

## Appendix 5a: How Alfie is portrayed

Bullet points (based on selected information units)

- portrayed as a central figure in the rise of vlogging culture, with his success reflecting the evolving landscape of online entertainment
- part of a new, growing phenomenon of vloggers who have become more popular than traditional celebrities
- seen as a prominent and successful YouTuber
- gained fame through his YouTube channel "PointlessBlog"
- over four million subscribers
- success attributed to his outgoing personality, quick-wittedness, and ability to engage with his audience
- Deyes and other vloggers are criticized for prioritizing financial gain over creative independence
- Deyes asserts importance of creative freedom and maintaining a close relationship with his audience

### Summary

In the article, Alfie Deyes is described as a young and very successful vlogger with over four million followers. He is well-known in the world of online content, especially for his vlog called *Pointless*, where he plays games and does fun activities with his friends. While many people over twenty may not know him, Alfie is very popular among younger audiences and can attract thousands of fans to events, like his book promotion in London.

Alfie is part of a growing trend of vloggers who have become as famous, or even more famous than, popular actors and singers. The article explains that successful vloggers like Alfie often have special qualities: they are friendly, funny, and natural, which helps them connect with their audience. They also listen to their viewers and change their content based on feedback, making their channels even more appealing.

The article also mentions some problems with vlogging, especially the effects of earning money through ads and product promotions. However, Alfie and others like him say that staying creative and independent is their top priority.

Overall, the article shows that Alfie Deyes represents the rise of vlogging as a new kind of entertainment and fame.

[197 words]

## Appendix 5b: How YouTube is characterised

Bullet points (based on selected information units)

- serves as a platform for Alfie Deyes and other vloggers to gain popularity and success
- provides accessibility and flexibility, allowing viewers to watch vlogs anywhere and at any time
- enables vloggers to create content independently, without intrusion from traditional media corporations
- vlogs are made by young people for young people – making a direct connection between creators and their audience
- facilitates monetization of vlogs, allows creators to earn income through advertising and product promotion
- despite opportunities for financial success, challenges related to commercialization and maintaining creative independence exist
- remains a central hub for the vlogging culture, offering creative expression and financial opportunities to content creators

### Summary

The article describes YouTube as the platform where vloggers like Alfie Deyes have become very popular and successful. It explains that YouTube is easily accessible and flexible, allowing people to watch vlogs anytime and anywhere. This convenience is made possible by modern technology, which helps a large audience enjoy vlogs tremendously.

YouTube is shown as a place where vloggers can create content on their own, without control from traditional media companies. The article highlights that vlogs are made by young people for young people, without interference from mainstream media. This shows YouTube as a democratic platform where people can express themselves and form communities based on their common interests.

The article also talks about how YouTube helps vloggers make money. It explains that vloggers can earn a lot through advertisements and product promotions. It mentions YouTube Creator Spaces, where vloggers with large subscriber numbers can access professional facilities to enhance their content production.

YouTube being a pivotal platform in the rise of vlogging culture, offers both opportunities for creative expression and financial success to content creators like Alfie Deyes. However, the article also hints that making money from vlogging can create challenges, especially when it affects the quality or honesty of the content.

[203 words]

## Appendix 5C: How Lauren Black is portrayed

Bullet points (based on selected information units)

- Influencer with 100,000 followers, not huge but significant
- experienced considerable pressure to perform and negative effects on Instagram
- felt compelled to constantly please her audience
- excessive screen time of up to 13 hours a day
- harmful content related to body image exacerbated her eating disorder
- promoting unrealistic standards

### Summary

The BBC Three documentary *The Instagram Effect* explores the challenges faced by influencer Lauren Black during her time on Instagram. With over 100,000 followers, Lauren felt constant pressure to satisfy her audience, leading her to spend up to 13 hours a day on the platform. This excessive screen time worsened her eating disorder, as she was exposed to harmful content about body image and accounts promoting unrealistic beauty standards. The documentary highlights how Instagram's algorithms often amplify negative content, making it harder for users to avoid harmful material. Even former Instagram employees admit that the platform contributes to user pressure.

Lauren also talks about the negative impact of filters on self-esteem, as they create unrealistic expectations about appearance. She supports initiatives that encourage transparency by labelling edited images. Despite these difficulties, Lauren has turned her experience into something positive. She now uses her platform to promote body positivity, sharing unedited photos to inspire others to embrace their natural selves.

Meta, Instagram's parent company, claims it is working to make the platform safer, though it acknowledges there is more to be done. Lauren's story sheds light on the complex relationship between social media and mental health, stressing the need for healthier online habits and supportive communities.

[205 words]

## Appendix 5d: How Instagram is characterised

Bullet points (based on selected information units)

- portrayed as uncaring, solely focussed on exhorting and encouraging influencers to maintain, grow and develop their follower count
- seemingly neutral or benign social medias platform, enabling influencers to create content, to become successful and well-known and to earn lots of money
- initially unwittingly pressurises influencers and makes them anxious about pleasing their audience
- changed from ordering posts chronologically to using an algorithm that prioritised follower count, and introduced filters, as an improvement which made you look good – better than reality
- ignored its own research and the negative effects on vulnerable users like Lauren
- Instagram is owned by META
- META supports and defends it, by saying that safety and security are their top priority
- the work they do with experts to develop rules and procedures to protect them and give them control, but it isn't changing or stopping what it's doing
- their algorithm fuels addiction and impacts all of us, and seriously negatively impacts the physical and mental health of the vulnerable

### Summary

The article describes Instagram as a platform that significantly affects its users, focusing on its negative impacts. It highlights the pressure Instagram places on influencers, like Lauren Black, who feel the need to constantly satisfy their audience and uphold a specific image. This focus on gaining followers and engagement often leads to feelings of stress, anxiety, and inadequacy. The article suggests that Instagram can worsen mental health problems, such as eating disorders, as users are frequently exposed to content that promotes unrealistic beauty standards. Lauren Black's story shows how spending too much time on the platform can make existing issues worse and encourage harmful behaviors.

Former Instagram employees discuss how the platform's algorithms influence users' experiences. By amplifying certain types of content, the algorithm can spread harmful or triggering material, increasing risks for vulnerable users. The article also discusses the impact of Instagram filters, which can reinforce unrealistic beauty expectations and lead to unhealthy comparisons.

Meta, Instagram's parent company, acknowledges the platform's challenges and says it is working to address them. The company claims to invest in safety measures and work with experts to improve user experiences. While Instagram offers creative and social opportunities, it also raises concerns about maintaining a healthy relationship with social media and reducing the potential harm it can cause.

[214 words]