

Create a YouTube Channel for Your Association

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If your organization regularly captures video of speakers, sessions, and demos, consider cataloging those videos by creating your own YouTube channel. This primer offers step-by-step instructions for creating your own channel and posting your videos to make them easily accessible to members and others.

Do you regularly capture video of speakers, sessions, and demos at your annual conferences? Or record quick video how-to or information vignettes for staff and members? Consider creating an official video channel for your association on the most popular video website, YouTube (www.youtube.com).

Google, the company that runs YouTube, delivers 1.2 billion video streams a day, according to TechCrunch. That means everyone surfing the internet on any given day is watching, on average, at least one YouTube video.

Build Your Own YouTube Channel

Designing your own channel is easier than you might think. First, visit www.youtube.com and hit “Sign Up” in the upper right to create an account and channel for your shop. For your username, consider your association or chapter acronym. If you may need several channels to represent different aspects of your association or chapter, consider something like “cothespianconf09.” Be short and sweet since you are limited to 20 characters.

Once you’ve created a username, you will be asked to open a new Google account. Since opening an account requires an email address, you may need to create a new email specifically for this purpose, such as youtube@associationname.org.

Once your account is verified, log back into YouTube with your new account and hit “Account” in the top right. Then hit “Profile Setup” on the left. Update this information. Most important is inputting your organization’s URL in the “Website (URL)” box and providing a description. Save the changes, then hit “Account” again, then hit “Edit Channel” toward the right, then click “Channel Design” on the left.

At this point, you should be able to see “Settings,” “Themes and Colors,” and “Modules” toward the top left. Hit “Settings,” and you’ll see your channel’s Youtube URL, something like <http://www.youtube.com/associationacronym>; note this information for later. Then input a more legible title, such as “Association Name Video Channel”—this time you have 30 characters. Now pay special attention to the Channel Tags. Input all of the critical keywords that you may have used to optimize your website. Finally, visit “Themes and Colors.” You may want to match your organization's brand colors, but you’ll need to input equivalent web-safe colors.

These fields cover the essentials. You may want to go back and fill in the rest when you have time. Save all changes.

You now have a video channel on YouTube charged with all of the keywords people may use to find you on the Internet.

Capturing Video

Capturing quality video for YouTube does not require expensive, professional-grade video equipment. Check out the affordable “Flip” video cameras at www.theflip.com. The Flip UltraHD, for example, captures two hours of video in 1280 x 720 high-definition resolution and connects to your computer using a USB port, all for \$199. Another option is Sony’s Webbie HD HMS-PM1, which adds the ability to capture photos at 5 megapixels as well as capturing HD video, all for \$170. At the time of this article, DXG was due to launch the \$100 DXG-125v with similar specs as the Flip, with the added convenience of being waterproof. New iPhone 3GS owners can also take advantage of the device’s video-capture capabilities as well.

It’s easy to manage video with the Flip camera through its FlipShare program, which works for both Mac and PC. Once imported, FlipShare allows you easily to edit the video and has a built-in feature to export to YouTube. If you opt to use a different a camera, your free option for the PC to manage video is MovieMaker. Mac users can use the capable and free iMovie software.

Since these cameras are inexpensive, consider distributing several to staff and members to cover your events and provide material for video blogs and on-site interviews with attendees and speakers.

Video Upload How-To

YouTube requests that your videos from FlipShare, iMovie, and MovieMaker be exported with the following specs: 640 x 480 (standard definition) or 1280 x 720. Also acceptable are the H.264, Mpeg-2 or Mpeg-4 codec, as well as the MP3 or AAC audio codec in two stereo channels. Be sure that the length of your video does not exceed 10 minutes’ run time and that file size does not exceed 2 GB. Export your video files to a place you can find them later, like your Desktop folder.

Log into YouTube and hit “Account” and click “Uploaded Videos” under “My Videos” in the “Overview” section. Click “Start uploading a video now.” Click the button “Upload Video,” which prompts you to select the file (from your Desktop). You now have the option of providing a title, description, and tags. Again, think search engine optimization when determining which words and word combinations best describe your video. Then select the appropriate category and click the “Save Changes” button. Depending on your bandwidth and computing power, upload may take a few minutes. That’s it!

Expand Your Web Presence

Once you have quality video content, you can embed and/or link to these videos from all of your web presences. The first stop is your website. Log into YouTube, hit “Account,” then click “Uploaded Videos.” Click the title on any of your videos. You’ll see on the right side of the next screen “URL” and “Embed.” The code found in the Embed box can be cut and paste into your web page’s code for the video to appear as a playable video on your page. Consult your web developer for details.

If your association has a presence on Facebook, MySpace, or other social media, use the link in the URL box to promote your videos as links from these pages. Recall your YouTube URL: <http://www.youtube.com/associationacronym>. Use this URL as a general link to all your videos.

Check out YouTube channels from the following associations:

- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- Colorado Society of Certified Public Accountants
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- Mason Contractors Association of America
- Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International

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