OOYALA®

BOOST YOUR VISIBILITY & SEARCH RANKING

VIDEO SEO IN A MOBILE AND SOCIAL ERA

Social networks and mobile devices are changing how people find and consume online video. Discover how to gain visibility, grow your audience and move your bottom line with VSEO from Ooyala.

PEOPLE ARE WATCHING MORE ONLINE VIDEO THAN EVER. MAKE SURE THEY'RE WATCHING YOURS.

By 2015, online video is expected to make up over 90 percent of consumer Internet traffic globally.[1] Tablets, laptops, and smartphones are altering the video landscape in radical ways as more video is delivered to more connected screens than ever before. Smart TVs, set-top boxes, tablets and personal computers are fueling unprecedented rates of home and office video consumption.

If video takes up most of the Internet's bandwidth, then social networking takes up most of Internet users' time. Americans spend more time on social networks than they do checking email, playing games or visiting any other type of website.[2]

The rise of connected screens and social networks means more opportunities for media companies and consumer brands to connect with viewers and increase revenue with online video. But if your video isn't easily found by viewers, it's worthless. **Online video that is properly indexed is 50 times more likely to rank on the first page of Google search results than a text page.**[3] Yet nearly half of the top 50 retail sites don't index their videos with search engines.[4] Companies are putting more content online, but need better ways to help people find and watch it.

In this paper we'll examine video optimization strategies that improve social sharing and mobile discovery across all types of devices.

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[1] Cisco Visual Networking Index – Forecast and Methodology, 2010 - 2015
[2] Nielsen – State of the Media Social Media Report: Q3 2011
[3] Forrester Research
[4] ReelSEO – The State of Video for E-Commerce Retailers: Q4 2010 Report

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SEO BEST PRACTICES: TRADITIONAL SEO

Many companies add metadata and meta descriptions to their web content for better placement in search engine results pages (SERPS). To gain SERP visibility, your content needs to be engaging and attractive to both people and search engines. This means creating a logical, well-organized site with clear meta labels and relevant keywords.

Other factors that can make your site more visible to search engines:

- The number of other sites linking to your page
- The quality of these inbound links
  - Google assigns every site a Page Rank based on its perceived authority.
  - The higher the Page Rank of the site linking to yours, the more quality the link has in the eyes of the search engines.
  - In general, the more trusted and authoritative sites that link to your content, the better your content will do in the SERPS.
- Keyword density
  - How often do your keywords appear on your site and within your metadata?
- Alt tags for related images
  - Alternate text tags provide short, clear descriptions of images to search engines.
  - They're a good place to add keywords that relate to your site.

- Overall site architecture
  - The way that humans and search engines navigate your site influences your ranking in the SERPS.
  - There should only be one to two clicks needed to get anywhere on your site. If your content takes 7 clicks to get to, it will be harder for the web-crawler to find your content.[5]

USING VIDEO TO BOOST VISIBILITY: VSEO BEST PRACTICES

Facebook is now a leading site for video consumption.[6] The rise of social and mobile technologies mean that more people have access to online video than ever before.

> Almost a third of all online video views will occur on mobile devices in 2012.

Adding videos to your site will engage your users and add a level of richness that text and photos alone lack. Videos will also help your content gain visibility in SERPS, but only if you take the time to optimize them. For best results, these VSEO practices should be used consistently, and along with traditional SEO techniques.

Video Challenges
Leading search engines like Google, Yahoo! and Bing send out webcrawlers daily to read and index web content. These webcrawlers can't execute dynamic code and they don't like items made in Flash or JavaScript. As a result, **online video is "invisible" to the search engines unless the content owners take proactive action.**

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[5] SEOmoz – Site Architecture for SEO
[6] CNET – Top Internet Destinations in 2011

START WITH YOUR WEB DESIGN LAYOUT

Step 1: Create Landing Pages For Each Video

Make sure every video has its own landing page. That way, all incoming links will lead to the same URL, which focuses the power of the links in one place, and improves the credibility of the site in the eyes of the search engines.

Video Landing Page Checklist

Make sure that the title of the page (the 'H1' tag) and the title of the video contain similar keywords so viewers on search engines and on your page understand what your content is all about.

- Make sure your video URL link is also referenced where the asset is managed.

- Limit the title to 60 characters so it can appear completely on SERPS.

- Describe subject matter and unique characteristics in long-tail terms for increased visibility.
  - The more specific, the better
  - 'Great Dane' is better than 'dog,' for example.

- Provide keyword anchor text for each video:
  - Additional tags (and metadata) are not as important in boosting rankings but should be included to provide a more complete idea as to what your video is about. As search engines get better at indexing video content, these additional tags and categories (<video:tag>, <video:category>) may provide may provide additional context for content.
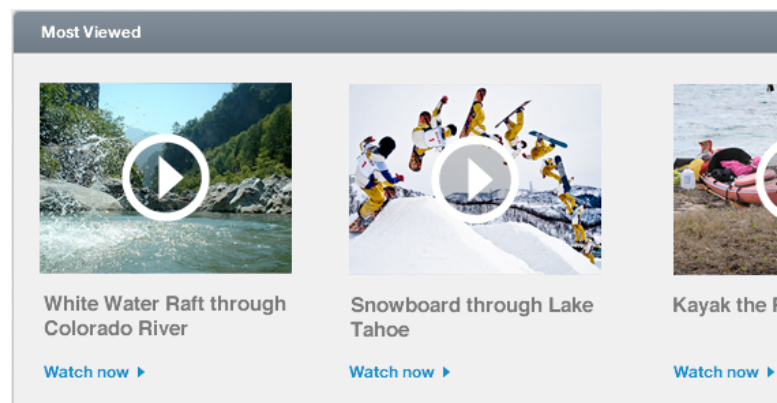
Step 2: Create an Index Page That Encompasses Your Video Library

It's important to give search engines context and related content for your videos. Surround them with text, photos and audio files wherever you can. The more organized your content, the more context it offers a search engine. You can also easily incorporate a "Featured" or "Most Viewed" tab on your index page. For brands, these videos could be current promotions or even user-generated content.

Step 3: Create a Fluid Experience

Embed your videos in your web pages at all times to maintain continuity and keep viewers within your branded environment.

- Pop-up players are distracting. They should be avoided by media companies and brands.

- Pick compelling video thumbnails that viewers will want to click on. Make sure that your content loads as quickly as possible on all types of devices.

- Optimize your cache to enable rapid queries to the APIs on your CDN. Player speed is critical to maintaining user engagement.

Most Viewed

White Water Raft through Colorado River
Watch now ▶

Snowboard through Lake Tahoe
Watch now ▶

Kayak the ...
Watch now ▶

CREATE SOCIAL SEO

71 percent of Americans use video sharing sites on a regular basis, according to the Pew Internet survey.[7] **Facebook is now one of the leading video sites on the Internet.**[8] Social networks help people share and discover your content through Tweets, likes and links. And since Google takes social virality into account when ranking pages, social video discovery can boost your video's position in SERPS.

Step 4: Make Your Video Easy to Share

- Make the embed codes for your video easy to find and copy.

- Create social sharing buttons so users can share, comment and rate your video.

    - Comments are an easy way to add metadata to your videos.

- Use Facebook Connect to allow easy integration with the world's largest social network.

    - Facebook Open Graph establishes contextual relationships between your content and specific users.

    - This means that when a Facebook user "likes" you content on the web, they also like you on their Facebook profile.

    - Website publishers can then interact with the user and their social graph on Facebook and the web.

Step 5: Make It Easy For Other Sites To Reference Your Videos

- Show trackback and inbound links on your website.

    - This shows all the sites that link to your video or embed your video on their web page.

- Correlate backlinks to your keyword strategy.

    - Show the other sites that link to your content, and you'll increase keyword density on your page.
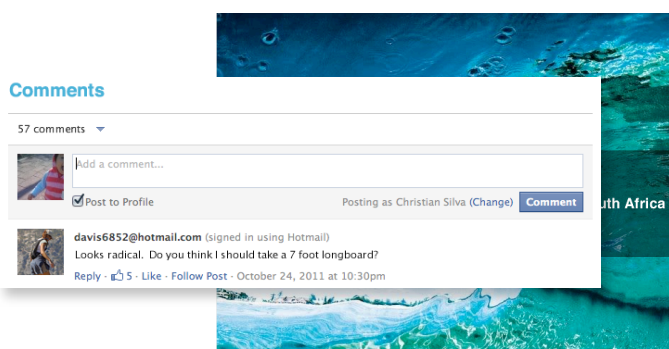
Step 6: Engage Your Community

Make it easy for your followers to find your latest content with updated video feeds. Highlight new video content and you'll encourage your viewers to return often for more updates. But if your viewers don't know that new content exists, it may as well be invisible to them.

MRSS feeds:

- Put your video content on feed readers.

- Help search engines discover your video.

- Are important for mobile apps that use these feeds to populate their content.

Ooyala's video technology platform makes it easy to generate Google sitemaps and MRSS feeds, which can be submitted to the leading search engines.

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[7] Pew Internet
[8] CNET Online Video Rankings

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CREATE FRIENDLY SEO FOR WEBCRAWLERS

Step 7: Expose your metadata

In order to increase the visibility of your video content, take advantage of the metadata that you use to describe your video content in your video platform. Ooyala can make it easy for you to swap out the video player and replace it with search friendly metadata for webcrawlers to find and index, converting HTML headers and body elements to replace "search unfriendly" Flash. It's an efficient and effective way to expose your video metadata and make them more discoverable.

Step 8: Submitting Sitemaps

To get your video content indexed in search engines, you should first optimize your website layout and ensure that each video has it's own unique URL. Then you should create a video sitemap with all the unique video URLs and submit it manually.

So just what is a video sitemap? It's a single list of all of the postings on a website, with links to all pages, that tells search engines where to find your videos. The more descriptive and keyword-rich your sitemap, the better. Webcrawlers use this map as a guide to visit and index your content and add it to search engine results.

> Video sitemaps are the proactive way to gaining visibility and increasing your potential audience.

Video Sitemaps
- Are similar to XML sitemaps, but are formatted for video
- Can submit XML or MRSS feeds

Create Video Sitemaps Easily with Ooyala

Ooyala's video management platform helps create video sitemaps for better video visibility in SERPS. Mapping a video is as easy as dragging and dropping it in our dashboard. (Third-party systems require API calls to produce this kind of content.) Video sitemaps are a great start for getting higher rankings on the keywords that matter most to your business. Of course, the video content itself must also be compelling if you want to attract viewers and earn high search rankings.

What About Robots.txt Files?

Some people feel that Robots.txt files are necessary to boost your site's SEO. These text files list the restricted areas of your page that you don't want webcrawlers to access. Unless you are specifically "fencing off" content from the search engines, these files have limited SEO value.

OTHER SEO TIPS TO CONSIDER

MOBILE VIDEO SEO

Mobile computing is exploding. Forty-three percent of Americans own a smartphone capable of displaying video.[9] By 2014, video will account for 66 percent of mobile traffic data.[10]

Tablet sales continue to accelerate. Experts predict sustained year-over-year growth with more than 325 million units sold in 2015.[11] Like video, search has left the desktop behind. Publishers and brands must optimize their videos for all types of mobile devices in order to reach and hold their audiences.

[9] Nielsen Q3 Study
[10] Cisco Visual Networking Index – Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2010–2015
[11] Gartner

MOBILE VSEO BEST PRACTICES

Submit separate mobile sitemaps for your video content. They increase the chances that your content will be discovered by mobile users, since they're limited to URLs that deliver mobile web video. They can also be integrated into your MRSS feeds. Without mobile sitemaps, your video content will be ignored. Again, be sure to choose compelling video thumbnails that viewers will want to click on.

Once viewers find your content, it has to play back flawlessly. Make sure that your video player can display on multiple devices and in various network conditions. Ooyala gives you encoding for iOS and Android devices, and deploys advanced Adaptive Bitrate technologies to detect playback speed and adjust the stream in real time.

CONCLUSION

Video is a vibrant and emotional medium that is rapidly transforming the way we work and play online. As social media sites and the number of connected devices both grow, you need a video optimization strategy that factors in both.

Media companies and consumer-facing brands can both benefit from optimized and indexed video content. They'll gain visibility in the search engines and attract new viewers (and new revenue sources).

Keep in mind that SEO is important, but shouldn't dictate every decision you make for your website. Optimized keywords are never a substitute for bright, relevant, engaging content.