

CASE 2 YouTube

It's the website everyone visits at least once, and most surfers come back again and again: the ubiquitous YouTube. Where else can you watch a video of a cat swimming contentedly in a bathtub, a 12-year-old rendering a professional performance of the "The Star Spangled Banner" at a small-town basketball game, or a public political debate where candidates answer questions visitors to the site have submitted?

YouTube, a video-sharing Web site, went online in 2005. Two former PayPal employees, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley, created the site, and it was practically an overnight success. The San Bruno, California-based service displays a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie and TV clips, music videos, video blogs, and short original videos. In July 2006, YouTube reported that visitors to the site were viewing more than 100 million video clips a day—a fact that compelled Google Inc. to buy the site that year for US\$1.76 billion in stock. As of 2014, YouTube continues to be a successful video site and a top destination for Web surfers, who watch over 1 billion unique visitors each month. According to the site, over 6 billion hours of videos are watched each month, and 100 hours of video are uploaded every minute.

All of that video requires YouTube to have access to tremendous bandwidth. In 2013, the viewing of videos on YouTube consumed about 17 percent of global Internet

bandwidth. In fact, in 2007 the British publication *The Telegraph* expressed fears that the Internet could "grind to a halt within two years" without massive upgrades to the Internet infrastructure. Fortunately for YouTube fans and Internet users in general, that didn't happen. Bandwidth issues aside, YouTube continues to try to draw in more viewers.

As YouTube has gained popularity, police forces around the country have used the service to help catch criminals. In April 2010, for example, homicide investigators in Vancouver, British Columbia, posted a video about a victim in an unsolved but high-profile murder case. Although the case was being actively investigated, the investigative team had exhausted its list of leads. The posted video included photos of the woman who had been killed and a recap of what the investigators had pieced together up to that point. Their hope was that by using social media and getting the story in front of viewers, it might help jog a memory of someone who might have seen something pertinent to the case. Some police departments, however, such as St. George County in Virginia, said they would not use YouTube for catching criminals because posting police videos next to those with "crazy" content would be "bad publicity" for the police.

Regardless of the propensity for catching criminals or lack thereof, YouTube has had its share of legal issues as well. After several lawsuits were filed alleging copyright

violations over copyrighted material posted on YouTube, the company agreed to remove copyrighted material on request. In addition, YouTube installed software intended to automatically detect and remove copyrighted clips. In order to function correctly, however, the software needed to compare clips of copyrighted material to YouTube content, which meant that music, movie, and television companies would have to send decades of clips of copyrighted material to YouTube so that comparisons could be made.

In March 2010, the entertainment corporation Viacom entered into a US\$1 billion lawsuit against YouTube alleging that the video site knowingly made a financial gain from 62,637 Viacom video clips that were viewed over 507 million times. YouTube has countered by alleging that Viacom was covertly uploading clips of its content in an attempt to sabotage YouTube's efforts to remove copyrighted material. Later that year, a U.S. district court ruled in favor of YouTube, a decision that Viacom was unlikely to accept; in April 2012, a judge at a U.S. federal appeals court sent the case back to a district court, asking the lower court to determine to what extent YouTube was aware of the copyright infringements. In April 2013, a district judge again granted summary judgment in favor of YouTube. An appeal was begun, but the parties settled in March 2014. Whatever YouTube's future, it's not likely that Internet users will soon lose interest in video sharing.

Questions

- 1-43. Do you use YouTube? If so, what is your favorite type of content? If not, why not? What other video-sharing sites do you use? Why?
- 1-44. How can businesses use YouTube to promote a good brand image? Have you seen any "good" campaigns on YouTube? If so, what made them appealing?
- 1-45. What potential dangers for a business's reputation can arise from user-generated content posted on sites such as YouTube? How can a business react to such dangers?

Based on:

Anonymous. (n.d.). Statistics. *YouTube*. Retrieved May 12, 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>.

Bolan, K. (2010, April 1). Police enlist YouTube in hunt for a killer. *Vancouver Sun*. Retrieved June 13, 2014, from <http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/westcoastnews/story.html?id=acf3b299-6086-4e24-b68f-ed6543e3ed1>.

ViacomInternationalInc.v.YouTube,Inc.(2014, March 18). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved May 13, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Viacom_International_Inc._v._YouTube,_Inc.&oldid=600224157.

Kafka, P. (2013, November 11). Netflix + YouTube = Half your broadband diet. *AllThingsD*. Retrieved May 12, 2014, from <http://allthingsd.com/20131111/netflix-youtube-half-your-broadband-diet>.

MyMISLab™

Go to mymislab.com for the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

- 1-46. How do the five megatrends influence how people work and interact?
- 1-47. Describe and contrast the economic, cultural, and technological changes occurring in the digital world.