

# Creator Playbook

Version 4



[youtube.com/playbook](https://youtube.com/playbook)



# What's New in this Version

Since we released the first Creator Playbook in July 2011, quite a bit has changed on YouTube. And, as the platform evolves to reflect our new strategies and recommendations for audience development, so too does the Creator Playbook.

## New and Revamped Sections:

- *Live*: YouTube Live gives your fans another reason to tune in. Cover timely events and create new ways for your fans to interact with you.
- *Promotion*: Paying to promote your videos on YouTube can connect your channel with new audiences and convert existing viewers into subscribers.
- *YouTube Analytics*: Uncover key channel insights based on viewers' data and the content they engage with most.
- *Google+*: Leverage Google+ to build viewership and engage with your audience in new ways.
- *Build Your Community*: Interact with your audience, and build a community around your content on YouTube.

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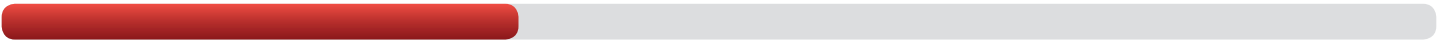
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# Introduction

We're excited to provide our partners with a great resource that compiles important tips, best practices, and strategies to help you build your audience on YouTube. We hope that you find the information helpful to your creative process, and we hope to 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 Creator Playbook and how you should use this resource as a tool to achieve your creative goals.

**"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."**

## **There Are No Rules to Making Great Content**

The Creator Playbook 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 a variety of uses and to encourage creators to innovate and develop their own approach.

## **Be Creative in Applying The Playbook to Your Channel**

We understand that not every strategy or optimization will apply to every creator on YouTube. Each bit of information will apply differently to the myriad of channels, categories, and talented creators that make YouTube so great. The Creator Playbook requires you to be creative in its application. This resource should be a guide for how to think strategically about the content you make and where to focus your optimization efforts. We hope it consistently inspires creators to try new things. Use the Creator Playbook alongside your creativity, passion, and commitment to creating great content; it will not act as a substitute for any of these necessary elements of success.

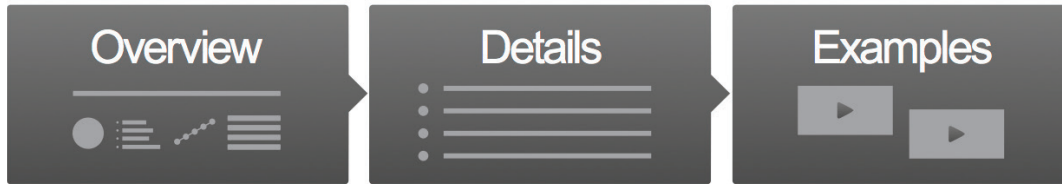
## **There's Always More To Know**

YouTube learns a lot from its creators, 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 Creator Playbook with new strategies, tips and optimizations for you to try. Check back with us often to get these updates so you can continue to build audience and utilize new features in meaningful ways.

**Enjoy!**

# Playbook Structure

The Creator Playbook is structured into three sections: Programming, Optimization, and Community. Each section presents several optimizations or strategies for building engaged audiences on YouTube. These best practices are explained in stages to help you understand each point and guide you through taking action.



## Overview

### Includes:

- Strategy: Brief description
- Why It Works: Reasoning or context
- How To Do It: Short explanation of how to implement

### A Visual Key Guide to:

- Time Cost: Estimates how much time is required.
- Effect: Outlines which metrics are affected by optimization.
- Impact Rating: Estimates how much effect an optimization or strategy will have on outlined metrics.
- Optimization Type: Denotes whether optimization or strategy is production based, achieved during publishing, or created through community involvement.

## Details

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

## Examples

- Presents examples and/or different methods or variations.

# Icons & Key Definitions

## Progress Bar

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



## Impact Rating

Moderate  
1 out of 5

Strong  
3 out of 5

Major  
5 out of 5



## Time Cost



**Minimal**  
0 – 5 Minutes



**Moderate**  
Less than 1 hour



**Medium**  
1+ hours



**Major**  
Full day or more

## Effect

List of metrics the optimization can influence: viewership, subscribers, watch-time, click-through-rate (CTR), engagement, etc.

## Optimization Type

**Pre-Production**

To implement before going into production

**Production**

To implement during production process

**Publishing**

To implement at the time of video uploading

**Post-Publishing**

To implement after video has been published

# Section One

## Programming

*Build a cohesive channel strategy and viewing experience.*

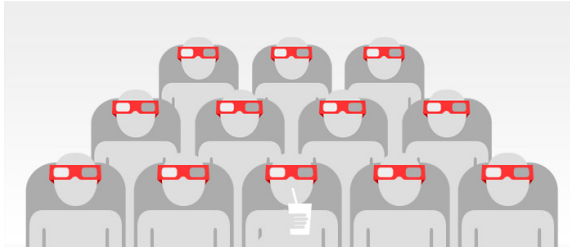
Gone are the days when YouTube was exclusively a place for one-hit viral videos. If you're a creator interested in building a successful channel on YouTube, you've got to consider your channel's long-term plan. What does this mean, and how do you execute it? The answer largely lies in developing a viable programming strategy.

"Programming" means creating a cohesive viewing experience across videos on your channel, where each video fits into the larger channel vision. It encapsulates both pre-production and production activities; what type of content to produce and how to publish and share it.

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# Captivate Your Audience



## Strategy:

Hook viewers from the start of your video to keep them watching.

## Why It Works:

Videos and channels that retain their viewers create the best viewing experience. YouTube optimizes search and discovery for videos that increase watch time on the site.

## How To Do It:

Increasing watch-time can be accomplished through video production techniques that include effective editing, quality production, and attention to video structure.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Retention
- Annotation CTR
- Views

## Optimization

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing



# Captivate Your Audience

## Hook your viewers

Many viewers decide whether they'll keep watching a video within the first few seconds. Hook viewers early, and keep their attention.

- Make the first shot fascinating.
- Address the audience immediately.
- Tell them what they're watching.
- Spark their curiosity.
- Ask a question.
- Tease the rest of the video.
- Keep branding to less than five seconds, unless it's hilarious.

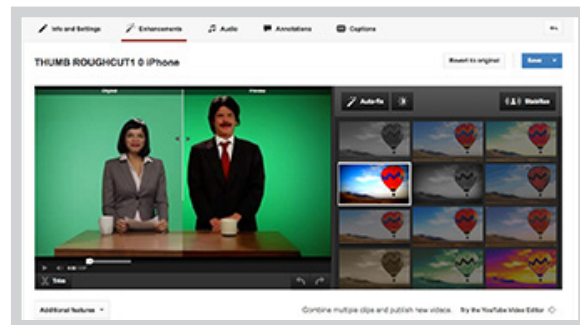


*Use the YouTubeVideo Editor tool to edit videos, add effects or enhancements, and correct minor problems.*

## Keep them watching

Follow your video's catchy opening with awesomeness. The right length for a video is exactly as long it keeps people glued to the screen. That said, basic production techniques help!

- Pay attention to lighting, sound quality, and shot-framing.
- Make sure the audio is clear and balanced.
- Properly light your video.
- Include only necessary footage in your videos. Cut, cut, cut! But...
- Avoid sloppy editing. It can be more distracting than no editing.
- Use varying camera angles, cut-aways and other visuals to make your videos dynamic. Long, static shots can make a video drag.
- Add transitions, overlays and graphics to help convey your story.



# Captivate Your Audience

## Optimize for long-form content

- Pique viewer interest for what's coming up through graphics, in-video messaging, or other creative techniques.
- For non-linear narratives, use annotations and graphics to allow viewers to jump to specific sections of the video. Time codes that you include in the video description will automatically link to the video time code.
- Create clips that pull out the best short-form content to act as stand-alone videos, maximizing your content.
- Consider creating promotional clips or teasers to attract more viewers to the long-form video. Annotate and link these clips to the full-length versions.

## Optimize for serial viewing

If you create narratives that extend across multiple videos, sweet! But be sure to use these tricks to keep your viewers happy -- and not disoriented.

- Provide context at the beginning of each video. New viewers should quickly grasp that they're viewing one part of a larger series.
- Recap previous episodes if possible.
- Drive viewers to the next sequential video, a trailer, or a playlist using in-video messaging, graphics and annotations.
- Provide information about the series, its schedule, release dates and links in the video description.
- Include episode or part numbers at the end of your keyword-driven video title.

# Calls to Action



## Strategy:

Direct viewers during the video to take actions that can help build engagement and audience.

## Why It Works:

Online video is an interactive experience. Prompting your viewers to take action will help them feel more invested in your work.

## How To Do It:

Accomplished through production and/or annotations.

## Impact

4 out of 5



## Time Cost



Minimal:  
0 – 5 Minutes

## Effect

- Annotation CTR
- Subscribers
- Views
- Comments

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

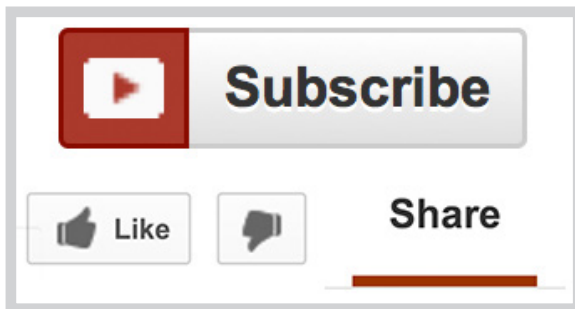
Post-Publishing

# Calls to Action

Watching video online is an interactive and social experience. Content creators rely on the actions of their audience to help them succeed - but many viewers won't act unless you prompt them. Your videos should have specific Calls to Action (CTAs). CTAs should be minimal and simple; too many prompts can cause confusion. Make it as easy as possible for viewers to act.

## Types of Action

- **Subscribe.** Invite viewers to subscribe to your channel and give them good reasons to do it!
- **Watch more.** Direct viewers to the next episode, a new video or a playlist.
- **Likes/share.** Ask viewers to like or share a video – it gets broadcast to the community and will bring new viewers to your work.
- **Comments.** Ask for comments! Posing specific questions will boost participation.



## How to include CTAs

- **Direct Host-Mentions.** Talk directly to the camera to get your audience to listen and act.
- **Annotations.** Annotations – clickable text overlaid on your video – are one of the most versatile ways to engage with your viewers.
- **In-video graphics.** Eye-catching graphics can encourage subscribing, commenting or sharing. Use the spotlight annotation to make these graphics clickable once the video is published.
- **End-cards.** Create an end-card that directs viewers to act. Create a template that builds consistency into the end of your videos.
- **Video Descriptions.** Put in-depth descriptions about your videos (and links to your site and social media) here.

*Depending on your message, place CTAs at the beginning, middle or end of the video.*

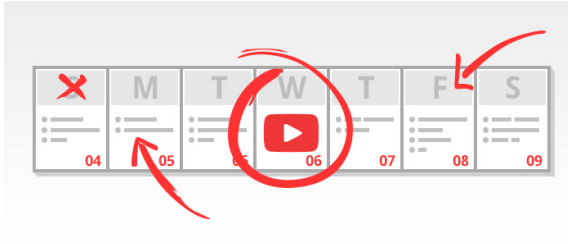


*Specific prompts are a great way to guide the conversation that will take place in the comments.*



Remember that it is a violation of YouTube Terms of Service and Community Guidelines to incentivize clicks on video features in any way (i.e. give-aways or prizes for liking or favoriting a video).

# Regular Schedule & Frequency



## Strategy:

Release videos frequently on a recurring schedule. React to trending topics with relevant content.

## Why It Works:

Frequent uploads and other platform engagement keep your channel feed active and retain audience interest.

## How To Do It:

Find the right release schedule for your audience. Maximize the content developed during production shoots.

## Impact

4 out of 5



## Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

## Effect

- Subscriber Views
- Subscribers
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

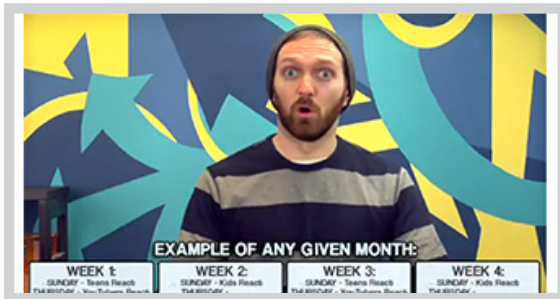
Post-Publishing

# Regular Schedule & Frequency

Once you hook your viewers, give them a reason to keep coming back. New material, regularly scheduled, will do the trick. Feed your channel's feed!

## How to “feed” your feed

- Upload frequently. Aim to publish a minimum of one video per week.
- Keep your feed active. Favorite, like and comment on other channels' videos. Manage and update your playlists.
- Engage during the off-season. If you take a break from regular programming, stay connected to your audience during the down-time.



## Get the most from your productions

- Shoot lots of footage, and package it creatively.
- Recycle current content into making-of videos, bloopers, behind-the-scenes, recaps, best of countdowns, trailers, vlogs, comment videos and more.
- Create shorter versions of long-form content to act as teasers, trailers or previews.



*Use annotations, playlists and other links to get viewers from the preview video to the actual video.*

# Regular Schedule & Frequency

## Set a schedule

YouTube isn't TV, but some of the principles that drive television viewership apply to the web. Regular release schedules and timely publishing are both important for online video.

- Release videos on a set day of the week, if possible; audiences like structure.
- If your channel hosts multiple shows, create a programming schedule. Communicate it to your audience in the video, on your channel, and in video descriptions. Use YouTube's scheduled publishing feature to build your schedule.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	Dec 1	2	3
4	5 Mon. Episode	6	7 How-To Episode	8	9 Fan-Friday Video	10
11	12 Mon. Episode	13	14 How-To Episode	15	16	17
18	19 Mon. Episode	20	21 How-To Episode	22	23 Best of 2011 Eps	24
25	26 Mon. Episode	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

## Stay timely

- Timing matters. News and politics, sports, commentary, and opinion content can thrive on topicality.
- Don't be too locked into your schedule: respond to rising search trends, viral videos or breaking news.
- Add reactive and timely supplemental content to your regular programming; it can help your channel find new audiences.

**Privacy Settings** ?

Scheduled ▼

Keep private, then go public later

Jan 25, 2013      01:30 PM ▼

(GMT-0500) Local Time ▼

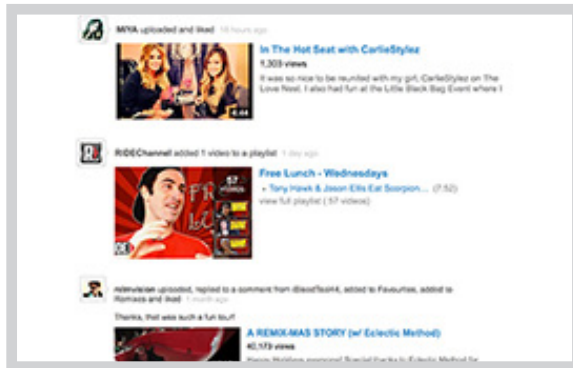


*Use YouTube's scheduled publishing feature to build your schedule.*

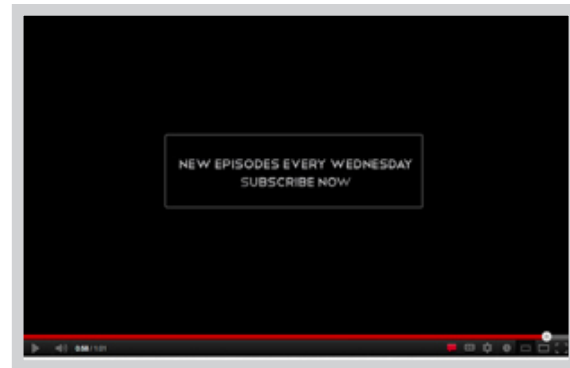
# Regular Schedule & Frequency

## Examples

**Maintaining an Active Feed with Uploads and More**  
/MIYA, /RIDEChannel, /MikeReIm



**Communicate Your Schedule**  
/hplusdigitalseries





# Playlists



## Strategy:

Create and manage playlists to organize your videos and provide an extended viewing experience.

## Why It Works:

Playlists make it easy for viewers to lean back and watch multiple videos with minimal effort. Playlists can increase watch-time.

## How To Do It:

Create playlists for different sets of videos. Optimize the playlists' metadata, and direct viewers to these playlists via annotations and links. Publish playlists as channel posts to your channel feed.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



**Moderate:**  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Views
- Watch-time
- Annotation CTR

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Playlists

Playlists should be an essential part of your channel strategy. Not only do they increase watch-time, they create another asset that will appear in search results and in Suggested Videos. You can create playlists using your own videos, other videos, or a combination of both.

## When should I make a playlist?

- To group a set of videos that you want viewers to enjoy in a single session or in a particular order.
- To group videos around a theme or a tent-pole event.
- To separate multiple shows into playlists and feature on your channel.
- To combine your most-viewed videos with new uploads.
- To create “Best of” playlists lure (and entertain!) potential subscribers.

## Playlist best practices

- Choose a strong thumbnail for your playlist. Make it pop!
- If a playlist needs context, upload a short, snappy intro video.

- Make your metadata work for you. A strong title, tags and description will help people find your playlist. (See Metadata.)



*Playlists can be embedded on other websites and in social media. They're a great way to share your work across the web.*

## Promote your playlists

- Feature your playlists on your channel page.
- Share playlists with the channel post feature. Add context!
- Add videos to the playlist. Every addition can show up in your feed.
- Use in-video messaging, annotations, end-cards and links to send viewers to a playlist.
- Invite comments. Playlist comments automatically link back to the playlist -- they become organic promotion.



*To link to a video in Autoplay playlist mode, click the share button and copy and paste that URL. The video link will launch the whole playlist.*

# Playlists

## Advanced playlist features and strategies

**Feature:** Start and End Time

**Find it:** In Edit Playlist

**What it does:** Sets the “in” and “out” points for any video in a playlist. Allows you to create a seamless curated experience, highlighting and connecting select moments in videos. This feature is especially useful if your videos include repetitive opening titles and credits; you can use it to omit these portions of your videos.

**Strategy:** Hosted playlist

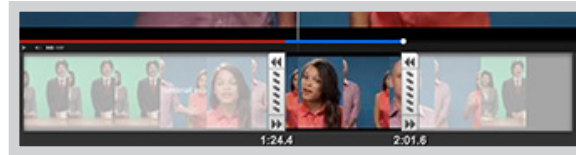
**How it works:** Create an intro video and/or interstitial videos to link videos in a playlist. You can upload your own interstitials or create them within Edit Playlist.

**Feature:** Series playlist

**Find it:** Mark appropriate playlists as a “series” in the playlist settings page.

**What it does:** Helps viewers watch more of your videos. When you group videos in a series playlist, YouTube will help your viewers find more episodes in the series and a link to the whole playlist.

- Use series playlists for groups of videos that are related to one another or should be watched in order, such as episodes in a recurring series.
- Pay special attention to your playlist title since it will appear next to your videos.

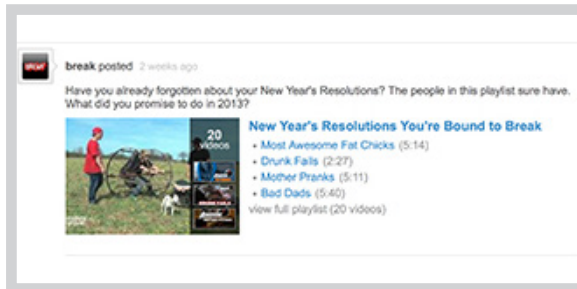


*Playlists function differently across different devices, so consider you mobile audience when crafting a playlist strategy.*

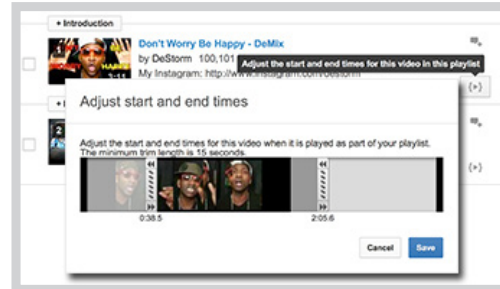
# Playlists

## Examples

### Channel Post with Playlist Attached /Break



### 'Start and End Time' Interface /Destorm



### Playlists with In and Out Points /SpaceLab



# Tent-pole Programming



## Strategy:

Create, release, and/or package content that is themed around tent-pole events.

## Why It Works:

Tent-pole events capitalize on search trends and audience interests.

## How To Do It:

Create and publish content according to a programming calendar. Use playlists and other packaging to position your content for tent-pole events.

## Impact

4 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Promotion
- Views
- Discovery
- External Site Traffic

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

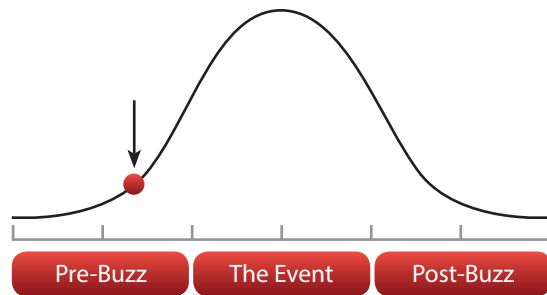
Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Tent-pole Programming

Why does Discovery Channel have Shark Week every year? Why are scary movies released around Halloween? Why do talk shows have relationship experts on just before Valentine's Day? The answer: tent-pole programming.

Tent-pole events are the cultural milestones that organize our viewing habits throughout the year: major holidays, big sporting events, movie releases and more. Any channel can participate in tent-pole events; they're a great way to tap into the larger cultural conversation – and the promotional and audience development opportunities don't hurt, either!



Movies, Holidays, Culture & Sports

## Getting Started

- Identify tent-pole events that are relevant to your audience.
- Develop a programming calendar covering all the videos you are going to create or curate for the event.
- Create original videos for the tent-pole using appropriate thumbnails and metadata to capitalize on search trends.
- Repackage old videos in new ways.
- Use playlists to organize your videos or curate other content relevant to the event.

## Get Ahead of the Buzz

- Use the "Explore" tool at [Google.com/trends](https://www.google.com/trends) to gauge how much early and sustained interest there is around an event.
- Release tent-pole related videos several days before an event. The "pre-buzz" leading up to an event is just as important as (or more important than) the actual event.
- Reach out to blogs early with your tent-pole related content.

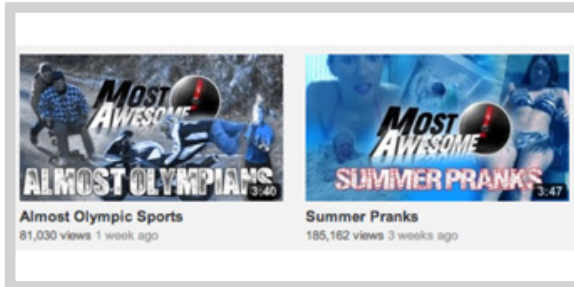


*Titles and tags can help rebrand a video for tent-pole events. When possible, make use of your archives.*

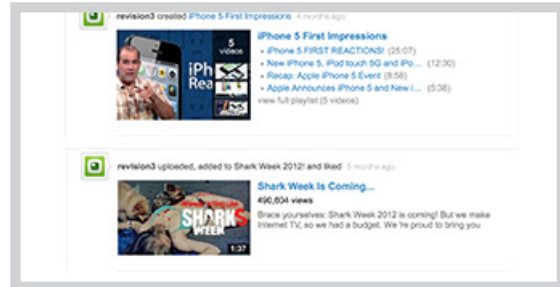
# Tent-pole Programming

## Examples

Tent-pole related videos  
/Break



Tent-pole curation in the feed  
/Revision3



How Will You Do it?

# YouTube Live



## Strategy:

YouTube Live gives your fans another reason to tune in. Cover timely events, and create new ways for your fans to interact with you.

## Why It Works:

Live broadcasts are a great way to build an engaged, loyal audience through subscriber growth.

## How To Do It:

Test live functionality, market the event on and off-site, integrate Calls to Action, clip out content, and upload clipped content to your channel.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



Major:  
Full Day or More

## Effect

- Subscribers
- Engagement

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing



# YouTube Live

YouTube Live lets you livestream large music, news, and cultural events, and interact with your fans in a way that's not possible with regular YouTube videos. Let's dive into the steps to set up, promote, and execute a live event.

Think about your YouTube Live event in stages:

- Before the event
- During the event
- After the event

## Before a Live Event

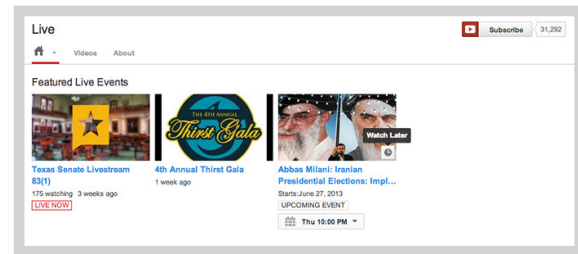
Live events appeal to your most engaged fans. Remember, a livestream is only viewable for a limited time period, so make sure your audience knows when to tune in!

### Test, test, test (and test some more)

- Get familiar with the technical setup of a livestream before scheduling an event.
- Test everything well in advance of your event; you don't want to let down your audience by having technical difficulties.
- Your channel must be in good standing to publish a live event.

## Schedule the livestream

- The metadata of your scheduled live event is important. Add a great title, thumbnail, and an optimized description.
- Custom thumbnails and titles are especially important for live events due to their placement on your channel, in channel sections, in an email to your subscribers when the event is live, and on [youtube.com/live](https://youtube.com/live).



- Promote the Live event on G+ by creating an event and making that event available "on air". By showing additional fields you can reveal a YouTube URL to your G+ followers.

# YouTube Live

## Create a trailer or teaser video

- A trailer lets your subscribers know about the event by appearing in the channel feed. A few key points as you craft your trailer:
- Include the important stuff - when the live event is happening, and for how long.
- Feature the host/talent from the livestream.
- Link to the scheduled event in the trailer's description. Once the event is live, swap in the livestream video URL.

### Tip

*Use the trailer you create to promote the livestream through paid promotion.*

## Optimize the Channel

- Create and feature a playlist or section on your channel that assembles videos related to the livestream.
- If creating a playlist, use the notes field of the playlist to add commentary about the live event.
- Highlight the livestream trailer video in the Welcome Trailer module on your channel.
- In the days leading up to the livestream, use InVideo programming to promote the trailer.

### Tip

*When your live event is published, your subscribers receive an email with your thumbnail and title. Make these look and sound awesome!*

# YouTube Live

## During the Live Event

Though YouTube Live is primarily used to push content to viewers, there is still an opportunity to build Calls to Action into the content to turn viewers into channel subscribers.

- Make sure that InVideo Programming is promoting the livestream when the livestream is live. When scheduling the livestream, you can schedule InVideo Programming to do this automatically. In order for this feature to work, the live event must be set to public (unlisted or private live events will not be promoted through InVideo Programming).
- Calls to Action need to be edited into the actual production of the event, as Live does not currently support annotations. These Calls to Action could be scripted, or if you have the editing capability, edited into the top or bottom third of the broadcast.
- Pay attention to the live comments! Give the people what they want, whether it's a certain camera angle, a song, a question to be answered, or for more/less of some topic.

- Live events can be a powerful driver of new subscriptions. Ask for subscribers and tease your channel's content during the event.
- Let viewers know when the footage from the live event will be uploaded to the channel. You can do this in the video itself, in the video description, and in the comments of the video.
- Make sure that you have staff to keep the event on schedule, read and respond to social media, and serve as a connection between online reaction and the host.



*Plan for dead-air during a live event.  
What stunts or audience questions can you address during lulls in the action or performance?*

# YouTube Live

## After the Live Event

In the days after a live event, consider uploading the best clips from the event. Clipped content help fans relive the most memorable parts, and also drives viewership and watch time.

- Secure necessary content rights to rebroadcast clipped and edited versions of the live event.
- Edit the live event into separate videos that each touch on a unique theme or topic. Your video title should pique the interest of potential viewers; "Celebrity Says Something" is much more engaging than "Part 2 of Live Event."
- Upload the archived content from music performances soon after the live event. Include the event venue, date, band and song info in the title.
- Set an upload schedule to publish the archived footage if the amount of live content might be overwhelming as one upload.

## YouTube Live or Hangouts On Air (HOA)?

With YouTube Live, and a lot of planning, testing, and promotion, you can produce a broadcast-quality live event. Don't have enough time to pull off a live event? HOA builds fan engagement by creating a highly interactive, more casual fan experience, and they don't require as much setup time. Learn more in [Google+](#).

**Note:** Live is enabled for all creators who have at least 1000 subscribers; more information can be found on our [blog](#).

# Programming

## Checklist

- ☐ Create content that is unique, compelling, and entertaining or informative.
- ☐ Captivate your viewer in the first 15 seconds, and keep them watching throughout the video.
- ☐ Include specific Calls to Action in the video or through annotations.
- ☐ Set a recurring schedule for your uploads, and maximize your production investments.
- ☐ Utilize playlists to create a satisfying long-form experience for your viewers.
- ☐ Create a programming calendar. Create content around tent-pole events that are important to your audience.
- ☐ Create a channel experience that guides viewers across multiple videos and communicates everything your channel has to offer.
- ☐ Use YouTube Live to cover timely events. Remember to test the live functionality, market the event on and off-site, integrate Calls to Action and clip out content, and upload clipped content to your channel.

# Section Two

## Optimization

*Ensure your videos will reach the widest audience possible.*

Your video is creative, insightful, and spot-on for your YouTube audience. Now it's time to sit back and watch the viewcount rise, right? Not quite. Remember, a ton of great content lives on YouTube. Creating a stellar video is crucial, but it's only half the battle.

To help your videos and channel succeed on the platform, you've got to optimize them. This means developing an intimate understanding of how audiences discover and engage with your videos, and using all available tools to take advantage of these insights. You'll also need to monitor performance on both a channel and video level and adjust your strategy as necessary.

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# Metadata



## Strategy:

Write optimized titles, tags and descriptions for your content.

## Why It Works:

Metadata helps YouTube index your content. This is critical to building views from search and suggested videos.

## How To Do It:

Use optimized keywords and formatting when writing metadata for your videos.

## Impact

5 out of 5



## Time Cost



Minimal:  
0 – 5 Minutes

## Effect

- Search Traffic
- Views
- Suggested Video Traffic
- Subscribers

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Metadata

YouTube is the world's second-largest search engine, and it uses metadata – your video's title, tags and description – to index your video correctly. To maximize your presence in search, promotion, suggested videos and ad-serving, make sure your metadata is well optimized.

## Title

Make it compelling – this is your video's headline. Title and thumbnails are often the primary elements driving a viewer's decision of what they'll watch next. If your video's title showed up in a search, would you click on it?

- Always represent your content accurately.
- Offer keywords first, branding at the end.
- For serial content, add the episode number to the end of the title.
- Create a title that reinforces the thumbnail - make sure that together they tell a cohesive story.
- Update video titles so they continue to grab views.

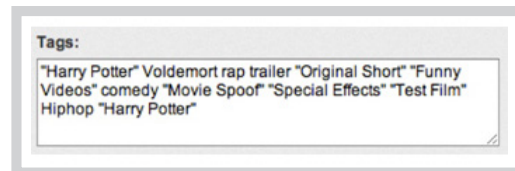
### Tip

*Avoid titles that trick viewers into clicking the video. This will cause drop-offs in the first few seconds of your video and will negatively impact your video's watch-time.*

## Tags

Tags are descriptive keywords that will help people find your videos. Create a set of standard tags for your channel that can be applied to any video you publish. (E.g. filmmaking, animation, comedy, "Funny Videos," "Pet Videos," etc.)

- Include a mix of both general and specific tags.
- Use enough tags to thoroughly and accurately describe the video.
- Update catalogue videos' tags when new search trends emerge.
- Properly format tags to ensure proper indexing of your video.
- Include keywords from your title in your video's tags.



### Tip

*Update the metadata on older videos if title, tags or descriptions are not optimized. This can increase views even if the video's been public for a long time.*



# Metadata

## Description

Only the first few sentences of your description will appear in search results or above the fold on a watch page – so make them count! Follow a template for all of your video descriptions to create consistency.

### A video description should:

- Accurately describe your video in one or two concise sentences.
- Describe your channel and link to your channel page.
- Drive viewers to subscribe (and include a subscribe link).
- Link to other episodes or related videos and playlists.
- Include links to your site and social media presence.

### A video description may:

- Link to sites, videos, channels or users referenced in your video.
- Include your channel's release schedule.
- Include links to time-codes in the video for long-form content.
- Include a recurring keyword tagline. The keyword tagline is a group of sentences that describe your channel. They should include several search-driven keywords. Repeating this tagline in episode descriptions will inform first-time viewers about your channel.



*YouTube's new 'metadata defaults' feature when you upload allows you to create templates for your metadata and ensure important text or links are always included.*




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

# Metadata


## Examples

### Thumbnails and metadata for serial content /Hplusdigitalseries


H+ The Digital Series: Complete First Season



**H+ Episode 1: Driving Under**  
by H+ The Digital Series  
1,230,177 views  
CC



**H+ Episode 2: On Their Level**  
by H+ The Digital Series  
511,431 views  
CC



**H+ Episode 3: Prophetess**  
by H+ The Digital Series  
552,768 views  
CC

### Video Descriptions with links and channel information

**Uploaded on Oct 23, 2012**  
Subscribe for weekly episodes: <http://www.goo.gl/hqZhX>

Watch this episode and more in my 'How-to Rap' playlist:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEpfyC...>

In this episode, I teach you how to rap like Black Thought from The Roots highlighting some of his techniques he's used over the years.

This video is part of my weekly series "how to Rap" - a comedy show where you also learn the tips and tricks of crafting rap lyrics. You can also learn about beat-boozing and other interesting facts about hip-hop music. Come back every Tuesday for new episodes!

Visit my channel for more videos:  
<http://www.youtube.com/howtorapnow>

Subscribe to get notified about my latest videos:  
<http://www.goo.gl/hqZhX>

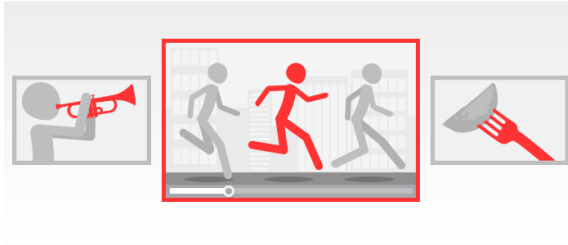
Category

People & Blogs

License

Standard YouTube License

# Thumbnail Optimization



## Strategy:

Create high-quality, custom thumbnails for your videos that accurately represent the content.

## Why It Works:

Thumbnails act as miniature marketing posters for your videos – they attract viewers to your content and compel them to click through to watch.

## How To Do It:

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

## Impact

5 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Search Traffic
- Views
- Suggested Video Traffic

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Thumbnail Optimization

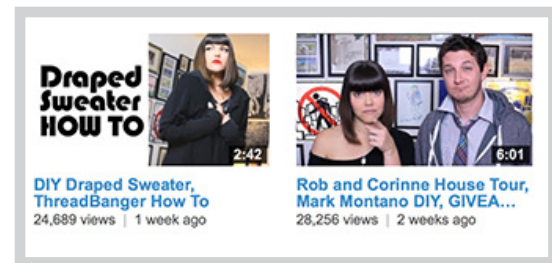
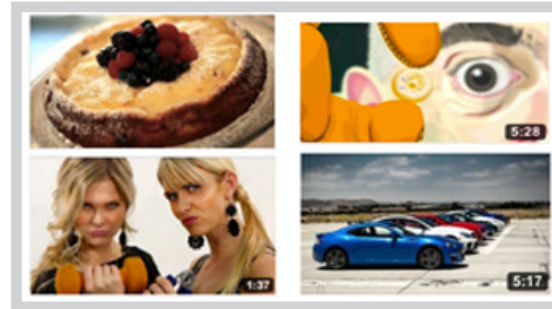
Thumbnails show up in different sizes and formats all across the platform, and outside of it. Make sure you've got a strong, vibrant image that pops no matter what size it is.

## Visual Guidelines

- Clear, in-focus, hi-resolution (640px x 360px min., 16:9 aspect ratio)
- Bright, high-contrast
- Close-ups of faces
- Visually compelling imagery
- Well-framed, good composition
- Foreground stands out from background
- Looks great at both small and large sizes
- Accurately represents the content

## General Guidelines

- When shooting a video, take shots that will make great thumbnails
- Always upload custom thumbnails with the video file
- Make sure the thumbnail is not overly sexually provocative
- Design thumbnails that reinforce your videos' titles
  - make sure that together they tell a cohesive story.



**Tip**

*Upload high-resolution thumbnails so they appear crisp and clear wherever viewers happen to see them.*

# Thumbnail Optimization

## Metadata and Thumbnails on the 'Watch Page'

### Examples of Watch Page Placements

- Suggested Videos – Algorithmically generated by YouTube
- Video End Screen – Algorithmically generated by YouTube
- Video Responses – Creator-generated
- Playlist Runner – When watching in playlist mode, videos appear alongside the video player

## Metadata and Thumbnails Across the Site & Devices

### Channel Page Placements

Playlists show in the right column and on the videos tab. Featured Tab thumbnails are much larger than elsewhere on site.

### Suggested Video Placement

Thumbnails appear in the right column that recommends additional videos for viewers to enjoy.

### The Guide and Channel Feed

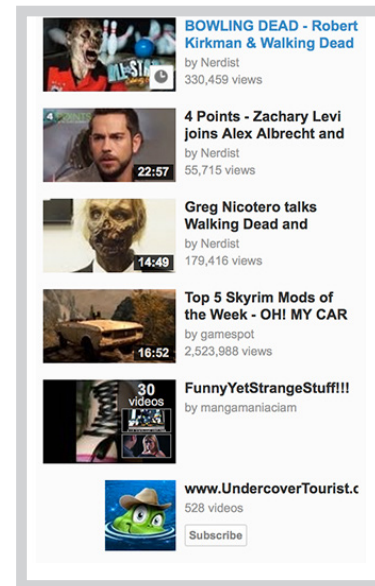
Channel icon appears prominently in the Guide. Thumbnails appear in subscriber feeds whenever new videos are uploaded or playlists are created.

### Search

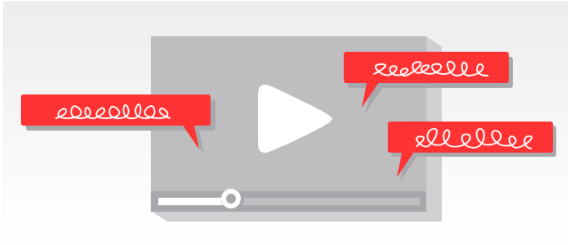
Video thumbnail, the first 60 characters of their titles, and ~140 characters of their descriptions appear in search results.

### Mobile

Primarily thumbnail-driven given the limited real estate.



# Annotations



## Strategy:

Use annotations on your videos to increase viewership, engagement, and subscribers.

## Why It Works:

Annotations are unique to YouTube. They can drive viewers to more content, increase community actions on your videos, and attract new subscribers.

## How To Do It:

Add relevant and helpful annotations to all your videos after upload. Use annotations on archive videos to direct traffic to new initiatives or content.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Annotation CTR
- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

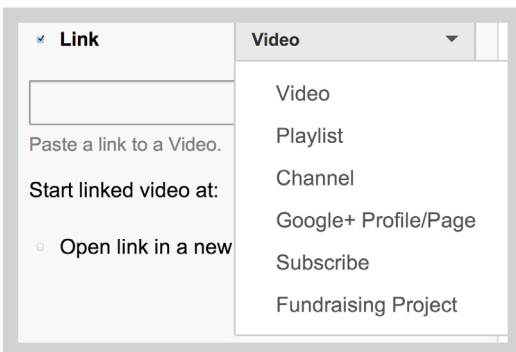
Post-Publishing

# Annotations

Annotations are clickable text overlays on YouTube videos. Annotations are used to boost engagement, give more information, and aid in navigation. Be inventive! Producers are consistently finding new, creative uses for annotations.

## Common Uses

- Ask viewers to like, favorite or share a video.
- Ask a specific question to enhance viewer engagement.
- Make it easy for viewers to subscribe right from your videos.
- Create a table of contents for long-form videos.
- Link to related videos or content you reference in the video.
- Link to other videos in the series.
- Link to other videos, playlists, channels or full versions of shorter video clips.
- Make areas of your video clickable and interactive.
- Highlight your dot com or merchandise store.
- Link to your social media presence.
- Direct viewers of older videos to newly uploaded content.
- Place hidden “Easter eggs” or interactive games in your videos.
- Add text clarification to a specific part of the video.



The image shows a screenshot of the YouTube annotation interface. On the left, there is a 'Link' tab with a checkmark. Below it is a text input field with the placeholder 'Paste a link to a Video.' and the label 'Start linked video at:'. Below the input field is a checkbox labeled 'Open link in a new' with a small square icon to its left. On the right, there is a 'Video' dropdown menu that is open, showing a list of options: 'Video', 'Playlist', 'Channel', 'Google+ Profile/Page', 'Subscribe', and 'Fundraising Project'.



*Controlling the text, placement, timing and link URLs are all in your hands. Get creative and optimize for the highest engagement!*

# Annotations

## Best Practices

- Avoid annotations in the lower third of the video; the advertisement overlay can obscure them.
- Also avoid annotations along the very top of the frame. Embedded players may obscure placement of these annotations.
- Don't obstruct the actual content. Make sure annotations add value and do not get in the way of the viewing experience.
- Don't bombard the viewer. This can feel "spammy" and may have an adverse effect.
- When appropriate, set annotations to open a new window when clicked. Be careful! Don't take viewers away from a video too soon.
- Repeat "subscribe" solicitations and other CTAs at the end of the episode.
- Annotations at the end of a video should open in the same window.
- Use your best judgment (and Analytics) to determine the timing, placement, style and number of annotations included in your videos.

Be creative! The annotation is a flexible feature that's unique to YouTube – and there are still many uses yet to be discovered.

## Spotlight Annotations

Most annotation types are self-explanatory. Spotlight annotations stand out because they allow creators to subtly create clickable areas within a video. The text only appears when a viewer hovers over it with the mouse; a light outline shows when the viewer's not hovering. This is a great way to include unobtrusive but clickable annotations.



*When linking to a video that you want to play within its playlist add "&list=playlist ID HERE" to the end of the url.*



# Annotations

## InVideo Programming Annotations

Unlike regular annotations, InVideo Programming allows you to promote both your channel or any video on YouTube across all your uploads. How InVideo Programming works:

- When promoting videos, pulls in the thumbnail as the annotation. Videos with optimized thumbnails perform better.
- Ability to upload a custom, transparent square image to promote your channel. Unsubscribed viewers who hover over the channel image have the ability to subscribe to your channel without interrupting the video.

- You can set InVideo Programming to appear at the beginning or end of every video.
- Only available to channels that are in good standing.
- InVideo Programming annotations are viewable on mobile devices.

For more information on where to edit InVideo Programming visit the YouTube Help Center.

### Example Uses:

- Promote your most recent upload
- Promote a tentpole event or collaboration video
- Promote the first episode in a series
- Promote your channel with a custom image

# Channel Page Optimization



## Strategy:

Create a cohesive and compelling channel experience that will turn first-time visitors into long-term subscribers.

## Why It Works:

A well-organized channel page and robust channel metadata will make your channel a richer destination for both current and potential subscribers.

## How To Do It:

Optimize channel branding and metadata, create organizational sections and a channel trailer, and broadcast to subscribers through the feed.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Channel Views
- Channel Discovery
- Subscribers
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Channel Page Optimization

Channels appear on YouTube more often and in more varied placements than ever before. Optimize your channel for placement in search, related channels, browse channels and the feed so you'll engage current and potential subscribers across YouTube.

## Channel Name

- Your channel name will appear across the site in search, suggested channel and channel browser placements.
- Your channel name is distinct from your channel URL; the name can be edited from the channel page.
- Pick a channel name that is short, memorable and gives your audience an idea of what your channel is about.

## Channel Description

- The first few words of your channel description appear most frequently across the site so highlight your most important content upfront.
- Accurately describe your channel.
- Use relevant keywords in the description.
- Include your upload schedule, especially if you host multiple content types or series.

## Example of a great description

Adult Swim: "Adult Swim is your late-night home for animation and live-action comedy. Enjoy some of your favorite shows, including Robot Chicken, Venture Bros, Tim and Eric, Aqua teen, Childrens Hospital, Delocated, Metalocalypse, Squidbillies, and more. Watch some

playlists. Fast forward, rewind, pause. It's all here. And remember to visit [Adultswim.com](http://Adultswim.com) for all your full episode needs. We know you wouldn't forget, but it never hurts to make sure."

## Channel Icon

- Upload a square, high-resolution (800px x 800px) image that is recognizable at smaller resolutions. This image will be your channel's icon throughout the site.
- Use text sparingly; it can be illegible at smaller resolutions.

## Channel Art

- Create customized, visually-compelling channel art. Use the channel page and use the channel art tool to choose how the image appears on desktop, mobile, and TV.
- Channel art should reflect your channel's personality. Make the audience feel like they're connecting with a person or character and not just a brand.
- Add website and social media links to the About tab. These links can be overlaid on desktop channel art.
- Check how your channel looks in search, related channels and the channel browser. Do your channel icon, channel name and channel art do a good job of describing your channel to potential fans?



**Tip**

*Associate your official website with your YouTube channel.*

# Channel Page Optimization

YouTube channel pages display videos in two ways: through Browse or the Activity Feed. The Activity Feed broadcasts channel activity to your subscribers. To learn more, see “Maintaining the Channel Feed”.

In Browse, subscribed and unsubscribed viewers see different versions of your channel. The unsubscribed view is your first opportunity to convince potential fans to subscribe.

## Subscribed View

- Subscribed viewers see personalized recommendations of “What to Watch Next,” based on their viewing history. In the default view, subscribers will see videos they haven’t previously viewed.
- Your most recent feed posts will appear on your channel page.
- Promoting a video with InVideo Programming will push that video more frequently to “What to Watch Next.” see “Programming”
- Channels listed in the Other Channels module will be listed as “Suggested” when a user subscribes to your channel.

## Unsubscribed View

- Unsubscribed viewers will see your channel trailer first. Enable the channel trailer view and upload a channel trailer.
- Keep your trailer short. You should be able to pitch your channel to a new viewer quickly.
- Show, don’t tell. If you’re a comedy channel, make a funny promotional video. If you’re an extreme sports channel, incorporate a trick into your video. Your channel trailer is your elevator pitch to potential subscribers: How can you convince first-time viewers to subscribe?
- Ask viewers to subscribe. Any CTAs should leave time for the viewer to take action before the video finishes.



*If the channel trailer view is not enabled, unsubscribed viewers will just see your sections.*

# Channel Page Optimization

## Sections

Sections function as the main organizational tool for channels. Sections make your channel page easy to browse and can be created dynamically from playlists or actions such as likes.



*Any section either created from a single playlist OR that only consists of individual videos now has a play button on it to create an uninterrupted, lean back experience.*

### Sections

- Can be annotated to from a video
- Can curate other channels' content
- Organize content into different groups
- Can organize videos (e.g. popular uploads), playlists (My Albums) or Channels (more from my network).

## Playlists

- Viewable in search and suggested placement
- Organize content that is meant to be viewed in order
- Can be annotated to from a video
- Can curate other channels' content
- Can't organize playlists, only videos
- Use sections to organize your best content or curate other channels' content.
- For channels that upload multiple shows and assemble them into playlists, you can put all show playlists in one section.
- Sections can curate other channels' content.



*To annotate to a section from a video, use the click-through link for the section from your channel page and input that URL as an annotation.*

# Channel Page Optimization

## Featured Channels

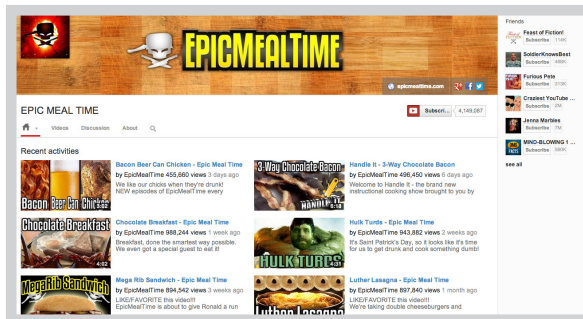
- Featured Channels are channels you choose to promote on your channel page.
- If you're promoting a large number of channels, rotate through the list using the "rotate channels" feature. This ensures all your channels get visibility.

## Related Channels

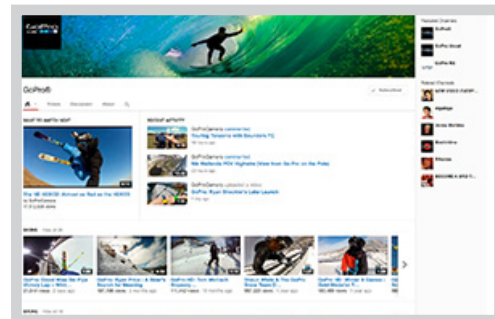
- Related Channels are promoted channels populated by YouTube. Recommendations are based on channels that are similar to yours.
- Disabling the Related Channels feature pulls your channel from being promoted in the Related Channels placement on other channels.

## Examples

### Great channel designs /epicmealtime



### Great channel designs /GoProCamera



# Maintaining the Channel Feed



## Strategy:

Maintain an active feed that keeps your audience engaged without overwhelming them.

## Why It Works:

As you convert viewers to subscribers, maintaining an active feed drives viewer to new uploads and helps promote other videos.

## How To Do It:

Utilize other channel activity such as channel posts and 'liking' videos to publish your content to the feed and curate videos from other channels.

## Impact

4 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Engagement
- Views
- Subscriber Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

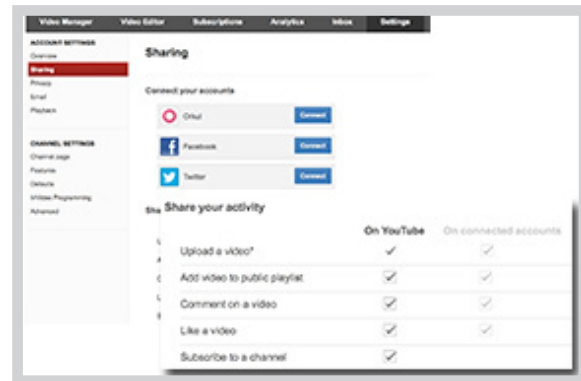
Post-Publishing

# Maintaining the Channel Feed

The channel feed broadcasts your activities to your subscribers. The default feed will share your uploads, liked videos, videos added to playlists, channel posts, comments, channel subscriptions and favorited videos. Your feed should stay current, promote the content that's important to you, and never overwhelm your subscribers with too much information..

## The Feed - Curating Your Own Content

- Adjust your sharing options in channel settings based on what you want to share, and be aware that if you're very active on the site, you may overwhelm your subscribers.
- For creators who don't upload every week, the feed allows you to appear more active by broadcasting other activities.
- Set a schedule for your channel activity. If you upload once a week, offer curation and channel posts in between new videos.
- Does resurfacing great videos help drive new viewership? Try it using channel posts. But be sure to tell your users why you're highlighting it now!
- Multiple actions can get aggregated into a single post for your subscribers. Space out your interactions so that uploading, commenting, adding to playlists, liking and channel posts don't happen consecutively.





# Maintaining the Channel Feed

## The Feed - Curating Other Content

By boosting other people's videos, your channel can become a tastemaker destination.

- Be a picky curator – understand your audience and share work that will appeal to them.
- Set a curation schedule. Choose non-upload days to curate content in your channel's feed. Treat these curated videos like you would a weekly show.
- Set the context. When you comment on your own video and someone else's, make sure the comments add to the experience.

## The Feed - Tent-Pole Programming

- Compile playlists for key tent-pole events and post the tent-pole playlists to your feed using the channel posts feature.
- The feed can be used to resurface videos and Playlists that are relevant to trending topics or upcoming tent-pole events.
- Only when a video is switched to "live" for the first time does it appear in your feed. Upload videos as unlisted to adjust metadata and annotations before publishing to subscribers.



*Great thumbnails and titles are especially important to attract attention for your videos in your subscribers' homepage feeds. (see Metadata)*

# Reaching All Audiences



## Strategy:

Optimize videos and create content to reach the widest possible audience. Caption your videos to ensure they are accessible to any viewer.

## Why It Works:

Captioning makes your videos accessible to more viewers, including foreign language speakers and those with disabilities.

## How To Do It:

Use online tools to create captions for your videos. Create content that can transcend cultural differences.

## Impact

2 out of 5



## Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

## Effect

- Search Traffic
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

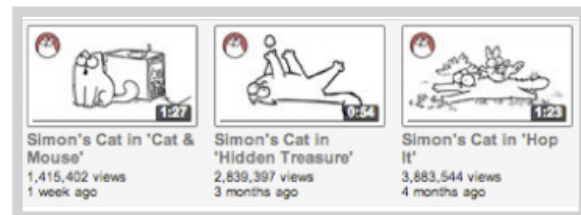
# Reaching All Audiences

YouTube is a global platform - your audience can watch from anywhere in the world. Take extra steps to help your videos appeal to broader audiences, including foreign language speakers and viewers who are hard-of-hearing.

## Create Content with Global Appeal

Your content may already have global appeal (Check YouTube Analytics), but consider whether there may be an opportunity to adapt it and expand on interest around the world.

- Use Analytics to find out where your channel might already be attracting an audience. Focus internationalization efforts on those languages.
- Appeal to new audiences. Animation, dance, animals or strong visuals without dialogue have cross-cultural appeal.
- Identify and program for local and regional trends as well as tent-pole events. Make your metadata multilingual and add subtitles during these events.
- Consider launching your content on a separate channel targeting new regions or language groups.
- Invite speakers of other languages to create voice-overs or audio for your content.
- Find other channels around the world that are similar to yours, and collaborate or cross-promote with them, if your content will translate.

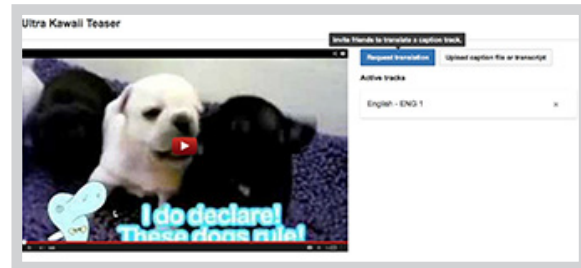


# Reaching All Audiences

Captions and subtitles make your work accessible to a wider audience – and they act as additional metadata, which helps your video show up in more places on the site. You can provide your own captions and transcripts, or use YouTube's features to help you create and translate transcriptions of the audio in your content.

## Creating Captions

- If you upload a caption track on your video, YouTube can then enable Auto-Translate, which will automatically translate it into 58 languages (variable accuracy).
- To create captions for a video, write out the text of all the audio and upload it. YouTube will auto-sync the timing to match speech in the video (currently English, Spanish, Japanese, and Korean only).
- Edit and improve automatically-generated captions in the Edit Video interface using the Translator Toolkit.
- Use multiple languages for titles, tags, and descriptions. This helps improve discoverability through search terms.
- A transcript's content and keywords are searchable. If your video is captioned for multiple languages, it will be searchable in all those languages.



*By using the Translator Toolkit you can invite your fans to help create and edit captions in languages they speak!*



# YouTube Analytics



## Strategy:

Use YouTube Analytics regularly to assess your channel's performance and investigate changes or trends across key metrics.

## Why It Works:

Analytics provide actionable insights for creators to make better videos, implement and measure optimizations, and develop strategic programming.

## How To Do It:

Gain fluency in the YouTube Analytics product. Routinely assess your channel's performance and make changes to content and audience strategies based on your findings.

## Impact

2 out of 5



## Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

## Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Views
- Community Activity

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# YouTube Analytics

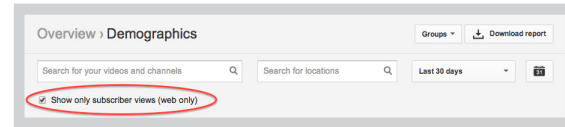
**YouTube Analytics (YTA) is your channel's pulse.** It helps uncover key channel insights based on real viewer data and the content they engage with most.

**It's never too early or late to start.** YTA is for all creators, and should be used regardless of whether you're just starting out or are a seasoned veteran. You can use YTA not only on your newest videos, but also to analyze performance data from older videos to inform future content, programming, and audience development strategies.

## Viewership: How Do I Build a Large and Loyal Audience?

### 1. Know Who Your Viewers Are

Understanding your repeat viewers enables you to more confidently create content they'll love and come back for time and time again. Does the current age, gender, and location of your viewers match up with your ideal target audience? If not, you may consider recrafting your content and promotion strategies to attract the audiences you want most.



### Key Reports:

- Subscriber Demographics - Filters report to display subscriber only data.
- Demographics - Provides directional insights into audience age and gender.
- Geography - Shows which countries your viewers are from.

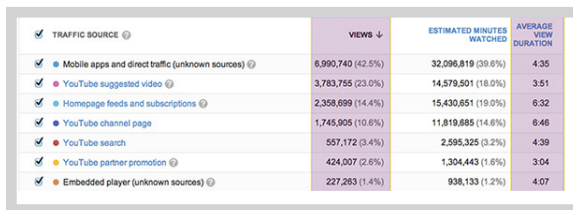
### Sample Report Uses:

- Tailor your channel design, content style, thumbnails, etc to appeal to your core audience demos.
- If your content is performing well in a foreign country, consider transcribing and enabling captions.
- Track changes to your channel's audience demographics over time so you can continue providing viewers with the most relevant and engaging content possible.
- Be mindful of potential nuances like children logging on using their parents' accounts, because such user behavior can affect demographics data.

# YouTube Analytics

## 2. Know Where Viewers Are Finding Your Videos

Understanding which traffic sources drive the greatest viewership can help you get the most out of your audience development efforts. Consider allocating your strategic efforts where your videos are getting the most traction. And remember, it's not just the quantity, but the quality of views that matter (See "Average View Duration" in the image below to see which sources are responsible for the most engaged viewers).



TRAFFIC SOURCE	VIEWS	ESTIMATED MINUTES WATCHED	AVERAGE VIEW DURATION
Mobile apps and direct traffic (unknown sources)	6,990,740 (42.5%)	32,096,819 (39.6%)	4:35
YouTube suggested video	3,783,755 (23.0%)	14,579,501 (18.0%)	3:51
Homepage feeds and subscriptions	2,358,699 (14.4%)	15,430,651 (19.0%)	6:32
YouTube channel page	1,745,905 (10.6%)	11,819,685 (14.6%)	6:46
YouTube search	557,172 (3.4%)	2,595,325 (3.2%)	4:39
YouTube partner promotion	424,007 (2.6%)	1,304,443 (1.6%)	3:04
Embedded player (unknown sources)	227,293 (1.4%)	938,133 (1.2%)	4:07

### Key Reports:

- Playback Locations - Shows YouTube pages and embedding sites where viewers watch your videos.
- Traffic Sources - Shows external sites and YouTube features linking viewers to your videos.

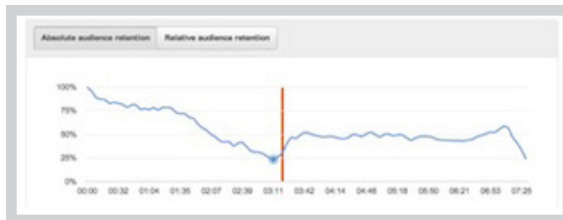
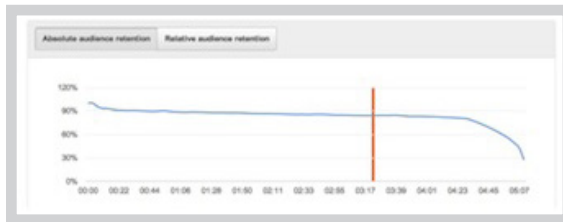
### Sample Report Uses:

- Increase viewership from YouTube Search and YouTube Suggested modules by creating effective titles and descriptions, captivating thumbnails, and engaging content.
- Increase viewership from Homepage Feeds & Subscriptions by frequently and consistently uploading content that your audiences crave most.
- Examine the Embedded Player and External Websites reports to learn which sites are promoting your content and consider reaching out to them for cross-promotions and/or collaborations.
- Select the "Show Subscribers Only" checkbox on the Traffic Sources report to see viewership trends from your channel subscribers.
- Check the "Average View Duration" column on all traffic reports to determine which sources are driving viewership with the highest view duration (a great indicator of viewership quality).

# YouTube Analytics

## 3. Know What Makes Viewers Come and Go

Understanding how audiences interact with your content can help uncover invaluable patterns, and empower you to create more engaging content. Videos with low audience retention rates are far less likely to be surfaced in Search and Suggested placements on YouTube, so create a viewing experience that causes audiences to watch as much of your video as possible. Do you know why audiences watch certain videos to the end, while abandoning others within the first few seconds?



## Key Reports:

- Absolute Retention - Shows which parts of your video people are watching and/or abandoning.
- Relative Retention - Shows audience engagement compared to other videos of similar length.

## Sample Report Uses:

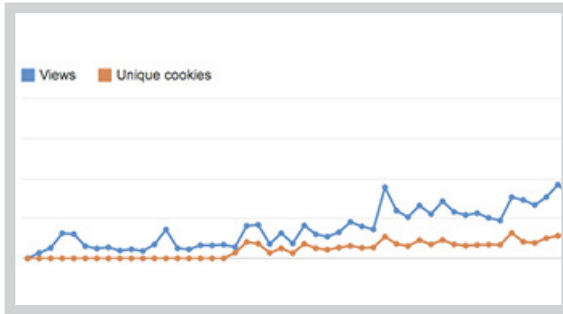
- A rise in the Absolute Retention graph means viewers are re-watching that part of the video; a dip signifies that viewers are skipping forward or abandoning the video altogether.
- Significant dips in Absolute Retention within the first 5-10 seconds can indicate unmet audience expectations. Make sure your thumbnails and titles accurately represent the actual content.
- Use audience retention patterns to inform possible changes to future content topics, styles, pace, length, and/or packaging.
- Assess "Average View Through" and "Average Viewing Time" for specific videos to identify which content types are most likely to drive high watchtime.



# YouTube Analytics

## 4. Know How Many Videos Each Viewer Consumes

Understanding what causes viewers to enjoy multiple videos per visit can help you work smarter, not harder. Because engaging existing audiences is easier than attracting entirely new ones, it's important to extend the viewing session for viewers you have. Do you know which days viewers are most likely to visit your channel, and which videos they enjoy watching most?



### Key Reports:

- Views - Shows overall viewership trends and which videos are driving those views.
- Views vs. Unique Cookies - Shows how many average views are consumed per visitor.

### Sample Report Uses:

- Identify days that your audience is most active; repeated weekly viewership peaks may suggest the best days to upload new videos to your channel.
- Consider focusing or putting creative spins on themes and topics that have performed exceedingly well in the past.
- Increase Views per Unique Cookie by suggesting additional videos your viewers might like via engaging playlists, end cards, and call-to-actions.
- If your Views graph is spiky and erratic, check the Homepage Feeds and Subscriptions traffic sources to determine if your upload schedule might be responsible.
- If overall Views are growing and/or a certain video has gone viral, consider adding subscribe annotations to convert those viewers into a loyal community.

# YouTube Analytics

## Engagement:

### How Do I Increase Audience Engagement?

#### 1. Know Why Viewers Subscribe

Understanding what causes people to subscribe can help you convert more casual viewers into loyal subscribers. Do you know which videos are causing people to subscribe? Is your programming strategy geared toward those subscribers?



#### Key Reports:

- Subscribers - Shows which videos people are subscribing and unsubscribing from most.
- Views vs. Subscribers - Shows how effectively you are converting subscribers from each view.

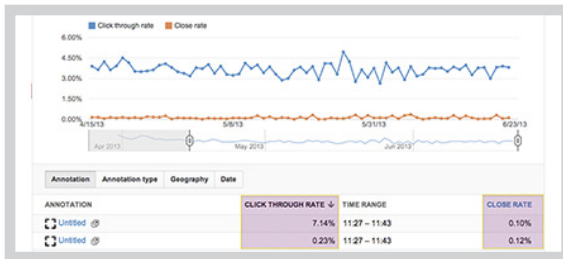
#### Sample Report Uses:

- Examine specific dates and/or videos with high gains (or losses) of subscribers to learn which content resonates best with your audience.
- Consider using your most subscribed videos to inform future content and programming.
- Gain more subscribers by adding subscribe annotations, calls-to-action, links in the description, and InVideo Programming to your most popular videos.
- Compare viewership and net subscribers to assess how effectively you are converting viewers into subscribers.

# YouTube Analytics

## 2. Know How Effective Your Annotations Are

Annotations are a powerful way to engage viewers and direct them to continue watching more of your videos. Viewers have lots of videos to choose from on YouTube, adding and optimizing annotations on your videos can help keep more viewers on your channel and convert them into long-term subscribers.



### Key Reports:

- Annotations - Shows click-through (CTR) and close rates for all of your annotations.

### Sample Report Uses:

- Optimize annotation placement and duration to achieve the highest Click Through Rates (CTR) possible while simultaneously reducing Close Rates.
- High CTRs mean viewers are clicking on your annotations.
- High Close Rates mean viewers don't find the annotations useful, so consider modifying or removing low performing annotations to improve the viewing experience.
- Monitor annotated end-cards that promote other videos and compare CTRs of the given choices to learn which videos and/or thumbnails attract the most clicks.

# YouTube Analytics

## 3. Know How Fans Interact With Your Videos

Understanding which videos your audience interacts with most can help you craft more successful content and promotional strategies. Examine Likes, Dislikes, Comments, and Sharing on standout videos to understand what type of content resonates best with your audience.



### Key Reports:

- Likes & Dislikes - Shows how many viewers give your videos a thumbs up or down.
- Comments - Shows how many comments are left on your videos.
- Sharing - Shows how many times viewers share your videos and where.

### Sample Report Uses:

- Determine how many Likes and Comments per View various videos generate to inform what types of content you should consider creating in the future.
- Read your community's thoughts on highly Commented videos and consider addressing, incorporating, or otherwise referencing them in future videos.
- Determine which videos your audience is most likely to share and increase the number of Shares via in-video calls-to-action.

# Optimization

## Checklist

### Upload

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

### Publish

- ☐ Annotate the video with community CTAs, a subscribe button and links to related content.
- ☐ Optimize channel branding and metadata, create organizational sections and a channel trailer, and broadcast to subscribers through the feed.
- ☐ Utilize channel posts and 'liking' videos to publish your content to the feed and curate videos from other channels.
- ☐ Use online tools to create captions for your videos. Create content that can transcend cultural differences.
- ☐ Use Analytics to better understand your audience, improve your content, and help you develop effective optimization strategies.
- ☐ Engage with your viewers! (See Community.)

# Section Three

## Community

*Build a genuine community around your channel and what it stands for.*

YouTube provides a unique experience for both creators and audience alike, one that is social and interactive. As a creator, you can not only foster authentic engagement around your channel but also interact with these viewers.

Building a community - whether it's with other creators or your audience - on YouTube means transforming your fans into an engaged and loyal audience, who can then, in turn, serve as a social army to promote your content.

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# Build Your Community



## Strategy:

Interact with your audience, and build a community around your content on YouTube.

## Why It Works:

An engaged community often leads to a dedicated audience, who will come back to your channel again and again.

## How To Do It:

Create viewer-centric content, engage with your audience through social features on the platform, and develop relationships with top contributors.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

## Effect

- Engagement
- Subscribers
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Build Your Community

Online video is social. People are drawn to online video and web series because they can interact with the channel in ways that they can't with television. The ability for creators to interact with their viewers is key to the medium. So, speak to your audience, and listen to what they say. If you actively engage with your audience through your channel, it will pay off in the long run. Your fans will become your social advocates – empower them to grow awareness about your brand and spread the word.

## Importance and impact of communities

- Communities are critical to building an audience on YouTube. After all, **YouTube is a social platform**. Liking, sharing, and commenting are key social features.
- Think about your YouTube channel's community as a **social army of promoters**: they'll share your content with their social networks and help grow awareness about your channel.
- And, in addition to spreading the word about your channel, they'll function as a **content barometer and focus group**. They're not afraid to tell you what's working, what's not, and offer up some ideas for future content decisions. Ask what they think, and more importantly, listen to them.
- Remember, **communities will happen with or without you on YouTube**. You want to make sure you're the one leading the discussion in a fruitful direction.

## How to build a community from the ground up

- Think of the communities you're involved in - maybe it is a book club, a sports team, or your college alumni group. What **qualities of these communities** make you want to be a member? Can you recreate some of those same qualities in your YouTube community?
- Give viewers a **reason to support your cause**. Why? Well, there are a lot of other things your viewers could be doing instead of watching your videos. What value does your channel and the content you create provide?
- Once someone has visited your channel once, **why should they come back for more?**
- **Define a creed for your community**. Think of this as your channel's mission statement.
- **Make sure your community has a leader**. It can be a literal host, a group with a consistent voice, or just a figurative brand / authority.



# Build Your Community

## Community building fundamentals

- **Develop relationships with top contributors.**

Think of each viewer as an individual. Respond to frequent commenters, and take a genuine interest in them.

- Respond to comments in the first few hours after you publish a video. These first commenters are your loyal community members, so keep them engaged.
- Your own comments on your uploaded videos get pinned to show up at the top of the comments section, prominently featuring your engagement with the fans.

- **Recognize the contributions of individuals in the community.**

People love to be recognized; responding to first-time contributors is a way to encourage ongoing engagement. Consider recognizing your community through in-video shout outs, or by offering other rewards like fan merchandise or exclusive content shared through unlisted videos.

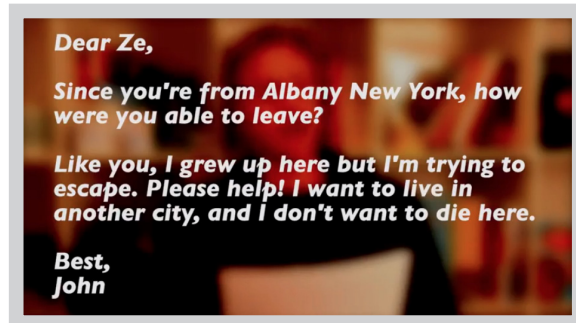
- **Create content about your community.**

Whenever possible, include your community in the video content itself. Shout them out by name, acknowledge that you're reading their comments, or even let viewers choose the direction of a special feature. Many creators find ways to work-in their fans, letting the whole community know how much they appreciate their viewership.

- **Spur conversation.** Create relevant content that generates conversation among your community. Ask for their opinions and feedback. Remember, good debates are a part of a healthy community; only remove / flag hateful comments targeted at an individual or group.

- **Use off-platform social tools to engage with your community.** Do some research and figure out which social platforms your community is actively involved in. Jump into the conversation on those social networks.

- There are many social networks that YouTubers use as part of their social strategy. Some popular platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, and Google+.



# Cross-promotion & Collaboration



## Strategy:

Work with other creators and cross-promote content between channels.

## Why It Works:

Collaborating with and promoting other creators in the community can be one of the most powerful ways to reach new audiences. Other YouTube creators are a critical part of your community on YouTube.

## How To Do It:

Create a strategy to cross-promote your content to relevant audiences. Find and reach out to channels with similar audiences for collaborations.

## Impact

5 out of 5



## Time Cost



Major:  
Full Day or More

## Effect

- Channel Views
- Subscribers
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Cross-promotion & Collaboration

Think holistically about your YouTube community. Sure, it includes your most avid fans and followers, but it also includes other YouTube creators. Identify similar or relevant channels and invest in these relationships. Accessing new audiences on YouTube begins with finding the channels where those audiences are already engaged.

It's a good idea to identify similar or relevant channels with whom to work on cross-promotion and collaboration in a mutually beneficial manner. Though, first you must do the work to build your content, your channel, and your audience into something that other channels will want to support or partner with.



## General Best Practices

- Collaborate with channels that attract similar demographics.
- Appear, guest-star or contribute to other channels and vice-versa. Leverage each other's audience to find new viewers.
- Record video chats, hold Hangouts on Air, or incorporate video from a collaboration partner on your channel.
- Use annotations, playlists, links in description and clear direction within the video to help the viewer watch more.
- Be active on your channel during any cross-promotion period. Interact with new viewers.
- Feature your best videos or playlists when you expect a lot of new channel visitors.
- Make sure to have an effective programming schedule after cross-promotions. The content you publish in the weeks after gaining new subscribers will determine if these new viewers remain subscribed and active with your channel.

# Cross-promotion & Collaboration

## In-video Promotion

- **Guest Star:** Appear or guest star on another channel; it's a great way to work with other creators.
- **Shout Out:** A simple host recommendation can go a long way. Find short, surprising clips or cliff hangers to hook your audience.



## Channel Promotion

- **Recommendation Activity:** Like or comment on other channels. This passive promotion will appear in your Activity feed.
- **Social Media:** Use other social media channels to spread the word about other channels you like. Leverage your Google+, Facebook, or Twitter followers!
- Track the effectiveness of cross-promotions by examining viewership graphs and subscriber changes in Analytics. Measure subscribers gained from the additional views, and assess the stickiness of your content/channel. How many new viewers were retained weeks after the promotion?



*Use Vidstatsx.com to identify successful channels and compare subscriber growth.*

# Cross-promotion & Collaboration

## Shared Topics and Playlists

- If collaborating, make the viewer aware of all channels involved in the cross-promotion through playlists, annotations, mentions in the video, and links in descriptions.
- Link multiple videos in a chain: Producer A links to Producer B's video, Producer B 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.
- Compile playlists or create hosted playlists featuring videos from channels that you cross-promote.

## Subscriber Box Sharing

- Use the Other Channels & Friends module to link to channels you manage or want to promote. When users subscribe to your channel, they'll also be able to subscribe to the channels you've listed.
- Let the channels know that you're featuring them and ask if they'll return the favor.

## Examples

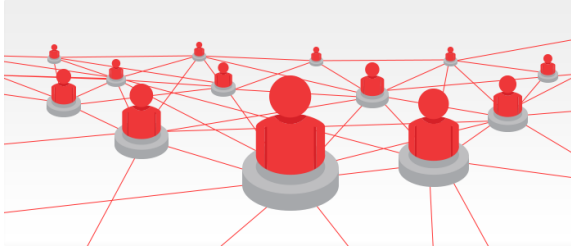
### Guest Star Collaboration and Cross-Promotion /ZeFrank1 and /SoulPancake



### Guest Star Collaboration and Cross-Promotion /lindseystomp with several other channels



# Google+



## Strategy:

Leverage Google+ to build viewership and engage with your audience in new ways.

## Why It Works:

Google+ extends the reach of your channel and improves content discoverability across Google's products and platforms.

## How To Do It:

Connect your channel with a Google+ page or profile, and take advantage of new features with enhanced integration between Google+ and YouTube.

## Impact

4 out of 5



## Time Cost



Moderate:  
Less than 1 hour

## Effect

- Views
- Engagement
- Comments

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

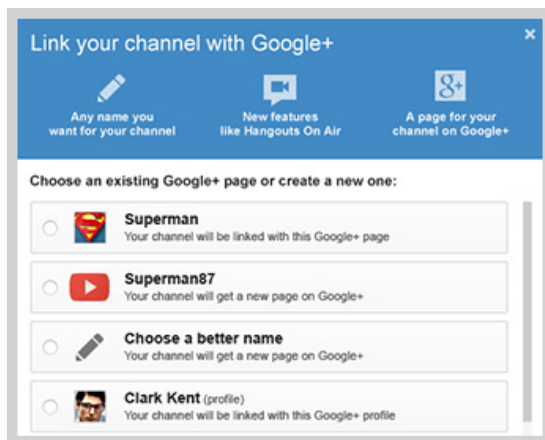
# Google+

Creators can set up a Google+ page or profile to engage with fans and other YouTube creators. Google+ allows you to organize people into different “circles” to help tailor your engagement to a circle’s specific interests. Engage your fans directly in Google Hangouts, and broadcast live Hangouts on your YouTube channel via Google+ Hangouts on Air (HOA).

## Google+ Identity



All Creators can use a Google+ identity for their YouTube channels. This allows Creators the ability to modify their YouTube “usernames” by linking their channels to Google+. All public channel activity – uploaded videos, created playlists, comments, likes, favorites, and subscriptions – will be attributed to your Google+ account.



## +Page or Profile?

We encourage YouTube Creators to link a Google+ page to their channel to access the features listed below. However, if your channel represents you as an individual, and you personally manage the channel and plan to manage your Google+ presence on the same account, then a G+ profile is the way to go.

Pages	Profiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multiple channel managers (up to 50)</li><li>• Single log-in for multiple channels</li><li>• Page defaults to public privacy setting</li><li>• Access to +1 button</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single admin</li></ul>



*The profile aligned with your channel should be created on the same Google account. For +pages, the channel’s account admin should be the manager.*

# Google+

## Unlock Features

We are constantly adding new features to channels linked to a Google+ profile or page to improve engagement, discoverability, and more flexibility managing your channel. Once you connect your YouTube account with Google+, you have access to these extra features.

- **Better name:** Change your channel name through Google+ or even add spaces and punctuation.
- **Google+ Badge:** Add a badge to your website to connect it to your Google+ page. It makes your page and relevant posts eligible to appear in Google search results.
- **YouTube Tab:** Feature nine of your most recent public videos in a tab on your Google+ profile. The videos play on YouTube, and the tab links to your channel.

*Be sure to link your Google+ page with your official website to enable discovery of your channel and videos in Google search.*



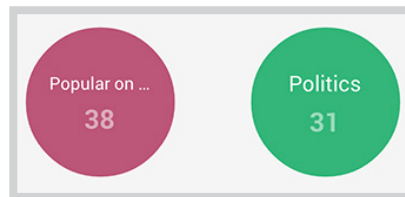
*Post at least once daily: the best times to post are from 10am - 1pm.*



Once you've linked your channel to Google+, here's how you can get the most out of Google+ features to highlight your videos.

## Manage Circles

- Create and organize different circles to correspond with the various audiences you want to reach.
- Offer fans exclusive access to videos by sharing private or unlisted videos to your circles.



## Post and Share

- Post new videos to your Google+ stream, and target updates to specific circles.
- Post a video directly to a linked Google+ page when uploading from YouTube, and customize the message for each post.
- Share archive videos from your channel to your Google+ community to spur new viewership.
- Post supplemental content on your Google+ page such as behind-the-scenes photos, or provide a sneak preview of videos.
- Encourage followers to +1 and share your post if they like what they see.



# Google+


## Engage

- Interact with fans and build relationships. Moderate conversations, and respond to mentions.
- Acknowledge followers with +1s and +mentions in posts.
- Tap fans to be your focus group. Ask specific questions about the content you post, and seek feedback or ideas for your next video.
- Promote other creators or videos you like.
- Annotate your YouTube videos to link to your Google+ page to encourage subscribers to follow you.

## G+ Hangouts!

Hangouts allow you to chat face-to-face with up to ten people.

- Use Hangouts to interact with a small group of your fans or other creators.
- Seek input from your fans and reward your super-fans with personal, direct access to you.
- Check out apps you can use within a Hangout. For example, you can host viewing parties by watching YouTube videos in your Hangouts.

 Hangouts



*Remember to follow all community guidelines and Terms of Service if uploading the video file of a Google+ Hangout to YouTube.*

## G+ Hangouts On Air (HOA)

Hangouts on Air allow you to broadcast your Hangouts live, directly from your YouTube channel, Google+ stream or website. After the live session, a video of the public Hangout is uploaded to your YouTube channel and to your original Google+ post.

- Be prepared! Test your connection, cameras, mics, and other equipment well in advance.
- Hangouts are interactive, so make sure the format allows you to engage with other participants and viewers.
- Designate a community manager to interact with fans on Google+, YouTube, and social media during the event.
- Set audience expectations before and during the Hangout. Remind viewers what's coming up next in the live HOA using your Google+ stream and other social media.
- Include Calls to Action during the Hangout. Remind viewers to leave comments, send questions, and subscribe to your channel.
- Share the full Hangout video or just the best moments.

# Google+

## Promote HOAs

There are a variety of ways to promote HOAs on Google+ or your YouTube channel.

- Create a public Google+ Event to remind viewers to tune in. It features a broadcast of the HOA and the social commentary around it.
- Promote your upcoming HOA on your channel. Post to your feed or upload a promotional video announcing the event's date and time.
- Direct viewers to your live event URL: [youtube.com/user/{channelname}/live](https://youtube.com/user/{channelname}/live). It features your latest live event.
- Refer to the YouTube Live section for more ways to promote HOAs on your channel.

## Google+ Communities

Communities allow you to supercharge your relationship with your fans and bring them together around shared interests. You can increase awareness of your channel by participating in relevant communities and keeping up with discussions.

- Participate and share your content in relevant fan communities.
- Designate a trustworthy fan to moderate your own community.
- Contribute posts to foster discussion and ideas rather than broadcast information. Add categories to guide discussions.

- Limit membership to reward superfans with exclusive access to videos, Hangouts, and other bonus content. Note: communities can be public or private.

## Measure

- Use Google+ Ripples to track how your posts are spreading across Google+ over time. This is a great way to spot your biggest influencers and superfans. Jump into the conversation when it makes sense, and use Google+ Ripples to identify and follow interesting people.
- Track the analytics on your Hangouts on Air to understand what length and format works best for your viewers. Note: Views in YouTube Analytics represent total live and recorded playbacks.
- Access social reports from Google Analytics to see how Google+ influences your conversion rates and the impact of referrals from your social network.

# Blog Outreach



## Strategy:

Share your content with relevant blogs, sites, and online communities.

## Why It Works:

Blogs and other sites are always looking for great, relevant content to feature. External site traffic can be a significant driver of views to your channel.

## How To Do It:

Create a blog roll and only share relevant content. Target your outreach and build relationships.

## Impact

3 out of 5



## Time Cost



Medium:  
1+ hours

## Effect

- External Traffic
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Blog Outreach

Don't limit your purview to YouTube. A lot of viewers encounter videos on other sites, and websites and blogs are always looking for great content to feature. Make it easy for them! Reach out with your most brilliant videos.

## Get the Word Out

- Create a blog roll: a comprehensive list of sites, blogs, online influencers and niche online communities that are relevant to your content.
- Pitch new videos to your blog roll. Be strategic: Topical content is typically most attractive to these sites.
- If you've created a video playlist for a tent-pole event, share it with blogs, who often want groups of videos about trending topics.

## Build Relationships

- Keep track of which sites are driving views. Share new videos with those places first, and let them know they're getting the inside scoop.
- Build relationships with blog editors. Thank them when they repost, and only share videos that you honestly think they'd want to share with their audience.

## Track Your Brand

- Know where people are talking about you. Set Google Alerts for your channel name, show names, character names and any other keywords specific to your channel.

# Blog Outreach

## Examples

Embeds on Top Blogs and Sites  
/ENTV on Deadline.com


### Hammond On Post-Fest Oscar Buzz: Video

By ENTV YouTube | Tuesday September 18, 2012 @ 9:28am PDT  
Tags: [ENTV](#), [Oscars](#), [Telluride Film Festival](#), [Toronto Film Festival](#), [Venice Film Festival](#)

Several movies that premiered during the [Venice](#), [Telluride](#) and [Toronto](#) film festivals over the past month or so are already earning serious Oscar buzz as the movie awards season has officially kicked off, Deadline Awards Columnist Pete Hammond tells ENTV. Check out Pete's thoughts on what films have bolted to front-runner status:

**Related:** ['Silver Linings Playbook'](#), ['Argo'](#), ['The Master'](#) Oscar Contenders

Argo' & 'The Master' Are Frontrunners For Osca...  
Share More Info



[Watch this video on YouTube](#)

Embeds on Top Blogs and Sites  
/AboveAverage on HuffingtonPost.com

### 'Edwards Scissorhands' Gets 'Rejected Pitches' Treatment (VIDEO)

Posted: 09/19/2012 12:00 pm Updated: 09/19/2012 12:00 pm

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Rejected Pitches: Edward Scissorhands



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GET COMEDY ALERTS:  
Enter email SIGN UP

REACT: Gross Funny Crazy Adorable Weird Amazing Finally Nerdy

FOLLOW: [Video](#), [Edward Scissorhands](#), [Tim Burton](#), [Edward Scissorhands Rejected Pitches](#), [Rejected Pitches](#), [Comedy News](#)

# Promotion on YouTube



## Strategy:

Create promotional videos and pay to promote these on YouTube using AdWords for video.

## Why It Works:

Promoting your videos allows you to connect with audiences that might not have found your channel otherwise and helps convert existing viewers into subscribers.

## How To Do It:

Create great ads with a clear call-to-action and target these ads to the correct audience.

## Impact

4 out of 5



## Time Cost



Major:  
Full Day or More

## Effect

- Subscribers
- Views

## Optimization Type

Pre-Production

Production

Publishing

Post-Publishing

# Promotion on YouTube

## Paid Promotion on YouTube

After you optimize your channel and videos to organically grow your audience, you can pay to promote your channel and videos with ads on YouTube. When used in tandem with other playbook best practices, these ads can help you effectively gain new viewers and subscribers.

A tool called AdWords for Video allows you to promote your videos and your channel with the TrueView family of ad formats. Get started by creating an AdWords account at [adwords.google.com](https://adwords.google.com), create a new “online video campaign,” set a budget, and use the strategies below to create an ad and target an audience.

In this section we’ll cover: TrueView ad formats, audience targeting strategies, and how to combine formats and targeting to reach new audiences, capture subscribers, and cross promote with other similar channels.

### Note:

- All the strategies outlined here require you to pay for your own advertising.
- You can start with as little or as much of an investment as you’d like.
- Campaign budgets, ads, and targeting strategies are all flexible and can be started, changed or stopped at any time.
- Beyond the guidance below there are several resources to help you get started with paid promotion including the AdWords help center, [adwords.google.com](https://adwords.google.com) and support line, 1-866-2-Google.



*Link your YouTube and AdWords accounts to unlock key campaign success metrics, such as the number of subscriptions or video views after an ad-view.*

# Promotion on YouTube

## TrueView Ad Formats

### TrueView InStream

InStream ads are like TV commercials – they play before the start of a monetized YouTube video. Viewers see five seconds of your ad and then can keep watching or can skip it. You pay a “cost-per-view” if they choose to watch at least 30 seconds of your ad.

For InStream ads, don’t simply repurpose your other video content. Create a compelling ad by staying creative and following these strategies:

- **Keep it short** – shoot for 30-60s
- **Show viewers what you’re all about** – include clips of your content and make the ad is in the same style as the content on your channel.
- **Make the first 5 seconds count** – after this the user can skip your ad. Convince them to stay!
- **Use Calls to Action (CTA)** – tell users exactly what you want them to do after watching your ad.
- **Give users time to take that action** – the last 10 seconds or more of your video should give users time to click. Create a static call to action, like an end-card for your ad.



**Tip**

*To drive subscriptions with your Instream ad, use this page as your destination url: [www.youtube.com/subscription\\_center?add\\_user=\[insert your channel here\]](https://www.youtube.com/subscription_center?add_user=[insert your channel here])*

- **Give it a real title** – ad titles are visible to the user so don’t call it an “ad.” Use this space to double-down on your CTA and name it something like “subscribe to my channel”
- **Upload to the channel you’re promoting** – upload the ad as unlisted or public to the channel you’re trying to promote.

### TrueView InDisplay

InDisplay ads appear as a thumbnail and text on YouTube watch pages in the right-hand pane of suggested and recommended videos. You pay a “cost-per-view” when a user clicks-through your ad and begins watching your video on a watch page.

InDisplay ads are a great place to promote your existing videos, but before you do, make sure they are well-optimized:

- **Annotate to more content** – drive viewers to more of your videos by annotating to playlists and other videos.
- **Upload a compelling thumbnail** – use clear, interesting, and creative thumbnail to entice users to click your video ad.
- **Use CTAs** – make sure the video you’re promoting includes calls to subscribe, engage, or watch more content.



**Tip**

*Get even more mileage out of your new TrueView Instream ad – upload it as your channel’s welcome video.*



# Promotion on YouTube

## Targeting the Right Audience with your Ads

Targeting the right audience with your ads There are many ways that you can target an audience with TrueView ads .These are three targeting types that have helped YouTube Partners drive audiences for their channels:

### Video Remarketing

With video remarketing you can serve an ad to users that have performed an action on your channel, such as viewing, liking, or commenting. Using an AdWords feature called “custom combinations” you’re also able to combine these groups, to target, for example, audiences that have viewed your video but who are not yet subscribers.

### Placement Targeting

Are there other YouTube channels that have an audience you think would appreciate your videos? Placement targeting allows you to show your ad (InStream or InDisplay) on these specific channels.

### Interest Category Targeting

Interest Category targeting allows you to show your ad only to users that have a particular interest. If, for example, you create cooking tutorials, you can target YouTube users that are interested in food, or “foodies”. Like remarketing, you can use the “custom combinations” features to combine interests together to reach a more niche audience, such as users that are both “foodies” and “DIY enthusiasts.”

## Reaching New Audiences

Are you having trouble organically finding an audience on YouTube? Are you trying to get your content in front of a new audience you don’t currently have? You can use paid promotion to attract new viewers to your videos and your channel by:

### Targeting

- Identify channels that have an audience you’d like to attract and add these channel as “placement targets”
- Identify subjects your new audience would be interested in and add these as “Interest Category” targeting

### Ads

- Create a channel trailer that tells the user why they should watch your channel and use this as a TrueView Instream ad
- Create TrueView InDisplay ads using your most popular and well-optimized channel videos

# Promotion on YouTube

## Converting Existing Audiences into Subscribers

Are you generating lots of viewership, but not a lot of subscribers? Help turn these one-off audiences into long-term channel fans:

### Targeting

- Create a remarketing list of all users that have viewed a channel video.
- Create another list of all users that have subscribed to your channel.
- Combine these lists in a “custom combination” that targets all viewers who have not yet subscribed

### Ads

- Create a channel trailer with a very clear call to action to subscribe
- Use this as an InStream ad



*Need help setting up your campaign? Search for the “Mastering AdWords for Video” playlist on YouTube.*

## Cross Promote with another channel to reach a new audience

Is there another channel that you work closely with whose subscribers would be a good audience for your channel? Target another channel’s existing audience with remarketing. NOTE, in order to leverage this strategy you’ll need to have your collaborating channel link their YouTube account to your AdWords account.

### Targeting

- Create a remarketing list of all the viewers or subscribers of your collaborating channel
- Create a list of your current subscribers.
- Then, create a custom combination of all viewers/subscribers to your collaborating channel that are not yet a subscriber to your channel.

### Ads

- Create an InStream ad channel trailer featuring both your channel and the collaborating channel
- Clearly explain why their audience would be interested in your content, \*Call the user to subscribe to your channel



*Use the traffic sources report to identify how much of your viewership is coming from “YouTube Advertising”*

# Build Your Community

## Checklist

- ☐ Create videos specifically designed to engage your audience. Ask questions, feature fans, or address the audience directly.
- ☐ Dedicate time to interact with your audience and develop relationships with top contributors. Respond to comments in the first few hours after you publish a video.
- ☐ Identify channels with similar content and/or similar audiences, and work with them to cross-promote or collaborate.
- ☐ Set up a Google+ profile page to engage with fans and other YouTube creators. Engage your fans directly in Google Hangouts and broadcast live via Hangouts on Air.
- ☐ Create and maintain a blog roll for your channel. Include niche sites or targeted sites for tent-pole related content.
- ☐ Track engagement on social media sites, and measure the incoming traffic from those communities to your YouTube content.

# Resources

Still stumped as to what a YouTube Watch Page is? Or, looking for an easy-to-use checklist for the tasks the Creator Playbook recommends?

We've got you covered with a range of different resources to make life a little bit easier. So, go ahead and browse our Glossary of Terms and Video Upload Checklist. If you're looking for strategies specific to your content type, check out the Playbook Guides at <http://youtube.com/yt/playbook/guides.html>.



# Video Upload Checklist

Each channel's approach to publishing will vary, but below is a simple 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 equally important.

## Upload

☐ Write detailed and comprehensive metadata following the proper formatting.

☐ Create and upload an eye-catching, high resolution thumbnail.

## Publish

☐ Annotate the video with community CTAs, a subscribe button, and links to related content.

☐ Add the video to a playlist.

☐ Consider promoting the video using InVideo Programming.

## Engage & Outreach

☐ Post on Google+.

☐ Reach out to relevant blogs, websites, and online communities.

☐ Engage with the audience in the comments section within the first few hours after publishing.

☐ Like and favorite the video on your channel after posting (e.g. 24 hrs later) to reappear in your subscribers' feeds.

# Glossary

**Annotations** - Video Annotations are an uploader-controlled, dynamic overlay on videos that allows you to overlay text on a video and/or make parts of the video clickable. You can add, edit and delete annotations to your videos, controlling the text, placement, timing and link URLs. URLs can only be directed to YouTube.com.

**Audience Retention** - The Audience Retention report (formerly known as Hot Spots in Insight) measures your video's ability to retain its audience. It shows when viewers fast-forward, rewind or leave your video.

**Avatar** - The square image on your channel page that represents your channel across the site.

**Blog Outreach** - A strategy of sharing your videos with a targeted list of blogs, sites and/or online communities and influencers. This includes sending your video link and/or embed code to blog editors and others in the hopes that they embed or share the video with their audiences.

**Blog Roll** - A list of blogs, sites, online communities and influencers relevant to a particular category or type of content. Used for blog outreach.

**Bulletin** - A message that channel owners can send to their subscribers. Bulletins show up in subscribers' feeds. Channel owners can attach videos to a bulletin.

**Call to Action (CTAs)** - These prompt the viewer to take an action.

**Channel or Channel Page** -

YouTube.com/CHANNELNAME. A channel is the public page for a user account on YouTube. It contains uploaded videos, playlists, liked videos, favorited videos, channel comments and general activity. Some creators manage or create content across multiple channels.

**Comments** - These are written comments on videos, channels, playlists or in response to other comments. Comments may be posted either on the watch page or on a channel page.

**Community Actions** - Any actions taken by a viewer on or around your channel and content. Includes likes, favorites, subscriptions and comments.

**End-Card or End-Slate** - A graphic that creators include at the end of their videos. End-cards typically include specific Calls to Action to subscribe, watch more content, or visit a channel page. They may also contain credits for the video. Generally, end-cards prominently feature annotations.

**Engagement** - Interaction between the creator and the audience, the viewer and the video, or the creator and the site. Can be measured by the number of interactions (comments, favorites, likes, or new subscriptions) per view.

**Favorite(s)** - A user action that adds a video to their channel's Favorites playlist. This action can also be broadcast to subscribers

# Glossary (Feed - Share)

**Feed** - A stream of activity either for one channel (via the channel page feed) or for multiple channels (the homepage feed). Feed activities include uploads, updated playlists, video comments, channel comments, new subscriptions, bulletins, likes, favorites and sharing. Users control what feed activities they broadcast and, by subscribing to channels, what feed activities are broadcasted to them in their homepage feed.

**Hangouts on Air** - Google+ Hangouts are a live video chatting feature, and they can be broadcast on your YouTube channel.

**Hook** - Content that is meant to keep viewers interested in what happens next. Ideally, a video's hook happens within the first 15 seconds.

**Hosted Playlist** - A collection of videos linked by additional hosted videos. Hosted videos can act as intros, outros and/or interstitials. Hosted videos can contain an actual host (person) or creative branding that acts as a host.

**Like(s)** - A user action that shows appreciation for a video. This action can be broadcast to subscribers in the feed.

**Metadata** - The textual information that describes a video, channel or playlist. Video metadata includes title, tags and description. Playlist metadata includes title and description. Channel metadata includes a description.

**Optimization** - An action that increases the potential success of a video, channel, playlist or content strategy.

**Other Channels Module** - An optional module that allows the channel owner to feature other channels on their channel page.

**Packaging** - Graphics and/or content that adds context to a video. Packaging can build your brand, connect your host with the audience, add relevant context to archived content, or add scripted/annotated Calls to Action.

**Playlist** - A playlist is a collection of videos that can be viewed, shared and embedded like an individual video. You can create playlists using any videos on YouTube. Videos can be in multiple playlists. Uploaded videos and favorited videos are default playlists on your channel.

**Pre-Buzz** - Audience interest in a tent-pole event occurring in the days and weeks leading up to it.

**Programming** - The practice and strategy of organizing videos, shows or channel content and activity into a daily, weekly or season-long schedule.

**Recommendation Activity** - A strategy in which a channel likes, favorites or comments on a video in order to promote that video to their subscribers through the feed.

**Series Playlist** - A playlist that locks the videos into one specific playlist. Meant for serial or episodic content that follows a narrative story arc, videos included in a series playlist cannot be added to other playlists on the channel.

**Share** - Ability to distribute videos via social media, email or direct links. This action can be broadcast to subscribers.

# Glossary (Suggested Videos – YouTube Analytics)

**Suggested Videos** - Video thumbnails that appear in the right-hand column of watch pages and the homepage, or the tiled thumbnails that appear when a video has finished playing.

**Subscriber / Subscription** - By subscribing to a channel, users will see that channel's activity in their homepage feed. Subscribers can also opt into email communication from subscribed channels on a per-upload and weekly digest basis.

**Subscriber Box** - See Other Channels Module.

**Tags** - Words or phrases used to describe the content of your videos. Added to videos at time of upload (see Metadata).

**Teaser** - A short video that acts as a preview or trailer for longer content. Can be used to promote larger content initiatives or announcements.

**Templates** - Different pre-set channel designs that can be used to highlight videos, playlists and other channels.

**Tent-pole Programming and Publishing** - Content creation and publishing strategy that is meant to draft off of the popularity of large cultural events. Programming and publishing tent-pole content is meant to maximize audience.

**Thumbnails** - The images selected to represent your videos or playlists on the site.

**Traffic Source** - The referral source of a video view. The page, module or site that drove a viewer to a video.

**Vlog** - A video-blog. A casual, conversational video format or genre featuring a person talking directly to camera.

**Watch Page** - The page where the majority of video viewing happens. URLs with the format `youtube.com/watch?v=[video ID Here]` are watch pages.

**Watch-time** - The amount of time in aggregate that your viewers are watching your videos. Watch-time is estimated in Analytics.

**YouTube Analytics** - A tool that provides information across various metrics for videos, channels and audience. Available in your user account.











**[youtube.com/playbook](https://youtube.com/playbook)**