

Consumers often generate content about unfolding experiences (e.g., by texting, writing notes). In doing so, they create temporal cues that divide up the time period. Although prior work finds that temporal cues can elongate retrospective judgments, the authors propose that generating content within an experience can make time feel as though it is “flying,” shortening experienced duration. Eight studies demonstrate that generating content leads consumers to feel as though time was passing more quickly due to increased immersion in the experience, which ultimately increases enjoyment. Supporting the proposed immersion framework, these positive effects are greatest when the content is self-generated (vs. created by someone else) and relevant (vs. irrelevant) to the ongoing experience. Demonstrating the perceptual nature of this mechanism, the effect is not moderated by cognitive load, but is diminished when immersion into the experience is inhibited. Finally, a field study conducted during the Super Bowl halftime show replicates the positive effects of generating content in a real-life experience. The findings provide implications for marketers and consumers to improve experiences by leveraging content creation.