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Understanding YouTube Culture and How It Affects Today's Media

Jessica A. Zanatta
Dominican University of California

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Zanatta, Jessica A., "Understanding YouTube Culture and How It Affects Today's Media" (2017). *Senior Theses*. 83.
<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2017.CMS.ST.03>

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**Understanding YouTube Culture
and
How It Affects Today's Media**

Jessica Zanatta

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree in
Bachelors of Arts in Communications and Media Studies
School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Thesis Advisors: John Duvall, David Ablee

Dominican University of California
San Rafael, California
May, 2017

This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the Chair of the undergraduate program, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the Department of Communications and Media Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Jessica Zanatta, Candidate

Date

Bradley Van Alstyne, Chair

Date

Dr. John Duvall, Thesis Advisor

Date

David Albee, Second Reader

Date

Abstract

The rise and growth of YouTube has created some of the biggest social media and marketing entrepreneurs and has enabled its audience to navigate the platform to their liking. Because of the business franchise YouTube has become a catalyst for famous YouTube creators, regular people with a dream to make it in the “Hollywood Industry.” YouTube provided the resources to these stars, so they would could share their content and be given the opportunity to partner with other Public Relations and Marketing teams for other businesses.

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Research Questions I Considered

- How did YouTube become a culture?
- How do YouTubers get paid?
- How are YouTubers making this business a career?
- Why do people think YouTube is entertaining?
- What is the future of YouTube as a corporation?

Methods

By taking a Media and Cultural Studies approach to the culture of YouTube, I analyzed what makes YouTube a culture, and how people use the medium to establish a career in the media. Since YouTube is a medium and part of media, I will be looking into how these content creators have become social media icons and millionaires in a mainly Hollywood/LA-run industry full of over-filtered, plastic people. I created content of my own that replicates that of YouTube Culture now, uploaded and released one video every week over the past 11 months that fall under the categories listed: Vlogs, Challenges, live streams, cooking videos, gaming, beauty, DIY's, sit down chats, music videos, Q and A's, skits, tips and tricks/advice videos etc. I also break down some of my own YouTube channel analytics to measure growth of my audience.

Personal Introduction

Late one summer night in 2007, seated at my old desktop computer at home in the spare room that is rarely used, I clicked the familiar Internet Explorer logo in the bottom left hand corner of the screen and began to type Y-O-U-T-U-B-E into the search bar. Loading the page, I waited patiently for the red and white logo to pop up. Once it did, I was immediately immersed into this website that was foreign to many people, including myself at the time.

This was how my obsession began. I watched the videos of this girl from Britain. She talked about daily life and her interests every week. I soon realized after about a month, that I could “subscribe” to her channel. I quickly made an account to follow her videos and interact in the comments. Once I subscribed to her, I couldn’t stop. I was so interested in this girl halfway across the world from me. Somehow I saw a bit of myself in her, and her videos made me keep watching. She would dance in her room, sing, talk about current movies, TV shows, Broadway musicals, etc. All of the things she found interesting, so did I. I stayed up late many nights on the computer “binge watching” her videos until there weren’t any more current videos to watch.

I also subscribed to Shane Dawson (a native of the city of Long Beach, my hometown), who made silly content weekly just because it was a fun way to keep them stored. I also subscribed to Jenna Marbles because she was the biggest YouTuber at the time and her comedy channel made me laugh. I am now subscribed to over 107 channels on YouTube.

I watch YouTube videos like people watch TV. It has become a bigger part of me than just watching videos on a website. I have dedicated a lot of time and money to be a viewer of YouTube. Like a concertgoer pays for “meet and greets” and front row tickets, I pay for access to behind the scenes content and passion projects.

If I had known back then how big YouTube was going to be in today’s society, I would have hopped on the bandwagon early and made some money. I would have made videos for fun with friends or by myself about daily life, made skits, or even music videos to my favorite songs. I could have been famous for connecting to the audience on a growing platform back then, but in the business, timing is everything. That’s how many of these creators became as famous as they are now. They were in the “right place at the right time.” The thing that made many of these ordinary people stars was timing. Twelve years ago, everything was brand new. People quickly began to realize that YouTube could be an outlet of expression, and a way to have fun. However, no one knew just how big this platform would grow to be today.

YouTube Development (History)

YouTube has become the new TV, at least for me it has. That seems to be a pretty bold statement people wouldn't have understood in 2005. Creators Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim (ages range from 38-40) thought up this idea after shooting videos together and realizing they had no way to share what they made with each other. "Youtube Co-Founders Split," (2014). All three men worked at PayPal together, and were able to use the money they earned from their already well-paying jobs to create the concept for YouTube. This all took place after a dinner party in San Francisco that lasted well into the morning. They wrote many of the concepts on a Denny's napkin. Years later they took their idea to Google which bought their concept from them for 1.6 billion dollars. These PayPal workers didn't realize how far this actual concept would carry, but it has lasted 12 years and billions of dollars as Google's second largest social media platform and the primary provider for online videos.

The internet holds a plethora of information, and also a variety of information allowing for different ways to retrieve it. Search engines are just one way people can retrieve information on the internet. Yahoo, Bing, and Google are all very well-known search engines. Some of these companies own extremely intelligent sections of the internet. Since Google now owns YouTube, it is one of the most well-known sections of the internet. YouTube has played a significant role in the growth and knowledge of social media as a whole.

Hurley and Chen were working on three main products before selling Youtube to Google. They started a company together in 2011 to allow them to pursue multiple projects at a time. Although they were brainstorming and conceptualizing nine different products at one time, Avos Systems, Mixbit, and Google Venture were the three most developed. Even though both they worked on these together, Avos Systems and Mixbit were the “brain babies” of Hurley’s, and Google Ventures was Chen’s idea. Today, the three original creators of Youtube are all working on their own products to launch, but all of the products are focused on video-sharing.

There are however, some technical challenges people face when using a video-sharing platform such as YouTube. Other than user errors, the platform itself has been experiencing technical difficulty as well. Over the last couple of months, the platform has had numerous glitches that are being worked out by headquarters. Subscribers are being lost, which means ad revenue drops per video, since less people are receiving notifications about new videos being uploaded. This issue has had many content creators upset for a couple reasons; they aren’t making as much money as they are used to, but more importantly they are losing their audience. If this problem isn’t resolved soon, these young entrepreneurs could begin using their platforms to speak to corporate to make ensure it is fixed. For many, YouTube is their job and their livelihood. If the system fails, their jobs are threatened and can be lost, making them build their successes over again from scratch.

How YouTube Works

This year, celebrating its 12th year anniversary, YouTube has come a long way from the little idea of sharing videos, to one of the most viewed websites on a daily basis. Many people just type “YouTube” into their web browser, click the Youtube.com link, and type something in like music videos or interviews for entertainment. However, many children, teens, and young adults watch videos daily by subscribing to their favorite people. Subscriptions are a numerical tally of the amount of people watching a person’s channel. A “channel” is a web page given when a person signs up to create an account. Having an account allows people to like, comment, and share any video they watch. Signing up for an account also allows anyone to upload their content to Youtube. With an account, anyone has the freedom and the control to navigate the platform.

YouTube has had very fast-paced growth, beginning with average people posting videos and gaining many viewers. These people have been coined with the term “YouTuber” or “Content Creator.” Many content creators have gained the spotlight because of the amount of subscribers, views, and likes on their videos. Having and selling merchandise, partnering with companies for advertisements, going on tour or doing shows, submitting book deals, signing TV and movie deals, and podcast – all allowing these young entrepreneurs to make millions of dollars for creating videos.

By releasing a video, the advertisements are embedded before and during content creators videos. Because many companies have targeted their marketing to the 8-30 year old range, they turned to these content creators with a huge following, to partner with

them in order to market to their audience. For example, if the brand Nike decides it's best to reach out to an athletic content creator to gain more sales from their viewers, Nike contacts the content creator's business email and will ask about a sponsorship – similar to what professional athletes do, except instead of displaying all of their sponsors on a jersey, a content creator displays merchandise in a video. These people in the spotlight are often referred to as “YouTube Celebrities,” but the movie, TV, and award show industry are beginning to recognize them as Content Creators, which is a much more appropriate name. Content creator Jenna Marbles, is one of the platforms largest names, with her numbers growing every day. Starting at 0 subscribers just like everyone else, she has grown her channel and her brand to 17,193,598 subscribers. That number changes every day by the amount of people to who subscribe or unsubscribe to her channel. A content creator's YouTube channel has become their brand. These people use their platform to essentially market themselves.

Public Relations and Marketing Communications Theories

In mass communications, most of the theories apply to the setup and outreach of YouTube in terms of reaching all demographics. However, a couple of the theories are more direct with their ability to project the outcome. The spiral of silence theory relates to those who are in the minority. The word “minority” is being used loosely to explain that content creators may not use the platform to express personal thoughts on controversial subjects (1991).

There are also many YouTubers who choose not to talk about political problems or other controversial issues on their channel, for reasons like being afraid to speak up, starting arguments, straying away from the popular opinion, or because they are afraid of being isolated. Many YouTubers created a channel and posted videos because they were bullied in the past, are part of the LGBTQ+ community, or depressed, and used the platform as an outlet. YouTube allowed many to establish their identity and video posts gave them a sense of purpose and belonging. They all have backstories and reasons for why they decided to make this a hobby, and eventually got paid for what they love to create. They were the theoretical minority by believing they were misfits who all joined this community of people who were trying to find a balance between work and play. As content creators, YouTube enables them to do both.

The exciting part about YouTube is the endless content people have at their fingertips every second of every day. The uses and gratifications theory applies to viewers, giving them the freedom to choose the video content they find entertaining. They experience one has on the platform, can be very different depending on the person. One person may only use the site for music videos, while another could subscribe to over 110 people. It is up to the viewer to decide what they find entertaining; the possibilities on this platform are endless. Since there are so many sections of YouTube; vlogs, music videos, DIY's, skits, live shows, and many more – uses and gratification theory suggests that using the platform begins with the viewers interests and spans as far as the platform's content will go if the viewer finds it entertaining. Since YouTube is considered a social

media platform, the media has also become involved.

The media is always competing for attention; as a society we are exposed to so many advertisements. Advertisements are a crucial element in how these content creators get paid. However, before any income, content creators must monetize their channel. Anyone on YouTube can choose to monetize the videos they upload by filling out a form that is sent and viewed by YouTube to ensure none of your content is copyrighted. The advertisements before videos allow content creators to generate income. Sometimes those advertisements are YouTube advertisements for someone else's channel, and other times they are for products with no relation to YouTube. No matter the purpose, people still must view the advertisements before starting the video, unless the viewer has an adblocker on.

Many people skip over the advertisements before the video, but if they watch the whole thing, at least 30 seconds of it, or click the advertisement, the YouTuber generates a percentage of the advertisement that ran. The media competes for the viewers' attention to try to entice them with the promotion, but most people click the "Skip Ad" button so they can begin or continue watching the video they picked. People use YouTube for music, comedy, beauty, reviews on products, gaming etc. Viewers understand the content that the server holds, and pick the video based on what kind of mood they are in.

Many content creators have started explaining that the reason they are "vlogging" (video blogging) is because they want to be able to look back at how their time was spent when they were younger. It has turned into a video version of a photo album. People want

to reminisce and share memories with others.

Steve Harvey, a well-known talk show host, and the main man on *Family Feud*, is now the host of a new show called *Little Big Shots* on NBC. This show discovers young and unusual talent based on their popularity on the internet. One of the main ways to see these kids' videos is from using YouTube's platform to search for young, interesting talent. This is one very recent, modern day example of how YouTube culture is filtering its way into mainstream media today.

Since YouTube began, people were skeptical on how it operated as a business until a few names became easily recognizable in everyday media. One of the most influential content creators that people may know is Tyler Oakley. Youtube sensation Tyler Oakley, has been very active in voicing his vote for Hillary Clinton in the November Presidential elections.

Oakley had been really involved in politics over the past two years. He visited the University of North Carolina (UNC) to help campaign for Hillary Clinton and early voting. He chose North Carolina especially because they are a swing state. He went door-to-door in dorm rooms to encourage college students like you and I to sign up and vote. Because of the support Oakley has shown toward Clinton, she took to following him on Twitter. Oakley's recent achievement in gaining his own show, produced by the Ellen Show, has resulted in him meeting many influential people including Tim Kaine. In the past, he has made YouTube videos with Michelle Obama, in conversation about education.

The minute that came to be, users from all over the world believed they had what it took to become “famous” on YouTube. However, from the user’s perspective, the view on YouTube is very one-sided. Since so many people now just want to use YouTube as a platform to become famous, they fail to take the necessary steps to become the professional entrepreneurs that many content creators are today.

Anyone can create content, but professionally one needs a budget, the ability to have connections, and the knowhow to book a place to film, operate the camera, and use other equipment. Having a creative eye and mind is important as well! Most of the people on YouTube however, only own a smartphone or a consumer grade camera. Having the budget out of pocket to buy nicer equipment for videos is highly unlikely if that person is an everyday user. Paul Soukup (2004), author of the article in *Communication Research Trends*, had his main focus on the marketing, advertising, and social networking skills one needs to stay afloat as a businessperson.

Business

The future of TV is changing; as well as putting content on their personal channels, a couple of content creators have had movie/documentary/TV opportunities to debut and shows they produced. This has given ordinary people who started with an idea and a dream, turned it into something a lot bigger, and have now become famous and created a space for those who are famous, thanks to their fans, to attend and win at award shows.

YouTube has helped many people's careers take off because of the platform it provides. For example, Justin Bieber, a musician that has risen to fame in recent years was discovered through his videos on YouTube. The same thing happened to Tori Kelly, and Alessia Cara. Not only do musicians become famous from YouTube's platform, but even the content creators land amazing roles in movies, directing gigs, podcasts, and much more. Jenna Marbles, began on YouTube making videos, but now with her boyfriend Julien Solomita, they run a weekly podcast together. She also controls SiriusXM Hits 1 radio on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday's where she hosts a show called "YouTube 15." She gives her audience the latest trends on YouTube with songs and commentary.

Many other YouTubers have written books and become bestselling authors, made movies, starred in movies, been on late night talk shows, attended and hosted live award shows, won awards, and gained a plethora of other opportunities. Shane Dawson, the young boy from my hometown in Long Beach California, began making funny skits by himself in his home and uploading them to YouTube as a way to store the videos somewhere. When the platform began, Shane didn't know just how "famous" he would eventually become. Since the skit days, he has created a movie, written two books, directed and starred in many short films, developed a weekly podcast, and has also won many awards for his creations.

The reason YouTube has become as successful as it is today, is because it's extremely user friendly so everyone has access to it. People just need the drive and the

know-how. Christopher Cayari's "The YouTube Effect" (2011) highlights the way YouTube affects connections to education, technology, and media. YouTube's first facet of content began with music and music videos. Although music streaming services were around at the time – Pandora was founded in 2000 and Spotify in 2006 – YouTube was the only platform that offered audio and visual components. Although Cayari mainly focused on music, YouTube has many other areas of creation and sharing content. The general concept of the platform is to consume and create content to share. This content can be spread throughout the entirety of the purpose of YouTube, not just music.

Even other social media like Vine have become content sharing media. According to the article called *Remembering Vine* (2017), Vine is a social media outlet that allows users to create six-second content, that posts to a feed in a looped video. These people who upload their videos and gain popularity are called Viners. Everyone can make Vines, but Viners are users that become hits on the platform because their content was funny, edited creatively, or just really entertaining.

Many Viners also ended up successful on YouTube since they already had an established fan base. These Viners used Vine as their platform for releasing video sharing content to users who wanted to also create content or watch the content for entertainment. Since some of these Viners became pretty famous on the platform, they realized they wanted to do more than just post a six-second video. That is when many decided YouTube would be their branch platform to make longer content. *TheGabbieShow* is one of the first and most notorious for deciding to take her content and followers to YouTube.

Starting out on Vine, she has now grown her own YouTube channel to well over four million followers. Vine was the “stepping stone” for many of YouTube’s content creators today. Vine eventually became a discontinued media. These popular Viners now use YouTube full-time to create content for their audiences daily and weekly to post on their channels.

Filming and editing videos has become an art form. Many Vloggers use their content to create cinematic productions. YouTube is a thriving business because it maintains a sense of professionalism without losing a one-on-one feeling. The connection these content creators have with the camera makes the audience members and fans feel as though they are just talking to a friend. That feeling cannot be replaced.

From a user to a professional, the idea is the same. A content creator, big or small, still connects to their audience via the content they create, the camera, and the editing. However, a bigger content creator has the ability to hire a manager and a team of people to further their entrepreneurship and business knowledge. Many content creators have created a business for themselves, and have also been exposed to what business deals look like if they partner with a company that believes their brand is worth the risk to invest time, money, and ideas in.

The content creator best achieves entrepreneurship and brand deals because their fans support them. Whether it’s by buying a product, or just by watching their videos, fans have the power to make these ordinary companies become household names. Since fans are the main reason creators have a claim to fame to begin with, content creators

sign to movie, book, and other brand deals because they know their audience genuinely cares and would support them regardless.

Education

The younger generation, and the tail end of the millennial generation, have been taught in the classroom with various tablets and smart devices. iPads are a significant source of education in classrooms today. Downloading YouTube on a device that will quickly pull up math problems, or a story that can be read to a child, is still affirming methods of learning; it just happens to be on a new technological device, “Quick Hits” (2012).

Education is extremely important, and YouTube is beginning to help solve homework problems. For example, if a student cannot remember or figure out how to accomplish a math problem, he or she can type in YouTube to the browser, load YouTube, and type in Khan Academy, a channel on YouTube dedicated to teaching certain lessons of math for the average person to understand.

The creator of *Khan Academy*, (2006) Salman Khan, is in charge of the channel. He draws and gives diagrams in all of his videos, as well as going over the formulas and equations for students. By starting with a simpler problem and increasing intensity, students can apply what they learn from the simpler problem to the problems on their homework. YouTube has created an educational platform because of people like Salman Khan, and their channels like Khan Academy. He began to make videos on YouTube to

help his family member with math. Khan Academy now has over three million subscribers.

YouTube has not only provided a platform for entertainment, but it has also become a tool for adults to continue being educated. These videos allow adults to look up “How to Change a Car Tire” or “How to Build a Fence,” and by watching the videos people can be taught by professionals or just everyday people who understand how to do those things proficiently and can teach others their method through a video. It has ended up saving many people time, money, and resources to learn things and tackle the work themselves.

Events

YouTube holds events year round for content creators and their fans to have public “meet and greets”, and interact with them by being on live panels for discussions, Q and A’s, skits, performances, and book signings. These events occur all over the world, but a few are right in our backyard in the United States. These events include VidCon in Anaheim, CA; YouTube Fan Fest in Toronto, Canada; BeautyCon in Texas/LA; and Playlist Live in Florida, to name a few. These events are usually a weekend full of fun, entertainment, emotions, and motivation. There are also offices for content creators around the world to work on their videos, filming and editing in their sound stages.

Content creators even have their own events put on by the YouTube team. The one that happens once a year is called Creator Summit. This is a new event that YouTubers are invited to. It is all organized by YouTube, and it’s a couple days of fun

with other creators and provides consistent inspiration and motivation. YouTube brings music artists like Sia, motivational speakers, and other people to keep the inspiration throughout the entire event. There are after-parties, where content creators can relax with their friends or “collab” (collaborate) and make a video together for each other’s channels. These events have created a massive following, and are extremely fun if tickets are purchased ahead of time.

An annual event started in 2012, YouTube Rewind is the YouTube audience’s New Year’s gift to the viewers. Although the video is shot in the summertime, the video is edited and uploaded before the new year begins. YouTube Rewind is a newer event that content creators collaborate in. By filming the most content creators in one day, the video encapsulates trends and fads from the past year. The YouTube team picks the most viewed content creators and sets up a day of shooting with different backdrops, choreography, and popular songs from the year. These events are a long day of shooting, but the content creators usually have a fun time and are proud of the video that comes out of it. Viewers wait patiently every year for an updated video to spot each of their favorite content creators.

Influence/Media

According to the article, “Watching Youtube,” (2010) there are three main parts of YouTube Culture: the home and family on YouTube, the YouTube community, and the post-television audience. These main points are essential for YouTube Culture to thrive. Michael Strangelove (2010) highlights the “Real You in YouTube” as being a

self-driven job that will definitely have an effect on the future of culture, politics, warfare, and family life. Although famous YouTubers have managers, they are their own boss and work in collaboration with YouTube and other companies who want their products advertised. For the ordinary person, picking up a camera and filming themselves could become a lifelong job if done right. This study raised the question of whether or not having a lot of people picking up cameras to try to gain “fame” on YouTube is necessarily a good thing.

Since its rise in popularity, YouTube has been known for not only video sharing, but for providing some compensation and profit. Because this news went viral a handful of years ago, many people gained the impression that they could drop everything and focus on YouTube. However, it doesn't work that way; even though it seemed like it. YouTube is not a “get rich quick” platform. Many of the content creators who do make money today, did not wake up the day after uploading a video and receive a check for a million dollars. Although videos go viral there is no profit other than popularity and maybe a cool news article written later, unless the video is monetized first.

Strangelove is aware of the many people that YouTube reaches on a daily basis, and because of that, questions the validity of a self-proclaimed “YouTuber” or content creator. These ordinary people who post due to the platform and forum that YouTube provides have psychologically created a sense of community among the small content creators that they interact with. The same can be said about fans of highly popular content creators.

How to Make Money on YouTube

People often ask how an everyday person would be able to make money on YouTube. There is a three step process similar to Bustle's article on, "How Do YouTubers Make Money," (2015) users can go through in order to monetize their videos and acquire advertisements before their videos. This is not a sure-fire way a creator will definitely be paid, since a creator needs over a certain number of viewers to see the advertisements before the creator can make any actual ad revenue. For me, after monetizing and creating an AdSense account with my videos at no more than 110 views, the highest revenue I made from advertisements before and during my videos was no more than 20 cents total. With this being said, the more people that view the ad, the more ad revenue is accumulated.

Step 1: Enable your channel for monetization.

The monetization process allows anyone to become a "YouTube Partner" and begin making money on their content. Like signing to a new job, the monetization process is like a contract. It tells the creator which videos are and are not eligible for monetization. Once Youtube grants the creator access to monetization, it is time to connect to an AdSense account.

Step 2: Connect your YouTube channel to an AdSense account in order to earn money and get paid for your monetized videos.

AdSense is what allows your content to become linked with Ads related to your videos. Google automatically chooses which advertisements to group with your videos based on your content. This account is sort of like a serial number or ID that YouTube uses to track whether or not the feature is enabled.

Step 3: Take a minute to get to know the kinds of videos you can monetize and the different advertisement formats.

There are two main advertisement formats: advertisement revenue created for before or during videos, and YouTube Red revenue. YouTube Red was created for the purpose of partnering with bigger content creators for funding on their passion projects that they didn't have the resources for alone. YouTube stepped in and allowed the bigger content creators to partner in order to provide those resources and in turn, part of the advertisement revenue would be distributed among the smaller content creators to allow for a better chance at making money.

Another really exciting tool that creators have access to is called the Creator Studio. This feature allows access to anyone with a YouTube account, monetization on, and AdSense turned on, to a virtual studio. The studio's tools include finishing edits to videos before uploading, checking ad revenue, measuring growth/analytics, live streaming, translating videos to different languages, connecting with community, accessing a free non copyrighted audio library, and so much more. YouTube has given much access and tools to the community.

Recent Advancements

YouTube has created a new membership called “YouTube Red” (which is a \$9.99 uninterrupted monthly subscription that includes the ability to save videos offline to watch them when internet access isn't available. This service also includes a subscription to Google Play and access to exclusive video content made specifically from the content creators who signed with YouTube Red’s contract. The paid memberships help smaller content creators become more successful based on the broken down percentages of watch time. The percentage per video of monthly revenue is usually broken down into all of the subscriptions a viewer watches in a month; the percentage is pretty small, but pennies and nickels add up over time. The more videos of the smaller YouTuber a person watches and time spent watching, the bigger the percentage of money given to that creator.

Viewers can still watch and subscribe for free, but YouTube Red allows viewers to unlock bonus videos with no advertisements before or during the content. YouTube has created a community of members, from the content creators themselves, to their fan-bases all becoming friends because of a common hobby or interest. It is slice of social media that has allowed so many people to get involved, and become a part of the video creating and sharing process. Those three men clearly understood the idea of social media and communication with others before it ever got as big as it is today.

Another recent launch as of this year is YouTube TV. This is a huge step for YouTube as a platform, and even bigger for the content creators. YouTube TV is another

subscription like YouTube Red. For \$35 month, viewers can stream live TV from popular networks. Not only can people watch live TV from all of the collaborating networks, but they also have the ability to DVR or record shows they might miss. It is all stored in iCloud with unlimited storage. The service also allows up to 6 people to use one account and can be accessed by multiple devices.

Conclusion

YouTube Culture has been established by the generation that watched it thrive. Millennials are that generation, but it has slowly transitioned and shaped the younger generation as well. One of the main reasons these content creators are extremely wealthy and looked up to, boils down to being extremely authentic; showing their truest self in it's rawest form is a huge reason people connect with these entrepreneurs so well.

Social media has now become part of a content creator's job and marketing plan, in order to connect with their fans and receive feedback. Verifications are also telling of status, since social media websites will verify people's accounts (mainly if you have a big enough following) to show others on social media that you are who you say you and you have a significant following.

Being a content creator is now an established career. It has evolved into one of Vlogs, Challenges, live streams, cooking videos, gaming, beauty, DIY, sit down chats, music videos, Q and A's, skits, tips and tricks/advice videos. Many content creators support non-profit organizations and campaign for a bigger cause than themselves. They

feel as though they are responsible for speaking out and using their platform of people who watch every day or every week for good. The loyalty of the YouTube culture is important.

These different elements to YouTube videos have created this culture. When a member of the culture creates something new, it becomes really popular and very well-received, but like most fads, popular content soon becomes a pastime and it's "out with the old, and in with the new." This trend of phasing out fads is a popular concept among YouTube content. Those creating the content will either create something new, receive credit, or others copy their technique. These content creators are constantly trying to develop new ways of reaching their audience. The culture of YouTube has created a safe space, an open space. Since YouTube is user-driven, any creator, famous or beginner, can upload any interpretation of the content they see or create something new. The culture and the media are important things to note when looking at how YouTube runs as an industry of entertainment, business, media, and storytelling.

My generation has grown up in the rise of YouTube culture and has adapted to hearing about "famous" content creators in the media. We have probably seen many of them attend award shows, watched their movies/documentaries, and come across their advertisements before a music video on YouTube. The younger generation however, are increasing their interest in the YouTube culture and have fully immersed themselves into it from an early age. Since they are still young, they think that making videos equals fame, but unless you are extremely funny or talented in something new and exciting, the

chances of becoming “famous” are very slim.

YouTube culture has shaped our society. As a millennial, growing up in a society of overflowing technology, YouTube culture has impacted media. Through the history and evolution of YouTube, the business and marketing approaches, and influence in education, YouTube culture has taken over social media and influenced the younger generations as well as the Millennials. Companies and organizations are consistently targeting the younger generation through advertisements within social media to purchase merchandise, “meet and greets”, show tickets, and company sponsored products, all of which support YouTubers.

YouTube is generally a positive platform, however some viewers create fake profiles to comment hate on content creators’ YouTube videos. These kinds of people are called internet trolls, and they make the community environment a negative place. Although these types of people try to create controversy and be rude online, the positivity among the platform far outweighs the few negative people.

Overall, YouTube is a great resource, and many people’s lives have been changed because of the opportunities it has created for young adults to break out of their comfort zone, and experience opening up and sharing their lives with millions of people all around the world.

My [Personal Channel](#)

To gain a better understanding of how someone can grow a YouTube channel and what the analytics look like, I officially launched my YouTube channel almost a year

ago. My main focus was to partake in YouTube culture by making mainstream videos that were popular on the internet around the time I was willing to film them. I began with a video called “My Year in a Vlog” which is a play off of a concept that many content creators make called “Year in Review.” It encompasses video clips and pictures that have been gathered over the course of a year. I edited mine together using iMovie which came on all Mac laptops, and uploaded it to my YouTube channel. At the time, I had video projects for school on there, but no personal videos. I posted my video and shared it on social media with my friends and family. That video as of today has 80 views. While it’s not millions, the amount of people that watched my video went from 0 to 80 over the span of a few months. The growth, even for a small content creator just starting out, was enough to propel my project further.

After that video, I decided that the day and time I would upload and post my videos would be Monday’s at 10 o’clock AM. I figured I would edit the weekend before and post before any of the week got out of control. “First thing on a Monday morning” held me accountable and got me up early and excited to see how many people would watch. I filmed my next couple videos over the course of the next month and uploaded every Monday. My videos include “The Soda Challenge,” a “LUSH Haul”, a “4th of July DIY,” and a “Makeup Challenge.” Those four videos alone created some more buzz and I was able to increase my views per video anywhere between five to 28 people. Over the next month I created three videos which were “Baking a Camo Cake,” a “Follow Me Around” video, and a “Through My Eyes” video of my family vacation to Palm Desert.

By this time, I was figuring out what my audience liked and didn't like watching. While I had 108 views on my "Makeup Challenge" video, less of my viewers watched the "Through My Eyes" video of my vacation. For the purpose of this project, I kept along with my original concept of creating content that mirrored popular videos in the YouTube society. However, I have plans to put my theory of higher views of makeup videos to the test, and focus more on beauty and makeup to see if I gain more views from those kinds of videos.

Since then, I have only released two more videos. I uploaded a "Disneyland Day Vlog," where I show my experience at Disneyland for a day with my friend. I also recently uploaded a challenge video called "Who Knows Me Better Tag?" Since I waited a while to post these two videos, I have less views. They still weren't the lowest views I've received, but I went from 60, 80, and 100 views down to 40 and 60 views. However, in the meantime my channel has still been growing. The growth may not be by video count on the last two videos, but instead by the number of views, subscribers, and channel art. Even if I don't post a video, people can still find my past videos on YouTube, and they can also subscribe. I also updated the "channel art," which is like a header picture on Facebook. The art helps brand your channel.

As a YouTube lover, and someone who has been the viewer behind the screen for over 10 years, it has been really fun to be in front of the camera and editing my own videos. The Monday deadline is a challenge some weeks, but it's my channel so I can build it however I see fit. I love sharing my work with family and friends and whoever

else wants to partake in a little entertainment. I hope to create more videos for fun in the future. My aim is not and has never been to become famous from this platform, and I don't think any of the original people saw it that way either. YouTube should not be used as a "get rich quick" solution. It's a hobby for many that has turned into a business and a career.

Extra Content: Links to Video's breaking down YouTube

1. Understanding How Content Creators Make Money; As Told By a Content Creator
 - a. *The Truth About Youtubers*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ne1qYkpBEsA>
2. Breakdown of the Highest Grossing Content Creators and How they Make Money
 - a. *Top 10 Highest Paid YouTubers*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWlsNOaj1sQ>

Glossary of Terms

1. Binge-watching: Watching multiple episodes of TV shows back to back.
2. Channel: A channel is the home page for a user's account.
3. Collab: Collaborating with other creators to release a video on both creator's personal business channels.
4. Content Creator: A Content Creator is someone who is actively creating and publishing original content to an audience on one or more media platforms (direct definition from *Content Engine*).
5. Online Trolling: Internet slang for unnecessarily being rude or mean online because of the freedom of speech.
6. Subscriptions: Based on who a viewer would like to follow, by subscribing to a creator's video's, the viewer can now access all of their creator's most recent videos through their subscription feed.
7. Vine: Vine was a video-sharing app designed to allow users to film super short clips that could be linked together in one video for a total of six seconds. Each short video played in a continuous loop. They could be embedded and viewed directly in Twitter's timeline or any web page (direct definition from *Lifewire*).
8. Viner: A well-known creator of six second videos on the video-sharing app known as Vine.
9. Vlogging: Recording your day through video blogging.
10. YouTube: YouTube is a video sharing service that allows users to watch videos posted by other users and upload videos of their own.
11. YouTuber: A person who uploads, produces, or appears in videos on the video-sharing website YouTube.

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