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Haters and Beliebers: 8 Russian-Speaking YouTube Stars

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It is a well-known fact: everyone can gain access to money and fame on YouTube these days. The trend has also hit Russia: as long as you have a laptop and are not camera-shy, you have a chance at becoming a celebrity from your own bedroom.

The Moscow Times selected 8 Russian-speaking YouTube personalities who enjoy tremendous popularity on the Russian web.

1. Roma Zhelud

625 150 subscribers; 50 823 299 views (RomaAcorn)

156 058 subscribers; 18 917 682 views (RomaAcorbLive)

19-year-old Roma Zhelud is one of the pioneers of Russian video blogging.

As he recalled in an interview to Russian magazine Sobaka in 2013, everything started in 2010, when he was a lonely and bored kid hanging out in his bedroom. He decided to make a video and address the Internet community with a simple question: "Hi, how are you?"

Somehow the video went viral, and now Zhelud's repertoire has expanded up to include travel video journals, commentary on awards ceremonies and even a music video, "Like," which was shown on Russian TV.

"I shoot and edit all the videos myself. Now, thanks to my blog, I have earned enough money to buy professional equipment," Zhelud says in one of his videos.

Zhelud has been called the "Russian Justin Bieber," due to a vague physical resemblance to the Canadian pop star. According to his official site, he also opened for him in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 2013.

His YouTube audience, just like Bieber's, is very polarized, split between devoted fans and rabid haters. While some praise him as the "symbol of a young and free generation," trolls often attack him for being talentless.

Yet, this "spoiled rich kid" has had to face some serious challenges along the way. "I have been beaten and have had to change schools many times," Zhelud told Sobaka. "One time I was found beaten and unconscious."

2. EeOneGuy

3 922 013 subscribers; 775 835 460 views (EeOneGuy)

"I love haters – they increase my popularity," 19-year-old Ukrainian blogger EeOneGuy says in one of his videos.

He appeared on the YouTube scene in 2013, presenting himself as a total goofball and talking about broken iPhones, playing video games and pranking his friends.

Having reached more than 3 million subscribers, he has set yet another ambitious goal for himself. In a recent video titled "50 facts about me," EeOneGuy, who entertains his audience by cuddling with stuffed panda bears and sell-taping his face, declared he wants to be included in YouTube Rewind, an annual overview of the world's most popular videos. Will he succeed?

3. Max Golopolosov

6 424 268 subscribers; 903 840 475 views (AdamThomasMoran)

Max Golopolosov is the producer and host of +100500, one of the most popular web-shows in Russia. In the series, which first came out in 2010, he comments on the most popular amateur videos of the week.

Golopolosov, 25, stands in front of a leopard background, and often relies on vulgar language, edgy jokes and animation. Such a provocative behavior gained popularity among kids — 70 percent of his viewers are 18 and under, according to glossy magazine Cosmopolitan.

After the launch of +100500, entertainment news site TeleVesti.ru reported, Golopolosov was approached by producer Mikhail Orlov, who helped further develop the project and turn into an Internet channel: Caramba TV. In 2011, +100500 started by the TV channel Peretz.

In 2013, the now self-sufficient company Caramba Media earned 125 million rubles ($2, 075 615) in ad revenues, news site RBC reported. Big names such as Nokia and General Motors figure among their clients.

"I am only bothered if someone on the street recognizes me and asks me to tell a joke," Golopolosov told Cosmopolitan. "In that case, I ask my interlocutor what he does for a living. If he is a mechanic, for example, I ask him to fix my car on the spot."

4. Ekaterina Trofimova

3 207 298 subscribers; 306 607 149 views (TheKateClapp)

Vlogger Ekaterina Trofimova, 22, is better known on the web as Kate Clapp, after her popular YouTube show TheKateClapp. In it, she talks about her student life and shares make-up tips and travel impressions.

A recent video about a trip to the Star Wars Celebration, a festival in the U.S. dedicated to the film series by George Lucas, has already reached more than 2,500,000 views on YouTube. The clip shows Trofimova proclaiming her undying love for Darth Vader, after chasing the "Dark Lord of the Sith" around the festival's hall.

When she is not busy fantasizing about fictional characters, she likes to delve deeper into the ultimate philosophical question: Why do people hate Justin Bieber so much?

5. Sasha Spilberg

2 297 579 subscribers; 302 900 999 views (Sasha Spilberg)

"Hello, I am a video blogger, a gamer and a singer", Sasha Spilberg introduces herself on her Youtube channel.

The girl uploads a new video every Friday, performing R'n'B songs, promoting fashion brands and talking about her travels.

Once she staged a phone conversation with U.S. President Barack Obama, asking him to protect Justin Bieber from haters.

She calls herself a "Twitter victim," hates Mondays and is afraid to be at home alone. Odd and honest enough for people to like her!

6. Sonia Esman

1 311 015 subscribers; 118 934 488 views (Sonia Esman)

"I was born in St. Petersburg and moved to Toronto at the age of 5", Sonia Esman writes in the description to her YouTube channel. "I am a contributor to Conde Nast's Canadian platform Fashionation TV, an international Skype fashion ambassador and a model."

With a supermodel look, a slender figure, blond hair and minimalist make-up, Sonia has a romantic temper. She shares make-up and fashion tips as well as details of her first kiss.

Sometimes we get to see the tougher side of her personality. In one video, for example, she sits with fellow YouTuber Zhelud to discuss the meaning of Russian swearwords.

7. JoRick Revazov

602 250 subscribers; 96 000 059 views (JoRick Revazov)

JoRick Revazov has found his own unique niche vlogging about cars. His series is called "Tuning Time," in which he test drives, tunes and races with cars.

Revazov is interested in luxury as well as economy class vehicles, for example installing brand new gear on old Soviet car Moskvitch.

Sometimes he shows impressive acting skills. In one of the episodes, he pretends to be a Russian mobster before conducting a test run of Russian gangsters' darling Mercedes Benz.

8. Polina Repik

158 216 subscribers; 26 357 832 views (Polina Repik)

Polina Repik is the queen of beauty blogging and offers endless variations of hairstyle, make-up and skin-care tips.

"To be in a good mood, a woman must feel beautiful," Repik says. Her mission? Ever the Mother Theresa, she devotes herself to the honorable cause of helping women improve their looks.

Retro waves or hipster pigtails – they all look easy to make and perfect on her. Her fitness-centric episodes, with instruction on how to get in shape, have also attracted the attention of hundreds of viewers.

Repik, who often talks about her experience being pregnant and giving birth, is at times joined on screen by the other star of the blog: adorable 6-year-old daughter Lera.

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