

8 Steps to Master Video SEO

Techniques to Drive More Traffic to Your Video Content

White Paper • June 2014



Overview

8 Steps to Master Video SEO

Getting Started with Video SEO

First, the Basics ...

1. Content is King
2. Choose Your Words Wisely
3. Create a Great User Experience
4. Go Social
5. Make Use of Video Transcripts

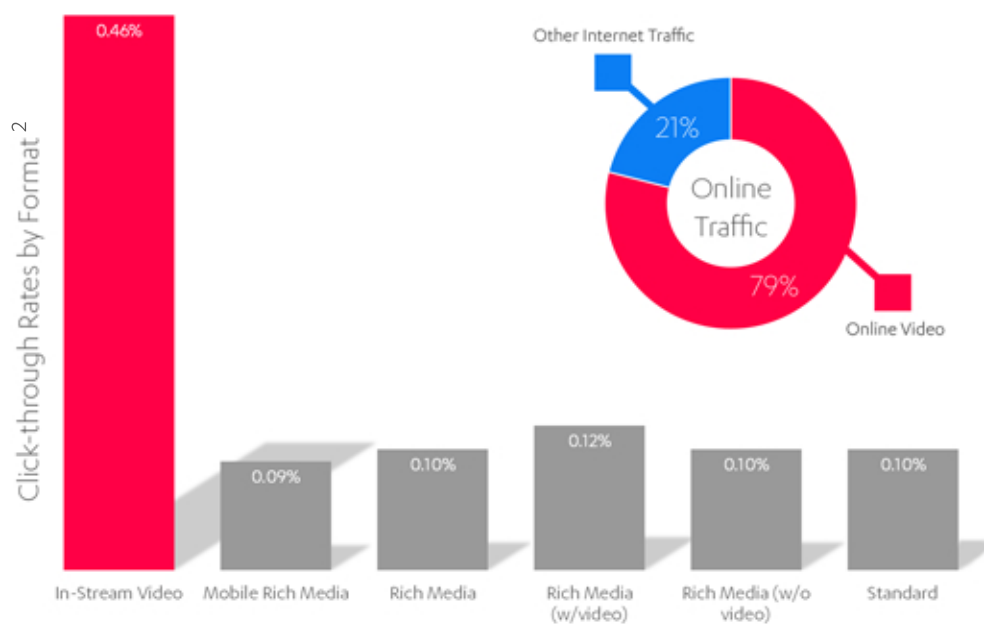
Advanced Video SEO

Let's Get Technical

6. Leverage a Multi-Channel Strategy
7. Create Sitemaps
8. Mark-up with Schema.org

The JW Player Difference

8 Steps to Master Video SEO



Online video is growing rapidly - it is expected to represent **79% of consumer internet traffic** in 2018.¹ This is good news for companies and brands, as videos are one of the most effective ways to engage an audience. Video ads have more than four times the click-through rate (CTR) of their plain text counterparts.² Furthermore, retention rate for visual information can reach 65% vs. 10% for text based information.³

So how do viewers find your videos? Video Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the evolving practice of ensuring your videos are as highly ranked in search engine results pages (SERPs) as possible. Fortunately, by properly indexing your videos, your site is **50x more likely** to end up on the first page of search results than with text alone.⁴ In this white paper, we will examine video SEO strategies to move your content closer to that coveted first page.

1. "Cisco Visual Networking Index: Forecast and Methodology, 2013–2018." Cisco. <http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/ip-ngn-ip-next-generation-network/white_paper_ct1-481360.html>.

2. "Digital Advertising Benchmarks." MarketingProfs. <<http://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2014/24821/digital-ad-benchmarks-performance-by-format>>.

3. "Invodo Video Statistics." Invodo. <<http://www.invodo.com/resources/statistics/>>.

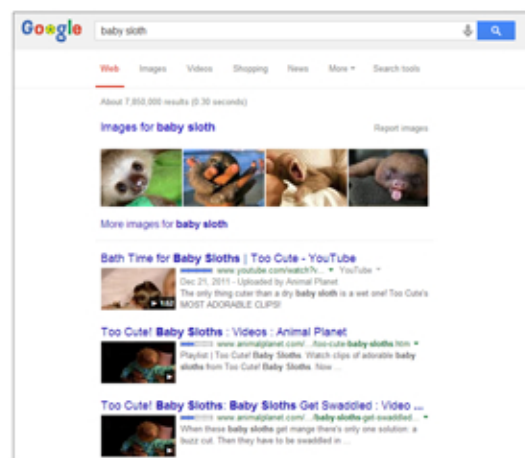
4. "Nate Elliott's Blog." The Easiest Way to a First-Page Ranking on Google. <http://blogs.forrester.com/interactive_marketing/2009/01/the-easiest-way.html>.

1. Content is King

No matter how good your SEO strategies are, content always comes first. Create content that is relevant and useful to your target audience. If your content is compelling, then it will attract visitors and entice other sites to link to it. Having authoritative sites link to your content will increase your “trust” in Google’s eyes and boost your search ranking in turn.

Videos are a great way to convey instructions, promote a product/service, or convey creativity and emotion. Google is more likely to show video results for these types of searches:

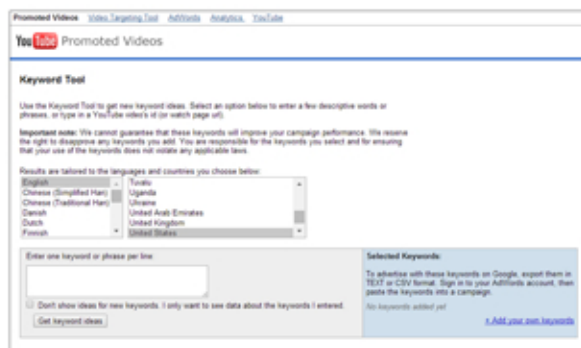
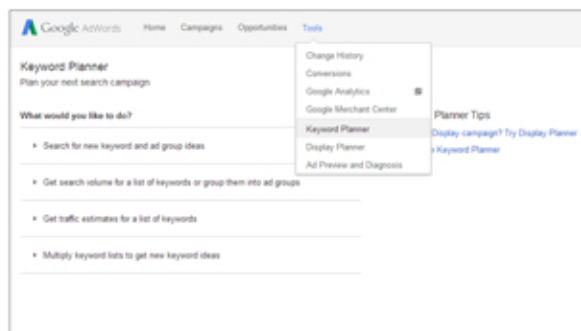
- **“How to” Videos**
e.g. How to Survive a Zombie Attack
- **Sports/Fitness Videos**
e.g. Curling
- **Funny/Cute Videos**
e.g. Baby Sloth



Once you’ve decided that video is the best type of media to convey your information, make sure that you are using high quality audio and visuals to keep your audience engaged. **Don’t forget to produce high quality thumbnail images!** Google shows thumbnail images next to video results so you can stand out more on a listing with a good image.

2. Choose Your Words Wisely

Without the proper keywords in your videos, viewers will have an incredibly difficult time finding them. Keywords exist in video titles, descriptions, and tags. Optimize keyword selection with [Google's Keyword Planner](#) or [YouTube's Keyword Tool](#). You'll be able to enter a variety of relevant keywords to see related keywords, average monthly searches, and the level of competition on specific phrases. These tools are excellent ways to bucket and prioritize which keywords to use on your own site and video metadata.



2. Choose Your Words Wisely

There is no ideal set of keywords or formula to follow, especially since Google changes its search algorithm up to 600 times each year according to SEOMoz.⁵ What may work today can be completely different tomorrow. However, here are a few tips that can push you towards the right direction:

- **Everything in Moderation**
Use no more than two to three keywords for each video or landing page. Search engine algorithms are tasked to find users "keyword stuffing" so it would be best to avoid being penalized for it.
- **Diversify Your Content**
Surround your onsite video with other forms of content like brief summaries, header tags, a URL with targeted keywords, and a video transcript.
- **Learn From Your Competitors**
Look at your competitors' source code to view their meta descriptions and tags to gauge some of the most commonly used phrases for your vertical.
- **Be Informational, Not Transactional**
Focus on informational keywords such as "how to" or "learn" over transactional keywords such as "buy", "cheap", and "free". A study conducted by aimClear discovered that video search queries with informational keywords returned video 84% of the time in SERPs vs. transactional keywords that only returned video 12% of the time.⁶
- **Use Common Sense**
Ask those outside of your industry what a common user would type in universal search engines.

5. "Google Algorithm Change History." - Moz. <<http://moz.com/google-algorithm-change>>.

6. "How To Get Your Videos to Rank in Universal Search: A Video SEO Study." ReelSEO RSS. <<http://www.reelseo.com/videos-ranking-universal-search-results-video-seo-study/>>.

3. Create a Great User Experience

Making your sites user friendly will not only increase audience engagement, but also increase your SEO rankings. Here are some best practices to follow:

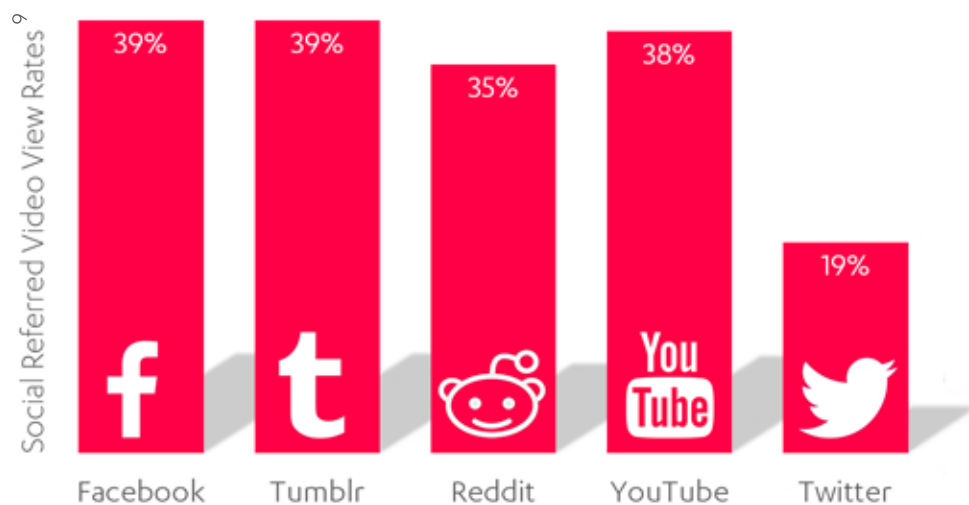
- **Make Each Video a Star**
Create a separate landing page for each video, complete with titles, descriptions, and thumbnails so that search engines can find and index each video individually.
- **Make Videos Easy to Find**
Place videos above the fold in a prominent position on the page. Set your video player to a large aspect ratio. Organize your videos with categories and tags so viewers can easily find and search for content.
- **Make Videos Easy to Play**
Using a video player that supports different formats and all popular browsers/devices will make it easier for Google to index. For example, use a solution like JW Player that supports both Flash and HTML 5.
- **Make Videos Quick to Load**
Page load time matters for SEO. Furthermore, consumers will click away when videos do not load within the first 2 seconds.⁷ Choose a video platform that offers global CDN delivery (which adjusts to an individual's location) as well as adaptive streaming (which adjusts to an individual's connection speed). Both will help deliver a high quality, fast, and responsive web experience for the end user.



7. Sutter, John D. "Online Viewers Ditch Slow-loading Video after 2 Seconds." CNN. Cable News Network, 12 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/12/tech/web/video-loading-study>>.

4. Go Social

Why does Google care about social signals? Because they are great indicators for human engagement. Your Facebook shares and Twitter retweets all impact how Google ranks your pages. As such, make your videos easy to share - consider using an online video platform with social sharing options and RSS feeds.



Users are ready and eager to share videos - in fact, over half of 25 to 54 year olds share videos online.⁸ When posting videos to social networks, make sure you are using the open graph protocol to maximize the impact of social media posts and enhance your SEO results. Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest all use the open graph protocol to display videos on their platforms. The protocol also allows publishers to control how posts look when they are shared on social networks.

For SEO purposes, the open graph tags convey useful metadata such as the title, description, and type of content (eg. video). Google automatically detects open graph and will incorporate the metadata into its algorithm.

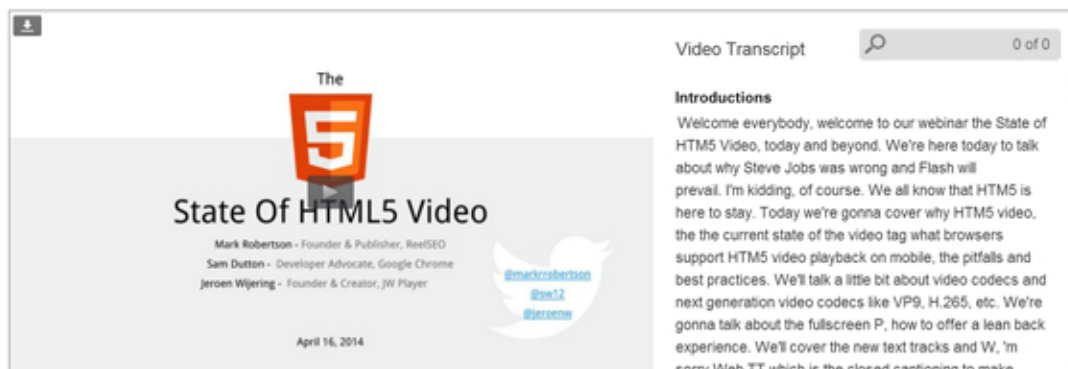
8. "Video Ad's Success Hinges on Social Sharing in the Early Days." - EMarketer. <<http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Video-Ads-Success-Hinges-on-Social-Sharing-Early-Days/1009852>>.

9. "Online Video Updates: Online Video and Video on Tumblr." - Viralgains.com <<http://www.viralgains.com/2014/03/online-video-updates-mobile-video-video-tumblr/>>.

5. Make Use of Video Transcripts

Video transcripts textually represent all verbal content in a video. The allure of such transcripts is the ability to organically add target keywords to the body of a page. Since universal search engines crawl text, why not give them more information? A study by 3Play Media found that video transcripts kept viewers more engaged with videos, leading to higher video completion rates.¹⁰ Since Google ranks videos with greater time watched higher, including video transcripts on your pages can benefit your search results. If you are targeting an international audience, use Google Translate to render your transcript into other languages.

Where should you put your transcripts? It depends on the duration of your video. Videos that exceed five minutes should have their transcripts on a separate landing page.¹¹ Otherwise, you run the risk of Google classifying your page as a text page rather than a video page. Separate landing pages for transcripts will also help enhance your domain relevancy by increasing your site size - all attributes that end up enhancing your web presence on SERPs!



Check out how JW Player utilizes transcripts for its video webinars! [This demo with HTML5 Video Webinar shows an interactive, searchable transcript.](#)

10. "How Online Learners Are Using Interactive Video Transcripts [STUDY]." How Online Learners Use Interactive Video Transcripts [STUDY]. <<http://www.3playmedia.com/2013/01/29/how-online-learners-using-interactive-video-transcripts-part-i-study/>>.

11. "How to Optimize Long-Form Video Transcripts for SEO: The Wrong Way and the Right Way." How to Optimize Long-Form Video Transcripts for SEO. <<http://www.3playmedia.com/2013/03/22/how-optimize-long-form-video-transcripts-seo-the-wrong-way-right-way/>>.

6. Mix it Up With a Multi-Channel Strategy

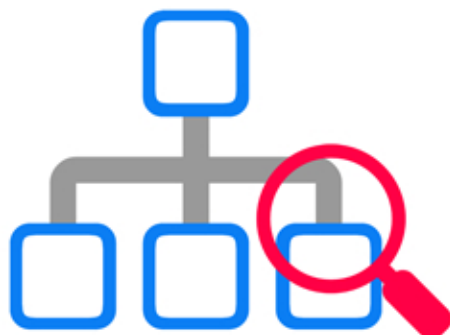
When you upload videos to YouTube, you are driving traffic to YouTube and not to your own site. Even when you embed Youtube videos on your site, the content on YouTube will generally rank higher in search than that on your site.



Consider using YouTube as a teaser to your video content - use a preview that will entice people to watch more. Then, place Calls To Action (CTA) in YouTube's annotation overlays to drive traffic to the self-hosted videos on your site. This kind of multi-channel strategy will enable you to benefit from the high ranking of YouTube videos while giving you additional traffic.

Today, with technologies like JW Player, it's easy and cost-effective to create a self-hosted video destination site that lets you take control of your brand, your traffic, and your advertising. To read more about the benefits of monetization with a multichannel strategy, read ["The Future of Online Video: Multi-Channel Video Strategy."](#)

7. Create Sitemaps



Most viewers are driven to videos via search engines using metadata, which is simply information about your video titles, descriptions, tags, etc. To provide the clearest path for search engines, Google recommends creating a sitemap and a schema.org markup for your videos. These two strategies enable your videos and websites to communicate to Google exactly what and where your content is.

Sitemaps are extensive XML lists of all the pages on your website that includes metadata about your specific types of content. Creating sitemaps and submitting them to Google ensures Google knows about all the pages on your site.

Creating sitemaps can be a long and arduous process ([Check ReelSEO for a guide](#)). If you're using JW Platform though, you benefit from our automated generation of mRSS feeds. Since these are supported by Google, you can directly submit them to the Webmaster Tools.

In addition, it's worth noting that if you don't have responsive web design, then you should create a separate mobile sitemap so that Google can find your mobile page. [Check out Google's mobile sitemap guidelines](#).

Once you've created your video sitemap, submit it through Google WebMaster Tools. Google will crawl your pages to verify that the videos exist and then index it so they can appear in SERPs. To check if Google has effectively indexed your videos, enter "site: YOURSITE.com" in Google search and see how many video results are displayed.

8. Markup with Schema.org

A schema.org markup is vocabulary that is supported by major search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo! The creation of the markup involves customizing the page's HTML to include a VideoObject and at a minimum, specifying the three required VideoObject properties:

- Name
- Description
- Thumbnail URL

An example of what the schema.org markup would look like using JW Player is provided below:

```
<div itemprop="myVideo" itemscope itemtype="http://schema.org/VideoObject">
  <h2>Video: <span itemprop="name">Big Buck Bunny Trailer</span></h2>
  <meta itemprop="duration" content="TOM33S" />
  <meta itemprop="thumbnail" content="http://content.jwplatform.com/thumbs/
  urwfoBna-480.jpg" />
  <span itemprop="description">Big Buck Bunny is a video about a fluffy bunny that
  has been created using the open source program Blender.</span>
</div>
```

Users would generally embed JW Player over this entire block. The benefits of schema.org markup include enhancing the information and aesthetics of your SERP listing and providing users with more information via review ratings, breadcrumbs, thumbnails, etc.