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The Construction of Authenticity in Short-Form Video Narratives

S. Donovan[1]

[1] Independent Researcher, Canada
Correspondence: S. Donovan, Independent Researcher, Canada.

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Abstract

Short-form videos have become an important form of digital storytelling. Through personal experiences, everyday activities, emotional expression, and informal speech, creators present versions of themselves that appear genuine and relatable. However, authenticity in short-form video narratives is not simply a reflection of reality. It is constructed through narrative choices, visual presentation, editing techniques, and interactions with audiences. Creators may use spontaneous performances and ordinary settings to establish a sense of sincerity, while carefully selecting and organizing content to make their stories more engaging. Audience responses also influence how authenticity is understood and evaluated. This essay examines the construction of authenticity in short-form video narratives, focusing on self-presentation, narrative structure, audiovisual techniques, and audience participation. It argues that authenticity in short-form video storytelling emerges from the relationship between personal expression and media production rather than from the complete absence of performance or editing.

Keywords: authenticity, short-form video, digital storytelling, self-presentation, narrative construction

1. Introduction

Short-form video has become a widely used form of digital communication. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts allow creators to tell stories through brief combinations of images, speech, music, and text. These videos often present personal experiences, daily routines, relationships, work, travel, and individual opinions. Compared with traditional forms of storytelling, short-form videos frequently use informal language, direct camera address, and familiar settings to create a sense of closeness between creators and viewers.

Authenticity plays an important role in this process. Viewers often respond positively to content that appears honest, spontaneous, and connected to everyday life. A creator who describes a personal failure in an ordinary room may appear more relatable than one who presents a highly polished account of the same experience. Similarly, imperfect speech, visible emotional reactions, and unplanned moments can make a narrative seem less distant from the viewer's own experiences.

However, the appearance of authenticity does not necessarily mean that a video presents reality without mediation. Creators decide which experiences to share, which moments to exclude, how to arrange events, and how to present

themselves on camera. Even a video that appears spontaneous may involve repeated recording, selective editing, and deliberate choices about language and presentation. Authenticity is thus connected to the ways in which a story is produced and interpreted.

The construction of authenticity in short-form video narratives deserves attention because it reveals how digital storytelling shapes perceptions of personal identity and everyday experience. Rather than treating authenticity as a fixed quality that a video either possesses or lacks, it is more useful to understand it as an impression developed through narrative and audiovisual choices. This essay examines how creators construct that impression, how short-form narrative conventions support it, and how audiences participate in determining whether a story appears credible and sincere.

2. Authenticity as a Form of Self-Presentation

Authenticity in short-form video narratives is closely related to the way individuals present themselves to others. Goffman's The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959) provides a useful starting point for understanding this process. Goffman explains social interaction through the idea of performance. People adjust their behavior according to the situations in which they appear and the impressions they wish to create. This perspective can also help explain how creators present their identities through online videos.

A creator may describe themselves as an ordinary student, an inexperienced worker, a struggling artist, or someone learning to live independently. These identities are communicated through clothing, speech, facial expressions, surroundings, and the events selected for a video. A creator who records a difficult day at home may emphasize tiredness, mistakes, and small frustrations. Such details can make the person appear approachable because viewers recognize similar experiences in their own lives.

Self-presentation does not necessarily mean that creators are being dishonest. People naturally show different aspects of themselves in different social situations. A person may behave differently at work, with friends, and at home without making any of these identities entirely false. Short-form video follows a similar pattern. Creators cannot present every aspect of their lives within a short recording, so they select details that communicate a particular identity.

The important distinction lies between presenting a personal perspective and creating a misleading impression. A creator who shares a genuine experience but selects the most relevant moments is still telling a personal story. However, a creator who repeatedly presents an unusual event as an ordinary part of life may encourage viewers to form an inaccurate understanding of that person's experiences. Authenticity is therefore connected not only to what appears in a video but also to the relationship between the presented identity and the experience it claims to represent.

Creators also develop recognizable personal styles through repeated storytelling. A person may regularly share humorous accounts of workplace problems, while another may focus on quiet domestic routines or personal reflections. Over time, these repeated choices help viewers understand what kind of person the creator appears to be. Authenticity becomes associated with consistency: the creator's words, behavior, and recurring narrative style seem to support the same identity.

Consistency should not be confused with the complete absence of change. People develop new interests, change their opinions, and experience different stages of life. A convincing personal narrative does not require a creator to maintain an unchanging public identity. It requires the presentation of that identity to remain understandable and credible as circumstances change.

3. Narrative Structure and the Appearance of Authenticity

The construction of authenticity also depends on how personal experiences are organized into stories. Short-form videos provide limited time for introducing characters, explaining situations, and developing events. Creators must decide which details are necessary for viewers to understand an experience and which can be removed without weakening the story. These decisions influence not only the clarity of the narrative but also the way viewers understand the creator's identity and judge the credibility of the experience being presented.

First-person narration is particularly important in this process. When creators use expressions such as "I felt," "I thought," or "I did not know what to do," they place their own experiences at the center of the story. This narrative perspective allows viewers to follow events through the creator's personal understanding rather than

through an external description. Emotional reactions become part of the story, helping audiences understand why a particular event matters to the person telling it. A video about a difficult first day at work, for example, may focus less on the details of the job itself and more on the creator's nervousness, mistakes, and changing expectations. The personal perspective makes the experience easier to understand as an account of lived experience.

However, first-person narration does not automatically guarantee authenticity. Creators may interpret the same event differently at different times, and their accounts are shaped by their current feelings and knowledge. A person who describes an earlier failure may emphasize the lessons learned after the event rather than the uncertainty experienced at the time. The story remains personal, but its meaning has been reorganized through later reflection. This distinction matters because viewers may interpret a confident retrospective account as a complete representation of what happened, even though it reflects only one perspective.

The emotional progression of a story also affects the impression of authenticity. Many short-form personal narratives move from an ordinary situation to a moment of difficulty, followed by reflection or a change in understanding. This structure gives the video a clear direction and helps viewers recognize the significance of the experience. A creator might describe an unsuccessful attempt to learn a new skill, show the frustration caused by repeated mistakes, and end by explaining what they have learned. The sequence creates a connection between the events and the creator's emotional response.

Real experiences do not always follow such a clear pattern. Personal difficulties may continue without producing an immediate lesson, and emotional responses may remain uncertain or contradictory. When creators organize every experience into a story of failure followed by improvement, they may give the impression that personal growth is always direct and predictable. Such narratives can be satisfying, but they may simplify the experience being described. Authentic storytelling can also leave questions unanswered, acknowledge continuing difficulties, or admit that the creator has not yet understood what an event means.

The selection of narrative details is equally significant. Short-form videos often begin with a recognizable situation or a direct statement of a problem. A creator might explain that they failed an important examination, struggled during their first week at work, or felt uncomfortable at a social event. This opening gives viewers an immediate reason to continue watching. The middle of the narrative then develops the experience through selected details, such as a short conversation, a visible reaction, or a moment of uncertainty. The ending may offer a lesson, a new perspective, or an unresolved question.

Narrative gaps emerge when creators leave out information between these moments. Some omissions are necessary because a short video cannot include every event or explanation. Viewers can usually understand a story without knowing every background detail. However, omitted information may also influence how they judge the people involved. If a creator describes an argument but leaves out the events that led to it, viewers may form a strong opinion based on an incomplete account. The story can appear convincing because its selected details fit together, even when important context is missing.

This process shows that authenticity depends partly on the relationship between narrative coherence and contextual accuracy. A coherent story is easy to follow, but coherence alone does not establish that the story is fair or complete. Creators can simplify an experience while preserving its essential meaning. Problems arise when the selection or arrangement of events substantially changes how the audience is likely to interpret what happened. The distinction is particularly important when personal narratives involve other people, sensitive relationships, or disagreements in which different individuals may have different accounts.

The ending of a short-form narrative can further influence the impression of sincerity. A clear conclusion may help viewers understand the creator's perspective, while an unresolved ending may communicate uncertainty more effectively. Neither approach is inherently more authentic. The appropriate choice depends on the experience and the purpose of the story. A creator discussing a completed learning process may reasonably explain what changed, whereas someone describing an ongoing personal problem may be more credible when they acknowledge that the outcome remains uncertain.

Narrative construction, then, does not simply make personal experiences shorter. It determines which parts of those experiences become meaningful to an audience. First-person narration establishes a personal viewpoint, emotional progression gives the story direction, and the selection of details shapes the interpretation of events. These techniques can make personal storytelling engaging and understandable, but they also create opportunities for simplification and distortion. Authenticity is strengthened when the narrative remains faithful to the essential character of the experience, even when its full complexity cannot be included.

4. Visual and Auditory Techniques in Authentic Storytelling

Visual and auditory techniques play an important role in shaping how viewers interpret short-form video narratives. Camera position, framing, lighting, background, editing, music, and speech influence the impression a video creates. These elements do more than make content visually appealing. They establish a relationship between the creator, the narrated experience, and the audience. A personal story may appear intimate, distant, spontaneous, or carefully staged depending on how these elements are combined.

Camera perspective is one of the most direct ways to create a sense of intimacy. When creators record themselves at close range, viewers can observe facial expressions and small changes in emotion. Direct eye contact with the camera may also resemble face-to-face conversation, encouraging viewers to feel that the creator is speaking directly to them. This effect can be particularly strong when a creator discusses an embarrassing experience, a personal disappointment, or a difficult decision. The close-up makes the creator's expression an important part of the narrative, allowing viewers to connect the spoken account with visible emotional cues.

Framing also affects how an experience is understood. A video recorded in a bedroom or kitchen may emphasize privacy and everyday life, while a carefully arranged background may suggest professionalism and control. Handheld footage can create the impression that the camera is following events as they occur. A fixed camera, by contrast, may make a personal account feel more deliberate. These differences influence the atmosphere of the story, but they should not be treated as direct evidence of truthfulness. A handheld recording can be planned, and a carefully framed video can communicate an honest account. The relationship between visual style and authenticity is based on audience interpretation rather than on any single technical feature.

Everyday settings and ordinary objects can also help ground a narrative in recognizable experience. A creator describing the pressure of studying may show an untidy desk, unfinished notes, or a late-night working environment. Someone discussing the challenges of living independently may include grocery shopping, preparing meals, or cleaning a small apartment. Such details provide a visual context for the story and allow viewers to connect general statements with specific situations. The experience appears less abstract because the audience can see elements of the environment in which it takes place.

Nevertheless, everyday details can be selected and arranged to create a particular impression. A messy desk may communicate exhaustion or an intense workload, while a clean and organized workspace may suggest discipline. Neither interpretation necessarily reflects the creator's broader habits. A single visual moment cannot represent an entire lifestyle, even when it feels convincing. Creators may also prepare ordinary settings before recording because they understand how viewers interpret familiar objects and domestic spaces. The appearance of everyday life can therefore be part of a deliberate visual strategy.

The treatment of imperfections provides another way to construct authenticity. Small pauses, unfinished sentences, repeated words, background noise, and visible mistakes may make a video feel less formal. These features suggest that the creator is speaking naturally rather than delivering a fully prepared performance. When a person briefly struggles to explain an emotion or admits that they cannot find the right words, viewers may interpret the moment as a sign of sincerity. Such details can give the impression that the audience is witnessing an experience rather than watching a polished presentation.

However, imperfections are not reliable proof of spontaneity. A creator can choose to retain mistakes in the final edit or deliberately use an informal speaking style. The distinction between

planned and unplanned behavior may be difficult for viewers to recognize. More importantly, the presence of a deliberate presentation does not necessarily make the underlying experience false. Creators can carefully prepare a video while discussing something that genuinely happened to them. The analytical question is how the presentation guides the audience's interpretation, not whether every moment was recorded without preparation.

Editing plays a similarly complex role. Short-form videos often use quick cuts to remove pauses, repeated explanations, and less relevant events. These choices improve the pace of the narrative and allow viewers to understand the main point within a short period. Captions can identify key statements, clarify spoken language, and direct attention toward particular details. Close-up shots may emphasize an emotional reaction, while changes in camera angle can distinguish between different moments in a story.

At the same time, editing determines what the audience is able to see. Removing a pause may make a speaker appear more confident, while placing two statements next to each other may suggest a connection that was less direct in the original conversation. A reaction shot can make a brief expression seem more important than it was in the full event. When relevant context is excluded, the finished video may communicate a different meaning from the original experience. These effects demonstrate that editing is not simply a technical stage of production. It is part of the construction of narrative meaning.

Music and sound further influence emotional interpretation. Soft background music may make a personal reflection seem thoughtful, while dramatic music can turn an ordinary difficulty into a moment of crisis. Silence can also draw attention to hesitation, disappointment, or uncertainty. The same visual scene may produce different responses when paired with different sound choices. Viewers do not interpret images in isolation; they understand them through the combination of speech, sound, timing, and visual presentation.

This emotional guidance can strengthen storytelling, but it may also encourage viewers to adopt an interpretation before they have considered the details of the experience. For example, dramatic music and repeated close-ups may frame a disagreement as a serious personal betrayal, even when the situation is more complicated. A lighthearted soundtrack may make a troubling event appear harmless. Sound does not determine meaning on its own, but it can influence which aspects of a narrative become most noticeable.

Captions and on-screen text also shape the relationship between the story and its audience. A short statement displayed at the beginning of a video may establish how viewers are expected to interpret what follows. Text such as a description of a personal failure or an unexpected discovery can direct attention toward a particular meaning before the story has fully developed. Subtitles can improve accessibility and clarify speech, but highlighted words and short text summaries may also simplify complex experiences into easily recognizable messages.

The interaction of these techniques is more important than any individual element. Direct address may establish intimacy, ordinary settings may suggest familiarity, and informal speech may create an impression of spontaneity. Editing and sound then organize these elements into a coherent emotional experience. When the techniques work together, viewers may perceive the video as a sincere expression of personal experience. Yet the same techniques can also be used to construct a misleading impression.

Authenticity in visual and auditory storytelling should therefore not be measured by the absence of professional production. A carefully edited video can communicate a genuine experience, just as an apparently unedited recording can omit important information. The more relevant consideration is whether the audiovisual presentation supports the meaning of the story or substantially alters the audience's understanding of it. Visual intimacy, ordinary settings, and informal expression can encourage trust, but their persuasive effects should not be confused with independent evidence of truthfulness.

5. Audience Participation and the Recognition of Authenticity

Authenticity is not determined by creators alone. Viewers also play an important role because they interpret personal stories through their own experiences, expectations, and knowledge of online communication. A video may appear sincere to one audience but exaggerated or unconvincing to another. The meaning of authenticity therefore develops through the

interaction between the narrative and its audience. Creators can use particular techniques to encourage trust, but they cannot completely control how viewers understand their stories.

Shared experience is one reason viewers may find a personal story credible. When a creator discusses loneliness, workplace pressure, family relationships, or the difficulty of learning a new skill, viewers can compare the story with their own lives. Familiar details may make the creator's experience feel understandable even when viewers have never met the person. A student describing the pressure of preparing for an examination, for example, may gain the attention of viewers who have experienced similar difficulties. The value of the narrative lies not only in the specific events being described but also in the emotions that viewers recognize in them.

This recognition can create a sense of personal connection. Creators who regularly share their daily routines, personal concerns, and emotional responses may gradually become familiar figures to their audiences. Viewers learn about their habits, opinions, relationships, and recurring experiences through repeated exposure. Over time, this familiarity may encourage viewers to feel that they understand the creator as a person rather than simply as someone producing online content.

The concept of parasocial relationships helps explain this process. Horton and Wohl (1956) introduced the concept to describe a form of relationship in which audiences experience a sense of personal interaction with media figures without having an equivalent reciprocal relationship. In short-form video, direct camera address, informal speech, and frequent personal updates can strengthen this impression. A creator who speaks into the camera about a difficult day may appear to be sharing the experience directly with each viewer, even though the same video is presented to a large audience.

Parasocial relationships do not necessarily indicate that viewers misunderstand the nature of online communication. People can feel connected to public figures while recognizing that they do not know them personally. The important issue is that perceived familiarity can influence how viewers evaluate information. When audiences feel emotionally connected to a creator, they may be more willing to accept personal accounts, identify with the creator's interpretation of events, or trust recommendations. Authenticity can therefore emerge partly from the relationship viewers believe they have with the person telling the story.

Repeated exposure also allows creators to establish recognizable patterns of expression. A creator may regularly discuss work-related frustrations, share experiences of learning new skills, or use humor when describing personal difficulties. These recurring patterns help audiences develop expectations about the creator's identity and storytelling style. When new videos appear consistent with earlier content, viewers may interpret that consistency as evidence of sincerity.

However, consistency is not the same as truthfulness. A creator may maintain a carefully controlled public identity while withholding information that would complicate the audience's understanding. Conversely, a creator who changes their opinions or presents unfamiliar aspects of their life may still be authentic. Personal identities develop over time, and people do not always behave in consistent ways across different situations. Audience judgments can become unreliable when viewers expect creators to remain permanently attached to the identities established in earlier videos.

Comments and other forms of audience participation provide additional opportunities for viewers to evaluate a narrative. A personal video may generate responses from people who share similar experiences, question the creator's interpretation, or provide information that was missing from the original account. These interactions can expand the meaning of the story beyond the creator's initial presentation. Viewers may also compare different interpretations and recognize that a personal experience can be understood in more than one way.

Creator responses can further influence perceptions of authenticity. When viewers ask questions, creators may provide additional context, correct an earlier statement, or acknowledge that they presented an event too simply. Such responses can strengthen credibility because they show a willingness to engage with questions rather than treating the original narrative as beyond criticism. A creator who admits uncertainty may appear more credible than one who insists on having a complete answer to every question.

Audience interaction does not always produce a more accurate understanding. Comments may reinforce a shared interpretation without examining whether the original account contains sufficient information. Viewers who already agree with a creator may defend the narrative, while others may reject it because it conflicts with their own assumptions. In these situations, audience participation can strengthen group identification rather than encourage careful evaluation.

The visibility of comments can also affect how later viewers interpret a video. Supportive responses may create an impression that a story has been widely accepted, while critical comments may encourage suspicion before viewers have assessed the content independently. Popularity and credibility can consequently become confused. A video with many positive responses is not necessarily more truthful than a video that receives little attention, and a widely criticized narrative is not automatically false.

Audience interpretations also differ because viewers bring different cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and expectations to the same content. A creator's informal speech may be interpreted as honest by some viewers but as careless or performative by others. An emotional display may be seen as an understandable reaction by one group and an attempt to attract attention by another. These differences demonstrate that authenticity is not a universal impression produced by a fixed set of visual or verbal signals.

For creators, this means that establishing authenticity involves more than adopting a friendly style or encouraging audience engagement. Their narratives must also remain open to reasonable interpretation and questioning. Providing relevant context, acknowledging the limits of personal knowledge, and responding to legitimate concerns can support a more credible relationship with viewers. Such practices do not guarantee agreement, but they allow audiences to evaluate the story without relying entirely on emotional impressions.

Authenticity is therefore a social judgment shaped by familiarity, shared experience, audience interaction, and expectations of credibility. Short-form video creates opportunities for personal connection, but the sense of closeness it produces should not be confused with complete knowledge of the creator. Audience participation can deepen the meaning of a narrative and expose missing context, yet it can also reinforce assumptions. Understanding authenticity requires attention to both the emotional connection between creators and viewers and the limits of that connection.

6. The Tension Between Authenticity and Commercial Production

Short-form video narratives often exist within environments shaped by competition for attention, personal branding, and commercial interests. Creators may wish to share experiences honestly while also trying to increase their audience, maintain regular engagement, or earn income from their content. These goals do not necessarily conflict, but they can influence which experiences are selected, how stories are presented, and what kinds of identities become visible. Authenticity must therefore be considered in relation to the conditions under which personal narratives are produced and circulated.

Personal storytelling is particularly effective at building a recognizable identity. A creator who regularly discusses everyday difficulties may become known for being honest and relatable. Another may develop an identity around humor, independence, or emotional openness. Once audiences associate a creator with a particular quality, that quality can become part of the creator's public image. Personal experiences then serve two functions: they communicate individual feelings and help maintain a recognizable identity across multiple videos.

This process can encourage creators to repeat successful narrative patterns. If stories about failure generate supportive comments, a creator may produce more videos about personal setbacks. If humorous accounts of daily problems attract attention, similar experiences may become the main focus of future content. Such repetition is not necessarily dishonest. Creators often return to subjects that matter to them or that they believe will be useful to their audiences. However, repeated patterns can gradually influence how experiences are selected and interpreted.

A creator may begin to organize personal experiences around the identity that audiences already recognize. Events that fit the established image may receive more attention, while experiences that do not fit may remain unshared.

Someone known for presenting an independent lifestyle, for example, may hesitate to discuss moments when they depend on others. A creator associated with positive personal growth may find it difficult to share experiences that remain unresolved. In these cases, the pressure to maintain a recognizable identity can narrow the range of stories presented to viewers.

Platform visibility adds another dimension to this process. Short-form video creators publish content in environments where viewers can move quickly between different videos. The opening moments of a narrative must often establish a reason to keep watching. Creators may therefore use direct questions, unexpected statements, emotional scenes, or brief descriptions of personal conflict. These techniques help make a story immediately understandable, but they may also encourage the simplification of complex experiences.

The need to attract attention can affect the relationship between storytelling and authenticity. A difficult personal experience may be presented through its most dramatic moment because that moment communicates the central conflict quickly. A gradual process of learning may be reduced to a visible failure followed by a successful result. Such narratives are easier to recognize and remember, but they may conceal the time, uncertainty, and repeated effort involved in the original experience.

Repeated exposure to familiar narrative patterns can also shape audience expectations. Viewers may become accustomed to stories with clear emotional turning points, strong personal revelations, or satisfying conclusions. Creators may then feel pressure to make ordinary experiences appear more dramatic or meaningful than they initially seemed. The result is not necessarily a false account, but the process of selecting and presenting events becomes increasingly influenced by expectations about what makes a compelling video.

Commercial activity creates further challenges. A creator may incorporate a product into a story about daily life, explain how a service helped solve a problem, or present a sponsored experience in a conversational style. Such content is not automatically inauthentic. A creator may genuinely use a product and sincerely recommend it. The difficulty arises when commercial motives are concealed or when the narrative gives an impression of independent personal judgment that does not reflect the actual relationship.

The personal style of short-form video can make commercial messages particularly persuasive. A conventional advertisement often presents a product through direct promotional language, whereas a personal narrative may introduce it as part of an everyday routine. A creator might describe a morning routine and include a skincare product, or discuss difficulties with time management before introducing a planning application. Because the product appears within a familiar personal context, viewers may interpret the recommendation as an expression of personal experience rather than a commercial message.

This does not mean that personal recommendations should be treated with automatic suspicion. Creators can have genuine preferences and commercial relationships at the same time. The relevant question is whether viewers have enough information to understand the nature of the recommendation. Clear disclosure of sponsorship, an honest account of the creator's experience, and a distinction between personal opinion and broader claims can help preserve credibility.

Commercial pressure may also affect the way vulnerability is presented. Stories about insecurity, exhaustion, personal failure, or emotional difficulty can create strong connections with viewers because they reveal aspects of life that are often absent from polished public images. However, when such stories become part of a recognizable content strategy, vulnerability may also function as a way to attract attention and strengthen personal branding.

The existence of a strategy does not automatically make the emotions being expressed false. A creator may deliberately choose to discuss a difficult experience because they believe it will help others, while also recognizing that the story may attract attention. Personal expression and professional objectives can coexist. Problems arise when emotional disclosure is used to create a misleading impression of intimacy or when important details are altered to make a story more persuasive.

Privacy introduces another important consideration. Authenticity should not be understood as an obligation to reveal every aspect of personal life. Creators may reasonably withhold information about family members,

relationships, health, or other sensitive matters. They may also choose not to share every stage of an experience because they need time to understand it themselves. Selective disclosure is a normal part of communication and does not necessarily undermine sincerity.

The distinction between privacy and misleading presentation is important. A creator who chooses not to discuss the details of a personal relationship is not necessarily misrepresenting that relationship. However, a creator who makes strong claims about another person's behavior while withholding context that would substantially change the interpretation of events may create an unfair impression. The ethical question is not whether all information has been disclosed, but whether the information presented is likely to mislead the audience about matters central to the story.

These issues suggest that authenticity should be understood as a relationship between personal experience, public presentation, and the expectations created by the narrative. Creators do not need to abandon editing, personal branding, or commercial activity to produce authentic content. They do, however, need to consider how these practices affect the meaning viewers are likely to take from their stories.

A more credible approach to short-form storytelling allows personal expression and deliberate production to coexist without treating them as identical to truth. Creators can use engaging openings, concise narratives, and recognizable styles while preserving relevant context and communicating commercial relationships clearly. They can maintain privacy without presenting selected information in ways that substantially distort an experience. Such practices support a more responsible form of authenticity, one that recognizes the constructed nature of digital storytelling without dismissing the possibility of sincere communication.

The tension between authenticity and commercial production is therefore not a simple conflict between genuine expression and artificial performance. It concerns the conditions under which personal experiences become public narratives and the ways those narratives are shaped by visibility, audience expectations, and economic interests. Recognizing these conditions allows authenticity to be examined more carefully, as both a communicative achievement and a perception that can be influenced by the structure of digital media.

7. Conclusion

The construction of authenticity in short-form video narratives involves more than the presentation of personal experiences. It emerges through the interaction of self-presentation, narrative structure, audiovisual techniques, audience interpretation, and the conditions under which content is produced and circulated. Creators select particular experiences, organize events into understandable stories, and use visual and auditory elements to communicate emotions. These choices influence how viewers perceive the creator's identity and decide whether a narrative appears sincere and credible.

Narrative structure is important because it determines which details become central to an experience and how viewers understand the relationship between events. First-person narration and emotional expression can create a sense of personal involvement, while selective editing makes stories easier to follow. However, a coherent narrative does not necessarily provide a complete or accurate account. The omission of relevant context may change the meaning of an event, even when the story appears convincing. Authenticity therefore depends partly on whether the narrative preserves the essential meaning of the experience it presents.

Visual and auditory techniques further shape this process. Direct camera address, familiar settings, informal speech, and everyday details can make a video feel intimate and spontaneous. Editing, captions, and music help communicate emotional meaning, but they can also guide viewers toward particular interpretations. These techniques should not be treated as evidence of truthfulness in themselves. A carefully produced video can communicate a genuine experience, just as an apparently spontaneous recording can create a misleading impression.

Audience participation adds another dimension to the construction of authenticity. Shared experiences and repeated exposure may encourage viewers to develop a sense of familiarity with creators, while comments and direct responses provide opportunities to confirm or question personal narratives. Nevertheless, emotional connection and audience approval do not establish that a story is accurate. Viewers may accept a narrative because it reflects their own experiences or expectations, even when important information remains

unavailable.

The relationship between authenticity and commercial production also requires careful consideration. Platform visibility, personal branding, and sponsorships can influence the stories creators choose to share and the ways they present themselves. These influences do not automatically make personal expression insincere. The more important issue is whether creators communicate their experiences and commercial relationships in ways that allow viewers to understand the nature of the content. Authenticity also does not require complete disclosure of private life. Creators can maintain personal boundaries while presenting their experiences responsibly.

Authenticity in short-form video narratives is best understood as a constructed but meaningful relationship between personal experience, media presentation, and audience judgment. It cannot be determined by informal appearance, emotional expression, or popularity alone. A more credible form of storytelling emerges when creators use narrative and audiovisual techniques without substantially distorting the experiences they describe. Understanding this process provides a useful basis for examining how digital media shapes perceptions of identity, sincerity, and trust in everyday communication..

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