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eMarketing

The essential guide to digital marketing

4th Edition



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and the Minds of Quirk

What's inside: An **introduction** to video search engine optimisation, the **key terms and concepts** you need for this chapter and the **history** of video-hosting as three young men **took the first steps towards creating YouTube**. We look at how this video search giant **works**, discuss how web search has changed, how **people find videos**, as well as seven **vital steps to creating and maintaining a video channel**. There is an explanation of how social media affects video content and a **summary** of the chapter.

13.1 introduction

In 2011, Google was the world's largest search engine with billions of searches a day and over 60% market share. Interestingly, the second largest search engine was in fact YouTube, the popular video sharing website. In November 2008, YouTube overtook Yahoo in the US to become the second largest search engine with 2.791 billion monthly searches.

Online, we turn to search engines to help us answer questions and to find content. That content can be anything, from images to text, and of course, video. Text content can be read by search engines, but content such as images and video cannot easily be read by search engines. With more and more people using search to find video content, understanding how to optimise videos for search is an important part of any digital strategy.

According to YouTube, there are more than three billion video views a day on its website, while every minute, 48 hours of video is uploaded.

Videos can come from anyone, and can come from anywhere. Small home videos can experience massive global reach, as was the case with the popular *Charlie Bit My Finger* video which has accumulated 338 million views as of June 2011. Musicians often use social video platforms to share their music videos and, of course, brands use video sharing platforms to communicate messages via video. People are increasingly interacting with brands via video by creating opinion videos, parodies and responses.

In 2007, Google released a major change to its search engine results pages (SERP). Along with other search engines such as Bing, Google now serves media such as images and video in search results. This means that video content now plays an increasingly important role in search engine optimisation. Not only can optimising videos for search increase your search engine ranking, but data shows that it increases clickthrough rate from the search engine results pages, and that these visits are longer and more engaged than other search visits.

Not only does video content help to connect with your audience, but it can help to reach them through search as well.

13.2 key terms and concepts

term	definition
Annotations	A comment or instruction (usually added as text) to a YouTube video. A YouTube annotation may contain links directing users to other pages within YouTube, or if a brand is willing to pay, to outside websites.

Google AdWords	Google's main advertising product and primary source of revenue. AdWords offers pay per click (PPC) advertising, cost per thousand (CPM) advertising, and site-targeted advertising for text, banner, video and rich-media ads.
InStream videos	A video advertisement that plays before the start of the actual selected video. Typically 15 to 30 seconds in length.
Promoted videos	YouTube and Google AdWords 'Promoted Videos' is an advertising solution which allows users to promote their video content within the YouTube website.
Search engine results page (SERP)	The page that shows the results for a search on a search engine.
Social Media Optimisation (SMO)	Social Media Optimisation, Social SEO or SMO is the process of methodising social media activity with the intent of attracting visitors to specific website content. For example, Facebook tabs, Flash games, YouTube videos.
Thumbnail	The still image that is shown at the start of the video. This can be selected, and can make a video more enticing.
Views	This is the number of times a video has been seen. Remember, multiple views can come from one user.
Video syndication	The manner in which you attain optimum distribution and search coverage for your videos. This can include multiple facets of optimised distribution.
Viral video	This is a video that becomes immensely popular, leading to its spread through word-of-mouth on the Internet via email, social networks and other hosting websites.
Video search engine optimisation (VSEO)	Is optimising videos for search engines, similar to how one would optimise a website to rank higher on the SERPs.

13.3 history

While there are several video sharing sites, including Vimeo (www.vimeo.com), Daily Motion (www.dailymotion.com) and Metacafe (www.metacafe.com), the biggest video sharing site in the world is YouTube (www.youtube.com).

Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim founded YouTube in 2005, registering the domain name in the February of that year. The first video (Me at the Zoo) was uploaded in April 2005, while YouTube previewed in May 2005 and launched six months later. It was acquired by Google in November 2006 for \$1.65 billion. Their most recent figures show 48 hours of video are uploaded every minute, over 3 billion video views a day, and over 200 million views a day on mobile.

note

Want to see the first ever YouTube video uploaded? It's at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNQXAC9IVRw.

Online video is not just about creating content, it's about getting viewers to that content. For many, that is where video search comes in. YouTube is said to account for about 28% of searches on Google sites. And, in 2007, Google introduced blended search results, where media such as images and video, is included in the search engine results pages (SERPs). Bing and Yahoo have introduced similar changes to their search results pages. All this has served to bring video closer to the mainstream.

With so much time being spent by Internet users on video sharing sites, advertising soon followed. In November 2008, YouTube introduced Promoted Videos, a paid for service where you can bid to have your video listed next to other videos and in YouTube search results. Like PPC advertising on search engines, you only pay when someone clicks through to your video and not for being listed.

Over the years, YouTube and other video sharing sites have continued to release innovative advertising and community building solutions for marketers. However, this chapter focuses on those solutions which are related to video search.

13.4 how it works

Most search on the web is keyword based: you type keywords relevant to your query into a search box, and the results of the search should list content that matches your keywords. Whether you are using a search box on a website, on YouTube, or Google, this outlines the very basic way we expect search to work.

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

This is all covered in great detail in the *Search Engine Optimisation* (SEO) chapter. Optimising video for search involves understanding the basics of SEO, and then the particular challenges and tactics of optimising video content.

When we search, we use keywords to describe what we want to find. Search engines use those keywords to match to content. Search engines rely on being able to use text in the content to determine what it is about, and other indicators to determine how relevant that content is. When it comes to web pages, search engines can “read” the text on the page to determine what the page is about, and can measure the links coming in to determine how relevant the page is. When it comes to video, the search engine cannot “watch” or “read” the video, and instead must rely on other text on the page to determine what the video is about. The search engine also needs to look for ways to measure relevance.

This is becoming important not just for the search boxes on sites such as YouTube, but also for search results on Google. With blended, or universal, search results pages, video is listed along with other media such as images and with the usual web results.

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

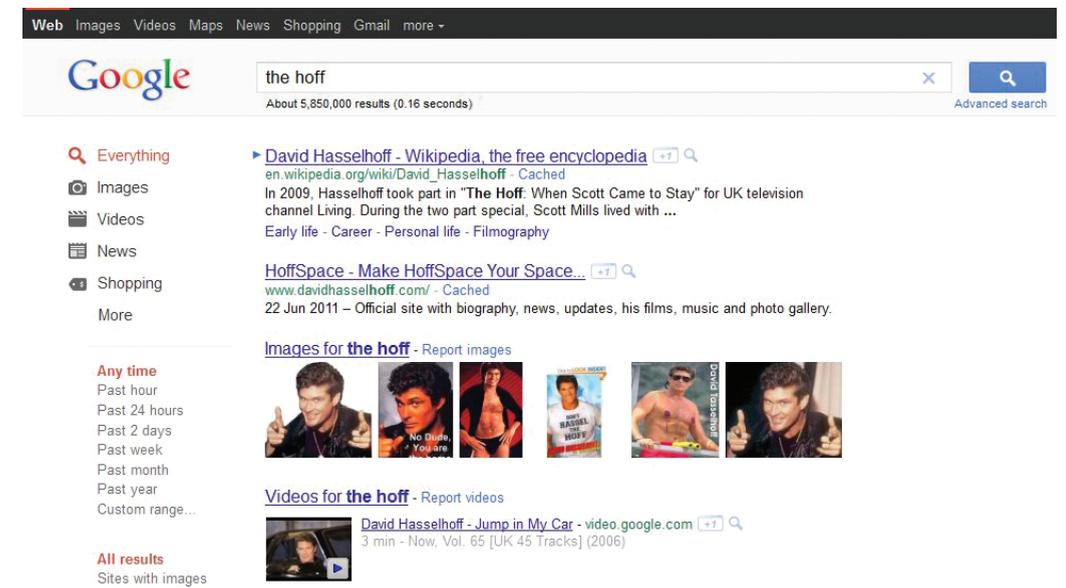


Figure 13.1 A search for the words “the hoff” brings up website and video results.

Online video serving

There are two options for making your video content available online. These are not mutually exclusive and there are techniques for both to ensure the best distribution and search coverage for your video.

Online video can be **hosted** on your own site, or it can be **posted** to one or many video distribution channels.

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

If your video is hosted, the obvious advantage is that you have control over the whole website on which it is hosted, from the look and feel to on-page text, metadata as well as the user experience. When it comes to advertising and related content, you control both, and any other monetisation of the content is yours to decide. Traffic and links go directly to your website, and so can be integral to a longer-term search strategy.

Video discovery - How users find video

There are four main ways in which users find content and video online:

- A user knows what he/she is looking for and goes directly to a search engine or video search engine to search for content (e.g. Google, YouTube).
- A user follows recommendations from others, whether on emailed links and content, social bookmarking and sharing services or social networks and social media such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.
- Someone knows exactly what they are looking for and navigates to the appropriate URL directly (e.g. <http://www.quirk.biz/courses/home>).
- Users can find videos through paid advertisements and promotions.

13.4.1 YouTube Video Search Optimisation (getting ranked, fast)

YouTube is the dominant player in the video sharing market, and is owned by Google. While we focus in this chapter on optimising for YouTube in particular, many of the same approaches apply to other video sharing sites.

Once you've determined how users are already accessing your videos and where they appear in SERPs, you can use various techniques to improve your rankings.

While YouTube, like Google, keeps its search algorithms a closely guarded trade secret, digital marketers can speculate, as well as experiment to see what works, and more importantly, what doesn't.

Firstly, the following components are evaluated on a keyword and key phrase level by the search engine spiders:

- Titles
- Descriptions
- Tags
- Playlist additions
- Inbound links

Additionally, YouTube defines relevance in accordance with the popularity of a given video as well as the interaction taking place around it. The following factors play a role in the algorithm which determines relevance to a particular search:

- Views
- Channel views
- Ratings
- Comments
- Shares
- Embeds
- Subscribers
- Flagging
- Age of video

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player for 'Savanna Wedding Crashers | Crash The Royal Wedding'. Annotations highlight several key factors for relevance:

- Title:** The video title is 'Savanna Wedding Crashers | Crash The Royal Wedding'.
- Views:** The video has 6,165 views.
- Rating:** The video has a rating of 16 likes and 0 dislikes.
- Share, embed & flag:** The video has options to share, embed, and flag.
- Description:** The video description includes the text: 'To crash the royal wedding of the century you'll need a good cover story. Savanna is inviting 5FM listeners to phone in and state a believable name and cover story to Grant and Anele. Take these whoppers, for example: "George Winstanley, Prince Harry's father" or "Sophie Lemonton, the palace horticulturalist"'. It also includes a category of 'Entertainment', tags like 'savanna cider', 'savanna wedding crashers', and a license of 'Standard YouTube License'.
- Comments:** The video has 6 comments, with the first one from 'RAmen771' saying 'Love it!'.

note

For the YouTube AdSense program, views are only counted after 30 seconds of a video being watched or, if the video is shorter than that, the entire length of a video watched. In order to ensure that unscrupulous individuals and businesses don't inflate their view numbers, YouTube uses technology to identify 'views' by spam bots, malware and other software and removes these from the count. This legitimises the view count beneath the video.

Figure 13.2 A breakdown of the various factors which determine relevance using Savanna Wedding Crashers | Crash The Royal Wedding on YouTube.

Keeping YouTube content current and entertaining is vital if a video is very new. This will allow the video to engage with viewers. Remember, a new video growing in popularity (i.e. views), will take preference in the SERP over an older video with more views.

Optimising posted video

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

1. Video title is very important.

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

Title:

Sowing the Seeds for Rocking the Daisies 2010

2. Use long descriptions.

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

Description:

To check out more of our rocking videos, visit
<http://www.rockingthedaisies.com>

Sowing the Seeds is an annual teaser music festival giving
 music fans a taste of what to look forward to at Rocking the

3. Use the tags to input several keywords, but remember that order matters.

Put your most important keywords first. You can also capitalise on popular search terms and piggyback on popular or topical phrases. However, ensure that these are at least somewhat relevant to your video and utilise terms from the same category. YouTube Suggest and Google Suggest are useful tools in assisting with this.

Tags:

"the dirty skirts" "7th son" "seventh son" aking "a king" "aking lyrics" "aking band" "aking music" "jeremy loops" "hot water band" "rocking the daisies" "rocking the daisies tv" "rocking daisies" "rockin the daisies" "rocking the daisies 2011" "music festival" "music festival 2011" "music festivals" "music

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

Don't forget to respond to relevant comments. It is vital to assure users that you are taking them seriously. This is a key point to remember if you want to create a thriving online community.

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

that girl at 0:28 got owned!
 kingofkeyboards 1 year ago 2 👍

man i'd love my band to be there next year! glastongury would be the ultimate gig!
 jhon peel sounds a brill stage, i'd love to play there! :)
 sarahjanerulez 1 year ago

Figure 13.3 YouTube comments.

5. Optimise the thumbnail.

Consider adding a thumbnail frame. YouTube allows you to choose the thumbnail image to be a quarter, half way or three quarters' through the video. Simply optimising the thumbnail image can encourage increased clickthroughs and views, which helps to increase search visibility.



Figure 13.4 Three thumbnail choices on a YouTube video.

6. Use annotations to link from and to other video properties.

Annotations allow you to add text boxes with clickable URLs (which are crawled by the search engine spiders as well) at points of your choosing in your video. Annotations in already popular and current videos can be used to drive traffic to new videos, although it should be standard practice to include them in a video as soon as it has been uploaded.

The nature of YouTube is such that the number of views for pages on which videos are watched, or watchpages, is always higher than channel views. However, if a paid search campaign is being run, the option to play clicked videos on the channel page exists. This is optimal as it could boost interactions with the branded channel header image, increase engagement with the playlist and raise the channel view stats.

note

How to pick a YouTube thumbnail:
 Sign in to your YouTube account.
 Click your username (in the top right-hand corner of the screen). A drop-down menu will appear.
 Click [My Videos](#).
 Find the video whose thumbnail you'd like to change and click its Edit button.
 On the following page under the heading, Video Thumbnail, click on one of three thumbnails to use as a picture to represent your video. Once you've chosen your preferred still, the border around it will become highlighted.
 Finally, click the Save Changes button at the bottom of the page.

note

Don't use annotations in such a way that it might cause annoyance or frustration for viewers. For example, don't place an annotation over the climax of a trailer or music video, as this will obscure the view and irritate users.

7. Upload videos regularly to ensure continuous channel activity and topical interest.

Consider the nature of the brand and what you are trying to communicate to your viewers, you must decide how often videos are uploaded. But remember, the more videos you upload, the higher your channel will rank due to Google picking up on your fresh content.

The amount of content you upload is also dependent on the service or product your brand offers. It's a careful balance of not overloading your channel with useless media and keeping content fresh and engaging.

Optimising hosted video

If you are hosting your video content yourself, you can and should still optimise the content around it for best search opportunities. As with posted video, it's the text content on the page with the video that is so important.

Make sure that your page title is descriptive, as well as the video title and the video file name. The text on the page with the video is important, so optimise it to reflect the content of the video.

You can also make use of speech to text software such as Blinkx or Spinvox to transcribe the video. The text can then be used in the video metadata.

Social sharing:

Whether your videos are hosted or posted, you should initiate and encourage sharing through bookmarking and ensuring access across various platforms, e.g. YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn as well as your company's website. Social sharing and recommendations are increasingly relevant ranking factors for search engines.

Paying for placement

Like Google's PPC advertising for search, you can pay to have your video recommended on YouTube. YouTube calls this its Promoted Video programme. It is available to any YouTube user.

With Promoted Videos, you are able to bid on searches or popular videos, and have your video content displayed alongside the search results or other videos. You only pay when someone clicks through to view your video.

Promoted Videos are a cost effective and quick way to promote video content, especially if the content is topical. It's targeted and controlled, and can be a good start to VSEO.

13.4.2 Measuring Success

The Internet allows for detailed tracking and analysis, enabling future campaign optimisation. When creating video content, use the various measurement options available to determine what you can do better going forward.

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

You can also delve deeper into the lifecycle of videos, such as how long it takes for a video to become popular, and what happens to video views as popularity peaks.

Using these metrics, you can increase your videos' view counts and improve popularity on the site. For example, you might learn that your videos are most popular on Wednesdays, that they have a huge following in Spain, or that new videos which play off previous content become more popular more quickly.

With this information, you can concentrate on posting compelling fresh content which appeals to selected target audiences, and post these videos on days when you know these viewers are on the site. You could even go a step further and customise the video, dubbing it in Spanish. The range of possibilities to customise – and optimise – your content is limited only by the brand's level of willingness.

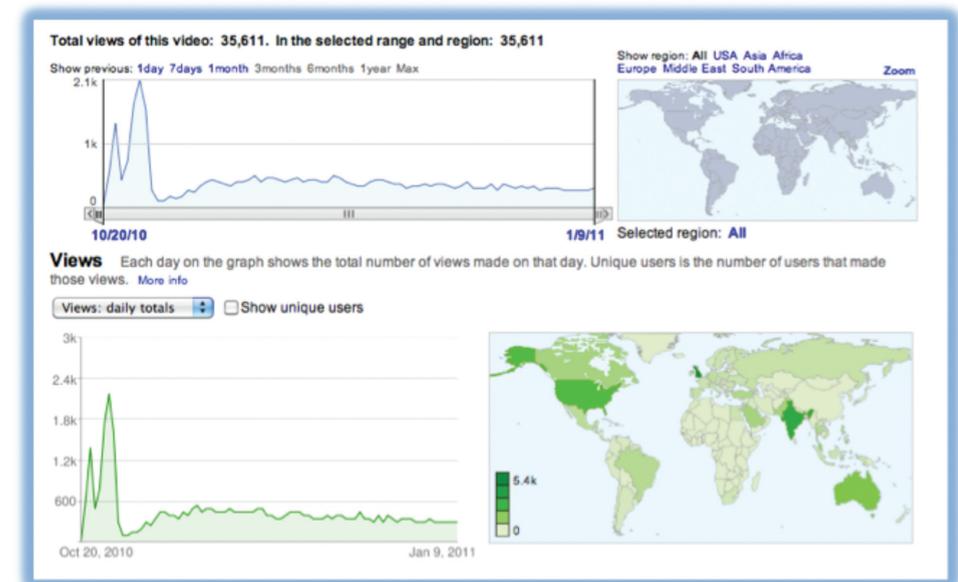


Figure 13.5 A breakdown of views for a particular range and region for a video.

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

13.5 pros and cons

Posting regular video content shouldn't result in any negativity, provided it is done in a focused, engaging way. That said, there are definitely pros and cons to the way in which you decide to optimise video content.

Given the continuous divergence of online video into two distinct areas, namely social video and video as a tool to increase search rankings, the lines can easily become blurred as to which direction you are heading in. Which form of video optimisation will work better for you? Where should you turn your efforts?

Remember that essentially what you are trying to do is improve your business online so you need to define what your exact goal is. If you want to drive users from search engines to your site, put your energy in VSEO. If your goal is to drive users from other destinations to watch your videos, you should place emphasis on social media optimisation (SMO).

- **Video search engine optimisation**

Search engines are placing a lot of emphasis on usage data in determining a site or a video's relevance to a user's search query. This will soon become the single largest factor in determining search rankings and in displaying related content.

This will be even more heavily emphasised on YouTube than on Google, as users visit the site to browse. Take a look at the *Search Engine Optimisation* chapter; its concepts are essential to your success.

- **Social media optimisation**

Social media optimisation for video focuses on user engagement with your content. Instead of looking at ranking factors, you are looking primarily at your audience. Ask yourself what they would enjoy and what would make their experience memorable (and therefore worth re-telling). You want them to spread the word, via email, chat, Twitter, Facebook, and essentially get your video to go viral.

By studying analytics, Insights and comments, you can see which videos on your channel/site are providing users with what they're looking for. You can then choose to advertise your best videos with the various formats YouTube and Google have on offer.

The number of views you get is an important factor in getting ranked or featured on YouTube and, by pushing your best content through the paid medium, you can get the ball rolling and significantly increase your chances of picking up organic traction (both within YouTube and Google's universal SERPs).

13.6 summary

Video has become an integral part of the online world. The potential for exposure - as well as interaction - is massive, and brands which fail to capitalise on this risk being left behind as competitors build thriving communities.

As with most content, it is up to the brand to decide how to represent its video content. Videos can be hosted on popular video-sharing websites to capitalise on already existing audiences and developed interfaces, or on bespoke websites which allow for free reign in customisation.

Brands should then aim to optimise their videos on the chosen platforms to increase their visibility on search engines.

Creating a healthy community is also important in increasing exposure. Very rarely, if ever, does an audience come to video content without input from the creators. On top of optimising for search and other tweaks, brands should upload content regularly or risk losing any ground gained.

Social media should also be considered as its platforms allow for the sharing of content, as well as commentary.

Overall, brands should be aware that there is no quick fix for video. It requires planning and investment as well as long-term commitment to creating brand ambassadors.

13.7 tools of the trade

Both these tools are in their beta stage but, in conjunction with Google AdWords, are increasingly being used to optimise video content.

YouTube Targeting Tool

- www.google.com/videotargeting/

YouTube 'Insights for Audience'

- www.google.com/ads/innovations/ytinsights.html

13.8 case study: Old Spice and YouTube

In order to appeal to a new hip market, Old Spice, together with their advertising agency, Weiden+Kennedy, created a YouTube campaign that produced results far beyond anyone's imagination.

In 2010, the Proctor and Gamble brand, Old Spice, released a hugely successful Superbowl advert, 'the Man Your Man Could Smell Like'. It featured Isaiah Mustafa, a handsome, former NFL wide receiver, who promised women that he was the 'man your man could smell like' even if no man could ever be as truly manly as The Old Spice Man.



Figure 13.6 A screenshot of the Old Spice video on YouTube indicating the number of times it has been viewed.

To build on this success and to further engage with the fledgling online community, Old Spice and Wieden+Kennedy took a fresh approach and created a series of personalised 'response' videos, broadcast on YouTube, to comments posted about the video. To do this, they created a custom program that automatically pulled in people's comments from Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc.

Between July 12 and 14 2010, the Old Spice guy engaged directly with fans and consumers, sending out almost 200 response videos!

This produced some amazing results for the brand. According to Visible Measures, the Old Spice response videos had more viral views in the first 24 hours than Obama's Victory Speech!

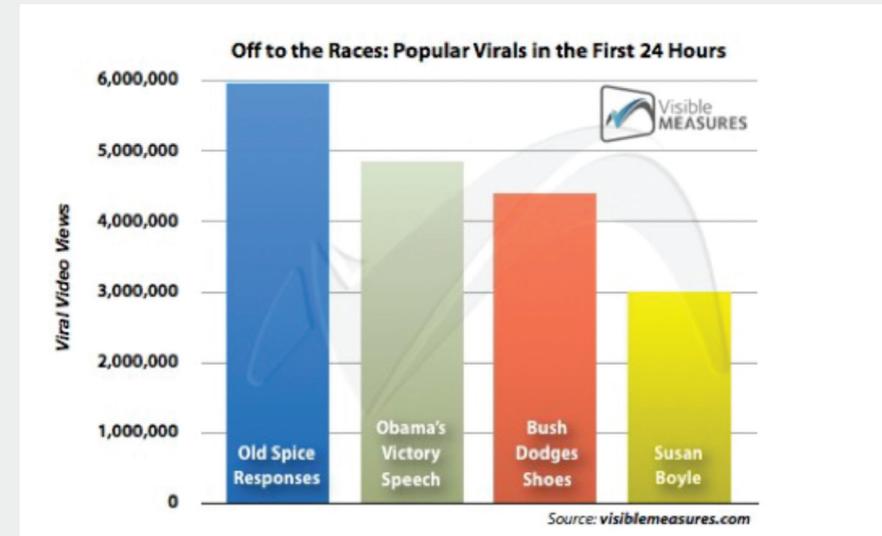


Figure 13.7 In comparison to other well known virals, the Old Spice advert had a significant viewership.

In the three months following the campaign, the brand also saw sales jump by 55 percent and the month after that, by 107 percent (Nielsen).

Due to the success of the original video and the response videos, Old Spice has seen some huge changes to its online presence and popularity.

- The Old Spice YouTube channel has had over 26 million channel views with over 266 thousand subscribers.
- They have over 1.5 million Facebook Fans.
- Their Twitter account has over 125 thousand Twitter followers.
- The original video has received over 33 million views on YouTube.

[July 2011]

In terms of optimising search, Old Spice leveraged social media to gain a strong foothold on the search engine result pages (SERP). The video itself was optimised for search through the clever use of tags. Instead of only tagging the video with generic terms related to the video (such as Old Spice or Isaiah Mustafa), Old Spice added lines from the advert which had become as popular as the video itself. Because fans were tweeting and posting lines like "tickets are now diamonds", these tags were added, further optimising the video for search. This means that when a user searches for "tickets are now diamonds", see following page for what the SERP displays.

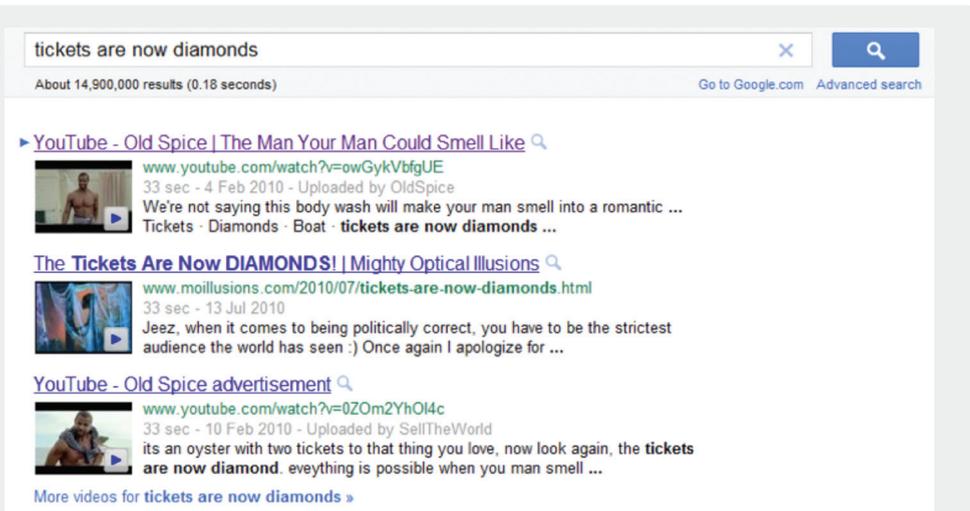


Figure 13.8 A screenshot illustrating that terms relevant to the campaign were optimised for, and are therefore served in search results.

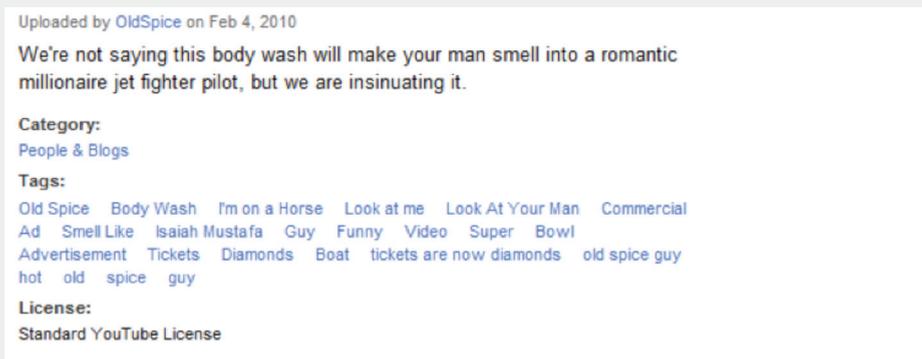


Figure 13.9 Certain tags were used to optimise the campaign.

So, what else made the video so successful?

- The initial video was entertaining, appealing to the audience.
- It used social networking and links with other channels (Twitter, Facebook etc.) to encourage interaction and engagement.
- The videos were short, simple and consistent.
- The follow-up videos created trust in the viewers. They gave people direct contact with the brand and showed that they were listening to viewers – even in a playful sense.
- The videos were personalised and by responding directly to certain consumers, they created demand from others to get a response from the Old Spice Man.
- While the original campaign had a short-lived duration, with the response videos being released over a two day period, the impact for the Old Spice brand continues to live on, with Old Spice featuring Mustafa in a video uploaded in March 2011.

case study questions

1. Why do you think Old Spice Guy was such a success?
2. How did the existence of YouTube contribute to this campaign?
3. How would you have used video search engine optimisation for this campaign?

chapter questions

1. Why should commenting on videos be encouraged?
2. What sort of personalisation would self-hosting of a video allow?
3. How do you feel social media affects video marketing?
4. What possible obstacles could a brand face when seeding a viral video?

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further reading

- www.reelseo.com/ - Regularly posts updates and developments in the world of video SEO.
- www.youtube-global.blogspot.com – YouTube’s official blog. If there are announcements likely to affect a video optimiser, this is where you’ll find them first.

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Seth Godin: Author Purple Cow, Permission Marketing and Linchpin

"If you are a marketer, this is a must have book; if you know a marketer, do him or her a favour and get it for them; if you are just interested in eMarketing and want to expand your general business knowledge, buy two copies - someone will want to borrow this from you."

Jaco Meiring: Digital - Investec

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