

COMMONS ECONOMY ROADMAP

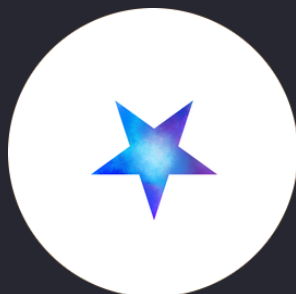


Featured Project Card IT1

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NEBULA TV



1. General Info

Nebula, launched in 2019 by an initial group of relevant youtubers willing to gain some **autonomy from Youtube**, is a paid video streaming platform. With over 150 creators totalling 120 million collective YouTube subscribers, and over 300.000 paid subscribers to the service, Nebula has emerged as the **biggest video platform for independent creators in the world**.

It has a semi-cooperative structure, with governance and revenues shared by the creators on one side and the company Standard managing the streaming platform itself and business relationships of creators on the other. **The service runs on its own infrastructure**, with a big team of engineers constantly upgrading it, and it's available on the major operating systems.

1.1 Links and Basics

The following table contains the most important links and contacts for the examined project.

Website	nebula.tv
Socials	Twitter
Contact	help@nebula.tv



1.2 CER Internal Info

The following explains the internal tags in the Commons Economy Roadmap and then shows which of them apply to the card's featured project.

- **Function:** the function of the project is its main activity's focus.
(In some cases it has been difficult to fit projects into one category, consider this framing as a simplification for good)
 - **InfoTech Infrastructure:** the main focus of the project is providing information technology. Software and hardware for communication and coordination, as well as applications and protocols in the technological background of organizations are examples of this.
 - **Economic Infrastructure:** the main focus of the project is enabling and/or mediating economic activity. Cryptocurrencies, payment tools, marketplaces and production protocols belong to this category.
 - **Social Infrastructure:** the main focus of the project is being the community for a specific theme or need. These entities usually are thematic networks and/or distributed communities related to a particular context.
 - **Expertise & Know-how:** the main focus of the project is providing expert knowledge. These organizations do consulting and/or research related to the infrastructure projects and usually consist of small groups of highly qualified individuals
- **Tags:** this property simply contains an informal and non-exhaustive list of tags useful to classify the projects based on their activities and expertise.

FUNCTION	Economic, Infotech Infrastructure
TAGS	Web3, Service Platform

2. Economic Factors

In this section we analyze the project's financial and economic foundations, based on information publicly available or given to us by the projects themselves, including third parties' analysis.



Nebula is a **streaming service that features original content created by independent educators** and content creators, focusing on informative videos. It represents a **collaborative effort** among creators to build a space that supports both educational and entertaining content, emphasizing quality and creator control.

The economic foundation of Nebula is built on a **subscription model**, where viewers pay a **monthly fee** to access the platform's content, providing a direct, ad-free revenue stream to the creators. This in turn grants them independence from Google's ads and monetization system, while also lowering reliance on private subscription platforms such as Patreon.

2.1 Economic Impact

This is a short overview of the quantifiable economic impact the project has generated so far.

Consulting their [2023 Year-End Review](#) shows Nebula has an increasing subscriber base, growing larger and larger each year. More subscribers led to more profits, and the subscribers also have comparably stuck around for longer.

Nebula has only recently switched its aim to increase its in-house subscriber base (it was frequently subscribed to through a deal with CuriosityStream), as those are both more loyal customers and worth more overall to them.

You can read the reasoning and more data in the Review itself, but the impact and interest in the platform seems to certainly be there, with even less-than-convenient deals like Lifetime Memberships actually being well liked by the supporters.

2.2 Revenue Streams

These are the main avenues the project has to sustain itself.

Nebula sustains itself through a **subscription model**, as mentioned. Subscriptions offer monthly, annual and lifetime plans, and reading [their review](#) gives more insight on the reasoning for them, which are deemed more valuable and which support the platform more.

Nebula has also historically partnered with CuriosityStream to promote its own platform, but as of writing this card the bundle is no longer present, reflecting Nebula's decision to grow its own subscriber base.

As indicated in their video "[How Nebula Works](#)" (we highly suggest giving it a watch to get a deep dive on the functioning of streaming platforms in general!) we also know Nebula is not interested in seeking funding from venture capital firms, hoping to build stable revenues and relationships with loyal customers



rather than having higher liquidity at their disposal, and seeking to mostly please shareholders for more.

2.3 Structural Competitors

These are the main competitors to the project's activity, whether within the Commons space, or without, among more traditional companies.

Differently from many other projects featured on CER, Nebula was born in direct competition with other streaming companies, and YouTube mainly, to counter its mistreatment of high quality content in favor of higher quantity abusing its obscure algorithms.

Nebula is a “prestige” platform, not accepting submissions from anyone but relying on recommendations from current contributors to engage and support new creators. In their [FAQ section](#), they write they aren't a direct competitor to YouTube simply because they are not aiming for an open platform as an end goal, to maintain their high quality standards.

3. Commons Orientation

In this section we examine the project's closeness to those that we consider the fundamental values of the Commons space.

3.1 Ownership, Governance and Funding

What's the configuration of the ownership and governance structures of the project, especially in relation to the main sources of funding received to date?

Nebula promotes itself as a creator-owned streaming platform, with the aim of assisting its community of creators through funding to challenge dependence on traditional platforms like YouTube. Half of the revenues from subscriptions [go to creators, based on watch time](#).

It has a peculiar organizational and governance structure (in constant evolution) where creators have a strong formal power; Nebula received some investments and now the company is worth 150 millions dollars, but they are **firmly intentioned not to accept deals with Venture Capitalists**. You can get to know more about these and other elements of the project evolution in this video by the founders themselves : [How We Built a \\$150 Million Streaming Platform with \\$100,000](#).



3.2 Workforce, Leadership and Inclusion

How does the project ensure diversity and inclusion across various dimensions such as background, ethnicity, and gender, both in the general workforce and in leadership roles?

The current composition of Nebula's team is not publicly available, but given the diversity of its creators and founders, we can assume inclusion and ethical workforce practices are appreciated by the management team, as it also seems apparent in their [jobs page](#).

3.3 Decentralization and Distributedness

To what extent is the organization or system decentralized or distributed, and how does this approach fit with the specific needs and context in which it operates?

Nebula isn't decentralized or distributed, as can be seen in their "[How Nebula Works](#)", creating a streaming platform is already a technical challenge when decisions and content are centrally controlled.

What Nebula does for decentralization though is take away view-time from mainstream platforms such as YouTube, and although indirectly, favoring a digital market less reliant on tech giants.

3.4 Nontraditional Economics

How extensively does the project implement and test economic models based on non-monetary transactions like mutual credit, barter systems, or resource-sharing networks (CoFi)? How does it operate differently from traditional corporations or non profits?

Nebula doesn't include nontraditional economic practices such as CoFi, or alternative and community currencies.

The subscription model is quite innovative though, mainly thanks to their offer of a lifetime subscription: while it may not be the most convenient, it gives fans of the platform a chance to support its capital in a way that isn't tied to external investors interested in steering the company itself away from its mission.

3.5 Socio-Political Impact and Challenge to the Status Quo

What impact does the project have on existing socio-economic structures, and in what ways does it challenge or seek to alter the current political and economic paradigms?

There are many ways in which Nebula challenges the status quo of the digital streaming market:



- Nebula offers a **creator-centric model**: Nebula offers a space where creators can experiment with content without trying to optimize for views and trying to garner the attention of an obscure algorithm. Nebula also offers **direct support to creators**, by sharing with them 50% of the subscription revenues based on watch time.
- Nebula offers a **subscription, ad-free model**: instead of relying on constant ads, viewers get to enjoy the content they're interested in without interruptions and without needing to rely on ad blockers.
- Nebula offers **its own original content**.
- Nebula offers a **community approach** to a usually very competitive market: being founded and led by a community of creators, it emphasizes the importance of sharing tips, techniques, resources, and cross-promotion.

4. Robustness and Viability

In this section we examine the project's sustainability in the long term, and the viability of its objectives in light of its current and past activities.

4.1 Sustainability of Business Model/Tokenomics

How stable and sustainable is the business model and tokenomics (if applicable) especially in the long term?

The number of Nebula's subscribers has only been increasing, with an incredibly **high retention rate** (second only to Netflix, according to them), it seems fair to say the platform is only going to keep growing, especially considering it appears to be already profitable after a relatively short time online.

4.2 Resilience and Track Record

What has been the project's historical resilience against economic fluctuations, market changes, and other challenges?

Nebula is a **fairly new platform**, so actual resilience is to be seen, but they already moved away from a subscription bundle with CuriosityStream while safely landing on their feet, with direct **subscriber count still on the rise** and with optional lifetime subscriptions which offer a good amount of liquidity for them to develop and grow without depending on venture capital.



4.3 Engagement with Community and Stakeholders

How deeply and effectively does the project engage with its community and stakeholders, and how does it build strong, collaborative relationships?

Nebula places a **strong emphasis on community engagement**, both among its creators and with its audience. This focus is pivotal to its model and success, setting it apart in the streaming content industry.

Creators often work together in shared projects, original content and cross-promotion. Nebula also offers unique content to subscribers they can't find on other platforms the creators themselves might use (it is common to see the main videos both on Nebula and YouTube for example, but on the former without unnecessary ad breaks or self-censorship to avoid demonetization by the latter's automatic system).

4.4 Effectiveness of Organizational Processes

What's the efficiency, effectiveness, and adaptability of the project's organizational processes?

LACKING INFO - We asked the team to tell us more about this! Do you know yourself and wanna contribute your knowledge? You are welcome to do it, **find our contacts [here!](#)**



5. CER Considerations

In this section we explain why the project is featured on CER, give a few highlights about it and consider possible connections with other Commons projects.

5.1 Why is Nebula on CER?

Nebula is on CER as it's the first successful attempt — after over a decade of failures — at creating a **popular streaming platform outside of Big Tech control**, and this is remarkable in itself.

On top of this, it's **cooperatively owned by its workers** with an interesting structure and didn't receive any Venture Capital investments to fund its operation, nor it intends to do so, and achieved economic sustainability already. The vast majority of the creators on the platform is **progressive** or left leaning, and as such they constitute a strong voice for the Commons by generating high quality and engaging videos spanning a broad range of topics and formats, from education to entertainment, influencing the minds and hearts of millions worldwide.

5.2 Notes and Highlights

- **Creator-Centric Content:** Nebula stands out for its strong focus on independent creators, offering a diverse range of high-quality, original, and often educational content that's not driven by ad revenue, allowing for greater creative freedom and innovation.
- **Subscription-Based & Ad-Free Experience:** The platform operates on a subscription model, providing an ad-free viewing experience. This approach directly supports the creators and ensures a seamless content consumption experience for subscribers.
- **Collaborative Community:** Nebula fosters a unique collaborative environment among its creators, encouraging cross-promotion, joint projects, and community engagement, which enhances the platform's content variety and enriches the viewer experience.

5.3 Commons Interactions

There have been no interactions so far between Nebula and the other CER projects. We expect that as these projects grows, Nebula and its creators can be amplifiers of their work, and vice versa. For example, there are some videos about Fairphone [on the platform](#).

Also, as Nebula infrastructure evolves, it could benefit from technological or



economic protocols developed by CER projects for what regards crypto payments or its internal economic optimization and democratization.

5.4 Room for Improvement

Among the many challenges Nebula is going to face to keep up in the harsh video streaming market, we hope that the project will progressively get decentralized in terms of its technical infrastructure and even more democratic for what regards its governance, continuing on the path of being the best home possible for the progressive creators of the world.

5.5 How can I get involved?

If you are interested in their operations, you can simply join their various communities such as [their reddit](#) to keep updated on the latest news, or you can take [one of the classes](#) they offer.



Credits

About CER

The **Commons Economy** Roadmap is a research and promotion project, you can read more about it [here](#).

