

The Creator Economy-has the Future Reached Serbia?

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Abstract—As digital platforms reshape how expertise is produced, delivered, and monetized, the “creator economy” has emerged as a relevant arena for entrepreneurship. Serbia offers a timely yet under-researched context: digital adoption is broad and creator practices are visible, but - so far - no peer-reviewed work has systematically examined platform-mediated knowledge entrepreneurship in the country. This study documents the domestic platform landscape available to knowledge-oriented creators through a transparent, desk-based mapping of publicly accessible sources. The unit of analysis is the platform-mediated venture that connects services for content production, delivery, payments, and community. The mapping focuses on formats commonly used in the knowledge vertical-online courses and cohort workshops, one-on-one coaching, memberships, newsletters with paid tiers, and digital products-and identifies domestic services that support these offerings. Public indicators suggest that core technological prerequisites (broadband and mobile connectivity, mainstream platforms, and accessible payment gateways) are in place, while uneven advanced digital skills on the user side temper the sophistication of adoption. The contribution is a descriptive inventory of platforms available to Serbian creators, intended as a factual baseline for subsequent empirical research. By foregrounding scope and practical relevance, the paper motivates closer scholarly attention and offers initial inputs for practitioners and policy makers concerned with skills, micro-entrepreneurship, and the creative and cultural economy.

Keywords - creator economy, innovation, entrepreneurship, digital platforms, Serbia

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms are reshaping how expertise is produced, validated, and monetized worldwide, turning knowledge into an entrepreneurial resource in its own right. The creator economy enables individuals to build ventures that bypass traditional intermediaries, relying on platform infrastructures for discovery, delivery, payment, and community. Reputation systems and visible signals of quality increasingly substitute for formal credentials, which changes how trust is formed and how markets select winners. Rapid experimentation with formats and business models encourages continuous innovation in courses, coaching, memberships, newsletters, and digital products. These dynamics are redefining the boundaries of the firm and the pathways to scale for small ventures. Understanding this shift matters for strategy, policy, and workforce development in both mature and emerging economies, including Serbia.

The creator economy can be regarded as an innovative form of entrepreneurship rather than merely a novel domain for content creation. The central element of this concept is a platform-mediated enterprise wherein a lone creator or a small team connects services for production, distribution, payments, and community administration with minimal initial investment and frequently before official incorporation. Audiences act as early validators and as co-producers of value through attention, feedback, and referrals [1-3]. In a Schumpeterian sense, creators recombine tacit expertise, digital tools, and platform affordances into marketable



offerings. In contrast, platform governance shapes variation and selection pressures that determine which ventures survive and grow [4,5].

This preliminary study focuses only on the education and knowledge-based segment of the creator economy - knowledge vertical. It considers courses, workshops, one-on-one coaching, membership communities, newsletters with paid tiers, and digital templates. These ventures operate within multi-sided markets where platforms coordinate creators, audiences, advertisers, and complementary infrastructure such as payment and subscription providers. Cross-group network effects and rules of access influence entry, experimentation, and scaling in ways that differ from traditional firms with proprietary distribution assets [6,7].

Mechanisms that link technology and practice are central to performance. Technological affordances enable analytics, format testing, memberships, gated communities, and live delivery, which support disciplined learning and retention [8,9]. At the same time, algorithmic management reallocates control over discovery and monetization. Creators adapt content cadence, format choice, and bundling to recommendation systems that are powerful and often opaque [5]. Under uncertainty, selection operates through signaling and reputation more than through institutional credentials. Credible signals such as demonstrated outcomes, third-party endorsements, and transparent processes reduce information frictions, while reputation systems and electronic word of mouth structure search, discovery, and purchase behavior [10-12].

Resource endowments remain important, although their composition changes. Human capital in the form of specific skills and experiential knowledge, together with social capital and especially bridging ties, predicts entry and early traction. Collaborations across platforms recombine knowledge and accelerate legitimacy acquisition - monetization functions as business model innovation rather than as a narrow pricing choice. Freemium and subscription models dominate, and the boundary between free and paid content shifts in response to demand and advertising conditions. Memberships and bundled subscriptions can increase engagement and stabilize cash flows, thereby sustaining continued experimentation at a low marginal cost [13-15].

Serbia offers a timely and under-researched setting. Digital adoption is substantial and creator practices are visible, yet - to my knowledge - no peer-reviewed work has systematically examined platform-mediated knowledge entrepreneurship in Serbia. The study's objective is to document the domestic platform landscape that enables knowledge-oriented creators through a transparent desk-based mapping of publicly available services. The contribution is a descriptive inventory of platforms available to Serbian creators, intended as a factual baseline for future empirical research. By foregrounding the scope and economic relevance of these activities, the paper highlights the significance of the topic for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.

The main research question addressed in this paper is: What domestic, platform-mediated options are currently available to knowledge-oriented creators in Serbia, and how do these options correspond to common formats and monetisation models?

II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND FORMS OF CREATOR ENTREPRENEURS

Early roots of this entrepreneurial form lie in user innovation and open collaborative production rather than in traditional producer-centered models. Lead users often develop novel solutions to their own needs and later reveal or commercialize them, which establishes a direct link between individual expertise and marketable offerings [16]. Subsequent work traced how such users become entrepreneurs through emergent and collective processes that precede formal firm formation [17]. A broader shift from producer-dominated innovation to user- and open-collaborative models explained why individual creators and communities could increasingly rival firms once digital tools reduced the costs of design and coordination [18].

The rise of large digital platforms provided the missing market infrastructure. Research on two-sided markets [6] has clarified how platforms coordinate creators, audiences, and complementors, as well as how pricing and access rules shape participation on each side. This work also showed why platform governance becomes a key determinant of entry and scaling for small ventures that depend on discovery and matching. Studies of open platform strategy [7] then examined how granting access versus devolving control influences the rate and locus of innovation across an ecosystem.

Entrepreneurship scholarship added a digital technology perspective, arguing that new technologies make organizational boundaries more porous and reconfigure uncertainty, which favors lightweight, creator-led ventures that assemble external services for production, distribution, and payment [19].

As social platforms matured, creators adopted practices of self-branding and micro-celebrity, turning audience attention into an asset and reframing legitimacy as a market outcome. Research in media and marketing has documented how creators build identity and trust through ongoing interaction with followers, which complements formal brand building with continuous audience-level signaling [20]. In parallel, research on reputation systems showed how online feedback mechanisms structure search, discovery, and transacting, thereby operating as selection devices in markets with information frictions [11]. Service-Dominant Logic positions skills and knowledge as operant resources that co-create value with users, while the knowledge creation literature explains how tacit expertise is externalized and combined into explicit artifacts that circulate through communities. These perspectives together help explain why the creator economy is well-suited to knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship, where audience participation and reputation systems serve as substitutes for formal credentials [3,21].

Within this trajectory, the knowledge-oriented segment of the creator economy has converged on several dominant forms. Creators assemble courses and cohort-based workshops, one-on-one coaching, membership communities, newsletters with paid tiers, and digital templates or toolkits. Platform design choices and revenue-sharing models influence which formats scale and under what conditions, and recent work formalizes these choices for the creator ecosystem [1,2]. Monetization has moved beyond pure advertising toward hybrid models with freemium and subscription options. Evidence indicates that the line between free and paid content is responsive to demand and advertising conditions, and that subscriptions can lift engagement in ways that stabilize cash flows for small creative ventures that iterate rapidly [14,15].

III. SERBIA - A DESK-BASED SITUATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Serbia presents a receptive environment for platform-mediated knowledge entrepreneurship

when viewed through publicly available indicators. Official statistics report broad household connectivity and steady diffusion of personal devices, which lowers access barriers for both creators and audiences. These foundations suggest that the domestic market can support online delivery, recurrent payments, and community building without heavy fixed investment in distribution. Household access indicators are strong by regional standards. In 2024, 88.8 percent of households had a broadband internet connection, 95.9 percent owned a mobile phone, and 53.9 percent owned a laptop, according to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia [22]. These figures characterize a market where fixed and mobile channels can jointly support discovery, live delivery, and asynchronous learning formats that are typical for the knowledge-oriented segment of the creator economy. Adoption and usage metrics from international aggregators reinforce this picture. DataReportal estimates [23] 6.16 million internet users in January 2025, corresponding to an online penetration rate of 91.8 percent, alongside 4.84 million social media user identities, or 72.1 percent of the total population. Median connection speeds at the start of 2025 were 59.12 Mbps for mobile and 90.18 Mbps for fixed connections based on Ookla data, which is consistent with viable conditions for video courses, livestreams, and membership communities that rely on rich media. Network resilience indicators and market infrastructure offer additional context. The Internet Society Pulse reports [24] that approximately 85 percent of the population is internet users, documenting the presence of an internet exchange point and multiple data centers, while also benchmarking aspects of security and market readiness. These metrics do not directly measure creator practices, but they characterize delivery risk and the maturity of the basic internet ecosystem that creator ventures depend on.

Ecosystem and policy signals point to strategic attention to digital transformation. The Digital Serbia Initiative [25] describes a multi-stakeholder effort to strengthen education, the startup environment, legal frameworks, infrastructure, and public dialogue related to the digital economy. The International Telecommunication Union's Digital Innovation Profile for Serbia [26] maps the innovation landscape and formulates recommendations for improving coordination and capability building across actors. Together, these sources suggest

institutional support that can lower non-technological barriers to entry and scaling for creator-led ventures.

Comparative regional benchmarks further indicate progress alongside capability gaps that matter for knowledge entrepreneurship. The Western Balkans Digital Economy and Society Index 2024 [27] reports improvements in broadband coverage, ICT education, and aspects of business digitalization such as e-invoicing and online sales. The same report highlights shortfalls in advanced digital skills, 5G deployment, AI adoption, and uptake of online public services, which can constrain experimentation with more sophisticated delivery, analytics, and automation in creator ventures. These gaps delineate practical boundaries for what formats may scale fastest in the short term and where complementary policy or ecosystem efforts would have the highest leverage.

Serbia therefore exhibits a supportive baseline for platform-mediated knowledge entrepreneurship. Household connectivity and social media adoption are high, and ecosystem actors signal growing attention to digital transformation. At the same time, gaps in advanced digital skills [28] and uneven uptake of sophisticated technologies temper near-term ambitions for complex delivery and analytics. Taken together, these conditions favor formats that build on existing distribution channels and straightforward monetization, with gradual expansion toward memberships, bundled offerings, and stronger community features as capabilities deepen.

IV. MAPPING THE PLATFORM ECOSYSTEM IN SERBIA

Scope and unit of analysis. The desk-based mapping focuses on platforms and services that enable creators in Serbia to produce, deliver, or monetize knowledge-oriented offerings.

Inclusion criteria cover domestic origin or Serbia-oriented operation, a public website in Serbian or English, explicit support for at least one knowledge format (for example online courses or cohorts, one-on-one coaching, memberships, paid newsletters, digital products), and publicly accessible pages with basic information on features, pricing, or onboarding.

Exclusions apply to ticketing or donation tools without structured learning delivery,

general collaboration utilities without course or community pathways, and closed corporate LMS instances without public catalogues or onboarding for external creators.

The procedure comprises a structured review of public sources, including platform home, help, and pricing pages as well as visible catalogues, extraction of attributes into a template capturing type, intended use, openness to external creators, and visible delivery or monetization features, followed by cross-checks for internal consistency across subpages; no interviews or private data were consulted.

The profiles that follow summarize the platforms most relevant for the knowledge-oriented segment in Serbia and provide a baseline for future data collection. Below are concise profiles of domestic platforms for online courses and knowledge delivery in Serbia.

- *Kampster* – An international online academy offering an extensive catalog of courses in Serbian, with certificates available in both Serbian and English, providing continuous access, learner support, and elements of gamification. The platform highlights content verification and a sizable learner base. [29]
- *SkillUp.rs* - Blended learning model that combines online materials with instructor guidance, weekly practical assignments, and case studies. Course listings and pricing are publicly available, accessible through a dedicated portal [30].
- *Krojačeva škola* - Longstanding online school offering a subscription that unlocks the full catalog of more than two hundred courses across IT and design topics. The subscription includes access to newly released courses during the active period [31].
- *eGO LMS* - A domestic cloud learning platform aimed at corporate training and internal education. Public materials emphasize implementations and corporate case references [32].
- *doEdu* - A local learning management system that integrates administration, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery. Designed for organizations that

require end-to-end control of learning processes [33].

- *Mravsi* - A platform oriented to authors who want to create and sell their own online courses. Public guides describe a step-by-step path from course design to publication and sales [34].
- *MIS e-learning* - The Young Researchers of Serbia platform with free online training developed within donor-supported projects. Content focuses on public interest topics and collaborative learning [35].
- *Partners Serbia e-learning* - An online portal with courses on data protection, dispute resolution, and communication

skills. Individual course pages present objectives, target audience, and expected outcomes [36].

- *Obuke i kursevi* - The platform is designed to facilitate engaging conversations and provide information across a wide range of topics (Technology, IT, Design, Online Marketing, etc.), offering users an interactive and informative experience [37].

The following Table I summarizes domestic platforms relevant to knowledge delivery in Serbia, presenting a taxonomy and visible attributes based on publicly available sources.

TABLE I. DOMESTIC PLATFORMS FOR KNOWLEDGE DELIVERY IN SERBIA: TAXONOMY AND VISIBLE ATTRIBUTES.

Platform	Type	Openness to individual creators	Typical formats (visible)	Monetization/ memberships (visible)	Notes
Kampster	Online academy/marketplace	Limited/catalogue	Courses	Paid courses; certificates	Large public catalogue
SkillUp.rs	School/blended portal	Closed curriculum	Mentored courses	Paid tuition/fees	Public prices and module descriptions
Krojačeva škola	School/subscription catalogue	Not open to external creators	Courses	Subscription (all-access)	Long tradition; 200+ courses
eGO LMS	SaaS LMS (corporate)	For organisations, not individuals	Courses/trainings	Commercial LMS	Focus on corporate use
doEdu	SaaS LMS	For organisations/ creators	Courses/ automations	Commercial LMS	End-to-end administration
Mravsi	Creator-first course platform	Yes, for authors	Courses; sales	Course sales	Guides creators through publishing
MIS e-learning	NGO portal	Not open to external creators	Free online trainings	Free	Donor-funded projects
Partners e-learning	NGO portal	Not open to external creators	Courses	Free	Thematic courses
Obuke i kursevi	Directory/portal	Aggregator	—	—	Informational listing/wayfinder

The descriptive snapshot is consistent with established views of multi-sided platforms and creator ecosystems, where governance and access rules shape entry, experimentation, and scaling. In Serbia, creator-first/LMS tools lower fixed costs and enable rapid iteration, while school-type portals offer distribution with more constrained onboarding. This structure aligns with research on platform design and two-sided markets, where pricing, access, and discovery rules determine participation and viable monetization patterns.

For knowledge-oriented creators, reputation mechanisms and signaling remain central. In the absence of formal credentials as primary

selectors, visible outcomes, endorsements, and transparent processes help reduce information frictions and support conversion from free to paid offerings. The observed platform mix therefore provides the infrastructure for signaling and community-based validation, but the breadth of advanced digital skills among creators and audiences will condition how quickly more sophisticated models (bundles, memberships, analytics-driven cohorts) diffuse.

V. CONCLUSION

The desk-based mapping indicates that Serbia has the core technological prerequisites for platform-mediated knowledge

entrepreneurship. Foundational infrastructure, broadband and mobile connectivity, mainstream social and course-delivery platforms, and accessible payment gateways, is available and interoperable. The main constraint lies on the usage side: advanced digital skills among both creators and audiences remain uneven, which dampens depth of adoption and the sophistication of monetization models. Consequently, the market is developing, with supply-side readiness outpacing the ability to fully leverage these tools. Nevertheless, a mix of domestic and global services is available, while many knowledge entrepreneurs also rely on self-hosted websites, membership areas, newsletters, and live events; for example, creators such as Sonja Dakić who supports small-business development through combined live and online offerings. Findings are descriptive and aim to establish a factual baseline rather than to close the debate.

Relevance of the topic is likely to increase as creators contribute to lifelong learning and general upskilling of the population, create self-employment opportunities, and influence income security and social mobility. Policy makers may wish to account for these dynamics in skills strategies, SME support, and cultural and creative-industry agendas, including attention to digital skills, financial literacy, and light-touch rules that facilitate micro-entrepreneurship. Better data, shared taxonomies of formats and revenue models, and regular monitoring would enable more precise analysis and evidence-based decisions.

A proposed agenda for further research can proceed in three steps. The first step is a structured replication of the desk mapping across quarters and across comparable countries in the region in order to benchmark adoption patterns and platform availability with the same variables. The second step involves a small-scale survey of Serbian creators in the knowledge-oriented segment, capturing formats, pricing, payout methods, and the use of signaling and reputation tools. This is followed by purposive interviews that clarify the mechanisms and boundary conditions. The third step is the construction of a longitudinal dataset that joins public platform indicators with creator-level outcomes, which enables tests of the propositions advanced in the theoretical framework and permits the analysis of policy or platform rule changes as natural experiments. This sequence preserves feasibility under resource constraints and builds toward an

evidence base that can inform both practice and policy.

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DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this conference paper, the author used ChatGPT, InstaText, QuillBot and Grammarly solely to improve the clarity, grammar, and readability of the English text. All tool-generated suggestions were reviewed, revised, and approved by the author, who take full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

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