

Tracking Online Data with YouTube's Insight Tracking Tool

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Abstract: *YouTube users have access to the powerful data collection tool, Insight. Insight allows YouTube content producers to collect data about the number of online views, geographic location of viewers by country, the demographics of the viewers, how a video was discovered, and the attention span of the viewer while watching the video. This article reports on the viral capacity of a video over a 24- month period.*

Reaching the Target Audience

Online enhanced or video podcasts provide opportunities for Extension educators to disseminate information to consumers. Online video podcasts often provide an opportunity for educators to share information (Case & Hino, 2010) and expand the reach of their programmatic efforts to a global community, including consumers, educators, and the general population around the world. This article describes the potential of data accumulation and tracking tools using YouTube's Insight data-collection tool.

Creation of a Video

In an effort to experiment with the ability to track the "viral," meaning the video's popularity is increased as the video is distributed from one person to another (Kinsey & Henneman, 2011), the *Digital Immigrant: A Day in the Life* production was created using software tools commonly found on most computers. Using Microsoft's PowerPoint, slides were filled with photographs and text (Kinsey, 2010) to establish the format for this demonstration video that can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5-HIJAj_8E>. The PowerPoint slides were saved as JPEG image file formats (Joint Photographic Experts Group, used by digital cameras and other photographic image capture devices) and placed in a folder on the computer desktop (Pennebaker & Mitchell, 1993). A voice track was recorded using Apple's GarageBand software. Enhanced video was later created by using the recorded GarageBand voice track as a format for dropping PowerPoint slide images into the voice track. The process resulted in a series of still images with a voice track overlay. The completed project was saved as a movie (.mov format or as a QuickTime format which allows online video viewers to click and play the video) and uploaded to YouTube.

YouTube's Reach into the Global Community

YouTube, the most popular video-sharing site on the Internet, has a substantial reach into the global community (TechPartner, 2011). According to Alexa, The Web Information Company, found at <www.Alexa.com>, YouTube reached over 30 million people per day during the month of July 2011. Alexa states on their website that YouTube is ranked the third highest most used online search engine on the World Wide Web after Google and Yahoo. The PEW American Life Project's report released in 2010, *The State of Online Video*, found "seven in ten adult users (69%), or roughly half of all U.S. adults (52%) have used the Internet to watch or download video." The community Extension educators are attempting to reach is clearly online and watching video!

Insight: YouTube's Analytics Tool

Individuals with a YouTube account have access to a self-service analytics and reporting tool called "Insight." The tool allows account holders to obtain detailed statistics about the audience for video uploaded to YouTube. The Insight tool allows an account user to view data for specific videos or aggregate data from all videos uploaded into an account. Reports are available in the following categories: Views & Popularity (graphic trends showing where the video views are coming from), Discovery (how people discover the video, i.e., YouTube searches or Web links) Demographics (the age and gender of the audience viewing the video), Audience Attention (a graphic of where the video is hot or cold in terms of a dropping off rate of viewers), and Community Engagement (the number of viewers who rate, favorite, or comment on the video).

Twenty-Four Months of Insight Tracking

The *Digital Immigrant: A Day in the Life* video was launched as an online venue on YouTube on July 23, 2009 as a publicly accessible podcast. As of July 2011 (24 months after the initial launch) according to Insight, 2,709 individuals around the world viewed the program online on YouTube's website. The initial distribution of the podcast was sent to an electronic address book including 207 people consisting of family, friends, colleagues, and professionals who have participated in outreach programs. After the initial launch, the podcast took on a life of its own, as it has been passed from one person to the next. The podcast has never been intentionally promoted by the author, which demonstrates the power of the Internet and the potential of making a podcast lightly viral.

Tracking Outreach Using Insight

The reach of *Digital Immigrant: A Day in the Life*, a 3-minute, 26-second production, has been productive in spite of little promotion of the video. YouTube's Insight data tracking tools makes it easy to see where the podcast has been viewed and to determine information about the viewers in terms of gender. Individuals from six continents and 50 countries viewed the podcast over 24 months. Although the demonstration video used as an example in this article has been shared by numerous people, it is by no means viral in the context of currently popular videos available on YouTube that attract millions of views each year.

The U.S., the most popular country for viewers, had 1,404 views in households in 30 states. The podcast is also popular in Europe, with 446 viewers in 21 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the Ukraine). Asia had 65 viewers in 14 countries (Estonia, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam). South America had 57 viewers from six countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. A total of 16 viewers from seven countries in the Middle East watched the video, including viewers in Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In Africa, the country of Morocco had only three views over the 24-month period.

Summary

Online video can be simple to produce using commonly available software tools. One method for creating a simple video is to use PowerPoint slides added into an audio voice track using a tool such as GarageBand. Once a video is uploaded to YouTube, it will develop a path of views, allowing the video to become viral. YouTube's Insight data tracking tool provides a variety of reports that enable users to collect information about the number of views, geographic location of the views, demographics of the viewer, discovery of the video, and attention span of the view. Extension educators may find Insight's data tracking tool useful when disseminating information with online videos targeted to reach the global community.

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