

19.4: Video production step-by-step

Creating video content for the web can be easy and cost effective but it will always involve a lot of research, thought, and planning before you even get started with filming. Consider the following process:

Identifying your audience

As always, you first need to identify the audience for whom you are creating this video content. What are their wants and needs? What video content are they already consuming? Where are they consuming it? How can you engage their attention, provide something valuable that fits the platform, and promote your brand at the same time? Some solid market research will reveal the answers to these questions.

Planning and concept

Now you need to come up with the core concept for the video, which will be dictated by what will resonate with your target audience. Will it be a once-off clip or part of an ongoing series? What marketing message do you hope to convey? Decide on the best style and tone in which to convey this. What kind of story do you want to tell? Remember, storytelling is central to a good video, whether it covers B2B or B2C content.

Once you have decided these aspects, it's time to start planning your actual video shoot. You will need to write a script, or at least prepare a breakdown of what the video should include, and schedule the shoot, consider the venue, crew required, actors, and any other props or elements you will need. How long this takes will depend on the complexity of the video you're planning and your budget.

Producing the video

Note

For some helpful pointers and advice on producing your video, take a look at the Vimeo School: vimeo.com/videoschool

Now it's time to get filming! Once you have all the footage and audio, edit it together, add any special effects and other elements, and save it as the final video.

Choosing and uploading to platform

Once you have the video, you need to decide where it will be uploaded to. There are two options for making your video content available online. These are not mutually exclusive and there are techniques for both to ensure the best distribution and search coverage for your video. For example, you could be embedding videos posted elsewhere on your site or on social media, which is where a massive amount of video is being consumed.

Online video can be hosted on your own site, or it can be posted to one or many video distribution channels. If you post your video somewhere such as YouTube or Vimeo, it is then easy to embed it into your website as well.

The main advantage of posting a video to a third-party site is the opportunity to quickly exploit an already existing audience. These websites also usually have a built-in social and viral media aspect to their user experience. Video-sharing sites tend to have simplified algorithms which are easier to take advantage of, leading to more rapid universal search exposure.

Many third-party video hosting options exist. Short-form videos like Vine, Instagram, and Snapchat have emerged to challenge existing heavyweights like YouTube (www.youtube.com) and, increasingly, Facebook. It is difficult to know whether Facebook or YouTube receives more daily views because on YouTube, a view is longer than 30 seconds, while on Facebook a view is counted after three seconds. However, Facebook claims that users watch around 100 million hours of video every day, compared to YouTube's claims of around 300 million hours a day (arguably up to 500 million by November 2016) (Moz, 2016).

Evan James from Socialbakers suggests that the key to deciding where to distribute your content is "[t]o understand what content works on which platform – how it works – and to build your strategy around using each network to its fullest potential" (HubSpot, 2015). In other words, rather than placing your videos on the platform with the most views, you need to find out where your audience is consuming video, whichever platform that may be, make videos for those specific platforms, and post them appropriately.

Many channels allow you to add a logo, branded elements, a brand description and links to your other web properties. This means you can customise the page as you see fit. Channels also have a range of analytical features for measuring video engagement, and as an added bonus, they work well on mobile devices, too. Using YouTube can help you gain many benefits in ranking well on the world's most popular search engine, Google.



Figure 19.4.1: The HBO channel on YouTube showing strong branding *Adapted From Screenshot, HBO, YouTube, 2017*

Other good options for video hosting include:

- Vimeo (www.vimeo.com)
- Metacafe (www.metacafe.com)
- Dailymotion (www.dailymotion.com).

If your video is hosted on your own website, the obvious advantage is that you have control over the whole website and environment in which it is hosted, from the look and feel to on-page text, metadata and user experience. When it comes to advertising and related content, you control both, and you decide how to monetise it. Traffic and links go directly to your website, and can therefore be integral to a longer-term search strategy. However, consider embedding your videos from your account on your chosen video-sharing site. Not only does this allow you to crosspollinate content, but you will also gain more views via more points of entry.

Note

YouTube Analytics lets you see where users are viewing your videos. This can give you insight into your most effective videosharing channels.

Optimising

At this point, you need to optimise your video for easy discovery on the web. Most searching on the web is keyword based. Users type keywords relevant to their query into a search box, and the results of the search should list content that matches the keywords. Whether you are using a search box on a website, on YouTube, or Google, this outlines the very basic way in which we expect the search function to work.

The search engine tries to match your keywords to the content it has indexed, and is also trying to determine how to rank the results so that you get the most relevant content at the top of your search results page.

This is all covered in detail in the [Search engine optimisation \(SEO\)](#) chapter. Optimising video for search involves understanding the basics of SEO, as well as the particular challenges and tactics of optimising video content.

Search engines rely on being able to use text in the content to determine what it is about, and other indicators to determine how relevant that content is. When it comes to web pages, search engines can 'read' the text on the page to determine what the page is about, and can measure the links coming in to determine how relevant the page is. When it comes to video, the search engine cannot 'watch' or 'read' the video in the same way that a human can; although there are technological solutions that are starting to make this possible. Instead, it must rely on other text on the page, as well as the metadata added, to determine what the video is about. The search engine also needs to look for ways to measure relevance.

Marketers and website owners now need to optimise all their various forms of content, be their text pages, images or videos, in order to achieve better rankings. Video search engine optimisation (VSEO) involves the use of basic SEO foundations and additional creative optimisation methods to ensure that online video content appears higher up on the SERPs.

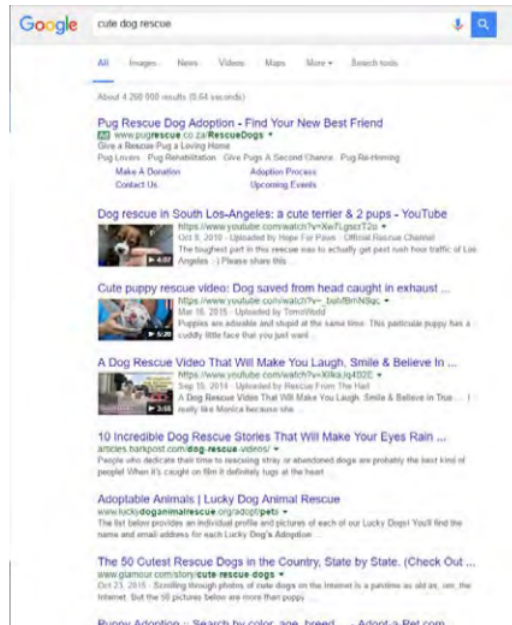


Figure 19.4.2: A search result for the words “cute dog rescue” brings up videos as well as ads, articles and org sites *Adapted From Screenshot, Google, 2017*

Optimising video for video-sharing sites such as YouTube means that you will appear not only in search results on the video-sharing site, but also on SERPs such as Google. While each video-sharing site will use its own algorithm, the guidelines below can be considered best practice across most of the video-sharing sites.

1. Video title is very important.

Video title is one of the first things a user sees when clicking through to a video, and is used first and foremost by the video search engines to determine the relevance of your video to the search query. Your most important keywords should appear in the first three words of the title. Longer, descriptive titles are better than short, concise and obscure ones.



Figure 19.4.3: Video title on Vimeo *Adapted From Screenshot, Vimeo, 2017*

2. Use informative, long descriptions.

Note

If you are creating a video series, use a standard naming structure for the title to make all videos easier to find.

Descriptions will contain key terms that search engines should be looking for to determine what the video is about. Use your most important keywords here! You can include as much information as possible, but put the most important information in the first 25 characters. You can include a link in your description, enabling you to direct users to other content that you have.



Figure 19.4.4: Video description on YouTube *Adapted From Screenshot, YouTube, 2017*

3. Use the tags to input several keywords.

Put your most important keywords first. You can also capitalise on popular search terms and piggyback on popular or topical phrases. The video hosting site will use your tags to help categorise your video. YouTube has also introduced hashtags to make searching easier; some other platforms already use these. Ensure that tags and hashtags are relevant to your video and utilise terms from the same category.

YouTube Suggest and Google Suggest are useful tools for generating ideas. You can view the tags other users use on YouTube to get some ideas by choosing 'view page source' from your browser's menu and doing a search for 'keywords'.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="Movies, film, foreign languages,
```

Figure 19.4.5: Video tags in HTML source code *Adapted From Screenshot, YouTube, 2017*

4. Encourage comments, subscriptions, ratings, embedding and sharing.

Get users to engage with your video in any way you can, and don't forget to respond to relevant comments. It's critical that your budding community feels that they matter and that you are taking them seriously. This is a key point to remember if you want to create a thriving community. Engagement is a massive factor in search engine rankings, so it is very important to focus on content; strong optimisation is no substitute for weak content.

To incite discussion, consider posting a comment as soon as you have uploaded a video, or adding a video card to encourage feedback. Pose a provocative question to spark discussion and lead the conversation. The absolute key to success in the social media space is engagement.

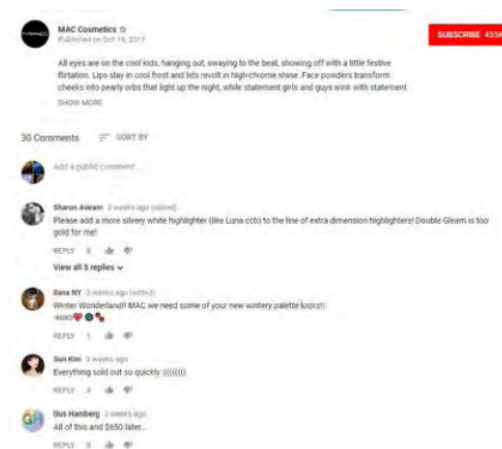


Figure 19.4.6: YouTube comments showing engagement with the brand *Adapted From Screenshot, YouTube, 2017*

5. Optimise the thumbnail



Figure 19.4.7: Three thumbnail choices for YouTube videos – note the clear branding and/ or use of people to draw attention *Adapted From Screenshot, YouTube, 2017*

Consider adding an enticing thumbnail frame. YouTube allows you to choose any moment in the video to be the thumbnail, and many other video platforms also give you this opportunity. Simply optimising the thumbnail image can encourage increased clickthroughs and views, which helps to increase search visibility.

6. Use video cards and end screens

Use video cards to link to and from other video properties. Cards allow you to add text boxes with clickable URLs which are crawled by the search engine spiders as well, at points of your choosing in your video. Cards in already popular and current videos can be used to drive traffic to new videos, although it should be standard practice to include them in a video as soon as it has been uploaded. It's also a great way to encourage viewers to subscribe to your YouTube channel.

The nature of YouTube is such that the number of views for pages on which videos are watched is always higher than channel views. However, if a paid search campaign is being run, the option to play clicked videos on the channel page exists. This is

optimal as it could boost interactions with the branded channel header image, increase engagement with the playlist, and raise the channel view stats.

A great way to use end screens is to link to some of your other videos at the end. This works similarly to ‘articles you may like’ at the end of a blog post. You can also use video cards to do this during the video.

7. Upload videos regularly

Upload videos regularly to ensure continuous channel activity and topical interest. Consider the nature of the brand and what you are trying to communicate to your viewers; you must decide how often videos are uploaded. But remember, the more videos you upload, the higher your channel will rank as a result of Google picking up on your fresh content. Think of it like a TV schedule. let users know when your ‘show’ is on so they know when to come back.

It also helps to delete videos that are not successful. The amount of content you upload is also dependent on the service or product your brand offers, and your video budget. It’s a careful balance of not overloading your channel with useless media and keeping content fresh and engaging.

Promoting

We’ve covered promoting your video in detail in the next section. There are three ways you can promote your video using owned, earned and paid media channels.

Engaging the community

As we mentioned earlier, it’s essential that you engage with your community to keep them coming back for more. Respond in a timely manner to any comments or questions, and take feedback on your content into account when planning new videos. The audience won’t stay hooked for long, after all, there are millions of new videos being added every day, so ensure that you engage with them to create a sense of community, the ability to relate to them, and genuine interest.

Reporting

As with all digital marketing tactics, in video marketing it’s essential to track and analyse data about your activities, and then to optimise your strategy accordingly. When creating video content, use the various measurement options available to determine what you can do better going forward.

YouTube Analytics is a free tool that enables anyone with a YouTube account to view detailed statistics about the videos they upload to the site. You can see how often videos are viewed in different geographic regions, as well as how popular they are relative to all videos in that market over a given period of time.



Figure 19.4.8: YouTube Analytics Adapted Form Crunch Data, 2017

You can also delve deeper into the lifecycle of videos, such as how long it takes for a video to become popular, and what happens to video views as popularity peaks. YouTube even breaks down the specific second when users stop watching the video.

Using these metrics, you can increase your videos’ view counts and improve popularity on the site. For example, you might learn that your videos are most popular on Wednesdays, that they have a huge following in Spain, or that new videos that play off previous content become more popular more quickly. If you see users dropping off halfway into the video, add a video card to mix things up. There are many creative ways to approach this.

With this information, you can concentrate on posting compelling, fresh content that appeals to selected target audiences, and post these videos on days when you know these viewers are on the site. You could even go a step further and customise the video,

dubbing it in Spanish, closed captions also support SEO efforts. The range of possibilities to customise, and optimise your content is limited only by the brand's level of willingness.

Furthermore, you can access a breakdown of how viewers discovered a specific video, which can then be used to optimise the keywords, tags and descriptions of videos.

Facebook Analytics also gives you some information about your video's performance, though it tends to be less detailed.

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