additive to both the fandom and the collaborator **when executed authentically**.

Brands should seek to **join fandoms when fans are in the deepen and engage phases** as this is when the emotional benefits are strongest.

But more than that brands need to make sure they join them when they are in their ascendancy, too early and it won't have the desired effect, too late and your brand risks being tarnished with the same exit reasons as the fandom itself.

Brand Action

Encourage your fans to contribute, create, and debate



Case Study

KPop Demon Hunters: a Lesson in Talkability

**KPOP
DEMON
HUNTERS**

”

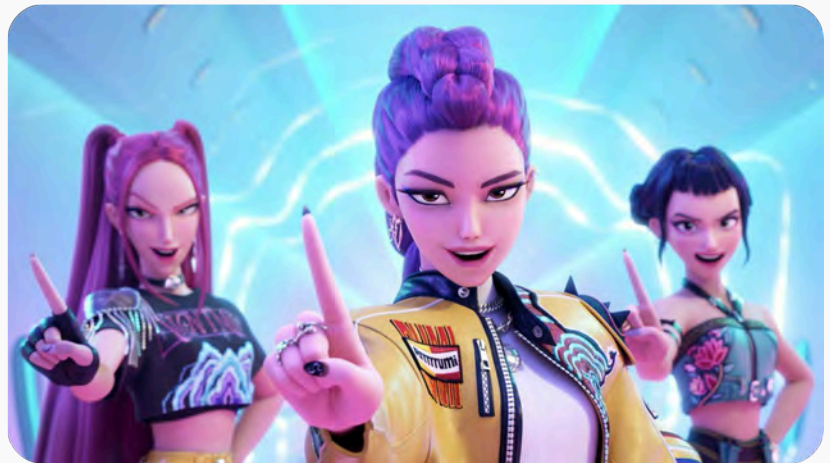
If you like kpop you notice this really has everything. The fansigns, the ships, the absurd TV shows, THE OUTFITS also are so good, the archetypes are so accurate, this was clearly made by kpop fans”

@lk-kitty, YouTube comment

”

“Kids only watch shows where they’re seeing people talk about it on YouTube”

Radford Sechrist,
co-producer KPDH



Fandoms Need an Ecosystem of Platforms to Be Experienced Fully

*“Different platforms help me enjoy and engage with the Harry Potter stuff because like I get to read it, I can watch the movies, I can play video games based off of it and that kind of stuff. I use **Peacock**, **Kindle**, **Nintendo Switch** to play the game. **Spotify** to play the Hedwig theme.”*

Girl, 10

*“I play **Roblox** on Roblox and one of the platforms I use to engage more with it is **Google Meets** to call my friends and use and play Roblox with them. Another one I use is **YouTube** to watch things about Roblox and get tips. I wanna say my most important is probably **Google Meet** because my friends help me a lot in Roblox and basically make me play it a lot.”*

Boy, 10

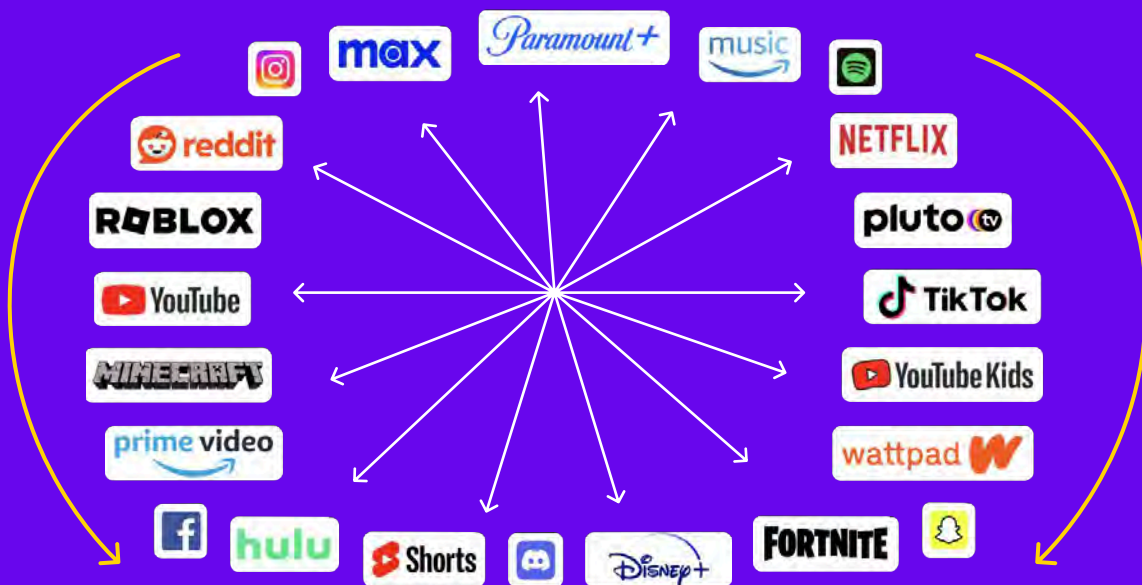
*“On **TikTok**, I can see what people think about demon slayer. I can look up edits, I can tell I can build a community on people who like demon slayer on **YouTube**. I can connect with people around the world that, like that demon slayer. I have thought about making a group on **Facebook** for demon slayer and **Demon Slayer memes**. I love demon slayer, so.”*

Girl, 14

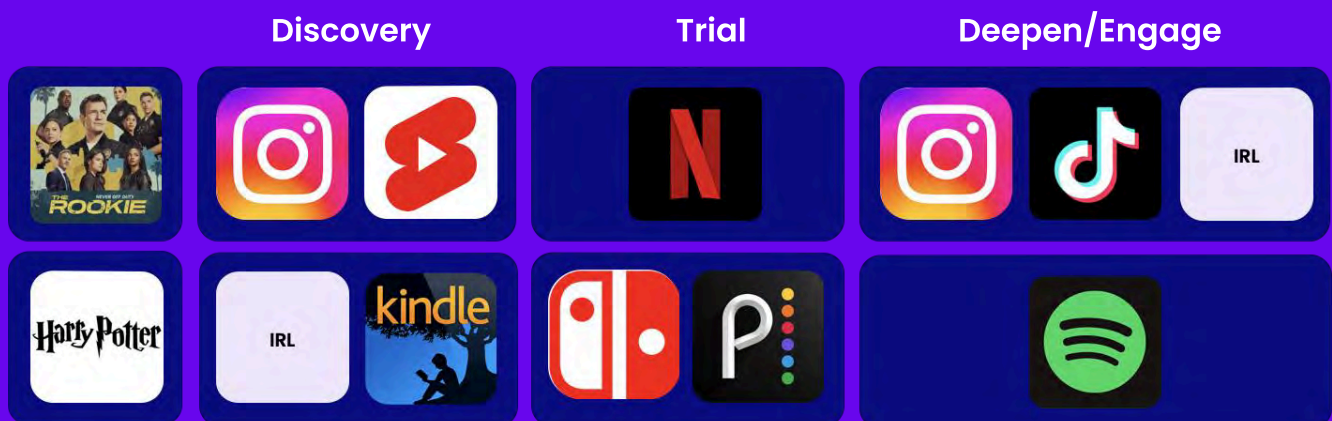
Fandoms Travel Cross-Platform

Creating Different Touch Points That Add Incrementally to the Total Experience

Platform Ecosystem



Example Fandom Platform Journey

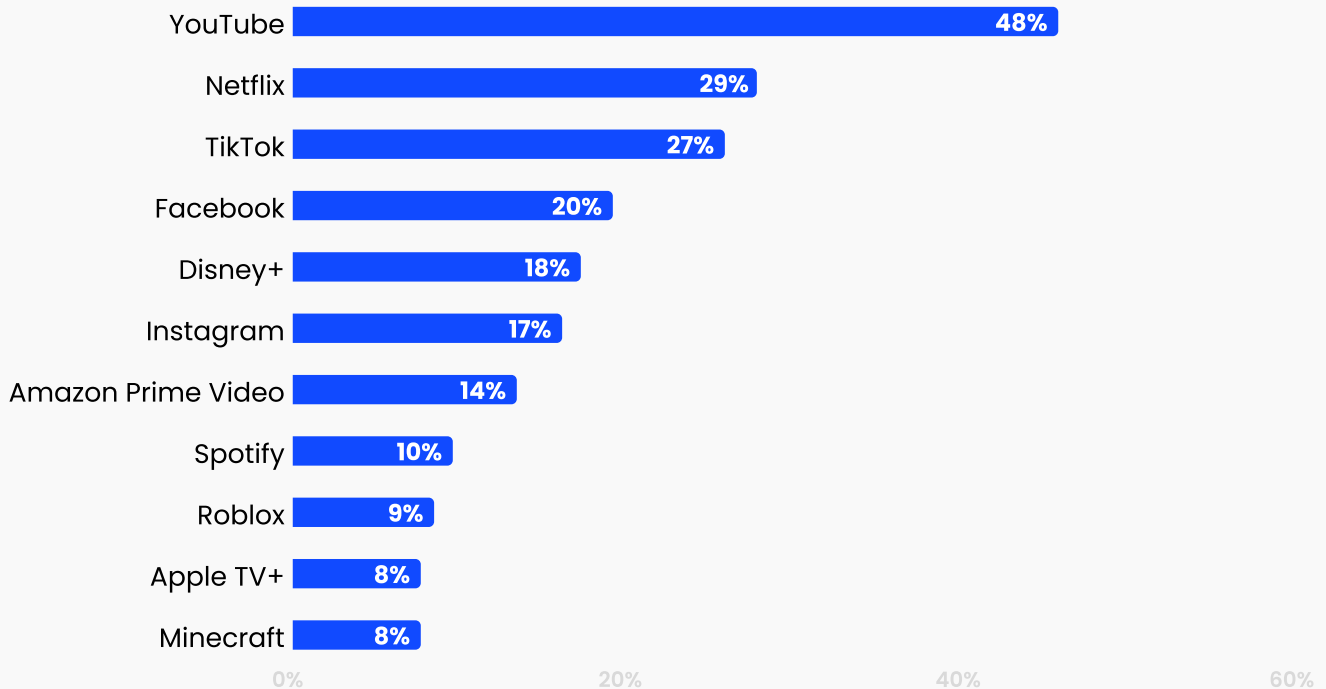


Brand Action

Building a fandom requires brands to leverage multiple touchpoints with content tailored to the platform and the audience to foster a deep connection

But YouTube Is the Key Platform for Fan Engagement

Q: Which platforms do you use for interacting with your [top fandom]?



Fandom engagement occurs across the digital ecosystem, but YouTube remains the primary platform for discovery and sustained engagement.

Brands should leverage creators to maximise engagement across YouTube and other social media.

79%

use YouTube more when engaging with their fandom than they did when discovering it



Brand Action

Half of fan content consumed is short form – make sure you have a shorts strategy



Influence Amplified

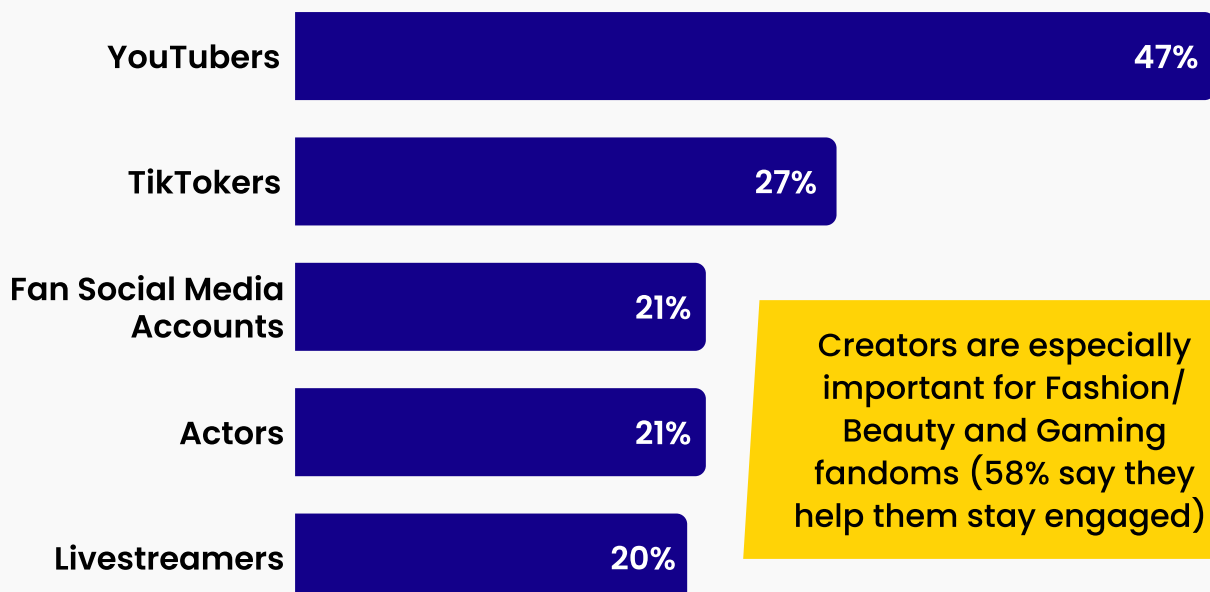
48% of U18s Say Creators Help Them Stay Engaged in Their Fandoms, Rising to Almost 60% Amongst Kids

Brand Action

YouTube creators are the most influential, ensure you harness their potential



Q: Thinking about [top fandom], what kinds of creators or influencers do you follow for this fandom?



Creators are especially important for Fashion/ Beauty and Gaming fandoms (58% say they help them stay engaged)

Meme Culture Is an Essential Tool for Fandom Culture (And Some Creators)

Meme Influence: Meme culture fosters a sense of connection through relatable, shared experiences.

- Shared quirky experiences
- Relatability and humour
- Being in on the joke, IYKYK
- Satire and cringe

"Oh, it's super important. I use it to make my videos funnier. I use it to like relate, so I don't feel too old even though I am very old in Fortnite years"

Birdo



"Just makes it people can like relate to memes, I think, in a funny way"

Creator

"The more stupid something is the more shareable it is"

Hew Moran



Brands need to approach memes with caution; getting it wrong can damage brand equity

Memes Are an Important Factor in Creator and IP Fandom Growth, Resurgence, and Occasionally Decline. It acts as a Talkability Tool.



The Importance of Lore for Deep Engagement

Lore, backstory, canon: The body of content surrounding a fandom is an important lever for every phase, from discovery to re-entry and exit.

Being able to add to the lore is a key engagement factor for many fans, from fan art to fan fiction and animatics, and keeps the content wheel turning.

Understanding the lore unites a fandom and can be a true indicator of the depth of a fan's engagement, IYKYK.

Deep lore and collaborations can expand a fandom (e.g, LEGO Star Wars Fortnite).



”

“The things that made me stay a big fan of the Harry Potter series, Harry Potter, is that it's, it's a nonstop adventure. It's, it never ends and there's always a surprise. It, you never know what happens next. And I still enjoy it because... it's just really surprising. And it's like fantasy and I really like fantasy”

Girl, 10

”

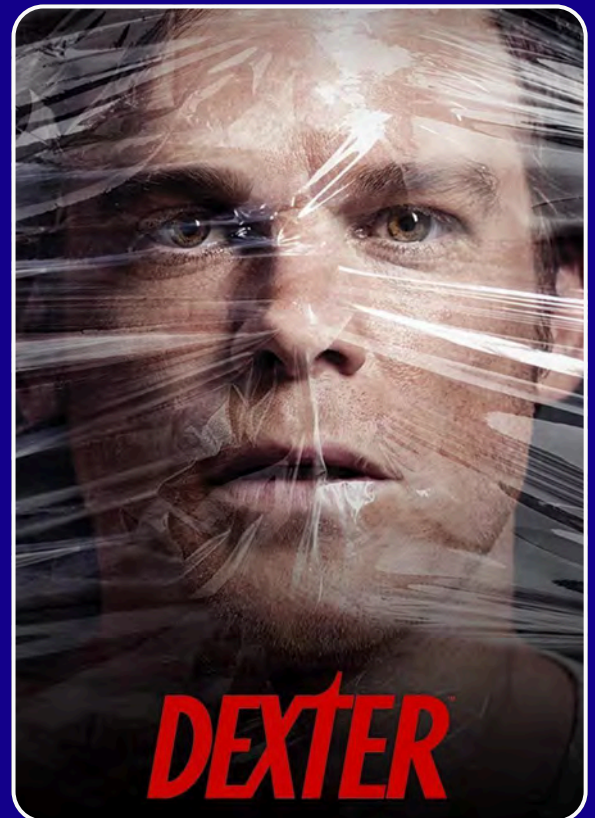
“People really get involved in their fandom based on like fan theories, based on what's going. If it's lore building, they love like looking into the lore, looking into the small things that people just don't others see”

Birdo



Case Study: Where Memes Reignite a Fandom

Dexter's current revival has been attributed to meme culture, creating a new set of fans.



"Like I would say an example of a fandom that was really big was Dexter. It was really big and then it like fell off really hard but now it's coming back because of memes – like the 'Doakes meme' is now a giant meme again."

Hew Moran

"I started watching Dexter when I was about like 17, something like that. I got into it 'cause of some TikTok videos that's online. I thought it looked pretty interesting. So I started watching it up."

Boy, Age 18





















The Fandoms Lifecycle Playbook: Fandoms In 2026, What's Next?





Top Fandoms Movers & Shakers 2024 – 25

While fandoms firmly revolve around entertainment and gaming, there are some notable movers in our chart that highlight a convergence of fandoms, and moving cultural influences. Anime and K-pop influence some of our new entries and big movers, as gen A and Z fandoms are shaped by Japanese and Korean cultures.

1.		Netflix		11.		Mr. Beast	-2
2.		YouTube		12.		Barbie	New entry
3.		Minecraft	+2	13.		LEGO	New entry
4.		Fortnite	-1	14.		Paw Patrol	-2
5.		Call of Duty	-1	15.		Arsenal (FC)	New entry
6.		Roblox		16.		Naruto	+2
7.		Harry Potter	+1	17.		Taylor Swift	-4
8.		Disney+	-1	18.		Spiderman	New entry
9.		Manchester United	+7	19.		Liverpool (FC)	New entry
10.		EA Sports FC		20.		Chelsea (FC)	New entry



The Next Big Thing

(According to Creators)



Live streaming will be increasingly significant due to the ease of production and the ability to provide a raw and authentic connection, moving away from highly produced content



Snapchat is expected to introduce streaming features and continue growing due to high payouts, which will attract more creators



Future content trends will include more lifestyle content (skincare, room design, fashion) and gaming: GTA 6 will generate a massive surge in content and new careers in the next two years. The FNAF movie and Minecraft will likely create popularity spikes and a resurgence in fandom



Creators will expand their offer (Hollywood, animation, live events, theme songs), setting new industry standards



AI-generated content will flood platforms, but there will be a consumer and creator backlash



YouTube's algorithm shift to TV will change the way that YouTube (main) is consumed to a growing, lean-back viewing experience for long-form content

The Fandoms Lifecycle Playbook: Brand Lessons



Key Learnings

1.

Fandoms are not built in a day

Fandoms require significant, long-term investment, not just in awareness but in developing the lore. The most successful fandoms become self-sustaining, with passionate fans contributing to and defending the canon.

2.

Driving Talkability

Brand awareness is important, but more crucial is the ability to generate talkability. This, in turn, creates new fans, sparks passion, and the desire to contribute to the fandom's lore or to experience it in different ways. Creators play an important role.

3.

The Power of Memes

Don't underestimate memes' power in fandoms. Though tricky, they are pivotal in generating talkability across the entire fandom lifecycle (discovery to exit). Memetic content amplifies community and belonging
– IYKYK.



Takeaways for Brands

The Fandom lifecycle has 6 phases; brands need to approach each phase with a distinct strategy to maximise the power of fandoms.

1. Discovery

Talkability from friends and family is key, with YouTube a leading early touchpoint; social platforms matter more for teens

You could...



📱 Use **creator-led YouTube Shorts** to drive mass reach with high trust

2. Trial

Happens primarily on YouTube, (where most ads are seen) and is reinforced by simple actions like talking about it or playing a game



🎬 Go deeper with a dedicated **longform creator video** that models the IP in depth

3. Deepen

Interest tends to grow when friends get into it too, and when new content drops; skill-building and "new ways to engage" also help



👥 Invite friends in – show friends playing together with creators, or push for **parental co-view through CTV**

4. Engage

Day-to-day engagement centers on talking with friends/family, as well as watching content; YouTube is the hub, with creators influencing nearly half of fans



🎮 Create an **immersive gaming experience** that fans can lose themselves in, with friends!

5. Exit

The top reasons are "lost interest/grew out of it," with "wasn't cool anymore" and "no new content" also in the mix



💬 Combat exit by keeping the creator content ecosystem firing – **seed lore about your IP** to keep the convo going

6. Re-entry

The way back is fresh content; friends re-engaging and crossovers add lift



👁️ Get eyes on your newest content beats or launches through **hardworking media**

Our Solutions

The Most Comprehensive Platform for Engaging Gen Alpha and Gen Z, Cross-Channel Engagement Unified by Consistent Audience Intelligence and a Privacy-First Infrastructure.



Awesome Intelligence

Build a deeper understanding of youth audience interests and motivations and effectively connect with them where they are with our audience data and recommendation platform.



AwesomeAds

Connect with youth audiences at scale across mobile, with bespoke rich media units developed by our in-house creative team.



Video

Reach youth audiences at scale using our unified solution, offering YouTube (including Shorts), CTV, and In-Game formats.



Creators

Deliver high-engagement creator content with fully managed talent partnerships. Aspirational creators tap into short-form content across channels.



Gaming

Deliver safe, exciting, and insights-driven gaming programmes, whether it's custom integrations, skins, UGC or other in-game opportunities.



Audio

Expand your cross-channel reach into podcasts via the world's largest independent kids and family audio ecosystem.

Want to dig deeper? **Get in touch** with the team!



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