



# The Definitive Guide to Video SEO

How to Get Your Great Videos Found



IMPULSE  
CREATIVE

# Incorporating Video SEO into Your Marketing, Sales and Service Strategy

Video represents a unique challenge in an SEO strategy. Video has grown in popularity for consumers, so businesses have developed video strategies, and yet search engines are still behind. The content of a video itself isn't indexed by search engines, but the metadata ascribed to the video is.

Here's what Google says:

In order for [Google to index a video](#), it must be able to see the thumbnail specified in your structured data or sitemap, the page the video is on, the video itself, and any JavaScript or other resources needed to load the video. Make sure that your robots.txt rules do not block any of these video-related resources.

Google would know, as they (Google sites including YouTube) are [the leading choice of video viewing in the U.S.](#)

This means if you want to use video as part of your SEO strategy, you need to use a combination of traditional SEO techniques as well as new techniques that work especially for video SEO. **Adding video within an existing SEO campaign is more about understanding how video and SEO work together, than changing your current SEO practices altogether.**

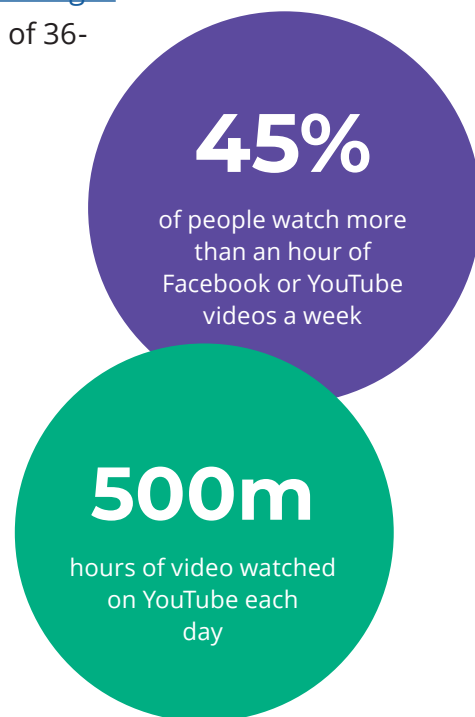
Video isn't just about fun and games, using video can translate into real revenue for your business. [Research shows that YouTube alone has huge reach across all ages.](#)

81% of 15-25 year olds use YouTube, 71% of 26-35 year olds and 67% of 36-45 year olds also do.

[A study by WordStream](#) shows just how popular online video is:

- 45% of people watch more than an hour of Facebook or YouTube videos a week.
- More than 500 million hours of videos are watched on YouTube each day.
- More video content is uploaded in 30 days than the major U.S. television networks have created in 30 years.

Video SEO isn't a side strategy for a successful business; it's a direct line to a huge chunk of the consumer market.



## Start with Great Content

Before you can begin to optimize your videos for search, you need to have great video content for people to watch. Great videos don't need to be epic productions or even the next viral sensation to be successful. Here are five proven types of videos that work for any type of business:

- **Company or product profiles:** short, sweet, and to the point, describe who you are and what you do.
- **Customer testimonials:** Let your customers do your selling for you by talking about their experiences working with you.
- **Video news releases:** Take the standard press release to the next level with a short video message about the news and why it's important.
- **Employee profiles:** Put a human face on your company and let employees' passion come through to your customers
- **Product demos:** if you sell a product, show it off. Consumers who watch a video about a product are 52% less likely to return the product after purchase.

# How to Make Your Videos Rank in Search Results

Incorporating video into your SEO strategy is pointless unless your videos can be found by search engines. So the first step is to ensure that Google and the other search engines can, and do, index your videos properly. Step one: titles, descriptions, thumbnails, and metadata.

## Optimizing Titles, Descriptions and Metadata

There are three basic elements of video search engine optimization that you must use in conjunction with high quality video content. Brands like yours can create the most stellar videos on the web, but if you don't optimize these basic elements as well, no one will ever discover the content. These three elements are the video title, description, and metadata.

The title of your video shouldn't just be catchy; it should also be descriptive if you want viewers and search engines to know what the video is about. A title like: "Product Overview" might make sense in the context of a larger page, but on its own? Whose product? What is the product?

Something like *"SoMedia VideoBuilder - Automated Video Creator Product Overview"* tells potential viewers what the video is about and the title will give search engines the context required to start to index the video properly. Titles, however, can't be too long. The next step is crafting a description that completes the picture.

**Descriptions are crucial to video SEO.** A video description should be written to attract the attention of search engines and consumers. Write your description like a movie trailer, giving enticing info about the content without spoiling the end. Phrases like "You won't believe what happens next," may sound cliché, but they work to encourage consumer clicking.

Integrating keywords throughout the video description or adding meta tags to a video will help search engine algorithms assess the video's content. [Video increases the chance of a front-page Google result](#) by 53x and and 80 percent increase in conversions. Being strategic about your video descriptions and messaging is crucial to your success.



YouTube and other video upload sites allow (and require) you to include other metadata with your video. Things like genre (required), date filmed, author, company, location, and keywords help to further cement your video into search indices in the context you want. Don't just skip over or rush through picking the right keywords for your video. Take time to make sure you have the right words with your post. This doesn't mean that you get to fill the space with every keyword you can imagine, but use the words that are most meaningful to the video you are uploading.

## Thumbnails Shouldn't be an Afterthought

When someone is searching for a video, they're likely looking for your video among a sea of other videos—and video thumbnails. Make sure your video stands out from the crowd. Videos in search results have [higher click through rates](#) compared to plain text results—but this only holds true if your video and associated thumbnail are enticing, so make sure they are!

Thumbnails can come from screenshots of the video content, or they may be created separately to advertise the video.

If your thumbnail is boring, blank, or difficult to make out, people may not click your video.

All video sharing sites—like YouTube—allow you to pick from several different thumbnails from your video. Most also allow custom images or even video thumbnails. Plan your thumbnail to ensure it's enticing and stands out from the crowd.



## Tips for Your YouTube Channel

You have several options for hosting video, but since Google owns YouTube, and it's the second [most popular website according to Alexa](#), you'll want to explore using YouTube as at least one distribution channel for your videos. However, just uploading your videos to your YouTube account isn't enough.

To make the most out of YouTube you need to customize your YouTube Channel Page with your company name, logo, background, links to your website and other social media. By fully and completely customizing your YouTube channel, you give your viewers – and Google – the most irrelevant information about you and your brand. Google can pull your data together into context with each other in search results. For Google, and SEO in general, context and connectivity are paramount to good SEO.

# Video SEO Tips for Your Website

Once you've customized and fleshed out your YouTube channel, it's time to apply some of the same steps to your website as well to give your SEO efforts an extra boost and context. Here are four easy steps you can take to extend and enhance the SEO strength of your videos (and website):

## **EMBED YOUR VIDEOS IN APPROPRIATE PAGES**

Your YouTube channel is a great warehouse for all your videos and will help Google understand more about your company as a whole, but make sure you embed your videos in your own website as well. Google sees not just the video, but the video in context of related content as well. Embed your videos on the appropriate pages on your website to not just enhance the content there, but make those connections between the video and the point you are trying to convey.

## **VIDEO LIBRARY OR GALLERY**

A video library or gallery page that lists all of your brand's videos in an organized fashion is a great tool for visitors and search engines alike. On your own page you have more freedom to describe, organize, and categorize your videos beyond YouTube's imposed hierarchy. A video gallery gives you the same effect as your YouTube channel and playlists, but caters to your audience who doesn't visit YouTube.

## **THUMBNAILS**

The thumbnails of your video can inspire clicks or send potential customers on their merry way. The video thumbnail is usually a frame of the video itself. If, however, your thumbnail features a boring frame such as a blank screen or a surplus of words, consumers may assume that the video is uninteresting. Choose thumbnails with action, color, and excitement.

## **ADD CLEAR, THOROUGH DESCRIPTIONS**

Be sure that all of your videos have keyword-rich descriptions that communicate precisely what the video is about. Descriptions should appeal to search engines and consumers, so including a teaser at the end may increase video clicks.

# Optimizing Video Landing Pages for Search

Optimizing your video landing pages for search involves many of the same techniques and practices common to content search engine optimization. Keywords should describe that specific video and the message on the page itself, not be filled with extraneous, irrelevant keywords— be SEO smart and only use the words that match the content.

Using video social media sites, like YouTube, is a great way to research popular search strings. When you type in a keyword, YouTube will provide a list of common associated phrases

At least 86 percent of the US Internet audience is watching online video—that's 183 million people.

ComScore

Add transcripts of the videos that you post to your website. Because Google and other search engine algorithms can't assess the content of a video, **a transcription document provides a search engine (and human) friendly version of your video content that can be indexed.** Including widgets for popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest will make it easier for consumers to share your videos with their friends and followers.


Social media activity is a great search engine rankings booster and Google is using how many times a video has been shared as one factor in search rankings.

# Creating a Video Sitemap

If your website is filled with videos, but you're simply not ranking for the videos that you've posted, there may be an issue with Google's ability to evaluate the video content on your site. To solve this issue, it's important to create a video sitemap.

Google enabled sitemap protocol for video content in 2007.

Creating a video sitemap will tell Google precisely where all your videos are located and what the content of each video is.



The screenshot shows the 'Sitemaps' section of Google Webmaster Tools for the domain 'example.com'. It includes a 'Submit Sitemap' button and a table of existing sitemaps.

Filename	Format	Last Downloaded	Status	URLs submitted	
<input type="checkbox"/> chtml.xml	Mobile	9 hours ago	WARNINGS	58	<a href="#">Details</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> codesearch.xml	Code Search	10 hours ago	OK	2	<a href="#">Details</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> geo.xml	Geo	9 hours ago	OK	16	<a href="#">Details</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> web.index	Sitemap Index	7 hours ago	OK	216	<a href="#">Details</a>

A video sitemap is, in essence, a text document that utilizes officially recognized Google sitemap protocol. This text document will have specific video tags embedded within the text. You can use [Google Webmaster tools](#) to create a sitemap for the videos on your site. Google walks you through the process, and the steps are fairly easy to understand. Incredibly, each sitemap allows you to provide information for up to 50,000 video files.

You can use tags within the sitemap document to state the location of the video landing page, provide the specific URL for the video, point to a recommended video player if your videos require specific players, provide a recommended thumbnail for your video, provide a title and description for your video, provide video length information, and even encode alerts that will tell users whether or not content is appropriate for all ages.



# Measuring Results

Just like any search engine optimization strategy, it's important to measure the results of your video content.

Use Google Analytics to see how your website is ranking with Google. If you've developed a specific landing page for video content, it will be quite easy to determine whether or not your video content is effective in generating site activity. Given that landing pages with video are known to generate 4-7x more engagement and response rates, you should see a considerable lift.

Also check your social media accounts to see how often videos were shared via Facebook, retweeted via Twitter, or viewed on YouTube. Watch the trends including time of day and day of the week when looking at your data to see if you can get better results changing when you post and share videos.

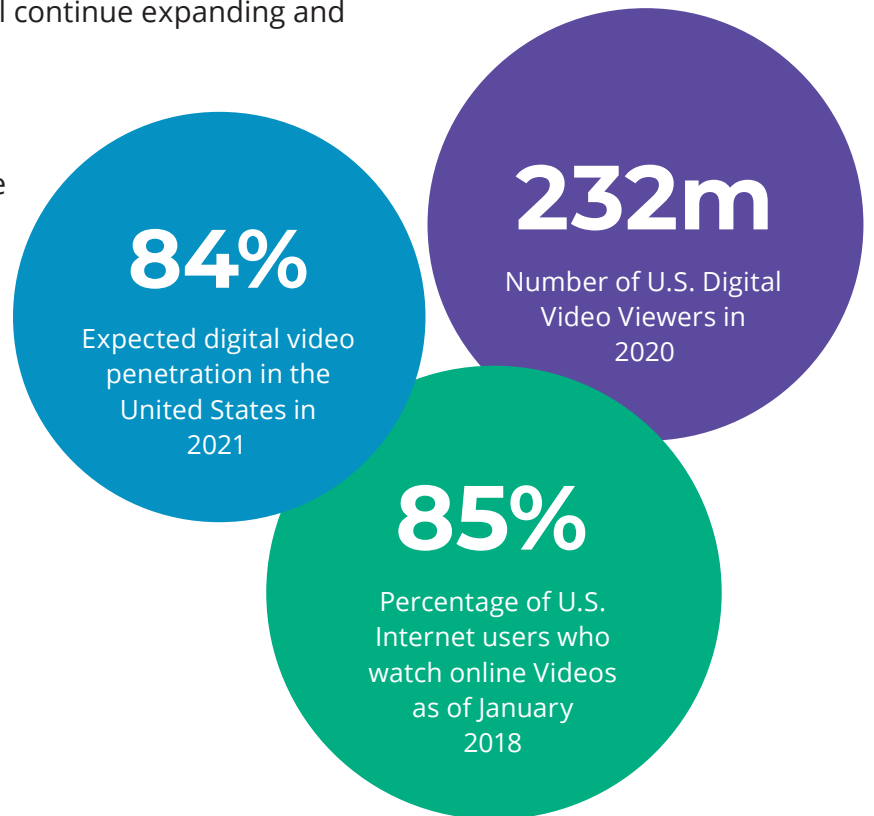
Keeping a record of different videos and the response generated with consumers will help you understand what types of videos and what type of content is performing well within your target audience.



# Conclusion

Online video isn't going anywhere. It will continue expanding and developing far into the future.

As Internet connectivity becomes more powerful and more pronounced, mobile browsing and connecting becomes more prevalent, and top search engines like Google start paying more attention to video content marketing, it will become crucial for successful brands to use video SEO tactics to boost search engine rankings.



# About Impulse Creative

## We Are Wayfinders

Wayfinding: All of the ways in which people orient themselves and navigate from place to place.

You know where you want to go. We're the compass to help you navigate there, and make your brand's mark on the digital marketing map.

We could call ourselves a "marketing agency", a "digital agency," or a "branding agency," but we're more than that. Because we don't provide services without results. We believe that good marketing is a long-term journey together, toward a clearly defined goal. When you're ready to put social media to work for your business, we're here to help.

From social media strategy to content creation, our inbound marketers help businesses of all sizes grow better.

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