

SEO for Videos: What Nobody's Told You That Actually Makes Money

When we talk about SEO for website pages, we're talking about one thing – getting your site to rank higher in the natural search results for your target keywords, thus increasing traffic and overall revenue on your site.

Pretty straightforward, right?!

Sure, there are a number of different approaches you might take to improve your website's SEO, whether that's optimizing your pages for specific keywords, building backlinks that point to your pages or expanding your presence on social networking sites. But whatever activity you're undertaking, the goal remains the same – achieve high rankings within the SERPs.

Unfortunately, video SEO (sometimes referred to as VSEO) isn't nearly as direct in its intended goals. When you engage in video marketing, you may have a number of different goals in mind, including any of the following:

- Having your videos display in the blended search results (which can be an especially powerful way to capture high rankings in the SERPs without competing directly against other websites).
- Generating traffic back to your main website through calls to action embedded in your video clips.
- Improving the SEO of your existing pages through the use of embedded video (digital research agency [Comscore](#) has found that, on average, people stayed two minutes longer on sites that included video compared to those that didn't).

Each of these goals is a valid use of video SEO, even though the specific actions you'll need to take and the outcomes you'll achieve may be different depending on the particular video use you're targeting. But despite their differences, these goals are all important to understand, as they represent different ways to earn more money through the use of video marketing.

We'll break each of these different goals down further in a little bit. But for now, let's take a look at what matters most when it comes to SEO for videos...

The three key metrics you need to be aware of as you plan your video marketing campaigns include:

- Quality Content
- SEO
- Audience Engagement

Quality Content – The quality of the video content you publish is one of the most important criteria that will determine whether your video marketing campaign is successful or not – no matter which of the specific goal types listed above you're targeting.

Publishing quality content matters because “video”, as a whole, is a social medium. A “quality” video gets watched more, commented on more, shared more and linked to more – all of

which influences how the video is ranked, both within the search engine results and the video directory-specific search results.

Of course, quality content doesn't mean that you need to be the next Steven Spielberg in order for your videos to perform well. You do, however, need to incorporate a pleasing visual presentation with some sort of value for your audience, whether that value comes in the form of educational value, entertainment value or some other type of reward.

SEO – As with traditional websites, optimizing your videos for traditional SEO keywords matters just as much in video marketing as it does in natural search marketing. Later on in this report, I'll get into some of the specific elements you'll want to optimize within each of your video listings, as well as some of the off-page optimization tactics you'll want to implement into your video marketing campaigns.

But for now, it's enough for you to know that traditional optimization plays just as much of a role in video marketing as it does in natural search marketing.

Audience Engagement – As mentioned earlier, video is a social arena, which means that if you want to get the best results with your video marketing, you've got to both get people to engage with your clips, as well as engage with these audience members yourself.

So what does "audience engagement" look like within a video directory? Any of the following attributes play a role in determining how engaged you and your audience are which – in turn – affects how well your videos perform according to video-specific SEO measures:

- The average length of time viewers spend watching your videos
- The number of comments and ratings your videos receive
- How often your videos are shared
- How active you are in managing your channel and responding to comments

Hopefully, by now, you're starting to get the picture that video SEO isn't nearly as simplistic as website optimization. There are a number of different factors that contribute to the many different aspects of video optimization – including several elements that are seemingly out of your control.

But don't worry if all these competing goals and priorities seem overwhelming. Starting now, I'll be breaking down four of the major video SEO goals, as well as why each priority is important and the specific actions you'll need to take to optimize your videos make the biggest overall difference in your website's earnings.

Let's get started!

VIDEO SEO PRIORITY #1 – Optimizing Videos within Youtube

First of all, let me be clear that when I say "video optimization," I'm not specifically referring to Youtube. There are a number of other video sharing directories you should be paying attention to as well, which I'll get into in a later section.

However, it's worth noting that Youtube does have the highest level of user engagement by far. Of all the visits to video and multimedia sites operating on the internet today, it's estimated that Youtube controls roughly 78.5% of all visits. That's a pretty big piece of the pie!

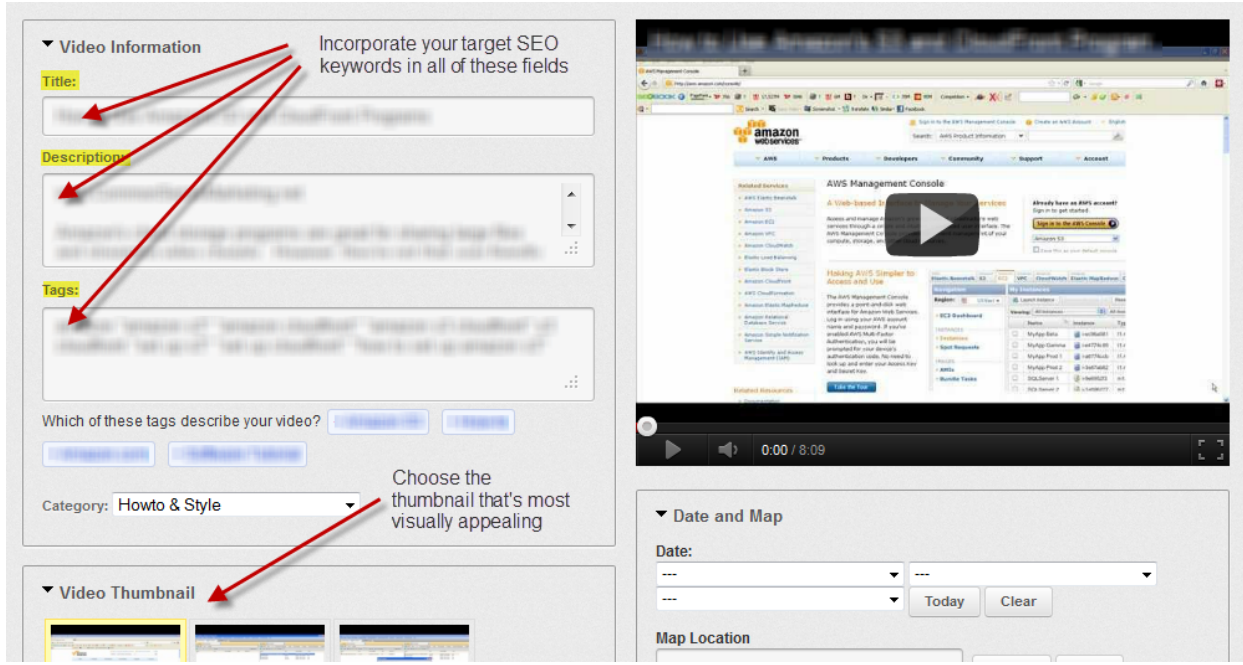
For that reason, proper video optimization starts with the way you upload your videos to this powerful site. Performing the following steps correctly will help to improve your rankings within the natural search engine results, as well as increase your chances of appearing as a "Related Video" when other clips are playing.

The following are the specific elements you'll want to address when uploading each of your videos to Youtube:

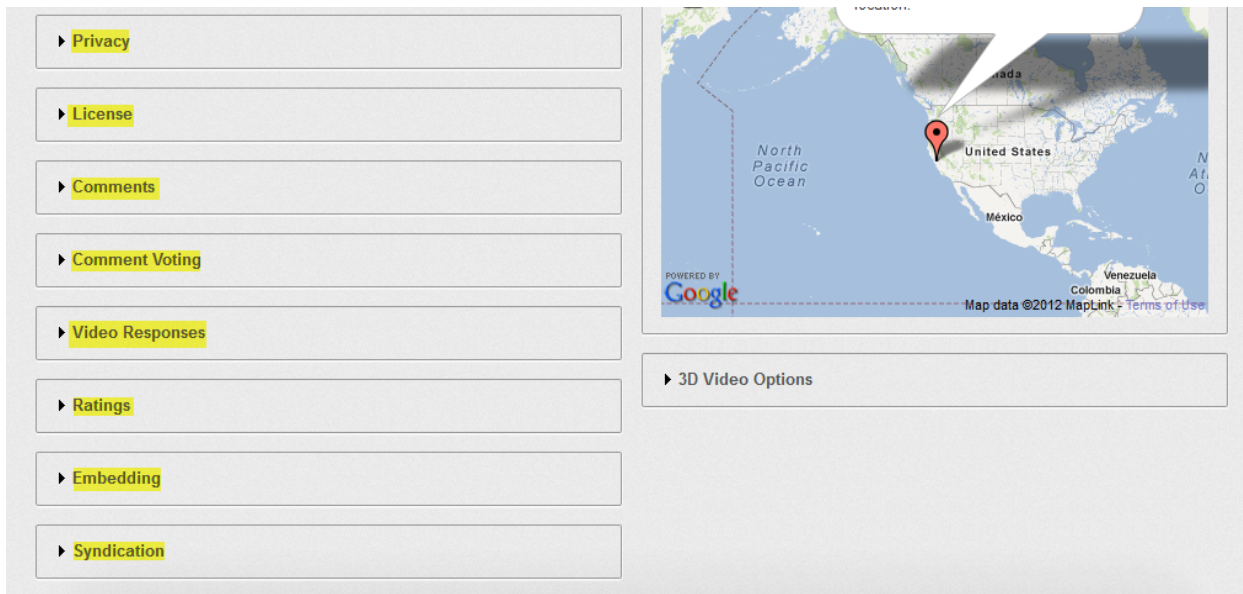
- **Title** – As in traditional website SEO, your video's title tag represents valuable real estate from an SEO perspective. Use your most important keywords here, but also make sure your title is engaging enough to capture potential viewers' attention as well.
- **Description** – Your video's description is the only place on your video listing page where you're able to insert a clickable URL, so don't waste this opportunity! Add your full URL (or use a shortening service like bit.ly for tracking purposes) as the first line of your description to ensure that it remains displayed when the "Show more" tab is closed, then use as many of the remaining 5,000 characters as possible, placing important keywords first in the description.
- **Tags** – When choosing the specific tags to associate with your video, be sure to use both target SEO keywords and "un-optimized" tags. Doing so will prevent your video from appearing to scam the system.
- **Enable interaction** – As you upload your videos, be sure all possible interactive features, including embedding, sharing, commenting and video rating are turned out. While doing so may result in a little extra work on your end (in terms of replying to comments and monitoring ratings), the extra user engagement these features encourage will benefit your videos in the Youtube search results.

(Just a hint – when it comes to optimizing your video files, be aware that manually uploading your videos can give you access to more characters in your title, description and tag sections compared to videos uploaded using automated tools.)

After you upload your video files, you'll be able to edit all of the fields listed above from within your Video Manager, as demonstrated on the diagrams below:



On the lower-half of the screen, open each of the highlighted drop-down arrows to enable different interactive options for your videos:



Be sure to save your changes after making any modifications to the video criteria highlighted in this section.

In addition to completing these video-specific actions, it's important to optimize both the content of your videos (as Google's transcription service automatically creates an indexed, keyword rich text version of your video's content for use in closed captions) and your Youtube channel, which we'll get into in the next section.

VIDEO SEO PRIORITY #2 – Understand and Optimize for Youtube Search Results Ranking Factors

While it's certainly important to add your target SEO keywords to various fields on your video listing pages, when it comes to video optimization, "tag sculpting" alone simply isn't enough to get the job done.

Here's why...

Besides being the largest provider of video content on the internet, Youtube is also one of the web's largest search engines – by far. It's consistently rated amongst the top four search engines in the world (alongside Google, Bing and Baidu, the Chinese search engine) in terms of total search volume, which presents an intriguing opportunity for website marketers.

If you haven't delved into video marketing before, chances are you've invested nearly all your efforts into getting your site ranked in Google's natural search results specifically. The idea that there could be another site out there with the search volume to rival Google and Bing might be surprising, but the reality is that people come to Youtube, day after day in order to search for information. If your video appears at the top of these site-specific search results pages, you stand to gain a significant amount of traffic to your site (and – consequently – a significant amount of revenue as a result).

What this all means is that, compared with Google's natural search results pages, we've got to get familiar with an entirely different algorithm and an entirely different set of ranking factors.

Like the Google natural search results, Youtube uses complex calculations and weighted ranking factors to determine which videos will display first in the Youtube SERPs. And like Google, the video sharing giant is notoriously tight-lipped about the specific way its algorithms operate.

However, this secrecy hasn't stopped video marketing strategists from coming up with a list of ranking factors that are believed to play a role in the overall results. In addition to the traditional keyword optimization described in Priority #1, the following elements may also play a role in how well your video fares within Youtube's search results:

- **Views and frequency** – Popular videos which are viewed more times, more often may have an advantage in the Youtube SERPs.
- **Likes and dislikes** – Youtube may use the number of "like" and "dislike" ratings each video receives to determine how to prioritize various clips.
- **Flags** – It's expected that Youtube uses flags as a means of weeding out videos that violate the company's Terms of Service and, therefore, shouldn't appear in the search results.
- **Shares** – The more "shares" a video receives, the more likely it is that these actions are occurring because the video is well liked and should – consequently – be ranked well in the SERPs.

- **Comments** – More comment activity may indicate that users are connecting with some videos over others, giving Youtube another clue as to which videos should be ranked on top.
- **Video Responses** – Similarly, video responses usually indicate an engaging video, making the number of responses present a potential ranking factor in the Youtube SERPs.
- **Subscribers** – Youtube channels with more subscribers usually indicate content producers that are putting out consistently engaging videos
- And many, many more...

Without boring you with the full list of suspected Youtube ranking factors, know that just about anything that could be used to signal higher quality videos compared to lower value clips is likely being used in some way in the video giant's search results algorithms.

So with all of this in mind, what specific steps should you take to optimize your web videos for prime placement within the Youtube search results? The following actions are a good place to start:

- **Optimize your Youtube channel** – Besides optimizing each video you upload to the site, pay special attention to how effectively you're using your Youtube channel. This prime real estate represents a great opportunity to connect with your viewers and encourage them to watch more of your videos, increasing total views and – potentially – your Youtube SERPs rankings as well.
- **Pay attention to your Youtube Analytics** – Youtube's built-in analytics program provides a wealth of fascinating information about how your videos are performing. Each of the tools found within this program can be used to help inform your video content planning and make your future videos as effective and engaging as possible for your viewers.
- **Embed calls to action in your videos using annotations** – If you want your viewers to watch more of your videos, subscribe to your Youtube channel, "bookmark" their favorite videos or share your content on social networking sites (all of which are believed to play a role in the Youtube ranking algorithm), don't count on them to take these actions on their own accord. Instead, ask them to do so by embedding calls to action in each video you produce with Youtube's annotation feature.

Taking these actions should help to increase the number of views your videos get from within Youtube, which – in turn – should increase the amount of money your website makes as a result of this additional exposure.

Again, though, optimizing within Youtube is only half the battle. Just as you promote your website with backlinks as part of traditional SEO, the way you promote your videos away from this video directory can play a role in your Youtube SERPs rankings as well.

VIDEO SEO GOAL #3 – Off-Page Video Promotion

To really make your video marketing campaigns as effective as possible, you need to conduct a little “off-page SEO” on your video listing pages – just like you would with any other ordinary page on your website.

Any of the following techniques can be an effective way to both build up backlinks and off-site traffic to your Youtube videos:

- **Social media activity** – For best results, submit your videos to the major social networking websites, including Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Stumbleupon and Digg. If possible, consider directing a few more backlinks to your video posts on each of these social networking sites to give the links pointing to your videos a little extra juice.
- **Blog mentions** – Getting your videos featured on related blogs is another good way to build up backlinks to your video pages on Youtube. Although you can certainly contact bloggers and ask that they share your content, it’s even more effective to create content with high viral potential (aka – content that people naturally want to share) in the first place. Having a video “go viral” can result in a substantial amount of views, backlinks and traffic pointing at your Youtube video pages.
- **Press releases** – As with traditional SEO, submitting press releases is a quick and easy way to generate backlinks back to your videos. Just be careful to use this technique in moderation. It’s only appropriate to create and submit press releases promoting your videos when you actually have something newsworthy and worthwhile to share!
- **Company website** – Whenever you create a video, upload it to your website in addition to Youtube. By exposing your existing customer base to your video content, you increase the likelihood that they’ll both watch your videos and share them with friends and family members who might also enjoy the content.

Remember that total video views is considered to be a primary ranking factor within the Youtube SERPs, so embed your video as often as possible when using the techniques described above. Doing so will ensure that your video receives as many total views as possible – both on and off of Youtube itself.

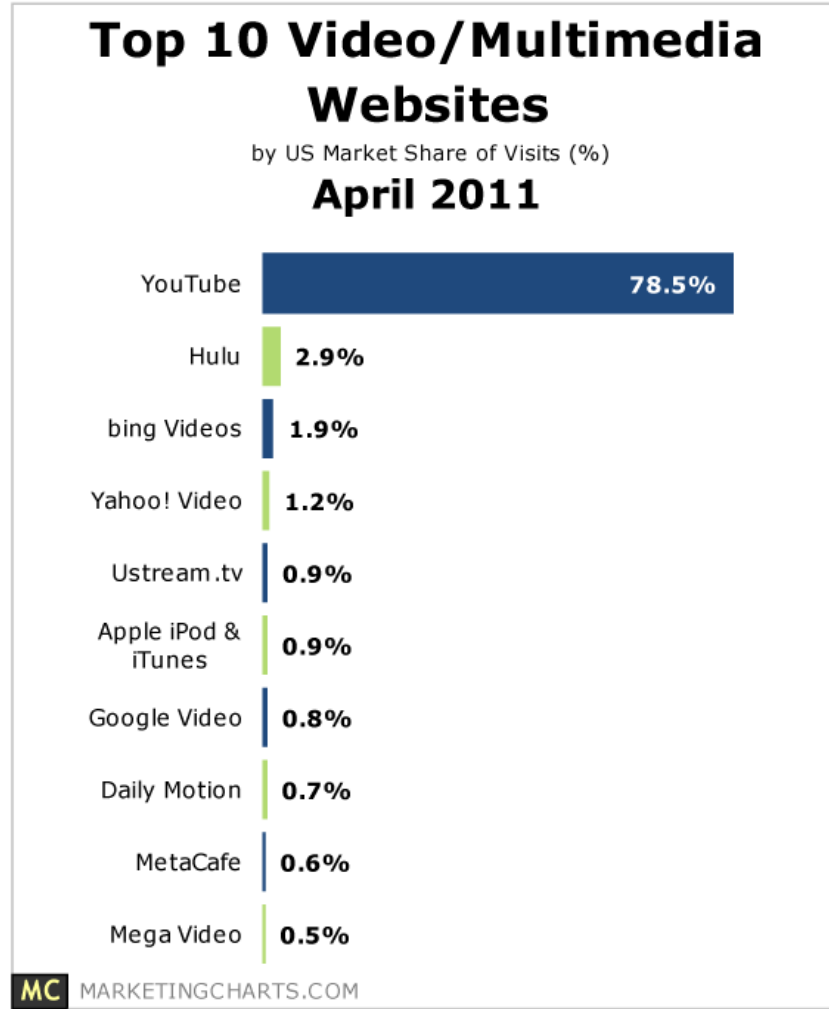
VIDEO SEO PRIORITY #4 – Submitting Videos to Other Video Sharing Networks

So far, we’ve focused pretty much exclusively on how to improve your SEO optimization for videos on the Youtube network. And if you really, truly only have time to participate in one video sharing network, make sure it’s Youtube.

But if you really want to get the most value for your video marketing campaigns, there are a number of other directories you’ll want to submit your content to as well.

Earlier in the article, I mentioned that Youtube receives 78.5% of all video/multimedia websites, according to [Experian Hitwise’s](#) latest survey data. However, just because Youtube controls the lion’s share of the video market doesn’t mean they’re the only game in town worth pursuing.

Here's why...



Source: Experian Hitwise

The specific data set used for this survey encompassed 10 million internet users. The next nine most popular video and multimedia sites taken together accounted for 10.4% of all video visits, and while that may not seem like much compared to Youtube's presence in this space, this equates to 1,040,000 visits when extrapolated out to total search traffic.

And that extra 1+ million visits is nothing to scoff at!

Realistically, submitting to these secondary directories doesn't take much extra time, as you already figured out the title, description and tags you'll use with each clip when you uploaded your videos to Youtube.

As an added benefit, you'll face significantly less competition on these websites, as there are plenty of marketers out there who think that submitting their videos to Youtube alone constitutes a good video marketing plan.

By taking a little extra time to submit your video content to these second-tier directories, you'll be rewarded with additional views and exposure. As you might expect, this combination works out great for your website's bottom line!

[Possible affiliate promotion Segway for automated video submission software here. Not sure what the actual goals are for this report, but it could be turned into almost any kind of call to action at this point.]