

Videos on Your Website

A picture's worth a thousand words. We now live in a rich-media, consumer-controlled culture where the likes of Consumer Generated Multimedia (CGM) – like [Youtube](#), [Flickr](#), etc dictate how information is shared and transferred among our peers on a daily basis.

In view of this, we are going to discuss the power of the Video and help you decide if it has a place on your site.

Videos on your site.

Before adding a video to your site, you need to decide the purpose it is going to serve. This may include:

- 1) Informing people about your product/service in a more colorful, exciting and dynamic fashion.
- 2) Creating a viral marketing campaign to generate word of mouth.

How to shoot the video?

There are 2 basic forms of camcorders you can use - Analog and Digital. Once you've filmed your video, you'll need to prepare it for uploading onto your computer so that you can edit and prepare it for posting on a network or the Internet. If you have a digital video camera, the video is already in the correct format. This can then be uploaded onto your computer via the normal USB port.

If you have analog content, then these signals need to be processed and compressed into digital files to be used online. You need to identify the type of ports on your video camera and your computer and the type of video capture card in your computer to determine whether you will need to acquire a new cable(s), video capture card and/or adapter.



There are some helpful sites that will allow you to decide what cameras best meet your needs. You can catch some useful discussions at [PC World](#).

Once the video is on your computer, you can use the following programs to edit the content: [Adobe Premiere](#) or [Adobe After Effects](#). You may also want to visit some forums to get some new ideas like [Digital Director](#).

How to incorporate videos on a site?

There are a number of methods to integrate your video into your site.

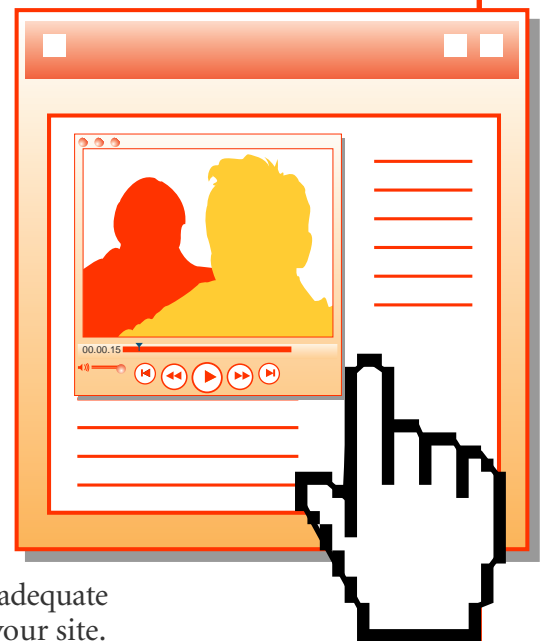
1. Upload the video file (.avi, mpeg etc) onto your website and create a link to the video file. This is the simplest and most fuss free approach. However in general, the movie will not 'stream', so the visitor will have to wait for the entire movie to load.

This can be slow and might end up driving visitors away. This method is only really viable for very small clips. You will have to ensure that your hosting and bandwidth capabilities can handle the length of the clip and the number of people accessing it at the same time. In general, the more videos you have on your site, the greater the hosting space (in MB terms) required, the more popular the clip, the greater the bandwidth required.

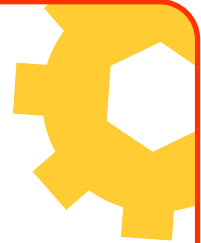
2. Convert the video into a streaming flash movie and allow your site to stream and buffer the movie. This gets rid of the long waiting time for the movie to run, as it starts playing before the entire clip is loaded. This approach also allows you to control the quality of the movie precisely. So if you are looking at offering clear, high quality videos, this is the method of choice. Again you will have to ensure that you have enough hosting space and bandwidth to accommodate your file size and number of accesses.

3. Upload your movie onto a CGM (consumer generated media) site like [YouTube](#) and pass the embedded link onto your site. In so doing, you do not have to worry about adequate hosting space and having the streaming functionality on your site.

These sites do tend to compress your video further to improve speed of download, and so the quality of your video might be affected. But they offer a very cost effective way of displaying videos, and require minimal technical know-how to execute.



When using CGM as a marketing tool, be careful...



As mentioned in our previous issue on [Consumer Generated Media](#), one can really use CGM to create word of mouth buzz about your product. **The challenge is to ensure that the buzz is positive and that it increases your company goodwill.**

We thought it might be interesting to compare some approaches to see which methods are more effective.

1. Always remember that when you are relying on people to pass your advertising links around, make the advertisement about the EXPERIENCE and the story and not the product.

Here are some ads that did just that. This [BMW](#) advertisement could have been about any car but the story stays with you. In our opinion, this might have been a bit of an over kill, because the product really got lost in the mix. The [Dove advertisements](#) on the other hand work well in creating an experience and tapping into a sentiment, while keeping the story real.

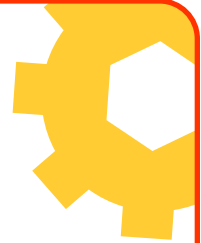
2. Humour is always a good tactic to use. See the [John West Red Salmon](#) commercial and the [Smirnoff Ad](#).

3. It is interesting to follow a story so that people are engaged and have to log onto your site to find out what happens next. Nisan Sentra did just that with its [7 days in a Sentra campaign](#).

4. When using videos for viral marketing purposes, it is important that they are easily accessible. Hence, the movie clips should reside on HTML pages or at least on unique flash pages. This is because people, when they first come to your site via a viral campaign, want to immediately see the video. They do not want to navigate your entire site to find it.

With a flash site, you will need more programming work to create a unique URL link to a specific page, however, with an HTML page you can easily go directly to the appropriate location. As a case in point, look at the [Macintosh Campaign](#) compared to the [Burger King Campaign](#). The Mac campaign can easily be found on the Mac site as the pages are in HTML, however given the snazzy flash site for [Burger King](#) you will have a hard time finding the advertisement.

5. Some new CGM campaigns are asking viewers to participate in campaigns by actually posting opinions or uploading videos. This approach can be very effective but can also completely backfire. Remember people are posting their opinions which might be inaccurate or influenced by extraneous factors.



We would like to showcase 2 campaigns in point here. One is for the [Chevy Tahoe](#) and the other for the [Converse Chucks](#). Both of these campaigns used similar CGM techniques. One was a resounding success and the other could, at best, be viewed as an interesting campaign. Both of these campaigns allowed viewers to upload comments/videos regarding the product or what the company stood for on the company sites.

The Tahoe campaign basically got [trampled on by the public](#). The posts that were put up were derogatory of the entire SUV class with people up in arms about environmental issues and blaming the Tahoe for the woes of the entire gas guzzling industry. However, when Converse fielded [a very similiar campaign](#) for its Chuck Taylor brand, it worked quite well. The [videos](#) that were posted were entertaining and original. Also very clear specifications were given as to what should be uploaded. Hence, the outcome was closer to what was desired.

The main difference, of course, is the sea of emotions connected to the brand and category. When Converse opened the floodgates for Chucks, it was pretty confident it was going to get a lot of love, connections to cool subcultures, nostalgia, and pride of ownership. When Chevrolet did the same, it tapped into a strong backlash against not just the Tahoe but SUVs. The consumer-created commercials were not anti-product, they were anti-category. Chevy was catching flack for the perceived evils of Ford, Hummer, and any number of other car manufacturers.

A brand that's going to field this type of campaign must have some sense of the emotions they're going to unleash as they pierce the veil between consumer-generated and advertiser-generated content. Our attempt at this will be the campaign for the [Volvo C30](#), to be launched in Singapore in April. The site will be live in March so keep a look out for it!

We think that it is a huge challenge to participate in this dynamic and entertaining environment. However, please keep in mind that harnessing and channeling CGM in this way is a tactic, and tactics without strategy is simply bad practice.

Where to upload the Video?

Assuming that you have decided to upload your video on CGM site, we will now go through the benefits and drawbacks of some of them.

Imp't: Please note that this is by no means a comprehensive review.

YouTube – *This CGM is probably best for Viral Marketers and Exhibitionists.*

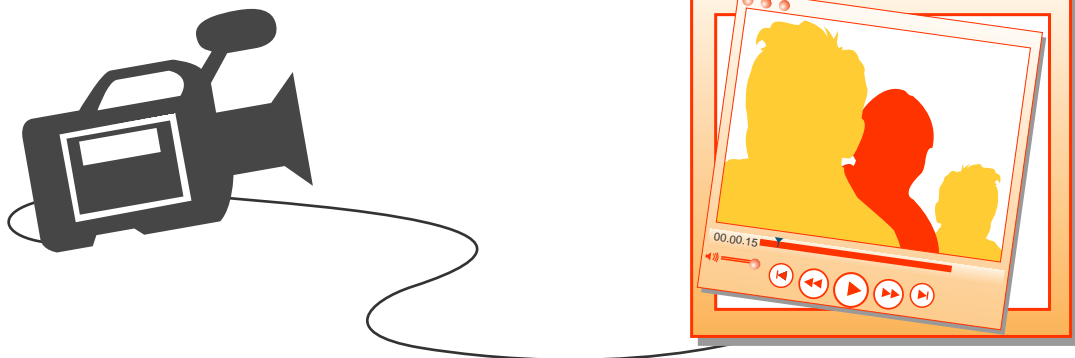
This is a simple to use, online video hosting tool and arguably the most widely used site for uploading and watching movie clips. It is fairly simple to use. All you need to do is upload your video in any format (as long as it is less than 100MB) and the site converts it into a flash movie and allows viewers to watch it. Viewers can then either watch the video on the YouTube site or pass an embedded link onto your own site by adding a few lines of HTML code on your site.

The downside is that YouTube basically offers videos only in one size and the quality can be poor, especially if the video is already compressed to begin with.

Google Video – *Best for incorporating video's into sites.*

Even though Google has bought over YouTube, the Search giant still runs its own separate video hosting service. The Google image quality is better than that of YouTube but the streaming takes longer. Posting a video is as easy as on YouTube. Incorporating the video into your site is intuitive as well and you can vary the size of the video window to fit your web design. Videos can also be downloaded easily onto your computer, iPod or PSP.

Unfortunately you cannot password protect or block casual access to your videos. This is not a major problem for viral marketing purposes.



Stage6 – Best for quality images

This is the new rival to YouTube and Google Video and run by the people who were behind the DivX format. So the quality is fantastic, and you can easily upload videos in high definition or wide-screen format and maintain aspect ratios.

However, one big downside is that viewers will have to download and install the DivX Web Player software to watch your videos. Not necessarily the best if you want people to view your videos easily and quickly. Most people are wary of downloading software onto their precious computers. Also given its newness, there are some glitches that need to be ironed out.

Grouper – Best for those looking for a simple video hosting system that does it all

Sony recently bought Grouper so the camcorder giant will probably be matching its functionality to its subsidiary in the future. Though you can upload videos through the website, it encourages you to use the Grouper software instead. This software allows viewers to download the content directly onto the PDA or the iPod which is an added advantage.

In terms of simplicity and adaptability, we think that Grouper has some ways to go. The image quality also needs improvement.

Parting Words

Videos are a great new medium to incorporate into your site with many marketing implications. If you would like us to discuss the different possibilities for your company, please contact us and we will be happy to dive in.

Happy Filming!

PS: Found this newsletter informative and useful? Email us with your comments, questions or other topics you would like covered at info@8rewardsroad.com