

The Me in Media:
A functionalist approach to examining motives to produce
within the public space of YouTube

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When people hear that my path to a higher education lead me from Arizona to Minnesota and, eventually, to Oklahoma they invariably ask me "*Why?*" Jokingly, I answer them, "I am trying to live in all the states that end in the letter A."

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Dedication

*This dissertation is dedicated to my Pop
who encouraged me to shoot for the stars and to my Mom
who said, "You better plan your route there first."*

Abstract

Often news organizations perceive social media platforms, such as YouTube, as a distribution tool for their content and the users of these sites as audiences yet to be acquired. From this perspective, the value within the site is either a benefit to the organization but only if they retain control of their content. When they are not in control of the content, practices within these sites are considered a threat in terms of thievery (piracy of their content) or time displaced from consuming mass media programming. From the other side of this argument, media scholars argue that social media platforms are tools of self-expression that return a benefit to a public good, even when that expression is directly built upon content produced by mass media.

Deliberately, this work took the stance that understanding the intersection between journalistic function and social media practices must consider the user first. YouTube and its users was chosen for this work since it is the largest social media site and uses video content as its main exchange. A conceptual model that locates three spaces, not two, of YouTube is presented: an interpersonal space, a public space, and a commercial space. Two studies were undertaken: study one was a content analysis of video responses to a question posed by a popular YouTuber on why they "Tubed?" Study two surveyed YouTubers directly on their motive changes and self-concept changes since they had first began to produce for the site. However, the main question posed was drawn from the findings in the first study. In study one, the YouTube space was mainly spoken about as community. In study two, producer/users (creators) were significantly more likely than users (watchers) to perceive YouTube as a community. However, items drawn from the Sense of Community Index and Brief Sense of

Community Index scales did not correlate as they have for geographical communities.

Findings from both studies place theories frequently used to examine new media uses in a new light. Although uses and gratifications is one of the tried-and-true theories used to explain motivations to use new media sources, YouTubers' produce motives were more diverse and complex than their watch motives. This suggests that U & G might be helpful in understanding motives consistent with being an audience, but is not as helpful in understanding motives to produce. Study two extended this inquiry by asking YouTubers how their motives and their self-concept had changed since beginning their YouTube channel. While there were no quantitative variables that influenced motive change, the elaborations provided by the respondents on *how* they changed suggest that migrations in social media sites, instead of motives changes, should be considered for future work. As to self-concept changes, quantitative analysis revealed that producer/users whose videos had generated discussion were significantly more likely to see themselves differently. Both quantitative and qualitative findings are presented and discussed. At the heart of it, though, this dissertation highlights the need to understand *exactly* what online cohorts - such as YouTube producer/users - mean when they use the term "community" and how that construct shares similarities to and differs from geographic communities.

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Introduction

For a moment, consider two possible scenarios likely to confront journalists in the digital age.

Scenario 1: An evening multimedia editor at a local television news station receives an email through the station's YouTube channel from a viewer. The viewer is concerned about a story the station aired earlier in the day on a house fire. While fighting the fire, the roof gave in and one fireman fell through and into the fire. He is in critical condition at a local hospital. In the email the viewer asks the station if they were aware that a similar situation happened a year ago? At that fire two firemen fell through the roof and the viewer recorded both the fire and the fall. After watching their coverage, he posted this clip to his YouTube channel so the station could see it. He suspects that the same homebuilder - one of the largest construction businesses in the state- built the two homes. Would they be interested in using the video for their late night newscast? The editor only has the viewer's YouTube email and personal information on his YouTube channel. During the next hour, the editor tries frantically to reach the viewer but with no results. Since production deadlines are approaching, the newsroom must make a decision - do they use the video?

Scenario 2: A new online news organization is thinking about setting up a site where users can interact with other politically minded citizens, pose questions to their local and national representatives, and actively participate in the organizations' news gathering and content production. They also believe the social media site could inform people on stories they are working on and contribute to their newsgathering efforts.

In the newsroom, opinions differ as to how best to build a site in order to elicit the engagement they seek. Some believe it should be a completely unfettered space for free expression. Others worry that without editorial control the discussion will quickly degrade into selfish, meaningless discourse and possibly hate speech leveled at both the news organization and the users of its site. Another group in the newsroom is excited about the possibility of offering people the chance to share media clips, create their own home pages, and "friend" others to the site. Meanwhile, the small staff who are tasked to create the site wonder "Where do we start?"

Both of these scenarios are not unique to the digital age. Journalists *must* meet and assess the credibility of sources, including those who promise a photo or video that serves as "proof" on an issue or controversy. Similarly, news organizations do not function in a vacuum. News organizations seek to establish and strengthen relationships with their audiences in a wide array of efforts from, at the very least, publishing letters to the editor or asking "man-on-the-street" their opinions on a news events or issues. At the more ambitious level, news organizations devote in-depth coverage on key issues, create events for public discourse, such as town halls or political debates, and support campaigns to promote a social good, such as breast cancer awareness. How, then, are these two situations different for journalists in the digital age than they were for journalists in the "analog" age?

This dissertation took the stance that understanding social media platforms or online communities must start from the position of the members of these environments and not from the eyes of journalists struggling to understand how to best use a new

communication technology. Fischer (1992) contends that new technologies are *tools* at the individual level and, through people's uses, a *system* emerges at the macro level. Thus, from the perspective of the viewer who emailed the station, YouTube is a communication tool that provides an easy means of connecting to the news organization, distributing content, and controlling how much (or how little) he wants to interact with the news organization. As a system, YouTube allows the viewer, as video producer/user, to connect with others who have similar concerns over roof constructions or - in a different scenario - challenge the TV station's coverage outright by posting the video in an oppositional manner thus competing, rather than cooperating with, the station's coverage. Digital technologies not only alter relations between media organizations and their audiences, on the audience side social media platforms like YouTube present easy access to alternative information sources, offer compelling ways of knowing through visual communication, and alter journalism's traditional position within the flow of information.

Often perceived as the second development wave of online content, the emergence of media created and shared amongst the “masses” has a number of labels including Web 2.0 (O’Rielly, 2005), the new Web (Tapscott & Williams, 2006), personal media (Lasica, 2005), user-generated media (Aufderheide, Jaszi, & Brown, 2007), citizen journalism (Gillmor, 2004), and social software/media (boyd, 2007; Levenshus, 2007). The earliest forms of social media platforms that drew the attention of technical gurus, journalists, and scholars alike were weblogs and social networking sites such as Friendster (Blood, 2003; boyd, 2006; Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004). In

particular, blogs covering politics and news received the most direct scrutiny due to their pivotal role in political campaigns (Trippi, 2004), their ability to monitor journalists (Brown, 2005), and in providing real time information during disasters (Norris, 2006). In addition, the emergence of “re-mix culture” – by which individuals re-use and edit commercial content for their own work – has introduced issues of ownership in a digital age (Lasica, 2005; Lessig, 2008a). Thus, much of the discourse on media produced by non-professionals tends to concentrate on who - or what - is legitimized media content within the structures of politics, journalism, and cultural expression. In other words, what *or* who can provide political, journalistic, or cultural value?

The recent widespread adoption of YouTube adds another dimension to the consideration of user-generated content, video. YouTube is unlike any other social media site; it is *the* largest social media platform and is largely fueled by visual content. Although a diverse and global set of users interact and share within the site, press accounts largely define YouTube by its commercial uses including pirated content (Burgess & Green, 2009). Meanwhile, news organizations tend to perceive social media platforms as a commercial vein yet to be tapped. For example, after attending a day long seminar on social media and journalism, Poynter Institute contributor Amy Gahrn (2009) wrote:

I noticed a strong focus on the question of how news organizations can monetize their social media efforts. While I believe these efforts are important and can earn money, I think it may be counterproductive to require them to primarily provide direct revenue.... [A]side from paying you money, clicking on your ads or simply being present in sufficient numbers to drive up your ad rates, how can your online community

members help you achieve your goals? What measurable actions can they take to help you gauge that value? (para 5-9)

At its broadest level, this dissertation sought to understand YouTube as a social structure. The value of this work pertains to both the journalism industry and media scholarship. To assist journalists, this work sought to build a conceptual model that identifies YouTubers producer types and locates them within YouTube's social structure. To advance scholarly understanding of social media producers, this work examined two possible attributes or outcomes from being a YouTube producer - changes in one's self-concept and in the collective sense of community.

Similar to the position of early mass communication researchers, the work begins with a simple question: Why? What motivates individuals to transform from viewers to producers? What need(s) are they seeking to satisfy? Does that motive change over time? And, in the long run, how does being an online producer change *them*? To rephrase Lasswell's (1948) dictum, before we can ask what *effect* social media has on individuals and social institutions, we should ask *who* produces *what* and *for what purposes*.

The importance of this work is founded not only in YouTube's uniqueness, but its relatively recent arrival as an online powerhouse of media content. As of writing, research on YouTube has concentrated on its overall structure from the perspective of computer engineering (Cha, Kwak, Rodriguez, Ahn, & Moon, 2007; Cheng, Dale & Liu, 2007; Kruitbosch & Nack, 2008; Maia, Almeida, & Almeida, 2008), categorization of political and Iraqi war content (Andén-Papadopoulos, 2009; Harp & Tremayne, 2007), analysis on strategic use of YouTube by political actors (Gueorguieva, 2008), its intellectual property court cases (Kumar, 2008; Meisel, 2009), and ethnographic work

rich with elaborations, but limited by its sample size (Lange, 2007a, 2007b). Three other YouTube studies are salient to this work: through network analysis, Maia, Almeida, and Almeida (2008) classified YouTube users by their social network ties and online behavior; Burgess and Green's (2009) content analysis classified types of users and the types of content they post; and Haridakis and Hanson (2009) examined motives to watch and share YouTube content through a uses and gratifications perspective. However, no quantitative work has surveyed YouTubers themselves and none of these studies has addressed changes over time. Furthermore, only Lange's (2007a) work attempts to understand the visual aspect of this new form of communication, but does so at the individual level of identity construction uncovered via qualitative methods. Two studies were undertaken to address this need. Because this dissertation sought to understand YouTube specifically, the work took an inductive approach in that the findings from study one formed the questions in study two.

Study one: In November of 2006, popular YouTuber Boh3m3 asked the YouTube audience "Why do you tube?" A content analysis of video responses to Boh3m3's question provided a unique opportunity to hear YouTubers talk among themselves on why they watch, produce, and how they perceive YouTube. The main finding of this study, that YouTubers perceived YouTube as a community, informed study two.

Study two: The second study took a functionalist approach to examine how variables within people (need to belong) and variables with the situation (social indicators and experiences within YouTube) predict a sense of community, changes in motives, changes in the self-concept, and the willingness to share content with news organizations.

Findings suggest that while producer/users do consider YouTube a community that perception is somewhat dissimilar than how we conceptualize geographic communities and may be more about emotional connections and the self rather than a true communal experience common to geographical neighborhoods and blocks.

To set a foundation for this work, chapter one examines YouTube and begins with YouTube's creation, growth, and purchase by Google and the challenges that grew out of that exponential growth and adoption. Leading out of this historical and cultural look at YouTube is Fischer's and Castells' theories on technology and social change which guide the discussion beyond a simple view of YouTube as merely being a mass distribution tool for social media. A review of scholarship on YouTube's social structure, content, and users follows. The chapter concludes by presenting a conceptual model of YouTube's social structure and its users.

Chapter two focuses on theories useful to examining YouTubers, their motives, and behavior. This chapter is guided by a question: What theory or theories might best explain users and their motives within social media platforms? Given YouTube's social and commercial uses, this question may not be as simple as it seems. Uses and gratifications theory has long been used in mass communication to understand why audiences seek media content, but is it helpful in understanding social media users? The answer to that question, so far, is maybe yes, maybe no (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). If U & G is not sensitive enough to understand active YouTubers, what theory might be helpful? Taking a functional approach as defined within social psychology (Snyder & Candor, 1998), three theories are presented: sense of community, need to belong, and

self-presentation. Furthermore, since YouTube is a site fueled by video content, theories of visual communication are presented in this discussion as well. The chapter ends with research questions that guided both studies.

Chapter three presents the methods, findings, and limitations from study one; a content analysis of YouTubers' elaborations as to why they watch and produce for YouTube and how they perceive the YouTube space. Chapter four presents the methods, findings, and limitations from study two; a survey of YouTubers' sense of community and changes over time.

The findings of these studies are presented in chapter five along these lines: how these findings help to illuminate YouTube's social world and assist in building conceptual models for social media platforms, empirical and conceptual implications related to the Sense of Community Index and the Uses and Gratifications framework, and, finally, a return to the two scenarios presented at the beginning of this introduction - how these findings may assist journalists as they approach or are approached by the active participants in a new visual form of communication - YouTube.

Chapter One

Broadcast Yourself: The rise and adoption of YouTube

"In certain areas, there are no experts."

(Jawed Karim, 2006)

In the everyday flow of YouTube, a diverse group of users upload a wide variety of content. In any given moment, one user may be uploading an editorial from MSNBC's Keith Olbermann at the same time another is uploading video of a baby's first steps while still another may be uploading their self-created (produced, shot, edited) and self-acted political parody. This poses an increasingly salient question to mass communication research: Is YouTube mass communication? YouTube's meteoric rise has been described as growing from a "cult phenomenon" to an "absolute mainstream" entity (Neary, 2006), a "gale-driven wildfire" ("Ready for its close-up," 2006), and an evolution from a concept to hyper-growth (Karim, 2006). Given that hyper-growth, YouTube has attracted mass media attention. Still, certain uses remain at the interpersonal level, such as clips of a baby's first steps, while other uses challenge notions of intellectual property rights within a digital world, such as the Olbermann clip. To confound the question further, some consider "consumers" creating media from scratch or remixing content (including mass media content) as a vital contribution within the realms of politics, culture, and innovation - contributions possible only within the participatory nature of a free and open horizontal system of distribution, collaboration, and sharing (Jenkins, 2006; Lasica, 2005; Lessig, 2001, 2004, 2008a).

To address the range of users and their use of YouTube, chapter one has

three purposes: to examine how YouTube and mass media are alike or aspire to be alike, to present current data on YouTube's social structure, and to sketch out a conceptual model of YouTube's structure to guide this work. Since this research took an inductive approach, one other purpose has been added. During the sampling timeframe, the number of YouTube channels that were blocked, suspended, or closed became noticeable. This is not a direct question of this work, but it was still too interesting to ignore. Thus, this chapter includes a discussion on YouTube's ongoing battles over copyright infringement, its policies to police such action, and possible consequences from those policies. Though the implication of YouTube's policy is not a direct question of this study, it is useful in building a model and, later in chapter five, will be helpful in directing future work. To assist that work, a background is presented here.

The chapter is organized into three sections: *YouTube's history, victories, and challenges* discusses the commercial aspects of YouTube from its development into its current challenges of competition and battles over copyright infringement. *The social structure of YouTube* first presents theories on technology, social change, and social structures. A review of research on YouTube follows. While these studies draw from diverse fields and methods, their findings help to illuminate YouTube's social network, types of users, and the content they upload. In short, these studies help to conceptually locate where people cluster around interests or behaviors and place those clusters within the broader structure of YouTube as a mass entity. *Conceptualizing YouTube* presents one last attribute to consider - the value of YouTube content to the speaker and to the audience. From there, a conceptual model of YouTube's structure is presented along the

lines of YouTube's users/content (from interpersonal to commercial) within the Google landscape.

YouTube's history, victories, and challenges

The history: In the beginning...

YouTube's beginning is an often-told tale of Steven Chen and Chad Hurley's frustration over not being able to share their videos after a 2005 dinner party at Chen's home (Delaney, 2006; Sorkin, 2006; Sorkin & Edmonston, 2006). Under this narrative, Chen and Hurley along with their friend Jawed Karim worked out of Chen's garage and financed their work with credit cards. Karim, who left the company to pursue advanced degrees in computer engineering from Stanford shortly after YouTube's initial stage, contests this narrative. Instead, he credits the online rush to find videos from John Stewart's verbal sparring match with CNN's Crossfire hosts, the Indian tsunami disaster, and Janet Jackson's Super Bowl clothing malfunction as events that generated the idea of creating a video site (Karim, 2006; see also Gannes, 2006). Other facts given less attention in popular accounts are: as some of the earliest employees of PayPal, each YouTube founder benefited financially when eBay bought PayPal for \$1.5 billion; Hurley married into the Internet's entrepreneurial apex when he wed Kathy Clark, daughter of Jim Clark the founder of the giant Internet corporations Silicon Graphics, Netscape, and Healtheon; the original intent was to create a video version of the successful site hotornot.com; and that the business received \$11.5 million venture capital in its first years from Sequoia Capital, the same company that initially funded Google (Cloud, 2006;

Hopkins, 2006; Helft, Richtel, & Hafner, 2006; Karim, 2006) (see Appendix A for an early version of YouTube).

The founders registered the domain name in February 2005 and began work on Valentines Day (see Appendix B for YouTube's 2005 development). On April 23rd, Karim uploaded the first video, "Me at the zoo," an eighteen second clip that is, at the time of writing, still posted on Karim's YouTube homepage or, in YouTube terminology, his channel (Karim, 2005, see Appendix C). A beta version of YouTube was launched in May with limited and, for the three creators, frustratingly slow growth (Cloud, 2006). Beginning in June, the three began to revamp the site. Karim (2006) credits that summer work as developing the four features he believes led to YouTube's popularity: related videos offered viewers a way to see similar types of content, sharing of videos through a one-click email service, easy means of commenting through video or text, and the development of an external video player (Gannes, 2006). By the end of the year, the site's tag line "Upload, tag and share your videos worldwide!" was reworded into "Broadcast yourself. Watch and share your videos worldwide!"

YouTube was neither the first video distribution nor video sharing site (see Kirsner, 2007, pp. 22-38 for full list). However, it was the first easy-to-use site for video. A video uploaded to YouTube is converted into an Adobe Flash file, a thumbnail of the video is created for searching purposes, and the video along with its meta-information (tag words, YouTube users' ID and location, duration of clip, category of the video, etc.) is stored on YouTube's servers. At the time, converting videos to Flash files was a unique solution to a technical problem in delivering video files. With YouTube's Flash files,

users no longer needed to retrieve a specific plug-in for a diverse set of media players (such as RealPlayer, QuickTime, or Windows Media) and viewing was relatively quick through a progressive download application in Flash. YouTube was the first site that made it easy to view, upload, and share videos.

YouTube gains national attention. Despite the attempts of its three founders, YouTube was rarely mentioned in news reports during the early months (see Karim, 2006 for early promotional attempts). A search in three news databases (Factiva, Lexis Nexis, and ProQuest) with the broad search terms "video online," "video sharing," and "video sites" reveals that YouTube was not mentioned in news reports until the last months of 2005. Even then it was usually mentioned among other sites including the video search engines for Google and Yahoo, distribution sites such as Veoh (former Disney CEO Michael Eisner's brainchild), and media sharing sites such as AtomFilms, Blip.tv, Break, ClipShack, Grouper, Heavy, iFilms, OurMedia, Revver, Sharkle, and Vimeo (see Graham, 2005; Kirsner, 2005; Stone, 2005). Still, within its first year the site grew from 30 daily users in May to over 3 million users by December's end which outpaced Yahoo and Google video by double and triple the traffic respectively (Wallenstein, 2006a). However, a more detailed examination of YouTube's December traffic reveals that most of this phenomenal growth was mainly due to one contested video.

Early skirmishes and partnerships with mass media. On December 17, 2005, NBC's Saturday Night Live aired a Samberg, Schaffer, and Taccone video parody, Lazy Sunday, to a national audience of 7.2 million viewers. Within a week, Lazy Sunday was

the first viral video to gain mass popularity and attention (Stone, 2006a). Early news accounts framed the video hit as a star-making performance for Samberg and a long-needed shot in the arm for the struggling show (Biggs, 2006; Faraone, 2005; Kesner, 2005; see also Neary, 2006). By the early days of January, press coverage on the hit shifted focus away from SNL and onto YouTube's phenomenal spike in traffic due to the video's popularity. Reports measured the clip's popularity at 1.2 million YouTube downloads and YouTube's overall traffic increasing from 624,000 viewers the week before the SNL broadcast to 2.3 million by year's end (Faraone, 2005; Morrissey, 2006). This spike raised YouTube's accumulated traffic for December which secured the site's ranking as the number one video site - a position it has held ever since.

After 5 million downloads, NBC requested that YouTube remove Lazy Sunday along with 500 other NBC and Universal clips. YouTube complied with the takedown notice and contended, as it does now, that its policy of removing content as soon as a violation is reported protects the organization against copyright infringement under the safe harbor clause in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). Soon after the conflict over Lazy Sunday was resolved, another SNL gangster rap parody, with actor Natalie Portman, gained instant online popularity and the attention of NBC lawyers. This time the duration between NBC's request and YouTube's compliance was a little over a day rather than the two months it took to ask and remove Lazy Sunday (Charny, 2006; Kelley, 2006). Other YouTube videos that gained the ire of the television networks in the early days include a CBS news feature on an autistic basketball player and a clip from

ABC's live broadcast from the Academy Awards where actor Tom Hanks appeared to be muttering obscenities (Wallenstein, 2006b).

In its first year, YouTube also drew the attention of MySpace and its parent company, News Corporation. MySpace was launched in August of 2003 as a copycat version of Friendster, the first social network site. Rupert Murdoch bought the site for \$580 billion in the summer of 2005 as a means to drive online users to Fox TV shows ("News Corp," 2005). At the same time, YouTube founders wrote code that allowed their users to post videos, via the YouTube Flash player, on their MySpace pages. This attracted MySpace users who, in the first year, accounted for about 20 percent of YouTube's traffic (Hansell, 2006; Wallenstein, 2006b; see also Cha, Kwak, Rodriquez, Ahn, & Moon, 2007). In January of 2006, MySpace launched its own video hosting service - vids.myspace.com. Soon thereafter hundreds of users reported that YouTube videos appeared only as white space on their MySpace pages and that mere mentions of YouTube were mysteriously removed (Bosman, 2006; Whitehead, 2006). Though the errors were corrected, some MySpace users expressed suspicion that News Corporation was "putting business interests above its members" (Wapshott, 2006).

At the time, the top four sites were Yahoo, MSN/Windows Live, Google, and Microsoft respectively. Similarly, the top four parent companies were Microsoft, Yahoo, Time Warner, and Google (Nielsen, 2006a). Though YouTube was not among the biggest sites online, it was the fastest growing during the first half of 2006 and increased its unique users by nearly 300% (Nielsen, 2006b).

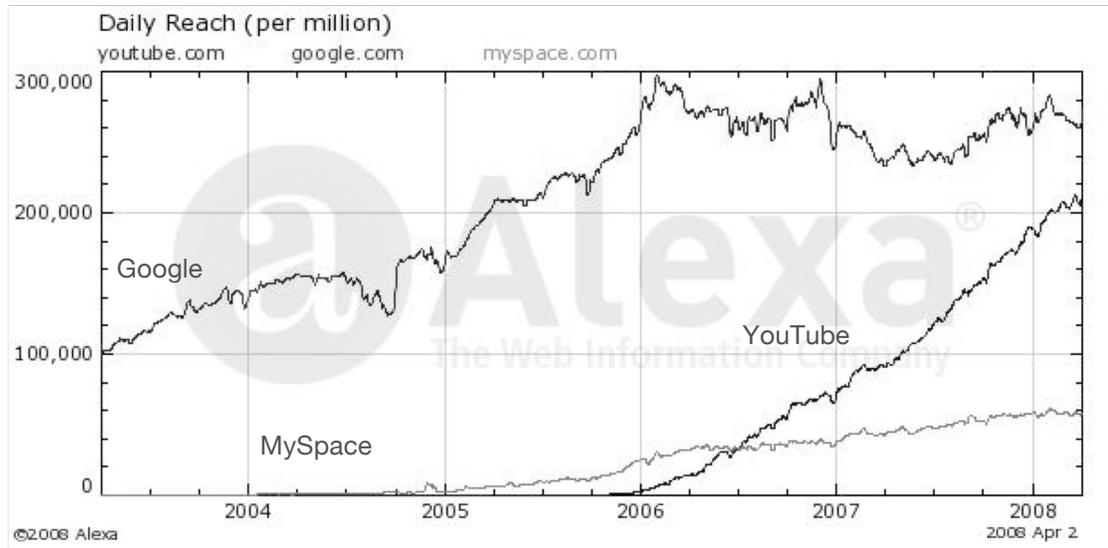
As YouTube grew it drew in partnerships. For example, a YouTube monthly video contest changed from giving away Apple Nanos music players to an eighteen month-long rock band contest co-sponsored with Cingular Wireless and the ABC television network accumulating in a grand prize of an appearance on Good Morning America (Egerton, 2006). Partnerships with EMI and Warner Music Group were established and, even after battles over SNL content, NBC used YouTube to promote their half-hour comedy show *The Office* (Chan, 2006; Hansell, 2006; Leeds, 2006; "YouTube signs," 2006).

Victories: YouTube under Google

News briefs released the morning of October 9, 2006 reported that YouTube had secured partnerships with Universal Music Group, Sony BMG, and the CBS television network ("CBS, YouTube", 2006; "Universal and YouTube," 2006). This flurry of deals flamed rumors of an impending Google purchase since many of these companies were already partnered with the California-based company (Monson, 2006). By the end of the day the rumors were fact: Google bought YouTube for \$1.65 billion in stock value. With Google's stock value at the time of the purchase, Chen and Hurley received more than \$325 million each and Karim's stake was worth over \$64 million, a deal that made some of their former PayPal bosses and co-workers jealous (Hafner, 2006).

Growing big. Once under Google's umbrella, YouTube's presence in the online world increased. According to data from the Internet tracking company Alexa, YouTube's overall share of online traffic, or its reach, surpassed MySpace in the summer of 2006 and grew increasingly closer to Google's reach into 2008 (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. YouTube's daily reach compared to Google and MySpace from April 2003 until April 2008.



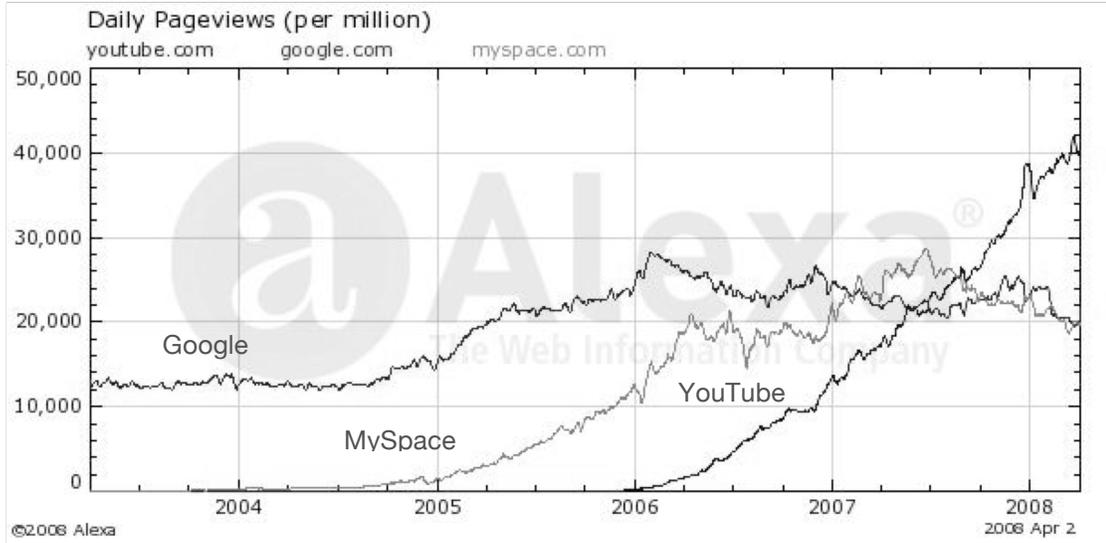
Note. Data accessed from Alexa.com on April 2, 2008. In its March 2009 redesign Alexa dropped the ability to compare across the last five years since its sampling methodology changed (see "Pardon our dust," 2009).

Furthermore, between 2007 and 2008, YouTube surpassed both Google and MySpace in daily page expanded into new markets while continuing to establish agreements with media groups including the BBC, Sony Pictures, Verizon Wireless and secured its first partnership with a sport organization - the National Hockey League ("YouTube in Web,"2006). As with many of its partnerships, the NHL deal was comprised of three aspects: the establishment of an NHL channel, a share in the ad revenue placed within NHL's channel and subsequent pages, and an agreement that YouTube would actively search for and remove any illegally posted NHL clips.

Corporations were not the only institutions interested in YouTube. Governments, public institutions, and political figures world-wide flocked to set up their own YouTube channels including the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, the controversial Church of Scientology, Britain's Queen Elizabeth, and Jordan's Queen Rania (Kutz, 2008; Lyall, 2007; Nicholson, 2008; "The Church of Scientology," 2008). Due to increasing world-wide traffic, YouTube launched national and regional sites in 2008 (Ben-Yehuda, 2008). Currently YouTube has 22 worldwide sites from the UK to Taiwan and presents those sites in 18 different languages.

Combating illegal uses. The Google acquisition brought more than attention and money to YouTube, it also brought a tool to combat digital copyright violations. Developed by Google engineers, digital fingerprinting technology automatically scans media content for digital attributes, such as a music track or a specific video sequence, and then compares those attributes to copyrighted content stored in a digital database. YouTube promotes this service as its Content ID System. By the summer of 2007,

Figure 1.2. YouTube's daily page views compared to Google and MySpace from April 2003 until April 2008.



Note. Data accessed from Alexa.com on April 2, 2008. In its March 2009 redesign Alexa dropped the ability to compare across the last five years since its sampling methodology changed (see "Pardon our dust," 2009).

Google engineers used digital fingerprinting to scan YouTube content, compared it to Time Warner and Disney content, and removed infringing videos or, for repeat offenders, blocked individual users from the site (Li & Auchard, 2007). Audio content has been more successfully subjected to digital fingerprinting technology than video, but the quest to find a means of automatically detecting video and live material has spawned a new arm of the technology sector (Stone & Helft, 2007). Both the International Olympics Committee and the Chinese government used digital fingerprinting technology to protect their broadcast rights to the 2008 summer Olympics (Burrows, 2008). In 2008, the British comedy group Monty Python took a "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" stance and joined YouTube's Video ID system. They explained their decision in a tongue-in-cheek video accusing YouTubers as stealing from them for years. Subsequently, sales of Python DVDs on Amazon went up 1,000% (Kiss, 2008).

Challenges: YouTube through 2009

In the year 2009, YouTube faces a paradoxical reality; although it enjoys supremacy over all other online video sites, it also faces dual challenges: to make money in an increasingly competitive market while also defending itself against charges of piracy in court. Each of these challenges will be presented in this section. The discussion begins with the first part of that paradox: YouTube's supremacy.

By multiple measures, YouTube stands above nearly all online ventures. For example, Nielsen (2009a) ranks YouTube fifth in unique viewers behind Google, Yahoo, MSN/Windows Live (now Bing), and Microsoft. Alexa measures YouTube's reach as the third largest in the world and fourth in U.S. traffic behind Facebook. Alexa

data also indicate that a YouTube visit continues to be unlike any other. In comparison to the other top ten online sites, an average visit to YouTube lasts longer (almost twenty-three minutes), goes deeper (around 16 page views), and has less "bounce" (percentage that measures how many users come to look at only one page) - only eighteen percent of YouTubers bounce out after one page view (see Appendix D for a comparison table between YouTube and top online sites).

In terms of media sites, YouTube dominates other online video sharing sites and outperforms mass media organizations' sites on every Alexa measure (see Appendices E and F for comparison tables). For example, YouTube accounts for 18% of all online traffic. In comparison the closest ranked video sharing site, Metacafe, accounts for less than one percent and the closest ranked mass media site, the BBC, accounts for about 1.5% of overall traffic. As to time within the site, an average YouTube visit lasts about sixteen minutes longer than either a Metacafe or BBC visit.

Meanwhile, online video use is still on the rise. Time spent watching video online increased 49% from May, 2008 to May, 2009 (Nielsen, 2009b). Of course, not all of this growth is directed at YouTube alone. Long-form content is becoming more popular and this trend favors the sites owned and operated by mass media organizations, namely Hulu.

Big media finds its own "Tube." Hulu performs much like its mass media owners, Universal/NBC, News Corp., and Disney, as a mass distribution site of traditionally produced content. Although the number of videos watched on Hulu increased 490% between April, 2008 to April, 2009, it still lags far behind YouTube. Nielsen (2009b)

measures Hulu's monthly videos at nearly 400 million but clocks YouTube use at over 6 billion videos a month accounting for 58% of all online video viewing. Still, Hulu stands above YouTube in one consideration - it attracts advertisers, many of whom are leery of placing ads on YouTube alongside random, possibly pirated, and user-generated (perceived as less professional) content.

Increased competition at the top of the online video market is narrowing the field below with YouTube itself losing some ground (Kirk, 2009; Levine, 2008; Shields, 2008a). At the end of 2008, Warner Music Group (WMG) severed its licensing agreement citing inadequate compensation. WMG earned 0.5 cents every time its content was watched on YouTube, but that revenue accounted for less than one percent of its 2008 revenue, reported to be \$639 million (Adegoke, 2008). Press coverage continues to criticize YouTube as a money drain for Google and a trove of pirated content. Competing estimates report YouTube's losses between \$174.2 and \$470.6 million a year (Deagon, 2009; Liedtke, 2009; Matyszczyk 2009).

As competition changes online video venues, so does technology. Both YouTube and Hulu are positioning themselves to be distributors of large format, high-definition, and full length media in anticipation of the computer and the living room plasma TV becoming one system. Late in 2008, YouTube secured partnerships to carry full versions of classic movies and CBS programs. In June of 2009, YouTube released a beta version of YouTube XL - a YouTube interface with larger features (buttons for links, search, etc.), a black background, and a larger main window for high-definition content. Stripped from YouTube XL are the social networking functions quintessential to YouTube. In

YouTube XL there are no video responses, user comments, or ratings. Instead, YouTube XL is designed for the next generation of Internet-ready televisions and gaming devices (Helft, 2009; Parr, 2009).

In addition to increased competition, YouTube faces ever present litigation over copyright infringement. In public discourse, copyright issues place YouTube between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, mass media organizations accuse it of benefiting from piracy while, on the other hand, media scholars and users accuse it of pandering to mass media regardless of the chilling effects of its policing policies.

Copyright, the DMCA, and YouTubers. As with all copyright laws, the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) seeks to balance the rights of those who use media property with the rights of those who created, but updated the law to consider the distribution of digital content. At the time an entity like YouTube - a commercial/social media site with video as its main content - did not exist. Originally, the law's safe harbor provision was intended to protect Internet service providers (ISPs), computer networks, and online storage companies from copyright liability due to any content transmitted or stored by their customers. While YouTube is not an ISP, it is a computer network that stores the content of its users. The safe harbor protection is contingent upon the provider not being aware of violations, not altering or redirecting the content in any manner, and only if the provider "responds expeditiously to remove" content once notified of the infringement (H.R.2281, Sec. 512, 2E, 1998). Courts can serve injunctions, but these actions are taken upon specific accounts and subscribers, not upon the service provider or network itself (Sec. 512, J1-2).

YouTube contends it meets and exceeds the DMCA safe harbor requirements by: warning users of the consequences of copyright infringement in its user agreement form, removing infringing clips as soon as it is notified, blocking repeat offenders from the site, actively seeking licensing agreements with rights holders, and using fingerprinting technology to find and remove content and recurring offenders. YouTubers who feel their content has been unjustly removed can file counter notices, but they have to wait 10 days after the takedown. In addition to copyright infringement, YouTube removes videos and suspends accounts due to sexual, violent, or shocking content, pedophilic or predatory use, under-age restrictions, or hate speech. Users are encouraged to police the site themselves by flagging inappropriate uses or content (done in a click of a button). Users are removed, suspended or blocked from the site after three violations.

On March 13, 2007, Viacom filed a \$1 billion lawsuit against YouTube and Google for copyright infringement. Viacom contends that 150,000 unauthorized clips of their popular programs have been uploaded to YouTube and subsequently viewed 1.5 billion times (Viacom International Inc., et al. v. YouTube Inc., et al, 2007). While Viacom is YouTube's main adversary over intellectual property rights, it is not the only one (Zampano & Moloney, 2008). Before the Google purchase, Los Angeles based freelance reporter Robert Tur sued YouTube for infringement over his helicopter news reports of the L.A. riots and O.J. Simpson's get-away chase ("Reporter sues," 2006). After the Google purchase, the British Football Premier League sued YouTube and Google over use of the league's products and game footage (Chaffin & Kirchgaessner, 2007). Both the Premier League and Tur have joined a class action law suit with a group

of music publishers, but their international claims have been negated in U.S. court (Kramer, 2009; Sandoval, 2009).

DMCA from the user side. According to the Freedom Frontier Foundation, thousands of users have had their videos or accounts suspended unjustly, however they only present anecdotal evidence supporting this assertion (Arango, 2009). With legal help from the Foundation, Stephanie Lenz sued Google after a 30 second clip of her 13-month-old son dancing to the Prince song "Let's Go Crazy" was removed from her YouTube channel. Northern California U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel ruled in favor of Lenz's argument that her video was not a copyright violation since it was covered under the doctrine of fair use (Egelko, 2008; Lessig, 2008a; see McCullagh, 2008 for Lenz's video). Juliet Weybret, a Lodi, California high school sophomore, posted a holiday video of herself playing the piano and singing the Christmas song "Winter Wonderland." After Warner severed its YouTube partnership it pulled its content off the site and, since Warner owns the Winter Wonderland copyright, YouTube removed Weybret's clip (Arango, 2009). In 2007, law professor and former Freedom Frontier Foundation lawyer Wendy Seltzer posted a clip from the Super Bowl to show her students "how far copyright claimants exaggerate their rights" ("Fighting YouTube," 2007). YouTube removed the clip immediately.

Private individuals are not the only ones affected. During the 2008 presidential campaign, both candidates had videos removed from their YouTube channels. YouTube complied with takedown requests from NBC News and Warner Music Group regarding videos on Obama's channel (Lessig, 2008b). In a letter to YouTube, the McCain/Palin

campaign claimed numerous videos protected under fair use had been unjustly taken down and urged the site to review takedown notices served on legitimate political campaigns especially since "10 days can be a lifetime in a political campaign" (McCain/Palin, 2008, p. 2; see also Condon, 2008).

Taking a proactive stance, the Center for Social Media outlined proper practices for online video use. Their *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Online Video* (2008) posits six conditions by which use of copyrighted video should be protected under the fair use doctrine: 1) for commenting, criticizing, or critique; 2) for illustration or example; 3) incidentally or by accident (such as Lenz's video); 4) to memorialize, preserve, or rescue a cultural event or experience; 5) to generate discourse; and 6) to create new meaning (pp. 5-9). Lessig, though, takes a different stance by arguing that copyright law makes little sense in the digital world where everything is a copy. The law scholar calls for an update to copyright laws that re-introduces the notion of "free use" and contends that a new conceptualization is needed that regards online social platforms as part commercial and part social, i.e. a hybrid space.

Is YouTube a hybrid space? Built upon social exchange theory, Lessig (2008a) presents social media platforms as based on an exchange of social goods - attention, information, entertainment, support, etc. - and contends it is unproductive to introduce financial incentives within that system. Instead, he argues that the value of a commercial space and the value of a social space can be shared and, at times, leveraged for the benefit of the other. For example, Amazon is not solely a commercial site, but, instead, leverages its sharing economy through user reviews and recommendations. Similarly, Microsoft's

Product Support site is supported not by the company, but by its volunteer users who facilitate the flow of knowledge.

YouTube's blog reveals its efforts to use the collective side of YouTube for both the site and for social good (www.youtube.com/blog). In the month of June 2009 alone, the editors from YouTube and Google asked Tubers to:

- suggest improvements to the new channels feature
- partner with non-profit groups as a "video volunteer"
- vote on the videos from the U.S. State Department's Democracy Video Challenge contest
- send suggestions to Senator Chris Dodd on how to reform the nation's health care system
- and submit questions for President Obama.

During that month editors also posted updates on videos coming out of Iran (including the video of Neda Soltan's death) and provided citizen journalists suggestions on the craft of news (including interviewing tips from Katie Couric).

However, at times the commercial side of YouTube has drawn suspicion among YouTubers especially when they feel slighted, ignored, or being pitched to. These tensions drive discourse on *what YouTube is* in comparison to *what it is not*. For example, the *Viacom v. YouTube* case became personal when the court granted Viacom access to data that linked users' IDs, emails, and IP addresses with their behaviors - what they watched, who they were connected with, what they had posted, and what they wrote in emails and comments. This action sparked "an expletive-laden counterattack" through video posts and responses ("YouTube users vent," 2008). As these videos gained attention suspicion grew among YouTube that their popularity had made them targets for

takedown notices. Eventually Viacom compromised with Google and agreed to receive redacted data.

Other events that have heated up discourse within YouTube include the Google purchase, the launch of YouTube partners (popular Tubers who receive ad revenue), and the disclosure of fake postings by LonelyGirl15 (Griffith, 2007; McMurria, 2006). When Oprah launched her YouTube channel, her arrival to the site was promoted on the front page as "Oprah's week." This promotion sparked distain from some YouTubers who perceived Oprah as appropriating the media space for her own ends and herself as a mass media celebrity who could not understand the "community" (Brouwers, 2007-2008). YouTubers, like Nalts, posted video responses such as "Nalts on Oprah? Noprah." One Tuber sarcastically noted that it was good Oprah found YouTube since "she has trouble broadcasting herself" (as cited by Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 10). Others suspected that YouTube had manipulated the top videos of the week to match the Oprah promotion instead of accurately reflecting what users were watching from behavior within the site. There are other ever-present behaviors that draw heated discourse among YouTubers such as YouTube editors' alleged unresponsiveness to emails and the presence of haters - YouTube users who respond to videos in a hateful and vicious manner (Burgess & Green, 2009, pp. 12-14, see also Lange, 2007b).

Central to this chapter's discussion is the question: Is YouTube a mass communication medium? From the perspective of mass media organizations, the answer is strongly in the affirmative: YouTube is a mass distribution hub for video content and, from their position, that content is largely pirated goods. Similarly, from the beginning

YouTube has sought to be commercially viable and is perpetually seeking media partners, many of whom are the largest media organizations in the world. However, this viewpoint is anchored in the traditional relationship between producers and their audiences; i.e. a one to many hierarchical distribution of content to a heterogeneous audience unknown to the producer (see McQuail, 2002). Lessig argues that we need to redefine social media platforms as hybrid spaces. While YouTube as a company encourages social participation for political involvement, social good, and its own development, at times YouTubers have balked or protested commercial actions within their perceived community. Given these tensions, it is unclear how useful it is to consider YouTube a hybrid space as Lessig has defined it. To advance a conceptual model, let us return to journalism, its value to the public, and the value of expression in a democracy.

Assessing value within the public sphere

News value from the side of journalists. Definitions of value range from market worth ("a fair return in goods, services, or money for something exchanged") to relative worth in terms of expression, utility, or an object's quality (Merriam-Webster, 2007, p. 1099). McQuail (2005) defined news value as a criterion by which journalists "determine whether or not to carry particular items of news" (p. 562). Textbook standards of news worthiness often center on attributes of information such as its timeliness, impact, proximity, and whether it is unusual or unexpected (Kolodzy, 2006). With digital technology creating new distribution channels, other writers have categorized the value of a medium rather than of the information itself; e.g. through the presence provided by video, broadcast news provides viewers a sense of immediacy and intimacy; print

journalism provides readers portability, permanence, depth, and detail; and online news provides value due to its on-demand, interactive, and innovative qualities (Wenger & Potter, 2008).

However, from a media sociology perspective many contend that journalism is a social practice. In Tuchman's (2002) terminology, "news is made, not found" (p. 80; see also Schudson, 1997; Tuchman, 1978, 1997). Zeiler (2005) argues that journalists view news judgment as a "sixth sense" and the function of news as: providing a full account of the day's news, a mirror on society, a narrative (the story of "us"), and a service to the public (pp. 68-72). Furthermore, in recent years news content has been shifting toward softer news stories crafted as personalized narratives or covering the news of popular culture rather than serving the public's need to know ("Changing definitions of news," 1998). This "entertainment-izing" of the news further complicates the notion of what news *is* and its presumed value to audiences; a trend that is only increasing for online journalists ("The Web: Alarming," 2008; Mindich, 2004). Thus, to many, the value of the current state of news, overall, is declining at a historical moment when information sources are expanding and the barriers to production -skill, distribution, and financial barriers - are being lowered or disappearing altogether. In this mix, the rise of citizen journalists is seen by some as a positive democratizing of the news while, on the other hand, others perceive the invitation for citizens to produce news as merely a strategy to bring free labor sources into newsgathering efforts (see Potter, 2007).

The public sphere and theories of the press. At their most basic level, all theories of the press argue that journalism must provide a normative service to a democracy.

Thus, the value of journalism is first and foremost to “provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, p. 17; see also “A Free and Responsible Press,” 1947). From a pluralist position, though, journalism should support and encourage diverse voices within the public sphere. In recent years, former advocates of public or civic journalism have embraced blogging as a liberating force that supports "grassroots" or citizen journalism, e.g. Jay Rosen's (2009) *PressThink* blog with its tag line "Ghosts of democracy in the media machine."

From a republican perspective, the press should actively pursue truth or a common good within the marketplace of ideas. Common arguments against the role of the press under the republican model are its non-inclusiveness to voices outside a marketplace defined largely by elitists, journalists among them. Arguments against the role of the press under the liberal-pluralism model are often framed as non productive to consensus building needed for a democracy to move forward. From a different perspective, others contend that different "public spheres" cannot find their own values and voice, or strategies to bring their contributions forward unless they have the space and time to develop their own sense of their collective self. Without this development time, media organizations meant to serve marginal voices tend to, in the end, mirror traditional media structures and values (see Baker, 2002, pp. 135-153).

In contrast to this dichotomous tension, Baker argues for a theory of the press that supports a complex democracy. The press should support different public spheres found under liberal-pluralism and their development into their own normative structures and media content. Meanwhile, the press should, at times, seek a consensus on a common

good or direction - a value held under the republican model. From this perspective, then, journalists should not regard YouTube as either free labor or a competitor to their news efforts, but as a media space whereby YouTubers can find, belong, and be part of the development of their own public spheres. As part of their development, the press should support YouTubers in finding not only their political voice, but their cultural one as well.

The public within the You. From this viewpoint, then, YouTube should not be considered a hybrid space where commercial and private uses are sometimes at odds and sometimes in concert with each other, but rather as a media platform with three locations: a commercial space, a private space, and a public space. Viewing YouTube as having three, not two, spaces also helps to explain tensions that arise within YouTube over incidents such as Oprah. Mass media organizations - from both a liberal-pluralism and republican model - may perceive YouTube's public space as a location to grow an audience, find sources and stories, and encourage participation in their news efforts/ However, to YouTubers the value of the media platform is to be heard and acknowledged, not to be appropriated by mass media, and to find their own place within a new audience - within the social space.

Also, by adding a personal space into a YouTube model allows for those users who use the site purely for interpersonal reasons - to share and discuss among their offline social circle - to be considered. The more individual uses can still be salient to mass communication research given a current argument that posits interpersonal communication as having a compelling influence on media effects (see Southwell &

Yzer, 2008). Furthermore, as a dynamic experience and structure, the migration between the three spaces provides other questions to be asked such as changes across time.

For all inquiries, though, the question centers on: What is this space? Who sees it as what? How is it structured? To assist in understanding these questions, the next section addresses technology, its influence on changes at the macro-level, and the attributes of social networks.

The social structure of YouTube

Technology and social structures

Theories on how technology influences macro-level structures vary from the *technological determinist* frame whereby development is considered self-generating and affecting social forces universally to the *social constructivism* frame which considers social forces as influencing technological development. Both have been criticized for focusing too narrowly on either technology attributes or the core group who influenced development in the first place (Carey, 2005; Edward, 1996; Williams, 1974; Winner, 1986). Furthermore, since the earliest computer networks what users *did* with a new technology influenced its eventual functions, systems, and structure as much or more than the intent of the original engineers (Abbate, 1999; Hauben & Hauben, 1997). A theory is needed that includes the users and their connections while also considering the technological attributes of YouTube.

Fischer (1992) considers the effect of new technologies as dynamic and in the control of those who use the technology. His *user heuristic* theory centers on the individual and asks similar questions to Lasswell's directive: who adopts a technology for

what intention and with what outcome? "We assume that users have purposes they mean the technology to serve, and – this is the point of the method – that users can understand and tell us about those ends and means" (p. 17). At the individual level technology is a *tool*, but once it is widely adopted a *system* emerges around the technology. Within that development, technologies produce externalities that, ironically, create a system that imposes constraints on the individuals (user and non-users alike).

Individuals within a relational structure. With his term "the network society," Castells (1996, 2001) contends that computer networks are altering wide-spread patterns in political, social, economic, and media structures globally. Advancements in microelectronics during the 1990s afforded social actors the means to overcome barriers of time, space, and resources. Only through these advancements were computer networks, YouTube among them, possible. Furthermore, the drive to make microelectronic devices smaller and cheaper lead to smaller, cheaper digital cameras to the point where they are becoming common features of cell phones and, through webcams, embedded into computer screens. These developments not only lowered the economic barrier to production, but the knowledge barrier as well. Castells, though, gives no consideration to micro-level analysis and has been criticized as being a determinist (Dijk, 2006). Others, though, interpret Castells as arguing that it is not technology, per se, that creates the network society, but rather the network itself (see Himelboim, 2008).

Unlike Castells' emphasis on large-scale phenomenon, social network analysis examines how social actors form a connective system at the interpersonal, group, and overall structural level of the network (Scott, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1999). Rooted

in gestalt and social psychological theory, social network theory assumes that the relational links between units or nodes (individuals, organizations, web pages, videos, etc.) provides a salient examination of social behavior in terms of opportunities and constraints. Nodes cluster to form an interconnected group and within the group these connections can be tightly interconnected (as found in a family unit) or loosely interconnected (as found between media producers and their audience). Linkages between groups can be reciprocal or not. In YouTube, these relationships can be found on a YouTuber's channel in the form of subscribers (those who have chosen to subscribe to the YouTuber), subscriptions (those the YouTuber has chosen to subscribe to), and the reciprocal nature of those links. For example, if Sophie has 100 subscribers (in-degrees) and has subscribed to 100 channels herself (out-degrees) then she can be possibly linked to 200 individuals. However, how connected Sophie is in the network - and whether the benefits of the network are within her reach - is dependent on the nature of those relationships. If the 100 people she subscribes to are all family members and the 100 who subscribe to her are the very same group, then Sophie has 100 reciprocal links within a highly interconnected group - her family. However, if Sophie has 100 subscribers who are not her family and she rarely reciprocates when someone subscribes to her, then Sophie's social network within YouTube is more similar to the social attributes of mass media entities than interpersonal users (see figure 1.3 for screen grab of a YouTube channel and social network indicators).

While YouTube and other social networks imply a democratic distribution of information and production flow, in reality they are more likely to display a

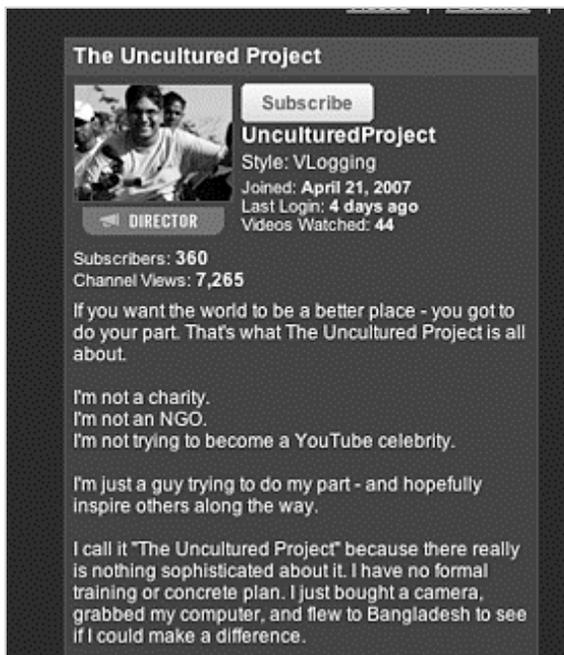
power-law distribution. Power-law is a highly negatively skewed distribution indicating a more hierarchical structure than in systems that are normally distributed. This distribution is commonly found in networks and is often analogized as *the rich-get-richer* phenomenon. In other words, a few individuals (or videos) get a lot of attention and a lot of individuals (or videos) get a little attention. So, although networks allow individuals to connect and behave outside of the control of hierarchical structures, people still connect in common patterns and create vertical structures whereby high-degree nodes become "richer" within the network.

Indicators of YouTube's social network. A number of studies from the field of computer engineering indicates that YouTube follows common patterns of networks. Maia, Almeida, and Almeida (2008) found that the network variables of reciprocity, in- and out-degree, and clustering coefficient were better indicators of user-types than individual variables. They identified five types of YouTube producers: *Small community members* are highly interconnected (highest clustering coefficient for all of the five groups), but are not active users. This indicates a YouTuber who uses the site to share video with family members, coworkers, and friends. *Content producers* constantly update their channels, are active uploaders, video watchers, and visitors to other channels. They also gather a diverse group of subscribers (low clustering coefficient) and are a mix of home producers and professional producers from mass media entities. *Content consumers* watch more videos than channels and subscribe more than they are subscribed to. *Producer/consumers* have attributes of both the producer and the consumer. They have a moderately high number of subscribers and videos they have uploaded, but they

Figure 1.3 Levels of personal and social indicators on YouTube channels



Note. From YouTuber Shawn's YouTube channel, The Uncultured Project. Shawn's social network is indicated by his subscribers, friends, and favorites. He also presents information on his motive to produce (see below). Other personal information not shown here includes his nationality, musical preferences, and lack of activity in YouTube due slow Internet connections in Bangladesh. Retrieved February 27, 2008 from www.youtube.com/UnculturedProject.



also have many subscriptions and browse through many channels. Producer/consumers were the largest cohort in the sample (48%). Users who could not be identified were grouped into the last cohort - *others*. This cohort shared an interesting attribute: their subscriptions out numbered both videos or channels watched. Mai and her colleagues suspect these may be dummy channels created by users seeking to increase subscriptions to their original YouTube channel and, thus, to raise their own popularity (see table 1.1). Cha, Kwak, Rodriguez, Ahn, and Moon's (2007) found that popular videos follow a power-law distribution whereby, again, the most popular videos continued to get a lot of attention and a lot of videos received no attention. Cheng, Dale, and Liu (2007) found that YouTube's related videos were highly interconnected. They also found that 58% of YouTubers have no friends linked to their channel. From their analysis of information found on YouTubers' channels, Halvey and Keane (2007) found that YouTubers, on the average, watch 966 videos although they upload only 11 videos. Santos, Rocha, Rezende, & Loureiro (2007) found power-law distributions in YouTube's subscriptions, video and channel views.

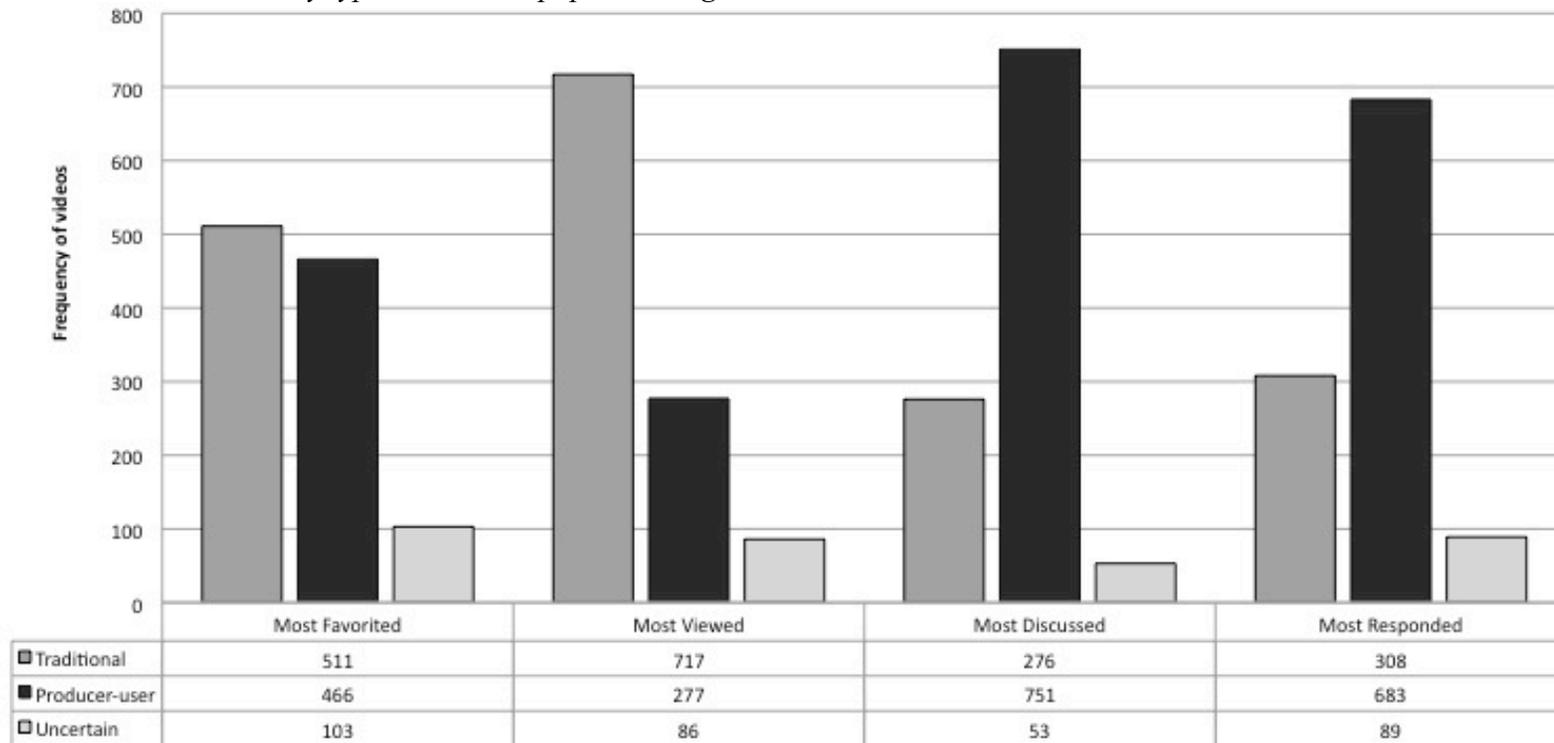
Examining content within context. In their content analysis, Burgess and Green (2009) found an interesting relationship between the content and users who uploaded that content onto YouTube. From a random three month sample (from August, October, and November, 2007), 4320 videos were collected and coded into two broad categories: the form of the video - either traditional or user-created - and who provided the video - traditional mass media sources, semi-mass media sources (independent producers, governments, cultural institutions), or YouTube users. The sample was drawn from

Table 1.1 Classification of YouTubers by social networks, behavior, and level of activity

YouTube user type	Social network attributes	YouTube behavior	Level of YouTube activity	Percent
Small community member	<i>High clustering with few YouTubers, i.e. family members, friends, etc.</i>	<i>Low number of channel visits and videos watched or uploaded</i>	<i>Low level of activity</i>	<i>0.06</i>
Content producer	<i>Low clustering, i.e. many subscribers from varied set of YouTubers</i>	<i>High number of channel visits, videos watched and uploaded</i>	<i>High level of activity</i>	<i>0.23</i>
Content consumer	<i>Low clustering and reciprocity, i.e. highly interconnected in a mutual fashion</i>	<i>More videos watched than channels visited</i>	<i>Moderate level of activity</i>	<i>0.13</i>
Producer and consumer	<i>Low clustering and reciprocity, i.e. have a large and diverse group of YouTubers who are subscribing to them, but whom they are not subscribing to</i>	<i>Moderately large number of uploads and visits channels they subscribe to</i>	<i>Moderate level of activity</i>	<i>0.48</i>
Other	<i>Extremely low clustering and reciprocity, but a high level of subscriptions to other channels</i>	<i>Extremely low number of channel visits, videos watched and uploaded</i>	<i>Low level of activity</i>	<i>0.10</i>

Note. From Maia, Almeida, & Almeida (2008). Identifying user behavior in online social networks. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 1st workshop on social networks systems.

Figure 1.4 YouTube content by type in the most popular categories



Note. From Burgess & Green (2009). *YouTube : Online video and participatory culture*, pp. 42.

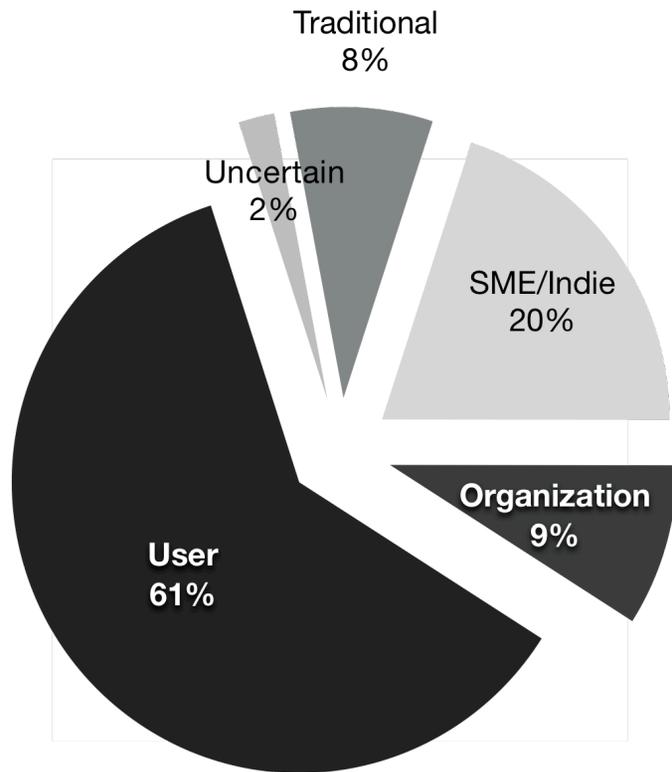
the most popular rankings provided in YouTube: Most Viewed, Most Favorited (marked as a favorite of the user on their YouTube channel), Most Discussed, and Most Responded (measured by the number of video responses a video has generated). The findings illustrate the two worlds in play underneath the YouTube banner. Though the YouTube content was slightly more user-created content (50%) than traditional media created (42%), it was mostly users (61%) who were posting to the site, followed by the small to mid-sized media entities (20%), and, lastly, traditional media sources (8%). The Most Viewed category was mainly comprised of traditional media (66%) that, for the most part, was uploaded unaltered from the original by YouTube users themselves (see figure 1.4). While this finding might support mass media's contention that YouTube's popularity is built upon piracy, Burgess and Green perceive this behavior similar to "quoting" text material instead. Quoting serves as a "clearing house service that people use as a way to catch up on public media events, as well as to break news stories and raise awareness" (p. 49). To use a metaphor, YouTube is a virtual watercooler where people randomly cross paths and discuss notable events in the news, entertainment, or in their own lives (see also Kruitbosch & Nack, 2008). In the Most Discussed and Most Responded categories, it was user-created content, not traditional media-created, that accounted for the majority of the categories (69% and 63% respectively). Videoblogs, known as vlogs, were the largest genre of user-created content, accounting for the majority of content within the Most Discussed category (40%), and over a quarter of the Most Responded category. Vloggers often "shout out" a particular viewpoint or question and invite YouTubers into the conversation. Most vloggers post their videos straight from their webcam however, some vloggers use the webcam portion as a media clip that is

then edited with other media clips (either of their own making or from mass media sources). Burgess and Green trace vlogs' norms to early online venues (both webcam and personal blogging cultures) along with a "confession" culture found in mainstream fare (reality and talk shows) present since the 1990s (see also Burgess & Green, 2008). Vlogs were also the largest genre of user-created content (40%) followed by music videos (15%), live performances (13%), and informational content (19%).

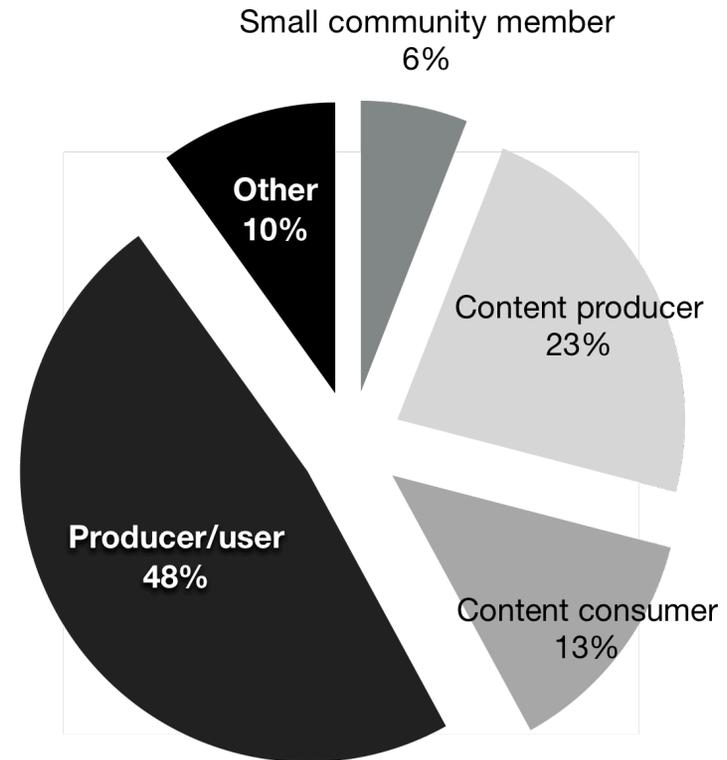
From this work, we can identify a number of YouTube user types beyond the mass media produced content: the interpersonal users who share videos among their family and friends; users who watch more than they produce; producers/consumers who are actively watching and producing; and the midsize or independent production company or producer who is producing more than they are watching. While they used different labels to categorize YouTubers and different methods to determine these groups, both Burgess and Green's content analysis and Maia et al.'s clustering analysis share some similar findings (see figure 1.5). Their findings consistently reveal that the most common type of YouTuber is the producer/user even though, as Burgess and Green discovered, the most common type of popular content uploaded is traditional mass media content.

Further findings: The unintended consequences of takedowns. Most of these studies also measured the frequency of videos taken down during the sampling timeframe. Burgess and Green (2009) found 2% of their overall sample and 10% of the Most Viewed and Most Favorited content was unaccountable. Using a web crawler, Kruitbosch and Nack (2008) collected a week-long sample from YouTube's

Figure 1.5 Comparison between Burgess & Green's and Maia, Almeida, & Almeida's classification of YouTube types



Note. Distribution of YouTube type determined via content analysis of the user's channel. Burgess & Green (2009), see p. 44



Note. Clustering distribution of YouTube channels by social network attributes, YouTube behavior, and activity variables. Maia et al. (2008), see p. 4

Most Recent category. This method gathered up videos as they were being posted. Since random selection of videos (nor its users) is not possible within a YouTube search, they opted to set the crawler to select the most recently posted videos every five minutes and then to randomly select 2 from every 15 videos. After removing duplicate posts, this sampling method produced 1008 videos, but 19 of these videos (1.88%) were removed in the five minutes it took for the software to register a post and download the clip. The researchers also gathered the 100 most viewed videos of the week for their analysis. Again, three videos in this group had been removed from the site before the researchers could download the videos. From their web crawl executed early in 2007, Cheng, Dale, and Liu (2007) found 14,607 videos removed either by the user or YouTube although this category accounted for less than one percent of their large sample. An additional 24,068 videos were either flagged as inappropriate or posted privately accounting for nearly one percent of the sample.

Although these occurrences are a small portion of YouTube's content overall, it might be noticeable to the smaller groups embedded within the larger structure. Since YouTube is fairly unclear as to what actually constitutes a violation or triggers account suspensions, it is hard to know what (or who) is being removed for exactly what reason and with what effect. Only Lange (2007) has investigated the question directly in her ethnographic interviews. She found that some users are unclear as to exactly what got their accounts into trouble or suspended and some are even suspicious that rivals (both online and off) have flagged them to YouTube's authorities.

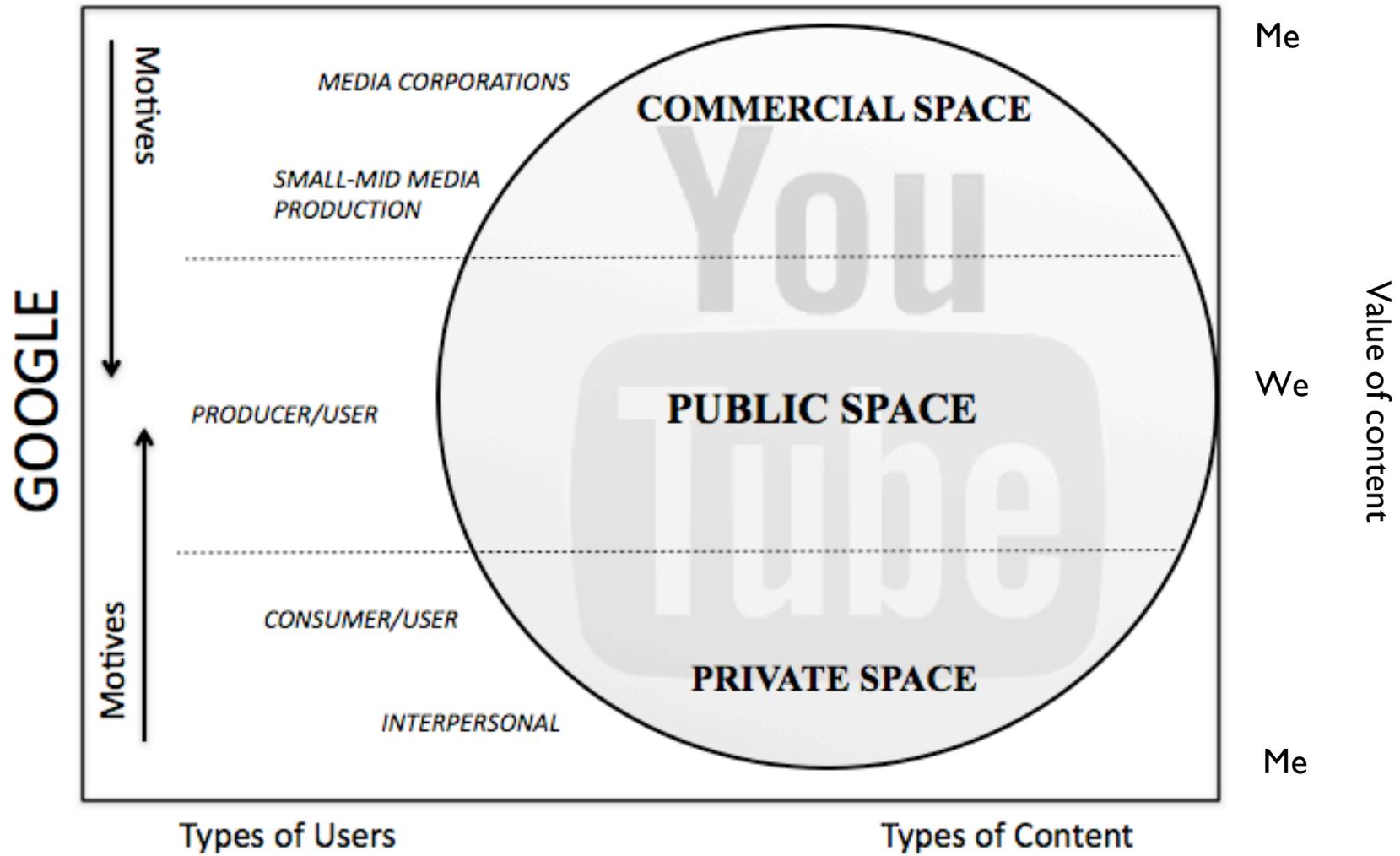
Regardless of the specifics of who and what constitutes a violation, the presence of take downs and their consequences illuminates an attribute of YouTube that is so

obvious it is often overlooked - it is an online space built within and upon Google. Any conceptualization, then, must consider YouTube founded upon the intent and concerns of the mega-corporation and its goals.

Conceptualizing YouTube

This review provides some insight into YouTube's overall structure in terms of social network attributes, types of users, and the content they provide. Firstly, YouTube should be considered a vast media platform that has three spaces that overlap and, at times, compete with each other: a private space, a commercial space, and a public space where users find their collective political and cultural discourse. Secondly, YouTube reflects common patterns found in social networks; users are clustered in tight and loose connections that spread out to other social groups within YouTube. Thus, YouTube is a social structure that is relationally built. Thirdly, through analysis of YouTube's network structure and its content, five user types have been identified: interpersonal users, users who mainly watch, small to midsize commercial media producers, producer/users who actively watch and post videos, and mass media corporations and entities. And, finally, this structure is ultimately monitored and controlled an ever-growing and expanding corporation (see figure 1.6). Thus, no matter what normative, social, or commercial structure producer/users build within YouTube, its foundation - the technical space it is built upon - has, since the purchase, a space owned and controlled by Google.

Figure 1.6 Conceptual model of YouTube's three spaces: Private, public, and commercial



Chapter Two

Uses and gratifications, communities, and the self:

Viewing YouTube through a functionalist lens

*"Each of us needs ... a setting where we can be ourselves and see ourselves mirrored in the eyes and responses of others."
(McMillan, 1996)*

YouTube is a mega-media world where commercial uses and social practices co-exist, intermix, and, unlike other social media, it is a world largely communicated through video content. YouTube's complexity poses a paradox for mass communication researchers: What theory (or theories) might be constructive in explaining YouTube's users and their motives? Should long-held concepts core to mass communication scholarship be applied? Retailored? Or should we turn to other disciplines to set a course?

The objective of chapter two is to dive deeper into theoretical explanations from mass communication and social psychology that may be suited to understand YouTubers and their motives. In addition, visual communication theories are also considered. Specifically, this chapter addresses these questions: What theory or theories might best explain users and their motives within social media platforms? Could these theories differ depending on which users and which motives are of interest? How does the visual aspect of YouTube influence outcomes?

Four sections organize this discussion: The uses and gratifications (U & G) framework is present in *Motives and media*. This review traces U & G from its 1950s and 1960s functionalist's origins through to its application to online sites, including YouTube. U & G is a long-held theoretical perspective popular within mass communication research to explain audiences and their motives. Can it be extended to YouTubers who

actively produce and contribute to the site? So far, research indicates the answer to this question is maybe yes, maybe no (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). Throughout the history of mass communication there have been calls to consider multi-level analysis (McQuail, 1974; Pan & McLeod, 1994). Utilizing a functional approach as defined by social psychology scholars meets these calls directly. The next section, *The me and we of media*, addresses both group level and individual level theories on motive and perceptions of the collective. The *psychological sense of community* and *need to belong* theories are presented in this section.

At least one type of YouTuber, the video blogger (vlogger) is in the practice of stepping outside of their internal selves, capturing themselves as mediated content, and offering that contribution to the group. One possible consequence of these actions may be a change in one's self-concept. *Me in the lens* will review theories on the self-concept, visual communication, and self-presentation to sketch a framework by which to examine how YouTubers' actions may influence their self-concept.

Although the theories presented in this chapter appear as an *a priori* set of theories, as already noted, this process was inductive rather than deductive; i.e. findings from study one informed study two; specifically, the approach to viewing YouTube as a community. The chapter concludes by presenting the research questions and operational definitions for each study.

Motives and media

From the uses and gratifications perspective

Ever since the field of mass communication began, researchers have been asking: Why do people use media, for what purpose, and with what outcome? (see Berelson,

1949; Herzog, 1942; Merton, 1952; Wolf & Fiske, 1949). This effort to understand the origins of media use, its context, and its consequences shifted the focus away from messages to audiences. The distinction between U & G and media effects is captured in the often-used phrase that uses and gratifications research does not ask "What does media do to people?" but instead asks "What do people do with media?" (Katz & Foulkes, 1962, p. 378).

Though the "why" of media use was examined in the 1930s and 1940s, it was not until the late 1950s and early 1960s that the terms "uses," "motives," and "gratifications" began to be used jointly and formally (see Katz, 1959; Klopper, 1963; Katz & Foulkes, 1962; McLeod, Ward, & Tancill, 1965; Schramm, Riesman, & Bauer, 1959). Early on, U & G was rooted within functionalism as expressed by Wright (1960). Wright built on Lasswell's (1948) three functions of media, *surveillance* (information needs), *correlation of society* (editorial needs), and *the transmission of social heritage* (socialization needs) and added *entertainment* to the list. Wright posited that functional analyses could be applied to four locations of mass media: at the highest level of abstraction, media use could be viewed as a *social process* (societal level), as a *method of communication* (channel level), as an *institution* or *organization* (institutional or organizational level), and as a *communication activity* (interpersonal level). The functional aspect of the theory considers "the individual as a system, as in uses and gratifications research, [and] elements of the system could include needs, motives, values, attitudes, interests, desires, tastes, behaviors, and the like" (Rubin, 1986, p. 284).

At its most basic, U & G posits that individuals differentially select and use media which competes with other sources to gratify some self-realized need (Rubin, 1986, p.

281). U & G research attempts to explain the motives for media consumption, how that use is gratifying, and to identify the functions and consequences that follow from that media use. The premise is grounded on the suppositions that: 1) audiences actively 2) choose media in a goal directed and purposeful act and 3) they link that media consumption with a need gratification although 4) media competes with other gratification sources and, finally, 5) that audience members are self-aware of their media motives and, thus, this process can be measured by self-reports (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, pp. 20-22).

During the 1970s scholars worked toward advancing the early descriptive work into conceptual models. This work was largely concerned with identifying typologies of media gratifications and the social and psychological variables influencing that use. Through interviews, Katz, Hass, and Gurevitch (1973) narrowed 35 possible psychological media consumption needs down to five categories: *cognitive needs* (information seeking), *affective needs* (strengthening emotional or pleasurable experiences), *personal integrative needs* (for status, credibility, or confidence), *social integrative needs* (strengthening connections to family, friends), and *escape or tension release needs* (for diversion or relaxation) (pp. 166-167). Katz et al. considered the escape or tension need as one that weakens "contact with self and one's social roles" (p. 167). McGuire (1974) constructed a matrix of sixteen motives drawn from social psychology categorized as being either *active* or *passive*, *internally* or *externally located*, *cognitive* or *affective* needs that are sought for either *preservation* or *growth* (see p. 127). McLeod and Becker (1974) examined possible intervening variables regarding political

participation and media use; Lometti, Reeves, and Bybee (1977) compared the functions of interpersonal communication to mass media channels.

Although U & G is one of mass communication's "big three" theories (Bryant & Miron, 2004), it is often described as an approach, paradigm, perspective, or an umbrella for a collection of theories rather than a theory in-and-of-itself (Blumler, 1985; Eighemy & McCord, 1998; Levy & Windahl, 1985; Rubin, 2002; Ruggerio, 2000; Swanson, 1979). It has also been a "magnetic force" in attracting criticism, although much of that criticism is from its own supporters (Rubin, 1986, p. 288). From the start, U & G was criticized as being: too focused on individual differences; inconsistent in its typologies and conceptualizations; too willing to generalize findings on motives from investigations on specific media use; too tied to its functional roots that negated both dysfunctions (at either the individual or societal level) and the influence of media systems and producers on individuals; its assumption of an active audience and how it should be measured; and dependency on an *a priori* set of needs researchers assume media satisfies (Becker, 1979; Blumler, 1979; Daley, 1979; Elliot, 1974; McQuail, 1987; McLeod & Blumler, 1988; Swanson, 1979).

U & G scholars addressed many of these criticisms throughout the later 1970s and into the 1990s. Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rosengren (1985) urged scholars to detach from the theory's "functionalist moorings" in order to see the gratification processes as "taking place within a field of interaction between societal structures and individual characteristics, an interaction calling forward specific realization of the potentials and restrictions inherent in those structures and characteristics" (p. 16). McQuail (1984) suggested that *cultural tastes* may serve as a better description for media motivations

than needs. Differences between interpersonal gratification sources, such as friends or family, and media sources were investigated directly (Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988; Kippax & Murray, 1980; Perse & Rubin, 1990).

Some attempts to build theoretical models sought to merge U & G with media effects. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985) drew on expectancy-value theory to propose that "gratifications sought from media experience are a function of both beliefs (expectations) that audience members hold about media sources and the affective evaluations they attach to media attributes" (p. 63). Beliefs about media are formed by direct observation (descriptive), through others' experience (informational) or, when observation is not possible, by inference (inferential). This model marks a distinction between belief that a medium can satisfy a need as *gratifications sought* and the actual media experience as *gratifications obtained*. Levy and Windall (1985) posited that the audience's orientations to media use were more useful than the generalized notion of an active audience and posited that audiences were oriented to use media by their *selectivity, involvement, and utility*. They advanced the concept that media effects are present *before, during, and after* media exposure. Addressing audience activity, Rubin (1984) dichotomized media experiences into *ritualistic* (passive) and *instrumental* uses (active). Rubin proposed that ritual use was perpetual and reinforcing and, thus, habit forming. Rubin and colleagues also subsumed the vast U & G typologies to construct, test, and verify the Television Viewing Motives Scale whereby motives to watch television were clustered into nine categories: *relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape* (see Perse, 1994, pp. 367-371).

U & G in a digital world. Beginning in the mid-1980s, scholars turned to the

U & G framework as online bulletin boards, VCRs, cable television, and home Internet services were being introduced and adopted into use (Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988; James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995; Lin, 2001; Perse & Rubin, 1990). With these new media technologies, U & G research enjoyed a resurgence for two reasons: its assumption of an active audience lent itself well to understanding "the self-motivated, goal-oriented, and gratifications-expected audience" (Lin, 1996, p. 578) and its openness conceptually and methodologically was thought to be useful in examining a variety of motives within emergent and diverse media platforms (Bryant & Miron, 2004; Morris & Ogden, 1996). Noting its historical place in mass communication research, Ruggiero (2000) called U & G "the cutting-edge theoretical approach" for understanding emergent media (p. 27). In regard to this work, key U & G concepts are: in understanding the distinctions between interpersonal and media motives, that the perceptions of new technology tools help individuals cognitively organize its attributes and functions, and the usefulness of U & G to examine emergent media in an ever changing mediated world.

Mixing the interpersonal with the mediated. Mass communication scholars have long been interested in the relationship between interpersonal and mass mediated communication (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Rogers, 1996; for current work see Southwell & Yzer, 2008). Within the uses and gratifications paradigm, scholars began by sorting out how interpersonal and media channels competed with or complimented each other as motivation sources (Katz, 1973; see also Kippax & Murray, 1980; McQuail, 1987). Early work indicated that most needs, and those deemed most important to individuals (self identity and social contact), were primarily satisfied by personal contacts rather than media use (Kippax & Murray, 1980; Lichtenstein &

Rosenfeld, 1983). However, social needs can also be met by media sources. For example, as home televisions were being adopted in the 1950s they served as a *functional alternative* to radio use since the time families and friends spent gathered around radios was being replaced by gathering around the TV instead. So, although movie attendance was expected to suffer from television, it was actually radio listening that declined (Meyersohn, 1968).

The social side of computer networks has, from the start, been reported as a gratifying attribute from users (James, Wotring, & Forrest, 1995; Rheingold, 2000). Recent U & G scholarship examining the motives to create and maintain blogs indicates that interpersonal motives are driven in part by self expression, social connections, and the medium's attributes and are, somewhat, in competition with motives ascribed to mediated channels (i.e., escape, pass time, entertainment, etc.). Through ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews, Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz (2007) identified five motivational functions bloggers reported as driving their blog behavior: as a means to *document one's life*, to *provide commentary and opinions*, as *catharsis* by expressing deeply held emotions, *finding one's own thoughts* through writing - described by one blogger as "thinking by writing," - and to *be part of a community* (pp. 43-45). Li (2007) used a twenty-four item list of motivations to identify seven motivational factors: to *improve writing skills* was the strongest motive followed by *information*, *medium appeal*, *self-expression*, *self-documentation*, *socialization*, and *passing time*. However, information was significantly correlated with self-documentation ($r=.14$, $p < .05$) as well as with self-expression ($r=.23$, $p < .01$) suggesting that both self-expression and self-documentation may overlap with information motives (see A. Rubin & Rubin, 1985 for

discussion on how the interrelatedness of motive). Consistent with other findings, Li found age and sex influenced bloggers' motivations: self-documentation, self-expression, and passing time were stronger motives for the younger bloggers and for women more than men; older men, on the other hand, were blogging for informational needs (see also Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004; Herring, Scheidt, Kouper, & Wright, 2006).

What is it good for? Perceptions of emergent technologies. How people perceive and cognitively sort out which sources (mediated or interpersonal) meet which needs has been a core element in U & G work. Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld (1983) were struck by the strength of participants' agreement as to the functions of specific media to the point that they wondered if the notion of an active audience should be rephrased as "audience agreement" instead. Swanson (1987) urged researchers to examine the connection between individuals' motivations, the attributes of a medium or message, and individuals' interpretations of that medium or message (see p. 246). In Perse and Courtright's (1993) terminology, we hold normative images of both mass and interpersonal communication channels that are, in part, drawn from the attributes of medium or its messages (see also Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Lin, 2003).

There is some new evidence, though, that the perceptions of a medium's functions may not reflect actual use nor do similar functions necessarily predict displacement. In the vastness of the 21st century mediated world it seems that displacement should be considered in terms of complimentary functions, not competing ones (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). For example, before the World Wide Web was introduced, Perse and Courtright (1993) argued that the new technologies of the day - VCRs and cable television - might

displace network and local television use since they were perceived as functional alternatives. Seven years later, though, Althaus and Tewskbury (2000) found evidence counter to their hypothesis that using the Web for surveillance (surveying for information and news) would displace traditional news media use. Although participants reported that they perceived television news and newspapers as meeting surveillance needs better than the Web and the Web better at meeting entertainment needs than traditional sources, their actual use revealed a different pattern. First, using the Web for surveillance was the strongest predictor of time spent online, not entertainment uses. Next, after controlling for level of political knowledge, computer anxiety, and desire for control, the relationship between web use for surveillance and frequency of reading the newspaper was significant and positive. In other words, using TV for entertainment was being displaced by overall web use while using the Web for information increased newspaper reading. Furthermore, newspaper reading increased as using the television for surveillance increased (see Diddi & LaRose, 2006 for similar findings). These findings suggest that traditional media use is being combined and heightened, not diminished, in the presence of a new medium deemed to be functionally similar.

It may also be necessary to consider media content in niches instead of generalizing in broad categories. For example, Nabi, Sitt, Halford, and Finnerty (2006) found that the *perception of reality*, how "true-to-life" people perceive television to be, did not predict motives to watch nor enjoyment from watching reality shows except in the case of informational reality shows, such as *Trading Spaces*, where perception of reality had a negative effect on enjoyment. *Voyeurism*, though, enhanced enjoyment of the

reality-genres of: romance programs, dramas, and game shows, but not informational, crime, or talent genres (see also Riess & Wiltz, 2004).

Yet the perception of reality may still influence motives from the other side of media, from the side of media producers. Cohen (2005) found a pattern among photobloggers in regards to the photos they sought to capture. Photobloggers are photographers who maintain a blog dedicated to their photography. Through interviews with the bloggers and an analysis of their sites, Cohen discovered they were motivated to capture "real life" and discussed this motivation in terms similar to the self-documentation motive found in other blogging studies (Herring, Kouper, Scheidt, & Wright, 2004; Herring, Scheidt, Kouper, & Wright, 2006.; Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2007; Li, 2007). To accomplish this task, many had purchased more equipment and carried their cameras throughout their daily lives. One photographer expressed a desire to have a camera implanted in his eyes or in his glasses. The photobloggers universally scorned staged photos, such as portraits, or photos that used obvious techniques, such as flash photography. The responsibilities of the blog and its audience became both a motivating influence and an experience the photographers took into the act of taking pictures. Although they loved taking photos, it was the need to refresh their blog that provided continual motivation to take and post photos for the blog and its audience. Furthermore, the blog was ever present in their minds' eye as the act of finding, composing, and capturing pictures mixed, simultaneously, with imagining how the shot would look on their blog. In their mind, snapping a shutter and seeing it finished on the blog became one.

Cohen's findings do not illuminate whether this goal of capturing "the real"

drove certain photographers to blog or the experience of blogging with other photographers socialized a norm to seek the real. While perceptions of a new technology and its functions are considered to be influential in the process of adopting a new medium, other studies do not fully elaborate on which comes first, perception or experience. For example, in Sweetser, Porter, Chung, and Kim's (2008) study on the perception of blog credibility, both journalists and public relations professions held negative opinions of blogs. However, public relations professionals who used blogs for surveillance considered them a more credible source than those who did not use them; journalists who used blogs, regardless of motive, perceived blogs more favorably and thought they would eventually impact the profession, an assessment the PR cohort did not share regardless of use. Although these findings indicate that use of a social media platform is associated with users' perceptions of a medium, they do not illuminate nor predict the direction of that influence.

It is also not always clear as to *what* perceptions of *which* medium matter. In his study on religious television audiences Adelman (1987) found the instrumental and ritualized categories of media use provided a limited explanation of users and their motives. He identified and labeled a third group as *reactionary uses*. Reactionary viewers were motivated by their negative perception of mainstream television fare which they considered morally lacking. As with instrumental and ritualized users, reactionary viewers sought different attributes from the programs, namely the sermons, music, and the inclusion of children, that they found gratifying.

Although U & G has always been under construction, the current blurring of the boundaries between interpersonal/media sources within dynamic social platforms against

the backdrop of an increasingly complex mix of media sources challenges the perspective even further. The paradox of its usefulness in explaining media motives while, possibly, missing some salient distinctions of motives within YouTube is highlighted in Haridakis and Hanson's (2009) U & G study on YouTube users.

Uses and gratifications within YouTube. From a random sample of undergraduates (N=427), Haridakis and Hanson asked participants how much they agreed with 51 motive statements in regards to their YouTube use (these items were taken from Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rubin, 1983, and their own focus group data). Independent variables included *YouTube affinity* (measurement of importance users ascribed to YouTube), *amount of time viewing* and *sharing* on YouTube, the psychological variables of *locus of control*, and *sensation seeking*, a measurement of participants' offline *social activity* (interpersonal interaction and social activity), and *demographics* (sex and age). Dependent variables were *motives to watch* and *motives to share* YouTube videos. Factor analysis identified six motivation factors: *convenient entertainment* (diversion items such as pass time, habitual use, and for entertainment), *interpersonal connection* (inclusion, expression, and control time), *convenient information seeking* (no-cost and novel means of getting information and news), *escape* (to forget or get away from life, people, or things), *co-viewing* (to watch or share with family and friends), and *social interaction* (to meet new people and participate in discussions). Their results illuminate how U & G may be useful to examine watching motives, but not participation motives such as sharing videos, posting responses, or creating videos. Variables that predicted watching motives were: sex, social activity, convenient entertainment, information, co-viewing, and social interaction ($R^2 = .46$, $p < .001$). In other words, men who were more socially active

watched YouTube to pass time, be entertained, find information, share with family and friends, and to meet and interact with others. For sharing motives, participants with internal locus of control and who reported higher levels of social activity shared videos for social interaction, entertainment, and co-viewing ($R^2 = .35$, $p < .001$). These findings support the premise that watching and sharing videos are two overlapping, but still distinct experiences with different motives and different users. The top *watch* motives were consistent with U & G findings on traditional media motives. *Social interaction* motives were significant but at the bottom of the list. However, those who shared videos were mainly motivated by their need for social interaction. Moreover, these individuals are internals who have a higher level of social activity. Furthermore, Haridakis and Hanson did not seek those who produce and post videos as a cohort of interest, only participants from a college population who watch and share videos. In the end, then, the answer to the question "Is the uses and gratifications framework helpful in examining YouTube?" is: U & G may be helpful for *watch* motives but other users and their motives may not be fully captured.

In summary, the U & G perspective has been particularly useful in understanding motives and users within emergent media spaces. Conceptual and empirical work has advanced the premise of an active audience that seeks media as sources of gratification among all possible alternative sources (mediated and interpersonal). Also, the framework considers social and psychological influences on the process of selecting, consuming, and interacting with media before, during, and after exposure. However, it is unclear whether its basic typology of motives is helpful to understanding participatory, mediated, social platforms. As Haridakis and Hanson's work indicated, U & G may be a suitable means of

examining motives to watch YouTube content, but the motive to share within that world appears to be distinct from watch motives. As mass communication scholars, should we expand on the U & G typology? Or should we consider U & G better at discovering passive users and their motives but not active users? Furthermore, U & G may still be bounded by older conceptualizations built upon the hierarchical structure of mass media producers on one end and an audience on the other while ignoring the dynamic changes and structures that emerge from a social network.

To meet Fischer's contention that new technologies are tools at the individual level and systems above, both individuals and situations must be considered. Multi-level analysis is, of course, encompassed within the U & G framework, however critics have argued that dispositional variables and motives garnish more attention than social influence. The next section discusses functionalism within social psychology and theories that may address both dispositional and situational variables that influence YouTubers' motives - specifically, psychological sense of community and need to belong.

The me and we of media

To consider both micro- and macro-level variables to explain media use and systems is a consistent call within mass communication scholarship (see Jensen & Rosengren, 1990; Pan & McLeod, 1991). For example, using McGuire's (1974) matrix of social psychological motives, McQuail (1987) posited that a number of needs could operate at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, formal organizational, and societal levels differently. Needs related to *the self*, then, manifest themselves differently due to what constitutes the self: at the *intrapersonal level* one seeks to maintain, develop, and reinforce the self-concept, at the *interpersonal level* a couple or family seeks *joint*

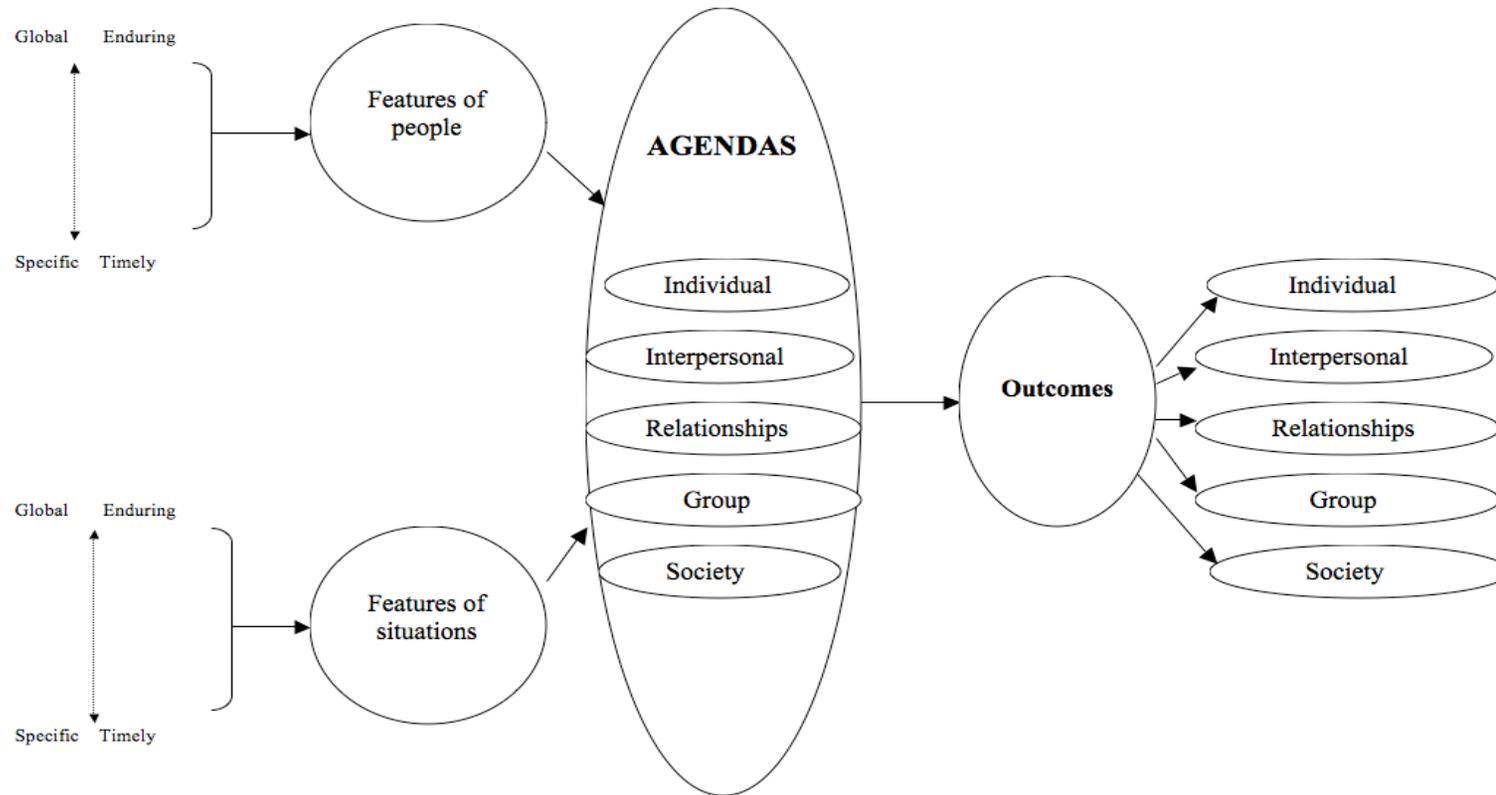
identity, at the *social group level* a group seeks expressions of its collective identity, marks boundaries, and establishes normative structures, at the *social network level* an organization seeks to establish its formal identity and formulate values, and at the *societal level* nations seek to express national identity, disseminate national values, traditions, history, culture, and language (pp. 333-346; see also Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988). Although U & G is founded upon functionalism, it is often merely mentioned and not fully articulated. For this, we need to turn to social psychology.

Functionalist approaches in social psychology

Snyder and Cantor (1998) argues for a functionalist approach whereby by both dispositional and situational variables are considered influences on behavior. At its core, the functionalist strategy's concerns are focused on "... the motivational foundations of people's acts, and with the agendas that they set for themselves and that they act out in pursuit of their goals" (p. 642). From this frame, both situational and dispositional variables (inputs) influence a person to *move* (motive) toward a goal, agendas are formed in pursuit of that goal, and outcomes are the end result (see figure 2.1). Different levels are theorized from the personal, to the interpersonal, to the group level, and finally to the societal level. As Snyder (1993) has succinctly noted, from a functionalist perspective the question "Of what use to people are their attitudes?" receives the answer "...[to] help people meet needs, execute plans, and achieve ends" (p. 254).

Similarly, Katz (1960) advocated for an examination of the motives attitudes serve. In other words, two individuals may hold the same favorable (or unfavorable) opinion of

Figure 2.1. Conceptualizing a functional model



Note. Model from Snyder & Cantor (1998), Understanding personality and social behavior. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.) *Handbook of Social Psychology: Vol. 1.*, p. 647.

an object, but that attitude may serve different needs for each person. Katz designated four functions of attitudes: the *adjustment function* (maximizing rewards), the *ego* (reinforcing one's self-concept via expression), and the *knowledge function* (to give meaning or standards to the chaotic)(see also Snyder & DeBono, 1989).

As discussed earlier, perceptions of a medium's functions may not predict actual use. However, intuitively it seems that perceptions of YouTube might be useful since the site can be many things to many people. Perceiving YouTube along its tagline connotations - a means to "Broadcast Yourself"- would set in motion different motives and behavior for one individual than for another who perceives the site as mainly a way to stay connected with friends and family. Furthermore, for someone who perceives the site as a community, the need to be part of a group or to connect with people (who are not friends or family) may motivate his behavior differently than the previous users. Measuring motives along the traditional U & G framework - such as affinity and motive - might mask actual perceptions, motives, and uses. In other words, these three individuals might report similar reasons for using the site (passing time and entertainment) and agree that they would miss YouTube if it no longer existed, but all three are actually using the site quite differently. Understanding the perceptions of YouTube might point research in fruitful directions, but it must also be viewed in context and in niches within YouTube (see Nabi Sitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006).

Psychological sense of community

Before anyone logged onto the first computer network, ARPANET, visions of collaborative, creative online communities were already expressed (Licklider & Taylor, 1968). Once it was launched, ARPANET's usefulness as resource sharing tool, the

purpose it was built for, dwarfed in comparison to how users were actually using the network - as a means of communication (Abbate, 1999). The second computer network created, USENET, originally began as a means to share information on the UNIX operating system and bring email to non-ARPANET institutions. However, it quickly became a social space as online discussion groups formed around shared interests such as a passion for chess playing or a love of science fiction writing. USENET provided individuals the chance to connect with "compatriots in thought" (Hauben & Hauben, 1997). In the mid-1980s the *Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link* - commonly known as The WELL - launched from its offices on the Sausalito pier in Northern California. Although the WELL is synonymous with virtual community (Rhinegold, 1993), Hafner (1997) contends that it was not defined as such by its users until the first conflict arose. This observation echoes the heated discourse in YouTube over Oprah-like incidents. In other words, even in the early text-based years of online groups, conflicts promoted an "us-not-them" response that helped the group define the borders of their relational community. What is not clear, though, is whether these online communities share similar attributes and dimensions to the bonds and concerns of geographical communities.

Psychological sense of community as a construct. Sarason (1974) proposed that communities, in order to be healthy, must meet needs, provide rewards, and establish order within a reciprocal structure. Chavis, McMillan, and their colleagues took the next step and articulated the dimensions and functions on which individuals' sense of their social cohesiveness could be measured within collectives such as neighborhood, communities, or affiliated groups (Chavis, Hogg, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986; Chavis & Newbrough, 1986; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Similar to those who

conceptualized, built, and used the first computer networks, Chavis and McMillan contend that communities can be geographically bound or relationally tied. The four interrelated dimensions of a psychological sense of community are: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Membership is defined by five aspects: individuals must feel that they *belong* to the group and *recognize the boundaries* of the group. Deviants, then, serve the community by defining who does not belong. Trust is built as newer members are tested by older members to assess their intent, level of participation, and commitment to the collective. Thus, *personal investment* earns membership. *Safety* is a necessary attribute for members to feel accepted and protected. Moreover, the community shares a *symbolic system* that is reinforced through rituals, myths, ceremonies, and holidays. Ten years after their first article, McMillan (1996) suggested that *spirit* might be a better label than membership since it encompasses the spirit of friendship and personal connections. Blanchard and Markus (2002) contend that membership in virtual communities is better described as recognizability, i.e. I can recognize others and others recognize me.

Influence builds social order. Members trust leaders to set a direction and leaders trust members to bring their concerns and insights. Thus, a normative structure is created and maintained that guides behavior and expectations. In his later article, McMillan (1996) redefined influence as *trust*. "Without this capacity, the community will eventually perish" (p. 319).

Integration and fulfillment of needs reinforces the individual and community level of needs and rewards. As needs for status, competency (appreciation of yours and others'

abilities and skills) and for successes are met cohesiveness grows. Again, ten years later, McMillan returned to this dimension and redefined it as *social trade* that is built upon intimate connections:

The medium of exchange in a community social economy is self-disclosure. The value of a trade depends on the personal risk involved in self-disclosure. In a social economy, the most risky and valuable self-disclosures involve the sharing of feelings. A community's members begin by sharing feelings that are similar, i.e., that they have in common. They move on to share positive feelings about one another. Once a base of understanding and support is established, the members can begin to share criticisms, suggestions, and differences of opinion. At this point, the basis of trading becomes part of the social economy. Members have established their safety from shame and believe they can work, learn, and grow safely in their social exchanges. (McMillan, 1996, p. 321)

A strong community also shares a past. This *shared emotional connection* is forged by a community's history, salient events, and dramatic moments. Instead of generalized notions of emotional connections, McMillan argued that the group determines defining events, creates and shares interpretations of that history and, thus, builds its mythic and symbolic identity.

Sense of community (SOC) is thought to be positively related to happiness and well-being (Davidson & Cotter, 1991), political participation (Davidson & Cotter, 1989), and student satisfaction (Drouin, 2008). Recent work has examined differences of SCO across space, time, and between geographic and relational communities. Obst, Zinkiewicz, and Smith (2002) drew a convenience sample from individuals attending an international science fiction fan convention to compare SOC to geographical and relational communities. While these participants had a strong sense of community for

both their geographical community (wherever they lived in the world) and their online fandom community, their sense of the fandom community was stronger. Maya-Jariego and Armitage (2007) examined immigrant populations and their SOC to their original community, their new community, and their relational connection with other expatriate compatriots in their new residential location. Although SOC for their original community weakened as time increased in the new country, those who had more compatriot members within their personal network had a stronger SOC with both their original country and with their expatriates community. Maya-Jariego and Armitage contended that these relational communities serve as bridges between the two geographical communities separated temporally and spatially.

SOC and virtual communities. Along with Markus, Blanchard's work advances SOC into online collectives such as blogs, Usenet groups, and listservs bound by common interests. Blanchard (2004) applied the Sense of Community Index (SCI) to the popular Julie/Julia blog (Julie Powell's blog that documented her year-long journey of cooking through Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*). Blanchard found mixed results to the question: Can we consider a blog a virtual community? How long one had been going to the site and frequency of visits predicted SOC followed by those who posted and read comments. However, the overall strength of SOC was moderate ($M = 3.12$, measured along a 5-point Likert scale). Since time on the site influenced SOC, Blanchard wondered if the limited life of the blog might have attenuated SOC (Powell ended posting once the year was over). Also, since those who posted had a higher SCO than those who did not, Blanchard speculated on whether the community aspect was shared among only a small group embedded within the larger group. This brings another

consideration into the question of whether online collectives see themselves as a community: attributes of the technology matter. In previous work, Blanchard and Markus (2002) had found that lurkers (users who only read comments) had reported a sense of community in a Usenet sports group. Missing attributes from Powell's blog may have discouraged visitors from perceiving the site as a community. In particular, Blanchard noted the front page that greeted viewers did not have a blog roll (a list of blogs the author deems important) and the comments section could have been overlooked since it was not prominent. Why would passive users have a SOC similar to those who are active in the Usenet group but not in Powell's blog? Lurkers in the Usenet group could observe the exchanges between the active users who started and responded to posts. Furthermore, Blanchard (2008) contends that the perception of norms mediates aspects of community; those who are more aware of a site's social norms are also more likely to be aware of supportive exchanges within the group. A site's technical tools that help users discover others' information increases the perception that others within the group know you. Blanchard's insights, then, might explain why SOC may differ across groups: 1) those who are aware of the site's norms may have a higher perception that the collective functions as a community, 2) active groups may be embedded underneath the larger population and their uses, and 3) technological attributes facilitates SOC.

Since SOC implies that individuals are motivated to attach to others and, thereby, create a sense of the collective self, one dispositional attribute must be considered as a influencing SOC: the need to belong.

The fundamental need to belong

First formally proposed by Baumeister and Leary (1995), the *need to belong*

is considered fundamental to human existence since it operates in a wide array of situations, affects a spectrum of behaviors, guides both cognitive and affective responses, transcends cultural borders, and, if unmet, leads to distress and dysfunction. Thus, belonging motives are not situational. In a chapter on belonging motivation, Leary and Cox (2008) illustrated this point in the story of a scholar who was forced to abandon a study examining motivations of hermits to shun personal contacts. Even hermits, it seems, have a need to belong and find ways to meet it. Those who are more motivated by a belonging need should not be considered a lonely or isolated individual but someone who has a "large social appetite" (Pickett et al., p. 1097).

As a fundamental necessity to humanness, those low on need to belong (NTB) may not exist, but those who have a higher NTB - or "chronic" NTBers - have been identified as being more sensitive to others and accurate in their emotional assessment. Pickett, Gardner, and Knowles (2004) found chronic NTBs were more likely than others to pick up on overt and subtle expressive facial and tonal cues. In one study they asked a woman to relive an emotional memory and recorded her retelling the story on video tape. She then watched the tape and stopped at each emotional moment to write down her feelings and thoughts at that particular moment. She identified four locations in the tape and her feelings at each location. Participants watched the tape and were asked what they thought she was feeling at each of the four spots on the tape. Their evaluations were recorded and analyzed by blind coders who rated the accuracy of their evaluations from a 0 -2 scale (0 for not accurate, 1 for somewhat accurate, or 2 for accurate). Participants higher in NTB were more accurate in their evaluations. This finding suggests that chronic NTBers are highly empathetic.

In summary, psychological sense of community is a well tested construct used to examine the strength of collectives' perception that they are a viable, useful community and not just a randomized group of individuals (like an audience). In this manner, the theory may be helpful in understanding those who actively produce and engage in YouTube as opposed to those who only come to watch. Inherent in the construct are notions of social exchange; the establishment, maintenance, and awareness of a normative structure; and a shared symbolic means of communication and interpretation within a reciprocal group. It has been applied to both geographical and relational collectives. However, as Blanchard's findings indicate, some online groups perceive their online cohort as a community more than others and characteristics the site mediate their perception of community.

As to YouTube's attributes, there is one aspect of the site that makes it like none other - video. Video is YouTube's main commodity by which both social and commercial value is constructed and distributed. Yet, at the time of writing, there are few studies examining the visual aspect of YouTube (see Lange's work, 2007a, 2007b). The next section reviews visual communication and self-concept theories to sketch out a possible consequence from YouTube's most common user-created genre - vlogging.

Me in the lens

Visuals have communicative power unlike all other forms of communication (Worth, 1975). Moreover, the visual communication within YouTube is even *further* unique not because of its sophisticated use of new production techniques, but because of the content's lack of professional production techniques and the use of one-shot webcams - a convention of vlogging (Burgess & Green, 2009; Kruitbosch & Nack, 2008). The act

of turning a lens on one's self, recording and uploading a clip, and then seeing yourself as mediated content tied in and connected with others should, intuitively, be a powerful experience. How, then, might this practice influence one's self-concept? A means of tying visual communication theory to theories of the self are needed. This section begins with a discussion on the self-concept followed by theories on why visual communication, via polysemic interpretations, is distinct from either text-based or verbal communication. Although both fields have a rich theoretical basis to draw from, examinations that tie the self-concept to constructed, mediated self-presentations captured in a video lens are, at least to the author's awareness, non-existent. For this work, self-presentation scholarship is the closest theoretical framework to build upon.

Returning to the looking glass self

The concept that the self is partially constituted of a reflective self harkens back to one of the oldest and enduring theories in social psychology, Cooley's *looking-glass self*. Cooley (1902) theorized that a person's self-concept is molded partially by what an individual imagines others think of him and analogized this psychological process to that of an individual looking into a mirror; a person imagines how he appears to another and anticipates that person's judgment of that image which, in turn, produces an affective state. James (1890) theorized that the self has two vital components – one social and one intrinsically intimate. James called these the *me* and the *I* self and distinguished them as the *empirical ego* (the *me* self) and the *pure ego* or the *knower* (the *I* self). This latter self, the *I*, is the inner most aspect of self, what only people can know about themselves, i.e. the knower of the pure self. However, the empirical ego, the known self, is social and is multifaceted. James posited that the known self ranges from the *bodily me* to the

idealized me (from the physical to the spiritual) (later Maslow theorized a hierarchical order to the self, see Maslow, 1954). In between these two resides the *social me*.

James thought that a man could have “as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind” (p. 164). Motives, attitudes, and behaviors are conditioned on which “me” is most salient in the current situation. For example, people may be motivated to go out to eat because of the bodily me (hunger) or they may be motivated by the social me (time with friends).

Mead (1934) extended the discussion on the self-concept and is considered the founder of social interactionism. Mead, as with James and Cooley, considered the self to be reflective. Once an individual steps into a social situation, the person takes in the imagined judgment of others and begins to construct a *self as object*. Mead advanced Cooley, though, in his contention that communication drives this interaction and considered communication to be a set of shared symbols. As a social anthropologist, Mead was particularly interested in non-verbal communication such as gestures.

Equating social experiences to theatrical performance, Goffman (1959) introduced the dramaturgical aspects of the self. Goffman (1968) contended that individuals are social actors who present a “face” to the world and are motivated to maintain consistency in this performance. Goffman termed this need for consistency as maintaining a *line*, which he defined as a set of verbal or nonverbal acts by which an individual expresses himself in social context. Face, then, is a positive affect or value and line is the reliability of that value.

Following the same hierarchical ordering, Allport (1968) updated James’ empirical me dimensions as: the *bodily me* (same as James), the *self-identity me*

(concerned with continuity), the *ego-enhancement me* (unabashed self-seeking), the *ego-extension me* (beloved possessions or “mine”), the *rational ego* (Freud’s defense mechanism), the *self-image me* (the phenomenal self), and the *appropriate striving me* (similar to James’ idealized me or Maslow’s self-actualization).

Thus, the concept that the self is constituted, in part, internally and, in part, externally holds a core place within social psychology and concepts of the self. In this way, the self-concept is a container for both internal and social knowledge of oneself and, from a functional perspective, it is widely believed we seek stability and congruency within these structures (Secord & Backman, 1965). This foundational premise, though, was ignored in early determinist work conceptualizing the role of identity creation in the Internet. For example, Turkle (1984, 1995) posited that new technologies allowed a fragmented self to be created within the online world of the earliest, text-based games - MUDs and MOOS (for criticism of fragmented self argument see Wynn & Katz, 1997). From a functionalist social psychological perspective, individuals seek consistency, not fractures, in their self-concept. For example, Baumeister (1982) argued that cognitive dissonance might not be an internal tension but rather an emotion brought on via concern over self-presentation inconsistencies instead. Baumeister sorted self presentation into being motivated by either audience or by one's self-construction; people may attend to their self-presentation due to anticipated rewards from an audience or due to the reward of bringing oneself closer to an internalized, ideal self. To this, Jones and Pittman (1982) added the strategic self-presentation motives of self-promotion, ingratiation, and exemplification.

But is the self-concept changeable? Tice (1992) sought to answer this question directly by creating experimental conditions in which half of the participants were told they were observed by a graduate student researcher and half were told that they were alone and their responses would be identifiable only by research numbers. Both groups were then asked to perform certain personality traits and, with their knowledge, were tape recorded. Participants were told the videos of their performances would be useful in testing graduate students' sensitivity to these traits in individuals. Pre-tests given at time of recruitment measured their actual trait levels on the item they were to perform. Post-performance measures were taken to see if they had internalized the performance, i.e. their self-concept moved closer to the trait and dimension they were asked to perform. This basic procedure was repeated in a number of studies with different manipulations. Regardless of their actual personality trait (for example, introverts who were asked to act as extroverts) those in the public group internalized the performance and moved their self-concept toward that performance whereas both the private and a control group did not. In the end, their self-concept was changeable due to expectations of future interactions with the graduate student, freedom to opt out of the study, and from recalling a personal experience related to the trait. In one of their studies, the researchers asked participants if they wouldn't mind taking a chair in a waiting room after completing what they thought was the full study. This post-condition behavior was measured as how close they sat next to and talked with a confederate already sitting in the waiting room. As expected, those in the public condition who performed extroversion, sat closer and talked more to a confederate than other groups. Thus, the self-concept is not only changeable, but those changes can influence behavior - at least in the short run.

The question becomes: Does the self-concept change as the social self is not only imagined but captured within the lens of a video camera, reflected back in editing software and sent out into the social world of YouTube? This question is even more pertinent when considering the power of images.

Visuals and their power to communicate

The section builds a foundation of visual theory and theoretically defines a visual communication process that might be at play between YouTube producers, users, and among producer/users themselves. The discussion on visual theory is organized by two considerations: the evidential power of visuals and visual production as a communication process. Since YouTube is mainly fueled by video and animation content, this discussion centers on visual theory as it relates to moving images rather than theories, semiotics among them, which are more applicable to understanding still images.

Visuals as proof

Since the earliest day of moving images, scholars have noted that visuals have the power to say “It is so!” (Metz, 1974, p. 4). Messaris (1996) notes that visuals serve as evidence like footprints in the sand (pp. 129-160). Why are images so convincing? Building on Charles Sander Pierce's (2006) seminal work, the cornerstone of semiotics, Messaris (1996) considers the power of images coming from three attributes: their *iconicity* (analogy), their *indexicality* (causality), and their *lack of syntax* (order) by which text and verbal communication are bound. In particular, photographs and video are both strongly iconic and indexical. They are, by their nature, evidence of an action; i.e. the act of taking a picture. Without syntactical properties, visuals communicate implicitly, which opens the meaning to personal, polysemic, and often emotive interpretations. The

polysemic meanings we infer from one raw video are intimate, emotional, and proof of the real (regardless of whether it is or not).

The power of visual as indicators of "fact" is particularly salient to Yusuf's (2009) study on social media during the Pakistani political unrest. Yusuf found that a video, shot by a Pakistani dentist and posted to his blog, functioned as "proof" of the cause of Bhutto's death more convincingly than either written eyewitness accounts or autopsy reports leaked out to social media platforms that also contested the government's assertion on the cause of her death. Unconstructed images also have evidentiary power. In two studies, Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, and Morris (2002) asked respondents to look around either office or bedroom spaces of an individual to assess the owner's characteristics. Through respondents viewed only the visual artifacts the subject had left behind, these objects held enough symbolic information that there was significant correlation between the respondents' assessments on the owners' personality to assessments made by the person's friends. In other words, armed only with the visual traces left behind, strangers significantly concurred with the individual's friends as to *who* owned each space.

Visual production as a communication process

Early film theorists considered the meaning audiences inferred from films as guided the filmic conventions invented and adopted by the earliest filmmakers of the day. In particular, Soviet filmmaker Eisenstein wrote about the collision of meaning that occurs when two seemingly unrelated shots are juxtaposed to each other (see Eisenstein & Leyda, 1949). Thus, early media and film historians heralded production techniques as conveying meaning and praised the "great storytellers" as finding the visual syntax for a

new form of media (Jacobs, 1947; Ramsaye, 1926). Since the 1970s, though, media historians and film theorists dispute the notion that meaning is derived mainly through filmic language and contends that meaning is derived by our innate skills to infer from visual events and objects (Messaris & Gross, 1977; Messaris, 1997; Musser, 1990, 1991, 1995). In other words, the meaning-making of visuals should be considered a communication process instead of a production technique.

Worth defined visual communication as "the *transmission of a signal* received primarily through visual receptors, which *we treat as a message by inferring meaning from it*" (p. 181, emphasis in the original). Along with his colleagues (Worth, 1971; see also Gross & Worth, 1974; Worth & Adair, 1972; Worth & Gross, 1981) Worth advanced a cognitive model that occurs in three locations: with the creator of the image (speaker), in the image itself (outcome of communication), and with the viewer (receiver). A person is moved to create something from a desire to express or, in Worth's words, a person has a feeling that arouses enough concern that they are compelled to speak. Worth called this motive the *feeling-concern* need. Once motivated, the speaker must adopt a communication strategy; i.e. a way to construct a story. Worth called this stage of the process the *story-organism* that mediates between the feeling-concern state and the actual creation of a visual statement, or the *image-event*. Thus, visual communication begins as an internal motivation to express a concern (often vague at this stage), which leads to cognitive organization of visual elements (or structure) that controls creative decisions that leads to an external, visual expression of that concern. From the receiver's side, this process is mirrored; i.e. from an external visual form

audiences recognize a story structure and infer meanings from that structure which leads to a feeling-concern.

While Worth and colleagues were first concerned with mean-making from syntactical filmic language, in later studies they posited that visuals compel us to draw on cognitive, interpretive strategies that rely on content, context, and our own personal and cultural backgrounds. In other words, visual events compel us to infer meaning when we believe they are communicating something to us whether or not they are constructed. Gross and Worth (1974) analogized this process to a situation where we are walking down a sidewalk and come upon a man laying in the gully with a sign on his chest. This is not a constructed image, of course, but a natural visual event whose ambiguous nature compels us to seek visual clues. Once we are close enough to see that the sign indicates he is part of a protest group in the area, we no longer need to seek meaning. In this manner, visuals are artifacts. In mediated images, they are artifacts of the intent of the producer. Meaning, though, is "... a function – a relationship - of something in the message and something in us" (Gross & Worth, p. 44).

At their most basic level of argument, each of these theories posits that meaning is made on both sides of a visual product. Applying Worth's model to YouTube, a person has a need to express something and then must make a plan - strategic or not - on how to construct that message and, since the message crafted is a video, visuals, logically, must be part of the producer's consideration on how to "talk" to others. In particular, vloggers attention to visual details might be at the level of self-presentation of oneself (making sure one's hair and outfit are appropriate) or one's personal space (making sure the crucifix on the wall behind is in the shot) or attending to how the video itself is edited and

shot (quick cuts with Queen's We are the Champions embedded in the audio track). In her ethnographic studies Lange (2007a, 2007b) found that vloggers use masks, hats, puppets, and sunglasses strategically to protect their privacy yet still engage or, in Lange words, provide a means of being "privately public." Thus, vloggers may be collectively establishing media and presentation conventions at three levels: from what is *seen*, i.e. objects such as hats, glasses, rooms; from the level of self-presentation, i.e. emotive gestures, inflection, posture, or facial expressions; or at the message level itself, i.e. *how* the message is constructed through editing, lighting, and shooting styles.

On the receivers' side of the visual message, all three levels may hold clues to the audience of who this person is and, among those audience members is the producer herself. Given the interpretive power of images and the possible mix of visual elements and self-expression leads one to wonder if YouTubers are communicating to an audience "out there" or to themselves as an inward means of reflections and self-construction.

The research studies

Overall, this dissertation seeks to advance our understanding of YouTubers, their motives, the influence from their social connectedness within YouTube, and one possible outcome – changes in their self-concept - that may be tied to turning the lens on oneself. Because YouTube is a relatively new social media platform, this work took an inductive approach with findings from study one informing the direction and research questions of study two. The methods, findings, and limitation of study one are presented in the next chapter. This content analysis applied a uses and gratifications framework to examine videos where YouTubers discussed their YouTube motivations. A key question asked how the motives to *watch* YouTube are different from motives to *produce* for YouTube.

In addition, since U & G posits that perceptions of a new medium influence use, how YouTubers perceive YouTube as an online space was also examined. Study two surveyed YouTubers producer/users and users to examine their sense that YouTube is a community. In this work, need to belong was considered a possible confounding variable. The methods, findings, and limitations of study two are presented in chapter four.

Chapter three

Study one: Why do you Tube?

You have a need to say something, you open up your camera and you spew it. ..., just so you can make your mark that you let people know, hey ... I am here, I exist ...

(YouTuber response to Boh3m3)

In chapter one, a conceptual model was introduced that located three spaces within YouTube: a commercial space with traditional mass media corporations and mid-sized media groups, a private space for interpersonal communication, and the public space between the two. The purpose of the model was to direct the two research studies of this dissertation. Study one begins this work by examining self-reported motives YouTubers ascribe to why they watch and produce. Returning to the model, if motives to produce remain at the individual level, such as keeping in touch with friends and relatives or working on a hobby, then we can consider YouTube as an interpersonal tool. If YouTuber's motives are more likely to be similar to mass media – such as finding an audience, market, job, or entertaining others – then we can consider YouTube closer to the commercial side. Motives that express a need to find and connect to others suggest a public space, but do they lean more to interpersonal uses or public uses deemed valuable to politics or culture? In addition to motive statements, value-statements related to how YouTubers perceive YouTube's space may illuminate the functions of this social space.

The uses and gratifications framework guided this work. As chapter two highlighted, U & G is considered the "cutting edge" tool to investigate emergent media functions. However, is it helpful as a means of understanding a dynamic, social space such as YouTube? Haridakis and Hanson's (2009) findings indicate that U & G may be helpful in understanding motives to watch YouTube content but not motives to share

YouTube content. Can the same be said of producing motives? If producing is driven by a more complex set of motives than watching, YouTubers should report a diverse set of produce motives that overlap, but do not replicate, traditional media motives such as entertainment, escape, etc.

Accordingly, the first three research questions are:

RQ₁: *What motives do YouTubers ascribe to why they watch YouTube?*

RQ₂: *What motives do YouTubers ascribe to why they produce content for YouTube?*

RQ₃: *When they talk about YouTube, what do they say YouTube is?*

Additionally, within the field of computer engineering research findings indicate that YouTubers connect and behave in common patterns found in social networks. Given these consistent findings, this study also asked:

RQ₄: *What social network attributes influence YouTubers' responses?*

Methods

Data collection

On November 29, 2006 popular YouTuber Boh3m3 asked the YouTube audience why they "tubed?" In a minute-forty-five second video Boh3m3 encourages his fellow tubers to respond back and tells them why he keeps working on content for YouTube. Boh3m3 was still receiving video and text responses into the summer of 2007 when he took down the video. Video responses to Boh3m3 were gathered from the first day of his posting until May 1, 2007 and these videos created the corpus for this study. All video responses were collected via the media downloading software TubeSock. In cases where

technical problems did not allow the software to capture the video the YouTube URL for that video was recorded for later access. Videos that were posted as private were not included in the data collection process. From this, 366 video responses were either captured or their URL was noted for future access. All videos downloaded were saved as a QuickTime file with an ID number that corresponded to data collected from the producer/user's YouTube channel. These data were recorded into an Excel file.

A large number of videos (n=107) was excluded from the final analysis for a number of reasons: 32 YouTubers did not respond to Boh3m3's question in any form; 32 videos could not be either downloaded or accessed later on via the video's URL; 15 YouTubers were determined by the coders to be acting; 5 videos were changed to a private post between when they were collected and the analysis stage; 5 videos had audio problems so severe the coders could not understand the response; 5 videos were made prior to Boh3m3's post but the Tuber re-posted it to answer his questions; 4 accounts were closed and 4 were suspended between the initial data collection and analysis; two individuals posted two different videos responding to Boh3m3 - all 4 were eliminated from the collection; and one post was a YouTube talk show that discussed Boh3m3's questions and the responses, but was not a response itself. This left 259 video responses for analysis.

Pilot study: Developing categories and codes

Content analysis is widely recognized as a method that has both benefits and disadvantages in its ability to discover patterns of meaning or structure within media content (Krippendorff, 1980; McMillian, 2009; McQuail, 2005). As Krippendorff (1980) notes, the validity of a study relates to its procedural ability to "capture those symbolic

qualities that are 'real' by some standard and whether the procedure is therefore valid to the point of representing these qualities" (p. 160). The first step in this effort is to identify value-laden sentences and then to assess if they are mutually exclusive from other categories. The researcher conducted a pilot study to identify a core of value statements that were tied to motive and perception of YouTube. Through HyperResearch software, the first 150 video responses were analyzed for normative phrases associated with motives, medium appeal, and general statements about YouTube overall (see Appendix G for a broad list of phrases and categories). From this list of phrases evaluations were made on which statements or phrases were similar enough to collapse into one code. The decision rule for collapsing codes was based on two criteria: whether the phrases overlapped in any of the cases or if collapsing phrases into one code was theoretically unsound. For example, many YouTubers talked about working on their craft in terms of acting, video shooting, or video editing and many of them expressed more than one of these in their responses. The distinction between motives to work on acting and motives to work on video editing were not theoretically salient enough to keep separate, so all craft mentions were collapsed into one code - advancing craft. However, in the surveillance category, checking in on what others are doing or saying was distinguished from those who said they were using YouTube to seek others' opinions on political or social issues for two reasons: mentions did not occur within the same cases - as it had for craft motives - and collapsing them into a broad surveillance category did not seem theoretically sound. Because of this, two surveillance motives were included in the code sheet: *surveillance-news* captured phrases or sentences related to information

Table 3.1. Examples of respondents' statements and corresponding code

Motive code	YouTubers' response
Self-expression	I think, hey that is pretty neat, maybe I will make a video. So, what do I do? Make my first blog entry. I mean, I probably got no views on it but it felt good to make the video. That is the thrill that get from making a video. I get to express my own opinion. That is why I like to YouTube.
Discourse	I always felt I had something to say and no one to say it to. A lot of my friends agree with me on political issues and religious issues so they get tired of hearing the same thing because they agree with me. I needed a forum with people who might disagree with me, but not in a hateful way. People who disagree with me and can have a conversation about it.
Surveillance-info	Well, I watch videos because it is a great way to find out what is really important to people rather than read the news – you know – having people tell you what is important. You can make your own decisions through other people's opinions.
Surveillance-others	It seems like human nature to want to watch people. People want other people to share their experiences with.... With YouTube, you pretty much get to see people from all over the world.
YouTube is ... not mainstream media	Imagine if television were more like YouTube. You are watching a news show, some guy on CNBC is talking about abortion, you disagree with him. Can you do anything to argue with him on the spot? Naw, you can't. You just have to keep watching or yelling at the TV at that kind of person. Now, imagine it was on YouTube. You see the video about abortion, you want to respond to it, you can. You make your own video put it as a response, people who see that video might see your video and – your voice is heard.
YouTube is ... Community	There are a lot of reasons being here .. one more, this community business and getting to know some people really well. Establishing forming relationships. There was somebody who commented on a video earlier saying she was not so sure about this community and then she went on to talk about the people she had connected with (laughs). So, I think that is a big piece of this. I am beginning to form friendships with people I have never met.
Mirror on self	To be able to watch myself, I guess to, because this is the first time I was able to watch myself or observe my self. And that can be a tremendous growing process.
Easier to communicate than in real life	I guess I have found it somewhat difficult to connect with my flat mates and the people I encounter on a daily basis. So this is another outlet for me to communicate with people, for me to just be myself. To say whatever I am thinking and not afraid of the response.

and knowledge seeking and *surveillance-others* captured phrases or sentences for a social comparison function. Similarly, phrases on starting or participating in a conversation were distinguished from phrases on expressing oneself. Conversation was considered a *discourse* motive while expressing oneself was kept as a *self-expression* motive (see table 3.1 for examples). From this a code sheet and code book were created (see Appendix H for code book, Appendix I for code sheet).

The pilot study also revealed the diverse and, at times, scattered manner in which YouTubers responded to Boh3m3. For example, some Tubers spoke through masks or sock puppets (consistent with other observations, see Lange, 2007a), others talked in clear and cogent ways, but started and stopped sentences as ideas came to them. To keep the coding procedures clearly and strictly defined yet to allow for latent patterns that might not be specifically tied to a motive or perception statement or where clear sentences might not been clearly communicated (socks or otherwise), four words were added to the code sheet as dependent variables: *real* in terms of people or content (external attribute), *real* in terms of themselves (internal attribute), *creative outlet*, and *community*. Presence of these words was recorded dichotomously (1= present, 0 =not present). The coders were instructed to summarize any motive or perception statement that they were unsure of or if there was no option for that type of response in the code sheet. The phrases the coders summarized in this *other* category were evaluated by the researcher to identify phrasing that overlapped with a code category in the code sheet or if a new one code was warranted (see table 3.2). Two definitions guided the coders in determining the integrity of the response. *Acting* was defined as when a respondent was two or more characters. A distinction was made for moments when YouTubers seemed

Table 3.2 Decisions on including "other" motives within code sheet categories

Dependent Variables	Motive (in code sheet or coders' descriptions in "other" category)	Moved to	
Watch -1st mentions	Escape from reality	Diversion	
	Personal utility	Interact	
	because you can find anything	Unique content	
	can find everything in one place	Unique content	
	so may things to see, so many doors can be opened	Unique content	
	you can find anything	Unique content	
	can't see it on tv	Not like TV	
	See interesting stuff other than TV	Not like TV	
	Watch - all mentions	addicted	Addicted
		catch up on tv, addictive, new	Addicted
don't have to pay for cable		Free	
Free		Free	
Take breaks from writing papers		Diversion	
voyeuristic		Voyeurism	
Personal utility		Interact	
Communicate		Self-expression	
Produce - 1st mentions		because she wants attention	Attention
		to be part of the community	Contribute-community
	Little people can voice opinions	Discourse	
	to get feedback on their work	Advance craft	
	blogging	Vlogging	
	video blog (blogging) or vlog	Vlogging	
	it's fun making yourself look like an idiot	Entertaining - fun	
	Produce - all mentions	addicted, addicting	Addicting
		Vlog	Vlogging
		blog, chase animals	Vlogging
hates typing blogs, enjoys video blogs		Vlogging	
Debate		Discourse	
feel like someone is listening		Discourse	
Talk to people all over the world		Discourse	
make world better, be heard		Discourse	
get attention		Attention	
to shock people		Attention	
YouTube - 1st mentions	Give back to those make a lot	Contribute-community	
	help others	Contribute-community	
	ungovernmented	Free	
YouTube- all mentions	better than television	Not MSM	
	creative, original, different than TV	Not MSM	
YouTube- all mentions	People	Community	
	place you can make a difference	Community	

to be playing to the camera or used a silly voice to make a joke in comparison to those who were acting. Also, those who did not respond directly to Boh3m3's question were coded as not responding directly to the question. For both, these cases were excluded from the sample.

Coders and coding procedures. Three independent coders were hired with support from a School of Journalism and Mass Communication Kriss grant. Two of the coders were student workers who had been coding television content for a long term project within the school; one had been coding television shows for a semester and half, the other had been involved for a year and a half. A third coder was hired who had no prior experience in coding media material. All were given the same set of instructions and coded 5-10 videos in the presence of the researcher to become familiar with the material, procedures, and code sheet. The code sheet was transferred onto the web survey software and hosting service Zoomerang (see Appendix I). All three coders used this online code sheet to record their work and were given a codebook as a guide. Videos were recorded onto separate DVDs and each coder was given a specific DVD with their assigned cases only. The first coder was faster than the other two and was given the YouTube URLs to code (the videos that could not be downloaded by the Tubesock software).

To measure inter-coder reliability, coders analyzed the same 10% of the sample and coefficients were drawn from the first mentions questions. Due to the errors possible within more liberal assessments, reliability coefficients are reported here as percent agreement and Krippendorff's alpha (see Krippendorff, 1980). Percent agreement for watch motives was 81% ($\alpha = 0.76$), percent agreement for produce motives was 70% ($\alpha = 0.67$), and percent agreement for YouTube perception was 80% ($\alpha = 0.66$). All three first

mention responses were summed to provide an overall agreement of 77% ($\alpha = 0.73$).

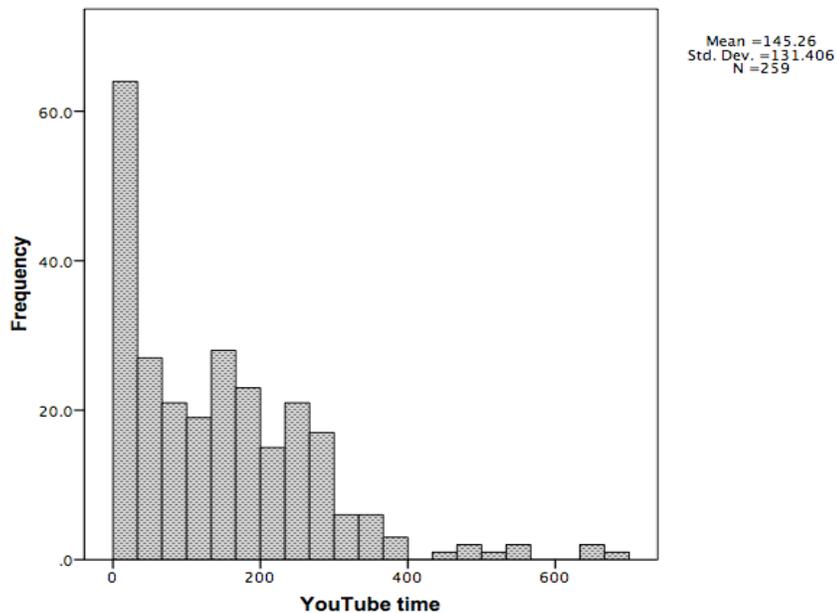
While the coefficients for produce motives and YouTube perception are low enough to be a concern, for an exploratory study coefficients in the .70 range are acceptable (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002).

Findings

Descriptive statistics

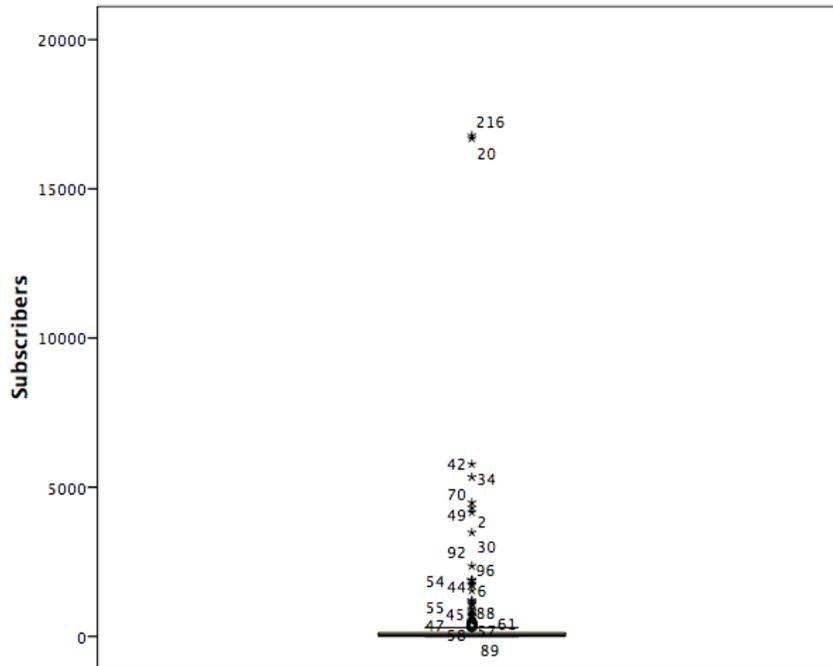
More respondents were male YouTubers (66%) than females (27.4%) followed by completely visual responses where the sex could not be determined (5.4%) and a few were posted by two or more respondents (1.2%). Distribution of YouTube time and subscribers both followed a power law distribution (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). For example, although, on the average, most of Boh3m3's respondents had their YouTube channel up for 145 days, many YouTubers' channel had a much smaller online life; 63 respondents had been on for only a month and 25 started their channel the day they responded to Boh3m3.

Figure 3.1 YouTube time in days between channel birth and response to Boh3m3



The distribution of subscribers was also skewed: the mean for subscribers was 376, but, again the most common response was 0 (n=11). Two respondents were outliers: one male Tuber had 16,786 subscribers and a female Tuber had 16,692 subscribers. Without these outliers, the range of subscribers was from 0 to 5,772 and the distribution, when cut into quartiles, was: 0-34, 35-128, 129-228, and 229 or more. To account for the highly skewed distribution, both YouTube time and subscribers were converted by a log-transformation.

Figure 3.2 Boxplot of YouTube subscribers distribution



Reciprocity - a measure of whether they acknowledged Boh3m3 or not - skewed slightly to the negative; 43% mentioned Ben either visually or verbally and 57% did not acknowledge him at all.

Research findings

The first research question this study asked was:

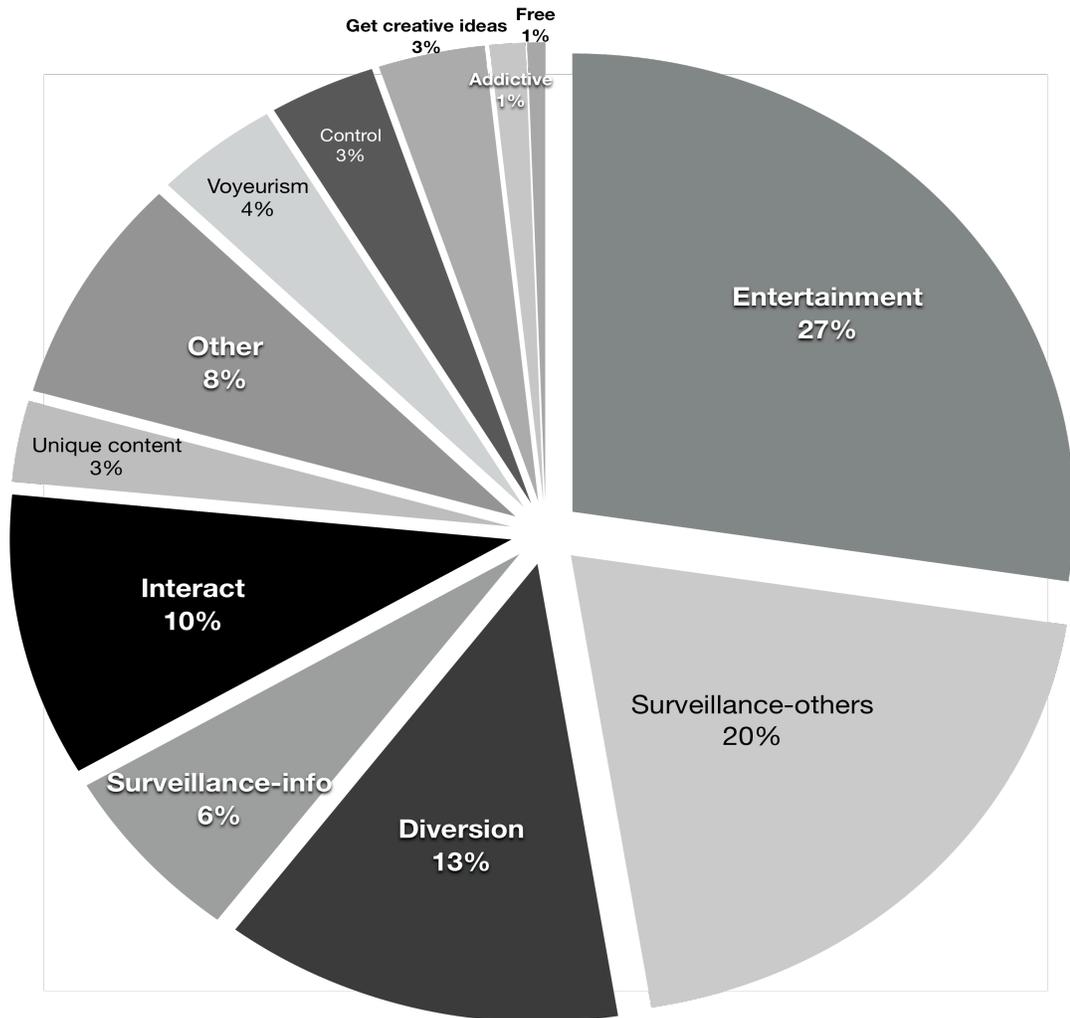
RQ₁ : *What motives do YouTubers ascribe to why they watch YouTube?* On the average, those who talked about why they watched discussed 1.87 motives (n=336).

Entertainment was the most common reason to watch YouTube content (27%) followed by surveillance of others (20%), diversion (13%), interaction (10%), and surveillance for information (6%) (see figure 3. 4). Other mentions accounted for 8% of the watch motives.

Table 3.3 Watch motives of YouTubers

	First mentions	All mentions	Total
Entertainment	69	27	96
Surveillance-others	41	29	70
Diversion	28	17	45
Surveillance-info	9	13	22
Interact	9	26	35
Unique content	6	4	10
Other	6	22	28
Voyeurism	4	10	14
Control what I watch/when	3	9	12
Get creative ideas	4	8	12
Not like TV	2	0	0
Addictive	0	4	4
Free	0	2	2
Total watch motives			350

Figure 3.3 Watch motives by percent within all watch motives mentioned



Note. N=105

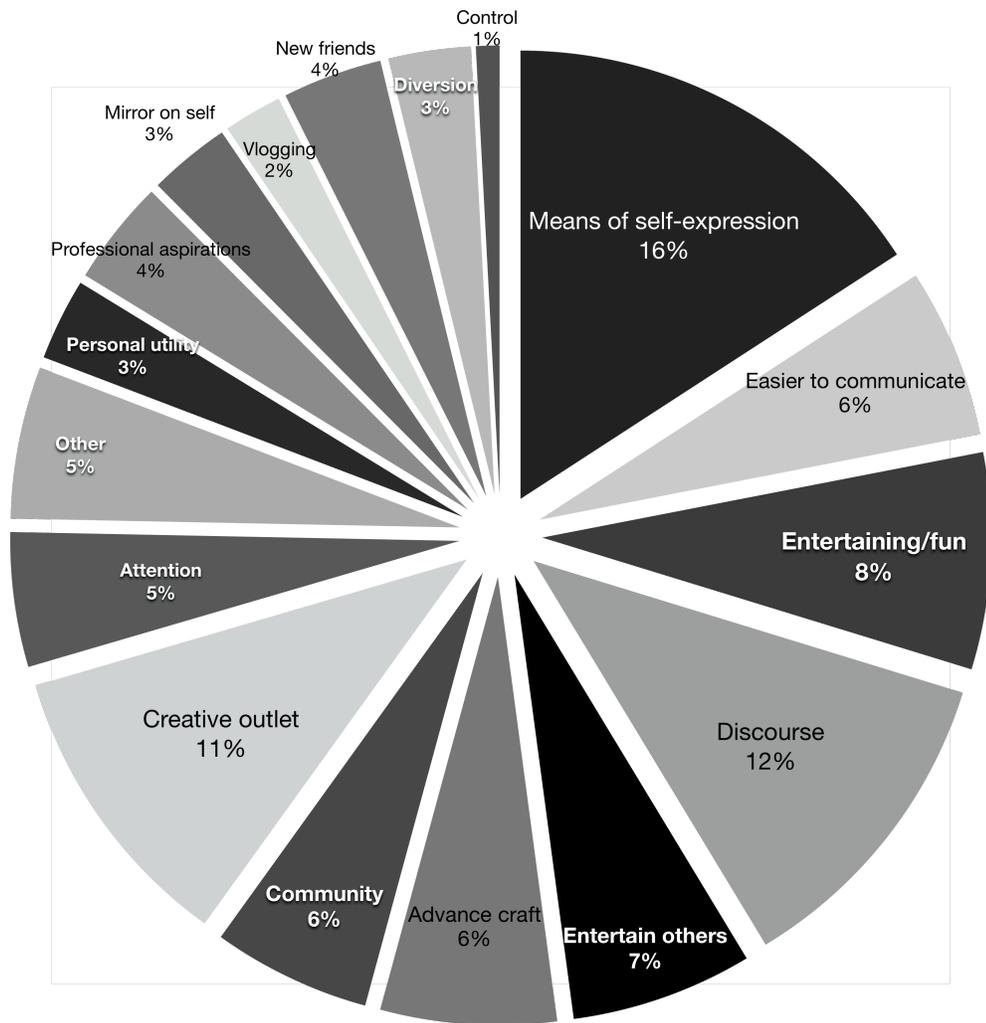
The second question this study asked was:

RQ₂: *What motives do YouTubers ascribe to why they produce content for YouTube?* Talking about why they produce videos drew the most respondents (n=197) and the most responses (n=430) for an average of 2.18 motives per YouTuber. Self-expression was the most common response (16%) followed by discourse (12%), as a creative outlet (11%), because it is fun (8%), or to entertain others (7%) (see table 3.4 and figure 3.4).

Table 3.4 Produce motives of YouTubers

	First mentions	Other mentions	Total
Means of self-expression	37	38	75
Easier to communicate	26	3	29
Entertaining/fun	18	19	37
Discourse	17	38	55
Entertain others	16	15	31
Advance craft	15	15	30
Contribute to online community	13	14	27
Creative outlet	12	38	50
Attention	12	11	23
Personal utility	5	9	14
Professional aspirations	5	13	18
Mirror on self	4	10	14
Vlogging	4	6	10
Meet new friends	3	14	17
Diversion	0	14	14
Control	0	4	4
Addicting	0	5	5
Total produce motives			430

Figure 3.4 Produce motives by percent within all produce motives mentioned



Note. N=430

The third question this study asked was:

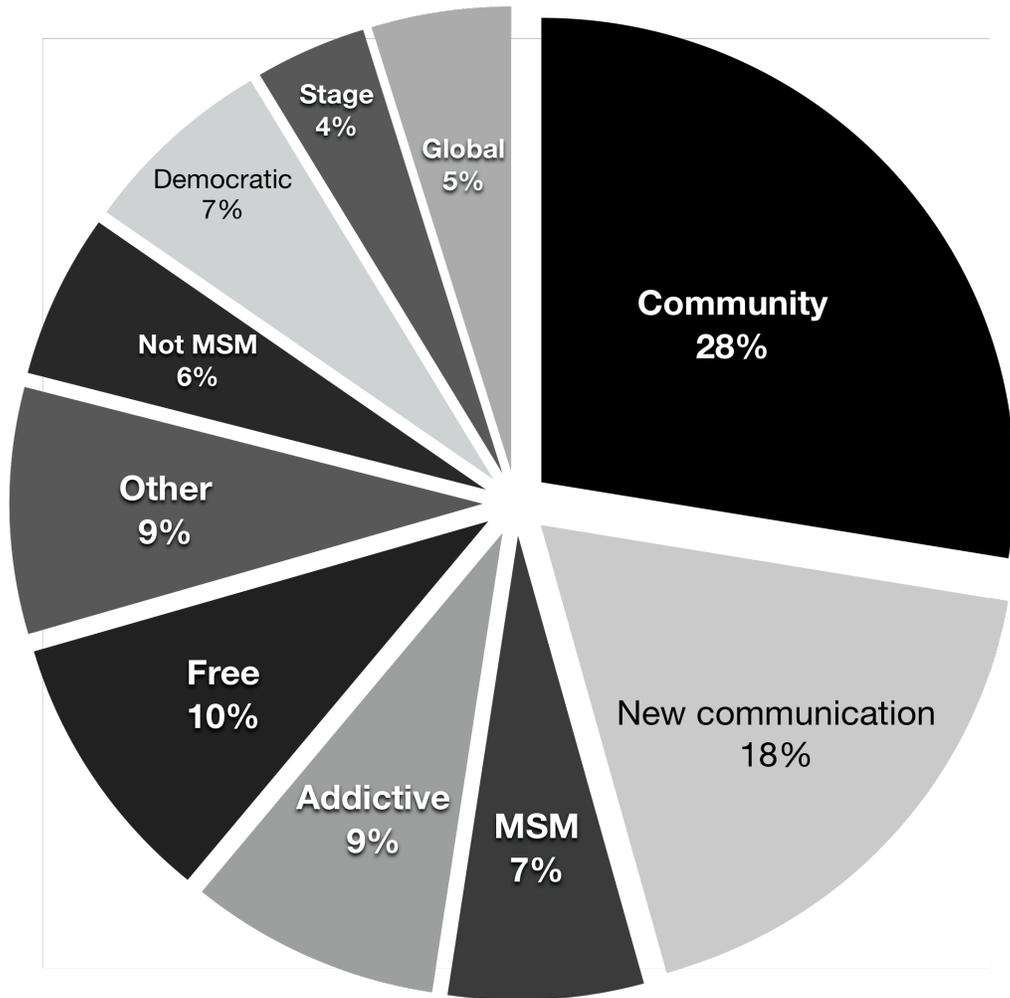
RQ3: *When they talk about YouTube, what do they say YouTube is?*

Only 67 YouTubers talked about YouTube in terms of being a space, site, or location. Similarly, perceptions of YouTube were the least discussed (n=105) for, on the average, 1.5 of these kind of statements mentioned per YouTubers. Of these mentions, nearly a third were ones that associated YouTube with a community followed by it being a new communication tool (18%), free (10%), addictive (9%) or other (9%) (see table 3.5 and figure 3.5).

Table 3.5 Perceptions of YouTube

	First mentions	Other mentions	Total
Community	18	11	29
New communication tool	10	9	19
Source for MSM	7	0	7
Addictive	7	2	9
Free	5	5	10
Other	5	4	9
Not MSM	4	2	6
Democratic	3	4	7
Stage, theater, channel	3	1	4
Global	2	3	5
Total mentions of YouTube is			105

Figure 3.5 Perception of YouTube by percent within all perceptions mentioned



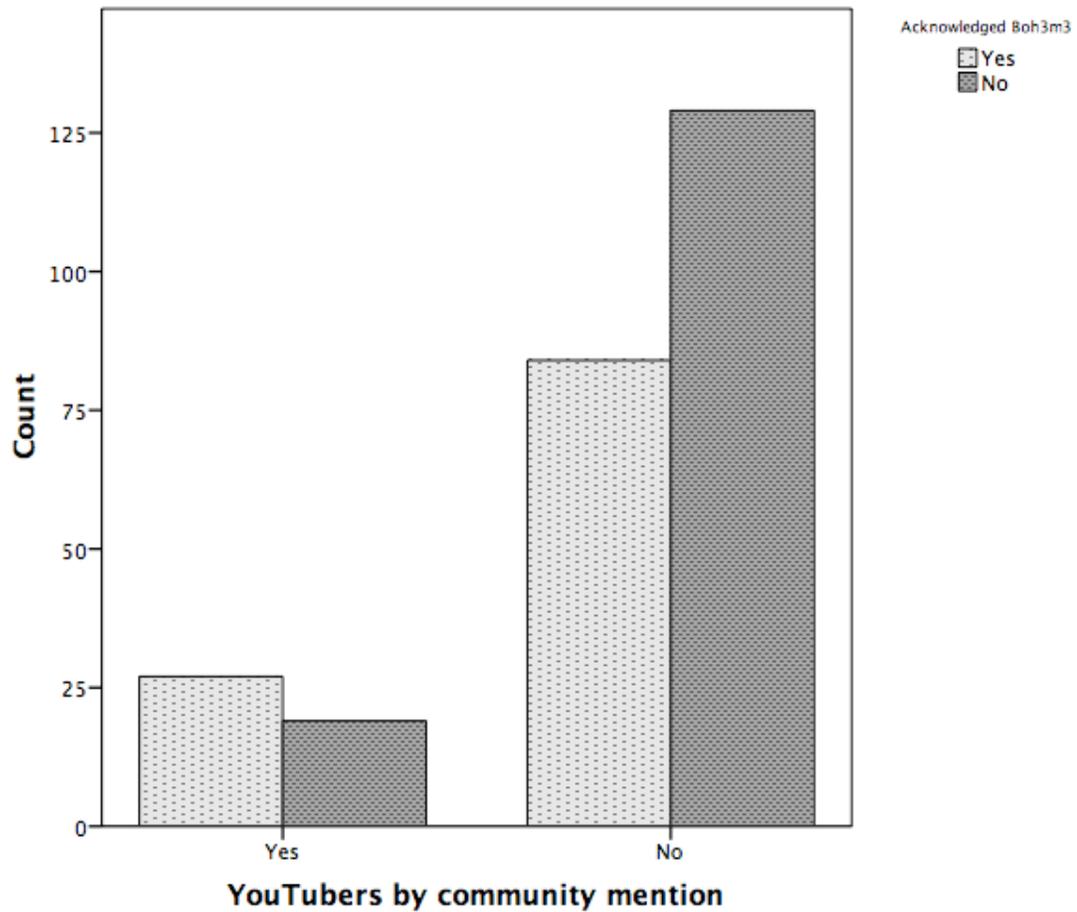
Note: N=105

The fourth question this study asked was:

RQ4: *What social network attributes influence YouTubers' responses?*

To investigate how social connections and experiences influenced YouTubers' responses on motives, the first and all mentions were collapsed for the most common response on watch and produce motives. This created a dependent variable of all YouTubers who mentioned entertainment as a watch motive and a variable on all who had mentioned self-expression as a produce motive. A different method was used for perception of YouTube since elaborations on what YouTube is as a space drew fewer responses. Coders were asked to record responses where the YouTuber mentions the word "community" which was dummy coded as a dichotomous variable (0=no mention of community, 1=mentions community). In all, 46 YouTubers mentioned community somewhere in their responses which was a larger number than mentions that tied community to YouTube as a space or location (n=27). Independent variables included the number of subscribers to the respondent's YouTube channel, the duration between when they created their channel and when they posted their response, and whether they acknowledged Boh3m3 verbally or visually. Due to their skewed distributions, duration and subscribers were converted through a log-transformation. Through logistic regression analysis only reciprocity was significantly related to community mentions ($\chi^2 = 6.529, p = .01$, see figure 3.6). Those who acknowledged Boh3m3 were significantly more likely to mention community.

Figure 3.6 Distribution of community mention by reciprocity



Limitations

There were obvious limitations to findings drawn from a self-selected, self-reported set of respondents who are answering a question posed by a popular YouTube celebrity. Furthermore, content analysis is dependent upon subjective evaluations of coders and the validity of a coding scheme. A number of steps were taken to minimize these possible errors; statements and phrases tied to motives and perceptions were first broadly captured, analyzed to determine which of these phrases could be collapsed into a code to create a code sheet. Three independent coders were hired and given strict

instructions, but then they were largely left to work and not to find consensus among themselves.

Summary

In this study, a set of responses to Boh3m3 were analyzed for latent patterns common among YouTubers' expressed reasons for watching and producing content for YouTube. Watch motives were consistent with common motive categories within the uses and gratifications framework. However, produce motives were a more diverse set of motives even though these numbers (both in terms of people and motives) were larger. The least expressed statements -those that centered on what YouTube functions like – produced one of the more consistent statements. Under the rule of large numbers, statistically we should expect the opposite: fewer mentions among a small group of respondents should produce a diverse set of responses while the large number of motives expressed by a larger cohort should be gravitating toward a common response. Why people produce, then, is a more complicated question than why they watch or their perceptions on what YouTube *is*. From these findings a new question emerges: Given the small number of responses, can we really consider YouTube a community?

Chapter four

Study two: Is YouTube a community?

I am just so excited to be part of this community.

I just can't stand it. It is so awesome.

(YouTuber response to Boh3m3)

Although hearing YouTubers talk about why they "Tube" provided some insights into how motives for differ for producer/users than users of YouTube, the method also had a number of limitations. To further our understanding on the social structure of YouTube, this study began by asking: Can we consider YouTube a community? This question is the same one Blanchard (2004) asked in her investigation into the Julie/Julia blog. Therefore, the first research question for study two was:

RQ₁: What predicts a sense of YouTube as a community among users?

In regards to motive, uses and gratifications begins with the premise that people actively select and use media to meet a need. However, the element of time is not included in that conceptualization. To examine changes over time, the next research question was:

RQ₂: What predicts producer/users' change in motives over time?

Boh3m3's respondents were mainly vloggers turning the camera on themselves. This observation is consistent with Burgess and Green's (2009) finding that vlogs are the most common form of producer/user created media within YouTube. Accordingly, the next research question was:

RQ₃: What predicts producer/users' self-concept change due to their YouTube time?

Since this study sought to provide insight into YouTubers' willingness to share content with news organizations, the last question asked:

RQ4: *What variables within users or within their space in YouTube correlate with a willingness to share content with a news organization?*

Methods

Operational definitions

The independent variables used in the first research question were: *entry into YouTube*, *weekly use*, and *type of YouTube user*. Entry into YouTube was calculated by the difference (in days) between YouTube's launch in May, 2005 and when the person started watching YouTube. Weekly use was how much the person uses YouTube in a typical week. Type of YouTuber was a dichotomous distinction between *producer/users* who reported they had posted a video to YouTube and *users* who have only watched YouTube. The dispositional variable – need to belong – was measured by Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, and Schreindorfer's (2007) need to belong scale.

The remaining questions addressed the producer/users only and, so, the type of YouTuber user was no longer an independent variable. However, other variables were added to the model: *YouTube time* was a duration variable measuring the time between when they posted their first video to when they were recruited to participate, *subs* was the number of subscribers the participants had at the time of recruitment, and two designations were used to identify where the participants (via their videos) were located during the sampling process. These two designations will be discussed in detail in the sampling discussion, but a quick description is needed here as well. Content on YouTube is organized by topics such as Comedy, Education, Entertainment, etc. These topic

headers, or *categories*, are chosen by the producer/user when they post a video (see figure 4.1). Because of the interest in how YouTube overlaps with journalistic functions in a democracy, the News/Politics (N/P) and People/Blogs (P/B) categories were used for this study. Once posted, YouTube's algorithm measures and reports behaviors surrounding a video and this information is presented both for the site overall and for each content category. For this study, the *sub category* had two designations: the most recent and most discussed sub category for both N/P and P/B.

The dependent variables for these questions were: *motive change*, *self-concept change*, and *willingness to share news content*. Motive change and self-concept change were dichotomous items that measured whether or not participants reported a change in their motives or self-concept due to their time in YouTube (dummy coded as 1=Yes, 0=No). An open-ended question followed both that allowed the respondent to elaborate on how they perceived their motive or self-concept had changed since they began using YouTube. Willingness to share news content was measured as *yes*, *no*, or *it depends on the news organization*.

Lastly, a definition not related to the research questions is provided here as a point of clarity for the discussion. Producer/users may have been recruited through YouTube or through the undergraduate courses. In this discussion, *YouTubers* are the participants recruited through YouTube, *undergraduates* are the producer/users recruited through academic classes, and the term *producer/users* is the overarching term for anyone who posts videos from either cohort (YouTube or undergraduate).

Sampling procedures

A number of researchers have noted the difficulty of gathering a

random sample that is representative of online populations (Burgess & Green, 2009; Gurak, Antonijevic, Johnson, & Ratliff, 2004; Kruitbosch & Nack, 2008; McMillian 2008). Unlike regional locations that can be sampled via voter registration, enrollment, and other public information, the boundaries of online communities are unclear and undefined. In short, we cannot clearly assess who is *in* YouTube nor identify sub groups along any attribute of interest as we can for other populations. The difficulty is further confounded by the nature of video content and YouTube's own engineering structure. For example, Li (2007) used search engines to find bloggers who wrote any of the words "why I blog" in a post. Executing a similar search within YouTube would find only words in the video's title or tags (search terms the producer/user provides when uploading a video) but not words *within* their video. The ability to search the attributes of videos might be helpful as well. For example, a means of finding videos where one person fills the frame could assist in identifying who is - or who is not - a vlogger, but this technology does not yet exist. Searching for types of producer/users is not helpful either. Even though individuals choose identity labels, such as vlogger, this designation does not always reflect actual behavior. As an example, Boh3m3 self-identifies as a comedian yet his question generated the content for study one.

Following Burgess and Green's (2009) strategy, this study used YouTube content categories as locations where producer/users' content might overlap with news and politics. YouTube organizes videos by its topic (chosen by the YouTuber) and activity around the video (determined by computer algorithms). For this study, the categories of News/Politics and People/Blogs were used due to the overlapping nature with news products.

Figure 4.1 YouTube's categories by topic

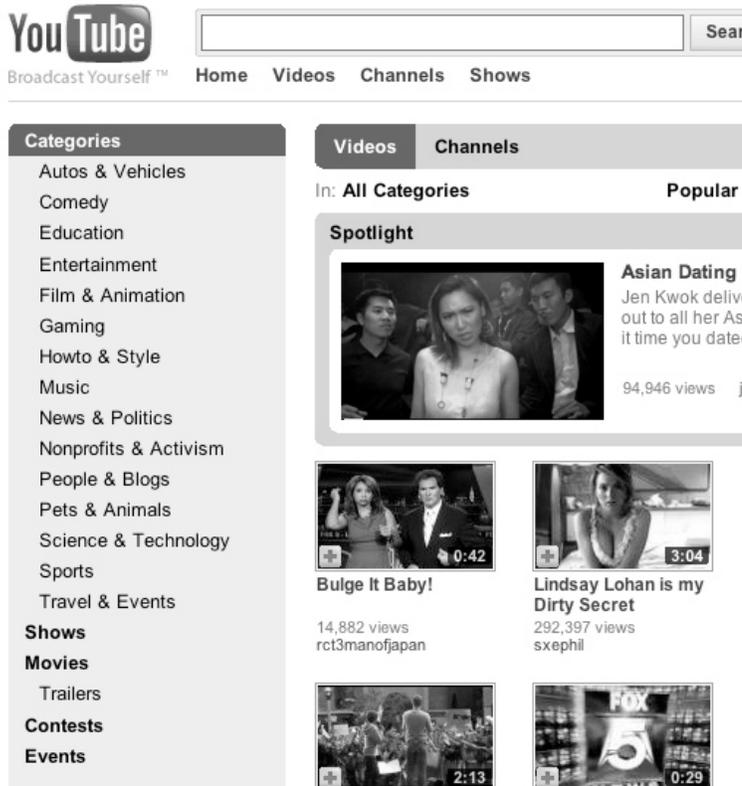
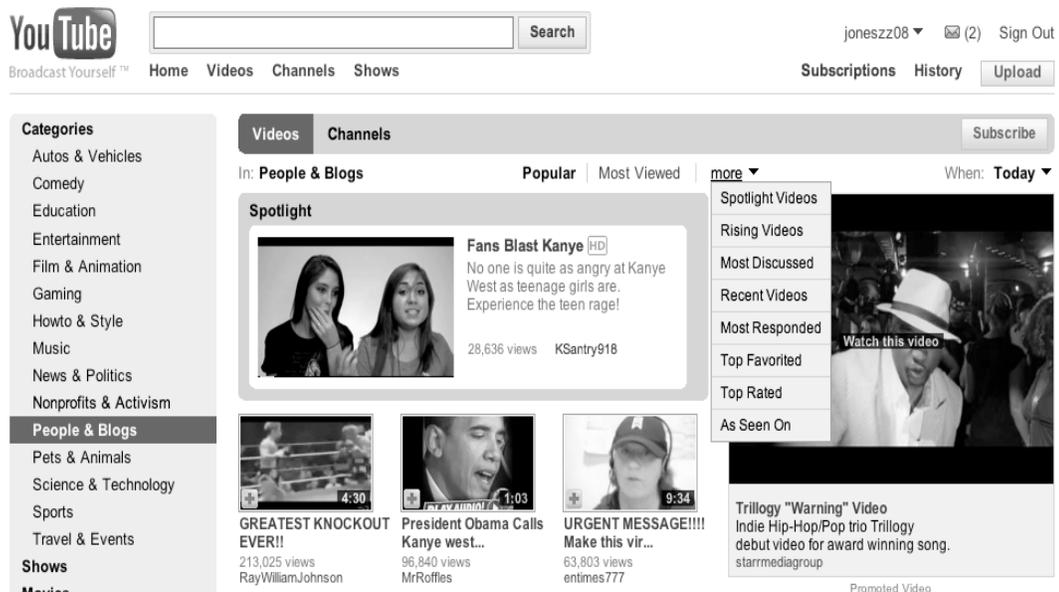
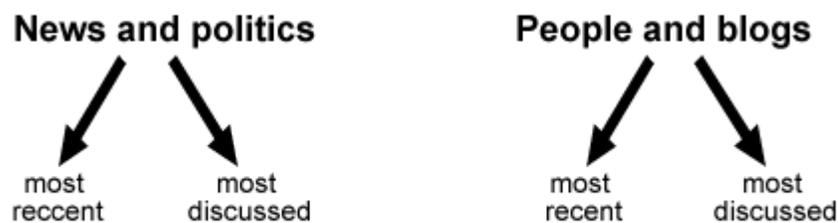


Figure 4.2 "Most ..." lists generated by YouTube's algorithms



After the video is uploaded, computer algorithm tracks the video and the activity it generates. Burgess and Green used these lists to find the most popular videos for their content analysis, i.e. most viewed, most favorited, etc. Among the behaviors YouTube tracks are videos as they are posted to the site, listed as the most recently posted, and the content generating the most comments, listed as the most discussed. While Burgess and Green used the designations for the site *overall*, the lists are also provided for each category (see figure 4.2). Videos were randomly drawn from the most discussed and most recently posted videos from under either News/Politics (N/P) and People/Blogs (P/B). These two designations of a video - one defined by the producer/user and one by computer algorithm - are operationally defined as the *category* and *sub category* respectively. Using these lists, potential participants were located from four locations: N/P and most discussed, N/P and most recent, P/B and most discussed, and P/B and most recent (see figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 YouTube content categories and sub categories used for sampling



A random number generator provided a random list (from 1-100) to identify videos in each of the four locations. Once a video was randomly selected, the producer/user who created that video was sent an invitation to the survey via YouTube email. The email included a link to the survey and a password for access to the site (see Appendix J for email script).

Dillman (2007) suggests that researchers should reflect the values of distinct populations when soliciting their participation. Taking this advice, the researcher made a video of herself explaining the study, a bit about herself, and how the YouTubers' assistance might help scholars understand YouTube. They were encouraged to contact the researcher via YouTube email with any comments, questions, or suggestions. The sampling timeframe was from May 5, 2008 until June 6, 2008. Second invitations were sent out to non-respondents from May 7 until May 24th. A second video was created and posted on May 21. In proportion to the number of reminder emails sent in a day, the response rate for the second email was sometimes more successful than first invitations. This response behavior is counter to response rates commonly found in postal mail recruitment (Dillman, 2007; see Appendix K for response rates by day). While interesting, this observation must come with a caveat: the number of second invites per day was small due to an unseen issue with YouTube email.

An unexpected problem arose on the first day of recruitment: YouTube limits email use. It was not apparent what exactly triggered this block (in terms of how many emails) but it affected every day of the sampling timeframe. This became particularly true in the middle of May when both first and second invites were being sent while, at the same time, YouTubers were emailing me on their concerns, suggestions, or just to let me know they took the survey (see Appendix L for an example of an email). Accordingly, the number of invitations that could be sent each day was limited and that limitation grew as email demands grew.

The global nature of YouTube presented another issue in the first week. While gathering an international population was expected, a flaw in the method became obvious

in the first week as emails came back expressing in simple terms that the producer was not fluent enough in English to take the survey. Out of the 40 YouTubers invited on the first day 12 were from outside of the United States. All but one of these came from the most recently posted videos in YouTube. Since it took a number of days to realize the extent of this issue, the advantage of sending out invites in conjunction with a recently posted video on YouTube was attenuated. As to sampling within YouTube, in the end, the overall response rate was 27%.

In order to compare producer/users to users, participants were recruited from the research pool at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The pool consists of undergraduate students attending introduction classes and mid-level prerequisite courses for SJMC programs. Some instructors required their students to participate in a number of studies during the spring semester (a number determined by the instructor) while other instructors gave extra credit for students' participation. Participants were recruited during March 2008.

Survey development and delivery

The survey was developed with assistance from the College of Liberal Arts Office of Information Technology. CLA-OIT Survey Service hosted the survey through Survey Solutions software (Enterprise Edition) and provided weekly reports on respondents so that non-respondents could be identified and sent a second email reminder. Access to the survey was protected by a password generated by CLA-OIT and provided to the YouTuber in their email invitation (in both first and second invites). The undergraduate population took the survey via the web-hosting survey service Zoomerang. All identifying information was kept confidential and procedures were approved by

University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board. All subjects acknowledged their consent online (see Appendix M for approved consent form and Appendix N for online survey).

Validity and reliability of the instruments

Two indices were used in this survey: need to belong scale and a sense of community index modified for YouTube. The following discussion begins with the dependent variable in this study, the Sense of Community Index (SCI).

As discussed in chapter two, a psychological sense of community is thought to have four theoretical dimensions: membership, influence, integration of needs, and shared emotional connections. As a first step in developing an instrument, Chavis, Hogg, McMillan, and Wandersman (1986) asked a diverse panel of community experts to evaluate 100 statements thought to tap into these four dimensions. From these evaluations, a regression analysis revealed 23 statements that accounted for 96% of the variance among the judges. In their examination on the strength of residential blocks' sense of social cohesion (as opposed to neighborhoods), Perkins, Florin, Roth, Wandersman, and Chavis (1990) developed a 12-item scale known as the Sense of Community Index (SCI). SCI has been used to study a variety of geographical and relational communities including Blanchard's (2004) work on the Julia/Julie blog. Blanchard changed SCI items to reflect the Julia/Julie blog instead of neighborhoods or blocks (see also Obst, Zinkiewicz, & Smith, 2002). Long and Perkins (2003) further refined the scale into the Brief Sense of Community Index (BSCI) and posited that sense of community has three, not four, dimensions: social connectedness, mutual concern, and community values (see table 4.1).

For this study, BSCI items were combined with SCI items and questions were re-worded to reflect YouTube rather than neighborhoods or blocks. Using Cronbach's (1951) reliability measure, the coefficient suggests that these items did measure an underlying construct ($\alpha=.80$). However, the data for these items loaded in a manner dissimilar to the original four theoretical dimensions (see table 4.2). Although the items loaded in a manner consistent with Long and Perkins' BSCI dimensions, the three SCI questions not included in the BSCI formed the strongest indicators of the second block (see table 4.3 for factor loadings).

The need to belong scale is a 10-item index that correlates highly with the original 13 item index (see table 4.4 for the NTB items). Statistically, the need to belong scale was reliable ($\alpha=.83$) and loaded onto two dimensions. The third question, *I seldom worry about whether other people care about me*, was removed from the index because of its low loading. Both indices were measured along a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendices Q and R for Eigenvalues for SCI and NTB respectively). Although the NTB distribution was slightly skewed, both indices are approaching a normal distribution (figures 4.4 and 4.5).

Scores for the NTB index ranged from 9 to 44 ($M=27.37$, $SD=6.82$) and scores for the YouTube SCI index ranged from 15 to 56 ($M=33.82$, $SD=7.92$). The direction of both indices is positive; a higher score on NTB indicates someone with a higher need to belong level and a higher score on YT SCI indicates a person who has a stronger perception that YouTube is a community.

Table 4.1. Items from Sense of Community Index* and Brief Sense of Community Index ** used for YouTube SCI

SCI #	Sense of Community Index	Brief Sense of Community Index	Re-wording for YouTube SCI	SCI Dimension	BSCI Dimension
SCI 1	I can recognize most of the people who live on my block.	I can recognize most of the people who live on my block.	When I go to YouTube, I can recognize most of the people I see there.	Membership	Social connection
SCI 2	Very few of my neighbors know me.	Very few of my neighbors know me.	Very few of those on YouTube know me. ***	Membership	Social connection
SCI 3	I have almost no influence over what this block is like.	I have almost no influence over what this block is like.	I have almost no influence over what YouTube is like. ***	Influence	Social connection
SCI 4	My neighbors and I want the same things from the block.	My neighbors and I want the same things from the block.	Others on YouTube and I want the same things.	Needs fulfillment	Mutual concern
SCI 5	If there is a problem on this block people who live here can get it solved.	If there is a problem on this block people who live here can get it solved.	If there is a problem in my part of YouTube, those on YouTube can get it solved.	Influence	Mutual concern
SCI 6	People on this block generally don't get along with each other.	In general, would you say that people on your block watch after each other and help out when they can, or do they pretty much go their own way?	In general, people you see on YouTube are mainly concerned with themselves and not others. ***	Emotional connection	Mutual concern
SCI 7	It is very important to me to live on this particular block.	Would you say that it is very important, somewhat important, or not important to you to feel a sense of community with the people on your block?	It is important to me to feel a sense of community with the people I see on YouTube.	Emotional connection	Community values

SCI 8		Would you say that you feel a strong sense of community with others on your block, very little sense of community or something in between?	I do not feel a strong sense of community on YouTube. ***		Community values
SCI 9	People on this block do not share the same values.		The people I see on YouTube do not share the same values.	Needs fulfillment	Mutual concern
SCI 10	I expect to live on this block for a long time.		I expect to use YouTube for a long time.	Emotional connection	
SCI 11	I feel at home on this block.		I feel at home on YouTube.	Membership	
SCI 12	I care about what my neighbors think of my actions.		I care about what others on YouTube think of my actions.	Needs fulfillment	

Note. *SCI from Perkins, Florin, Roth, Wandersman, & Chavis (1990). Participation and the social and physical environment of residential blocks: Crime and community context. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 18, (1), 83-115. **BSCI from Long & Perkins (2003). Confirmatory factor analysis of the Sense of Community index and development of a brief SCI. *Journal of Community Psychology* 31, (3), 279–296; see also Chavis et al. (1986); Peterson et al. (2008). *** Items reversed for analysis.

Table 4.2 Factor analysis loadings by SCI and BSCI dimensions

Block	Item	SCI	BSCI
Block 1	Very few of those on YouTube know me .	Membership	Social connectedness*
	I have almost no influence over what YouTube is like.	Influence	
	When I go to YouTube, I can recognize most of the people I see there.	Membership	
Block 2	I expect to use YouTube for a long time.	Emotional connection	NA**
	I feel at home on YouTube.	Membership	NA
	I care about what others on YouTube think of my actions.	Needs fulfillment	NA
	It is important to me to feel a sense of community with the people I see on YouTube.	NA	Community values
Block 3	If there is a problem in my part of YouTube, those on YouTube can get it solved.	Influence	Mutual concern***
	In general, people you see on YouTube are mainly concerned with themselves and not others.	Emotional connection	
	Others on YouTube and I want the same things.	Needs fulfillment	
Block 4	The people I see on YouTube do not share the same values.	Needs fulfillment	Mutual concern
	I do not feel a strong sense of community on YouTube.	NA	Community values

Note. * BSCI dimension for all three items ** Item not included in BSCI *** BSCI dimension for the first three items in the block

Table 4.3 Factor analysis loadings on YouTube SCI

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
SCI 2	.826	.066	-.048	.154
SCI 3	.766	.169	-.117	
SCI 1	.665	.210	.235	-.050
SCI 10	-.024	.839	-.020	.107
SCI 11	.393	.748	.054	.082
SCI 12	.366	.605	-.045	-.046
SCI 7	.516	.583	.169	.095
SCI 5	-.066	.013	.811	-.146
SC 6	.164	-.055	.597	.312
SCI 4	-.059	.447	.469	.128
SCI 9	-.014	.080	.014	.916
SCI 8	.365	.405	.283	.473

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Figure 4.4 Distribution of YouTube Sense of Community Index

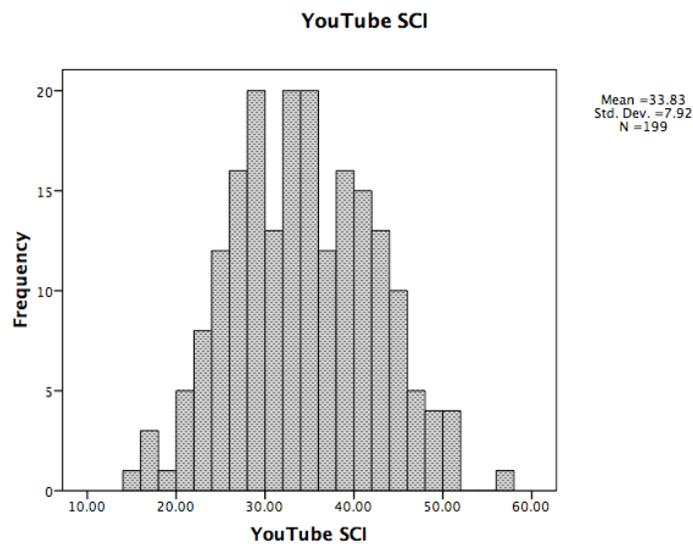


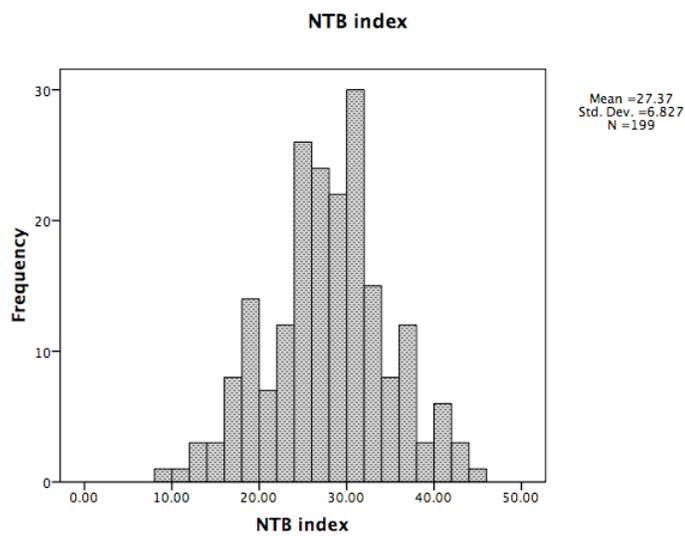
Table 4.4 Factor analysis loadings on NTB

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	1	2
NTB 8	0.77	0.18
NTB 10	0.76	0.15
NTB 5	0.72	0.22
NTB 9	0.71	0.22
NTB 2	0.67	0.11
NTB1	0.64	0.06
NTB 4	0.43	0.27
NTB 3	0.40	0.23
NTB 7	0.11	0.87
NTB 6	0.24	0.79

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Figure 4.5 Distribution of NTB Index



Descriptive findings and skewed distributions

Ninety-seven YouTubers and 107 undergraduates agreed to participate in the study. Two participants were excluded in the analysis since their responses indicated their insincerity; one used phrases such as “I want to save the world” for motive questions and the other answered the demographic questions with obscenities. Five responses in the SCI or NTB indices were missing for a particular item, but in every case the participant had skipped over only one item. In these single cases (one item missed by one participant) the missing data was replaced by the item’s median (a neutral 3).

Out of the 107 undergraduates, 17 had posted videos on YouTube and are included in the survey as producer/users. Overall, then, 112 respondents were producer/users and 91 were users who had only watched content on YouTube ($N=203$). No one reported having never seen a video on YouTube. The 17 undergraduates self-reported how many subscribers their channel had and which content category they usually used when posting videos on YouTube. However, they reported a diverse array of video categories beyond the two used to recruit YouTubers (N/P and P/B). Accordingly, undergraduate producer/users are labeled as *undergraduate* in both the video category and sub category variables.

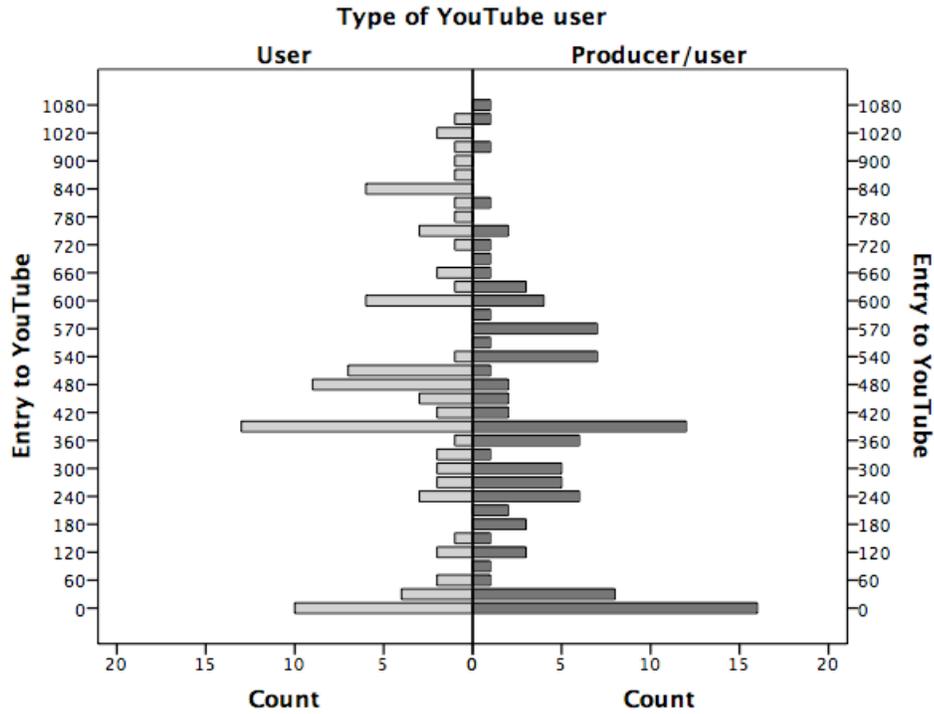
There was a gender difference between the two cohorts; the undergraduates who comprised the user cohort were predominately females (60 out of the 90 users) while YouTubers were mainly male (79 of the 110 producers who reported their sex). In terms of age, it is not surprising that all but one of the undergraduate cohort were between 18 and 28 years-old. This was also the largest age cohort among the YouTubers accounting for 45% of YouTubers followed by: 29-38 year-olds (27%) , 39-48 year-olds (15%), t49-

58 years-old (11%) and one respondent who was older than 59. According to Alexa, both males and 18-24 year-olds are over represented in YouTube's population in comparison to the Internet population overall.

Along with type of YouTuber (producer/user or user), the independent variables for the first research question were: entry into YouTube and weekly use of YouTube. Entry time was measured as the duration between when YouTube was officially launched in May of 2005 and when participants started watching YouTube. The range of this time variable was from 0 until 1080 - the number of days between May 2005 and May 2008 when the YouTubers were recruited to participate in the survey. Since the question was answered in two parts (first month and then year) responses could have been as early as January 2005 which is before YouTube's launch; both users and producer/users reported watching YouTube before May 2005 ($n=26$). These responses were anchored to May 2005 when YouTube officially launched. Distribution on YouTube entry time was negatively skewed with two peaks; 0 days which included those who reported watching YouTube before May 2005 and around the mean ($M=386$, $SD=269$) over a year after the site was launched (see figure 4.6). Due to the large variance, entry into YouTube was categorized into three levels determined by the data (cut at the 33 and 66 percentile): 0-270 days, 271-510 days, and 511 -1080 days and dummy coded accordingly.

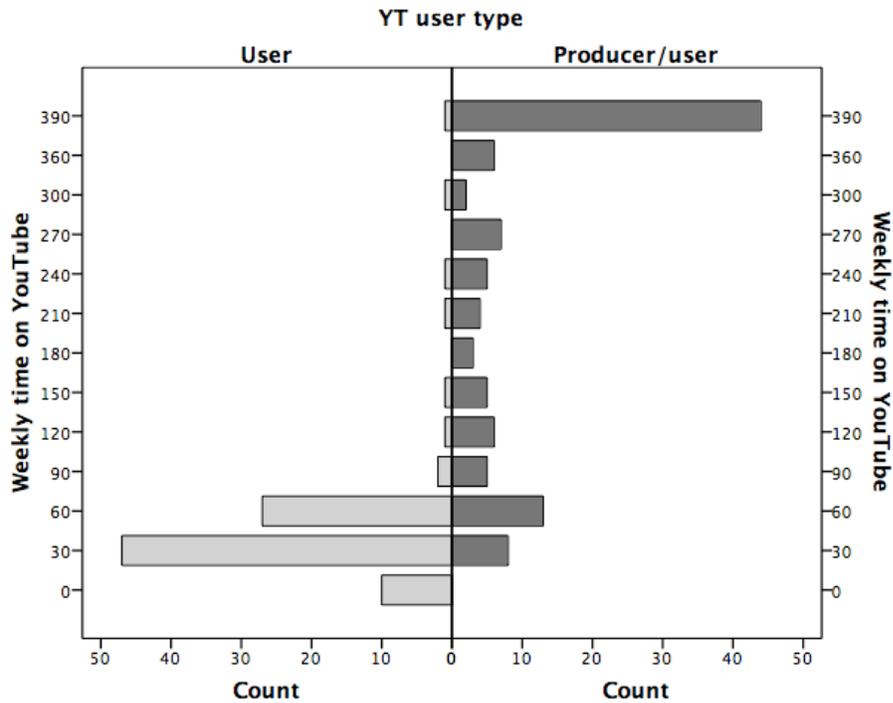
Weekly time on YouTube had a distinct binominal distribution; users overwhelmingly reported they used YouTube for about an hour a week and producer/users predominantly reported spending 6 hours or more a week with YouTube (figure 4.7). Because of this distribution, weekly time on YouTube was categorized into three levels determined by the data: about an hour (60 minutes), 1-2 hours, and 2

Figure 4.6 Entry time to YouTube



Note. Measured by distance from May 2005 with 0=May 2005 and 1080=May 2008

Figure 4.7 Weekly time on YouTube by half hour increments



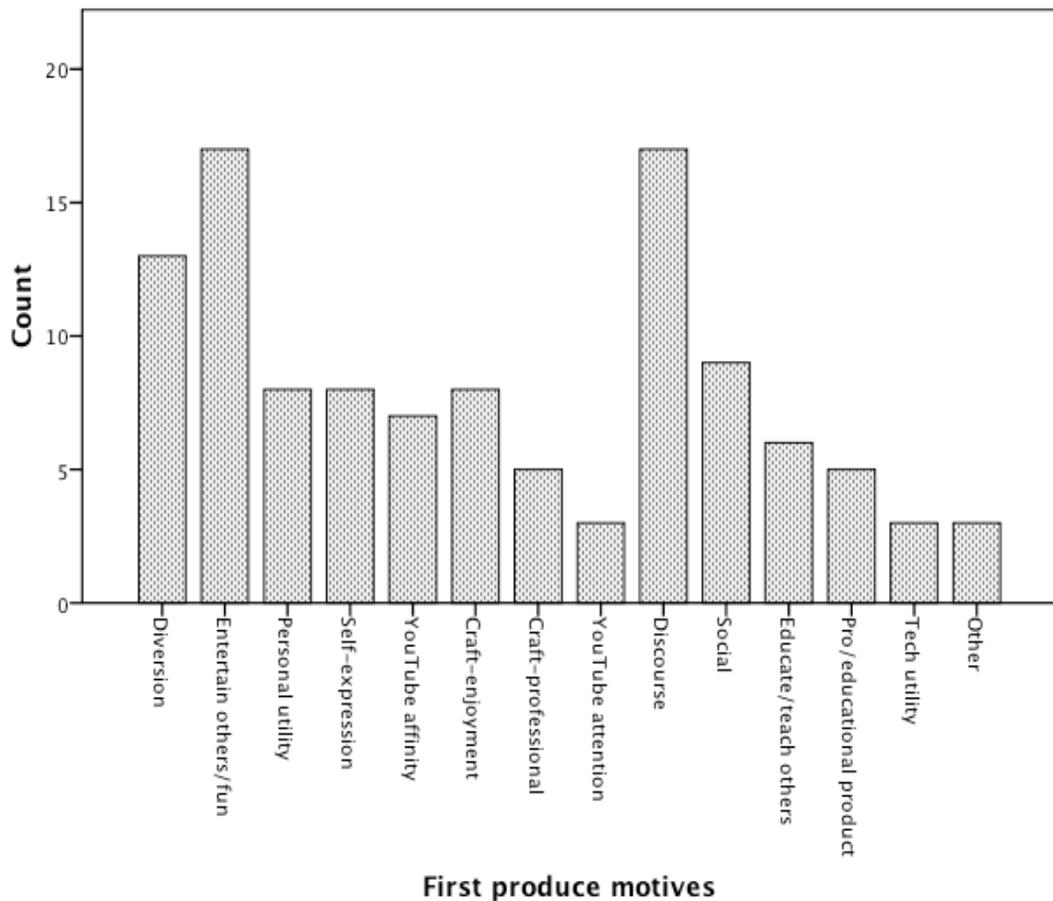
hours or more and dummy coded accordingly.

For the rest of the research questions, the independent variables were: subs (the number of subscribers), duration (the time between first watching and first producing), and where the participant was recruited from (content category, sub category or undergraduate). As with study one, the distribution of subscribers followed a highly skewed distribution ($M=1939$, $SD=4273$). Missing data included two YouTubers who did not report their subscribers and the undergraduate population who were not asked to report how many subscribers they have on their channel. Duration between watching and producing also had a great deal of variance and skew ($M=324$, $SD=298$). On the average, producer/users took nearly a year before they posted their first video. Again, the distribution was positively skewed with a mode of 0. Due to the variance, both variables were converted into a categorical variable with three levels determined by the data. Again, subscribers and duration were cut at the 33 and 66 percentile. Subscribers were cut at: 0-33 subscribers, 34-1,000 subscribers, and 1,000 or more subscribers. Duration was cut at: 0-90 days, 91-420 days, and 421 or more. Both were dummy coded accordingly.

Participants were asked why they first starting posting videos to YouTube to help prime them for the questions on how they might have changed over time. Because produce motives were diverse in study one, these responses were not included in the research questions. However, participants' first motives provide an opportunity to better understand motives if only from a descriptive level. An open-ended question offered participants an opportunity to elaborate on first motives if they felt their reason for posting was not represented in the survey. These elaborations were evaluated and

moved into motive categories when appropriate. Two types of responses were frequent enough to warrant adding a category: Technology utility were motives that allowed producer/users an easy means of writing or conversing on a purely technical level (this included a deaf participant who used YouTube as a visual conversation tool) and professional/educational motives included assignments for school or for work. Most of the elaborations talked about countering information presented either by political, religious, or media institutions or actors. These elaborations were moved into the discourse category (see figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Frequencies of first produce motives



Findings

The first research question addressed what influences a sense that YouTube is a community.

RQ₁: *What predicts a sense of YouTube as a community among users?*

Univariate analyses were run before building a model for three reasons: the exploratory nature of this study, the number of variables converted into categorical or ordinal variables, and the potential for small cell sizes with multiple predictors. From this, three variables were identified as possibly influencing SCI in YouTube: Need to belong (a continuous measure), weekly time on YouTube (an ordinal measure), and type of YouTube user (a dichotomous variable of either producer/user or user). Variables were entered into a linear regression model in the following order: type of YouTube user, need to belong, and then weekly time spent on YouTube.

$$YT\ SCI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 YouTube_type + \beta_2 NTB + \beta_3 Weekly_time + \varepsilon_i$$

Where $\beta_1 YT_type$ represents the intercept of producer/users (dummy coded=1) when users is held constant (dummy coded=0).

Along with weekly time on YouTube, being a producer/user accounted for 46% of the variance in SCI (regression coefficients are reported in table 4.6). This finding suggests that those who come to YouTube to only watch material are significantly less likely to perceive the site as a community. While need to belong was not significant, the three variables in the model were highly inter-correlated. A post hoc analysis was run and is discussed later in this chapter.

The second research question was:

RQ₂: *What predicts producer/users' change in motives over time?*

Table 4.6 Regression coefficients for YouTube SCI models

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta
1	(Constant)	30.220	.733	
	Type of YouTube user	10.488	.999	.601*
2	(Constant)	30.517	2.467	
	Type of YouTube user	10.441	1.068	.598*
	NTB index	-.010	.079	-.008
3	(Constant)	19.605	2.855	
	Type of YouTube user	7.374	1.094	.422*
	NTB index	.090	.074	.070
	Weekly time on YT	7.836	1.256	.392*

a. Dependent Variable: YT SCI.

Note. $R^2=.36$ for model 1; $\Delta R^2=.35$ for model 2; $\Delta R^2=.46$ for model 3. * $p<.00$

Of the 112 producer/users, 45 reported they were producing videos for a different motive than when they began. Univariate analysis indicated that only one independent variable had a relationship to motive change - the sub category. This categorical variable identified three groups from which the producer/user was recruited from: YouTubers were recruited from either the most recent or most discussed area of YouTube (under the News/Politics and People/Blogs categories) and 17 participants were undergraduates who reported having posted a video to YouTube. While the most recent cohort significantly reported motive change ($\chi^2 = 4.23, p < .05$), both the most recent and most discussed were negatively related to motive change (see table 4.7). Cross tabulation tables indicated that 10 of the 17 undergraduates reported a motive change from the first time they posted videos to YouTube. Thus, this finding may reflect the difference between the

undergraduates, who did report changing, and YouTubers who, on the average, reported no motive change regardless of subcategory.

Table 4.7 Logistic regression coefficients for motive change

	B	S.E.	Wald
Undergraduates			5.435
Most recent	-1.455	.640	5.172*
Most discussed	-.654	.557	1.380
Constant	.357	.493	.524

Note. * $p < .05$

The third research question was:

RQ₃: What predicts producer/users' self-concept change due to their YouTube time? Specifically, this question asked: Since you have been uploading videos to YouTube, do you see yourself differently? Of the 110 producer/users who responded, 50 said they saw themselves differently. After univariate analyses only one variable was associated with changes in producers' self-concept; as with motive change, the subcategory, where they were located for the study, was significant (see table 4.8).

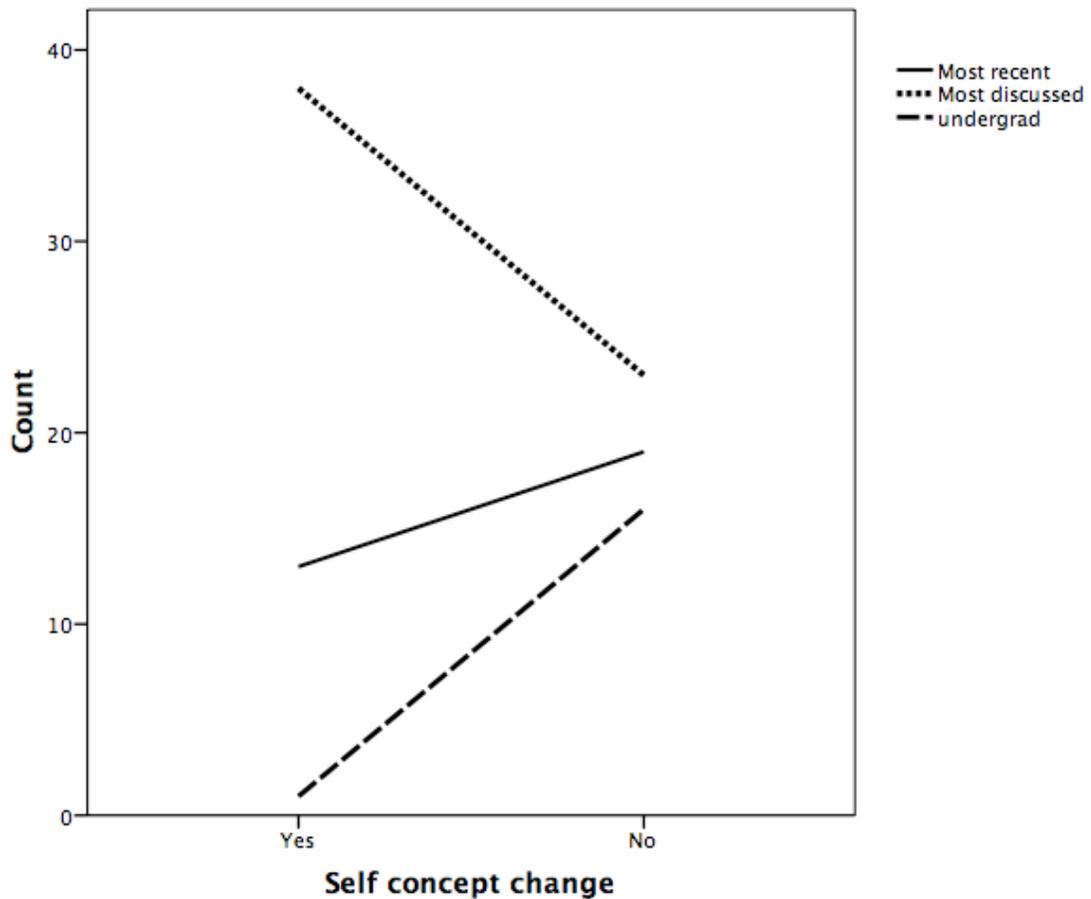
Table 4.8 Logistic regression coefficients for self-concept change

	B	S.E.	Wald
Undergrad			11.116*
Most recent	-3.248	1.064	9.311*
Most discussed	-.801	.451	3.160**

Note. * $p < .00$, ** $p = .07$

Odds ratio indicate that the most discussed cohort was 11 times more likely to see themselves differently than the undergraduates and 3 times more likely than the most recent cohort. Put differently, of the 50 producers who reported a change in their self-concept, 36 of them came from the most discussed portion of YouTube and they were they only cohort who, on the average, responded in the affirmative that their self-concept had changed since they began posting videos to YouTube (see figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 Self-concept change by location of producer/user



The last research question of the study was:

RQ4: *What variables correlate with a willingness to share content with a news organization?* Of the 110 participants who answered this question, roughly 75% of them said either yes or it would depend on the news organization. Univariate analyses revealed

that no independent variables significantly correlated with a willingness to share with news.

Post hoc analysis

The high correlation between some of the independent variables was apparent in the analysis. Specifically noteworthy was the correlation between type of YouTube user, weekly time on YouTube and the need to belong variables included in the model for the first research question. In the model, NTB's correlation with sense of YouTube as a community disappeared as weekly time in YouTube was added. Furthermore, the bimodal distribution of YouTube weekly time was clearly associated with being a producer/user who, on the average, spent 6 or more hours on YouTube in comparison to the users who, on the average, spent around an hour. Given these correlations, NTB might have been a confounding variable. To assess this possibility, a post hoc analysis was run. The logistic regression used type of YouTube user as the dependent variable and NTB as the independent. The results indicated that NTB was highly correlated with being a producer/user, but it has a negative relationship ($\beta = -.10, \chi^2 = 21.81, p < .001$, see table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Type of YouTube user by Need to belong

	B	S.E.	Wald
NTB NTB_YT	-.104	.024	18.759*
Constant	3.098	.689	20.224

Note. N=203; * $p < .001$

Odds ratio coefficients indicated that producer/users were nearly 19 times more likely to have a lower level of NTB than users. However, the validity of this finding is suspect

given possible sampling error due to drawing from an undergraduate population. Two independent-samples t-tests were conducted: one to compare NTB scores of producer/users and users (YouTube type) and the other to compare NTB scores of the undergraduates and YouTubers regardless of what type of YouTuber. For both t-tests, there was a significant difference between the groups; NTB scores for producer/users ($M=25.28$, $SD=7.19$) was lower than users ($M=30.01$, $SD=5.32$); $t(197)=5.27$, $p<.001$. Similarly, the NTB scores for YouTubers ($M=24.17$, $SD=6.62$) was lower than the undergraduates' scores ($M=30.12$, $SD=5.73$), $t(197)=6.79$, $p<.001$. Given that users were drawn from the undergraduate population, the validity of these findings are weak and generalizing to the YouTube population is unwise.

Qualitative analysis

An open ended question followed both questions regarding changes over time to allow respondents a chance to elaborate beyond a dichotomous measure. From the forty-five participants who reported their motive to produce had changed, 34 further elaborated in the follow up question. This included 4 undergraduate producer/users. Of the 50 participants who reported self-concept changes, 48 participants used the follow up question to elaborate on how they had come to see themselves differently. In addition, one respondent who answered no to the dichotomous question on self-concept change took the time to write about other changes he had experienced. Analyses of these written statements are framed by the model presented in chapter one. Sections on motive changes and self-concept changes are organized by elaborations that help to illuminate the locations and migrations producer/users made within the three locations from the model - the interpersonal, public, and commercial spaces within YouTube.

Changing motives to produce. Most of the 34 respondents talked about changes in their produce motive as moving their actions toward a group, community, or audience. These motives ranged from sharing among a small group to growing a commercial venture or audience. Three respondents wrote they now used their YouTube channel to direct traffic to their websites and two wrote about becoming a YouTube partner; a status that changed why they were producing. For an example, an American woman, within the 29-38 year old cohort and from Caribbean descent, reported that she began posting videos to YouTube because she was in the hospital and was sick and bored. Since that time, her channel had attracted more than 2,000 subscribers:

I have become a YouTube partner. I make money from my videos now and have become quite popular with two channels which have really taken off. Now I am interested in seeing how far YouTube can take me into the entertainment world of real life.

Entertaining others was a strong motivation for the other YouTube partner in the group, a white male in the 19-28 year old cohort who wrote, "I want to make more money and I LOVE entertaining people."

Four respondents talked about entertainment being their primary, or first, motive but that they were now posting to provide political discourse, information, social commentary, or to "sway opinions." Others talked about starting their YouTube channels as a means to keep in touch with friends or family, but they were now providing a service to others beyond their interpersonal circle. This included an American male, from the 29-38 year old cohort and of Italian descent, who wrote "My videos were originally intended to entertain others (music), but now me and my friend run a spiritual

blog hoping to help others spiritually." A woman respondent, in the 19-28 year old cohort and from a small, rural town, wrote:

I originally posted home movies for my family and friends - then I posted a video of myself playing ukulele, also for my family and friends, but then that one video started getting a lot of attention, and my channel has turned its focus to the ukulele videos.

Two of the respondents wrote about how they used the site as a collaboration experiment between family or friends. A white male YouTuber, in the 29-38 year old cohort and living in a large metropolitan city, wrote:

It started as an experiment in communication with my brother; it became much more community-focused. That initial desire to communicate through video with H*** remains, but now when I make a video I also want to connect with many other people.

At the time of the survey, the channel he shared with his brother had 28,655 subscribers. The other YouTuber involved in a collaboration, also white and in the 29-38 year old cohort, talked about community even though she had first come to the site to connect with Harry Potter fans:

I still am involved in the Harry Potter film, but now I am into the YouTube community as well. I love making videos and interacting with the people I've met online. I'm also involved in a year long YouTube project called five*****, among a couple others.

Three participants wrote they were now motivated to counter mass media messages through their YouTube channel. One was a Ron Paul supporter. Another YouTuber, a white male in the 49-58 year old cohort, wrote:

I had no idea YT was a place for politics. Once I found out there was a way to reach a unlimited number of people I opened my channel to speak of

things the main stream news media does not report.

Two respondents reported they were motivated to master their video craft or, as one put it, they were "caught up in the creative experience." For the most part, though, YouTubers expressed that their motives had moved them closer to a social group whether that group was small, such as friends they had made through YouTube or serving the needs of entertaining or informing an audience, or when they, unexpectedly, benefited from responses strangers posted to their videos.

In comparison, the four undergraduates who elaborated on motive changes consistently reported they were no longer posting due to situational changes; one because they were no longer in a certain class and one because "the football season is over." The other two simply reported they were no longer posting videos to YouTube without further elaboration.

Self-concept changes and the looking glass lens. The 50 elaborations on self-concept changes ranged, again, from benefits to the producer/user directly to benefits to a common, social good, to commercial rewards. At the individual level, 17 participants wrote about being more confident, proud, having more self-esteem or gaining a better understanding of themselves through their video posts. For example, a male YouTuber in the 39-48 year old cohort wrote:

YouTube has greatly helped me to enhance my self-esteem and become much more confident about sharing my thoughts and opinions with total strangers. It has also increased to a significant degree, my ability to communicate my thoughts and opinions, and it has actually helped me to hone people communication skills.

Some reported that talking in front of the camera had provided benefits away from the camera. One male participant, an American in the 29-38 year old cohort and with

Cherokee heritage, wrote that he was "more aware of my autistic gestures and other things I need to improve vocally and physically. I also feel exponentially more comfortable acting and being natural in front of the camera." Another man, from the 39-48 year old cohort, wrote:

My opinion of myself as an anti-social and asocial paranoid schizophrenic has been in part mitigated as a result of much more human interaction, albeit electronic, with literally several thousand people writing to me, rating my videos, etc. In some respect I find YouTube humanizing.

For a few the lens became, literally, a mirror. A German woman in the 29-38 year old cohort wrote:

[W]ell, i realised that i am a good looking person which is something that i was very unsure of...so it has boosted my self esteem. [I] also realise that i am not as bad as i thought i was with a lot of things. [A]s a teen-if i had had use of the internet and global connection-i would have had a much happier time knowing that i was not alone in my thoughts!

A man, responding from the United Kingdom and in the 39-48 year old cohort, expressed some of the same thoughts when he wrote:

I now see myself as more capable than I realised, entertaining, funny, even. It has improved my confidence and allowed me to accept the face that so many other people around me take for granted every day I see them. I am not as ugly as I thought I was. I still see myself as "odd" looking but I accept that without pain, now; without cringing!! It seems easier to accept that, at times, I will look a fool, and I have come to realise that foolishness is a matter of opinion. To one I may be a fool not worth watching, but to another, I could be hilarious and worth recommending to friends.... Broadcasting oneself is character building, enhances one's sense of self, and builds self-confidence. It is an important introspective in which, I believe, everyone should indulge regularly. A kind of 6 monthly voyage around

oneself to see what's happened, what's still simmering away, and what's changed.

He was not the only one to talk about YouTube as being a personal test within a social arena. The youngest participant, an 18 year old woman from Norway, discussed how critiques made her feel safe and that YouTube "... helped me getting out my thoughts and feelings." Another woman, an American from the 19-28 year old cohort, found that not all YouTubers were supportive, but that she still prevailed:

... with a fanbase there's also haters or people who judge you. Sometimes I feel like I'm something I'm not, it's not really easy to explain, but the wear and tear from haters, judgmental people, just takes a toll on my mind. But all in all, I think dealing with all that crap has actually made me a stronger person.

Another woman, an American in the 19-28 year old cohort, described this social test in terms of victory over less civil YouTubers:

From my experience, YouTube comments are usually unintelligent and needlessly hateful. But somehow the comments on my videos are almost always positive and enthusiastic. The fact that I've turned the Hydra of antagonism that is YouTube commenters into my lapdog makes me feel like I have something special, something genuine and enjoyable to offer.

Three participants discussed a keener sense of their self-presentation style in terms of their communication skills. One woman, in the 19-28 year old cohort, wrote:

I'm more aware of how I "come off" to other people. Because of how anonymous commenters comment and openly express their view me, I now see how just tweaking words or expressions even a little bit can help get an idea communicated properly and with tact.

One participant, a man from a large metropolitan area and in the 29-38 year old cohort, talked about becoming a brand:

I'm contributing to society more, immortalizing my identity, connecting with people who are less like me, and working in a new field. I have a personal self and a persona. My name, because it is also my username, is a brand now.

A sense of helping or aiding others was implicit in some responses. One participant wrote that "[a] single person can have a big impact." Another wrote of "...expressing myself across the globe" and yet another participant talked about how surprised he was when others found his word helpful. "I had not until this point in time," he wrote, "considered my opinion or advice all that noteworthy."

Three participants wrote more explicitly about contributing to the public space or a common good. Interestingly, all three were Caucasian men, in the 49-58 year old cohort, and were responding from a mid-size American city. One reflected on having missed out on the opportunity to "bring people together in common cause" earlier in his life. "I no longer have doubts I once had about myself," he concluded. Another wrote:

I feel more responsible in having a greater role in respect to influencing and effecting a change in the zeitgeist of our society away from dangerous ancient myths and superstitions, toward a real appreciation and understanding in the value of reason, logic, and empirical evidence. Such a trend of attitudes is essential for the betterment of humanity and its future in a peaceful "brotherhood of man".

The last participant among these three mixed the notions of a public good with an anti-mass media sentiment. In the longest post among all the responses, he speculated that others, like himself, were empowered by the sense:

...that 'the common woman/man' can still be significant in the processes of our society. This is of profound import, being that much of what passes for "a free press" these days is controlled by rich individuals (Murdoch), rich corporations (GE, TimeWarner), or "starlet journalists" (check ANY over-powdered, loudmouthed, or sanctimonious face on television today).

I don't think social or political affiliation plays a part as much as the desire of the human heart to be free, to be heard, to have an impact on the world we inhabit for just a blip on the radar screen of history. It is this desire that brought about the concept of free and open debate (think Lincoln-Douglas, Thomas Paine, the orators of ancient Greece; not the putrid pablum of today's made-for-tv crap!)

By taking camera in hand (just like yourself), ANYONE may start a conversation about their passions, their fears, their desires, for the human condition. This, I think, is the profound secret of every effort by humans to be heard. Whether the vehicle of expression is the public forum of Greek and Roman times, the movable type/press of Johannes Gutenberg, or the YouTube of today: We must always be free to speak truth to power!

Two others mentioned mass media in their responses. A male participant, in the 29-38 year old cohort who was responding from Germany, responded that he now knew "that YouTube is just manipulated like all the other MSM-shit." An American woman, in the 19-28 year old cohort, was more positive about YouTube when she wrote:

I see myself as a producer of media, not just an audience. I see more of the bias in the mainstream media, and how easy it is for them to lie/give skewed views to the public, and I am concerned about it. I think there is a Liberal bias, and it is frightening and wrong.

The one participant who had reported he *did not* see himself differently but went ahead and answered the open ended question was also the producer/user who had started his channel as a collaboration experiment with his brother. "I don't think my understanding of myself has changed much," he wrote, "I think my understanding of community has changed radically."

Only two YouTubers and one undergraduate who answered "yes" to the dichotomous measure on self-concept change did not elaborate on exactly how they saw themselves differently. Thus, nearly all of those who answered "yes" to the first question took the time to express how they changed.

Limitations

As an exploratory study that surveyed YouTubers directly, this study had its fair share of limitations. Sampling error may have influenced the findings since users were drawn from an undergraduate population. This strategy was used because undergraduates *are* YouTube users and their age cohort is over-represented in YouTube. Also, other means of finding YouTube watchers would bring other threats to the study. For example, recruiting users via YouTube would be dependent upon a snowball technique of recruitment since the researcher would have had to ask producer/users to direct their friends who watch YouTube to take the survey. The second limitation comes from the data themselves. Distributions on subscribers and weekly time on YouTube were so skewed that a log-transformation did not help in bringing the data to a normal distribution. Because of this variance, variables were cut at the 33 and 66 percentile to create three levels of an ordinal variable. Thirdly, the items in the YouTube sense of community scale did not load as originally theorized by Chavis, McMillian, and their

colleagues. While the Brief Sense of Community Index fared better items Long and Perkin removed from SCI were the largest influence in the second block. This suggests that participants' sense of YouTube as a community was not along the dimensions posited by both SCI and BSCI. In particular, the items that should be tapping into influence loaded onto block 1 and block 3 along with membership, needs, and emotional connection. This pattern suggests that there was something either in the way the questions were reworded for YouTube or in how these participants perceived the community within YouTube tapped into different dimensions of SCI than theory would suggest. The response rate was also a concern. Because no other study has surveyed YouTubers directly the influence of the low response rate - 28% - is hard to evaluate. Two limitations in YouTube itself may have attenuated responses early in the sampling timeframe - the limit on YouTube email use and the presence of non-English speaking YouTubers who were sent email invitations to the survey. The possibility that a certain kind of YouTuber - those who are seeking conversations, for example - may have been more likely to respond.

Summary

This study built upon the motivational differences found between users and producer/users in study one. As before, producer/users shared one key attribute not found in the user group: Producer/users perceived YouTube as a community whereas users did not and this difference was a statistically significant. The quantitative finding for the second question, what influences motive changes, is, in part, challenged by the qualitative analysis that revealed that most of the undergraduates had stopped posting to YouTube because the need to use the site (for a class or football season) no longer existed. Both

the quantitative and qualitative findings on the question of self-concept changes indicate that turning the lens on oneself does, over time, change how individuals see themselves and, when allowed to express this change, many of the respondents talked about moving toward a new social group, meeting the challenge of revealing oneself on camera, and feeling as though they were helping others. While some talked about personal benefits, such as accepting their personal image or growing an audience, many of these also talked about contributing to a public space.

In many ways, though, this study unearthed more questions than it answered. In particular, the sense of community measures correlated in a manner different than it has consistently for offline, geographic communities. This begs the question: Are social media sites truly communities? Are social, supportive, reciprocal relational online groups guided by the same or different normative structures than geographical neighborhoods and block associations? Returning to journalism, what do these boundaries and norms established by social media communities mean to the process and function of journalism in a digital age?

Chapter five

The me and we in YouTube

Whether the vehicle of expression is the public forum of Greek and Roman times, the movable type/press of Johannes Gutenberg, or the YouTube of today: We must always be free to speak truth to power!

(YouTuber's response in study two regarding self-concept change)

This dissertation sought to advance our understanding of the social world of YouTube by asking *who* is producing *what* for what *motive* and with what *outcome*. The introduction set the stage for two scenarios journalists will likely face in a digital age: how to assess sources with only the artifacts left on their YouTube channel and how to build community connections via a social media platform. While these questions could have been examined from the perspective of newsrooms, it was the intent of this work to approach these questions from the other side of problem - from the producer/users of YouTube. The logic of this approach lies in the manner of how journalists work with sources and communities - by understanding where they are "coming from." The producer/users of YouTube were chosen as the unit of analysis because of YouTube's uniqueness as an online site largely fueled by visual content and because of its megapresence in nearly everyone's lives. Thus, understanding how watch motives are different from produce motives was a key question in study one and how producer/users are different from users was a key question in study two. Both studies sought to provide *both* scholars and journalists a conceptual road map, as it were, to locate types of YouTubers within the three worlds of YouTube: commercial space, personal space, and the public space between them. The findings from each study illuminate a need to rework some

tried-and-true theories; especially in regard to uses and gratifications and the sense of community.

Study one: Uses and gratifications

Study one had two purposes: to compare watch motives to produce motives and to examine YouTubers' perception of YouTube. When addressing Boh3m3's question, more YouTubers reported more produce motives in a more diverse manner than for watch motives. This finding suggests that motives to produce are more complicated than watch motives. Furthermore, the most commonly expressed produce motives centered on beginning or participating in conversations or as a means of self-expression. Thus, not only were produce motives more diverse, they did not follow the usual motive typology we have become familiar with for explaining mass media use, i.e. entertainment, diversion, etc. While these response patterns may be an artifact of how Boh3m3 asked the question or the procedures used for the content analysis, there is some confidence in knowing that these are somewhat similar to Haridakis and Hanson's (2009) findings.

At the very least, scholars using a uses and gratification framework should be more clear on what *kind of user* they are interested in rather than what *kind of media* they are interested in. In short, we need to think in niches of people rather than media as tools. Although not reported in study one, one measure recorded during the pilot study was whether the camera was pointed toward the person, i.e. a vlogger style of response. It became an overlooked measure during the effort to collapse categories into codes. Whether people turned the camera on themselves was overlooked not because it was *not there*, but because it was *so present* it became, after awhile, invisible (see Appendix P for one sheet of YouTubers responding to Boh3m3). The type of YouTuber who responded

to Boh3m3 – and possibly those who responded to a survey invitation – may have been mostly vloggers. From that perspective, the social world that YouTubers surround themselves with matters for the style of how they choose to speak – here vlogs – as one aspect of that social world. This places the surveillance of others watch motive in a new light. Checking into what YouTubers are doing or saying on their channels could be a mediated social comparison of sorts that informs producer/users to YouTube conventions that guides their behavior as a means to fit in with other YouTubers. Observing others might also be a means of placing one’s thoughts and experiences within the social (and global) world. In either case, this is a different motive than either voyeurism (i.e. people move toward the social group instead of distancing themselves from it) or surveillance for information. In short, paying attention to others may be a way for individuals to move from a “me” space to a “we” space. Further research is needed to parse out what need surveillance of others is meeting.

Study two: Sense of community

These findings also suggest that sense of community, either as an instrument or as a conceptual construct, needs to be re-thought. Some of the limitations in the survey could be suspect (re-wording for YouTube might be one such problem) or in the sampling procedure (undergraduates representing users). However, there is some consistency with prior research. Blanchard argues that influence is not a dimension for online communities and should be thought of as being *recognized* instead. There might be support for recognizability from study one: Those who mentioned community in their responses were more likely to acknowledge Boh3m3 directly. Although influence might be considered similar to membership, YouTubers did not acknowledge each other but

Boh3m3 instead; Boh3m3 started this conversation and Boh3m3 gave them the opportunity to speak. Acknowledging Ben also acknowledges his influence – at the very least, his ability to start this conversation.

There is a more cynical interpretation on why dimensions such as influence load differently than expected. Within YouTube, take down actions and monetizing strategies – such as Oprah – not only allow the community to define itself more clearly, but they may be events that remind Tubers they live on borrowed land – Google land. While suspended and blocked users in study two were a relatively small number (as in other studies), listening to YouTubers responding to Boh3m3 in terms of a freedom to speak – as long as no one flagged them – highlighted how aware some are they are vulnerable to the corporate side of YouTube. Two emails during the sampling frame indicated this lack of trust; one Tuber left a number of addition email addresses because she did not trust YouTube email and wanted to make sure her survey responses were counted. A second female Tuber emailed links to her other websites in case the researcher could not get a hold of her. This Tuber, who uses her channel to talk about political events - either divisively or about divisive events, depending on your perspective – wrote in an email, “This is my 7th account here because they always delete me. I like to expose corrupt politicians and so called leaders and have lost over 300 videos on here due to youtube's censorship.” YouTubers who spend at least 6 hours a week in the site might be more aware that Google could, at any time, take YouTube in any direction it wishes – a reality users might not have considered. Sense of community, with its construct that membership is earned, could flesh out this relationship, but only if measures are further validated.

Contributions to journalists

One of the non-significant findings is actually good news for journalists: YouTubers and undergraduates responded in completely similar ways in regards to whether they were willing to share content with a news organization (see table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Willingness to share with news

		Count			
		Willingness to share with news			
		No	Yes	It depends	Total
Sample Population	Undergrads	24	46	37	107
	YouTubers	21	40	31	92
Total		45	86	68	199

Despite motive statements or perceptions phrases indicating an opposition to mass media, the news media among them, YouTubers want to share – even with journalists. But, from the journalist side of the fence, how do they know who they are dealing with? The answer might be best approached by a different question: How do we know where this person is “coming” from?

In chapter one a conceptual model was presented as a rough road map to locations within YouTube. The goal was to parse out YouTubers within the public space as a means of understanding their location – should we consider them more interpersonal users who occasionally drop into YouTube’s public space? Or are they more located in the public space and occasionally tip into either commercial or interpersonal space?

To help address this question, here is a recap on the findings that might guide this work:

- Producer/users are different from users in both how they behave in the site (spend more time) and how they see the site – as a community
- Those who generate more discussion are more likely to feel their self-concept has changed because of their time within YouTube
- Patterns of behavior in YouTube are consistent with other social network structures, i.e. a power-law distribution that implies a “rich get richer” effect

Producer/users who generate a lot of conversation or responses could be considered more externally motivated rather than internally motivated. That is not to say that their motives are altruistic, but instead their actions are outwardly directed, i.e. to connect with others and to engage in debate or discussion. In this manner, then, we can locate them in the public space and at a distance from the interpersonal users who post videos to communicate and keep in touch with small cohorts (family, friends). Since they generate a lot of discussion, network theory would argue that they are more highly connected throughout YouTube. In terms of information flow, they should be considered leaders.

Journalists can use this information. A producer/user who does not display some social connections in their channel or a high level of activity would be suspicious. On each channel YouTube algorithms show visitors the last time the person logged in as well as their last video posted. Even the interpersonal producer/users can be identified by their content if not activity – videos of a personal nature similar to home videos. A channel that does not reflect either social behavior or interpersonal use should be regarded with suspicion.

As to the other scenario, for news organizations that want to start a site or co-opt other social media sites, one sentence cannot be repeated enough: social media platforms are not users waiting and wanting to be an audience. They consider themselves a community. Social media platforms are social networks that are relationally built and with their own structure. In terms of soliciting participation or collaboration, journalists must realize that they are entering a conversation in mid-stream and, in some cases, that conversation has been going on for months or even years. Furthermore, it is a conversation among people who know each other or see the value in being known among the group. Journalists, who are accustomed to thinking of themselves as leaders or advocates or voices for the public may not realize that a different system of leaders, advocates, voices, relationships, and *audiences* are well established. In short, YouTube should be considered a social system of people, not a mass communication tool for distribution.

Future directions

Work leading out of this dissertation should dive deeper into three theoretical problems presented by the findings: the construct of community online, investigating more directly the notion of migration between the three spaces within YouTube, and the effect of visual production on the self concept.

The construct of community online

At the heart of it, this work brought forth one overarching question left unanswered: What are YouTubers referring to when they say they are a community? The next step to that investigation is to further refine our understanding of online communities. What do the main constructs of sense of community theory - membership,

influence, integration, and shared emotional connections - *mean* to YouTubers? These constructs are not as clear cut as they have been in measuring geographical communities. Membership within both geographical and relational communities began at one common step - you show up. However, after that initial step into a community, it appears that membership can be theoretically quite different. There is some support for this idea in the findings; items in the first block of the factor analysis corresponded to SCI's membership measures but also to influence. This presents new thoughts on what membership and influence may truly be and how that construct differs from the influence needed to build social order and consensus. Blanchard and Markus (2004) found that lurkers had a sense of community even though their entry into the site was invisible to the rest of the group. This begs the question: Is being a member of a community as much defined by what you observe as what you do? Is understanding the shared past and normative language of the group enough for an individual to be included *regardless* of their participation? This notion might also explain study one's findings that surveillance in YouTube was more of a social motive than an information need, i.e. I need to see others to *see* the norms of this group and to share in the common language and history. If membership, influence, and integration are correlated in this manner, then this places the lack of influence in a less cynical light than as an outcome of Google take downs: You need *do* little to be part of the group. This overlap with the key concepts is worthy of more in-depth analysis.

This work brought forth theoretical questions about what constitutes a community online, but it equally brought forth the need for a better instrument to measure these questions. Taking a similar approach to how Chavis and colleagues (Chavis, Hogge,

McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986) first attempted to define the parameters of a psychological sense of community, the logical first step is to ask YouTube leaders a set of questions to determine how they define their community. After factor analyses of this data, a better instrument for investigating online communities can be constructed and validated.

Changing motives, changing locations: Migration between the three spaces

Except for the undergraduate cohort, motive changes did not significantly correlate with any variables. However, the elaborations provided by 34 participants indicated that most of these producer/users had a motive change that *moved* them closer to a group experience. This introduces a concept of migration within social media networks. For these Tubers, using the site became a social discovery regardless of whether they started their channel to share videos with family or to produce and post funny, entertaining videos. While some producer/users moved from the interpersonal space into a more public space of YouTube, others had moved from the public space to the commercial space and were now using the platform to brand themselves or build an audience. Furthermore, they did so both within YouTube, as a Partner, and outside of it by driving users to their commercial website.

Clearly, there is more work to be done on this concept beyond 34 statements. However, the work could place the foundation of the uses and gratifications under even closer scrutiny. In other words, it might be more helpful to ask "What motivates people to move into a public space?" than to ask "What motivates people to produce for social media?" This is especially true for any work that seeks to understand how to encourage and promote social discourse (a question presented in one of the initial scenarios in the

introduction). Whether the social network is clearly present to producer/users as they come into a site needs to be considered in this work. In the last few years, YouTube's growth means one thing for its users: the clearly marked, easy to use buttons and clicks that allows producer/users to share and discover videos are being pushed further and further to the back pages of the site. Not discovering videos means not discovering other producer/users and, at least intuitively, would lead to silos of producer/users within YouTube instead of three locations that dynamically function together. Such actions could strip users of the richness social networks provide. When this survey was administered, the topic categories (such as News and Politics) and subcategories (such as Most Discussed) were clearly presented on the front page. At the time of writing, these listings are now presented behind the front page; users either know they are there or have to inadvertently find them by clicking through the front page. Once they are at their channel level, the only means of stumbling upon others is through sharing of videos amongst your friends and subscribers. Thus, YouTube has retained the network attributes that promote sharing, but it has driven these tools deeper within the site. Investigating producer/users' migration within YouTube, then, must also consider the changing attributes of the site driven by Google's engineering and commercial intentions.

Self-concept changes and the visual lens

Finally, this dissertation advanced the notion that the lens can serve as a reflective mirror back on one's self-concept. Again, though, this finding needs more work. Although there was a significant relationship between YouTubers whose content generated discourse and self-concept changes, the process of that change is unclear. It is tempting to say that as they become more connected within YouTube they acquire the

benefits of a network and come to see themselves as a discussion leader. However, there was no relationship between subscribers or duration on YouTube with self-concept changes. It may be that web camera experience is, as some write, a test of self-presentation style and the ranking of "most discussed" reinforced the notion that they were perfecting a type of YouTube speech. In any case, parsing out what influences self-concept changes is needed; is it something in the video, something in the person, or something in the social situation within YouTube or an interaction between all three? As with sense of community, this work should begin at the beginning by asking vloggers *how* they have changed their self-concept and *what* they consider the indicators of this change. Furthermore, although many of these elaborations indicate benefits at the individual level, others discuss gaining a sense of empowerment through self-expression and distribution of information outside the traditional circle of information providers - news organizations among them. The question for those who seek to build a platform for discourse and, specifically, to assist marginal cohorts in finding their voice, may center on technical and social attributes that promote greater sense of self.

Broadcasting the we and me

Shortly after World War II, Time and Life publisher Henry Luce asked University of Chicago president Robert Hutchins to convene a commission to address concerns over the increasing conglomeration of media. In particular, Luce's concern was over commercial pressure brought upon the practices of a free press. In comparison to our world, where only five mega-conglomerates control the world-wide media market – with Time Inc. at the top of the list (Bagdikian, 2004) - their concern seems an odd combination of quaint and prophetic. In their report, the commission first turned its

attention to the overarching right that oversees the bundled rights guaranteed under the first Amendment - the right of expression. In prose that harkens back to the natural rights of man asserted in the Declaration of Independence, the commission wrote that the freedom to express is a moral right, regardless of form or intent:

[M]otives for expression are ... and should be as multiform as human emotion itself, grave and gay, casual and purposeful, artful and idle. But there is a vein of expression which has the added impulsion of duty, and that is the expression of thought. If a man is burdened by an idea, he not only desires to express it; he ought to express it. He owes it to his conscience and the common good. The indispensable function of expressing ideas is one of obligation - to the community and also to something beyond the community - let us say to truth. ... Because of this duty to what is beyond the state, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are moral rights..." (pp. 8-9).

The more journalists perceive the value of YouTubers at the level of their content or as the chance to aggregate an audience, the less likely they are to understand the possible value that producer/users may bring to political and cultural realms *over time* as they find their voice. In the long run, of course, this takes time because not all conversations will be of value to the public realm. Journalists are not well equipped to consider time as anything beyond a deadline – often a daily one at that. The harm in not engaging in some form of discussion is that journalists will be caught unaware of discourse running through social networks until they become an issue at the larger scale – a key argument of Castells. Journalists will have to learn how to converse with people over the long run without constantly thinking, in the back of their minds, what is this good for? Instead, they will have to think about social media producers as personal connections – much like sources – that need to be cultivated, listened to, and – at times –

brought a gift. Journalists often reinforce their connections with their sources by being friendly or providing information to them ahead of when it is published. But, somehow, when it comes to engaging with social media producers few journalists look beyond the value of the content to see the content provider on the other side. Cultivating these relationships could be similar to other sources journalists deal with – being friendly, open, and, at times, give as well as take. For YouTubers, this gift could be simply attention. Journalists should look beyond the site’s promotional tagline. YouTube is much more – and much less – than just broadcasting yourself; some use it for a stage, others use it as a visual phone, others use it as a mirror, and others use it for a town hall. Across all of those motives, though, YouTubers perceive their space as something special, something they *own*, maintain, define, share, and move through. It is the You and Me and We of media.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Early version of YouTube's front page



Source. Internet Archive. Retrieved from <http://web.archive.org/web/20050428014715/http://www.youtube.com>

Appendix B: YouTube's 2005 development

Date	Event or usability function added or improved
April 23	Karim posts YouTube's first video, "Me at the zoo"
April 28	Search terms for dating purposes are removed
May	Beta launch of the site. Founders try to promote the site by contacting journalists, emailing friends, and a Craig's List ad that promised \$100 via PayPal for any attractive California women who would post a total of 10 videos on YouTube ^a Feature added: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link to related videos added on each video
June	Features added: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Browsing function that organizes the videos into the categories of most popular, most recent, most discussed, most added to favorites, and a category of "random"• Search by user name function• Embedded code that allows YouTube videos to be posted in MySpace• Geographical location and date of uploaded videos is encoded into the video's information and can be viewed in Google maps• Email link that allows users to share videos easily without having to copy the URL and paste in an email account• Users can remove comments• Front page redesign
July	Features added: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counter that measures how many videos that user has watched accumulatively• Counter that measures how many times a particular video has been tagged as a favorite by others• Browse categories are further organized into daily, weekly, monthly, and all time (most viewed, most discussed, most recent, etc.)• Ability to rate videos between 1 to 5 stars• Top popular videos are labeled with YouTube honors such as top

- viewed, top discussed, top favorite, etc.
- YouTube introduces monthly video contests with a "Can you dance?" inspired by Matt Harding's world-wide dance videos
- August Features added:
- Users can become "friends" with other users
 - Ability of users to flag inappropriate or copyrighted content which is reported to YouTube directly
 - Content of videos further categorized by topics and by channels
- September Features added:
- Users can subscribe to other YouTuber's videos or invite others to subscribe to their videos
 - Users can create playlists of favorite videos
 - Ability to watch videos in full screen mode
- October Sequoia Capital invests initial \$3.5 million
- Promotional campaigns for November include:
- Daily give-away of Apple's newest iPod - the Nano
 - YouTube partners with the job search website Simply Hired for November's video contest "Get Fired, Get Filmed, Get Famous"
- November Features added:
- Users can block and report malicious others
 - Redesign of log-in, subscription, message center, and home pages
 - "What's new" page is replaced by YouTube blog
- December 17 YouTube's tagline "Upload, tag and share your videos worldwide!" is replaced by "Broadcast yourself. Watch and share your videos worldwide!"

Note. Source YouTube "About us" pages from the Internet Archive. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://youtube.com

Appendix C: Me at the Zoo. YouTube's first video posted on April 23, 2005 by Jawed Karim.

YouTube Broadcast Yourself™ Worldwide | English (4) joneszz08 | Account | QuickList (0) | Help | Sign Out

Home Videos Channels Community Search Upload

Me at the zoo

jawed April 23, 2005 [Subscribe](#)
[\(more info\)](#)

The first video on YouTube, uploaded at 8:27PM on Saturday April 23rd, 2005. The video was shot by Yakov Lapitsky at the San Diego Zoo.

URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNQXAC9IVRw>

Embed `<object width="425" height="344"><param`

► **More From: jawed**

▼ **Related Videos**

- Oldest Youtube Video**
83,843 views
Melcland
0:11
- Who Is The Oldest YouTuber?**
35,494 views
creamofcardstv
2:43
- Evolution of Dance**
114,984,684 views
judsonlaipply
6:00
- YouTube**
175,070 views
YouTube
2:05
- Jawed Karim, Illinois**

Rate: ★★★★★ 3,674 ratings Views: 600,304

Share Favorite Playlists Flag

MySpace Facebook Send Video more share options

Source. Jawed Karim's YouTube channel. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNQXAC9IVRw&feature=channel_page

Appendix D: YouTube compared to the top ten international online sites

Site Date domain registered Alexa rank	Reach	Page views/average page views per user	Average time on site per visit (minutes)	Bounce	# of sites linking to	Demographic cohorts*	Tag line
Google September 15, 1997 #1	31.01	3.64/8.43	8.4	28	656,001	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college some college	Google
Yahoo January 18, 2005 #2	26.07	3.31/9.11	10.1	24.9	112,634	<i>Over represented</i> Sex: Males <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	Yahoo!
YouTube February 15, 2005 #3	18.11	4.11/16.9	22.9	18.8	489,059	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Grad school <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	YouTube: Broadcast yourself
Facebook March 29 1997 #4	17.17	2.50/10.41	25.0	12.3	258,619	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College grad school	Welcome to Facebook!

						<p><i>Under represented</i> Age: 35 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college Some college</p>	
Windows Live December 28, 1994 #5	18.66	1.25/4.84	5.1	40.2	24,889	<p><i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds <i>Under represented</i> Age: 35 years or older Education: Some college</p>	Home - Windows Live
Microsoft Network MSN November 10 1994 #6	15.02	0.43/2.04	2.8	49.2	39,000	<p><i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds <i>Under represented</i> Age: 35 years or older Education: Some college</p>	MSN.com
Wikipedia January 13 2001 #7	8.88	0.54/4.37	5.2	46.1	364,081	<p><i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Grad school <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college some college</p>	Wikipedia
Blogger July 31 2000 #8	8.4	.55/4.69	5.4	45.9	430,891	<p><i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Grad school <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females</p>	Blogger: Create Your Free Blog

My Space February 22 1996 #9	4.93	1.57/22.82	20.1	18.9	335,770	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Some college <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college grad school	My Space/ A Place for Friends
baidu October 11 1999 #10	5.6	0.88/11.22	6.8	23.6	58,665	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Education: College <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Males Education: Graduate	NA

Note. Source Alexa. Retrieved from <http://www.alexa.com/>

* as compared to the overall Internet population

Appendix E: YouTube compared to top ten video sharing sites

Site Date domain registered Alexa rank	Reach	Page views/average page views per user	Average time on site per visit (minutes)	Bounce	# of sites linking to	Demographic cohorts*	Tag line
YouTube February 15 2005 #3	18.11	4.11/16.9	22.9	18.8	489,059	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: grad school <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	YouTube: Broadcast yourself
Metacafe May 8 2001 #130	.56	.04/5.65	5.8	27	26,554	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: males <i>Under represented</i> Age: 35 years or older Sex: Females	Video entertain /Movies, TV, Music & Sports
Veoh June 24 2005 #182	.44	.03/4.16	4.8	20.3	16,618	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College <i>Under represented</i> Age: 35 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	Free videos online/Watch TV online /Free video clips
Vimeo December 4 2004 #441	.20	.01/2.8	3.9	53%	42,847	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College No college	Vimeo: Video Sharing for You

Revver January 25 2005 #2,240	.05	.00/2.2	2.4	65.4	5,796	<i>Over represented</i> Age:18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Some college <i>Under represented</i> Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: Grad school	Video sharing Network
Atom Films July 27 1998 #6,549	.017	.00/2.6	4.7	49.8	2,948	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College <i>Under represented</i> Age : 35 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college some college grad school	Funny videos, cool animations, short films
Our Media November 14 2002 #66,050	.002	.00/2.35	1.9	62.2	2,449	<i>Over represented</i> Age : 25-34 year-olds 45-54 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College <i>Under represented</i> Age: 55 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college some college	Our Media: Producing Change
Sharkle July 12 2004 #68,591	.001	.00/2.88	2.8	33.6	902	<i>Over represented</i> Age : 45-54 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Some college	NA

						<i>Under represented</i> Age: 55 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	
ifilm June 22 1997 #83,548	.002	.00/1.07	.5	84.0	7,427	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Some college college	SPIKE.COM: Check out the premier online destination for Men!
						<i>Under represented</i> Age: 35 years or older Sex: Females Education: grad school	
Break.com February 9 1999 not ranked	.00	.00/1.7	.8	61.8	101	<i>Over represented</i> Age: 25-44 year-olds Education: Some college college <i>Under represented</i> Age: 18- 24 year-olds Education: grad school	Funny videos & Funny pictures

Note. Source Alexa. Retrieved from <http://www.alexa.com/>
* as compared to the overall Internet population

Appendix F: YouTube compared to the top ten mass media sites

Site Date domain registered Alexa rank	Reach	Page views/average page views per user	Average time on site per visit (minutes)	Bounce	# of sites linking to	Demographic cohorts*	Tag line
YouTube February 15, 2005 #3	18.11	4.11/16.9	22.9	18.8	489,059	Over represented Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: grad school Under represented Age: 45 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	YouTube: Broadcast yourself
BBC December 13, 1994 #46	1.56	.10/4.95	6.7	36.2	87,954	Over represented Sex: Males Education: grad school Under represented Age: 55 - 64 years-old 65 years and older Sex: Females Education: No college Some college	BBC-Homepage
CNN September 22, 1993 #55	1.32	.06/3.46	5.4	46.4	81,101	Over represented Age: 25-34 years-old Sex: Males Education: College Under represented Age: 18-24 year-olds 55 years and older Sex: Females Education: No college	CNN.com - Breaking News, U.S., World, Weather, Entertainment & Video News

The New York Times January 18 1994 #106	.78	.03/3.11	4.6	54.4	113,416	Over represented Age: 25-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College grad school Under represented Age: 18-24 year-olds 54-65 year-olds Sex: Females Education: No college some college	The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia
Hulu February 12 1997 #224	.33	.03/5.65	5.6	27.2	7,738	Over represented Age: 18-34 year-olds Sex: Males* Education: College Under represented Age: 35 years or older Sex: Females* Education: No college grad school	Hulu - Watch your favorites. Anytime. For free.
Fox News Channel June 21 1995 #258	.344.95	.01/2.86	5.6	49		Over represented Age: 35-44 year-olds 55-65 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Some college college Under represented Age : 18-24 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college grad school	Breaking News / Latest News / Current News- FOXNews.com

USAToday April 24, 1994 #531	.19	.00/1.98	3	63.2	54,770	Over represented Sex: Males Education: College Under represented Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Females Education: No college	News, Travel, Weather, Entertainment, Sports, Technology, U.S. & World - USATODAY.co m
ABC May 5 1996 #637	.14	.00/2.9	3.7	29.2	11,596	Over represented Age:18-34 year-olds Sex: Females Education: Some college college Under represented Age : 35 years or older Sex: Males Education: No college grad school	Home - ABC.com
NBC June 17 1997 #754	.12	.00/3.46	4.1	35.4	17,001	Over represented Age:18-34 year-olds Education: Some college college Under represented Age : 35 years or older Education: No college grad school	TV Network for Primetime, Daytime and Late Night Television Shows - NBC Official Site
CBS December 16 1993 #948	.09	.00/4.05	4.4	32.2	12,598	Over represented Age: 25-34 year-olds Education: Some college college Under represented Age : 45 years or older Education: No college grad school	CBS.com - Official Site of CBS

Fox Broadcasting December 20 1995 #1077	.01	.00/2.73	2.9	33.6	10,131	Over represented Age:18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: Some college college Under represented Age : 35 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college grad school	Fox Broadcasting Company
National Public Radio December 13 1993 #1148	.08	.00/2.14	2.8	61.5	32,493	Over represented Age:18-34 year-olds Sex: Males Education: College Under represented Age : 65 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	NPR: National Public Radio: News & Analysis, World US, Music & Arts
MSNBC December 15 1995 2616	.04	.00/2.35	3.3	62.8	12,245	Over represented Age:45 and older Sex: Males Education: some college college Under represented Age : 18-24 year-olds Sex: Females Education: No college grad school	Breaking News, Weather, Business, Health, Entertainment, Sports, Politics, Travel, Science, Technology, Local, US & World News - msnbc.com

Comedy Central October 6 1996 #3,952	.03	.00/2.06	2.9	63.4	8,146	Over represented Age: 18-24 year-olds Sex: Males Education: No College Under represented Age: 35 years or older Sex: Females Education: No college	Comedy Central Official Site: Your source for comedians, funny video, TV shows, Games, Jokes, & Ringtones
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Note. Source Alexa. Retrieved from <http://www.alex.com/>
* as compared to the overall Internet population

Appendix G: Collapsed codes from pilot study

New code	Pilot study codes
YT-as community	YT-as community & larger society YT-as community with contributions to YT-responsibility to subscribers YT as utopia village
YT-global	Global connection-make new friends globally
YT-not mass media	YT--not mass media YT--not mass media - news YT--not mass media - more real YT--not mass media-unique YT-medium-better than TV YT-medium-better than TV-real people
YT-new medium	YT-new YT-new-communication tool
YT & trad media	W--traditional media W--traditional media-music videos
YT content diverse	YT--democratic YT--diverse for all content-diverse W--diversity of content W--diversity of content-changes daily
YT unique	content-original content-unique
Prod motives contribute to community	P--contribute to YT community
Interaction	interact interact-to meet others interact-with new people interact-with others content
Control	control level of interaction control-what I listen to control-what I watch P--control-what kind of video I make P--control-length and what to talk about

Connection	<p>connection-human connection connection-make new friends connection-make new friends-globally connection-others-u-would not know connection-to not feel alone-subject or issue connection-with those of similar interest connection-you tube members W--others who are in the same sport or hobby to be part of something to meet others-on intimate level to meet others-romantically P--to meet new friends</p>
Diversion	<p>Diversion-boredom diversion-escape real world diversion-kills time diversion-nothing better to do P--diversion-boredom</p>
Entertainment/fun	<p>content-entertaining enjoyment or fun entertaining W--entertaining-fun P--enjoyment music</p>
Surveillance/info	<p>educational informative W--to hear others opinions W--to hear others opinions thoughts W--to hear others opinions-learn W--to keep up to date with- news W--to keep up to date with-marketing tricks W--to learn W--to learn-language</p>
Surveillance/others	<p>W--surveillance-window on others not round me think W--to see what others are doing</p>
Voyeurism	<p>W--voyeurism W--voyeurism-real people W--voyeurism-real people-wo need for interaction W--to see others-curiosity W--to see who people are W- to see who people are-intimate level</p>

	W- to see others reactions on responses
Work on craft	tutorials P--feedback P--feedback on video craft P--feedback -craft-video ideas P--feedback-video ideas P--craft video P--craft video-learning P--craft-video-practice P--craft-acting P--craft-animations P--craft-cinematic P--craft-hobby P--craft-music P--craft-photography P--craft-social comparison P--craft-to work on W--to get creative ideas
Professional advancement	P--professional aspirations P--promote business-skills P--job skills-communication P--job skills-video
Personal communication	P--4 friends P--4 friends-away P--4 friends-who r subscribers

Note. P=produce statement, W= watch statement,
YT="YouTube is _____" statement, all others are general statements not specifically tied to P, W, or YT

Appendix H: Code book given to coders

Your Code# (James #1, Troy #2, and Andy #3)

YouTube ID# is the file name, not the number at the top of the Quick Time file. It is a 3-digit number.

Example: 002 is correct
#2 is not

This is Boh3m3 – whose first name is Ben. Code yes only if the person:

- . says either Boheme or Ben
- . uses his video as an image or video
- . uses the sound of his video

Acting is playing *two or more characters*.

Acting is NOT playing to the camera or using a funny voice to make a joke.

Think of this like a party. Sometimes people talk too loud, play to an audience, or use a funny voice to make a joke. That behavior is more about presenting yourself than acting.

After thinking about it, if you are on the line as to if some behavior is acting, go ahead and code it as acting.

If the person – or persons – are not talking about why they YouTube, code it as a non-response here and move onto the next video.

Q8 through to Q13 works this way:

A question about first mention followed by a question about all other mentions and is organized by three topics: YouTube is, watch motives, produce motives.

First mentions have a place for you to code for:

- . a non-response
- . if they person *only* mentions that they don't know why they are tubing or what YouTube is
- . for "other" and a space to write a quick explainer on what other is.

The other questions should be fairly explanatory on the survey. But, if you are confused about any part of this process, do not hesitate to call or email me. AFTER YOU HAVE CODED ALL your videos, open the "last videos" folder. Code ONLY the numbers that were not in your videos. This step is to measure the consistency between all coders.

YouTube Content Analysis

1 Coder #

2 YouTube ID #

SUBMIT



5 Are they acting (more than 2 characters)? IF YES, CODE FOR ACTING. SUBMIT UNTIL THE END AND MORE TO THE NEXT VIDEO. NO MORE CODING NEEDED

YES NO

6 The person did not seem to respond at all to the question: Why do you Tube?

YES NO

Additional comments if you have them.

- They said they dont know
- They did not mention any produce motives
- Other, please specify

YouTube Content Analysis

1 Coder #

2 YouTube ID #

SUBMIT 

Survey Page 1

YouTube Content Analysis

3 Respondent

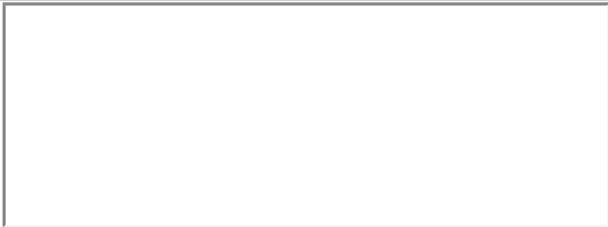
- Male
- Female
- 2 or more people
- Completely visual response

4 Did they respond to Boh3m3 directly? This includes using his video in their response, but they must show him or say his name to be a direct response.

5 Are they acting (more than 2 characters)? IF YES, CODE FOR ACTING, SUBMIT UNTIL THE END AND MORE TO THE NEXT VIDEO. NO MORE CODING NEEDED

6 The person did not seem to respond at all to the question: Why do you Tube?

Additional comments if you have them.



7 Did the person use the terms:

- "real" in describing people, content, etc
- "real" in context of themselves (Example: I am more my "real" self on YouTube)
- "creative outlet"
- "community"

8 YouTube is _____. If the persons mentions that YouTube is ... or this site is ... or this place is ..., then CHECK FOR FIRST MENTION HERE. If they do not talk about what YouTube is, then check "They do not mention anything about what YouTube is."

- Community
- A stage or channel or theater
- Global
- Free of cost or easily to access
- Not mass media
- A source for TV shows or movies (traditional media)
- Democratic or full of a diversity of people
- New medium of communication, technology, or media
- Addictive
- They do not mention anything about what YouTube is
- Other, please specify

9 YouTube is _____. If they continue to give thoughts on how they see YouTube as... check all other mentions here. Check all that apply.

- Community
- A stage or channel or theater
- Global
- Free of cost or easily to access

- Not mass media
- A source for TV shows or movies (traditional media)
- Democratic or full of a diversity of people
- New medium of communication, technology, or media
- Addictive
- Other, please specify



Survey Page 2

YouTube Content Analysis

10 Watch motives_first mention. If the person says they watch YouTube for a reason, CHECK FOR FIRST MENTION HERE. If they DO NOT mention any reasons they watch YouTube, then check "They do not mention any watch motives."

- Entertainment/fun
- From boredom, to kill time, escape life or kill time
- Keep in touch with their "real" friends/family
- Control what they watch when
- To see or hear what people are thinking or doing
- To see or hear people on an intimate or real level
- To learn or gain information
- To interact with other people or their content
- Get creative ideas
- They say they don't know why
- They do not mention any watch motives
- Other, please specify

11 Watch motives_all other mentions. Other than the first mention, if the person gives other reasons for why they watch YouTube content check all that apply here.

- Entertainment/fun
- From boredom, to kill time, escape life or kill time
- Keep in touch with their "real" friends/family
- Control what they watch when

13 Produce motives. Other than the first reason they mentioned, if the person gives other reasons for why produce videos for YouTube, check all that apply here.

- Entertain others
- To be entertained or for the fun of it
- Boredom, kill time, escape real world, nothing better to do
- To keep in touch with "real world" friends and family
- To have control over what videos they make
- To learn or advance their craft (video, photo, acting, cinema, etc)
- As a creative outlet
- Means of self expression (to speak, to express, to share parts of their lives)
- To make new friends
- Easier to communicate than in the "real world"
- To contribute to others or an online community
- To start or be part of a conversation. To share opinions, to be heard
- To be popular on YouTube (gain subscribers, ratings, fame)
- To see or hear themselves on video
- For professional aspirations - get a job in media, promote a business
- Other, please specify



Dan, come be part of the first survey of Tubers. Your input matters!

May 22, 2008

Hello Dan

As you personally know, YouTube is a worldwide media phenomenon. It invites a number of questions – including why. What is it about YouTube that draws so many people to come watch, comment, and post their own videos on this site?

This is my question as well. I am a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota. I am asking your help to shed light on the reasons and paths people have taken to become participating members of YouTube. It is important to hear from YouTubers about their own experiences.

I am conducting an online survey. You have been specially selected to participate because of the content you produce. Will you help me? Below is a link to the survey and the passcode you will need to enter the survey.

I have posted two videos explaining more about the study and myself. The most recent video is at the bottom of this email. Both can be found on my YouTube channel, jonezz08.

I respect your participation in this survey. All your answers to this survey are linked to your password and not to your YouTube user name directly.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at jone0882@umn.edu or my advisor – Kathy Hansen – at k-hans@umn.edu.

Here is the link to the study: <https://survey.cla.umn.edu/27525/>
Your passcode is: Cx3QyDa9

Thank you for your cooperation, I do appreciate your help immensely.

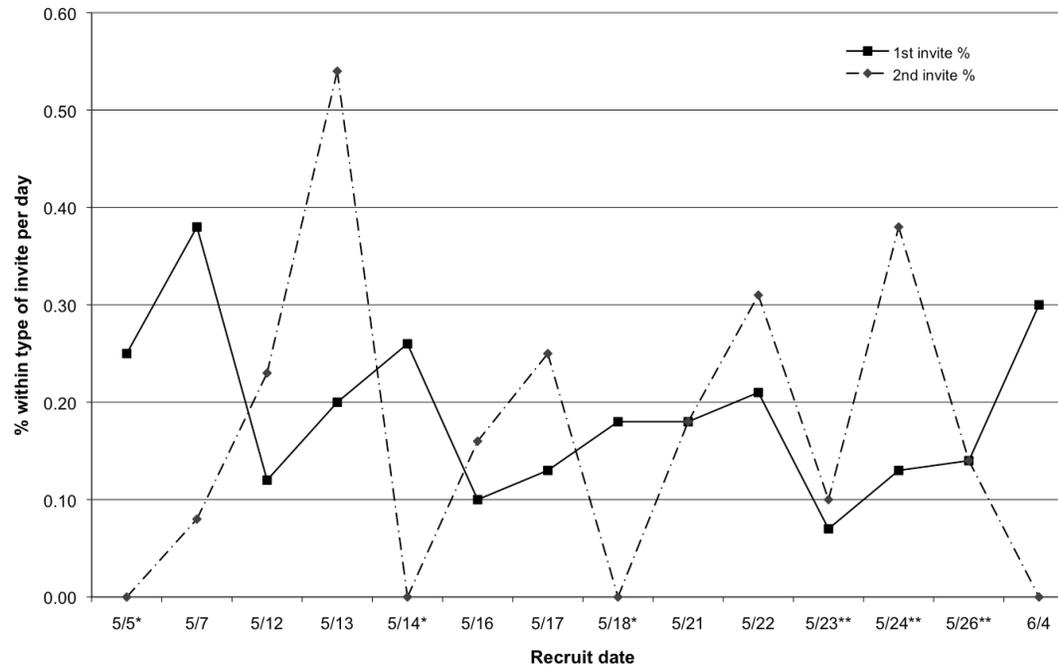
Julie Jones
Doctoral Student
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
University of Minnesota
jone0882@umn.edu

MOre about me & the study

A video addressing some of the concerns you guys have expressed about the study and even if I am who I say I am (I am! I am!)

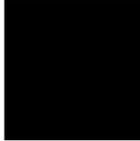
Delete

Appendix K: Response rate by type and date of recruitment invitation



Note. * Date when second invites were *not* sent; ** Memorial day weekend – Friday, Saturday, Monday

Appendix L: Example of email from YouTuber after taking the survey



Hi there,
I just took the survey and I have a couple of thoughts. First, 6+ hours may be a magic number for you, but doesn't come close to the amount of time I spend on this site in a week. For some of us, this has replaced television, which means 20+ hours.

Also, your questions didn't get into pecking order and metrics, which are essential for the self-validation of video creators. Generally, a vlogger wants the following accolades, in this order:

- to be featured by YouTube
- to be a partner (this is a revenue sharing agreement)
- to make any of the dynamic lists of top videos
- more subscribers
- more comments
- more ratings
- more video views

Also people want the comments they leave on other videos to get responded to by the person who made it.

I think it would be valuable to know how well a vlogger is doing at achieving these bona fides compared to how they feel about their experience. I've had a lot of success and that's tied to my positive opinion about the community.

I might ask, do you feel like you're keeping pace with channels like yours, exceeding them or falling behind? Is it your goal to make money off of your videos? Do you want YouTube to make you famous? How often do you check your stats? (Include "several times an hour") Do you have multiple accounts with different personalities?

Also, the kinds of criticism one gets must have an effect. Women who reach a moderate level of popularity have to wade through a lot of demeaning sexual and body-image comments and compliments. Have YouTube comments changed how attractive you think you are (more or less)? (You can swap out attractive for intelligent or interesting) Have you changed your everyday appearance in response to YouTube comments?

Finally, the content we produce is another legitimate variable. Some videos exist for blatant self-validation, others exist primarily to further a discourse, others to entertain in a conventional sense, and others to confess, disrupt, attack, rank, or simply see one's self on the internet.

If you are looking for a certain kind of person, let me know. I know the landscape.
Cheers,



(think user)

Appendix M: Consent form approved by University of Minnesota Internal Review Board

 SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION  UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

CONSENT FORM
The Why of Tubing

You are invited to be part of a research study that is examining why people participate in online media sharing sites such as YouTube. My name is Julie Jones. I am the primary researcher conducting this study and a doctoral student in the school of journalism at the University of Minnesota. Please read this form and email me any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. You can reach me at jone0882@umn.edu.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be directed to an online survey which will take you about 25 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

This study poses minimum risk to you. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may drop out of the study at any time during the survey with no consequences to you.

The benefit to participation is to help media researchers better understand the online world of YouTube, the people who participate, and the content they produce.

Confidentiality

Any information you share in this survey is linked to the password that was provided to you by email. Any records of personal information - such as your YouTube user name - will be kept private. Any public reporting of this study will not include any information that would make it possible to identify you as a subject of this study. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions now or after you complete the survey, you are encouraged to contact me at jone0882@umn.edu or my advisor, Kathy Hansen, at k-hans@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

By clicking the submit button below, you are agreeing:

- That you have read and understand the above information
- That you are 18 years or older
- And you are consenting to participate in this study

And, again, thank you for your time.

Consent

I have read and understand the above, and I **consent to participate in this survey**.

I do not consent to participate.

■■■■■■■■■■

Your Progress:

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Appendix N: Survey as it appeared on CLA site



SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
& MASS COMMUNICATION



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Section 1. *These questions are about your history with YouTube and events that have taken place in the past. Do not worry over exact dates or times, just try to think back and answer as honestly as you can.*

1) Have you ever watched videos on YouTube?

Yes I have
 No I have not

1a) If you answered yes, when did you first watch a video on YouTube?

Month	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

2) On the average, how much time in a week do you spend on YouTube?

3) Have you posted written responses on YouTube?

Yes I have
 No I have not

3a) If you answered yes, when did you first post a written response on YouTube?

Month	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

■■■■■■■■■■

Your Progress:

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4a) When did you first upload a video to YouTube?

Month Year

5) Had you ever created a video before you posted a video to YouTube?

- Yes
- No

6) Again, thinking back to the *first* video you posted to YouTube, which statement best describes the reason you made that video...

- out of boredom
- to entertain others
- to keep connected to friends and family I have in the "real world"
- to express something about myself
- to work on video, photography, cinematic or acting skills for the enjoyment
- to work on video, photography, music or acting skills because I want to work in that industry
- to get others to comment, rate, and subscribe to my channel
- to be part of YouTube
- to be part of a conversation
- to connect with others
- I had a different reason and it was to:

Next



Your Progress:



7) When did you last post a video on YouTube?

Month Year

8) Are you creating videos now for the same reason you created that first YouTube video?

- Yes, basically the same reason
- No, it is not the same reason

9) If you answered no, how has your reason(s) for producing and sharing videos changed?

10) When you posted that first video to YouTube, on the average, how much time did you spend on YouTube in a week?



Your Progress:



11) Since you have been uploading videos on YouTube, do you see yourself differently?

- Yes
- No

12) If you answered yes, could you describe how you see yourself differently?

13) Do you have a favorite YouTuber?

- Yes
- No

13a) If you answered yes, who is your favorite YouTuber?

14) If you thought one of your videos was interesting as a news story, would you submit it to a news organization? (for example, to CNN or Yahoo News)

- Yes
- No
- It would depend on the news organization

[Next](#)



Your Progress:



Section 2. This section asks you about YouTube. For each of the statements below, indicate the degree to which you disagree or agree with the statement by checking the appropriate button in the right column.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1) When I go to YouTube, I can recognize most of the people I see on there.	<input type="radio"/>				
2) Very few of those on YouTube know me.	<input type="radio"/>				
3) I have almost no influence over what YouTube is like.	<input type="radio"/>				
4) Others on YouTube and I want the same things from YouTube.	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
5) If there is a problem in my part of YouTube, those on YouTube can get it solved.	<input type="radio"/>				
6) In general, people you see on YouTube are mainly concerned with themselves and not others.	<input type="radio"/>				
7) It is important to me to feel a sense of community with the people I see on YouTube.	<input type="radio"/>				
8) I do not feel a strong sense of community on YouTube.	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
9) The people I see on YouTube do not share the same values.	<input type="radio"/>				
10) I expect to use YouTube for a long time.	<input type="radio"/>				
11) I feel at home on YouTube.	<input type="radio"/>				
12) I care about what others on YouTube think of my actions.	<input type="radio"/>				

Next



Your Progress:



Section 3. This section asks about you. Again, all answers are confidential and cannot be tied to your personal information (such as your YouTube user name). For each of the statements below, indicate the degree to which you disagree or agree with the statement by checking the appropriate button in the right column.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1) If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me.	<input type="radio"/>				
2) I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me.	<input type="radio"/>				
3) I seldom worry about whether other people care about me.	<input type="radio"/>				
4) I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.	<input type="radio"/>				
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
5) I want other people to accept me.	<input type="radio"/>				
6) I do not like being alone.	<input type="radio"/>				
7) Being apart from my friends for long periods of time does not bother me.	<input type="radio"/>				
8) I have a strong need to belong.	<input type="radio"/>				
	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
9) It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans.	<input type="radio"/>				
10) My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me.	<input type="radio"/>				

Next



Your Progress:



4) Have you uploaded a video onto YouTube?

- Yes I have, and I took part in creating the video
- Yes I have uploaded video that I did not create
- No I have not

Next



Your Progress:

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Appendix N: Eigenvalues for YouTube Sense of Community Index

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of		Total	% of	
					Variance	Cumulative %		Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.960	33.002	33.002	3.960	33.002	33.002	2.501	20.846	20.846
2	1.479	12.327	45.329	1.479	12.327	45.329	2.402	20.019	40.864
3	1.101	9.178	54.507	1.101	9.178	54.507	1.410	11.749	52.613
4	1.019	8.494	63.001	1.019	8.494	63.001	1.247	10.388	63.001
5	.868	7.233	70.233						
6	.739	6.161	76.394						
7	.685	5.708	82.102						
8	.623	5.188	87.290						
9	.511	4.256	91.546						
10	.383	3.191	94.737						
11	.359	2.992	97.730						
12	.272	2.270	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix O: Eigenvalues for Need to belong

Total Variance Explained						
Comp.	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.052	40.523	40.523	4.052	40.523	40.523
2	1.094	10.940	51.464	1.094	10.940	51.464
3	.970	9.704	61.168			
4	.819	8.193	69.361			
5	.693	6.930	76.291			
6	.671	6.712	83.003			
7	.568	5.683	88.686			
8	.473	4.730	93.416			
9	.365	3.645	97.061			
10	.294	2.939	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix P: List of video responses to Boh3m3's Why Do You Tube?

Why Do You Tube?

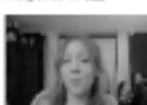


Why Do You Tube?
 From: [boh3m3](#)
 What are you looking at this for? Make a response!

Video Responses

372 Responses

 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:53 From: Geetho Views: 270 Response #: 312	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:25 From: pooorange1 Views: 1,036 Response #: 301	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:44 From: AliceLynn Views: 237 Response #: 310	 Why I tube 00:51 From: TaraSika Views: 444 Response #: 300	 Consider addition and subtraction 04:52 From: Talkerw18 Views: 746 Response #: 300	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:40 From: TheGarr12 Views: 1,054 Response #: 307
 Alan 05 01:24 From: NajmatUddin Views: 151 Response #: 306	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:48 From: xh0h0h0h0h0 Views: 100 Response #: 305	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:38 From: Dunk Views: 220 Response #: 304	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 03:23 From: pooorange1 Views: 240 Response #: 303	 Re: Why do you tube 00:14 From: dellon Views: 120 Response #: 302	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:36 From: MikeDon18M Views: 75 Response #: 301
 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:26 From: deliciousally Views: 105 Response #: 300	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:50 From: applepie1500 Views: 24,909 Response #: 290	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:46 From: JustinEthanVandenberg Views: 13,500 Response #: 290	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:26 From: JaredBenson Views: 1,841 Response #: 287	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 03:52 From: cathal Views: 705 Response #: 296	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:30 From: Sister002 Views: 747 Response #: 295
 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:42 From: app0004 Views: 251 Response #: 294	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:30 From: LopLustella Views: 114 Response #: 288	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:32 From: Bunbilly Views: 79 Response #: 292	 Why do I tube? 02:43 From: adam Views: 127 Response #: 291	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:46 From: Lachlan Views: 206 Response #: 290	 YouTube is my millions 02:32 From: Apple0007 Views: 268 Response #: 289

 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:02 From: cycars Views: 744 Response #: 348	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:00 From: gizaworld Views: 332 Response #: 347	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:02 From: zackback7770 Views: 27 Response #: 348	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:35 From: jamesinthehouse Views: 490 Response #: 345	 Why YouTube? 07:36 From: Ryan055 Views: 148 Response #: 344	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:21 From: sports999 Views: 253 Response #: 343
 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:34 From: moo1093 Views: 181 Response #: 342	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:17 From: BeeGoddin19 Views: 122 Response #: 341	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:06 From: diphal Views: 124 Response #: 340	 Why Do I Tube? 01:26 From: mijonemina Views: 404 Response #: 339	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:44 From: MorfedSandman Views: 223 Response #: 338	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:43 From: jaguar1 Views: 217 Response #: 337
 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:16 From: Lighthouse Views: 234 Response #: 336	 What were you doing before YouTube? 01:17 From: Nobles221 Views: 706 Response #: 335	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:45 From: FrankFelix Views: 219 Response #: 334	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:39 From: ash010 Views: 125 Response #: 333	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:35 From: Apple16 Views: 510 Response #: 332	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:21 From: mathiswonder Views: 434 Response #: 331
 Response: Why Do You Tube? 03:36 From: SergioCat Views: 243 Response #: 330	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:37 From: alvario Views: 751 Response #: 329	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:37 From: cyyb01 Views: 43 Response #: 329	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 00:46 From: TheBaroness03 Views: 26 Response #: 327	 Re: Why do you tube? 03:04 From: moo1093 Views: 162 Response #: 326	 re: why do you tube 00:41 From: moo1093 Views: 90 Response #: 325
 Who and What's YouTube For...? 07:32 From: TimTalker Views: 110 Response #: 324	 THIS is why I TUBE 01:49 From: moo1093 Views: 1,516 Response #: 323	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:39 From: paulmorton Views: 157 Response #: 322	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 01:35 From: grahamond11 Views: 94 Response #: 321	 why do you tube the truth 02:31 From: Lizkale Views: 176 Response #: 320	 Re: Why Do You Tube? 02:57 From: jacobanear Views: 1,533 Response #: 319
 Re: Why Do You Tube?	 Re: Why Do You Tube?	 Re: Why Do You Tube?	 Re: Why Do You Tube?	 Re: Why Do You Tube?	 Re: Why Do You Tube?

Note. Two pages pulled from the video response list under Boh3m3's "Why do You Tube? " as they appeared on YouTube. These are responses #313 to 348 and all were posted in the last month of the sampling frame - March 2007. Content analysis ended with video #340.