

Digital Video & the Future of News

Chapter 3: Best Practices in Digital Video

3 Best Practices in Digital Video

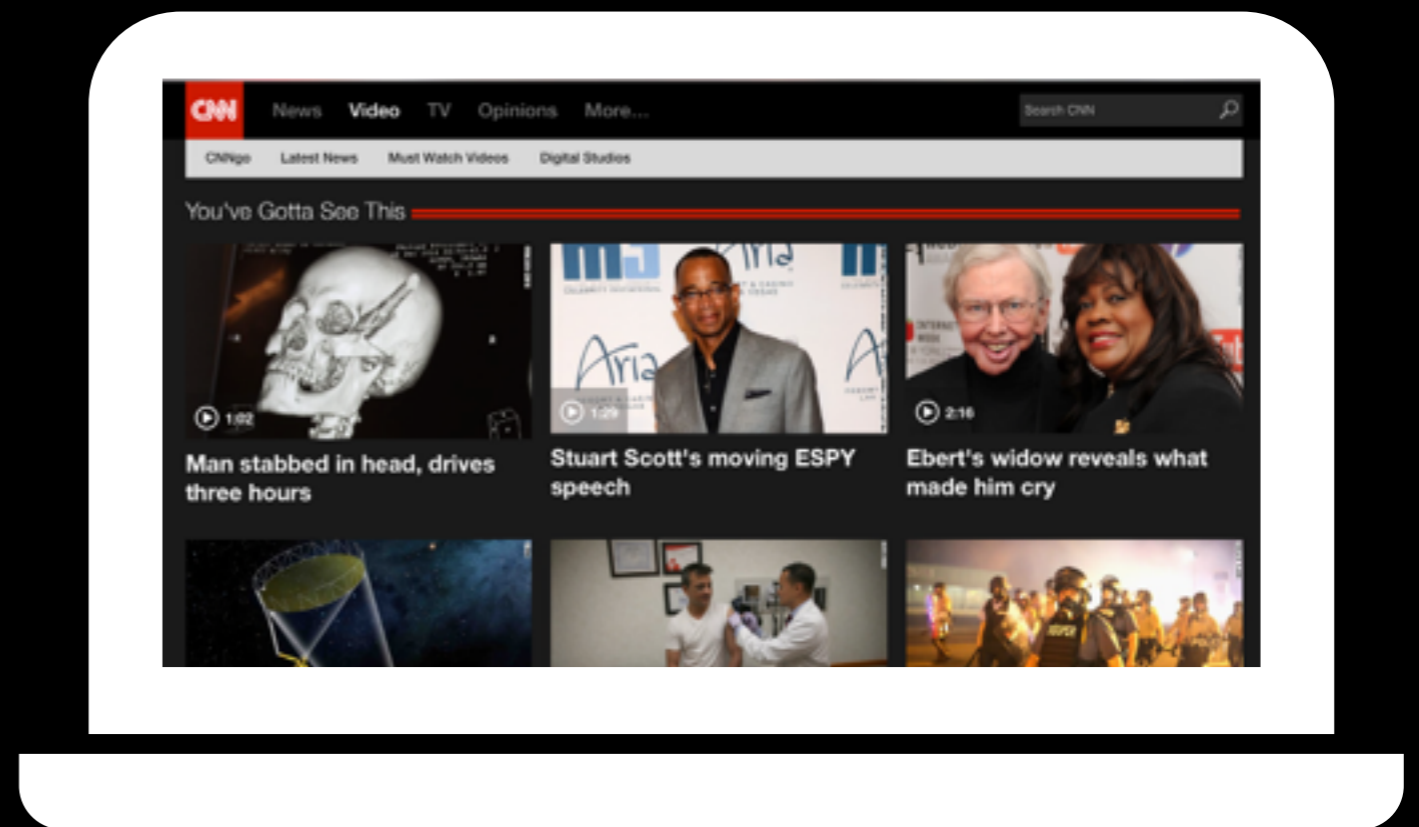
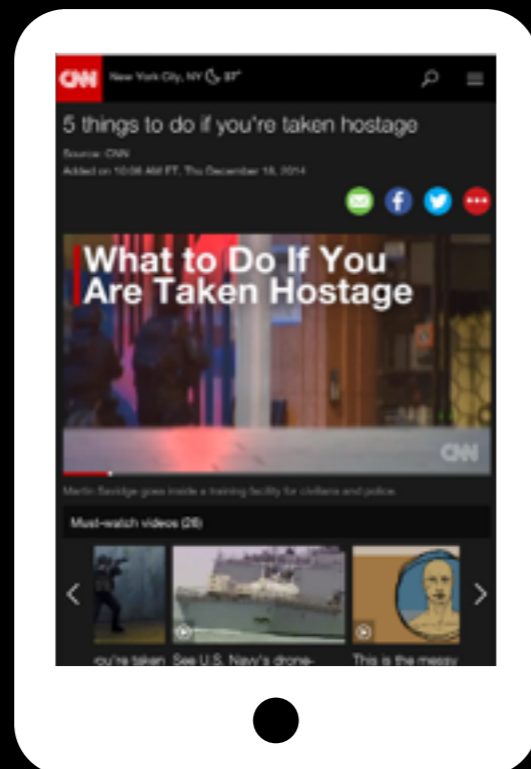
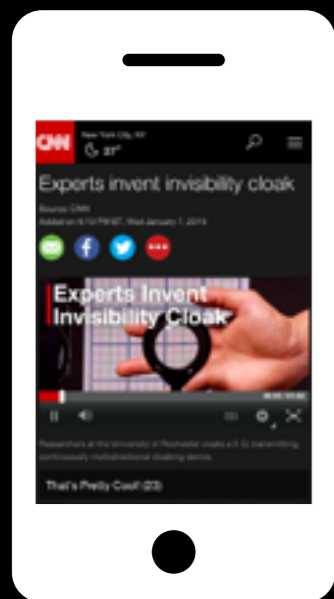


Content and Placement Best Practices

Now that you've seen the importance of digital video in the spectrum of content available to consumers, what are the best steps to leverage it for your brand?

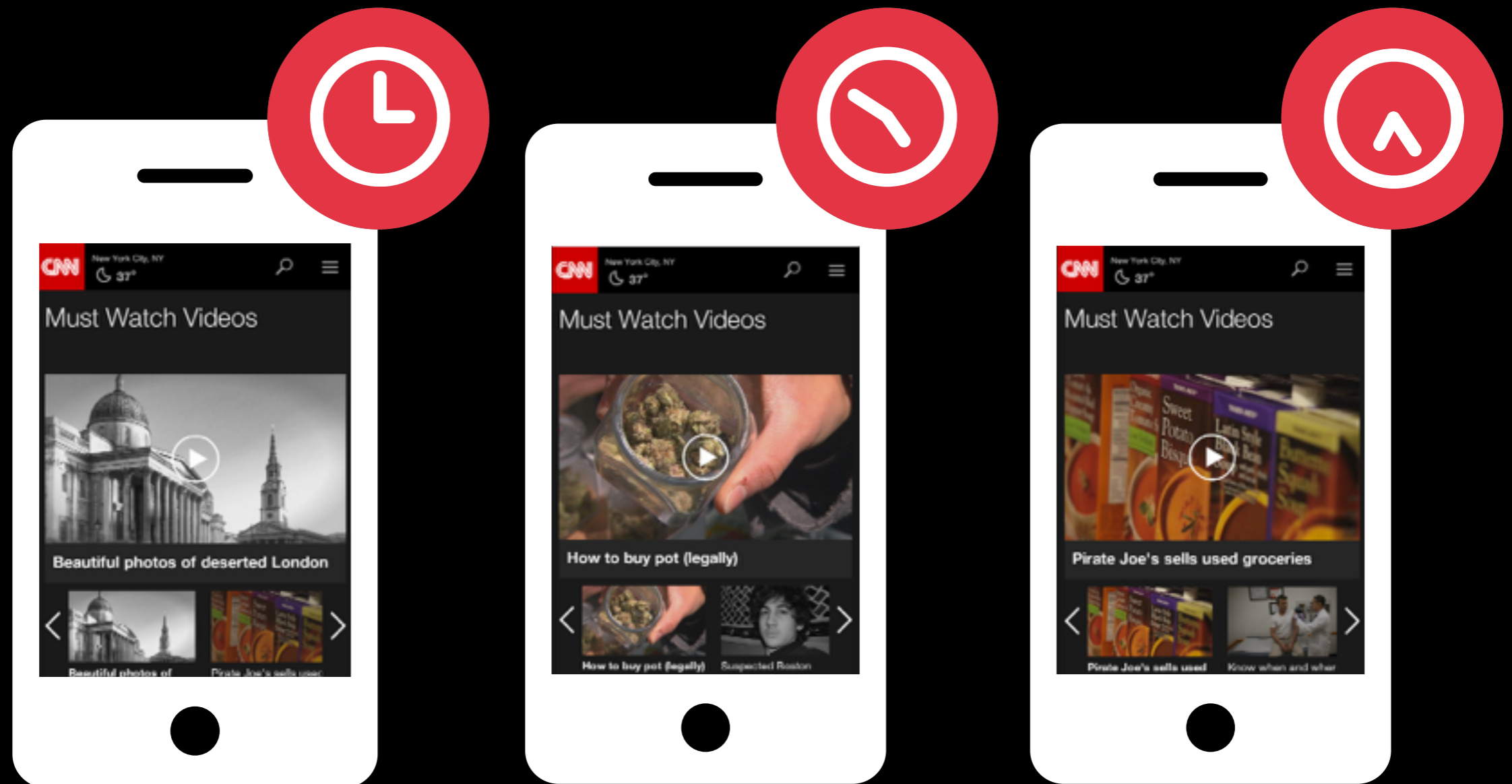
1. Think Bigger than News

According to the video team at CNN.com, hard news drives our agenda, but just focusing on the day's news stories would not be sufficient for us to reach our goals. Mixed in with the top stories is a large amount of counter-programming featuring video stories we believe will garner a large audience and have the potential to go viral through social media.



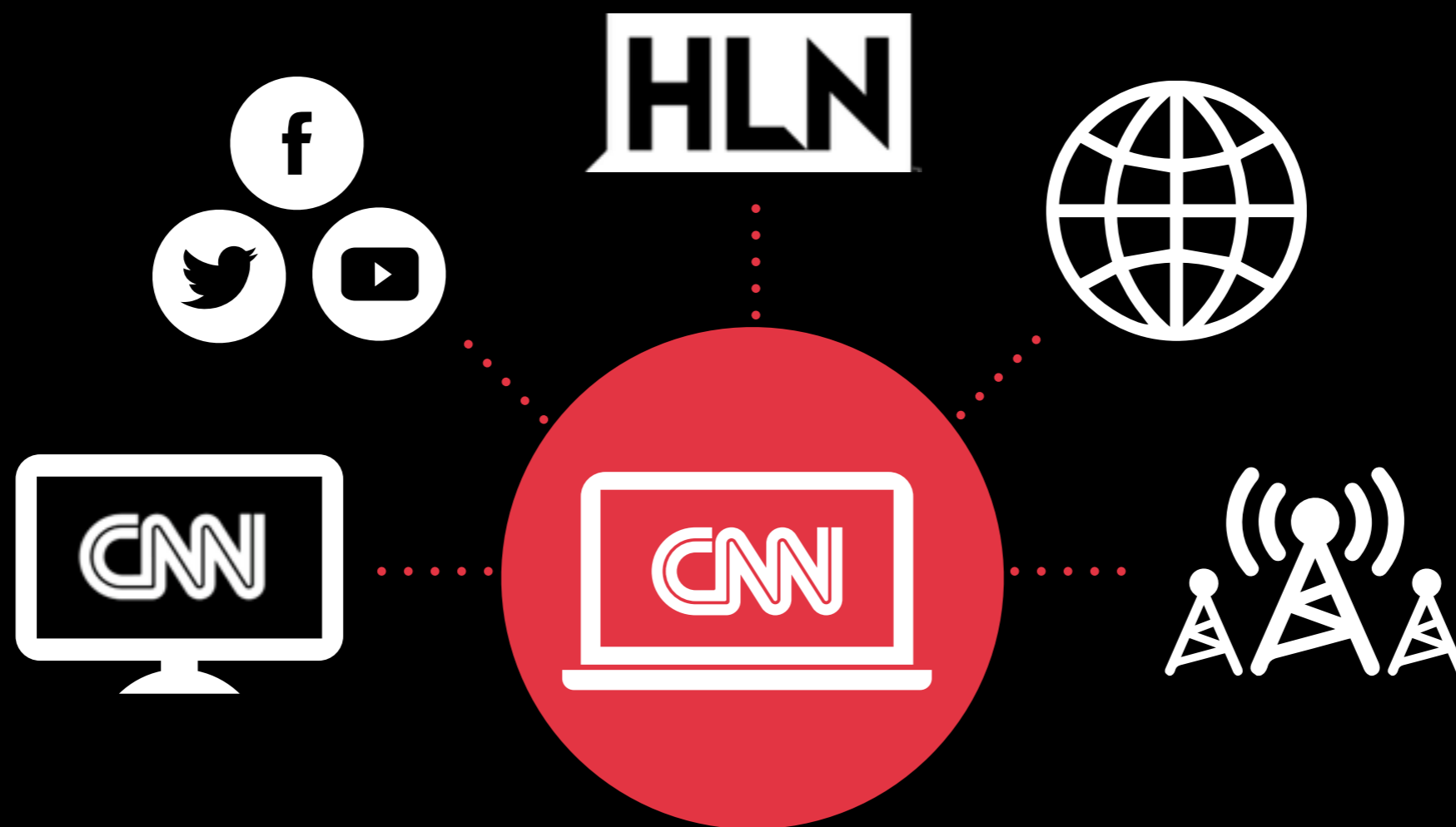
2. Update as Often as Possible

CNN shoots for hourly updates with our videos. While that may not be possible for you, you should avoid leaving the same videos posted in the same parts of your sites all day.



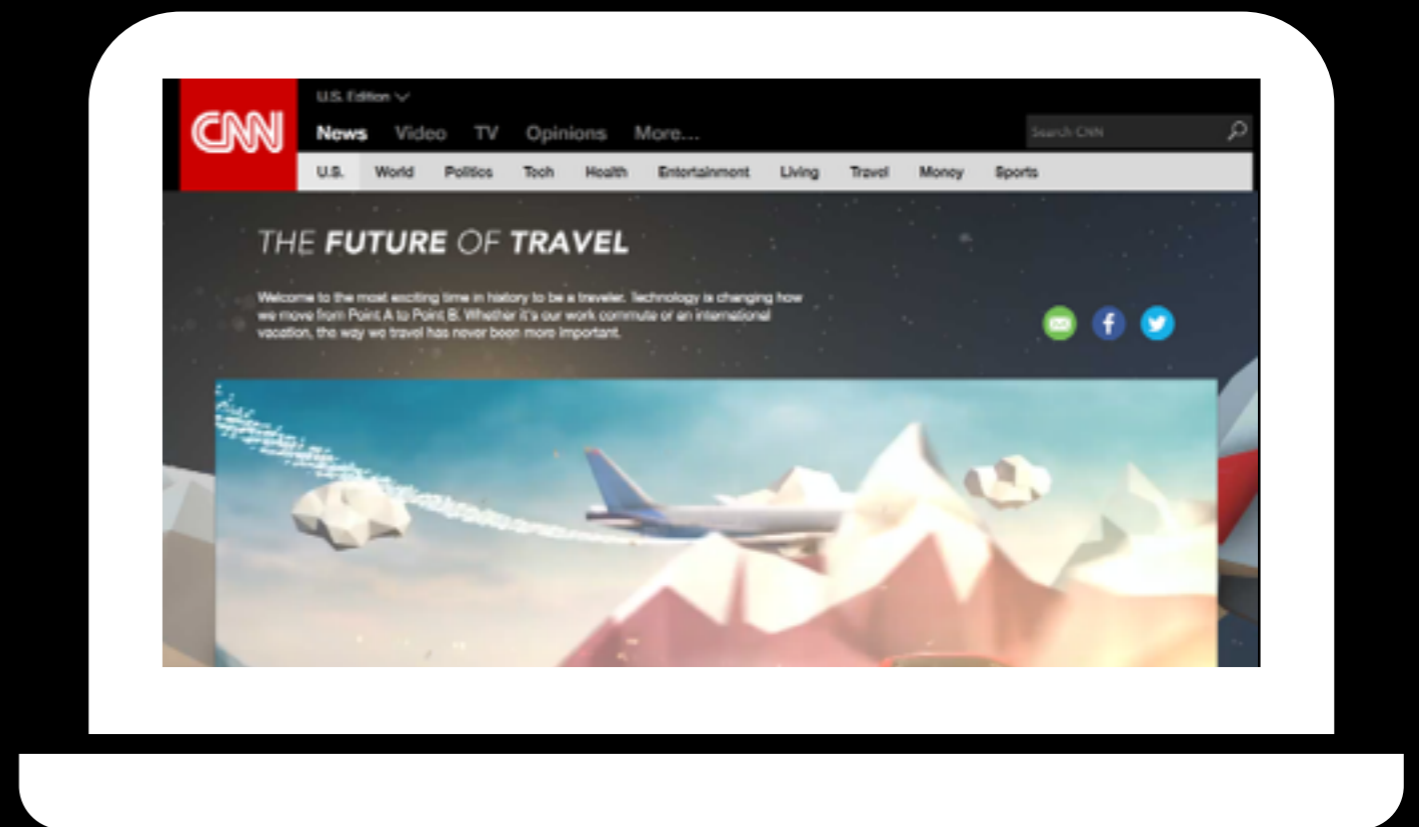
3. Broaden Your Sources

CNN.com's video team has multiple sources from which to pull video—our domestic CNN network, CNN International, HLN programming, affiliate partners, even videos trending online from other sources. Our programmers look for the right mix from all these sources to create a compelling digital video experience.



4. Consider an Original Video Team

We employ a dedicated team to create original video just for CNN.com. Content can be pegged to ongoing news stories or be completely independent with the purpose of generating viewer interest. The video also can be created to provide sponsorship opportunities which can defray the cost of the original video team.



5. Don't Just Post, Track

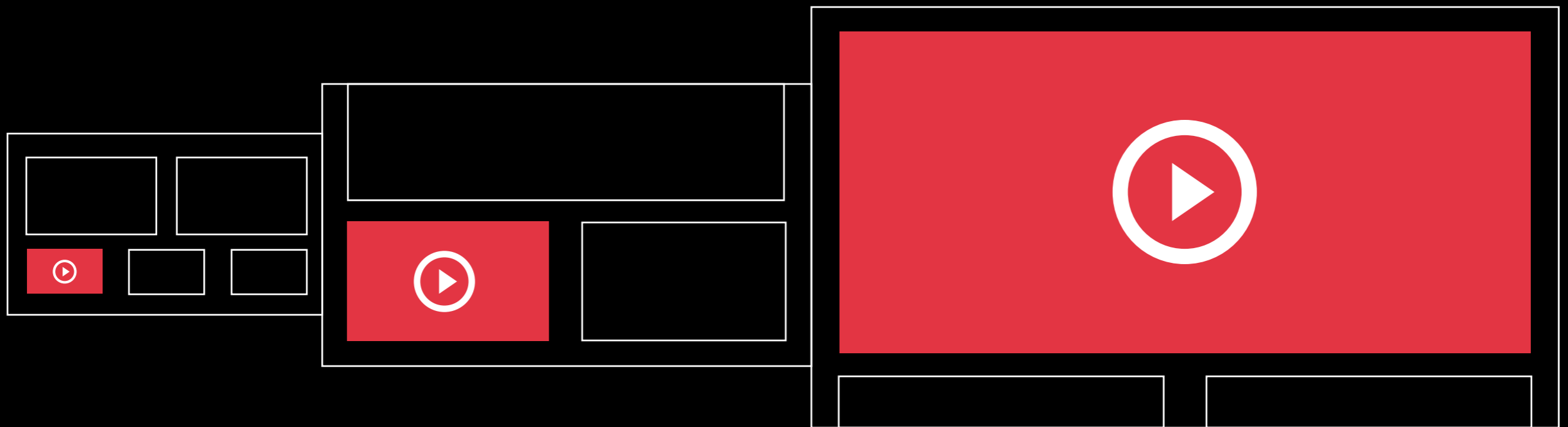
You can't just post a video and forget it. CNN tracks the performance of all our videos in real time and we replace those that are underperforming. Think of it as a video having to “earn” its place on the site.

Some services to help track video performance:

- **Omniiture** — Adobe's enterprise-level web analytics software used by many large publishers to monitor the performance of video and other assets
- **Chartbeat** — Another web analytics suite that focuses on real-time monitoring. Current users include CNN, Gannett, NBC Universal and Al-Jazeera
- **Google** — Beyond its basic tools Google offers many more services that give insight into how users are consuming and sharing your content

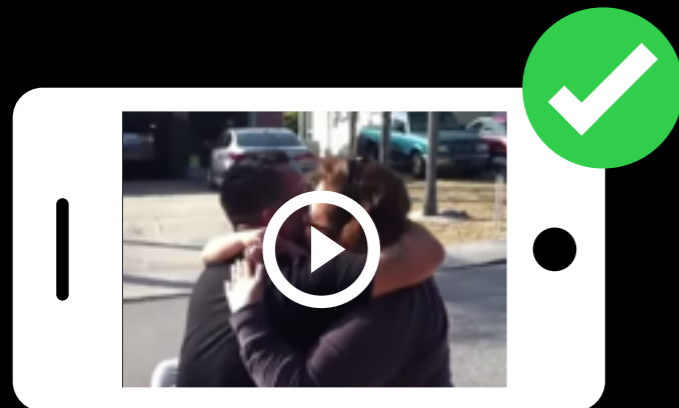
6. If Content is Doing Well, Reward It

As CNN monitors our video content, those stories that are exceeding expectations are moved to more prominent positions on the site to further increase their visibility and find a larger audience. Too often news sites have a rigid structure that makes it hard to reward well-performing content.



7. Best Video Content

In the words of the CNN.com video team, “Look for a video with a moment that gives you goosebumps.”



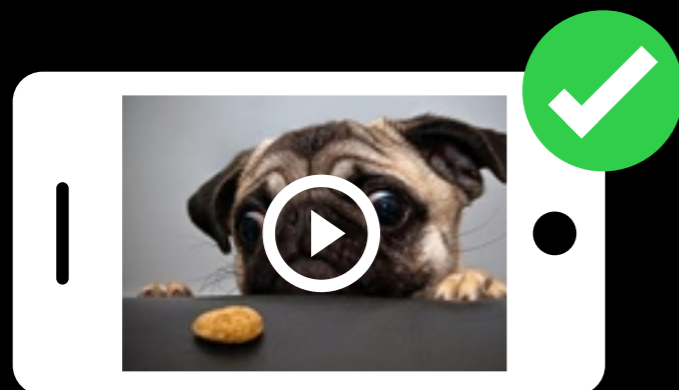
A welcome home surprise involving a service member.



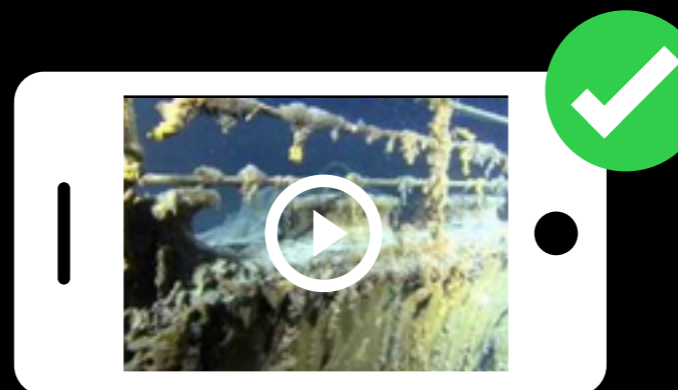
A story where the user is in on a secret that eventually is revealed (e.g. an elaborate marriage proposal).



Videos with compelling visuals, such as those involving surveillance or things caught on camera.



Not surprisingly, videos involving animals.

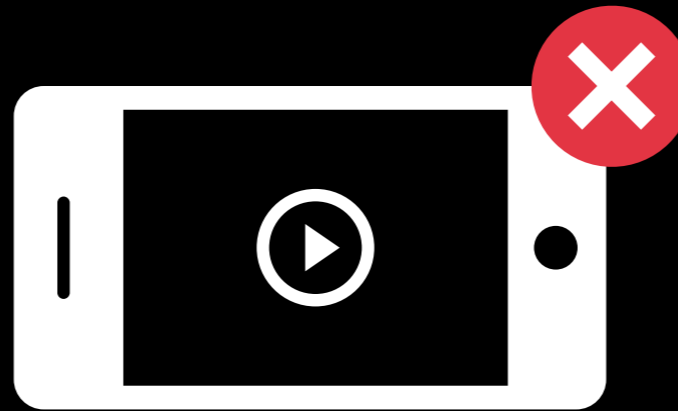


Various other topics such as underwater, aviation and space.

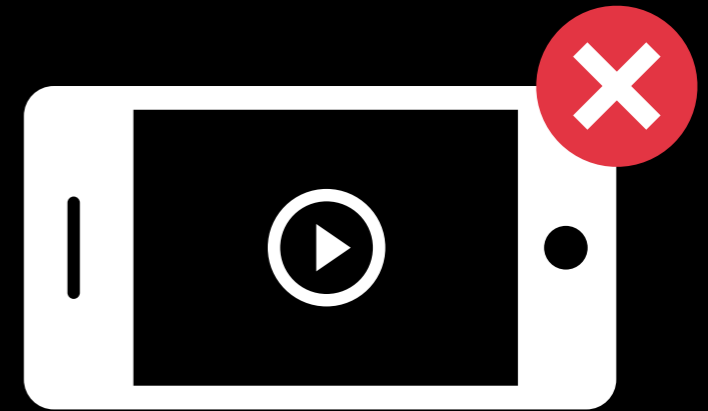
What doesn't work well?



Stories where people are bullied or taken advantage of.



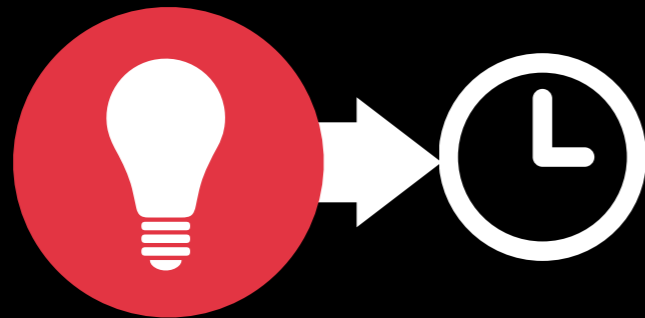
News involving people being seriously injured or maimed.



General “good news” stories that don't otherwise have a compelling element.

8. Think About Supporting Content

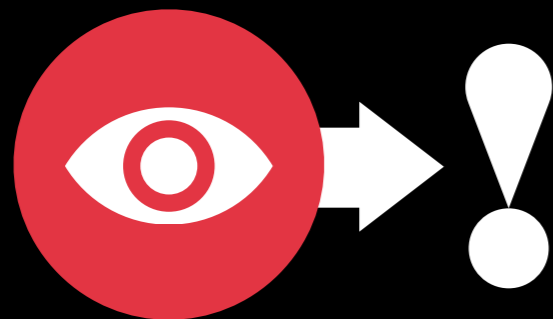
It's not enough just to have good video. You also need to make sure that the content that describes and supports the video is compelling as well:



Edit off anchor tosses and getting directly to the meat of the story. You have at most 15 seconds for a viewer to be engaged before he or she clicks off somewhere else.



When promoting, try to make a game out of what is teased, challenging the reader to click: “Where did your college end up on the list of best schools? Click here to find out.”



Craft good headlines to attract viewers and make sure the video pays off what got them to watch.

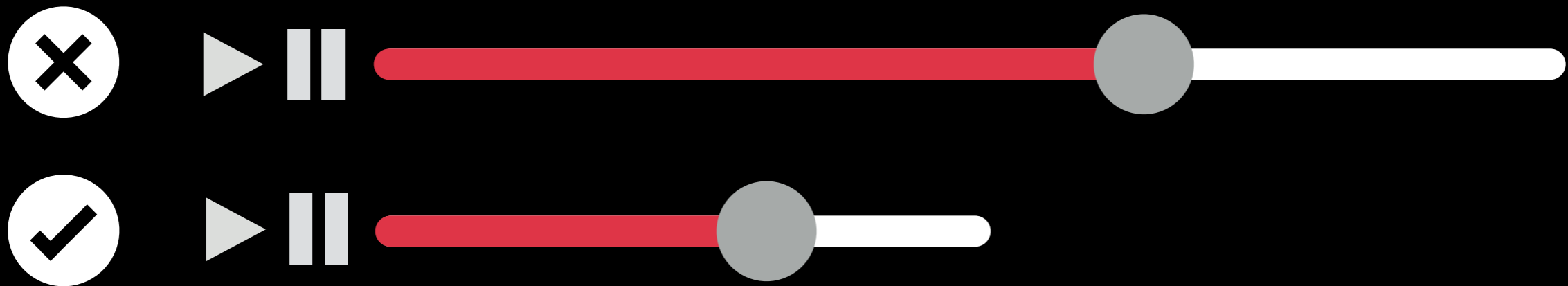


Select a good video thumbnail that will hook viewers and make them want to click and play.

9. Consider the Mobile Experience

As has been stated, the smartphone and tablet audience is expanding rapidly. Assume a large number of your video views, probably more than half, will come from mobile. Make sure that your teases, thumbnails and other supporting content work well for these devices.

In short, be brief and to the point.

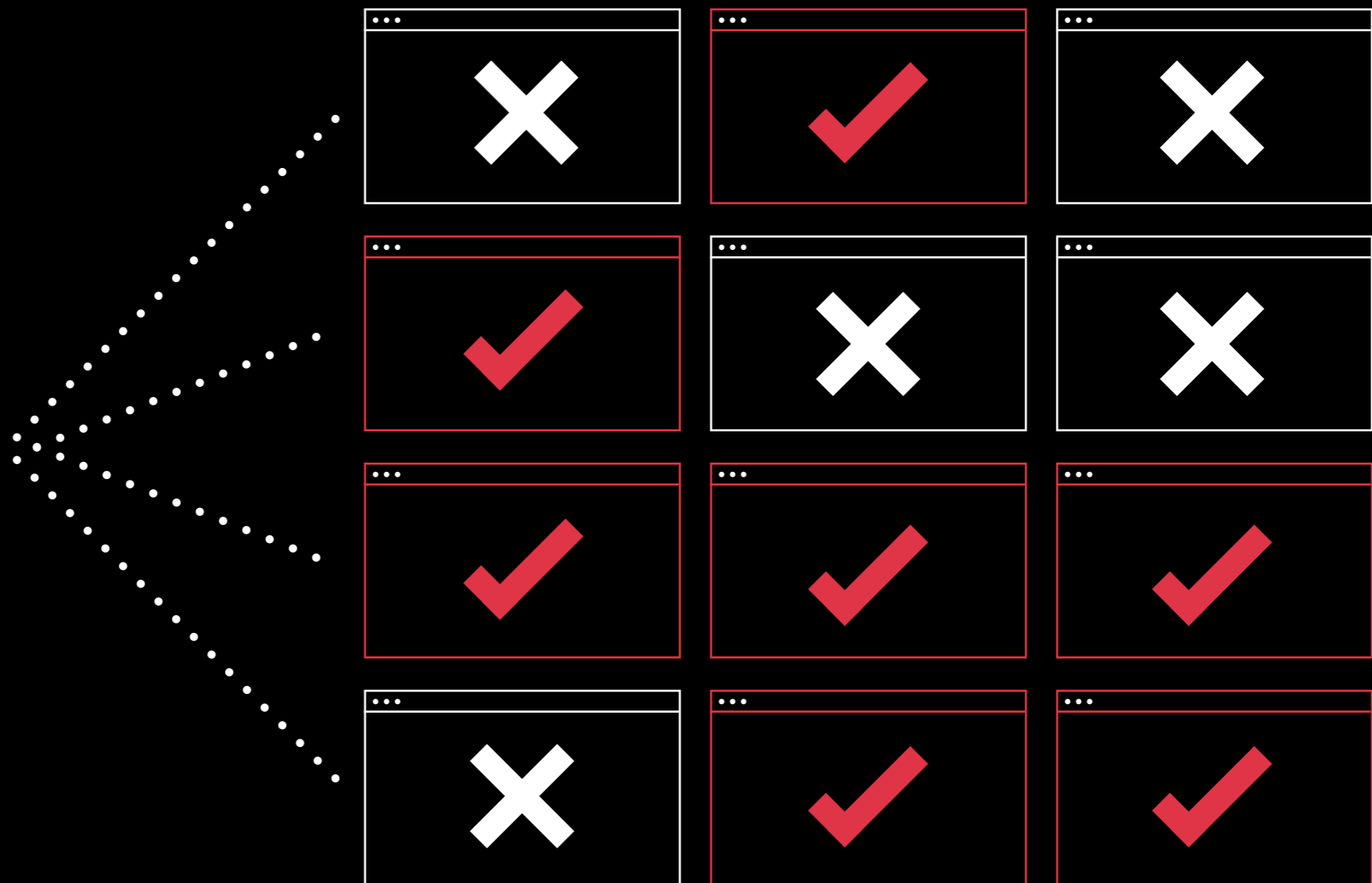


Marketing Digital Video

In addition to promotion on your own site, the two most important means to get people to your videos are proper SEO, and an aggressive push on social media.

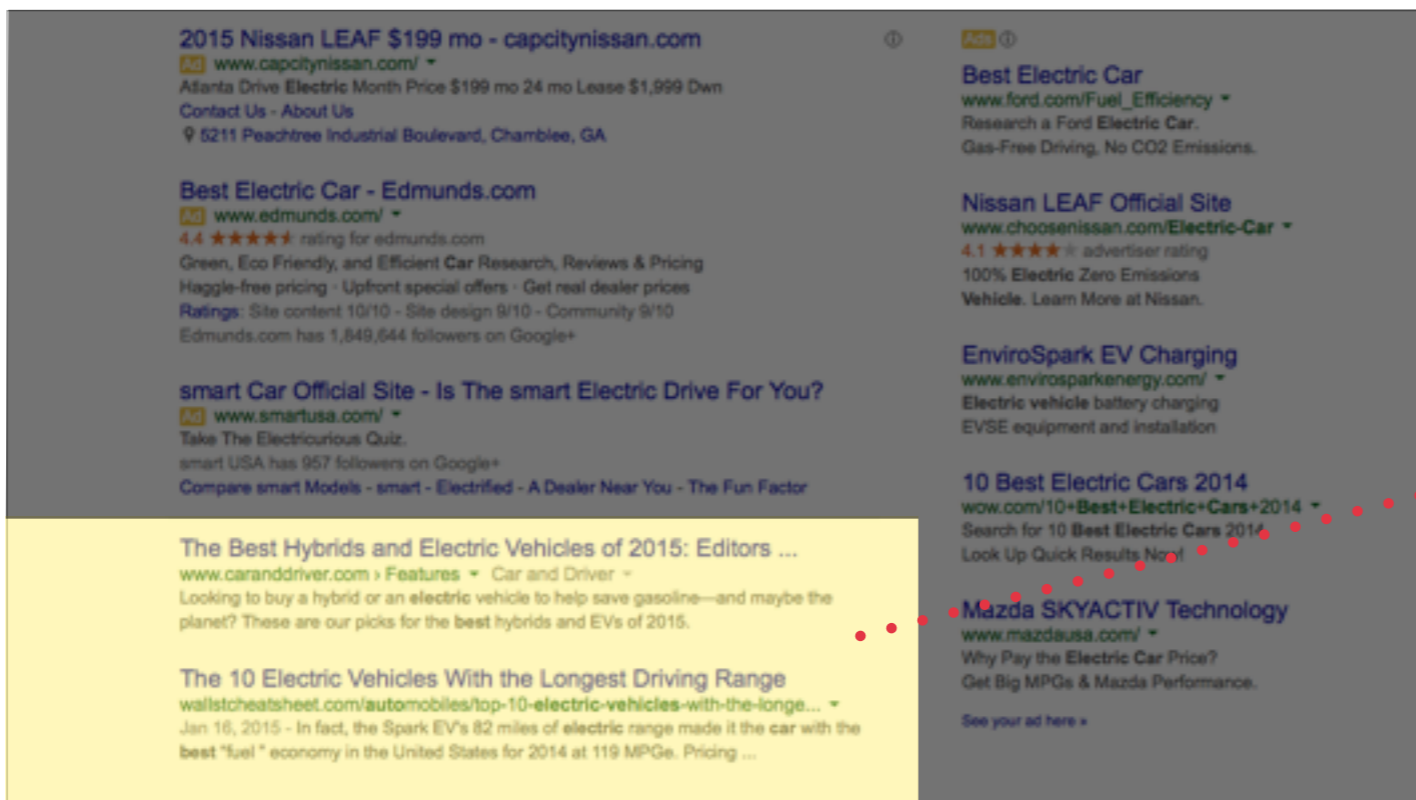
SEO: Search Engine Optimization

To capitalize on the incredible content catalog that search engines produce literally every millisecond, your site and all its content has to be optimized for the search engines to read.



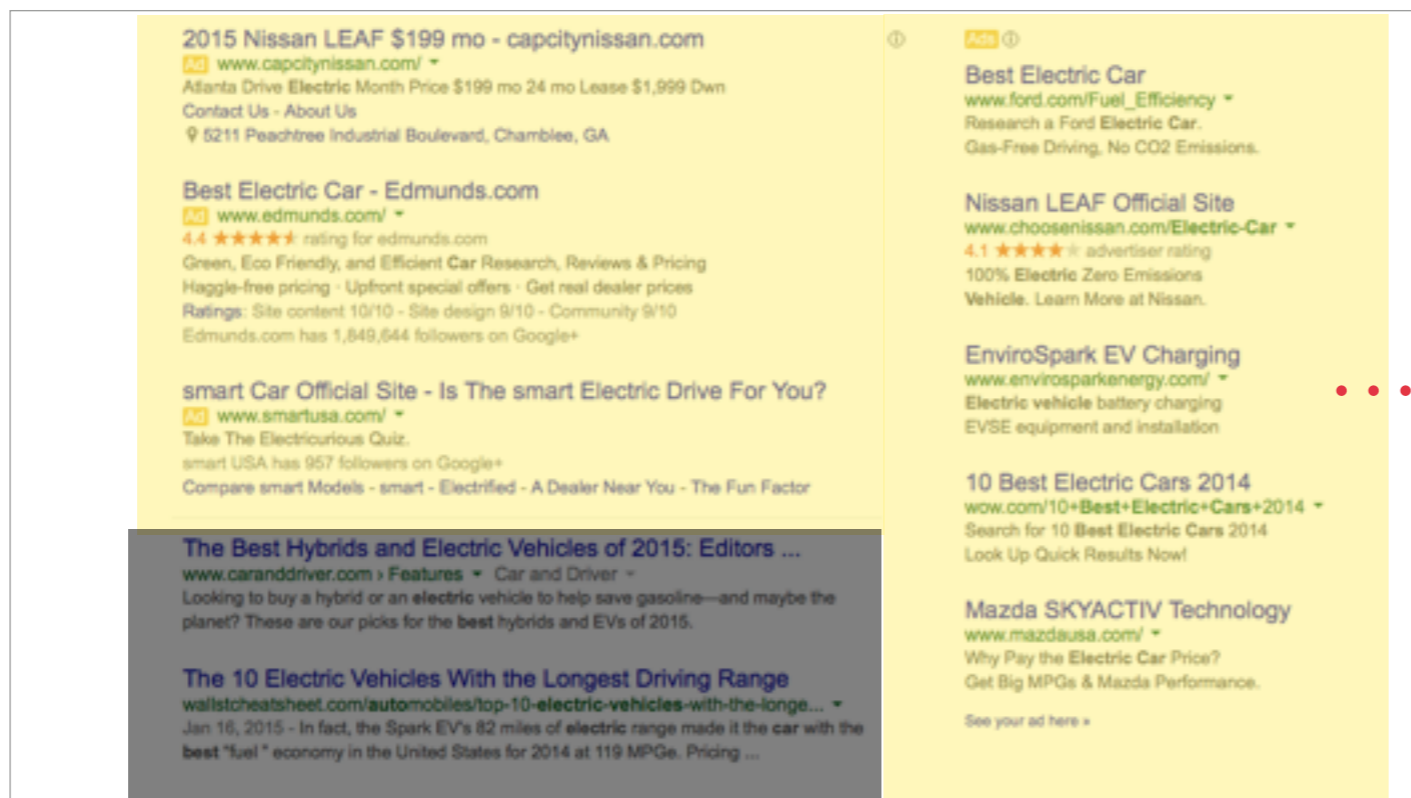
SEO ≠ SEM

Many people confuse SEO, search engine optimization, with SEM, search engine marketing. While a very important part of your marketing mix, **SEM is a part of your media plan. SEO is built into the inherent structure of your site**, pages and stories, to make them more transparent to search engines, driving them higher on search results pages.



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The image shows a screenshot of a search engine results page for electric cars. The results are displayed in two columns. The left column contains results from capcitynissan.com, edmunds.com, smartusa.com, caranddriver.com, and wallstcheatsheet.com. The right column contains results from ford.com, choosenissan.com, envirosparkenergy.com, wow.com, and mazdausa.com. A red dotted line extends from the right side of the search results area towards a red circle containing the text 'SEM'.

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4.4 ★★★★★ rating for edmunds.com
Green, Eco Friendly, and Efficient Car Research, Reviews & Pricing
Haggle-free pricing · Upfront special offers · Get real dealer prices
Ratings: Site content 10/10 · Site design 9/10 · Community 9/10
Edmunds.com has 1,849,644 followers on Google+

smart Car Official Site - Is The smart Electric Drive For You?
www.smartusa.com/
Take The Electricurious Quiz.
smart USA has 957 followers on Google+
Compare smart Models - smart - Electrified - A Dealer Near You - The Fun Factor

The Best Hybrids and Electric Vehicles of 2015: Editors ...
www.caranddriver.com > Features · Car and Driver ·
Looking to buy a hybrid or an electric vehicle to help save gasoline—and maybe the planet? These are our picks for the best hybrids and EVs of 2015.

The 10 Electric Vehicles With the Longest Driving Range
wallstcheatsheet.com/automobiles/top-10-electric-vehicles-with-the-longe...
Jan 16, 2015 - In fact, the Spark EV's 82 miles of electric range made it the car with the best "fuel" economy in the United States for 2014 at 119 MPGe. Pricing ...

Best Electric Car
www.ford.com/Fuel_Efficiency ·
Research a Ford Electric Car.
Gas-Free Driving, No CO2 Emissions.

Nissan LEAF Official Site
www.choosenissan.com/Electric-Car ·
4.1 ★★★★★ advertiser rating
100% Electric Zero Emissions
Vehicle. Learn More at Nissan.

EnviroSpark EV Charging
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EVSE equipment and installation

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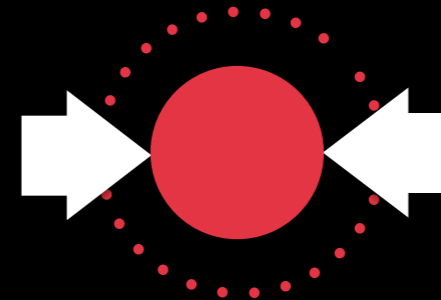
Mazda SKYACTIV Technology
www.mazdausa.com/
Why Pay the Electric Car Price?
Get Big MPGs & Mazda Performance.
See your ad here >

SEM

Tips for Better SEO

XYZ

If there is an option to add descriptive text within the video player itself, add as much as possible. Remember, search engines cannot “see” the video, so they rely on text descriptions of what is in it.



If a video falls into a certain category, say politics, listing all videos on that topic on a single page will help search engines find them better.



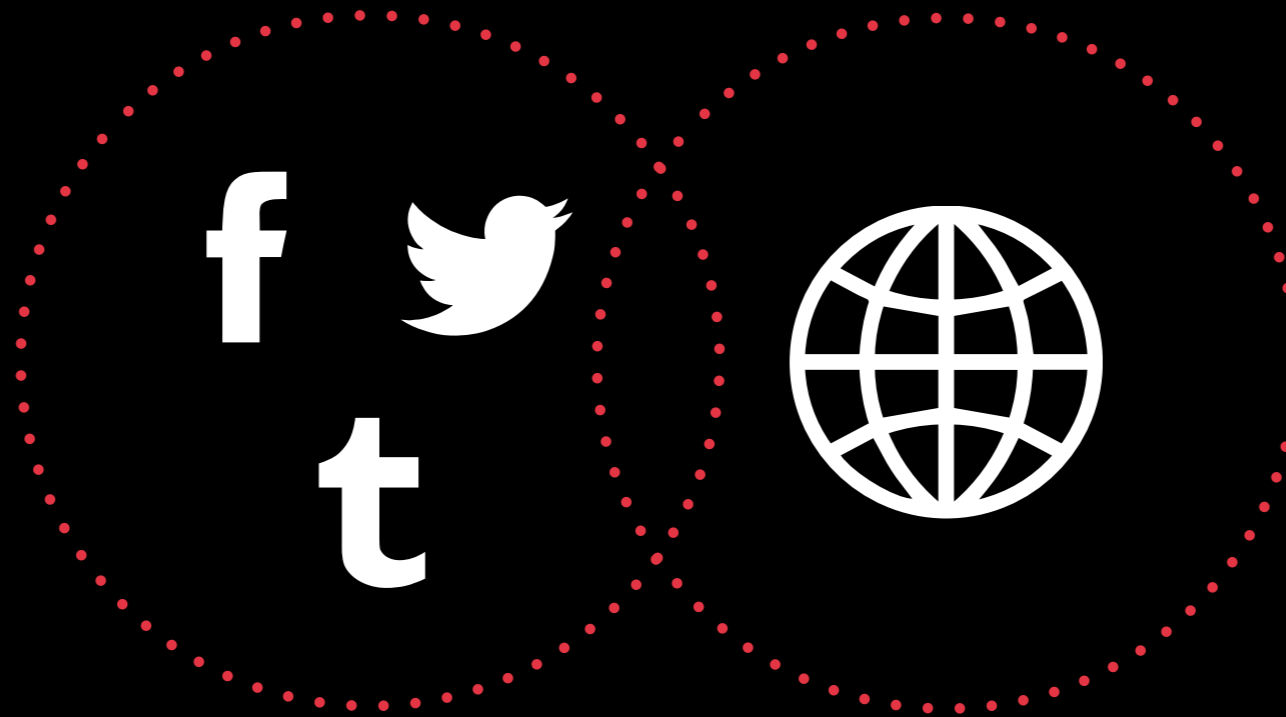
Each video needs its own unique page with its own URL, even if it is embedded in another page with many videos. Most video player software can generate these discrete URLs.



Other information on the page that describes the video needs to be optimized for search, too. Elements such as video title, description, names of people involved, all help a search engine categorize a video.

**Even more powerful
and immediate than
SEO, social media has
redefined how to
promote digital video
to an interested
audience.**

Social Media & News Similarities



- Both are geared towards publishing “updates” or other news-like information blurbs
- Both update frequently so users often check back several times per day
- Both have moved to being consumed on smartphones a majority of the time
- Video is a very effective and viral type of content on both

Social Platforms for Video

Focus your attention on these platforms in this order:



Twitter

best fit for news updates and retweets, now offers native video that plays inline.



Facebook

The largest reach with many shares, videos can also play here inline.



Instagram & Vine

Good for iconic images and brief video teases, as well as behind-the-scenes shots.



LinkedIn & Google+
For SEO purposes only



Others
Not particularly well suited for video but worth watching and experimenting.

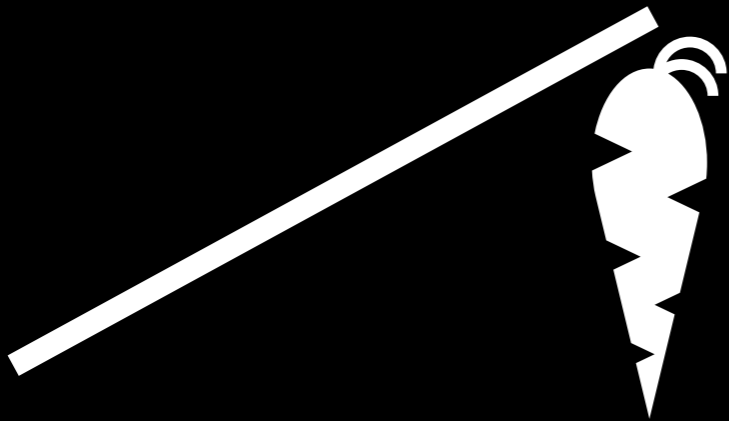
Selling Through Social

Two things sell digital video through social media:
effective writing of teases and a **compelling thumbnail image.**

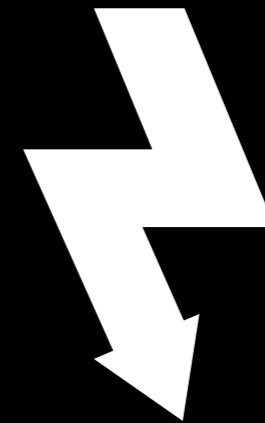


Writing Strong Video Teases

Social media is a busy, crowded landscape. You have to find a way to stand out, and give the user a reason to click:



Use leading language to make the reader want to see what happens in the video—“A wrong-way driver leads police on a mesmerizing chase.”



Give a specific reason the user needs to look at the video —“Witness the biggest shark ever filmed.”

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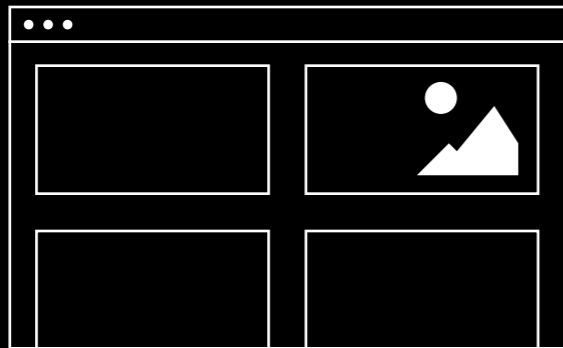
If the video's strength is emotion then **carry that emotion into the tease** — “What she did when she saw her son will make you cry.”



Don't sensationalize what already is dramatic or shocking. For example, “The reason this little girl killed her friend will shock you,” is redundant. The fact that a little girl is a murderer is shocking already. Instead try, “A 9-year-old girl stands accused of murder. See her plead her case.”

Choosing Strong Thumbnails

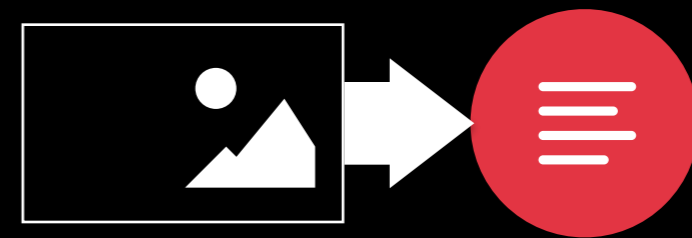
As much as the tease, a strong thumbnail image can make a user click on a video. Some tips for selecting the right thumbnail:



The image needs to be bold, and large enough to be seen at a very small size. Avoid wide shots or dark scenes.



Avoid showing an image from the key scene in the thumbnail that would give away too much and not cause the user to feel he or she needs to click through.



If possible, the image should reflect the meat of the story, like a still photo that would accompany the story.



Never show the anchor on set or reporter as the thumbnail.

Other Social Media Best Practices

Our web and digital video producers have these tips for better use of social media to promote video:

- **Keep videos that play inline on social media short—less than 1:00 and shorter than :30 when possible.**
- **People watch more digital news video in the evenings so step up your social promotion at night, particularly after 9:00**
- **Post breaking news video on social as soon as it is available. Don't wait until it airs on a TV newscast.**
- **When news is breaking create multiple videos to advance the story and keep posting and promoting.**
- **Allow videos to play inline on social media where possible, this includes Facebook and Twitter in many cases.**
- **Use hashtags sparingly.**
- **Use @tags to promote your own staff and verified @tags for subjects of video when known.**
- **Use URL shorteners like bit.ly to save space in posts**

More Do's and Don'ts for Social

Do

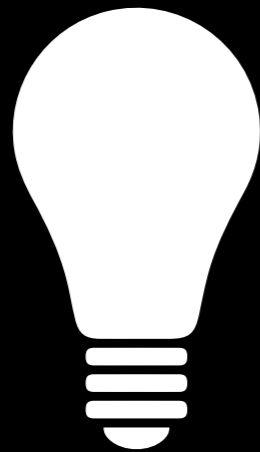
- watch for moments that can be distilled from your broadcasts and used on social. For example, a particularly funny interaction between anchors that could go viral.
- look for controversy, water cooler material.
- make sure that videos play on smartphones.

Don't

- put video on social media that you would not put on television or your website. Social is not a cutting room floor.
- explain or describe the video in teases, let them see it for themselves.

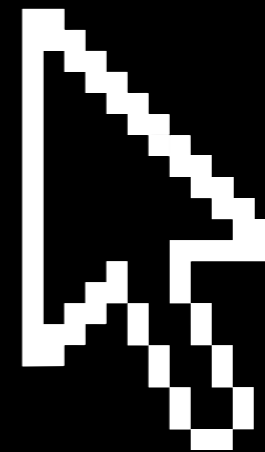
Measuring Success

Two ways to measure success on social media:



Exposure

How many views and shares did the social media post receive?



Click-Through

How many many click-throughs did you get back to your site and how many video views were generated?

While most may think that click-throughs are the better measure it's often not the case.

It's very hard to get users to leave Facebook to come to your site. So getting exposure there, including shares and inline video plays, might be your best goal.

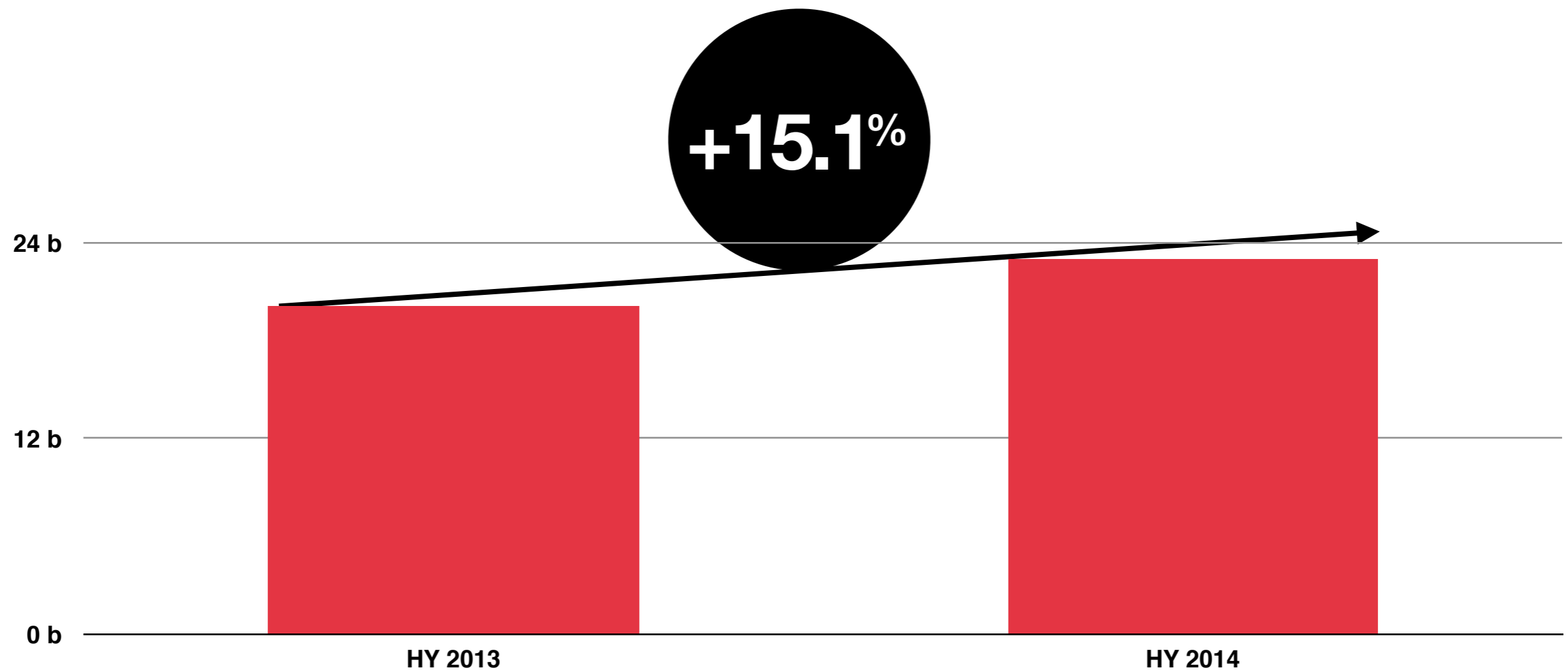
Digital Video Advertising

We've seen the good news around growth in digital video audiences and viewing habits. Now let's see how those larger numbers are paying off.

Digital Advertising Rising Fast

Digital continues to lead all categories of advertising with strong double-digit growth, year over year.

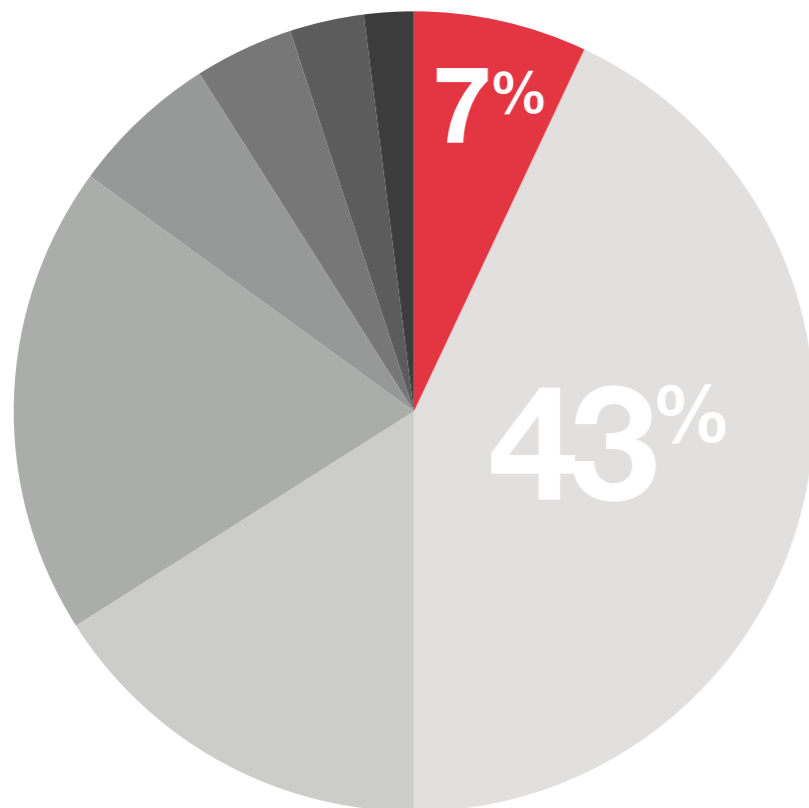
Revenues for HY 2013 and HY 2014



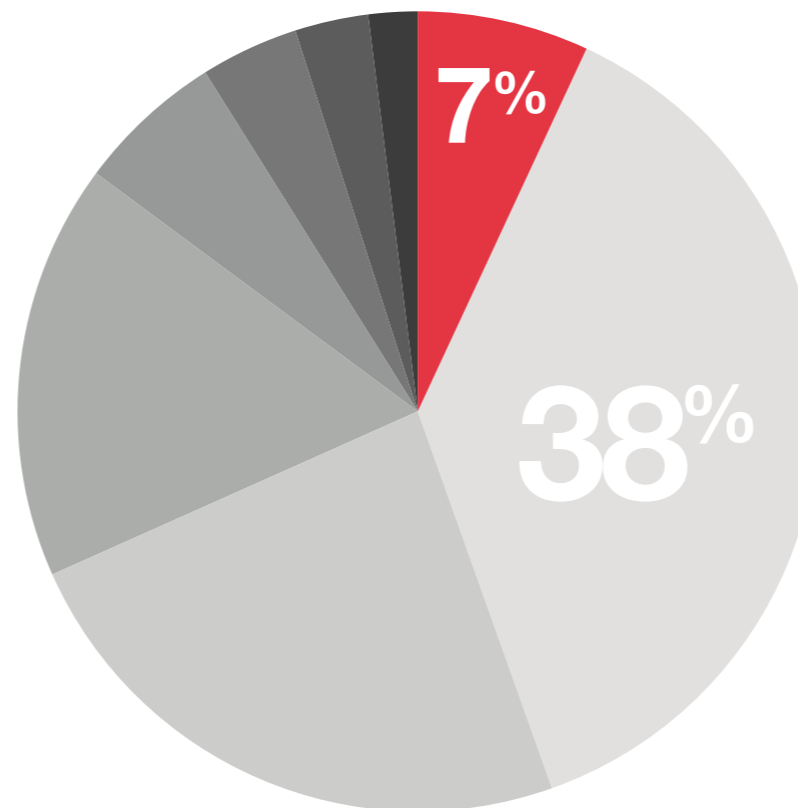
Video Advertising Breakout

Digital video advertising, at **7%**, remains a small component of overall digital ad revenue, but that mainly is a function of the overweighted size of search advertising, and the somewhat scarce quantity of digital video material as a subset of all digital content.

Ad Formats Q2 2013



Ad Formats Q2 2014

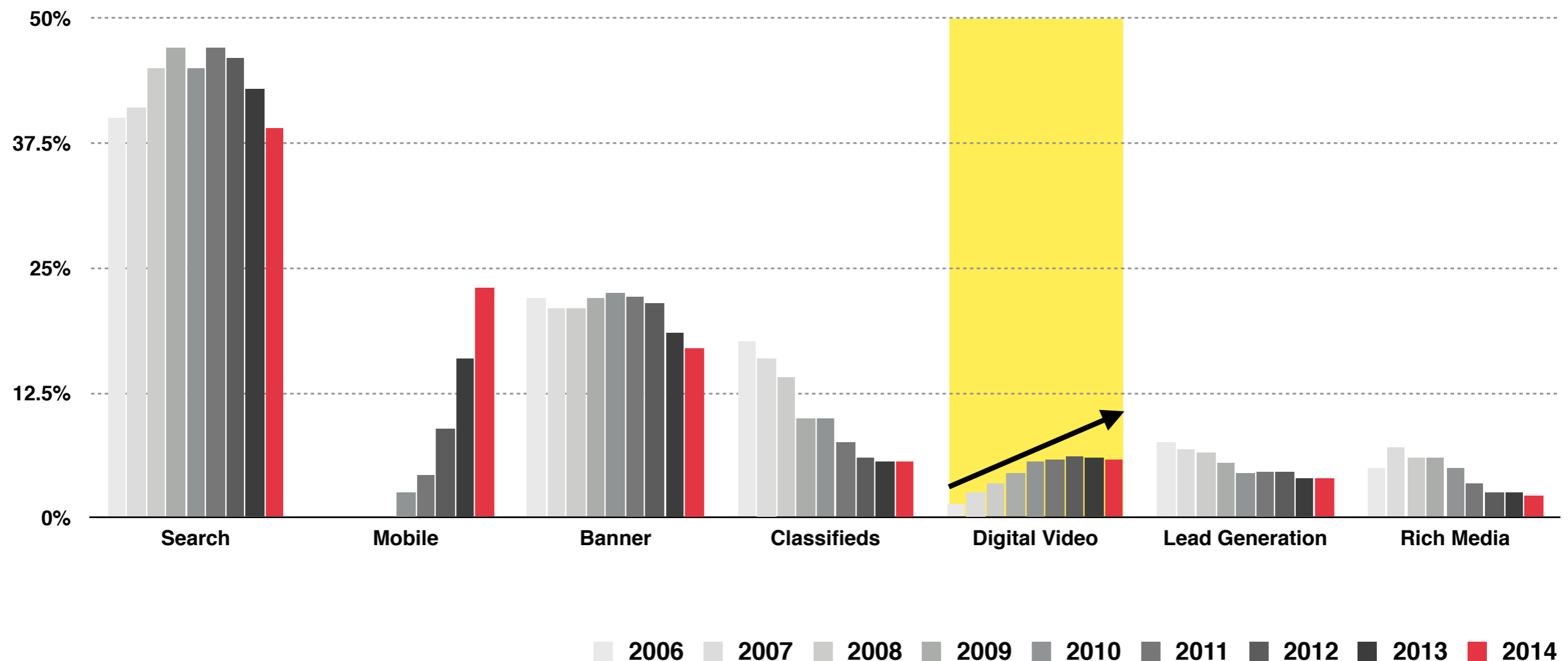


- Digital Video
- Search
- Mobile
- Banner
- Classifieds
- Lead Generation
- Rich Media
- Sponsorship

Video Share Growing

Still, digital video advertising is the only format other than mobile that has seen steady growth in revenue share over the past decade.

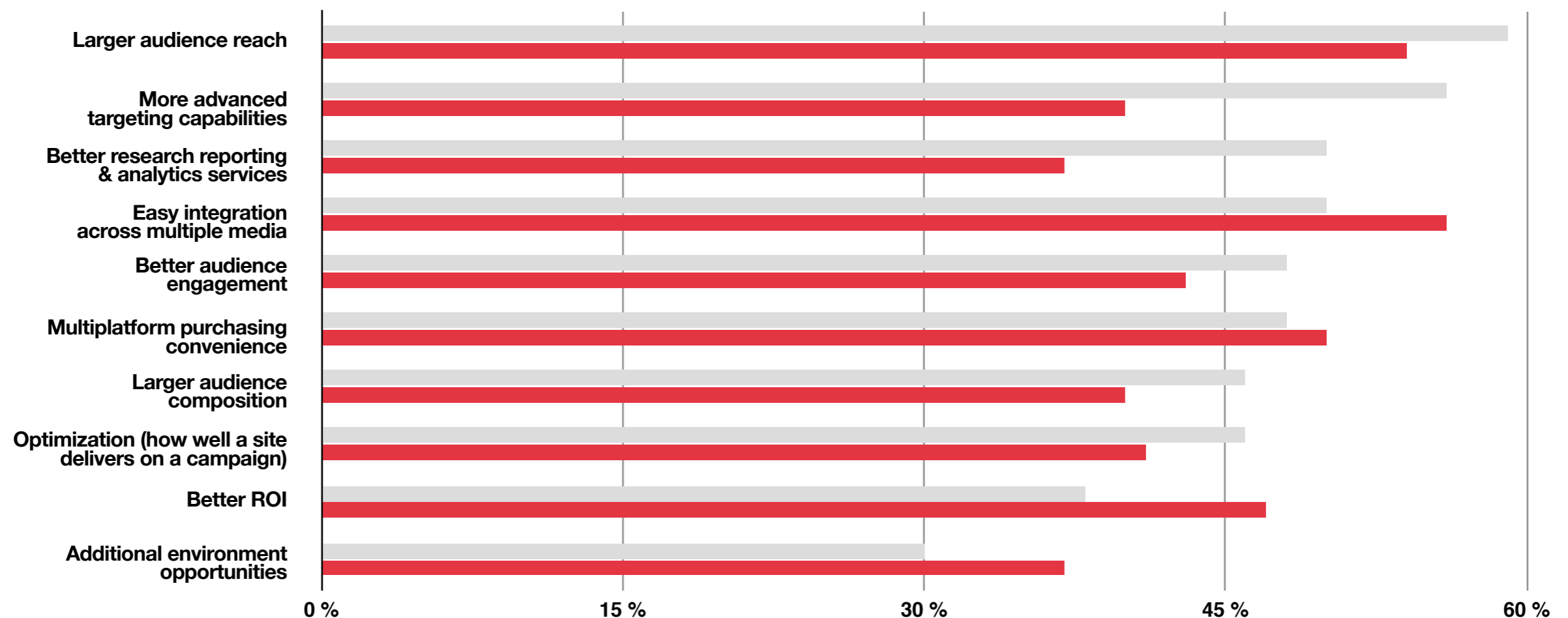
Advertising Format Share - % of total revenue



Complements, Doesn't Cannibalize

A long-held fear by many broadcasters was that digital advertising would take away from their core product. And while digital budgets have shifted from traditional dollars overall, most advertisers say they want integrated buying across TV and digital due to TV's reach and digital's better targeting and metrics.

Benefits of Digital Video Ad Convergence
on TV and the Internet



Video Advertising Trends

As digital video advertising has emerged as a major component, trends have emerged:



Pre-roll ads, those playing before a selected video, are the dominant format, though post-roll, those coming after the video, still exist and may become more common.

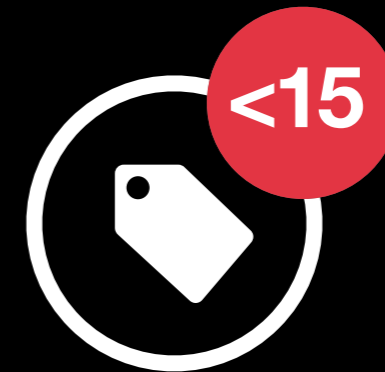


Pre-roll ads have gotten shorter, with the norm moving towards 15 seconds. Currently, 30-second ads still are the majority, but many have skip buttons after three to five seconds. It's possible that due to this skipping behavior 7 or 8-second ads may emerge.

Video Ad Best Practices



Place ads only on longer videos. Ads on shorter videos frustrate users when they feel like the ad is longer than the video they've clicked to see.



If you must run an ad on a shorter video, make sure it is a short ad, no longer than 15 seconds, and seven or eight seconds if possible.

SKIP

Allow users to skip an ad after a few seconds if the contract with the advertiser allows it. YouTube is a good example of this practice.



Other Video Ad Best Practices

Follow these guidelines to optimize the user experience around your videos and their associated ads:

- **Consider limiting the number of ads a user can see in any given session, particularly if you only have a few ads and they repeat often. A perception that there are too many ads or duplicate ads easily can drive users away**
- **Be prepared to pull ads from sensitive stories. It looks wrong to the user and few advertisers want to be associated with a major tragedy or controversial story.**
- **Have an editorial process in place to determine from which stories ads are pulled in sensitive situations so that the policy can be clearly explained to advertisers and staff and happen without delay when necessary.**

CNN Case Study: City of Tomorrow

CITY
OF TOMORROW



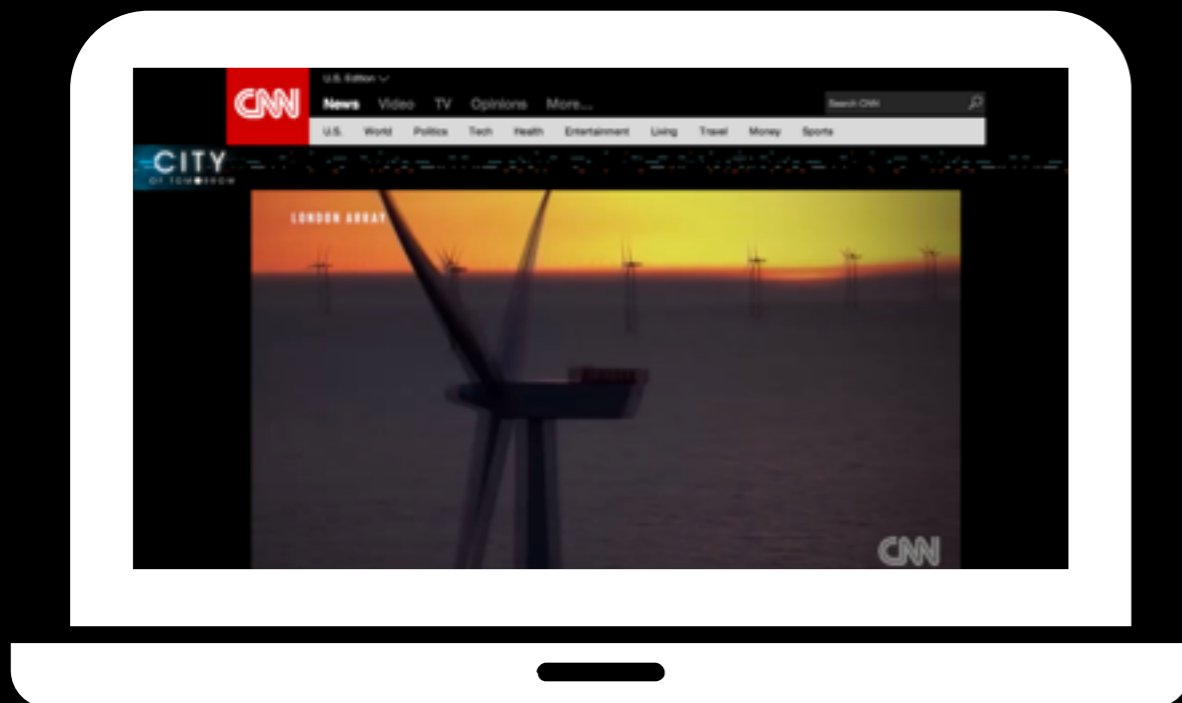
00:01 / 02:50



Here's an example from CNN of how digital video can move from being an ancillary form of content to its own self-supporting, self-funding programming focal piece.

City of Tomorrow

Conceived in conjunction with Cisco as the sponsorship partner, this series of reports on cities and their environmental impact in the 21st Century started as a digital-only video feature. **Success online drove it to be recast as a program for analog television,** showing that ideas and revenue can flow in both directions.



City of Tomorrow

Once the program expanded on television, it grew in scale both there and online, creating new content and revenue opportunities. **Additional sponsors including Dow and AT&T came aboard as the program brand grew.**



Other Case Studies

Let's look at some other examples of news and content organizations expanding their information with video beyond the traditional channels.

KPCC's Fire Tracker

The Southern California broadcaster developed an online tool to track and research the region's wildfires. The station leveraged its own reporting and other content, along with public information available from the government and other sources to create a single destination for those interested in following the fires.

While this is a public station and does not carry advertising, the convenience created for users through providing information from varied sources in one place would carry strong value for revenue generation.



KQED's Let's Get Lost App

The San Francisco public broadcaster assembled a comprehensive city guide for iPad, using its existing video library combined with new maps and data.



Philly.com Video Sections

The site operated by the two Philadelphia newspapers, The Inquirer and The Daily News, produces or otherwise secures the rights to several kinds of videos, particularly in the lifestyle areas. This additional content, not found in the core newspaper product, draws in new audiences and provides ad sales opportunities.

The screenshot shows a webpage layout with several sections:

- Shape up: Hot fitness trends for 2015** - Accompanied by an image of a man at a gym.
- How W. Philly woman got her dream body** - Accompanied by an image of a woman.
- The risk of knowing: Alzheimer's research volunteers**
- CDC: Hospital infection rates falling**
- FDA approves appetite-zapping implant for obese patients**
- As flu becomes more widespread, CDC pushes antiviral meds**
- Study shows spitting can detect lung cancer**
- How hugs figure** - Accompanied by an image of people hugging.
- What is the best** - Accompanied by an image of a couple.
- Advertisement for HARRY'S** - A switch with the text "COST \$32? HARRY'S WORTH THE SWITCH. TRY HARRY'S".
- Latest Health Videos** - A video player showing a man in a gym setting, with a play button overlay.

Latest Health Videos

The truth about calories burned during exercise
Philly.com

Andy Van Grinsven
MS, CSCS, CPT

Recap

To get the most out of digital video, there are best practices to follow.

- **Cast a wide net when it comes to the video you post. It doesn't have to be strictly “news” content**
- **Keep it fresh and update often**
- **Monitor performance and make changes to reach goals for traffic**
- **Optimize your video for search engines**
- **Use social media to bring in audiences and expose your brand and content**
- **Observe the latest trends in video ads, and keep current—they change often.**

**Digital Video & the
Future of News
continues with...**

**Digital Video
Syndication**