

YouTube's algorithm is pushing climate misinformation videos, and their creators are profiting from it | Nieman Journalism Lab

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When an ad runs on a YouTube video, the video creator generally keeps 55 percent of the ad revenue, with YouTube getting the other 45 percent. This system's designed to compensate content creators for their work.

But when those videos contain false information — say, about climate change — it's essentially encouraging the creation of more misinformation content. Meanwhile, the brands advertising on YouTube often have no idea where their ads are running.

In a new report published today, the social-activism nonprofit [Avaaz](#) calculates the degree to which YouTube recommends videos with false information about climate change. After collecting more than 5,000 videos, Avaaz found that 16 percent of the top 100 related videos surfaced by the search term “global warming” contained misinformation. Results were a little better on searches for “climate change” (9 percent) and worse for the more explicitly misinfo-seeking “climate manipulation” (21 percent).

Those videos with misinformation had more views and more likes than other videos returned for the same search terms — by an average of 20 and 90 percent, depending on the search.

[...]

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