

## 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VIDEO SEO

### Improving video search engine rankings



**PlanetStream Ltd**

Churchfield House  
36 Vicar Street  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY2 8RG  
United Kingdom

**Tel:** 01905 672593

**Email:** [helpdesk@planetstream.net](mailto:helpdesk@planetstream.net)

**Visit:** [www.PlanetStream.net](http://www.PlanetStream.net)



# introduction

In 2012, 1.3 billion people watched an average of 170 online videos per month according to ComScore in *The Past, Present and Future of Online Video*.<sup>1</sup> Once that staggering statistic settles in, think about the most important question about it.

How did the people find the videos to watch?

Chances are they found it one of two ways: 1) via a search engine or 2) a referral from a friend via a social network or email. Even in the latter case, it is likely the video was *originally* found from a search engine result.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is a well-known and ever changing field for any one that maintains a website. But video SEO introduces some challenges that require special attention.

Video is desired and consumed by web visitors, but search engines are unable to understand the content (at the moment). So you have to make a distinct effort to ensure your video is visible to search engines.

Here are the top 5 things to consider when optimising your videos for the search engines.

## 1. START WITH THE BASICS

The first thing you should do is to focus on the basic SEO of your website or page, as if your video page is just like any other on your website:

- ◆ Good title tags using keywords
- ◆ Good meta description less than 165 characters long
- ◆ Alt tags for every image on the page

Ensuring these are correct will offer improvement to your SEO results regardless of the content on the page. And if you don't do these things, nothing else you do regarding SEO will make much difference.

Tel: 01905 672593

Email:

helpdesk@planetstream.net

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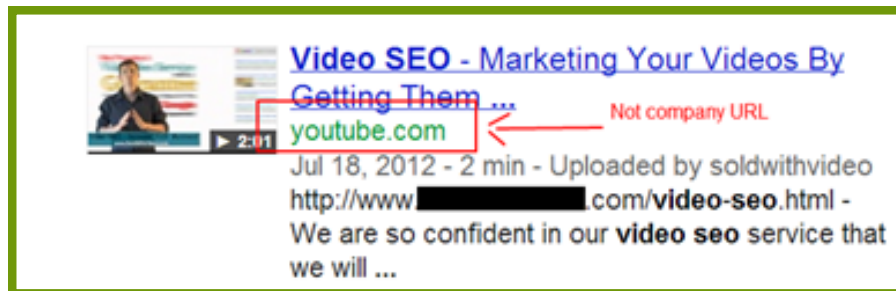
## 2. WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF YOUR VIDEO?

Once you've created your video, you need to decide where and how to host it. Believe it or not this can have a huge impact on SEO effectiveness. How do you decide on hosting? Think about what the purpose of the video is:

- A. Raise brand awareness and get the word out
- B. Drive traffic, sales and conversions

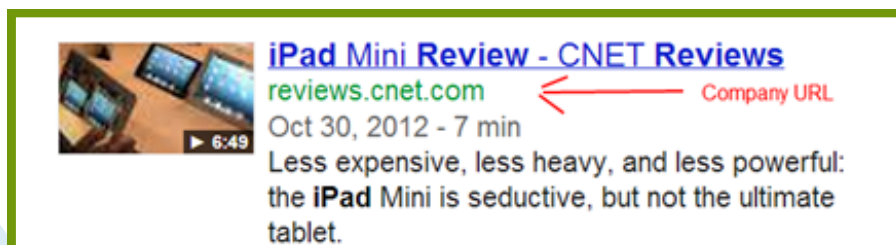
For Brand awareness, hosting on sharing sites like YouTube can be a great option. YouTube is the number two search engine in the world – second only to its mother

Figure 1 Google Video SEO results for YouTube hosted video.



However, as you can see if Figure 1, when video appears in search engine results, the domain will appear as “youtube.com” even if you have it embedded in your site (and hosted by YouTube). This is true of other video sharing sites like Vimeo as well.

Figure 2 Self Hosted Videos Result in Traffic to Your Website



If you are looking to use the video to drive traffic to your site, consider hosting it yourself using a third party service like PlanetStream. When the video appears in search engine results it will show your domain, rather than the sharing sites. PlanetStream is as easy to use as YouTube and offers great support to help you get started. Using PlanetStream allows you to receive the traffic from search engine results .

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### 3. IT'S ALL ABOUT CONTENT

Search engines can't yet determine the content of a video. So you still need to include written content on the page where your video resides. Here are a few tips on what types of content to include:

- ◆ A transcript of the video on the page. This serves a dual purpose. The search engines can use the transcript text for ranking purposes. And you're also likely to get a bump in response to your page (whatever your call to action is) because there are some people who just won't watch videos, but they'll read or skim a transcript. Pages with a transcript have in some cases earned on average 16% more revenue than videos alone.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ An excerpt or summary of the video transcript, if the full one is too large or just isn't appropriate to include.
- ◆ A few paragraphs of related content that enhances the video, or vice versa.
- ◆ Text links to other videos, or related content.

### 4. ADD STILL IMAGES

Another way to help the search engines understand what the video is about is to include still images from the video on the page. Make sure the filenames and alt tags for the images are focused on your keywords. Search engines will read those tags and improve the ranking for those keywords.

An example of how effective this can be comes from e-commerce retailer eBags. They added several images for their videos to the bottom of the each corresponding web page. Google indexed those still images and they received 115% more traffic to their video pages.<sup>3</sup>

## 5. MAKE IT EASY TO SHARE

In the UK, Google controls almost 90% of the search engine market. Catering to their interpretation of what is important for search is a worthwhile endeavour. And they've made it clear they think sharing is becoming more and more important. In fact, they have started taking into account how often your content is shared into its search engine rankings.

Also, when a user is logged into Google, search engine results will by default show items that have been shared by those in your Google circles.

Always include links to social media sites that make it easy for your viewers to share with just a click. Google will take note, and you should see a boost in ranking.

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# summary

Basic SEO principles still apply when optimising pages with video content. The decision on where to host your video can have significant impact on the search engine results you receive. And in addition, you'll need to pay attention to the descriptive text on the page, still images, and social sharing to boost your Google ranking for videos on your website.

## NOTES

1. West, Owen. The Past, Present and Future of Online Video. Comscore, 2012. PDF file.
2. Robertson, Mark R. "8 Best Practices to Optimize Video Landing Pages for Search." REELSEO. ReelVideo LLC, June 2012. Web. 16 Oct. 2012.
3. Robertson, "8 Best Practices"

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## ABOUT PLANETSTREAM

PlanetStream, launched in 2003, is one of the UK's first established streaming providers. They offer live and on-demand video streaming to any device worldwide over a network that is 25% faster than the competition. Offering affordable pricing packages and dedicated customer service, PlanetStream is committed to providing unbeatable value for money.

For more information visit:  
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