



Purdue University - College of Agriculture

SEO - YOUTUBE BEST PRACTICES

OCTOBER 2020

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YOUTUBE VIDEO OPTIMIZATION

Did you know that YouTube videos can be optimized? In fact, YouTube is the second largest search engine (after Google!) That means that having SEO in mind when uploading videos is key. In addition to searching on YouTube, if students search for your school on Google your video may also show up in the search engine results page there as well. This guide will show you how you can optimize both your videos and YouTube channel to get the best results.

+ TITLE

Your most important tool in enhancing a video's search engine visibility is the video's title. Make sure your title is relevant to the video you're posting, while still including at least one keyword at the beginning of it, is essential. To edit your video's title, click on your profile and then "Creator Studio." From there, you'll see your videos with the "Edit" button (see below), which you'll want to click on. If you're uploading a new video, then you'll be taken to the screen where you can customize your title after your video is done loading.

From here you'll see where you can input a title and a description. The title should always have your school's name in it, so something like "Purdue College of Agriculture Campus Tour" would work well. If you're uploading a video about a specific program at your school, then it's important to include as many keywords pertaining to that program as you can fit naturally. For example: "Purdue University College of Agriculture Bachelor's in Food Science Program Overview." While the video title can be up to 100 characters, it will cut off around 70. Make sure your title isn't too long, but still includes your keyword(s) without stuffing them.

+ DESCRIPTION

The video description plays an important role in YouTube's search algorithm as well. Here, you can write more in-depth about your video, as the limit is 5,000 characters. Similar to a webpage's meta description, a video's description is how the search engine (in this case YouTube) knows what your video is about.

In the description bar (right under the title bar) you'll want to write in length about your video, including a few references to keywords. This will help your video rank higher in YouTube's search results for those keywords.

Something to note on both titles and descriptions: if you're going to be using a video mainly for social sharing on other platforms, you'll want to keep both the titles and descriptions short. Just like metadata on websites, titles and descriptions will be cut off if they're too long. Keep this in mind if you're going to be posting these videos on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.

+ VIDEO FILES

There are many video formats that can be uploaded to YouTube, but Google recommends using MP4. The entire list of recommended encoding settings for your videos can be found here:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/1722171?hl=en>

Uploading videos using different settings can result in worse video/audio quality and an unpleasant user experience.

+ ARE TAGS IMPORTANT?

There are two helpful reasons to use video tags: inclusion in related videos and having an additional space for keywords.

- Related videos are the videos that show up on the sidebar of the video that a user is currently watching. Keywords help determine if your video is “related” to the video that people watch.
- Tags are also where you can insert more of your keywords. If you stuff your description with keywords, YouTube may remove the video, so here is where you can enter keywords more explicitly. Keep your keywords closely related and use around ten.

YOUTUBE ACCOUNT OPTIMIZATION

There isn't as much room for account customization on YouTube as there is on other social media networks, but account optimization is still important. This will give your channel more credibility and keep potential students interested in the rest of what your channel offers.

+ ACCOUNT NAME AND DESCRIPTION

The first thing you'll want to do is make sure your account name is the name of your school. To change your name, click on the profile icon in the top right-hand corner of the screen and then click on the cog icon (YouTube Settings). From there, you'll see your name. Click “Edit on Google” and change it to your desired name.

Next, you'll want to edit your channel description. To do this, click on your profile icon and then "Creator Studio" and make sure you're on the "Dashboard" tab on the left side of the screen. Then click "View Channel" under your name. Click on it and make sure to include a description that incorporates keywords.

+ LOGO AND CHANNEL ART

If your icon isn't your school's logo or something similar, you'll want to change that, too. On the same page that you changed your description, you can click on the pencil next to your icon to upload a different photo.

Following that, update the channel art. This is the long banner across the top of your YouTube channel. Good options for this include a panorama of your campus or another iconic shot. To edit this, click the pencil in the upper right corner of the long banner. YouTube channel art dimensions are 2560 x 1440 pixels.

+ FEATURED VIDEO/TRAILER

Last, choose a featured video/trailer. This is a video that auto-plays when someone visits your channel. It can generate interest and lead visitors to explore more of your channel. You'll want to choose a short, engaging video. Good ideas for a channel trailer include a short campus tour, school trailer, or something similar. Most importantly, the video should be engaging and interesting. If your channel trailer is boring, why would visitors want to watch anything else?

To select your trailer, click on "Customize Channel." Then navigate to "For new visitors." Immediately below that, you should see either an empty space prompting you to select a featured video, or your current featured video. To change,

click the small pencil icon in the right corner and choose “change trailer.” Select whichever video you think best captures Purdue University College of Agriculture.

FINAL NOTE

The more likes, shares, and subscribers your videos and channel get, the better your chances of ranking high in YouTube and Google search results. So be sure to embed your videos on your website and share them on all of your social media platforms!