

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: Starting off, Video SEO-- the wondrous, interesting topic that I think often gets lost in the mix of video marketing and the interest with YouTube and everything else. I think, really, the question that I always think is at the center of video SEO is really about traffic. It's, how do you drive traffic to your website?

And I've been doing that with a bunch of companies. And I've got a wealth of experience across, not only the implementation of that work for the people in the end, but also in the actual construction of the software to do it. So as I mentioned, I was at Distilled and then at Wistia. And now I'm consulting and also doing a bit of work with Yoast, which is another company that also [? solves ?] video SEO with some of their products. So I'm coming at this from both the software angle and the client-implementation angle as well.

I think, really, the place to start is where we are in terms of the languages online at the moment. So if we think about what it really means to build and market a website in various forms, we have to start with what the web is and what it's constructed of. And we can obviously think about the main languages of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript to construct a website.

But really, I think that, if we're being truthful, need to add another category to that, another code language, if you will, which is, of course, video, because video is now no longer a value add that people think about doing to do more advertising or, specifically, a certain kind of marketing. It's really just a fundamental language and fabric of the web, if we think about every social-media platform is now a video platform.

And whatever we're doing online, we think of video as just one of these seamless experiences that we move in and out of as we're consuming and engaging with content online. So we need to think of it [? slightly ?] differently and as something that we are really integrating throughout all of our communications, whether that be marketing communications or educational communication in our learning center, whatever that might be. And we can see that the trend is moving in this direction.

So there was a report that Wistia released beginning of this year, [? but I did a ?] little bit of work on last year. And essentially, it showed a few trends, firstly, that people were uploading way more video, but also, that they were uploading longer video. And the old model that we might think about, in terms of television and advertising being just the fundamental language of video, is changing.

And really, people are doing more longer-form video, more learning content, more webinars, more podcasts, more video series, more TV-type content. And we're really building a language of different kinds of web video, from TikTok to quick Facebook videos to Instagram stories to longer-form YouTube how-to content to full learning content on our websites. And we're really building a new language of what content is for the web that really mirrors, in some sense, what kind of content we've used for TV, historically.

And people are engaging with this. If we think about the amount of content being viewed per year, obviously, this had a massive impact on the pandemic last year with everybody getting indoors and, therefore, spending more time watching content.

But I personally believe that this trend is going to hold and that we will see video consumption online remain pretty much the same or maybe even increase further through 2021 and beyond. Because what the pandemic has done is really accelerated that trend of moving from image and text towards a more fluid and hybrid model of media types online that includes video as a fundamental language.

And as I mentioned, every single social-media platform is a video platform. Each one has video functionality. Facebook brought it in, I think, in early 2017, shortly after, Instagram. Twitter has had it for a couple of years. LinkedIn now has video as of a few years ago. And of course, TikTok is really the new platform that's come in there and cemented a new form of video content as well.

So not only is every social-media platform now a video platform, but video is also a critical tool for traffic acquisition. And that is, in the marketing sense, where I think video SEO comes in. And it's not just about engaging with people on social media in that language, but also using video to get more people to your website, to convert more users, and to increase engagement. And so there's a few ways you need to do this. And the first one is about what you actually make. So the first step for video SEO is to fundamentally use video throughout your website.

And there'll be many businesses who are probably not doing this right now, whether that is from a marketing standpoint where you are trying to improve the quality and the depth of the content offering on your website, or perhaps from an e-learning standpoint where you have a lot of courses that are maybe in largely text form with some quizzes and things like that, trying to also build video into that functionality. This is where you need to go.

And I think, from the marketing standpoint, there's certain kinds of videos that everybody should be having on your website. And I'm going to start with that. So the first video that, if you're not using video right now, you should go out and create is this one, the "About Us" video. And this is really the video that's going to explain your company culture and product and put your people front and center. And that's going to be about two to three minutes long.

Now, really, I think the purpose of video marketing, not only to drive traffic, but the broader principle of what video provides and why it's become such a fundamental language, is that what video does is it removes the barriers between people and technology. So often, when we go to a website, we are not sure who we're dealing with or what the main value of this content is and what the main value of this business would be.

And having a personal face, having that human-to-human interaction that can exist through video, allows you to just do more with that and actually provide more engagement, more openness, more trust. And that's essentially why videos become so valuable and why this, I think, is the first video you should start with. Because it will allow you to articulate who you are, what you're about, and set the foundation that will really set the course for the aesthetic that you're creating for your video content.

Secondly, you need to start to think about product videos. So these might be videos that are really designed to improve conversion and, from a video SEO standpoint, will often be those videos that provide that most instant marginal increase. If you are in a space whereby, in Google search, there's lots of videos ranking for queries about your products, if you don't have a video for your product pages, then you're not going to be able to compete in that space. And you might find that YouTube and other websites start to actually take the traffic off you.

So you should start to think about investing in product videos. Now, a product video is usually best when it's about 1 minute to 90 seconds long. You should be creating one for each feature or product variant that you have. So if you are a company that maybe sells software, each feature should have its own video that delves into the value proposition of that feature.

So essentially, if you think about your page structure for how many different pages and product pages that you have. Really, each product page should have a unique video. And I appreciate that can be quite an investment. But that's going to be where you're going to see the biggest short-term return in terms of video SEO.

And with these, I would always advise getting a product expert as the narrator or presenter for the content. Because the real value of these videos is not about personality, but it's about expertise. And expertise is far more important than polish. So it doesn't matter if somebody is not very good on camera if they show, authentically, that they really understand this product.

And you will certainly have those people in your business that is that product expert. They are the people who you should be putting front and center and coaching them to be slightly better because those are the people who are going to build the trust for individuals thinking about buying your products or services. And make sure each of those videos demonstrates that core value proposition.

So once you've done your "About Us" video, and then you've invested in a bunch of product videos-- and let's assume that's month one and two. Month three is probably going to be around support videos. And these can usually be slightly lower quality, in terms of production, a bit simpler, but often are going to provide that next level of immediate value in terms of traffic acquisition.

So these videos should be about one to five minutes each. They should cover that customer FAQ-- so basically allow you to tell customers the main things that they care about, whatever your products or services, go and build that support video. And you probably already have a support center, or you have some form of FAQ that you're thinking about. Well, go and make videos about that that really tell the story in a slightly easier-to-consume fashion than, perhaps, a wall of text.

And if you really don't know where to start, a very simple way to approach this is to see where your brand ranks on YouTube. So basically, type your brand name into YouTube, and see what other people have made to talk about you and talk about your products and services. Because that is going to be the kind of content that, really, you could own. And if you go and create better versions of those videos, you're going to, again, get a one-up state on the competition for your own queries and improve the traffic you're driving to your website.

Once you've done that, the next stage is thinking a little bit broader than your own products and services and perhaps looking at what you could be ranking for with video content outside of your brand terms. And if you're doing any form of SEO right now, you probably have a list of branded queries and unbranded queries. And those unbranded queries are going to be the terms that you would love to rank for that are, perhaps, [? competitive ?] queries or those that you think are essentially going to be the things that people search when they are looking for your product or services-- sorry, when they are looking for solutions to the problems that they have that your products or services solve. So these are your unbranded keywords.

And often, anything that includes a how-to or a question within that-- so a why, a what, a how-- are going to be the types of queries that tend to receive video results and, therefore, can be very, very valuable from a video SEO standpoint. So these videos should be around 1 to 20 minutes each. You want to mix different kinds of shots in this. So mix your talking heads, close-up shots, if it's a physical product, or a screencast, if it's a digital product.

And a simple way to get started here is to look at, well, what currently ranks for the unbranded keywords for youtube.com? So about 80% of videos or so on the web that are video results are ranked for youtube.com. That's not because YouTube gets any preference. That's just because most people use YouTube for their videos leading to a common misunderstanding that YouTube is somehow better for video SEO.

It doesn't really matter which platform you host your videos on. All that matters is that you provide the right data. And YouTube has the data for itself, but doesn't necessarily give it to your website. So we'll get onto that in due course. But essentially, what you can do is look and say, what ranks right now for YouTube, or perhaps Vimeo, to some extent, but mostly YouTube, for your unbranded keywords. And that will tell you the immediate videos that you should go and make in order to try and capture that ranking for your own website rather than giving it to YouTube.

So a good, simple way to do this is to use a tool called Ahrefs, which is an SEO tool that some of you may be familiar with if you're already doing search-engine optimization. I use Ahrefs. You could also use-- SEMrush, I think, has a similar function. But with Ahrefs, what you can do is you can look at all your different current unbranded keywords and then type in the domain youtube.com, and look at this report called Traffic Share By Domain.

And this will essentially give you all of the different keywords that YouTube is currently ranking for. And that basically tells you, if I go and make this video and optimize it correctly for my website, I can get the traffic instead of YouTube and, therefore, drive more traffic to your website with video, a.k.a. Video SEO.

Once you've done that-- so that's probably six months into a year into your new video project that I'm leaving you with to go and take away today. Then you can start to think about the next stage, which I think is augmenting your blogging strategy. So if you are a business right now investing in some form of written content, which I expect most of you are, you can simply augment this strategy by including video with all your blog posts, a.k.a. Vlogs.

So these might be essentially just a simple, short summary of the blog post as a scripted video of a single talking-head shot. Think about using these to augment and support your existing strategy. They can be as long as you like. It's really just there to provide that additional bit of value and accessibility to your blog posts.

So maybe for people who are visually impaired, they might want to actually listen to the blog post and consume it that way rather than read it. So you have ways into that and providing a bit more value through vlogging and just in getting more value. And that will allow you, again, to drive more traffic from search.

And then, lastly, which we're going to get on to a bit more detail-- I think, once you've done all of that, then you can start to think about the big investment, which is long-form creative content. And this is really where I think the businesses who are doing this effectively are going to get ahead of all the rest in the months and years to come. Because I think long-form creative content is really going to be the branding tool of the future rather than just paid ads. Because I think [? it ?] really matters with branding is not how many people have seen your content. It's how much time people have actually spent engaging with it, which is why long-form is taking off.

So this kind of content should be 20 to 60 minutes. We're talking about podcasts, interviews, documentaries, anything like that that's really bridging that gap between education and entertainment. And you should target niche-- very specific users rather than trying to make something for all people. If you make the best thing on the internet for a small group of people, that really kick-starts your word of mouth amongst your target audience.

So once you've done all of that, you've made all this amazing content-- let's say it's taken you a year to do all of this-- through that process, you can then think about step two, which is going to be actually implementing the technical side of video SEO. And what we're talking about here is getting your videos ranking in search results for your own domain.

Now, as I mentioned, a lot of times, when people think about video SEO, they just think about YouTube optimization and YouTube being the only platform that will rank. It's not true. Any website can get videos ranking. You just have to do the work.

And for most businesses, it's generally more valuable to drive traffic to your website than it is to YouTube, unless you are, perhaps, in a consumer-goods space where you don't have any direct sales, or your website is a secondary asset for your marketing. But for most businesses where your website is an important asset, which is most businesses doing SEO, you should then think about driving traffic there because you're going to get more value rather than giving it all to Google where they can just advertise on your content.

So how do you do video SEO? Well, it's pretty simple. But essentially, what you need to do is just include some metadata within your website that Google can crawl and see and understand and say, here is the video, and here's how it works. The reason why you need to do this is because Google is just not sophisticated enough yet to understand and crawl and parse the data within a video.

Google can understand when a video sits on a page, and they can read that. But they can't, then, understand the additional data about what is contained in the video. And that is what you need to provide through video SEO. And you can do this in a few ways.

You can do it either with Schema.org markup in JSON-LD, which means you inject some additional data into the header of the page. That, I think, is the best way to do it because it doesn't affect your site speed or the amount of processing needed to actually load your page completely. If you can't do that, you can also do it-- include schema data in the microdata, which is essentially a way of putting it in the body of the HTML.

You can also, if you want to submit something called a video sitemap in Google Search Console or within your robots.txt file. And that's the best way to do it if you are unable to change the actual content on the page. But for most businesses and most websites, increasingly, the simplest way to do this is with schema data using JSON-LD, which is exactly what I have shown in the code here.

And as you can see, if you look at the green text, there's a few different bits of data that come in there. There's the name of the video, the title. There is the upload date. There is a duration. There is the content URL, which is essentially the actual video file itself. There's the embed URL, which is the file of the player. And then there's some other information, like interaction count, which is an optional thing that you can include that tells you how many views this video has had.

Now, essentially, the essentials that you actually need to include are as follows. You've got to have the title. So you need to think about the title of the video and include this within that text. Now, this is not the same as the title of the page. This is the title of the video itself and explaining what is on the video. It may be quite similar to the title on the page. That's not a problem. But it's essentially just a new meta title that tells Google about this particular piece of content on the website and how it works.

You then need to include a description, which is very, very similar, again, to the meta description that you're going to be including on the page anyway, from an SEO standpoint. But again, this is not a description of the page. This is a description of the video within the page.

You then need to include the duration, which is often automated, but it essentially tells Google how long the video is. What's really important here is not any specific amount of optimization, but just that you cut the video to the appropriate length for the content type. And I included some of those lengths at the beginning of how long each video should be.

With the title and the description, it's important to not think in terms of constructing an SEO title. So the keywords ostensibly don't matter too much. What really matters is driving clicks. Often, Google will not use this content particularly. And they will still use the, even for a video result, [INAUDIBLE] title that is included on the page. But sometimes they might use the video title.

What's more important than trying to include keywords is to generate clicks. Because the thing that really improves rankings with video and selection is people clicking on your actual search result. And that gives the indication that this is a valuable result, either directly or indirectly. And that's the thing that's going to provide that ranking boost over the longer term. So it's about creating a great editorial title, much like you're thinking when you're writing a blog post or an article.

Once you've done that, you then need to include the captions. And this is, of course, where 3Play Media comes in very helpful because it is a great service that will do that for you and is the one I use. So I'd highly recommend it. And that's essentially going to give you that professional transcript.

You want to go for the best quality transcript you can get that is as accurate as possible because that is the kind of data that Google will then read when you put it in the structure data to understand the full context of the video because the robot is unable to actually watch the video itself. So this tells Google what is in the video.

And the more accurate that transcript is, the better the language is, the more complete it is, the more that they are going to see your content is contextually relevant for any query. So make sure you're getting that done as good as possible and then including that data within the metadata of the video SEO implementation.

You then also need to include an upload date. And this will tell Google how recent the video is. Now, an important one here is, obviously, you want to be honest, and you don't want to just lie. But there is a recency bias that usually applies. So if you have a product video on your website, and it says 2012, that's probably not going to be as clickable as something that says 2019.

So what I recommend doing is just updating your content as regularly as possible so that you benefit from that additional bias that applies to recent content through people clicking through. It doesn't mean you have to completely redo it. But just think about maybe updating any bits of voiceover or any particular stuff to say, those new features. Just keep that content regularly updated and think about that content editing cycle so that you're keeping everything fresh and relevant and driving traffic that way.

So once you've done all that, you then include the data on your website. A bunch of tools that will allow you to do this-- if you're using WordPress, the video SEO plugin from Yoast will automate that for you. It's quite affordable. It's only, like, 70 pounds or, I think, about \$100, so a quite affordable one-off payment. And that will do that for you.

Alternatively, some video platforms include this function natively. Wistia is one of them. YouTube is not. Vimeo is not. So if you're on a different platform to WordPress and you are using YouTube, for example, this is something you're going to have to do manually, or you're going to have to work with your development team to implement. So it can be a tiny bit technical, but it's not a huge job. This is probably only a few days' work for a content developer.

The most important part, however, of video SEO is around the thumbnail. So the thumbnail is the thing that really catapults and defines success with video SEO. And this is an example of, I think, a well-optimized thumbnail that I put together a couple weeks ago.

So here we have-- what's good about this one is that there is text that provides that supporting context to the title itself. There is a human face. As human beings, we have a bias towards looking at other people's faces. So if there is a face in the search result, we're likely to draw eyes in that direction. There's bold, clear colors to make it stand out. And there's a logo, as well, to have a little brand touchpoint.

So those are the things that really matter. And ultimately, what you need to be thinking about is creating specific thumbnails in a very considered way for all the video content that you're creating. And this will be probably-- if you're only going to invest time in one thing for video optimization over the long term, it's creating better thumbnails because better thumbnails are the things that drive clicks and more traffic.

And what most people do, mistakenly, is just pick a-- use, in their default video platform-- just pick a frame from the video that's included automatically and say, yeah, that's fine. That will do as a thumbnail. But really, what you need to do is think of your thumbnails as movie posters. They are there to entice people to click and view the content.

So spend a bit of time in Photoshop. Work with your designer to actually create great thumbnails for different content. And over time, test out different styles. Optimize this. Use different styles to test out which is going to drive more traffic. And then, over time, you can start to really optimize that content most effectively.

So think about bold, high-contrast colors, a human face, if [? possible, ?] a logo, and large, stylized text. Remember, it has to be visible at a very, very small size. So you can drive interest that way. So think about something that's legible at 116 by 24 pixels.

There's also a new feature that Google have launched within the last few months. You may have come across it in the search results. And it's these key-moments features. And what this essentially does is it allows you to have this big old bit of real estate that shows you lots of different links to different parts of the video and Google chopping up and understanding, if it's a longer piece of content, that there are certain styles and certain sections and driving people directly to them using links.

Now, this, right now, is only open on YouTube. So if you're not trying to drive traffic to your website, but just using YouTube as a platform to drive traffic to, you can take advantage of this. In the near future, this will also apply to your own website or other platforms.

So with the clip schema, you can include this data that tells Google exactly when a certain section of the video starts and when it ends and then get this result as well, which is nice, big real estate with lots and lots of links that's going to drive a ton of traffic. So watch this space in the coming months, and make sure you're ready to take advantage of this when it becomes more publicly available.

OK. So you have made all this amazing content. You have optimized it for search. And you are reaping the rewards, and you are driving in traffic. What is the next stage for essentially taking your video strategy to the next level? Well, I think it is about building an audience over the longer term. Now, this is essentially how you augment and take the essential video SEO and use that principle of driving traffic to your website across all your social media as well. So think about building an audience with owned media.

Now, the problem is, I think, with most video work, as I mentioned, we've essentially allowed Facebook and Google to own our brands. We have put all of our content on YouTube and Facebook. And we have just allowed them to control the audience and then get into a position where, if we want to reach our audience, we have to pay them money to actually spend advertising spend to get our audience to view our content.

And I think this might be beneficial as a short-term function for how do we reach people? It solves the problem of reach. And Google and Facebook have really solved that now. If we want to find people to go after who might be potential customers, we just give them money, and they have solved that problem for us.

But what they've not solved the problem for is how we then turn that into long-term value for an audience that we control. And that suits them because they would like to continue charging us money in the long term. But I think we can, with our video strategy, be a little bit more strategic.

So the old model is, essentially, what you do is you create one video asset, and you then put it everywhere. And I'm sure some of you are doing this right now. You are investing in [INAUDIBLE] video content and then trying to amend it and adjust it so that you can actually put it on all these different platforms so that you've got something on YouTube, on Facebook, on Twitter, on TikTok, et cetera.

And I think this is problematic. I think the problem is that we are then losing control. And we are not driving that value. We are just allowing all of our brands to live on these other platforms. That might be OK for some businesses, but I don't think it's OK for most, and certainly not if you are trying to monetize content.

So how, if you are monetizing content, perhaps in an e-learning context or whatever else, how can you actually think about content distribution? Well, I think the way to think about it is to copy the big players of content monetization. And that is, of course, the likes of Netflix and Amazon.

So how do Netflix approach social media? Well, they don't put all their content on it. What they do is they cut up little clips and trailers and small segments and supporting content, like interviews and other things that really advertise that core content asset that they have that they're monetizing. And this is exactly the kind of approach that you should be thinking about with social media in order to drive the most value from search. It is to create that core video asset that is really beneficial, the one that you want to rank for your website.

You then take that, and you cut it up into clips and trailers. And you make supporting content, montages, whatever else you have, to not give away the whole piece of content. Just tease the value of it. You put all that content on social media. You benefit from the value that comes from social media, in that, people typically want to consume shorter content than they would elsewhere. And then you use that content to advertise that core asset on your own website, which you're going to drive traffic to over the long term.

So by using social media for shorter clips, trailers, supporting assets, and having your core main video asset on your website, you are then going to get the best of both worlds by driving traffic using video SEO and also driving traffic by using social media in a way to develop an audience. So instead of distributing your content to your audience, you are bringing your audience to you over the long term. And then you can start to compound value.

So instead of marketing like a company selling ads, market like a media company. And think about yourself, if you're creating video content over the longer term, that you are really becoming a media company. And you need to start to think about one throughout your marketing and your customer acquisition.

Particularly important is the role of email in this. If you, of course, do something on YouTube, and you get people to subscribe on YouTube, Google owns that. And they charge you, and they engage with the subscribers directly. But you then cannot directly speak to your subscribers or bring them into your sales funnel.

Not so if you capture an email. So when you are including longer-form content or more entertainment-driven content on your website-- stuff like a podcast, like a video series-- make sure you are getting people to subscribe via email so you are capturing that email, often, through either just a subscription box or an email gate on your content-- so something that people have to include the email within the video in order to actually watch the full thing.

And within that, if you put the email gate about 10% to 20% through the video, that's when you're going to get the most value. If you do that, then you're going to capture the email. You're going to send subscribers into your own CRM system where you can start to market your products and services to them in a way rather than allowing Google and Facebook to own that communication.

So if you own the distribution channel, you own the audience data. And if you own the audience data, then you are set up for the long term to capture revenue and build that audience on your own platform that is going to drive value for you over the longer term.

So one of the big questions on video SEO is, which platform should you use? And there's no one size fits all. I would say, if you are a consumer-goods brand without direct sales and essentially where your website is not the most important marketing asset, YouTube is the best platform for you.

If you are maybe in the e-commerce or B2C business, and you're going to get a lot of traffic and a lot of views, naturally, Vimeo is probably the best bet for you. And if you're a B2B business, I would say Wistia is the best option because it offers more tools and services that are particularly applicable for B2B businesses, such as email gates and CRM integration.

So lastly, how can you measure video SEO? Well, there's two tools that you already have available that are ideal for measuring this. And first is Google Search Console. Now, Google Search Console has got a video tab. And this will allow you to see how much traffic you're getting, not only from Google Video search, but also from universal search where there is a video appearance.

As you can see here, in the Search Appearance tab, it says Videos. And this tells you how many impressions and clicks you are getting for your videos. And what you want to see, as you're creating more content and implementing video SEO, you want to see this going up over time.

And as I mentioned earlier, one of the most important things is thumbnails. And what I would recommend is, with specific content that you have, is split-testing thumbnails over time. So one month, you may have one thumbnail. The next month, you may have another one. And then you can use Google Search Console to look at that specific page and see whether the traffic is going up or down. And that will indicate to you what kind of thumbnails are going to be most valuable for your particular use case.

The other tool that is particularly useful for measuring video SEO is, of course, YouTube Analytics. And what I mean by this is, if you're using YouTube as a platform, either for your main video-hosting platform or as a supporting platform to have certain other content on-- as I mentioned, things like clips and trailers-- what you can do is then look at the YouTube Analytics Traffic Source Report. And this will tell you where your views are coming from. So how many are coming from YouTube search? How many are coming from suggested videos or embedded players elsewhere?

Now, what you want to see, to know here is to understand how much value YouTube, as a platform, is driving, in terms of overall views. So if most of your views are coming from YouTube search and suggested videos, that's good. That tells you that YouTube is actually a really valuable platform for you at this point.

However, if most of your views are coming from external websites or embedded players, that tells you that YouTube, as a platform, is not necessarily driving particular-- a huge amount of value for you, because people just aren't using YouTube to find your content. They're using Google search, or they're using other people's websites. So this is an example of that.

And in that case, then you can break down and say, well, OK. Where are people coming from? Here, we see Twitter and Google. And this really tells us that, actually, because a lot of traffic is coming from Google, we would then be better off moving that content off YouTube or putting-- marking them as unlisted on YouTube and trying to implement video SEO to drive traffic to our website because we are then going to be able to switch things up and get more value by driving the traffic there than we would with YouTube.

So I hope that is a very useful introduction to video SEO and gives you a good overview of how you can approach it and what the main principles are behind success for the long term. And if you do need a hand getting started, I'm always available to chat. You can just drop me an email at philnottingham@gmail.com. Or you can find me on Twitter @philnottingham. I hope that was useful. Thank you very much.

SAMANTHA SAULD: All right. The first question for you is, how should you treat educational content that you don't necessarily expect sales from?

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: So I would say I'm not 100% sure exactly what that is contextually. So apologies if I don't get this quite right, and I don't quite understand exactly what you're referring to. But I would say that, ultimately, if it's a marketing asset, the principle is still the same. So if you are trying to drive interest, and you are trying to get people to be intrigued about your products or services over the longer term, the strategy is still the same whether or not you're trying to drive direct sales.

So it's not about direct conversion. It's about, people arrive at your website, perhaps. They will get value. They will view the content there. You can track them. And then, over the longer term, you'll bring them into your sales funnel, or you'll have that brand touch with them.

So I don't think the strategy particularly changes whether or not you're expecting direct sales. The principle of still trying to create content that really matches the use and the demand and the interest that people have. It would still be the same. I hope that answers it. But feel free to chip in if there's more context that you can provide, and I can provide a better answer.

SAMANTHA SAULD: Awesome. Thank you. The next question is, does the quality of video matter, i.e., is the content more important than the look?

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: The content is certainly more important than the look. So the look is, I would say, increasingly less important, because we're all very comfortable with scrappy video as long as the audio is clear and good quality. So definitely invest a few bucks in a good microphone. If you're recording stuff just with your phone or with your webcam, so that's fine. But the actual picture is not so important. What matters is more the quality of the content.

And I think, ultimately, with education and with B2B businesses, and to some extent with B2C businesses, the thing that we're really trying to show through video is expertise. And as long as you have expertise, and you have somebody who's able to competently communicate their expertise, the quality of that shot is not going to matter so much.

SAMANTHA SAULD: Got it. Thank you. The next question is, how often should a brand be creating videos to keep up?

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: Obviously, it depends on the size of the business and the niche you're going to. But ultimately, every day. If you're trying to do stuff on social media, things on TikTok and Facebook, live or die in a day. So if you want to engage in those platforms that have a very short shelf life of content, you've got to be pumping out content regularly.

That said, I don't think the regularity is the most important thing. What is far more important is the quality and the effectiveness of the content you're creating. So I would go at the speed that makes sense for your particular business rather than trying to worry about pumping out loads and loads and loads of content.

If you only have space to make one video, make your "About Us" video. If you only have space for a few more videos, make product video, and work up to the stuff that has a shorter shelf life rather than trying to do everything out the gate all at once. So get really good at one thing, and then start to expand, rather than trying to do all things at once.

SAMANTHA Got it. That makes sense. The next question is, how much should brands be spending on creating video?

SAULD:

PHIL Oh, gosh. I think that's [INAUDIBLE] interesting question because it all depends on your budget. Bigger brands, I
NOTTINGHAM: would say, if you think about your wider marketing budget and your production budget for content. I would say the lion's share of it should be video content these days.

If you're spending a lot of-- at least more than you're spending on blogging and design and development. Video is that fundamental asset that you need throughout all of your marketing communications. And you should be investing heavily in it. So if you have the deep pockets to be able to do that, it's a fundamental aspect of all marketing communications.

And you should start to think in terms of the business goal and the channels and investing in those, rather than investing in video, per se. So instead of thinking of video as a line item, video is a particular cost associated with different channels and different elements of marketing. But it's likely to make up an increasingly bigger portion of that pie because it is the tool you need to communicate on most platforms, not only on social media now, but also web pages.

So it's like saying, back in the day, how much should we invest in written content? It's, like, well, the way to think about it is more, well, what are we writing and on what channels, and how are we doing it, and then building from there?

SAMANTHA Cool. Thank you. The next question is, what should you do if you don't have an in-house videographer to help
SAULD: with creating video?

PHIL So I think, depending on your-- I'm trying to answer these questions for both small and big businesses. But often,
NOTTINGHAM: things change because I don't know who is asking and how much resource they have. But if you are at a medium or big business, hire an in-house videographer, probably a producer and a director and a whole-- you need a whole media team.

In the same way that you hired a social-media team or a content-marketing team, the next thing is an in-house video studio. And that's the people you need to bring on. And I can help advise on who you need to hire, so feel free to get in touch.

But I think that if you are in a small business that doesn't have the budget to bring someone in full time, then there are a ton of great freelancers out there, no matter where you are, who-- particularly young people just coming straight out of college-- who will be able to offer their services for a good price, and you can bring them in part time to help.

If you even don't have a budget for that, then I would think about just doing it yourself, doing it with a webcam and a microphone and a phone, and just practicing doing really scrappy, simple, talking-head videos and building off the back of that. Because there's nothing wrong with that.

And what we're doing right now is video content. We're just doing a Zoom call. And we're using laptops and webcams, and it's fine. And you can do the same thing. So just think about, what is the smallest thing that I can do without external help? And go from there. But obviously, all of that depends on the size of your business and how much resource you have.

SAMANTHA Cool. Makes sense. The next question is, how do you measure SEO success?

SAULD:

PHIL How do you measure SEO success? So ultimately, traffic. And the core metric that you should be thinking about
NOTTINGHAM: is organic traffic from Google search and Bing and these other search engines, but certainly, primarily, Google. And the main tools for that are Google Search Console, Google Analytics, tools like Ahrefs and SEMrush. And all of those come with really good reports natively that will show you how well you're doing in your SEO.

And yeah, a good SEO consultant or agency will be able to set you up and provide all that good information to allow you to [? drive the ?] value for long term with search. But search, for most businesses, is the biggest acquisition channel they have. It's direct or search. So if you are not investing in SEO as a marketing channel and a marketing thing right now, I would definitely think that that's probably going to be something to investigate and start reporting on regularly. Because it's likely that most important marketing activity that you're not current engaging with.

So yeah, definitely go and explore the tools that are out there. Some of them are free. Some of them are paid. But there's a lot of good content to advise on that as well.

SAMANTHA Cool. Thank you. The next question is, what should you do if your video isn't performing well? Should you change
SAULD: the title or thumbnail?

PHIL So I would start with-- if it's not performing in terms of-- there's two aspects of this. There's whether it's not
NOTTINGHAM: performing in terms of impressions or clicks. Now, if it's not performing well in terms of impressions, that means that it's simply not getting ranked, and nobody is seeing it. And that indicates that you need to improve the quality of the page. You need to, yes, change the title and try to, perhaps, also think about link-building.

So that's one aspect of video SEO we didn't talk about today. But links are obviously a very important part of SEO and something that you might need to start doing in order to increase the value and the perceived authority of the page in question. So that is where you should start to think about a title.

If you are getting lots of impressions, as you can see in Google Search Console, then that's when you need to-- but you're getting a few clicks-- that tells you that people are seeing the video, but they didn't really like it. And that's when you should start to change the thumbnail and experiment with a better thumbnail and hopefully see those clicks improve-- so two different metrics for two different optimizations. But yeah, that's a great question.

SAMANTHA Awesome. Thanks. The next question is, for the video-featured snippet that you showed, is this only valid for
SAULD: YouTube videos? If we are a B2B company in which you recommend Wistia, can we still appear?

PHIL Yes, absolutely. Any website can appear. It's not just YouTube videos at all. So if you include the data that I
NOTTINGHAM: indicated there, then that's how you get your own website to rank. And Wistia will automate that for you, actually. So if you're using Wistia, it will ensure that your videos can rank for your website rather than YouTube.

The common misconception is that, because YouTube automatically gives that data to Google, because they're owned by the same parent company, that means that YouTube is the only platform that you can rank for. That's not true at all. You can rank for any website. You just need to make sure you're giving Google that data, effectively, so they can read and understand the videos, which Wistia will do. So yeah, you can do it for any website.

SAMANTHA Cool. The next question is, how do you come up with catchy titles?

SAULD:

PHIL How do you come up with catchy titles? Gosh. It's the same principle of editorial. So how do you come up with
NOTTINGHAM: good newspaper articles or good titles for anything, really? I think it's a creative copywriting discipline that-- sadly, I am not a great, skilled expert. And so I would normally work with a copywriter or someone who is really good at that.

But yeah, if you think about-- normally, hinting at something to be discovered is a good principle. So the click-bait option is, like, oh, you won't believe what happens next, or here's what's coming up, or five ways that somebody has done something. And you can hit those psychological triggers about numbers, about intrigue, about discovery. And if you can come up with something that's going to get people interested to want to click and find out more, then that's how you're going to win.

But there's a whole discipline on understanding good titles and the psychology of click bait and things like that. So I'd go and read up on those things.

SAMANTHA Awesome. The next question is, will auto-generated captions hurt SEO? How do search engines use captions for
SAULD: SEO?

PHIL Yes, I wouldn't say they'd hurt it, but I would say that they're not ideal. So really, you want the best quality--
NOTTINGHAM: either auto-generated and then with a human eye or human [INAUDIBLE] captions so that they are as best as possible. Now, we're obviously going to get to a stage soon where auto-generated captions are so good that we don't need human oversight. And I'm sure the 3Play team can talk a bit more about when we might get there, from a technological perspective.

But I would say, you just want to get the best quality and most accurate captions that you can. Because if there's spelling errors in there, if there's the use of the wrong words, that might throw the search engines off. Because they are ultimately taking the text, parsing it, and then using that text to understand what the full context of the video is. So if it's not accurate, you might be missing out on the view of relevancy for a certain kind of query.

SAMANTHA Cool. The next question is, how does SEO work for platforms like TikTok or Instagram?

SAULD:

PHIL So it kind of doesn't in the sense that a lot of TikTok and Instagram videos don't really appear in search results.
NOTTINGHAM: Some of them do, but it's often-- it's very sporadic. And Google haven't really solved that problem because some of it is not visible to them in terms of their crawling behavior.

So the answer is, they don't appear within search, generally speaking, for their own platforms. They will sometimes. And occasionally, if something is tweeted or has that further authority so Google can find it and crawl it, then it might appear. But generally, the answer is, they don't appear very often and not very frequently.

So if you want your Instagram videos or your TikTok videos to be indexed and visible in search, I would suggest linking to them on your website or sending them out via Twitter or another platform that is more open than Google can actually see and find and discover that way.

SAMANTHA SAULD: Cool. The next question is, what are your thoughts on using forms for videos? Do you think it hurts the brand experience? Are there alternatives [INAUDIBLE]? We use HubSpot forms on Wistia videos.

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: Sure. So I think, as with all the questions of conversion [INAUDIBLE], it's a question of how much effort and time people need to put into something. So I would say, you want to reduce the barrier as much as possible. And so generally, for forms, don't ask for more than you absolutely need.

Ideally, you would just ask for the-- if the idea is, just get the email address, just get the email address. Demanding the name is probably not that useful. You can actually get that, probably, by using tools like FullContact or Clearbit to augment that data just from what you have with the email address. So I would ask for as little as possible. Because the more elements you put in, as with all conversion forms, the more people are likely to click away.

And at Wistia, they found that if you just have an email form, and you put the gate, like 20% of the way through the video, you tend to get about a 40% conversion rate, on average, 40%, which is very high. So that principle is the one I would aim for. That seems to be the best thing to do.

If you're putting in lots of drop-downs and stuff, you're going to just, every time, cut your conversion rate. So if you absolutely have to have it in there, have it in there. But I would try and make those forms as simple as possible so that you're not forcing people to put in more than is necessary and then losing more and more conversions along the way.

SAMANTHA SAULD: Yeah, that makes sense. The next question is, what publications do you recommend to stay up to date on video SEO?

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: That is a good question. The Yoast blog, the Wistia blog, my Twitter account, *Search Engine Land* is pretty good, and Moz.

SAMANTHA SAULD: Cool. And that leads us to the last question, which is, where can we follow you?

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: You can follow me on Twitter @philnottingham. I'm on LinkedIn, also Phil Nottingham. And I have a new website launching next week, which is philnottingham.com. Or you can email me, philnottingham@gmail.com.

SAMANTHA SAULD: OK. Actually, one final question just came in. For your point in owning the distribution channel, how do you balance that with optimizing longer-duration video content for the key-moment video-featured snippet versus shorter, trailer-type video content that may not qualify for this snippet?

PHIL NOTTINGHAM: Yeah, that's an excellent question. So I would say-- oh, sorry. I was just reading it. So I think the essential principle there-- we don't know exactly when the feature snippet is going to play out. And once you have that feature snippet on your website, then you can optimize that longer-duration content for the feature snippet. And you can still have the-- that will all work naturally and lovely.

Right now, if the question is more like, how do you optimize the idea of having shorter videos on social media, longer videos on your website, and taking advantage of this, the answer is, you can't at the moment. You might just have to think about how you can change the content on social media so that you aren't giving them everything. But you might have slightly longer content that you're including clips in if you really want to take advantage of that.

But the principle is more, what can you do that's reducing the content so that you advertise the better stuff that's on your website and include, say, hey, this is good, but, actually, the better stuff is really good here if you want that longer stuff. So you might have a how-to video on YouTube that includes some of the information and still has the clip's functionality. It might be five minutes long and includes a few clips. But there's a 20-minute, fuller, more in-depth version on your website, for example.

So yeah, but in the longer term, when Google opens up that feature to wider websites, which I think they probably will, at that point, then you just make sure that your content on your website has that metadata set up, and you're getting the feature snippet for the clips, and then you're using social media for shorter stuff.

SAMANTHA Cool. Thank you. Thanks, everyone, for joining. And thank you, Phil, for a great presentation. I hope that

SAULD: everyone has a great rest of their day. Thank you.

PHIL Thanks, all. Thank you very much, Samantha.

NOTTINGHAM:

SAMANTHA Take care. Bye.

SAULD: