

YouTube - Its all about the kids isn't it?

In the last few years the concept of User Generated Content i.e. content created and published by consumers themselves has taken off like the proverbial rocket, but many people mistakenly see this as something only relevant to the young. The most obvious example of this is YouTube. YouTube was only created in February 2005 and yet was sold to Google in November 2006 for \$1.65bn and is now ranked as the 3rd most visited website on the planet by the website tracking site Alexa (after Yahoo and Google). The site is so popular in the US that ComScore reported that in July 2008 over five billion videos were watched on YouTube in the US alone by over 92 million people. Staggering figures for a site that didn't exist four years ago.

The influence of YouTube has been most recently seen in the US presidential election where many commentators attributed a significant amount of the reason behind Barack Obama's success to the video sharing site. With some going as far as to suggest that George W. Bush may not have been successful in the previous election had YouTube been in existence at that time.

But YouTube isn't just about kids uploading funny videos or even politician's speeches (or bloopers). It can also be a powerful business tool. As well as major content providers and broadcasters such as the BBC now having channels on the platform, a significant number of organisations have been using YouTube as a way of sharing their message and reaching new audiences through the medium of video rather than the written word. The sharing nature of the platform also means that content can be passed around easily between communities and can be posted on external sites using YouTube's embed code that references back to the video itself.

Setting up an account is simple and subject to some size constraints you can then upload your videos, give them titles and descriptions and then start to share links to the video or embed the code on your own website or blog. If others find they like the video or want to comment on it then they can do likewise.

My own company webitpr has used the platform to share our video (below) about the social media news release concept. The social media news release is a new form of press release which combines traditional press release text content, with multimedia and social media elements, and is used as an online PR tool to allow news content to be easily shared and discussed. The video we created last summer has been hosted on YouTube since it was produced and has to date been viewed over 8,300 times and linked to by 34 blogs. The effect of this has not only been to increase our profile but has also brought search engine optimisation benefits with the video being ranked on the first page of both google.com and google.co.uk for a search for "social media news release".

All of which proves that this isn't just about the kids after all.