

MEDIA MASTERCLASS

Using YouTube

with Adam Woodhams

Why YouTube?

YouTube is engaging, dynamic, there is more latitude for storytelling and it's the ideal place to communicate in a meaningful and memorable way.

YouTube is useful because it allows the user to build credibility with viewers, to hone storytelling skills through research and script development and it has seen me develop a new skill-set – video presenting, producing and editing. Videos have become an important part of my online presence and e-resume.

Unlike Facebook or Twitter, YouTube doesn't have the sense of urgency around constantly posting material. Subscribers to your channel are happy to wait for new material. It's free to use. Videos are shown to searchers, based on the relevance and merit of content, responses from other viewers and quality of keywords.

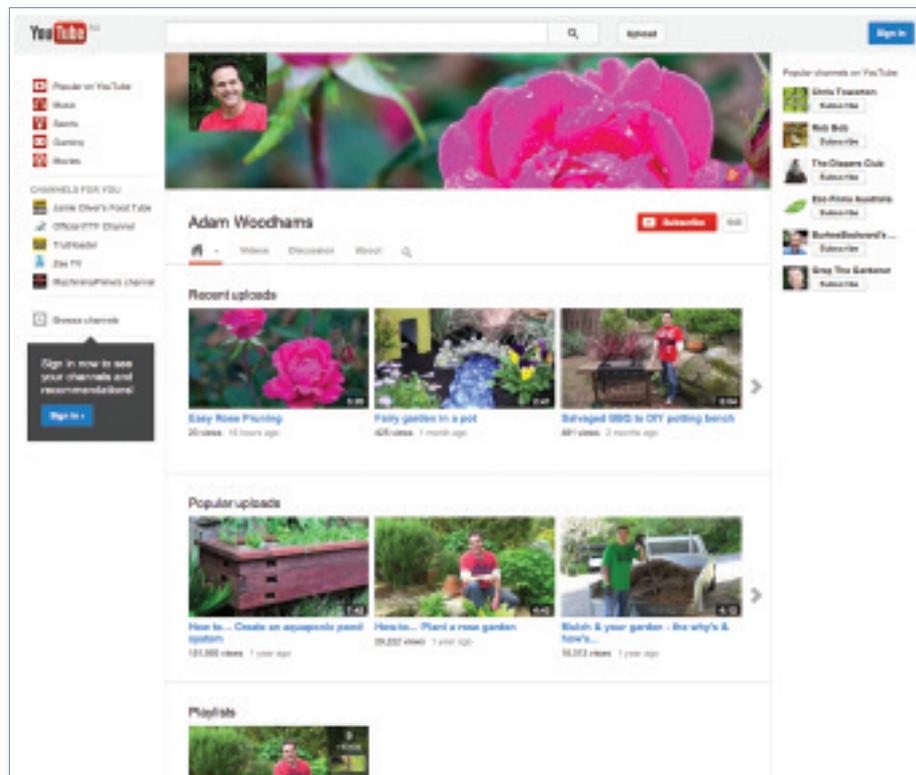
And you can make money from it. Use Google to 'monetise' or run adverts before your videos or as banners. These bring in a small amount, which adds up once the views start increasing. But monetising does take time and some experience to set up.

Using videos

Once videos are uploaded onto YouTube there is flexibility in using and sharing the content. Share on Facebook or LinkedIn where they display as if embedded. Embed them into your webpage or share the information with others to do the same. YouTube is quick to load across any device, from a traditional desktop PC to a smartphone. This gives a webpage a professional look without the delays experienced if the video was uploaded directly into and served by your page.

YouTube basics

- Quality counts - Apply the same quality standard and attention to detail when using YouTube as you would any other professional communication.
- Have a game plan - Write a short brief on what you plan to do and use this to write a script before you stand in front of the camera.
- Respect time – Keep the story interesting, relevant, punchy and as short as possible while still conveying the message.
- Be prepared - Have everything ready and arranged – including materials - so that once the camera is rolling there's no stopping and starting.



- Capturing the action – Record and upload at the highest possible quality. 480p (pixels) should be the absolute lowest minimum quality, but aim for 720p or 1080p.
- Sound matters – Invest in a wireless BlueTooth mic set or even better a radio wireless mic kit to ensure videos have a more professional sounding audio.
- On the level – To keep audio quality consistent try to use the same mics throughout each production. Record voice-overs in the same place as the rest of the production.
- Keep it steady – Mount your camera on a tripod or other suitable support whenever possible.
- Start a conversation – Look straight down the barrel of the camera lens and talk, don't lecture.
- No one-take-wonders – Always record more than one take of every scene no matter how well you think you nailed it.
- Keep it tight – Edit your video with quick punchy transitions, don't leave long pauses or slow fades between scenes. This chews-up time for no good reason.
- Content ratio – Avoid too many talking head scenes and try to include see/do footage. Add

voice-over rather than explain something and then show it.

- The incidental bits – Include music, but not too loud and be sure it's appropriate for your material. Add consistent titles, supers and credits. It makes a difference to the perception of the quality of your material. You can find royalty-free music online.
- Smile ☺ - Don't go over the top and get too cheesy, but smile when you present. Appearing friendly makes your videos more watchable. You can hear a smile too so smile as you talk while recording voiceovers.

Know your audience

Once your YouTube channel is set-up get familiar with the analytics section, which provides valuable insights into who is watching, what they watch and detailed demographic information.

For example, my YouTube viewership is roughly 70 per cent male/30 per cent female. Interestingly this is exactly the opposite of my Facebook demographic. From this I can only conclude that guys like to watch while the girls like to chat. Most followers and viewers are in the 35–65 years bracket with the largest concentration in 45-54 years.

Analytics for individual videos even allow you to see which sections people found most, or least interesting. Important information to help plan future productions – include what's of interest and avoid the dull stuff!

Adam Woodhams is a freelance multi-media communicator specialising in garden lifestyle, horticulture and sustainability. His YouTube channel has had over 250,000 unique views from around the globe.