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Show and tell

YouTube changes the economics of disseminating company videos

By **CLAUDE SOLNIK**

Jack Chapman, a salary negotiation expert in Chicago, wanted to increase the amount of time people linger on his Web site. So he added video.

In the past, that might have been complicated and costly, requiring new coding, the use of a special server to accommodate video, and a studio. Not anymore.

Chapman used \$70 floodlights and a video camera to record himself at home giving free salary negotiation tips and then uploaded the video to YouTube. Jesse Wroblewski, owner of Mastic Beach-based Generations Beyond, helped him link the video to his Web site and Chapman was ready for his close-up.

"It looks like you're playing a video on my site," Chapman said. "All you're doing is clicking a button and watching a video on YouTube."

As the Internet shifts from a static to a moving medium, firms are finding they can make the leap to moving pictures with little more than a camera, a computer and creativity. And sites like YouTube are making it easier than ever.

"I don't know how I would've done it," Chapman said. "You can embed video in a Web site. But I don't know how to do it. This was easy enough."

Wroblewski said small and large companies increasingly use YouTube and other video search engine technologies to present and post videos easily, quickly and cheaply to grow their business and recruit.

"They do it all," he said of YouTube. "They host your video. If you get a million visitors, you're not going to see an increase in your budget."

Murray Kleiner, president of technical writing firm Murray Kleiner Associates in Plainview, said sites, such as YouTube, shield small businesses from additional costs.

"When you have videos on your server, it takes up bandwidth and you pay for that," he said. "If you put it on YouTube, it's not your problem anymore."

Other video search engines let companies post videos including Metacafe.com, Daily motion.com and Vimeo. And Myspace and Facebook offer video. But Wroblewski said YouTube, owned by Google, is the giant garnering the most hits and postings.

"Now that YouTube is so popular, people are using it to search for what they need. You can film a video, upload it to YouTube. Within a half hour it'll be indexed," Wroblewski said. "We're helping clients create videos to get them indexed on YouTube to drive traffic to their Web site."

And Kleiner said YouTube's biggest benefit may not be ease of use, but traffic. "Because more people visit YouTube, there's a good chance they may get to see your video," he said. "If your video's only on your Web site, the biggest challenge is to get them to go to your Web site."

Companies also can create what amounts to their own Web page on YouTube filled with videos offering tips, demonstrations or communications with viewers.

"Each company can brand their own page with their corporate look and feel to stand out from the crowd," Wroblewski said. "It's a big sea, but compared to all the other search engines on the Internet, it's still a tiny pond. You're talking about all the Web sites in existence versus the videos there."

Wroblewski said companies can use video to position themselves as experts and connect with customers. "People see you on a video," Wroblewski said. "You're sharing your information with them. It's instant rapport. It builds equity in who you are."



Jesse Wroblewski, owner of Generations Beyond, said companies can use video to position themselves as experts in their industry.

Video also keeps people interested longer than text. Chapman's average site visit since he posted his video rose from 30 seconds to longer than two minutes.

"By putting videos there, people stay there longer and look at the rest of the content," Chapman said. "It seems that the pedagogy of having me talk about things worked better than making people just read."

In addition to getting interest and business, companies can monetize traffic to their video. Metacafe.com pays for videos generating 10,000 or more hits. "If you provide useful enough information, you can get a check cut for uploading your video," Wroblewski said.

Although posting video to YouTube is free, firms face risks. Viewers can post malicious comments unless firms turn off the comment function. Inappropriate videos can go up in the "related video" bar based on words you type to describe your video. "Companies may want to keep control of their own stuff," Kleiner said. ■