



# **The Playbook for Media Companies**

[ September 2011 ]

# The Playbook for Media Companies

## Overview

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# Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the YouTube Playbook for Media Companies! We're excited to provide our partners with a new resource that compiles important tips, best practices, and strategies that will help build audience on YouTube. We hope you find the information helpful to your creative, management, and publishing process and that we can help you take your channel to the next level. First, we want to address some questions you may have about what kind of information is presented in The Playbook for Media Companies and how you should use this resource as a new tool to achieve your creative goals.

## ***There Are No Rules To Achieving Viewership on YouTube***

The Playbook for Media Companies is not a collection of rules or guaranteed 'tricks' to get more views. Instead, it presents best practices, optimization tips, and suggested strategies for building audience and engagement on YouTube. We've tried to frame our suggestions and tips to encourage partners to innovate and develop their own approach.

## ***Resources Are Limited, Creativity Is Not***

We understand that not every strategy or optimization will apply to every partner on YouTube. We also understand that some optimizations are either difficult or impossible given resource and business constraints. Partners will apply each bit of information in the Playbook differently to their myriad of channels – understanding how to creatively use resources to optimize your content will determine your success on YouTube.

The Playbook for Media Companies should be used as a strategic guide for how to maximize your presence on YouTube, identify areas in which you can make optimizations, and prioritize those optimizations based on your available time and resources. We hope that the Playbook inspires you to be creative without acting as a substitute for your creativity.

## ***There's Always More To Know***

YouTube learns a lot from its partners and we're constantly finding new tips and trends to share back with you. As the platform evolves and as new features are released, there will be updates to the Playbook for Media Companies with new strategies, tips and optimizations for you to try. Check back with us often to get these updates so you can continue to learn how to build audience and utilize new features to reach more people in meaningful ways.

The most important part of what you do on YouTube – the greatest optimization – is to make something great, and to love what you're making.

**Enjoy!**

# Playbook Structure

The Playbook for Media Companies is structured into three sections: Programming & Producing, Publishing & Optimization, Community & Social Media. Each section presents several optimizations or strategies for building audience or engagement on YouTube. These 'best practices' are each explained in stages to help you understand each point and guide you through taking action. Varying advice is given for each strategy to address resource limitations and business priorities.

## Overview Page

- Includes:
  - What: Brief description.
  - Why: Reasoning or context.
  - Who: What content or categories tip is meant for.
  - How: Short explanation of how to implement.
  - A Visual Key Guide (explained on *Icons and Key Definitions* slide)



## Details

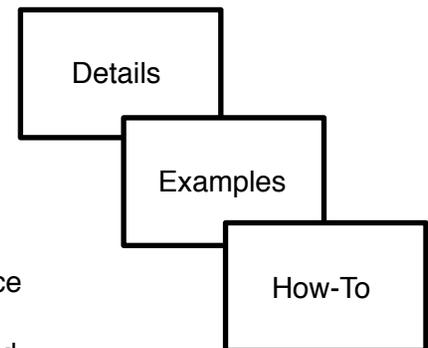
- Provides context and further detail on why the best practice is important or how to implement.

## Example or Method

- Presents examples and/or different methods or variations.

## How-To Steps (and Tracking Tip)

- Once you understand the strategy or optimization, you're ready to take action. This page outlines basic steps to get you going.
- Steps are broken out by impact on viewership and the level of resourced needed for each step
- Alternative steps will be provided in instances were recommended strategies are either too resource intensive or impossible to implement
- The how-to page also contains a 'tracking tip' which will provide information on how to measure and track changes to your channel's performance and the metrics that may be affected.



# Icons and Key Definitions

Indicates which examples are best-practices for repurposed content or new content

Repurposed

New



Progress bar appears at the top of the page showing the progress through each best practice explanation.

## Time Cost



Minimal



Moderate



Medium

+



Major

24

## Effect

Metrics the optimization will influence. (viewership, subscribers, video ranking, engagement, etc.)

## Impact Rating



## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Publishing

Production

Post-Publishing

## Section One

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# Programming and Producing

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# The First 15 Seconds

Programming and Producing

## Strategy:

Make the beginning of your content compelling to the viewer.

## Why It Works:

Attention spans are short. Hook viewers right from the start and increase engagement for the entire length of the video.

## How to Do It:

Accomplished through production and show structure.

### Time Cost



**Moderate:**  
Less than 1 hour

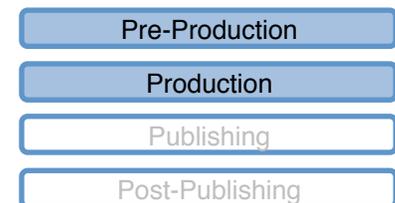
### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Video Ranking
- Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# The First 15 Seconds

Many viewers decide whether they are going to keep watching your video within the first 10-15 seconds. Attention spans can be short and they are just one click away from abandoning your video. The video's content - "*What am I Watching?*" - should come across in the first few moments and hook them early to give them a reason the stick around.

## Compelling Content First...

- The first thing the viewer sees should be compelling, whether it is the personality or the content of the video.
- Personalities should address/welcome the audience, ask a question, spark the viewer's curiosity, tease the rest of the video.
- Use a 'teaser' for the content of the video; start with a quick clip of what's to come later in the video.

## ...Branding and Packaging Later

- Branding, flashy intros, and packaging can create a professional quality to your content, but it's not the star of the video.
- Let the content or the personality be the star upfront; then the viewer has a reason to watch past the intro and continue with the video.
- Or you can make sure the *branding* is compelling content that the viewer is entertained by. For example, College Humor's Jake & Amir's opening branding features a different joke each video; their packaging is the content.
- Packing and branding should be minimal and short. We've found 5 seconds to be an optimal length.

## What am I watching?

- In a lot of cases of non-fiction programming, it is important to make it clear to your viewers what your video is, and what they'll be watching. If the viewer still doesn't know exactly what they're watching in the start of the video, they're gone.



## TIP

Unlike TV, branding on YouTube can almost entirely be achieved through titles, tags, and thumbnails.

# The First 15 Seconds

## Examples

### Branding is part of content

College Humor's Jake and Amir record a new voiceover for every episode intro.

New



### Bug branding (no front bumper)

BBC

Repurposed



### Engage First, Brand Second

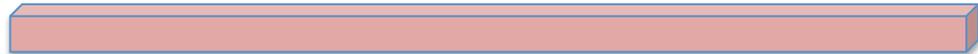
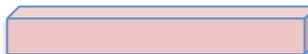
The Philip DeFranco Show

New

Capture Attention

Brief Branding (Optional)

Keep Them Watching with Great Content



# The First 15 Seconds

## How-To Steps

### Understand the Engagement and Viewing Trends of Your Content

- Use tools available in YouTube Analytics to better understand how your videos are performing in terms of engagement and attention spans. Short attention spans, 'drop-offs,' or low engagement graph performance at the beginning of the video reflect a need to optimize the first 15 seconds of the video(s).

### Determine the Right 'Hook' or Opening for Your Content and Audience

- All content is different so determine the best use of the beginning of your videos. Depending on your category, content, and current engagement trends, your approach to the beginning of your videos will vary.

### Experiment with Variations

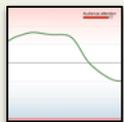
- Try different approaches and see what works best to keep people watching your video and decrease early abandonment.

### Place Compelling Content First

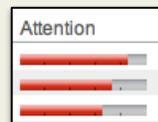
- Whatever approach you take, the first 15 seconds of your video needs to be compelling, engrossing, or entertaining enough to get your viewers to commit to continue watching the rest of the video.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



HotSpots



Attention Span

Use Attention retention data in YouTube Analytics to track changes in how your audience is viewing your content. Optimizing the beginning of your video should increase viewing time and attention spans, while decreasing drop-offs at the beginning of your videos.

# Calls to Action



## Strategy:

Invite viewers during the video to take actions that can help build audience.

## Why It Works:

Online video is an interactive experience. Community engagement and subscriptions build audience.

## How To Do It:

Accomplished through production and/or annotations.

### Time Cost



Minimal:  
0-5min

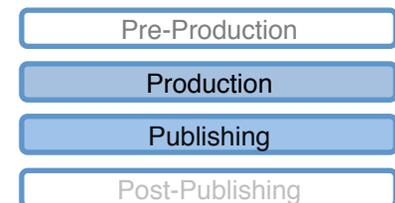
### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Video Ranking
- Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Calls to Action

Watching content online is an interactive and social experience. Partners rely on the actions of their viewers to help them succeed, but the majority of viewers won't act unless you ask. *Tip: Use annotations as prompts if the content doesn't feature a personality.*

Videos you produce and publish should have specific Calls to Action (CTA). Depending on what your CTA is, you can use the beginning, middle and end of the video to direct the actions of your viewers to help you boost your *ranking, engagement, and audience*. CTAs should be minimal and simple. Too many prompts can cause confusion. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for viewers to perform an action. *Tip: Pointing to where you want the viewer to click can make it very clear.*

## 1) **Subscribe**

Critical to grow subscriber base, so videos launch with an audience from the start.

- Videos should have a CTA for the viewer to subscribe to your channel.
- Give them reasons to subscribe: more great videos every week, never miss an episode, etc...
- People > Text. A personality asking viewers to subscribe is more compelling than text on the screen, but both can be effective.

## 2) **Like / Favorite / Share**

Positive Video Actions from your viewers will improve your videos' ranking in the algorithm.

- Ask viewers to Like, Favorite or Share the video by talking to camera or using annotations.
- 'Likes' and 'favorites' increase your video's ranking in search and get broadcast out to the viewer's YouTube friends, which draws new viewers to your video.
- Viewers sharing your video on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter broadcast your video to all their friends and followers.

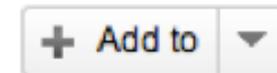
## 3) **Watch More**

Give viewers an easy path to watch more related content.

- For hosted content, highlight related episodes.
- Use annotations to link to previous episodes, related episodes, or the most recent episode (by linking to the channel page).



57,282 likes, 564 dislikes



Remember that it is a violation of YouTube Terms of Service and Community Guidelines to incentive clicks on features in any way with the exception of driving subscribers

# Calls to Action

Programming and Producing

## Examples

“How it Should Have Ended/Starz”

“Watch More/New Programming”



## Tip:

Use annotations as prompts if the content doesn't feature a personality.

Dexter / Showtime

Leave a comment



# Calls to Action

## How-To Steps

### Determine Desired Actions

- Decide what actions you want your viewers to take for each video. The key community actions should be included in most videos, where possible, but assess the right actions for your content and overall objectives.

### Style and Timing of CTAs

- Determine the right style or variation of CTA that makes the most sense for your channel and the content.
- Annotations, host mentions, or other methods can be used to create CTAs in your videos.
- Decide where in the video each CTA should appear keeping in mind that you don't want to direct the viewers away from the video before they finish watching.

### Include CTAs in the Video

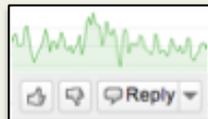
- Videos should have a call-to-action. Keep these important elements in mind when shooting the video and when adding annotations.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Subscriber Graph



Community Engagements

Use the Subscription graph and Ratings, Favorites, Comments, and Sharing graphs in YouTube Analytics to track changes in viewer actions in response to your CTAs. Including CTAs in your video should lead to increased community actions taken by viewers.

# Regular Schedule & Frequency



## Strategy:

Release content frequently and on a recurring schedule. React to trending topics.

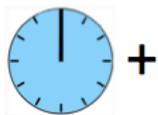
## Why It Works:

Frequency of uploads affects the algorithm. To build an audience, “a consistent audience requires consistent content” - FreddieW, YouTube creator.

## How To Do It:

Find the right release day for your audience. Maximize content gained from production investment.

### Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

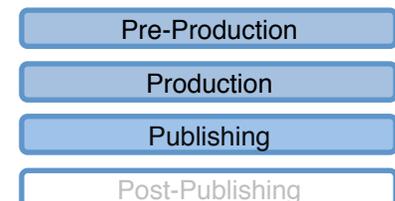
### Effect

- Subscribers
- Video Ranking
- Views
- Channel Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Regular Schedule & Frequency

Some of the same trends and viewer interests that drive television viewership are applicable to the web. Regular release schedules, programming, and timely publishing are all important in online video.

## Regular Release Schedule and Timely Publishing

- Release videos on a set day of the week, if possible. Releasing videos on a recurring schedule helps build a structure to your show that an audience can rely on. It can be easier to retain audiences and keep them coming back to your channel when they know when new episodes will be coming out.
- 'React' to trending topics when it makes sense for your audience. Don't get too locked in to your schedule. Adding supplemental content to your regular programming can build audience. Timing is important in online video and being part of what's going viral, rising search trends, or breaking news can be critical for certain content.

“Consistent audience requires consistent content!”



Freddie W., Top YouTuber

## Frequency

- Publishing content regularly will improve your ranking in the algorithm and help you build viewership.
- A good level to aim for is a minimum of one video per week, but the right amount of content depends on your audience, your goals, and your content. This frequency will provide your audience with new content regularly, and keep them coming back often.
- Make the most of your production investments. Be creative and resourceful about how you create content to find ways to be able to publish more regularly. Ways to get more videos from your production investment include creating supplements your larger productions, and using resource-saving production techniques.

Sun 7/24	Mon 7/25	Tue 7/26	Wed 7/27	Thu 7/28	Fri 7/29	Sat 7/30
	Monday's Episode		Behind-the-Scenes Episode		'Fan Friday' Comments Episode	

# Regular Schedule & Frequency



## How-To Steps

### Make Your Schedule Known

- If you set a schedule, make it clear to the audience and new viewers when and how often episodes are released.
- Remind the audience in the videos, in the episode description, or through other branding on your channel.

### Get the Most of Your Production Investment

- Find ways to cull more content from your shoots and production.
- Use production techniques (i.e. block shooting) to minimize production time and maximize the useable content.
- Create supplemental content for your big projects or videos that are less production intensive. Capture behind-the-scenes footage, keep a log of your bloopers, or create vlog-style update or comment videos.

### Maximize Your Frequency

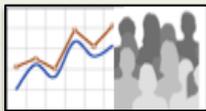
- More organized content will lead to more viewership and better ranking in algorithms. Release content consistently to build and retain a consistent audience.

### Stay Organized

- Use Playlists and Annotations to keep your content organized



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph

Find what days your channel sees peaks in views or if your audience follows your schedule by looking at the viewership graphs available in YouTube Analytics. Learn about how many views you gain by adding more content to your channel, and find the right balance between production investment and views gained.

# Tent-pole Programming

Programming and Producing

## Strategy:

Create and release content themed around tent-pole events.

## Why It Works:

Tent-pole events drive search trends, editorial opportunities, and advertiser campaigns.

## How To Do It

Create and publish content according to a programming calendar.

### Time Cost



Moderate:  
< 1 hour

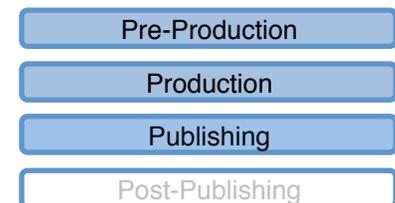
### Effect

- Promotion
- Views
- Discovery
- External Site Traffic

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Tent-pole Programming

Why does Discovery channel have 'Shark Week' every year? Why do a lot sitcoms have a Halloween themed episode at the end of October? Why does the Today Show have relationship experts on the week before Valentine's Day? The answer to these questions is: 'Tent-pole' Programming.

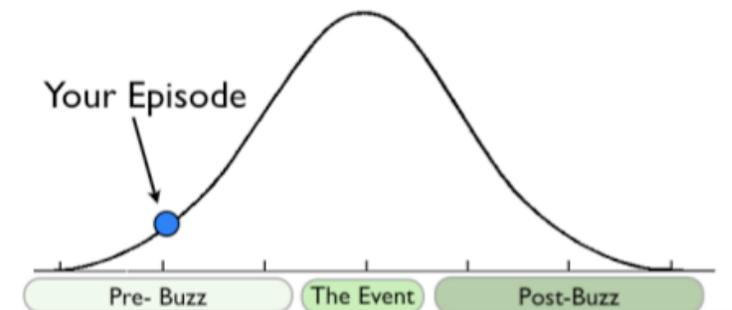
Tent-pole programming revolves around large cultural events, big movie releases, sports, holidays and niche events specific to your content expertise. These events act as guides for the content you produce. What events resonate with your audience? The New York Fashion Show may be a footnote for a news partner but the focus of a month's worth of programming for a channel dedicated to fashion.

## Program Your Content

- Create a programming calendar and identify the 'tent-pole' events that are relevant to your show and audience.
- Package and produce videos around events to take advantage of promotional and revenue opportunities, and capitalize on audience and search trends. *Tip: Titles and tags can help rebrand a video for tent-pole events. Make use of your archives, where it is relevant.*

## Get Ahead of the Buzz.

- Release tent-pole related content *at least* several days prior to the event. Online video is different than television and film because a video posted online has a 'long-tail.' The weeks leading up to an event, 'the pre-buzz,' is just as important as the date of the actual event, maybe more important. The video will still be there when the event arrives and afterward, but it can more momentum if it was released early.



# Tent-pole Programming

Programming and Producing

## How-To Steps

### Create a Programming Calendar

- Create a programming calendar for upcoming months. Identify the key tent-pole events that are relevant to your show and meaningful to your audience.
- Identify (or invent your own) tent-pole events where you may want to dedicate more resources, time, or content.

### Release Tent-pole Related Videos

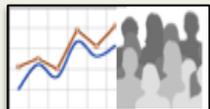
- Create videos for the tent-pole events and be strategic about when to publish your tent-pole related videos.
- Devote blocks of time to celebrate or produce special content around milestones or 'signature' events that you invent for your channel and audience. Make show anniversaries into special events or assign certain weeks (or months) special programming.

### Perform Blog Outreach

- Send your tent-pole videos to relevant blogs, sites, and online communities offering them content for their readers.
- Provide short descriptions of the content and why it would be a great fit with the sites readers. Include easy links and embed codes in your outreach emails.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph



Traffic Source Data

Track changes in viewership as a result of programming your content by using the viewership data available in YouTube Analytics. Use Traffic Source information to track views coming from search, featured video, or blogs for the videos you've made based on tent-pole events.

# Cross-promotion and Collaboration



## Strategy:

Work with and cross-promote other partners and channels.

## Why It Works:

Cross-promotion and collaboration can be one of the leading drivers of traffic to your channel. Working with other channels helps find and attract new audiences. YouTube is social; be a part of the community.

## How To Do It

Build your own channel's appeal. Find and reach out to relevant channels with similar audiences to plan smart and creative methods of cross-promotion.

### Time Cost



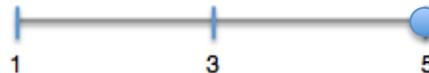
Major:

Full day or more

### Effect

- Subscribers
- Views
- Channel Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Cross-promotion and Collaboration ■ ■ □ □

Cross-promotion and collaborations with other partners and channels are some of the most effective methods of building audience and subscribers. Accessing new audiences on YouTube begins with finding the channels where those audiences are already engaged. Think about how TV talk show guests promote – the star of the new movie or TV show gets time to promote to a new audience, the host of the talk show gets access to a celebrity. The same give and take is found in YouTube Cross-promotion and collaboration.

Partners need to identify similar or relevant partners and channels where cross-promotion and collaboration would make the most sense. To collaborate with channels that have a large audience, partners have to bring something to the table. Established media brands offer production facilities, clip libraries, access to celebrity, and on-air/in-print promotional space.



Sorted (Fremantle Media) and MysteryGuitarMan

Weezer and The Muppet Studio



## General Best Practices:

- Cross-promote and collaborate with other partners that are relevant to your audience or attract similar demographics.
- Be creative with 'remote' collaborations. Record video chats, utilize video-responses, or incorporate video from one another on your channel.
- Make it easy for the viewers to get from one place to the other. Use annotations, links in description, and clear direction within the video on what the viewer needs to do to watch more. Tip: Link to specific videos and playlists, not just channel pages.
- Be active on your channel during any cross-promotion period. Respond to comments of new viewers. Make a good first impression with new viewers.
- During periods of cross-promotion cater your channel design to highlight your "best" content, not necessarily your most recent.

# Cross-promotion and Collaboration

Hosted, scripted shows can help you organize the videos in your archive. Either through collaboration or in-house production, you can create or help others create shows that contextualize your archive (and get your content in front of a much larger audience).

## Collaborations that Organize Your Archive

- Does your content lend itself to curators and field experts? Experiment with attracting YouTube talent to curate your videos.
- Historical, scientific, and comedic content lends itself to be curated by content experts. The creator benefits from access to a giant, relevant, professional archive, and you benefit from a creator giving scripted context to your videos.
- Collaboration can happen on your channel or on another creator's channel. Your content can be edited into scripted shows or simply assembled into hosted playlists.
- Please refer to *Calls to Action*, *Annotations*, and *Collaboration* sections to understand how to create the best collaboration and contextual experience.

### Collaboration as Context

Tobuscus working with FishBowl Media on CuteWinFail



# Cross-promotion and Collaboration

Programming and Producing

## Examples

### Guest Star Collaboration and Cross-Promotion

FreddieW featuring Jon Favreau

New

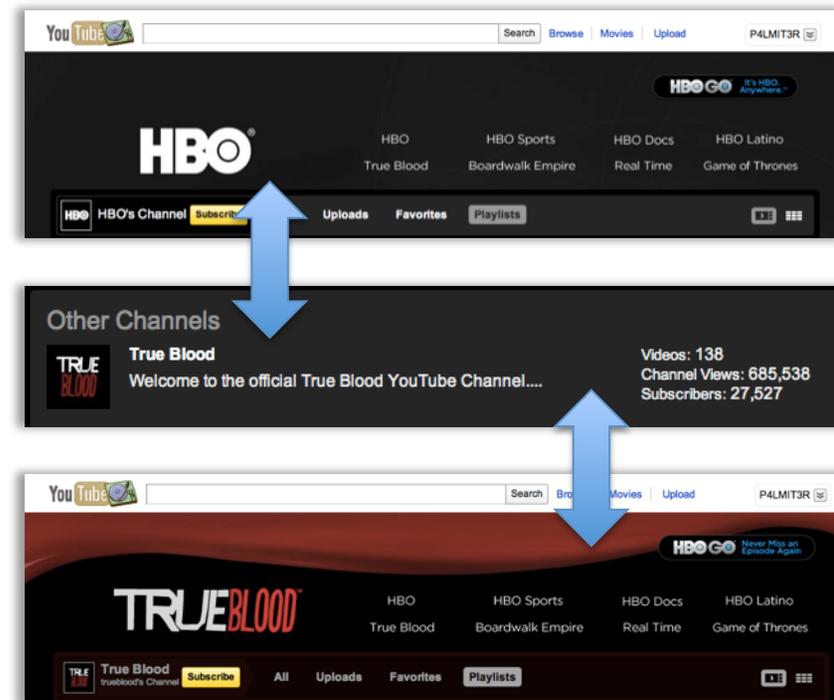


KassemG, Top YouTuber

### Channel Cross-Promotion

HBO and True Blood

Repurposed



"Part of making it on the internet is working with a lot of people, that is definitely essential."

# Cross-promotion and Collaboration

Programming and Producing

## Methods

### In-Video promotion

**A) Guest Star:** Appearing or guest starring in other channel's content is a great way to work with other partners and channels. You can combine show elements from each of your shows, or simply fall into another channel's theme completely.

**B) Shout Out:** A shout out can be illustrated with actual clips/teasers from the channel that's being promoted or a simple host recommendation can go far. Find clips that are short, surprising, or provide cliff hangers that make people more interested in following the call to action.

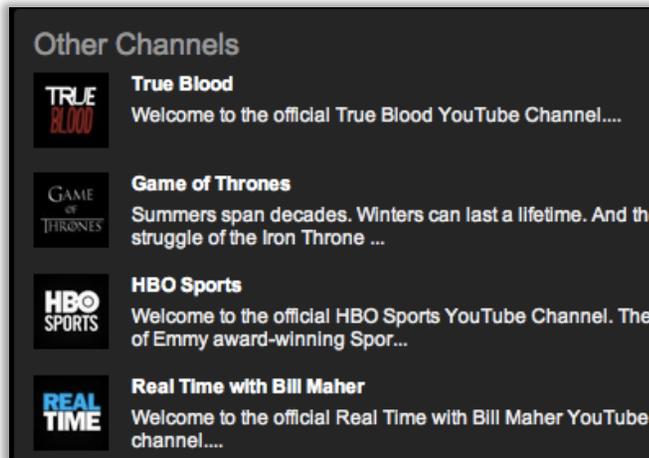


FreddieW feat. Epic Meal Time

Make sure to link to the other channel using annotations and links in the description.

### Channel Promotion

**Recommendation Activity:** 'Like', Favorite, or Comment on the videos of other channel that you like. This indirect recommendation will appear in your activity feed for your subscribers.



HBO

### **Subscriber Box Sharing**

The "other channels" module on your channel page is a great way to link other channels. Manage multiple channels? The Subscriber Box is the place to highlight all the channels you manage. When users subscribe to you they are also offered the opportunity to subscribe to the channels you have added to you "subscriber box."

Arrange Cross-promotion for yourself by getting placement in other people's subscriber box and sharing your own.

*Tip: Use VidStatsx.com to identify successful channels and compare subscriber growth.*

# Cross-promotion and Collaboration

Programming and Producing

## Methods

### Shared Topics

- Organize and create videos with other producers that are related, complementary, or supplemental. Focus both sets of content on the same 'tent-pole' event or create complementary videos that have similar tones / subjects / perspectives.
- Make the viewer aware of all channels involved in the cross-promotion through playlists, annotations, mentions, and links.
- Consider linking multiple videos in a 'chain' that completes a circle. (i.e. producer A ends his or her video with a teaser or recommendation to check out producer B's video, which in turn links to producer C, and so on back to A.) No matter where a viewer begins, all videos in the loop are in a position to gain new viewers and potential subscribers.



# Cross-promotion and Collaboration

## How-To Steps

### Build Your Channel's Appeal

- Before reaching out to collaborate with other partners and channels, take stock in your expertise and what you can offer others in exchange for access to their audiences

### Research Similar Content on YouTube

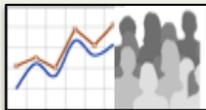
- Understand the YouTube space, especially everyone distributing content Know who your peers are and where similar audiences to your own channel are spending their time.
- Use YouTube and third-party sites such as vidstatsx.com\* to identify channels of similar content or audience size and growth.

### Create Engaging Cross-Promotion Opportunities and Collaboration Videos

- Create collaboration videos with channels and partners with similar content and relevant audiences.
- Set clear objectives of what each partner wants to get out of the cross-promotion.
- Fine tune your channel, content, and engagement during cross-promotions to provide the best experience for new viewers.
- Consistently update and refresh less-intensive promotion strategies such as featuring channels in your subscriber boxes and recommendation activity.
- Use the subscriber box to cluster similar owned and operated channels.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph



Subscriber Graph

Track the effectiveness and results of cross-promotions by examining viewership graphs and subscriber changes in YouTube Analytics. Assess the 'stickiness' of your content/channel and the relevancy of the cross-promotion by measuring subscribers gained from the additional views. *How many new viewers were retained weeks after the promotion?*

\* YouTube does not recommend or approve vidstatsx.com. Used as example of helpful sites.

# Investigate 'Peaks and Valleys'



## Strategy:

Use YouTube Analytics and other data to improve programming decisions and strategy.

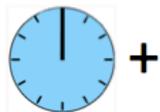
## Why It Works:

Gain understanding of what's working and what's not for your channel and content. Build on and repeat the successes and avoid what led to low-performing videos.

## How To Do It:

Gain fluency in Insight tools. Routinely assess channel's performance and make changes to content or strategies based on analytics.

### Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

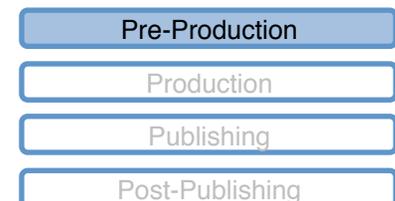
### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Views
- Community Activity

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Investigate 'Peaks and Valleys'



YouTube offers an array of tools that can help inform your programming and production decisions. Knowing how to use them to improve your show, build audience and increase engagement is important for every partner. Investigating the 'peaks and valleys' of your analytics and stat tracking will inform your programming decisions, topic choices, branding strategy, and show structure.

There are some basic metrics that you can track on a recurring basis to monitor the overall health of your channel. Tracking the top-level metrics that are important for audience development will identify any trends or patterns that may be emerging around your content organically, without any actions or optimizations that you've put in place.

**Track Top-Level Metrics:** Total Views, Subscribers, and Traffic Sources. Tracked on daily, weekly, monthly timescales.

## 'Peaks' of Success

- Identify the videos that have been most successful for you, whether in terms of revenue, views, engagement, or promotion. Learn what made these videos a success. Build on it. Re-use and apply the successful elements to future videos.

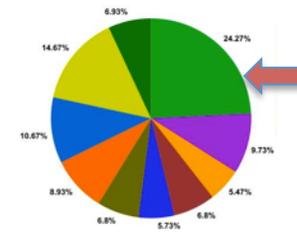
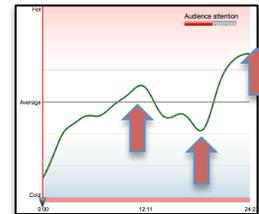
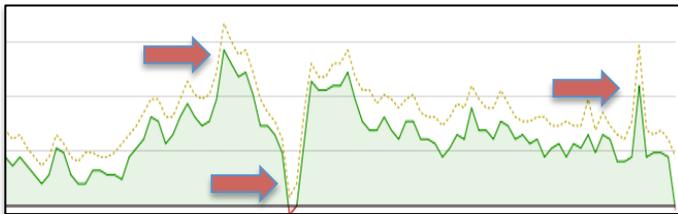
## 'Valleys' Needing Improvement

- Identify the videos that were least successful and understand what made the videos perform poorly.
- Know what areas can be improved such as traffic sources or engagement. Are you not getting any views from search - how can you write better Metadata or include keywords to improve views from search?

## % of Views

- Examine your catalogue's viewership composition. Track which videos account for the largest (and smallest) % of total views.
- What videos account for large percentages month over month?

*Tip: Use your archive. Your top 10 performing videos can be put into playlists and annotated to promote newly released videos.*



# Investigate ‘Peaks and Valleys’



## How-To Steps

### Gain Fluency in All Analytics Tools

- Explore YouTube Analytics and read through documentation to understand each resource and metric.

### Maintain Ongoing Tracking

- Use the downloadable monthly and all-time reports, YouTube Analytics and your own spreadsheets to monitor your channel performance on a regular and recurring basis.

### Mark Dates and Details of Strategy and Optimization Implementation

- When you implement new optimizations or change your strategy make a note of it and let your YouTube contact know as well!

### Make Programming or Creative Decisions Based on Your Data Assessment

- When you have assessed your channel performance, decide what actions to take based on your findings.
- Find ways to build on your channels ‘peaks of success.’ Understand why certain videos performed well and make programming and creative decisions to build on that previous success.
- Determine your top 10 most-viewed videos and leverage those videos’ viewership by adding them to a playlist and annotating these videos to drive new subscribers and viewership.

### Track Results of Implemented Changes

- When you make changes based on previous data, be sure to track changes to relevant metrics to see if those changes are causing the desired result.



## YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



(All Metrics)

Track the peaks and valleys of all metrics carefully and set goals for each. Use YouTube Analytics and downloadable reports to keep an ongoing record of your channel’s performance with notes on when new strategies or optimizations were implemented.

# Programming and Producing

## Checklist

- Create great content that is unique, compelling and entertaining or informative.
- Optimize the first '15 seconds' of your video.
- Include specific call-to-actions in the video or through annotations.
- Maximize access to celebrity and high-profile talent throughout pre-production, production, and post-production
- Set a recurring schedule for your channel and maximize your production investments to optimize how often you are able to release content.
- Identify channels with similar content, relevant audiences, and/or curating talent and work with them to create meaningful cross-promotion opportunities, collaboration videos, and/or curate your archived content.
- Use YouTube Analytics to better understand your audience, improve your content, and help you develop effective programming and production strategies.

---

# Publishing and Optimization

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# Metadata



## Strategy:

Write optimized Title, Tags, and Descriptions for your content.

## Why It Works:

Metadata is critical to building views from search and related videos as it greatly affects the algorithm.

## How To Do It:

Use optimized keywords and format to improve the algorithms indexing of the video.

---

### Time Cost



**Minimal:**  
0-5min

### Effect

- Video Ranking
- Views
- Search Traffic
- Related Traffic

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Metadata

YouTube is the world's 2nd largest search engine; optimize your video to take advantage of this fact. Metadata is the information that surrounds your video: Title, Tags, Description, Thumbnail. This set of data inform the YouTube algorithm of a video's content, indexing it for search, features, related videos, and ad-serving. **Tip: Metadata can also be used as packaging or rebranding a video. Adding in relevant keywords to the title of an archive video can help you repurpose the content for new search trends, or tent-pole events.**

## Title

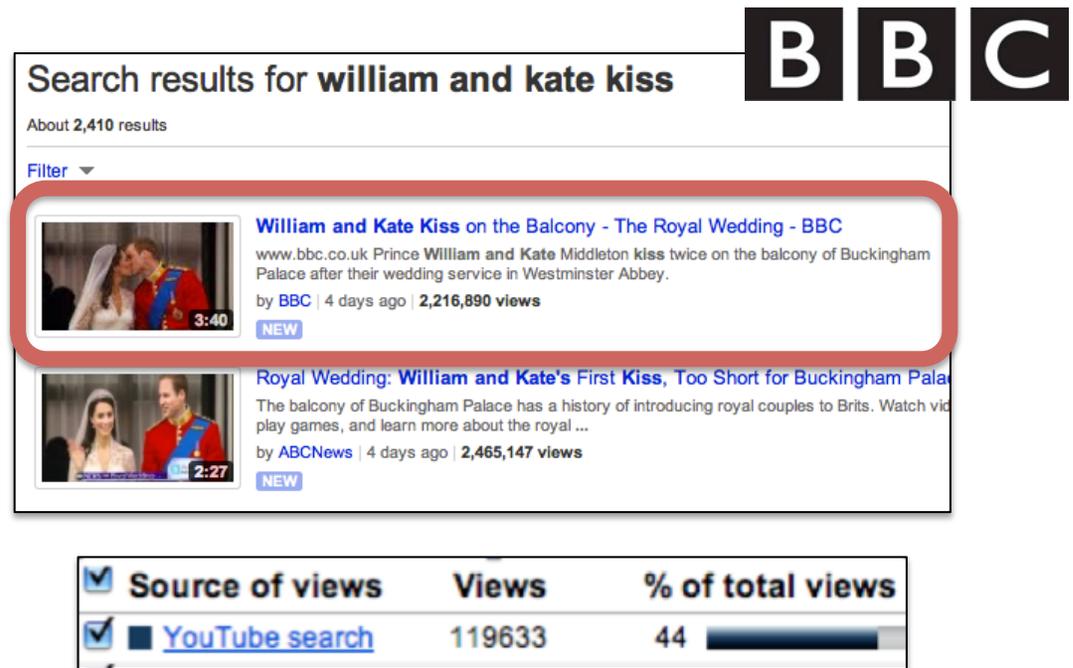
- Keywords first
- Branding at end
- Compelling

## Tags

- Mix of common & specific
- Ordering
- Variations and plentiful
- Use quotes for phrases: "harry potter"

## Description

- Most compelling info first
- Include keywords, links
- Show description, helpful information



**BBC**

Search results for **william and kate kiss**

About 2,410 results

Filter ▾

**William and Kate Kiss on the Balcony - The Royal Wedding - BBC**  
www.bbc.co.uk Prince William and Kate Middleton kiss twice on the balcony of Buckingham Palace after their wedding service in Westminster Abbey.  
by BBC | 4 days ago | 2,216,890 views  
NEW

**Royal Wedding: William and Kate's First Kiss, Too Short for Buckingham Palace**  
The balcony of Buckingham Palace has a history of introducing royal couples to Brits. Watch vid play games, and learn more about the royal ...  
by ABCNews | 4 days ago | 2,465,147 views  
NEW

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Source of views	Views	% of total views
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YouTube search	119633	44

Keywords and proper formatting are essential to writing metadata that will help your video appear high in search results. It is also important to provide useful and accurate information for the viewer so they know what they are watching and bounce rates are minimized.



Remember that it is a violation of YouTube Terms of Service to use misleading metadata on your video.

# Metadata

## Keyword Resources

- *YouTube Insight for Audience Tool*. Search for the most searched-for words in your category: <http://www.google.com/videotargeting/ifa/buildQuery>
- *YouTube Keyword Generator / Video Targeting Tool*: [https://ads.youtube.com/keyword\\_tool](https://ads.youtube.com/keyword_tool)
- *YouTube Trending Topics*: Identify trending topics in your category.: <http://www.youtube.com/videos>
- *Other Successful Videos*: Keywords other successful and similarly-themed videos utilize.
- *YouTube Search Suggestions*: Start to type keywords and see what suggested searches come up.



# Metadata

## Title

Titles are an important tool to describe the content and compel users to click on your video. Think of them as taglines or magazine headlines that will peak interest in potential viewers, but they need to be formatted and written with keywords in mind.

- Include popular, relevant, or compelling keywords to maximize ‘clickability’ and search traffic, but always accurately portray content.
- Place keywords first in the title and branding (such as your show name) at the end.
- Actively update and optimize titles of catalogue videos to remain relevant and gain views in the ‘long tail’ of a video.

## 2009 US Open: Djokovic vs. McEnroe -- You Cannot Be Serious!

USOPEN 576 videos  



**Category:**

Sports

**Tags:**

USTA Tennis 2009 US Open 2009 US Open Funny Novak Djokovic Djokovic John McEnroe McEnroe

## Tags

- Create a set of ‘standard tags’ for your channel that can be applied to any video you publish. These tags should be general tags that would apply to most of the content you produce (i.e filmmaking, animation, comedy, “Funny Videos,” “Pet Videos” etc.)
- Write video tags for each video that are a mix of specific and general keywords that are relevant to a video's content.
- Maximize tags (12 or more keywords, use all of the 120 character limit)
- Tags and Tent-pole events: Actively update and optimize tags of archive videos when new relevant search trends emerge.
- Properly format tags to ensure proper indexing of video.
- Combination of both general and specific keywords.
- Use quotes for phrases: “john mcenroe”
- Mirror the title of the video, using same word order in tags.

# Metadata

## Description

Descriptions inform both the viewer and the YouTube algorithm of a video's content, and can be a good place to add additional information not available in the video. The algorithm favors comprehensive descriptions that accurately describe a video's content.

- Begin your description with the most relevant information and compelling language. Only the first few sentences of your description show up 'above the fold' on a video watch page and next to the thumbnail in search results.
- Write your description to include the keywords used in the title and tags as well as additional relevant keywords.
- Always include CTAs in the description, these include:
  - Link to your channel page
  - Subscription link
  - Links to related content, or to sites/videos/channels/users referenced in the video.
  - Links for social media.
  - Links should always include the 'http://' to make them hyperlinks.
- Include a recurring 'Keyword Tagline' in episode descriptions. The Keyword tagline is a few sentences that describe your show, but is written to include several search-driven keywords. Repeating this tagline in episode descriptions will inform first-time viewers about your show, assist with including the right keywords, and increase relevancy amongst your videos. Keyword tagline could be your brand promise.
- State what the release schedule of your channel is in episode descriptions.
- Follow a structure or template for all your video descriptions to create a uniformity for your audience, as well as increase the relevancy of your videos to one another for related video rankings.
- Repeat or list additional tags in bottom of description.



Uploaded by [cutewinfail](#) on Oct 4, 2010

Stick it to the man however you can! Plus, watch a dog show-off his ding-ding. To see other CuteWinFail eps. subscribe here: <http://bit.ly/CWFSsubscribe>

Bonus Clip! <http://bit.ly/BONUS2>

[Facebook.com/cutewinfail](https://www.facebook.com/cutewinfail)  
[Twitter.com/cutewinfail](https://twitter.com/cutewinfail)

Music by Malte Hagemeister and Urban Delights

# Metadata



## How-To Steps

### Utilize Keyword Resource Tools

- Use the keywords generator tools to help you generate and test keywords for you uploads and/or channel.

### Create 'Standard Keywords,' 'Keyword Tagline' and 'Standard Channel Links'

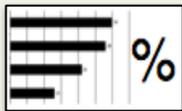
- Based on your show's content, theme, and audience, create a list of standard keywords that apply to your channel and most uploads. These keywords should be things that are categorical, genres, broad topics, show name, etc.
- Write 2-4 sentences that explain what your show is and includes keywords that are relevant to your channel. Include when new episodes are released and other relevant information.
- Create a list of links that can appear in episode descriptions. (i.e link to channel page, links to social media, link to subscribe, etc.)

### Optimize Metadata for Every New Upload (and archives)

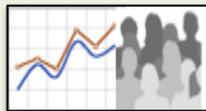
- Create a compelling, accurate, and keyword-driven title. Keywords first, brand or show name after.
- Fill in as many relevant and appropriate tags as possible. Write a mix of common and specific tags by adding your 'Standard Keywords' and specific tags about the episode. Follow proper formatting. Use keyword generator tools.
- Write a thorough, helpful, and keyword-driven episode description. Write compelling first sentences of your description. Include relevant or helpful information about the episode or your channel. Include your 'Keyword Tagline', list of links.
- Rebrand or continually optimize archive videos by updating the metadata to reflect new search trends, tent-pole events, or other keywords that may have become relevant to the content of the video(s).



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Traffic Sources Data



Viewership Graph

Use the Traffic Sources data available in YouTube Analytics to track changes in views coming from search traffic and related video traffic after you optimize the metadata. Use keyword tools and Google Analytics to better understand what keywords are driving viewers to your content.

# Thumbnail Optimization

Publishing and Optimization

## Strategy:

Create great custom thumbnails for your videos.

## Why It Works:

Thumbnails act as mini-marketing posters for your content and are important to attracting clicks on your videos.

## How To Do It:

Design and upload custom thumbnails for new videos. Update archive video thumbnails.

### Time Cost



Moderate:  
< 1 hour

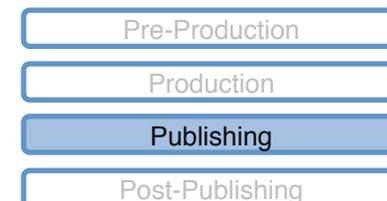
### Effect

- Video Ranking
- Views
- Search Traffic
- Related Traffic

### Impact



### Optimization Type



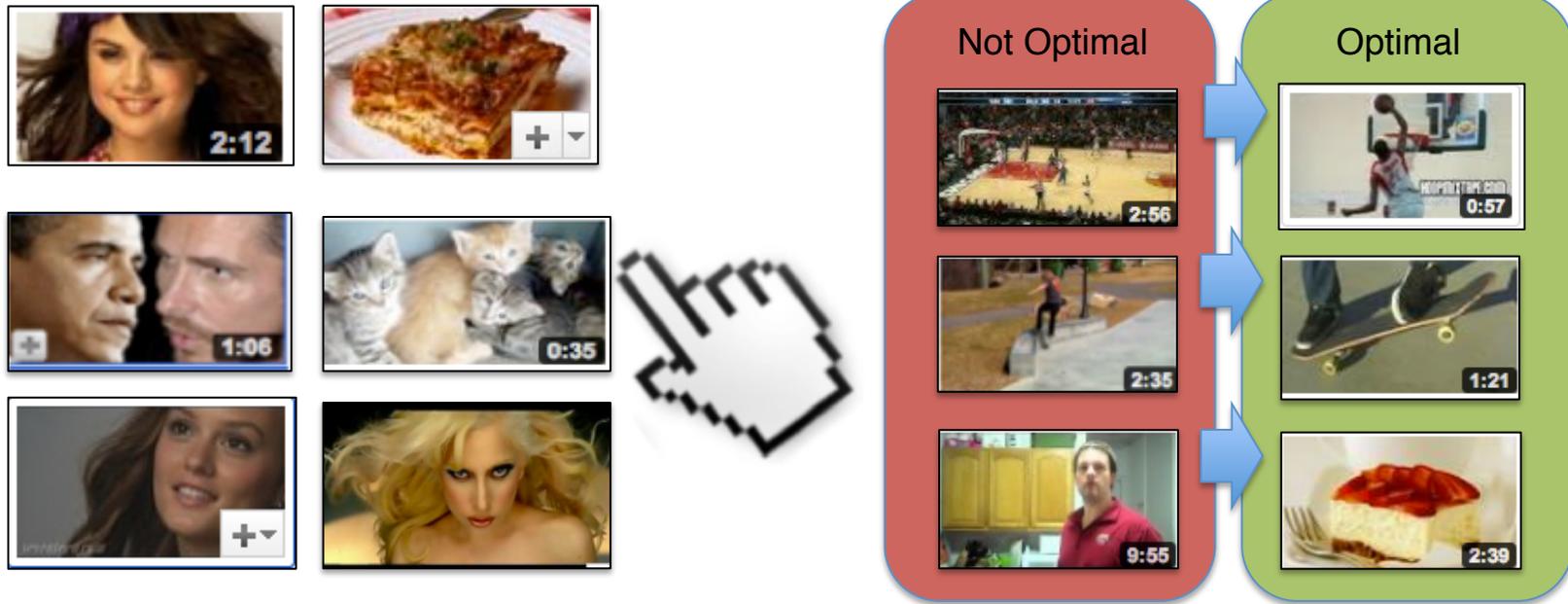
# Thumbnail Optimization

## Examples

Thumbnails, along with your video title, act as mini marketing posters for your content on YouTube. You should *always* create custom poster-frames to be uploaded along with the video file. There are a few general guidelines to follow, but the right poster-frame depends on what your show is about.

- Clear, In-Focus
- Bright, High-Contrast
- Close-Ups of Faces
- Visually Compelling Imagery
- Well-Framed, Good Composition
- Foreground Stands Out from Background
- Images that 'Compel You to Click'
- Accurately Represents the Content

Thumbnails are important for search, related video traffic, and channel page optimization. This visual snapshot of your video is one of the most important optimizations for attracting views on the platform. *Tip: make sure to upload high-resolution thumbnails so your thumbnail appears crisp and clear throughout the site.*



# Thumbnail Optimization

Publishing and Optimization

## How-To Steps

### Keep Thumbnail Optimization in Mind When Shooting

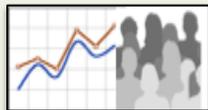
- Edit your videos to make the content translate into a great thumbnail.
- Consider taking photographs during your shoots to capture images for thumbnails.

### Create a Great Thumbnail

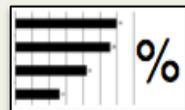
- Using images from the video and supplemental images (where relevant/appropriate) to create a custom thumbnail that shows off the best aspects of the video.
- Use photo-editing software to resize, modify, or combine images together in the frame.
- Apply effects such as adjusting the contrast and brightness of the image to make it stand-out and make the colors brighter.
- Preview your thumbnail design at the actual size it will appear on the site to know if the image will still be eye-catching at smaller scales.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph



Discovery Data

Track changes in viewership after you optimize your thumbnails. Use the Viewership graph and Traffic Sources information available in YouTube Analytics to track any increase in viewership coming from search and/or related video where thumbnails are important for attracting clicks.

# Annotations

## Strategy:

Use annotations on your videos to increase viewership, engagement, and subscribers. Add new context to archival content.

## Why It Works:

Annotations are a unique feature to YouTube and can help you keep viewers watching more content, increase community actions on your videos, and acquire new subscribers.

## How To Do It

Add relevant and helpful annotations to all your videos after upload.

### Time Cost



**Minimal:**  
0-5min

### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Video Ranking
- Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Annotations

Annotations are text overlays that you can place on YouTube videos. There are numerous uses for annotations and producers are consistently finding new, creative, and strategic ways to apply them to their videos.

Annotations can increase engagement and make your video conversational or interactive. They can supply additional information to the video, be an effective means to gain subscribers, increase community activity or engagement, cross-promote content, and drive traffic from your back-catalogue to your newest videos. Additionally, YouTube's search algorithm favors videos that drive traffic to other videos, playlists, channels, or subscriptions via linked annotations. *Tip: Adding links to annotations is a powerful traffic and subscriber driver.*

## General Notes:

- Be aware of the lower-third ad overlay and the autohide player controls - these can obscure annotations placed in the same region. Keeping annotations in the top corners assures that they are not obscured.
- Be careful not to obstruct the actual content.
- Use your best judgment to determine how many annotations you should include in your episodes. Don't bombard the viewer as it will feel 'spammy' and will have an adverse effect.
- Make sure to write and place text so it looks nice and reads well on the screen.

Starz



Showtime

What are you most excited for in season 6?  
Share with us by leaving a comment!

Break Originals

DEANS MESSAGE SCIENCES

**BREAK**

**DEMAND MORE FROM COLLEGE**  
SUBMIT YOUR OWN VIDEOS, GET FEATURED ON BREAK.COM,  
AND GET UP TO \$600

WWW.BREAK.COM/BREAK-U

Subscribe

3:17 / 3:26 360p

# Annotations

## Consistent Annotations for Navigation

Some channels have found success in using standard annotations for the length of video that appear in the same placement across all of their videos such as:

- Subscribe Button - When clicked, this annotation adds your channel to their subscriptions and makes it easy for viewers to subscribe right from your videos.
- Newest / Next / Previous – Links to another video in the series or to newest video. Including an annotation in your videos that links to your newest content will leverage your entire catalogue to drive traffic to your newest content your newest content.



## Other Annotation Strategies

- Front of Episode Calls to Action: Ask viewers to "like" the video, leave a comment, or subscribe.
- Ask a question. Asking a specific question is often more effective.
- Related videos or other content that is referenced in the video.
- Additional or supplemental information about the content.
- Subscribe and other Calls to Action repeated at the end of the episode.
- Be creative! Annotations can be used in many ways and you should always consider how to use this unique feature to make your content better and more strategic.

# Annotations

## How-To Steps

### Learn How to Create Annotations

- Understand the different types and uses of annotations, as well as how to create and edit them.

### Add Annotations to New Uploads After Publishing

- Determine the right uses of annotations for your content and audience. Avoid creating distracting annotations or too many. Use annotations for Calls-to-Action encouraging the viewers to take certain community actions such as favoriting, liking, and sharing the video.
- Decide if any static annotation buttons make sense for your content. Add a 'Subscribe' annotation and/or a 'Newest Episode' annotation 'button' on the video to provide easy navigation for the viewer throughout the entire video.
- Utilize annotations at the end of the video to direct viewers to another video, your channel, or to some other action such as subscribing.

### Update Annotations on High-performing Archive Videos

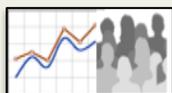
- Add and update annotations on high-performing archive videos to help leverage these view to new initiatives or new uploads.
- Use annotations to repackage old content for new purposes along with updated metadata.

### Be Creative

- Experiment with annotations to use them in new ways that will help you increase engagement, build audience, or simply make your content better and more compelling.
- Produce content or include elements in the video with the intention of enhancing with clickable annotations after upload.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership



Community Engagement



Subscribers

Annotations will affect metrics depending on what you use them for and what actions you're directing viewers to take. If you use annotations for community actions, subscribers and linking to other videos, track overall growth of these metrics. Focus on one specific action or initiative to measure specific effectiveness.

# Playlists, Shows, Video Responses



## Strategy:

Organize your content into sets of videos using playlists and video responses. Create themed content, curate content using playlists, or repurpose archival content.

## Why It Works:

Playlists help organize your content into meaningful sets of videos which will increase the number of videos a viewer watches and improve navigation of your content.

## How To Do It:

Create playlists for different sets of videos. Add new uploads to relevant playlists and set them as video responses to other videos.

### Time Cost



**Moderate:**  
< 1 hour

### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Video Ranking
- Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Playlists, Shows, Video Responses



Playlists are a great way to organize your videos into a themed set, or seasons. Video responses allow you to populate the space around your videos with your own content and connect relevant video together, increasing related video traffic. Playlists show up in search results and related videos, and both of these features improve your content's ranking in the algorithm.

## Optimized Playlists and Video Responses

- Utilize keywords when titling, tagging and writing a description for playlists.
- Use a great thumbnail for your playlist by setting an attractive thumbnail for the first video of the playlist – that's what gets used.
- Manage video response approvals for your channel. Users can set video response to your content, if you want, or you can restrict to just your own content. Ask viewers to submit video responses as a form of viewer interaction. Having a lot of video responses to your content helps improve your search ranking.

## Playlists Strategies

- Compile playlists and set video responses using related and relevant content that shares a common thread, suits the interest of the viewer, and encourages them to watch more.
- Utilize playlists to organize your content and make your channel easier to navigate.
- Create playlists based on highly searched keywords or trending topics where a set of videos is useful for the viewer.
- Build playlists to feature your most viewed content with newest uploads to connect your catalogue views to new videos.
- Curate great content for your audience and become a curatorial force on the platform for certain verticals or niches.
- Set a "series playlist" if you want lock-in a group of videos as a rigid set where the videos will always appear alongside one another on watch pages. Videos that are part of a series playlist can NOT be included in other playlists.

*Coming Soon: how to create 'hosted playlists' with interstitials between videos (curated content) Early example [HERE](#).*

The image shows a screenshot of the YouTube interface. On the left, there is a 'Video Responses' section with three video thumbnails. The first is titled 'Grilled Apple, Cheddar & Bacon S...' with a duration of 1:51. The second is 'Easy Snack Recipes For Kids - Fu...' with a duration of 3:21. The third is 'Smart Snack Recipes: Quick and...' with a duration of 3:58. On the right, there is a 'party music' playlist section with three video thumbnails. The first two are 'Haven't Met You Yet (OFFICIAL MUSIC VIDEO)' and the third is 'Nursery Rhymes - Alphabet Song'. Below these, there is a 'YouTube Mix for Lady Gaga' playlist section with a thumbnail of a person dancing, the text 'by YouTube', and a 'PLAYLIST 33 videos' button.

# Playlists, Shows, Video Responses



On YouTube, Shows refer to supercharged playlists that are displayed on a specially-formatted page with cleaner visuals and metadata. Made specifically for serial, regularly-scheduled programming, publishing videos to Shows pages enables better search placement, larger thumbnails, a more focused organizational experience, and a separate Shows section through which your content can be discovered.

## High Visibility

- Shows have their own page within the Shows section of YouTube
- Shows pages on YouTube are updated in the same way as playlists, with the addition of a manual review step by YouTube staff
- Thumbnails for Show episodes are larger on the Shows page, on the Channel page, and in search
- Links to Shows pages appear at the top of search results along with a cluster of Show episodes

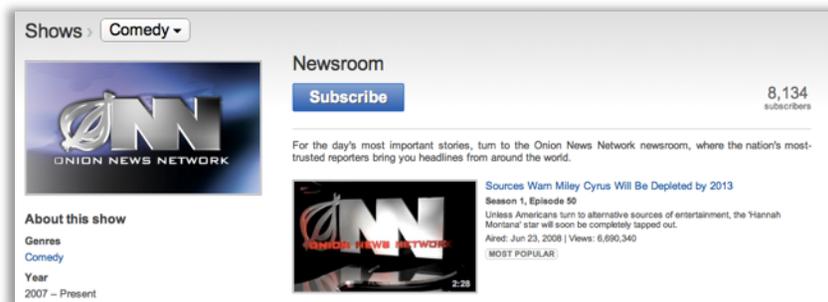
## Focused Organization

- Show page minimizes distraction and focuses on the Show content, listing episodes in chronological order with large thumbnails
- Viewers can subscribe to the Show page and receive updates for those shows apart from the overarching channel's subscription updates
- Videos that are grouped in Shows can also be grouped in regular playlists

## Process for launching and Updating Shows

- Please contact your SPM for a full guide to creating, publishing, and updating Shows content.

The Onion – presentation of shows on the Shows page



The Onion - Shows within Channel



# Playlists, Shows, Video Responses



## Examples

MeganJulienpParken – Vlogger – Video Responses

Video Responses see all

 <p><b>Be healthy</b> by americangirl910 52 views</p>	 <p><b>Body Image- video response to meganjuliaparken</b> by maddilovesbeauty 249 views</p>
--	--

SecretLifeofaBioNerd – Vlogger – Playlist

	<p><b>Hair Tutorials</b> 1 month ago <a href="#">more info</a></p>
	<p><b>D.I.Y Beauty</b> 2 weeks ago <a href="#">more info</a></p>
	<p><b>Reviews</b> 1 month ago <a href="#">more info</a></p>

The Onion - Shows within Channel

**Shows (6)**



**Election '08**  
The Onion News Network's years of award-winning political...

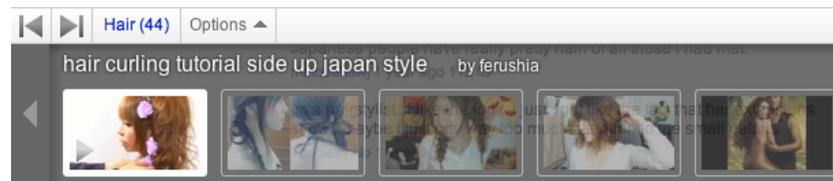


**In The Know**  
Moderator Clifford Banes hosts a panel of authoritative g...

Example of Watch Page experience - Playlist

◀ ▶ Hair (44) Options ▲

hair curling tutorial side up japan style by ferushia



# Playlists, Shows, Video Responses



## How-to Steps

### Set a Strategy or Use of Playlists for Your Content and Channel

- Find the right use of playlists, YouTube shows, and video responses for your channel's content and audience.
- Set objectives for what you want to achieve with playlist strategies: (i.e increase number of videos watched per viewer, better organize your content into themes or sets, curate other content for your audience.)
- Decide if your playlist strategy should or will affect how you produce or publish content (i.e videos produced for a playlist should follow a structure that is tailored for watching a set of connected videos).

### Create Playlists for Your Channel

- Create different playlists for grouping and organizing your videos into sets or themes.
- Follow metadata strategies and optimizations for the playlists. Use keywords for a compelling title, optimize tags of the playlist, and write a keyword-driven and informative description for the playlist.
- The first video in the playlist will set the thumbnail for the entire playlist, so create a great thumbnail for the first video.

### Add New Videos and Maintain Playlists

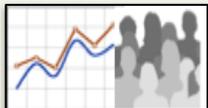
- Add new videos to relevant playlists at upload and maintain current playlists to keep them fresh, engaging, and relevant to your audience or new viewers.
- Add new uploads as video responses to relevant videos or to archive videos that can drive a lot of traffic.

### Organize Arrangement and Display of Playlists on Channel Page

- Arrange and organize playlists on your channel page to make navigation easy for channel visitors.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph



Discovery Data

Track changes to total viewership after creating playlists. Use Google Analytics, viewership graphs, and channel visit data to assess how your channel visitors are consuming content on your channel page. Track changes in views coming from search since playlists show up in search and related videos. Track views for video set a video responses; how many views are coming from the connection?

# Channel Page Optimization



## Strategy:

Optimize and design your channel page's metadata, layout, and background.

## Why It Works:

A well designed, organized, and search optimized channel page will keep viewers on your channel, attract more subscribers, and create a professional look to your content.

## How To Do It:

Design a custom background. Optimize channel metadata. Utilize channel page features. Organize and arrange your content to meet the needs of your audience.

### Time Cost



**Moderate:**  
< 1 hour

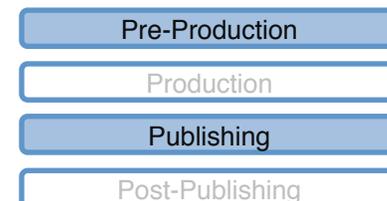
### Effect

- Chanel Views
- Views
- Time spent
- Subscribers

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Channel Page Optimization

YouTube Channel Pages can be optimized in a number of ways to help viewers find your channel, stay on it once they are there, and compel them to want to keep coming back for more. When setting up and optimizing your channel page, you should be thinking about Metadata Optimization, Navigation, Features, and Branding / Design.

## **Branding / Design**

- Create a custom, visually compelling skin for the channel page.
- Feature the personalities. Make the audience feel like they are connecting with a person or character of your show and not just the brand or logo when they come to the channel.
- Make use of the 'Banner Image' feature at the top of the page. Determine what links are important to display here and design this area to gain the most clicks (e.g. playlists, subscribe, Facebook, Twitter). Links on this banner image can link off-site to promote any initiative.
- Utilize the 300 x 250 branding box located on the lower left side column.
- If you have multiple shows, use the channel branding to announced your schedule.

## **Metadata / Optimization**

- Properly tag your channel page with keywords and SEO formatting (Under 'Channel Settings').
- Use keywords and SEO practices to optimize the channel for search when writing the channel description, profile, and other channel information.

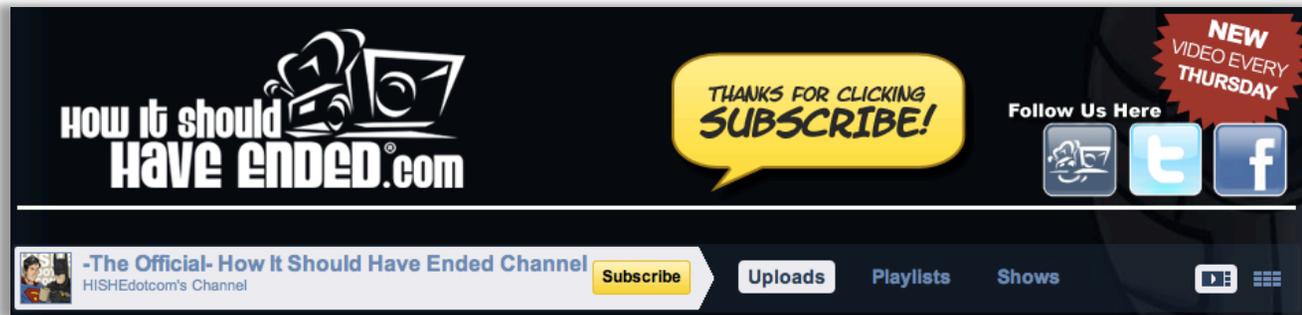
## **Navigation and Modules**

- Feature the right content and organize it in the best way for your particular audience. Set featured video and arrange uploads to be most engaging and relevant to your viewers.
- Determine the best presentation of your content on the channel (Uploads or Playlists). Feature playlists when your audience may be coming for distinct sets of content.
- Enable the 'Other Channels' module to promote your other content or related channels. This module is a great feature to create cross-promotion amongst channels. *Tip: Channels listed here are also listed as suggested channels when a user subscribes to your channel.*

# Channel Page Optimization



Examples

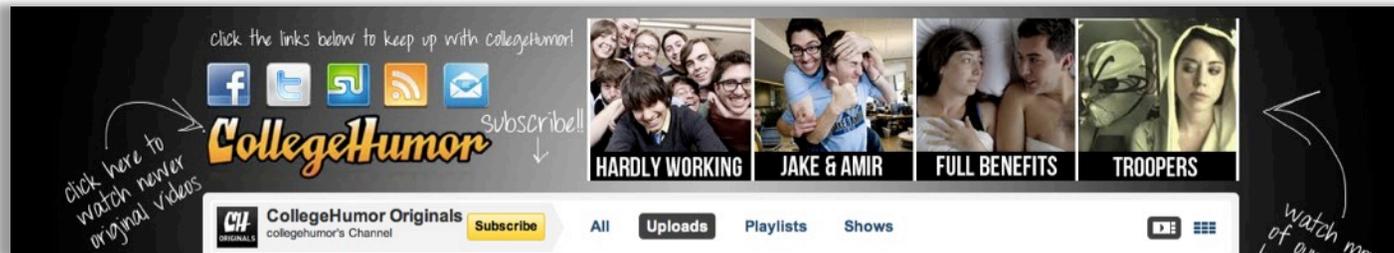


## How It Should Have Ended (Starz)

Let your audience know when new content is uploaded

## College Humor

CTAs and Show listings



How Will You Do It?

# Channel Page Optimization



## How-to Steps

### Optimize Channel Metadata

- Include relevant keywords in your channel page title. Select and input relevant keywords as tags for your channel.
- Write an optimized and helpful channel description with pertinent information including links, release schedule, show description, and other relevant information.
- Create a great avatar image that is relevant to your channel and will be eye-catching in search results.

### Enable and Utilize Channel Page Features

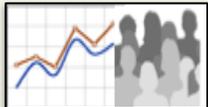
- Explore all available features and modules available for the channel page.
- Enable the 'other channels' module to feature other channels and cross-promote. Enable your recent activity feed and channel comments to increase engagement with your channel.
- Enable all the branding features available on the channel page to maximize your personalization and branding on the page.

### Design a Great Background Wallpaper and other Branding Graphics

- Design an attractive wallpaper for your channel that features the personalities, characters, or content of the channel.
- Design the banner image with a focus on the actions you want the channel visitors to take. You can make this area clickable, so design the banner to get viewers to click: feature the subscribe button and link to social media, important videos, or playlists.
- Every channel will have different aesthetic and navigation needs, so make sure you utilize the branding features and design your channel to encourage clicks that will help you build audience, gain subscribers, or achieve other objectives.



### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph  
Channel Views



Track changes to channel visits as optimizing your channel metadata and thumbnail can attract more clicks in search. Track click-through on links you put in the banner image. Install Google Analytics on your channel page to help you track visits and time spent etc.

# Publishing and Optimization

## Checklist

Every channel's specific approach and strategy to publishing will vary, but below is a simple and useful publishing checklist that covers some of the most important actions required once you upload a video. Making the video is only half the battle, optimizing and engaging with the community after you upload are of equal importance.



### Upload

- Write detailed and comprehensive metadata following keyword strategies and formatting.
- Create and upload a great, eye-catching thumbnail that is high-resolution.
- Spot-check the live video and published metadata.



### Publish

- Annotate the video with community CTAs, subscribe button, and links to related content.
- Set the video as featured video on your channel page based on how you organize your channel page's uploads.
- Set video as a video response to a popular and relevant video from your channel.
- Organize videos into playlists add to YouTube Show season list, where applicable.
- Group videos via playlists, annotations, and metadata programmatically (understand breaking news, large cultural events, what's trending in search).

### Engage and Outreach

(See Section Three)

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# Community and Social Media

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# Involve Your Audience



Community and Social Media

## Strategy:

Interact with your audience and involve them in your videos or channel.

## Why It Works:

Viewer interaction builds loyalty to your content and increases engagement. This can also improve your videos' algorithm ranking.

## How To Do It:

Create viewer-centric content, and engage with the audience through social features on the platform.

### Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Video Ranking

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Involve Your Audience



Community and Social Media

Online Video is a social media and a two-way dialogue. People are drawn to online video and web series because they can interact with the show in ways that they can't with television.

New

script CTAs and shout-outs for your audience

Repurposed

use annotations to feature and interact with viewers

## Ask the Viewers

- Ask viewers for their opinions, ideas, or feedback on the show. Whenever you try something new, ask for their thoughts.
- Ask fans to actively promote your video through social media and on YouTube by liking, commenting and favoriting.
- Ask for video responses to your video.

## Feature The Audience

- Feature viewers and their content in your video. Whether its featuring comments or user-submitted content in the show, make the audience feel like the star and they'll be a fan for life.
- Find ways to reward your community (both on and off YouTube) for their loyalty and support of the show.

## Interacting with Fans

- Respond to comments early and often. These first viewers are your core audience and building comments early helps increase the video's ranking in search.
- Make announcements through YouTube Bulletins which will appear in your subscribers feeds.
- Where appropriate, include Calls to Action in your responses or messages, but keep it casual.



# Involve Your Audience



## How-to Steps

### Set Your Own Interaction Strategy

- In whatever way makes sense for you, your content, and your channel, acknowledge the viewers and make them feel important. It could be using social media, focusing on comments, creating weekly fan videos, or including an interaction segment within your regular videos, or a combination of these.

### Create Viewer-centric Content

- Decide whether viewer engagement can be included in your regular videos, or if distinct videos make more sense for you to interact and/or involve the audience.
- Consider creating videos or segments to your content that feature the audience or are centered around engaging with them.

### Utilize the Social Features of the Platform

- Respond to comments, send bulletins, use the moderator tool, and respond to messages from your audience.

### Dedicate Time to Interact After Each Upload

- Whenever you upload a new video, dedicate time to interact with your audience. Message them on social media, and be a part of the early conversation that happens around your videos.

### Ask Your Fans for Feedback and Support

- Ask for feedback when you make changes or try something new. Ask for show ideas or new video concepts.
- Ask viewers for help achieving benchmarks or with programming initiatives.



## YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Community Engagements

Track changes in YouTube Analytics for community actions such as commenting, favoriting, or liking of your videos. The viewers will become more engaged as you interact more with them. Track the performance of viewer-interaction segments by using Audience Retention graphs.

# Outreach and Promotion



Community and Social Media

## Strategy:

Share your content with relevant blogs, sites, and online communities. Leverage your own network of sites to promote other brands. Promote from owned and operated media to YouTube.

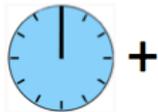
## Why It Works:

Blogs and other sites are always looking for great content to feature to their own audience. External site and internal network traffic can be a significant driver of views for your channel.

## How To Do It:

Create a Blog Roll (external sites and in-network sites) and only share content that is thematically relevant. Target your outreach and build relationships.

### Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

### Effect

- Views
- External Site Traffic
- Video Ranking

### Impact



### Optimization Type



# Outreach and Promotion



Community and Social Media

Don't limit your purview to YouTube. A lot of viewers find content on YouTube through other sites on the Internet. There are tons of sites and blogs that are always looking for great content to write about or feature. Make it easy for these people to promote your videos by reaching out to them with great content that is relevant to their audience.

## Get the Word Out

- Create a comprehensive list of sites, blogs, online influencers (Twitter users), and niche online communities that are relevant to your show for promotional purposes.
- Promote new videos to your site list.
- Internal promotion is easy and effective. If you have access to other sites that overlap thematically and/or demographically, make sure that the editorial teams across your network know what you're up to.

## Build Relationships

- Keep track of what blogs and sites feature your videos and drive views. Consider sharing content with these places first, letting them know they are getting the inside scoop.
- Build a relationship with the editorial teams by thanking them when they repost, and only sharing videos that you truly feel they would want to share with their audience.

## Track Your Brand

- Know where people are talking about your content, or sharing your content. Set Google Alerts for your show name, character names, and any other keywords specific to your show that will help you identify places where your content is appearing or being discussed across the web.



HUFFINGTON POST

GAWKER.TV

Mashable

tumblr.

BuzzFeed

# Outreach and Promotion



Community and Social Media



## TIP

Promotion from print media, television, and your own dot com is an effective way of bringing a new audience to your YouTube channels and adding value to your traditional media.

### TV Promotion

- Your YouTube content can be used as additional bonus content to what you publish on TV.
- By scripting CTAs that drive traffic to YouTube, drive viewership and add subscriptions (e.g., “to see more, go to YouTube.com/ChannelName” “tell us what you think at YouTube.com/ChannelName”).
- Create graphical bumpers that can be used throughout the show to drive traffic
- Use YouTube as a contest platform by asking for video responses or submissions
- Create playlists that link back to particular episodes and promote those playlists in the episode

### Print Promotion

- Mirror your print strategy online. Have a reoccurring magazine column? Create a playlist that parallels the column on YouTube.
- Link between articles and ancillary video content with QR codes in the video and/or links in the video description.

### Use the Player

- Embedding the YouTube player offsite increases the relevancy and performance of the video *on* YouTube.
- Curate your best YouTube content on your own site with the embeddable player
- For a deeper integration, work with your YouTube contact to leverage the API and make YouTube the preferred video platform on your dot com.

# Outreach and Promotion



## How-To Steps

### Create a Promotion Site List

- Use blog directories such as Google Blog Search, Alltop, Technorati, and Guzzle.it to find blogs and sites that are relevant to the type of content you produce.
- Create a list of general blogs with a broad scope in your category. Also, find niche sites that could be relevant to specific episodes. Finding niche blogs to promote tent-pole programming is especially effective.

### Send Videos to Targeted Channels

- Send brief, personalized emails to appropriate contacts and include a short description of the content, why it might be good for their audience, and a link to the video with the embed code. Make a note that they can embed/share if they like it.

### Track the Pick-Up

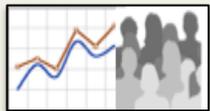
- Set Google Alerts for the name of the video or use other 'online conversation tracking' to help you track where it gets embedded. Check your discovery stats to find sites that are driving traffic.

### Leverage Your Other Media

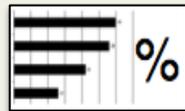
- Promote your YouTube channel from your TV, radio, dot-com, or print content.
- Mirror your brands' programming strategy across all media
- Leverage the YouTube player across your social media sites and dot-coms



## YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Viewership Graph



Discovery Data



Mentions / Google Alerts

Track changes in viewership coming from external sites. You can also use the Discovery metrics to see what % of views is coming from external sites and blogs. Identify key drivers of views and target your outreach there. Track off-site discussions on your content using Google Alerts.

# Other Social Media

## Strategy:

Leverage other social media sites to build viewership on your channel and engage with your audience in new ways.

## Why It Works:

Social media is a great way to turn your fans into a social army that will help you broadcast your content out to their friends.

## How To Do It:

Engage with your audience and promote your YouTube content on the social media sites you use.

### Time Cost



**Moderate:**  
< 1 hour

### Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Video Ranking
- Views

### Impact



### Optimization Type





# Facebook



Community and Social Media

Leverage your Facebook Page to help promote YouTube content and attract fans to your channel. Build, activate and tap into your community of fans on Facebook to drive views, engagements, and subscriptions on YouTube.

## Strategy:

Focus your attention on your Facebook wall, specifically how you post content. Tailor your posts to stimulate engagement by enticing fans to take any or all of the following actions: click, comment, like and share.

## How To Do It:

- Post regularly to your Page and include links to your YouTube videos. Post at least once a day, and include a video link so that your post is shareable.
- Add context to each video you post. Make sure the copy is purposeful and seeks a response: poll your fans, ask questions, and offer incentives for their feedback.
- Don't leave fans hanging! Read and respond to comments to learn about their interests.
- Post behind-the-scenes content or extras to promote new YouTube videos.
- Find ways to repurpose videos from your YouTube archive and post them. e.g. tent-pole or holiday-themed videos.
- Don't forget to direct Facebook fans to your YouTube content and channel.



# Facebook

Examples



## Behind-the-scenes extras to promote videos

Perrier

**Perrier**  
 With more than 11 million views, Le Club Perrier really heat up the summer!! To celebrate the success and to thank our fans, Perrier is proud to present an exclusive preview of the final bonus video – a music video featuring Babe Youth – in all of its steam glory!!

**Le Club Perrier**  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)  
 Share your videos with friends, family, and the world



**Evan Kelman** I think the whole Le Club campaign is a really good, relevent idea  
 July 20 at 1:43pm

**Perrier** Thanks a lot Evan, that's very nice :)  
 July 21 at 9:03am

**Poll, ask questions, respond to comments, offer incentives**  
 Machinima, Funny or Die, Perrier

**Machinima.com**  
 Kicking off our new music video series is an exclusive track from **The Crystal Method** with machinima by Kootra! You can check out Crystal Method this summer on the **Identity Festival**. What artists and machinima directors would you want to see team up for a video?

**The Crystal Method – Play For Real (Exclusive Machinima Music Video)**  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



2 hours ago · Share

**Machinima.com**  
 The Devil's Double is in theaters now and we've got a handful of posters and soundtracks to give away! Who's double would you want to be? We'll pick five winners from the comments below.

**THE DEVIL'S DOUBLE – Trailer**  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

Based on a gripping, unbelievable true story of money, power and opulent decadence, Lionsgate's THE DEVIL'S DOUBLE takes a white-knuckle ride deep into the l...

Friday at 5:17pm · Share

135 people like this.

View all 207 comments

**Funny Or Die**  
 Vote on your favorite video. The winner goes on the Funny Or Die homepage!



# Twitter



Community and Social Media

Build and tap into a prospective community of fans on Twitter to help extend the reach of your YouTube videos, and drive awareness and engagement to your brand.

## Strategy:

A healthy balance of promoting your videos, monitoring conversations about your brand, seeding your content, and interacting with followers, similar users, and super users.

## How To Do It:

- Write clever, clickable tweets that highlight your content, and do so at least 1-3 times per day to stay visible in your followers' feeds.
- Include links to your newest videos in tweets, and be sure to leave enough room for others to retweet. Also, use URL shorteners to track Click-Through-Rate (CTRs).
- @Mention/Retweet other collaborators, super users, and celebrities who appear in your videos.
- Identify and follow peers and relevant super users who may be interested in your content. @Reply them with your video links.
- Use Twitter search to monitor what people say about your videos. Follow them, and seize opportunities to listen, reply, and retweet. Share links, when appropriate.
- Create unique #hashtags for your show and always use them in your tweets.
- Look for other popular #hashtags and relevant trending topics/keywords to tag your tweets.



# Twitter

Examples



Community and Social Media

### Clever, clickable tweets to highlight content, extend reach

Break Originals, ClevverTV

 **Breakcom** Break.com  
When it comes to Google+, I felt exactly the same way the girl in the Google+ Song felt. <http://brk.to/1arx> #googleplus What about you?

 **smosh** Smosh  
Is Facebook Bad For Your Health? [smosh.com/smosh-pit/arti...](http://smosh.com/smosh-pit/arti...) RT if you have a Facebookitus :O  
36 minutes ago

### Mention and Retweet video collaborators

ClaraCMusic, Ryan Higa

 **Ryan Higa** ✓  
**@TheRealRyanHiga** Las Vegas, NV  
*That asian on youtube.*  
<http://youtube.com/nigahiga>

[+ Follow](#)

Tweets Favorites Following Followers Lists

 **ClaraCMusic** Clara Chung ↻ by TheRealRyanHiga  
Launching "The Camel Song" music video with @therealryanhiga in T Minus 10 hours. Are you excited? Make some noise tweeters!  
7 hours ago

### Mention celebs, super users; Use popular #hashtags and trends

ClevverTV

 **ClevverTV** Clevver TV  
It's Getting Hot On #PLL !!! Are you Team Ezra Or Team JD??  
[youtube.com/watch?v=ONe4AP...](http://youtube.com/watch?v=ONe4AP...)  
19 hours ago

 **ClevverTV** Clevver TV  
Our Girl @Sarah\_Hyland Dishes On A New Movie Written By @chriscolfer - Hint: We'll Be Seeing Some Cheerios Action!  
[youtube.com/watch?v=ZpkTOP...](http://youtube.com/watch?v=ZpkTOP...) #Glee  
18 hours ago

Disclaimer: These strategies are sample strategies, not endorsed by YouTube and in no way connected to or sponsored by Twitter.



Creators and Partners should have a personal Google+ account to engage with their followers and YouTube fans. *Note: brand pages coming soon for Google+.* Google+ allows you to interact with your YouTube audience in different ways than you would on YouTube. Using Google+ you can create unique 'circles' for the subsets of your friends or followers and organize them around shared interests. Many of the same best practices for Twitter and Facebook also apply to Google+: be conversational, update often, and reward the most active users.

### Google+ Best Practices

- Post new YouTube uploads to your Google+ profile.
- Find ways to repurpose and share videos from your archive in interesting ways.
- Create circles for other YouTube creators so you can interact and communicate with them separate from your fan base. Use the circles of other creators to find more channels to collaborate with and build promotional opportunities.
- Ask specific questions about the videos or information you post.
- Vary your updates and posts to be both video-centric and conversational.
- Post behind-the-scenes photos or sneak-peaks to promote upcoming YouTube videos.
- Create 'Hangouts' to connect with your fans and interact with them in a small group. Google+ Hangouts are a great way to speak to fans directly and ask for input. You can also watch your videos together in real-time in a Hangout.

### Google+ Is Still Evolving (here are some early ideas)

- Contests to choose 10 fans to participate in a Hangout with content creators
- Use Circles to create more loyal fans – make some social updates to select circles to reward super fans



**Hangouts**

---

Have fun with all your circles using your live webcam.

**Start a hangout**



# Other Social Media

## How-to Steps

### Create and Set-Up Accounts on Social Media Sites

- Create accounts on sites that are relevant to your content and audience. Find niche sites that are specific to your audience.
- Set up your pages and accounts to reflect your YouTube content and channel. Use similar design or branding to unite the different outlets. Use the layouts and settings that will allow and attract the most conversation, engagement, and comments.

### Set a Social Media Strategy for Your YouTube Content

- Determine the best way to build audience for your YouTube channel through other social media sites.
- Decide what content to share on the social media sites and how to interact with your audience in the right ways on each.
- If you use multiple accounts on the same social platform, decide how you're going to leverage each account to extend the reach of your content.

### Post / Share Your Videos

- Make posting your YouTube videos to social media sites part of your YouTube publishing process. Post new uploads, but also find ways to repurpose or reintroduce videos from your archives to your fans on social media sites.
- If you use multiple accounts, determine one main account to post a particular video. Use secondary accounts, when relevant, to repost/share/retweet the original message with attribution. Avoid blasting the same post from every account.
- Accompany each post with questions or other ways to encourage comments.

### Track and Assess

- Track engagements and traffic happening on social media sites and assess how they are translating into views for your content. Experiment with different strategies and find the ways to turn your social media followers into viewers and subscribers to your channel.



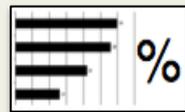
### YouTube Analytics Tracking Tip



Analytics



Analytics



Discovery Data

Monitor your discovery data to track changes coming from external sites such as Facebook and twitter. Use third-party analytics tools that are available for Facebook, twitter and tracking your keywords or links across social media sites. Investigate the 'peaks and valleys' of engagement on social media platforms in the same way you do for YouTube performance.

# Community & Social Media

## Checklist

- Set up accounts and set specific strategies for all social media sites that are important to your content or audience.
- Create and maintain a Blog Roll for your channel. Include niche sites or targeted sites for tent-pole related content.
- Dedicate time and resources to involve and interact with your audience. Perform outreach to blogs, sites and online communities for relevant videos.
- Create content or segments specifically for your audience and the purpose of engaging with them. Include viewer interaction in your videos by asking specific questions, featuring fans, or by addressing the audience in the videos.
- Interact with viewers in the first few hours after your upload new content. Respond to comments and be active on social media sites to build engagement around new uploads.
- Track engagement on social media sites and assess the incoming traffic from those communities to your YouTube content.

---

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# Video Upload Checklist

## Checklist

Every channel's specific approach and strategy to publishing will vary, but below is a simple and useful publishing checklist that covers some of the most important actions required once you upload a video. Making the video is only half the battle, optimizing and engaging with the community after you upload are of equal importance.

### Upload video

#### Upload

- Write detailed and comprehensive metadata following SEO strategies and formatting.
- Create and upload a great, eye-catching thumbnail that is high-resolution.



#### Publish

- Annotate the video with community CTAs, subscribe button, and links to related content.
- Set the video as featured video on your channel page based on how you organize your channel page's uploads.
- Set video as a video response to a popular and relevant video from your channel.
- Add the video to a relevant playlist on your channel. Add to YouTube Show season list, where applicable.



#### Engage and Outreach

- Update your social media channels.
- Outreach to relevant blogs, sites and online communities.
- Engage with the audience on the comments section in the first few hours of publishing.
- 'Like' and 'favorite' the video on your channel in timely increments (e.g. 24hrs later) to have the activity appear in your subscribers feeds.

# Example Links

## Programming and Producing

---

### The First 15 Seconds

- 9 College Humor / Jake & Amir <http://www.youtube.com/show?p=7pKInNFPvLU>
- 9 BBC <http://www.youtube.com/bbc>
- 9 The Philip DeFranco Show <http://www.youtube.com/sxephil>

### Calls to Action (CTAs)

- 13 Starz / How it Should Have Ended <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruMO9SXto0Q&t=220s>
- 13 Showtime / Dexter <http://www.youtube.com/show?p=7ZR4wliKGnw>

### Cross-promotion and Collaboration

- 22 Fremantle / Sorted & Mystery Guitar Man <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSUzzwRZPGY>
- 22 WeezerVEVO and The Muppets Studio <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOIsYA1QDuk>
- 23 CuteWinFail / Fishbowl Media <http://www.youtube.com/cutewinfail>
- 24 FreddieW & Jon Favreau <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71YsRO6G7Ks>
- 24 HBO / True Blood <http://www.youtube.com/trueblood>
- 25 FreddieW and Epic Meal Time <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtWPW8yJtgM>
- 26 Project for Awesome <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUp-GdyYJic>
- 26 Project for Awesome <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiBPkBCL7vY>
- 26 Project for Awesome <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UycjxxvOaE>
- 26 Project for Awesome <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdlI1C0E0zE>
- 26 Project for Awesome <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-6sk2f5urM>

# Example Links

## Publishing and Optimization

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### Metadata

- 36 US Open <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MIm5WgIepE>
- 37 CuteWinFail <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7tgidfHRxk>

### Annotations

- 43 Break Originals <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewMNRzJy2xo&t=176s>
- 44 IndyMogul's Reel Good Show <http://www.youtube.com/indymogul>

### Playlists, Shows, and Video Responses

- 48 The Onion <http://www.youtube.com/show?p=ODPByS4j3g0>
- 49 MeganJulienParken <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSM3Fb1I7mc>
- 49 SecretLifeOfABioNerd <http://www.youtube.com/SecretLifeOfaBioNerd>

### Channel Page Optimization

- 53 Starz / How it Should Have Ended <http://www.youtube.com/HISHEdotcom>
- 53 College Humor / Jake & Amir <http://www.youtube.com/collegehumor>

# Example Links

Appendix

## Community and Social Media

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### Other Social Media

66	Perrier Facebook Page	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/perrier">http://www.facebook.com/perrier</a>
66	Machinima Facebook Page	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/machinima">http://www.facebook.com/machinima</a>
66	Funny Or Die Facebook Page	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/funnyordie">http://www.facebook.com/funnyordie</a>
68	Break.com Twitter Page	<a href="http://twitter.com/#!/Breakcom">http://twitter.com/#!/Breakcom</a>
68	ClevverTV Twitter Page	<a href="http://twitter.com/#!/ClevverTV">http://twitter.com/#!/ClevverTV</a>
68	Ryan Higa Twitter Page	<a href="http://twitter.com/#!/TheRealRyanHiga">http://twitter.com/#!/TheRealRyanHiga</a>