

# YOUTUBE'S ALGORITHM

## Overview Problem:

1. What is the YouTube Algorithm?
2. How does it affect your videos?
3. What does this mean for you and your content, and how can you use the algorithm to benefit your channel?

## Overview Solution:

1. The YouTube algorithm is a sorting mechanism that determines the social life of a video. The algorithm determines how much the video is worth, how often YouTube will 'push' the video, and where YouTube will 'push' the video.
2. Proper understanding of the algorithm is important in order to help content creators thrive and survive in the ever changing creative battleground that is YouTube.

**Insight:** The YouTube algorithm is essentially the 'God' of YouTube. Structuring content and understanding the clockwork behind YouTube is required for long term success.

## Recommendations:

1. Even if you're an experienced YouTuber, understanding the algorithm and the way YouTube sorts videos is incredibly important.
2. Understanding the mechanisms behind YouTube is fundamental to publishing videos, receiving ad revenue for videos, and distribution of videos.

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## POINT 1: The Algorithm Explained

The YouTube Algorithm is a complex process that uses a series of factors to determine almost all meta-information about any videos that are published to youtube. The exact mechanisms that YouTube uses are unknown, they keep the numbers closely guarded, but every YouTuber, big and small, receives periodic emails when the algorithm changes drastically in order to help them structure their content and inform them of the new changes. The Algorithm currently uses these two parameters to evaluate content:

### Parameter A: Frequency of Upload

The rate at which you upload directly determines how much your content is worth. Advertisers don't want to advertise on a channel that only uploads once a year; they would much rather put ads on videos that are being uploaded every day, in order ensure that more people are going to see it over a shorter period of time. It's better for 1000 people to see an advertisement a day than for 30,000 people to see an advertisement over the course of a month.

### **Parameter B: Watch Time**

Watch Time is the grand-daddy of all content parameters. While frequency of upload is important, Watch Time is simply effected by a greater volume of uploads, which means that Watch Time is the absolute parameter that guides all other. Some examples of what Watch Time dictates:

- Watch time is greatest for **7 day active** YouTube users.
- Watch time increases as a user's subscription count increases. **The more subscriptions a user has, the more often they come back to YouTube and the longer they tend to watch.**
- YouTube's goal is to increase the amount of content that is seen by making the platform a daily viewing destination.
- Most people think that the value of a video can be measured by how many times that video has been seen. However, **we now reward videos that have more watch time. This is a better reflection of the value of the content rather than how many times it was seen.** All major search and discovery algorithms are optimized for watch time throughout the site. Not all views are the same.
- Value is not dependent on the individual video. It also depends on the viewing session from that video.**
- YouTube rewards a 6 minute video with 55% retention (3.3 minutes total for that video) with 20min/viewer total OVER a 3 minute video with 100% retention (3 minute total)** where the viewers had an overall average watch time of 10 minutes rather than 20. Basically, depends on the viewer's behavior surrounding your video. (Explains why watch time can be helpful for YouTube- more watch time across the site means more ad impressions)
- So **directing people to watch more videos is really helpful.**
- Increasing video's length just to get more watch time does not work, because it affects audience retention and doesn't increase watch time.** Also, don't decrease watch time to increase audience retention.
- Focus on watch time, not views.**
- Suggested videos are ranked by watch time.** <http://gyazo.com/a2c277486f054f92b7e1...>
- Search results are also ranked by watch time.**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (Information on the YouTube Certification Program: [#https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2952738?hl=en](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2952738?hl=en))#

I strongly suggest you read the entire article for yourself, but the summary makes the overall points clear. Watch Time is king on YouTube.

**POINT 2:** What does this mean for me and my content?

Now that you know how YouTube evaluates your content, what does it mean for you?

It means before you commit to creating content on YouTube, you might want to make sure your content will survive on YouTube. Due to these changes in the YouTube algorithm, you may have noticed Animators have been fleeing from YouTube, or dying off altogether on YT. This is because animation is the exact opposite of what will survive with this new formula.

Animation:

-Takes months to produce, hence:

- Less Uploads = Less Watch Time

-Is short in length, hence:

- Less Watch Time

So animation has very little high watch time value, regardless of quality; because it is short, and takes a long time to make, which means it suffers from:

- Being last on the suggested videos list
- Being lower down in search results
- Are worth less money
- Can have less ads to generate money
- Because of the difficulty of generation promotion, animators often have less subscribers, or at least less potential to generate subscribers

A death sentence for those videos, and unfortunately for animation on YouTube as a whole.

However, it may be possible for animators to survive. Theoretically, in order to succeed in this environment, your content should be:

- Uploaded Frequently
- Longer videos, while still increasing audience retention about (10-20 minutes)
- Short Production time i.e. spontaneous content
- Bundled with other videos, i.e. in a playlist

These parameters explain why Let's Play Channels and what I call 'Video Podcasting' has taken the stage, and why channels like Game Grumps have swept over YouTube over the last 3 years.

And we get to the final question: What does this mean for me, the content creator?

All this means is that you should plan ahead of time to structure your content in a more algorithm friendly way. If you plan on doing a short series, consider making one long episode. If you do longer videos, make sure to bundle them in a playlist. Try and keep a regular and constant upload schedule not just for the algorithm, but for your many fans as well.

Sources and References:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gi6Fcl2wFrw>

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2952738?hl=en>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsCeNCVb-d8>