Digital Video Tips
Optimizing for engagement & revenue

The first rule of digital video is that there are no rules. There are, however, best practices. Here are five tips for creating more compelling videos based on CNN’s 20+ years serving millions of streams:

1 Platforms
What goes where?

- Website:
  A full range of video stories that represent a mix of what you are covering.

- Social Media:
  Breaking news updates, health and wellness, "feel good" stories – heroes, must-see, positive outcomes.

- YouTube:
  Longer videos or playlists that create a cohesive topic thread or timeframe using multiple videos.

2 Content & Style
Your first question should always be: Why is this a video? If you can’t answer that question it shouldn’t be a video story.

- How viewers consume content:
  People are busy and distracted. Keep your videos short and pay attention to where they are being viewed:

  - Desktop
  - Mobile Web
  - Apps

- Give people a reason to watch:
  Not every clip needs narration. Let good videos breathe with natural sound from the scene.

3 Length
People are busy and distracted. Keep your videos short and pay attention to where they are being viewed:

- Programming
  It’s all about capturing viewers’ attention quickly:

  - Desktop
  - Mobile Web
  - Apps

- Revenue
  Ads pay for video:

- Platforms
  1
  2
  3

4 Programming
It’s all about capturing viewers’ attention quickly:

- Thumbnails
  Use the best possible thumbnail to attract attention to the clip.

- Headline
  How to viewers feel about the story? Headline should reflect viewers’ desire to know what will happen. Headline should have a summary of the story.

- Length
  Video is one of the most effective ways to get people to watch and share content. Use compelling raw video to give a sense of immediacy.

- No Ad
  Skip the ads on videos with violent or otherwise disturbing content.

5 Revenue
Ads pay for video:

- Interest
  Optimize for engagement and revenue.

- Length
  Optimize your video length between 2-3 minutes, if you can make the story that compelling.

- No Ad
  Optimize for engagement and revenue.