

blinkx Video SEO Whitepaper

1 Introduction

Search Engine Optimization

In an online world where traffic is emerging as a currency of trade, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a thriving industry. Whether through transactional e-commerce or marketing impressions, it is critical to ensure your content optimal placing in a search engine's untainted, organic results as well as in commercially sponsored results. As different forms of information and content fluctuate in popularity among the general Internet population, the practice of SEO must similarly yield to the traffic flows that dictate online success or failure.

For instance, the growth in the online news sector has driven increased interest in methods to ensure high placing on sites like Google and Yahoo! News along with newer, user-generated sites such as Digg and Reddit. Merely issuing a press release is no longer sufficient to amplify your message to be heard above the noise today. If you want your news to be read, you must ensure that it is well seeded at these popular news sources too.

The growth of online video

The increased ubiquity of broadband and the growth of available content on the Internet have caused a similar flux of traffic towards online video. The explosive growth of user-generated content sites such as YouTube and MySpace Video combined with the steady growth of traditional media content sites like CNN and the BBC have collectively redirected a slice of the online consumer's attention toward the search for and consumption of video content. This shift in attention is generating new traffic, and the SEO industry will be quick to follow suit.

What is Video Search Engine Optimization?

Simply put, Video SEO is the art and science of ensuring that your video content attracts as much traffic as possible.

What this paper will cover

This whitepaper is a readily accessible exploration of the key topics concerned in Video SEO today. As befits such a new and evolving area of expertise, this paper borrows frequently from the online observations and articles of those who are involved in the industry at the coalface and will suggest further reading for additional detail on any given facet of the overall topic.

This paper will not cover areas that, while extremely relevant to Video SEO are not inherently part of the topic. For instance, while some lessons of podcasting are applicable, they will not be covered, nor will audio content SEO. Moreover, although it is a common practice to simply buy traffic towards video from search traffic re-sellers or by purchasing fixed price ads, this paper will focus instead on organic Video SEO which you can get free of charge.

The flip-side of SEO is, of course, monetization. Video can be monetized in many ways: it can contain high value video ads that are played before, during or after the content; it can be a teaser that compels viewers to purchase a product or further video or, if it is a piece of marketing or advertising masquerading obliquely, it may contain value in itself. Though online video monetization is a fascinating and still-evolving topic, it deserves an extensive write-up of its own. Therefore, this paper will focus only on attracting traffic to the video and not what happens after traffic has been secured.

2 Background

The online video market today

To provide greater insight into the current climate surrounding and shaping Video SEO, a brief discussion of today's growing video Web market follows.

Through 2005 and 2006, Internet growth has maintained an aggressive pace; the US alone reached over 205 million active Internet users by the end of 2006. Globally, Internet usage is growing at a faster rate as European adoption rates approach US levels and major Asian markets continue to gain momentum.

Significantly, broadband Internet is the fastest growing segment of the Web. US broadband penetration rose to 73% in June 2006. Analysts estimate that by the end of 2006, US Broadband growth rates will have broken the 80% threshold. Major markets around the world are experiencing similar growth. In the UK, broadband has risen by 52% in the last year¹ and China has gained 49 million subscribers.²

This growth in high-speed access has created unprecedented consumer demand in Internet-distributed rich media and, as a result, advertisers and content producers are rapidly diverting focus from text to video-based content. In addition to content from traditional providers, user-made rich media is also on the rise. Podcasting (user-generated, RSS-encapsulated audio content) grew 17-fold in the six months ending April 2006. A single video-sharing site, YouTube, currently claims around 65,000 new video uploads a day. Video content is not just being created—it is being watched by millions. In August 2006, 110 million users in the US watched video online, streaming approximately 7 billion videos a month.³

Findings from a recent eMarketer⁴ survey support these observations:

- 123 million Americans will view online video at least once a month in 2007
- 27% of online video viewers watch news at least once a week
- 26% watch funny videos at least once a week
- 66% of video viewers have watched online video ads and 44% have taken an action on what they had seen
- 76% users tell a friend about a video they have seen

It is clear that online video is an evolving and burgeoning space with a number of players vying to provide various services within the overall industry.

Understanding the Online Video marketplace

Video SEO occurs in context of the larger online video industry and market. To assist our own understanding of this market, the key players involved and the types of services and products each provides, we at blinkx have built a topographical view of the key players, broken down by how each interfaces with others. We're very happy to share that topography and the spaces we've identified within it here. Following the diagrams themselves, the paper provides a brief commentary on each of the roles played by the companies that inhabit each identified space, including a few examples of competing services in each.

It should be noted that online video is a young industry and a number of companies we mention provide services in multiple categories. For simplicity and ease of understanding we've focused on highlighting each for their significant contribution.

1 Website Optimization's Bandwidth Report, 7/2006

2 Point-Topic's China Broadband Overview, 11/2006

3 comScore's US Video Metrix Rankings, 10/2006

4 Video and Podcast SEO, SES London--<http://www.seroundtable.com/archives/012398.html>

Diagram 1 is a rough 'application stack' of the video industry, demonstrating the levels of services that are provided by different players and which services depend upon and support others. The stack should be read vertically—Content Delivery Networks provide the backbone upon which Hosting and Streaming services are built and they, in turn, are generally the foundation for editing and creation tools.

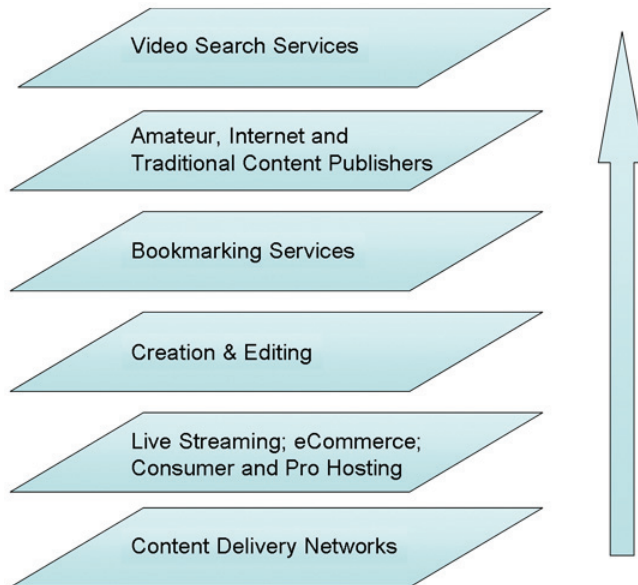


Diagram 1: The Online Video application stack

Diagram 2 represents a bird's eye view of the same stack—this time showing how certain layers within the stack apply only to specific functional or service areas. For example, Content Delivery Networks ultimately underpin most services in the Online Video industry, but Online Creating and Editing tools are generally found only within hosted services and usually are not associated with live streaming services. It is interesting to note that just as with the Text Web, search is an overarching influence on the Video Web. Whatever the content, whatever delivery or hosting mechanism you choose to use for it, it is likely that it will be discovered, indexed and ultimately delivered through some form of search. This, of course, further highlights the importance of getting Video SEO right.

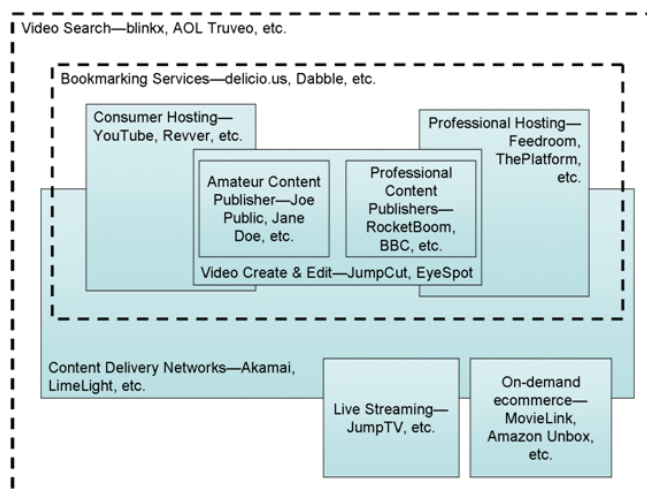


Diagram 2: Online Video topographical view

Content delivery networks

Companies such as Akamai and Limelight Networks form the content delivery backbone for much of the Video Web by providing fast and reliable streaming of video content to users across the globe.

Consumer video hosting

Gaining massive popularity in 2005 and 2006, video hosting and sharing sites allow end-users to upload content (usually free of charge) for viewing by private or public audiences. Some sites such as Rewver (and, reportedly in the near future, YouTube) offer commercial incentive to the uploader. The majority offer opportunities of fame and gained social networking status. Hundreds of consumer video hosting sites exist, including a number of specialist sites aimed at niche content interest areas.

Professional video hosting

These services provide services analogous to the consumer video hosting options, but at a cost. In return, content quality is higher and greater control is given to the playback experience and syndication capability. Key players in this market include NBBC, Maven Networks, Feedroom and NarrowStep.

White-labeled video hosting

These companies essentially provide video-hosting and sharing services 'in a box'. Brand-owning companies can tie an existing brand to one of these systems and create a white-labeled hosting service of their own, targeted to the audience to which the brand speaks. Some, such as VideoEgg, are hosted services while others like Mint Digital's BloomBox provide software that must be purchased and installed on one's own servers. Examples of services built using such white-label solutions include Oxjam (www.oxjam.mtv.co.uk), an MTV/Oxfam joint venture that uses Bloombox as its backend and Dogster Video, which provides video sharing for the popular social networking site, Dogster (powered by VideoEgg).

Traditional content publishers

This group is loosely defined as companies and organizations that create video content for offline distribution (via TV, DVD, satellite, etc.) and now also offer that content online. Larger examples include the major American TV networks (NBC, ABC, CBS, Fox) as well as smaller, specialist media companies including National Geographic and the Scripps Network.

Amateur content publishers

This catch-all term applies to any party that creates or uploads content for no professional gain. Examples include the many thousands of uploaders on YouTube.

Internet content publishers

These are companies that have offline experience, often in non-video content businesses, but are capitalizing on the cost-effective, long-tail nature of the Internet and using it as their first step into video content creation and publication. Examples of this sub-breed include Forbes.com and NYTimes.com. Others, that exist only online, include popular video-blogs such as RocketBoom.com and AskANinja.com. Despite being new to the video content publishing space, these players are in it to generate revenue.

Video search engines

These services seek to index video content from multiple sources and allow users to search across all of the content. Video search engines implement various technologies, from traditional metadata indexing to more recent, advanced speech and video analysis techniques. Key players in this space include blinkx, AOL Video and Yahoo! Video Search.

On-demand video e-commerce

These are sites or services that allow users to download content for a fixed period (renting) or for perpetuity (purchase). A rapidly growing sector, it includes stalwarts like Movielink and CinemaNow as well as newcomers like Channel 4 On Demand, Amazon Unbox, iTunes (Video) and Walmart.com.

Online video creation and editing

These services re-package popular creation, editing and publication features from video management software into an online, often free and ad-supported form. Popular examples include Yahoo!-owned JumpCut and EyeSpot.

Video bookmarking services

These relatively simple services allow users to manage bookmarks to multiple videos across the Internet. Web bookmarking services already exist in the form of del.icio.us and furl, but the surge in online video popularity has led to a rise in specialist video bookmarking services like Dabble and Panjea.

Live streaming services

Video streaming, a sector that was early to online video and later suffered a decline in popularity, is once again en vogue. These services offer numerous variations in content streaming methods (client-server streaming or peer-to-peer), pricing (free ad-supported content, pay-per-view or subscription) and accessibility (on-demand or scheduled streams). Examples include JumpTV, Al Jazeera, C4 streaming and services such as Joost and Babelgum.

Why Video SEO matters: the value of Web video

For content producers and marketers, the two Web video types that possess the greatest value are monetized video and promotional video.

The recent surge of consumer video hosting and sharing sites has caused Video SEO discussions to highlight promotional videos more often. However, with the popularity of monetizable content hosting platforms (such as those used by professional video content publishers), monetized video is also growing in visibility. It is worth examining each separately as numerous SEO decisions will vary depending upon which type of video you are trying to promote.

Monetized video

Monetized videos generate revenue in and of themselves. Revenue is most often earned by advertising (in or near the video), pay-to-view or pay-to-own and subscription. Though already extremely valuable, in-video advertising is still in its formative days. As a result, many video owners who offer their content for free on the basis of an advertising-based revenue use other, non-video ads (banner ads, Google AdSense or others by the video player).

In the case of pay-to-view, pay-to-own and subscription, a user pays for access to premium, high-quality content. Once provided access, the content is usually protected by Digital Rights Management (DRM) in order to ensure that only paid customers may access the content. Additionally, customers cannot reproduce and distribute the video.

Whether paid or free with advertising, within the context of Video SEO, the key observation to make about monetized video is that you must be in control of the content in order to monetize it.

For example, if your video is monetized by advertising around the player, it could be pirated and hosted on a popular video sharing site. Thus, millions of users may see the video, but you will generate no revenue from the exposure. While attempts have been made to track videos after they are re-purposed or re-encoded, no dependable service or standard has emerged.

Promotional video

These videos contain a message that is a promotion in itself. Examples that fall into this category include branding marketing, movie trailers, music videos and others. Promotional videos do not generate direct revenue on their own. Instead, they must be propagated across as many services and viewers as possible. Sometimes the expectations are rather nebulous—general branding, for instance. At other times there may be a more specific aim as would be the case for a promotional video distributed for free that contains a URL to be visited or call to action that will hopefully be triggered through the video's dissemination. The key observation here is that, except in cases where content message may be modified, you want to do all you can to get the video seen by as many people as possible.

For instance, an exceptionally viral video may be launched on a single sharing site but be copied onto additional video sharing sites. As long as the video is viewed on these services, your message has been imparted and, even if not directly responsible, you have been successful.

It is important to note that these two forms of video often complement each other. Specifically, a number of services that use monetized videos also employ promotional videos as a method of stimulating interest in their product. A number of American TV networks, for example, provide free promotional show clips on sites like YouTube to drive traffic to their own advertising-driven sites which contain full-length episodes.

In both cases, the more traffic that flows to your content, the more value generated. In this sense, Video SEO is required for both monetized and promotional content. What differs, however, is the type of SEO that is required. In the case of monetized content, the video itself needs to be protected and stored solely on your own site. Being indexed by video search engines will guarantee that users searching for relevant phrases and keywords will be alerted of your content and site. In the case of promotional content, the aim is to seed it to as many places as possible and provide it in a form that is easily copied and transferred to additional services.

What is video search and how does it work?

Web-based video search engines allow users to enter keywords into a search box, just as one would into a Yahoo! or Google search box. However, rather than get back Web pages, users are provided related video clips from across the Web. While traditional search engines are skilled at indexing, understanding and finding text-based content, they are inadequate for finding video content results. They focus only on textual or metadata within web pages rather than looking at actual video files themselves. Video search engines have emerged to compensate for the weakness of such straight HTML-focused search engines.

Today, the field of online video search is rapidly-evolving—an overview of the evolution of video search (from first to second generation) follows.

First generation video search

First generation video search solutions depended entirely on metadata. Including examples are SingingFish, Altavista Video (now used at Yahoo!). These engines are extremely similar to regular web search engines. Just as with a standard web search engine, the spider propagates across the Internet, recording and looking for content to index. Unlike a standard web search engine, text documents and pages are ignored and the spider focuses instead only on video (and sometimes audio) content. Once such content types are discovered they are examined for relevant metadata. Metadata is the textual data that is applied to a piece of multimedia content in order to describe it and can include user-provided tags, an editorially written title or summary, a transcript of the speech in the video or even information stored in the video file itself pertaining to its resolution, frame-rate and creation date.

Still part of the first generation, but much improved, display-oriented spidering has been used to great effect in video search. First developed for the closely related problem of image and photo search, display-oriented spidering looks at the web page text that lies near a video. Using a specialized algorithm, display-spidering evaluates the physical attributes of the way the page is designed and rendered to decide which portions of it are closely related or linked to the video. It then extracts the text within these areas and applies them, as further metadata, to the videos being indexed. As many web pages contain commentary or description that is related to the video but may not be contained in the official metadata, this approach can provide more detail on the meaning of the video being spidered. The best example of display-oriented spidering for video search today is that found at AOL's SearchVideo.com.

However, whether augmented with display-oriented analysis or not, the methodology of first-generation, metadata spidering is still flawed because the engines still rely heavily upon the quality of the metadata that has been provided. As the metadata is often provided as an afterthought, it may be incomplete or lacking in detail and, as it is provided by the owner or publisher of the video, may even be false or misleading. First generation video search is a reasonable solution that borrows on existing web search technology to simplify the video search problem. By doing so, however, it limits itself to never actually understand an actual video, but rather focusing only on pieces of text that may be related to the video but are, fundamentally, of second order to it.

Second generation video search

Second generation video search engines emerged as a reaction to the faults of the first generation. As well as spidering textual metadata, second generation video search aims to understand and extract meaning from the video itself.

Second generation video search engines use methods such as speech recognition, visual analysis and recognition and video optical character recognition to allow software to listen to, watch and read the text appearing on the video content itself. As well as providing more information, this approach provides objective information—if a video contains speech on a particular topic, it really is about that topic, whereas if a video has been tagged as pertaining to a certain topic, it may, actually be about something entirely different.

Second generation video search is still primarily used in government and enterprise settings, but blinkx.com and Podzinger exist as examples of technologies that have been applied to general, consumer Web video search. Podzinger, as the name suggests, focuses more of audio and video podcasts, while blinkx indexes all audio and video content on the Web, whether amateur or professional.

Regardless of the technology involved, both first and second generation video search engines exist and are popular today. For the purposes of a successful video SEO campaign, it is important to be included in both types of engine.

3 Video SEO

How to present your video for SEO

Metadata: As discussed above, both first and second generation video search engines consider metadata. In the case of first generation video search engines, in fact, this may be the only information by which your video is judged. As such, it is imperative to provide well-placed, rich and relevant metadata that can be easily located by search engines. Prior to discussing how and where to provide metadata, a couple of observations are worth consideration:

metadata is often lost during conversion

Not only should you create metadata, but you should also apply it each and every time your content goes onto a new service or is converted to a new format. Just because your .mov had great metadata stored in it, there's no guarantee that YouTube won't ignore it if you upload it to their service.

metadata cleaning

The media content creation and publication tools used to create video files often dump large amounts of irrelevant metadata into the files that are created. You can use a 'cleaner' to rid your files of this distracting information.

Examples of tools that will help ensure you maintain metadata between conversions and keep your metadata profile clean include: Sorenson Squeeze, Autodesk Cleaner and CastFire.

Title and description: Titles and descriptions are the text most commonly applied to videos. If a video is hosted on a structured hosting or sharing site such as YouTube, insert this information in the provided specified title and description fields. If hosting on your own website, the title and description will usually be extracted based on proximity. In order to best represent your content on generic sites, it is advisable to have just one video per page with a simple textual title and description placed near the video itself. In the case of links to the video or other tags, it is advised to use anchor text as well.

Filename: If you are linking to a specific file that is hosted on a web server, ensure the filename is a sensible and descriptive one, ideally with hyphens or some other form of separating character in between words. For example, use "climate-talks-video.wmv" rather than "videofile.wmv" or "climatetalksvideo.wmv".

Tags: Tags are growing as a facet of search and navigation, both for video and the Internet as a whole. If you use a video sharing or hosting system such as YouTube, you will generally be given the opportunity to provide tags (and are strongly encouraged to do). Unfortunately, many video sharing sites (YouTube in particular) suffer from prevalent tag abuse problems where enterprising Video SEO practitioners pollute their video tag lists tens, sometimes a hundred, popular search terms that are irrelevant to the video itself. This deceptive practice can easily be observed by typing such a search term into any popular video sharing site.

While this is, at the moment, a somewhat successful strategy, it has two significant weaknesses. Firstly, it brings SEO and an SEO professional's target or client into disrepute. If a user's search brings back irrelevant video, it is unlikely that that user will confer any positive impression of the content or brand associated. Secondly, as this problem grows, search engines are already working to combat it. blinkx, for example, now employs a number of Bayesian-based methods to screen for such tag abuse resulting in severe de-prioritization of such content. We believe we are the first video search engine to do this, but it is likely that others will follow, either developing their own technology or licensing ours.

Sitemap: Most video search engines allow the provision of a sitemap, starting-point URL or RSS feed. This invitation should absolutely be taken advantage of and used to provide the engine with a simple list of URLs that point to individual pages that host video. If you have followed the advice above, each such page will contain just one video and, if the sitemap is being provided within an RSS feed, you can then also provide metadata in the RSS feed itself.

RSS and Media RSS: Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is an-XML based standard for publishing time-oriented feeds of information. Considered outside the remit of this paper, the RSS specification can be found at <http://www.rssboard.org/rss-specification>. Media RSS (MRSS) is an extension to standard RSS that allows any content publisher to widely distribute multimedia content descriptions and links across the Web. In addition to providing standard media metadata, MRSS enhances RSS 2.0 enclosures to handle media types such as video shorts and television clips.⁵ From the point of view of SEO, MRSS and RSS are used as a language in which to describe your video to the video search engines. Starting with a sample piece of RSS at one of the specific sites, use RSS to provide pointers to and descriptions of your video content, ensuring to fill all possible fields with relevant and accurate metadata.

Format: Deciding on a format for your video content can be a critical decision to make with regard to how the content is going to be used. However, it makes little obvious difference to Video SEO. If you're using a video sharing or hosting site, acceptable upload formats are often listed and the content is usually transcoded to one or more formats and resolution ranges for the final displayed format.

One thing to bear in mind with format choice, however, is that some video search engines allow users to limit results to one format or another. In this case, if you have multiple copies of your content on the site, you will maximize the chances of your video being returned, even if a user chooses to filter results. On the other hand, blinkx research of this feature has demonstrated that very few users – considerably less than 1% - ever use such filtering technology.

Naturally, if you're hosting your own video, you will have greater choice and control over the process. In this case, you may choose to adopt high-quality, compressed formats such as mpeg 4 or an easily embeddable, lower-quality format like Flash. These formats, as well as others including Real and Windows Media, are supported by all major video search engines so it is unlikely that the format you choose will make a major impact.

In-format metadata: Depending on the tools you use to produce and encode your content, you will often be able to input metadata into the video content file itself. Similar to the popular id3 tags that exist in mp3 music files, these tags are encoded into the media file itself and, thus, are readable to any engine that indexes the content. While use of this metadata is relatively rare, it is likely to increase, so it is recommended that you always replicate any metadata copy for the web page or RSS feed in these tags. Depending on the format, you may be able to add a title, description, tags, mechanistic metadata regarding the format, encoding quality and even a full text transcript. In all cases, the more you provide, the more likely you are to match an incoming search.

Content management: As discussed earlier, there are two content management models that apply to those seeking to improve their Video SEO:

- a) Monetized content that is hosted on a particular site and, in order for the content's owner to earn revenue, requires viewers to view the video from that site.
- b) Promotional content that is of an advertising or marketing nature and is therefore readily welcome to be onto other sites and services.

In both cases, SEO professionals want to acquire as many views as possible, but in the first instance, they want to ensure it does not lead to the content being re-appropriated. Technical solutions to these issues exist, but Digital Rights Management (DRM) and other such technologies are outside the remit of this particular paper. Instead, it is suggested that all content, regardless of its revenue model, be appropriately watermarked with a logo and, if possible, a source URL. This graphic, much like the small channel icon that many cable TV channels use today, tells viewers where to access the original content and ensures that, in the unfortunate event that your content is stolen, it still retains some of your brand identity. Moreover, it is very rare for such pirates or the hosting services they use to remove watermarking, so it is a sensible move overall.

What to avoid

Flash-only and entirely dynamic players: Some sites have content played entirely in Flash or some other dynamic Web technology. These sites are difficult to spider, extract information from and, most crucially, make it very difficult to tell individual videos apart. In general, it is much better to have your videos in an easily accessible form – whether an RSS feed, directory with an accompanying sitemap or simply a one-video-per-page HTML hierarchy that can be easily spidered from a root URL. A good example of a particularly limiting player is the US ABC Network's Full Episode Web player.⁶

Pop-up players: While indexable by all of the main video search engines, pop-up players run the risk of being blocked by the increasingly popular pop-up blockers that many users now install on their browsers.

Where to submit videos: sharing sites and search engines

When your content is to be hosted with a third party service, some SEO consideration is necessary during the upload process. This will ensure that an uploaded video performs well alongside others of potentially overlapping content in the same hosting system. This is not the case where content is strictly divided by publisher (as is the case in professional content hosting services such as thePlatform or Feedroom); instead, it is a significant issue among open, consumer-targeted hosting services like YouTube and Rewer.

Whether your content is hosted on a third party site or your own - be it on-demand, pay-per-view, subscription-based or a live stream - further SEO practice should be applied with regard to video search engines. Many video search engines cover multiple content types, so regardless of a content's type, purpose, hosted location or how it is accessed, it is worthwhile to consider video search engines as a source of extra traffic and added exposure.

This section first covers potential amateur content hosting sites and quotes a recent blog post by Jonathan Mendez regarding optimization methods for such systems (the original article was written about YouTube, but the lessons can apply to other sites). Next, the paper covers the key video search engines in the market today, types of content they typically index and how to submit to them.

Amateur video sharing sites

Key sites in this area include YouTube, Google Video, MySpace Video, Yahoo! Video, AOL UnCut, MSN Soapbox, DailyMotion, MetaCafe, Rewer and others. Good lists online can be found at: <http://www.lightreading.com/videoshare> and <http://www.econsultant.com/web2/videos-hosting-sharing-searching-services.html>. While most of these sites provide similar services in addition to the actual hosting services (an exact feature comparison is outside the remit of this paper), what differentiates them is the ready-built audience they also provide—some are larger than others and some focus on particular niches that may be relevant to your content. If you're creating How-to content for example, it's important to get the content on

⁶ <http://dynamic.abc.go.com/streaming/landing>

sites like VideoJug—despite being smaller than, say, YouTube, this site has already nurtured an audience that is interested in relevant content. More broadly, as Video SEO is tasked with generating as many views as possible for video content, you should place your content on as many of these services as possible. Even if you are maintaining key content on your own site, any marketing or teaser clips should be placed on as many of these video sharing sites as possible.

Some guidelines to follow when providing the metadata to a video sharing site:⁸

- 1) “Make sure your tags are relevant to your content. Seems obvious but this takes some thought to get into the minds of users similar to keyword discovery.
- 2) The more tags the merrier. I see no penalty for using all your available tag space.
- 3) Spread your tags out among your clips. Adding more tags can help snag some tail.
- 4) Use adjectives. Remember lots of folks are browsing and they’ll use adjectives to find what they are in the mood to view.
- 5) Have some category descriptor tags. It’s important to remember YouTube’s default search settings are Videos, Relevance and All Categories.
- 6) Match your title and description with your most important tags. Basic SEM practice applies here as well.
- 7) Don’t use natural language phrases and waste tag space on words like ‘and’ or ‘to’.”

Video search engines

Once your video content is hosted, whether on your own site (in the case of monetized video) or at a hosting service (in the case of promotional video), it is important to further publicize it on the Web through SEO of the video search engines themselves. An overview below spotlights the key traffic-generating video search engines in the market today. Each search engine's approach to indexing and search is covered as well as how best to submit content to each.

- AOL Video

AOL Video is hosted at two distinct URLs – www.AOLVideo.com and www.SearchVideo.com. In both cases, the underlying technology is from a recent AOL acquisition, Truveo. AOL offers a product called AOL Uncut that is another video sharing and hosting service and so not covered here. Beyond hosting your content on AOL, however, AOLVideo will also accept submissions for content stored elsewhere in the form of an MRSS feed.

In order to submit video to AOL's video search engine you must first create a 'Director account' here: <http://developer.searchvideo.com/DirectorAccountsOverview.php> and then submit your RSS feed from your Director home page. AOL provides details of exactly how they expect the MRSS feed to be formatted on this page: <http://developer.searchvideo.com/DirectorDocumentation.php> and you should note there is a mandatory, manual check of the feed before it is published to the system. In tests, this process can take anywhere between a day and a week to occur.

Note that SingingFish, an older video and audio search engine that was acquired by AOL prior to Truveo has now been re-directed to the service above. As a result, it is no longer necessary (or possible) to submit your content to SingingFish.

⁸ http://www.optimizeandprophesize.com/jonathan_mendezs_blog/2007/02/optimize_your_y.html

- **blinkx**

As discussed above, blinkx analyzes not just your metadata but also uses audio and video analysis to extract information from your video content itself. blinkx supports submission in the form of Media RSS and RSS files which can be provided (and checked for validity) at this form: <http://www.blinkx.com/rssupload>.

Assuming your feed passes the test, blinkx automatically analyzes your feed, ensures it has the appropriate adult flag setting set and will commence indexing the content within 12 hours. Your content should be fully searchable 24 hours after initial submission.

- **AltaVista**

Although now part of Yahoo!, Altavista runs its own submission service to which it is worth ensuring your content is added. Altavista's video search technology is based on the underlying, regular text search engine technology and, as a result, the submission process is identical for both. Simply provide a top-level URL to your site (www.yourdomain.com) on the following form: <http://www.altavista.com/addurl/default>.

- **Yahoo!**

Yahoo! operates the world's single highest traffic website and, therefore, is an essential place to submit your video content. Much like AOL, Yahoo! today focuses on a user-generated content hosting and sharing service, but still operates a basic metadata video search engine in addition. Submission to this service is in the form of an MRSS feed and can be done here: <http://search.yahoo.com/mrss/submit>. Yahoo! crawls the content immediately but has a checking process which generally results in a weeklong delay or so before the content appears fully in their index.

- **Podzinger**

Podzinger's search engine also applies speech recognition in order to better index the content in your video. Befitting a site with 'Pod' in the name, Podzinger expects your content either as an RSS feed or as an iTunes or Yahoo! podcast URL (these are essentially heavily-modified versions of RSS that you can ignore unless your content happens to be hosted on Yahoo! or iTunes). You'll need to register up to submit your site to Podzinger but, once you do, the process is fast—in tests, content was usually searchable within a day or, at most, two days.

4 Further Information

The full text of this document can be found at <http://seowiki.blinkx.com> (launched March 13, 2007). At the URL, you will find a wiki compiled by blinkx and made open for editing by the online community in efforts to stay current and fresh on the rapidly-evolving topic.

For any additional questions not answered by the wiki article, please e-mail seo@blinkx.com.