AI-Generated Content on YouTube: 2025, Current (Early 2026), and Projections

Quantifying the exact percentage of AI-generated content on YouTube is challenging because the platform doesn't publicly release comprehensive data, and "AI-generated" can range from fully synthetic videos (often called "AI slop" — low-quality, mass-produced content for views) to human content enhanced by AI tools (e.g., thumbnails, editing, or dubbing). Most available figures focus on low-quality fully AI-generated content, particularly in Shorts and recommendations, based on third-party studies from late 2025.

Another category is **Brainrot**, videos that use some form of clickbait with their AI Slop. **AI-assisted videos** are generally trustworthy since they use AI only for editing and formatting, as I'm doing here.

In 2025 (and Late 2025 Data)

The most detailed study comes from video-editing company Kapwing (November/December 2025 data), which analyzed global trending channels and new-user experiences:

For new YouTube accounts (simulating fresh users), 21% of the first 500 recommended Shorts were fully AI-generated ("AI slop"), and 33% were "Brainrot" (a broader category of low-quality content that includes AI slop).

This means that over 20% of the content the algorithm pushed to new users was low-quality AI-generated material.

Among the top 100 trending channels in every country (15,000+ channels surveyed), hundreds were exclusively AI slop, with 278 purely AI channels identified globally. These amassed 63+ billion views, 221 million subscribers, and an estimated $117 millionin annual ad revenue. In other words, AI Slop pays

Earlier in 2025 (August), nearly 10% of YouTube's fastest-growing channels were **exclusively** AI slop.

One outlier estimate from a Medium article (written in early 2026, reflecting late 2025) claimed AI-generated content comprised 2-3% of daily uploads overall, but this seems to refer to total platform volume (not recommendations or views) and contradicts the heavier presence in algorithmic feeds.

Many creators (over 80% in some surveys) used AI tools in workflows, but this is ***assistive*** (not fully ***generated*** content).

Overall, in 2025, fully AI-generated low-quality content accounted for a small fraction of total uploads/volume (likely under 5%), but was disproportionately prominent in recommendations (especially Shorts for new users, at ~21%) and fast-growing channels due to algorithmic promotion and low production costs.

Currently (Early 2026, as of February)

No major new studies have emerged since the late-2025 Kapwing report, so the situation appears similar: 20-21% of recommended content (especially Shorts for new or unpersonalized feeds) is low-quality AI slop.

YouTube's algorithm continues to push this content heavily to new users, but established users may see less depending on their history.

Over one million channels use **YouTube's official AI creation tools** daily (as of December 2025), indicating widespread assistive AI use, but fully synthetic content remains dominated by unauthorized "slop" farms.

Platform-wide, the volume of fully AI-generated content is still estimated to be low (a few percent of total videos). Still, its visibility in feeds and views is much higher.

Projections for the Future (2026 and Beyond)

YouTube CEO Neal Mohan stated in January 2026 that reducing "AI slop" and improving the detection of low-quality AI content are top priorities for 2026, including better use of AI for moderation and the potential demonetization of mass-produced slop.

YouTube Has a Policy

Policies already require disclosure for realistic AI-altered content, with stricter enforcement on inauthentic uploads (e.g., no monetization for fully AI-generated videos lacking human input since mid-2025).

If crackdowns succeed, ***the percentage of visible/promoted AI slop could decrease*** significantly in 2026–2027, pushing it back to niche or labeled content.

However, without strong enforcement, it could grow further — some anecdotal predictions (e.g., from creators or older Google employee comments) speculate 50–90% in the long term, but these are unsubstantiated hype.

Assistive AI (tools for ideas, editing, etc.) will likely become near-universal (>90% of creators), but fully generated low-quality slop is expected to decline as a share of recommended views due to platform interventions and user backlash favoring authentic content.

In summary, as of early 2026, AI slop isn't the majority of YouTube's vast library, but it punches above its weight in what the algorithm shows new users (~21% in Shorts feeds, per the latest data). YouTube is actively fighting it, so expect a decline in its prominence moving forward, while human-AI hybrid creation becomes the norm.

