



## “How to YouTube”

### *Strategies for using YouTube for advocacy, outreach, and communication*

Your YouTube channel is a critical way to connect with and mobilize supporters for your organization. How can you make the most of the opportunity? This tip sheet contains strategies and ideas on how to use YouTube in your advocacy, outreach and communications efforts.

But first, here are five important points to remember as you begin using YouTube:

#### TOP 5 TIPS FOR USING YOUTUBE

- 5. REACH OUT:** Post videos intended directly for viewers on YouTube. Get conversations started around your organization, your impact, and what you are trying to achieve. Viewers respond well when they are engaged directly. Don't be afraid to ask them to respond.
- 4. PARTNER UP:** There is power in numbers. Network with your allies on YouTube to build up view counts and support each other's work. The social networking aspects of YouTube are what make it an organizing tool, not just a broadcasting medium.
- 3. KEEP IT FRESH:** A steady stream of new videos from your organization will help you build an audience and engage repeat visitors. Once people subscribe to your channel, they'll be notified every time you upload a new video. And keep your videos short -- under 5 minutes is best.
- 2. KEEP YOUR CAMERA RUNNING:** Anything you shoot, you can post – and you never know what will happen. Keep your camera running in formal and informal moments. It will allow you to build the identity of your organization and give tangible evidence of your work in action.
- 1. BE GENUINE:** The most compelling quality in any video is to be genuine. You don't have to try to be “hip” on YouTube – our viewing demographic mirrors the national population. High view counts come from videos that are compelling, not contrived.

## CONTENT

There are lots of different ways to use your YouTube channel, and you should experiment with them all. Here are a few specific types of content to consider:

**DIRECT DIALOGUE:** Use YouTube to communicate directly with people, eliminating the media as the middleman. Think of this as a highly-visible, video version of regular constituent contact. You can solicit questions from potential supporters, and answer them in regular video postings. Or you could make a request for ideas or reactions to your work in order to mobilize interest in your campaign or organization.

**CALL TO ACTION:** Mobilize people by soliciting user-generated content on YouTube. If your issue is health care, ask voters to show you a video of a person in their life who deserves better care. If your issue is immigration, ask viewers to make videos expressing their thoughts on border control. If your issue is education, ask voters to make you a 30-second video commercial for why we do (or don't) need more charter schools. Use the "Group" function on YouTube to collect these videos together, or set up a contest with a prize for the best video submission you receive.

**SERIAL STORIES:** Online video is a medium ideal for episodic content. Hook people in with a series of videos built around a specific theme, and keep them coming back for more. Maybe it's a weekly video in which someone from your organization gives an update on your work. Or maybe it's a more produced project, like a series of profiles of the people you are serving, or of volunteers who are working for your organization.

**RAPID RESPONSE:** Respond quickly to issues or events that hit the news by posting videos that explain your organization's position. When people search YouTube for information, they'll find your organization's video and will see where you stand. You can also send these links to your email lists -- a tangible video message can be more effective than a text-laden email.

**COMMERCIALS/PSA'S:** While it shouldn't be the staple of your content, it's a no-brainer to post commercials to YouTube. In addition, consider posting commercials that advertise your YouTube channel. A 30-second spot in which you talk about your channel and show some quick clips from your YouTube videos can serve as a mission statement for your organization and your online video outreach.

**EYE-CATCHING TITLES:** Try using questions or provocative statements for the titles of your video. YouTube users are sorting through thousands of potential videos to watch -- a good title will catch their eye. Don't call your video on Education, "Our views on education." Instead, try, "Doesn't your child deserve the best education possible?" You get the idea.

## USING YOUR CHANNEL FEATURES

Once you've started building up your content, it's time to design your channel to make it more attractive and accessible.

**ENHANCED BRANDING FEATURES:** The first thing to do is to contact us at [nonprofits@youtube.com](mailto:nonprofits@youtube.com) with your username. Once you let us know about your channel, we



can give you some additional branding features that include the ability to upload banner graphics and have extra links to your site.

**PLACE VIDEOS WISELY:** The top video on your channel automatically plays each time someone visits your page. Choose it wisely. You can try updating this video regularly to keep it fresh, or keep your most important video there for people to see every time.

**PLAYLISTS:** Once you've built up a body of work, use the playlist function to create groups of videos. This allows you to develop several video narratives targeted at particular demographics. These playlists can be centered around particular geographies, issues, or constituency groups. You can also add user-generated content to your playlists. Once you've made some playlists, you can post the links to them on your channel, or make them your video log:

**USE YOUR VIDEO LOG:** Select particular playlists as your video log, which you can display prominently on your channel page. It will make your channel more robust, and if you include user-generated content it will also serve as a helpful recognition of your allies on YouTube.

## NETWORKING

YouTube isn't just a content distribution system – it's a social networking platform. And one of the most effective ways to draw more eyeballs to your content is to network with other users on the site.

**CLICK "SUBSCRIBE":** The most basic currency of friendship on YouTube is to subscribe to someone else's channel. Not only does it show you're interested in their content, but it gives their channel's icon a place on your channel page. It also allows you to keep track of what other users are up to. Subscribe to voters, constituency groups, journalists, non-profits – anyone whose content you are interested in.

**MAKE REPLY VIDEOS:** Reply videos are videos that you make specifically in response to a video from someone else on YouTube. You can also designate your existing videos as reply videos to content that you find YouTube. This is a great way to drive traffic to your video, because each time someone watches the video you're replying to, they'll see your video right underneath it.

Let's say you post a video on the sanctity of life. Search for other videos on this issue, choose the one that is the most popular (has the highest rating, has the most views, etc.) and designate your video as a reply video to that one. Now your video is attached to a highly-visible video, and your content will get more attention.

**INTERACT WITH YOUR FRIENDS:** It's important to interact with your allies on YouTube – send them messages, favorite their videos, or post comments to their channels or videos to congratulate their work. A little message can go a long way to building support on YouTube.

**INTERACT WITH YOUR ENEMIES:** Draw attention to your work by interacting with those you disagree with as well. It's bound to draw attention to your channel. Consider posting specific reply videos to other organizations or candidates with views contrary to your own – or even try an online debate with opposing organizations. In general, it's smart to keep track of what your opponents are up to by regularly visiting their YouTube channels.



## DISTRIBUTION

You can use your YouTube channel to drive traffic to your organization's website, or use your website to drive traffic to your YouTube channel.

**LINKING BACK:** Drive traffic from your YouTube channel back to your website by giving viewers a reason to do so. Maybe there is something to sign up for, a contest to enter, or some information to receive. Use the compelling nature of video to pique interest, then tell viewers to head to your website for more.

**EMBED, EMBED, EMBED:** The broader your distribution online, the more people will see your YouTube videos. Use the embed URL that comes with each video to embed your videos on your website, and send the links to blogs that are sympathetic to your cause. Lots and lots of view counts on YouTube come from embedded videos – this is the number one rule for distribution.

**BADGES:** Using our developer [APIs](#), you can create YouTube badges on your home page that display your YouTube presence, with our logo, and a link to your YouTube channel. Call out your channel in as many places as you can.

**TAGGING:** Tag your video with relevant search terms that will draw people to your video. Think about this from the mind of a user – if you were trying to get information about your organization's work, what search terms would you use?

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### Relevant Links:

To see what's happening in YouTube News and Politics: [www.youtube.com/citizentube](http://www.youtube.com/citizentube)

For general help at YouTube: <http://www.google.com/support/youtube/>

For video production tips: [http://www.youtube.com/t/video\\_toolbox](http://www.youtube.com/t/video_toolbox)

If you have any questions about your YouTube channel or want to further discuss how to use it more effectively, feel free to contact us:

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