



NEW AUDIENCES, NEW RULES:

PRODUCING SHORT-FORM
CONTENT FOR ONLINE

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CONTENTS

1 – Introduction

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video:

- 1 • Don't expect upfront commissions: revenue share is the online funding model
- 2 • Partnerships with the new generation of content creators and influencers are crucial
- 3 • There is more freedom to work with brands online, but there are dangers
- 4 • Remember that online is interactive and responsive
- 5 • Don't think of online video as one category; each platform is unique and requires bespoke content.
- 6 • Online video requires producers to completely rethink the development and production process
- 7 • Producers need their own data team as algorithms and audiences are constantly evolving.

3 – Case Studies:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 • The Dead Girls Detective Agency | 4 • Comedians Solve World Problems |
| 2 • Wolf It Down | 5 • Mattel |
| 3 • Mr Bean | 6 • Story of Yanxi Palace |

Cover image:

Fully Blown, Sam Rockman for Studio 71 UK

1 – Introduction

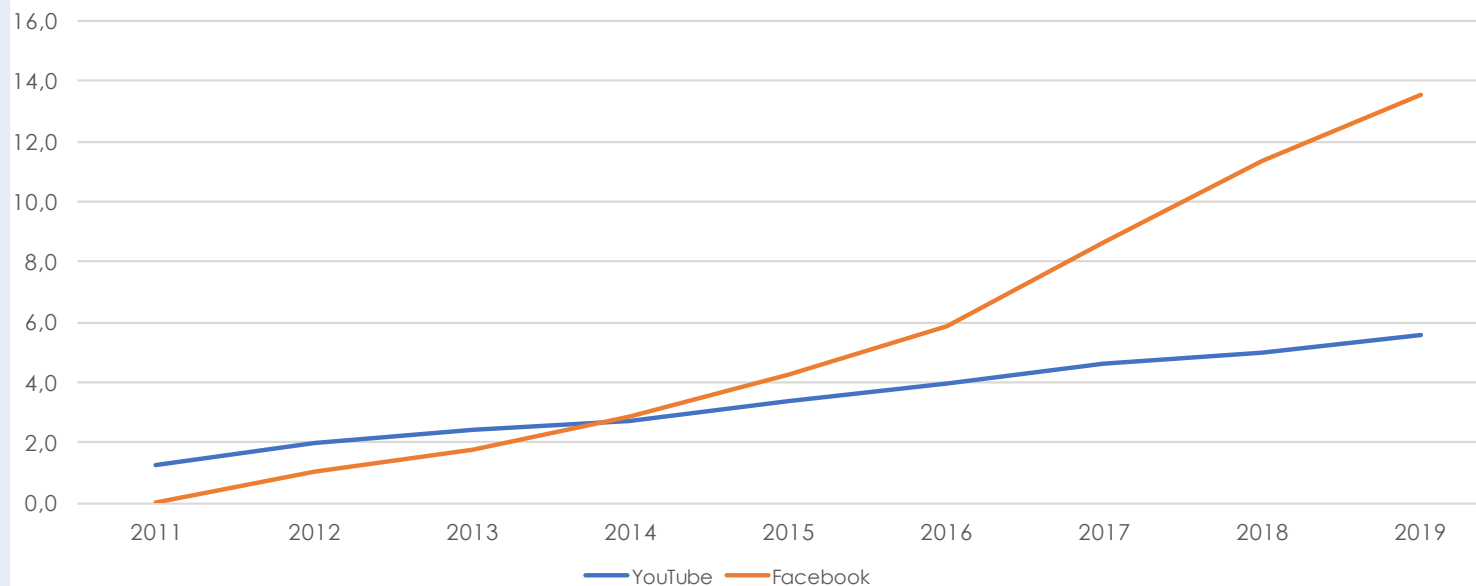
If you want to understand the new world of online video, a look at Tubular Lab's list of the most viewed content in the first quarter of this year is instructive. *Slippery Ice Fails*, a four-minute clip created by Still Laughing, was the most-viewed content on Facebook, racking up 184 million views. On Instagram, an 11-second video posted by Lady Gaga for her 35 million followers was viewed one billion times, and a YouTube original, *Step Up: High Water*, was viewed 645 million times on the video streaming website. Content producers are jostling to find a niche in

the exploding online video space, and the popularity of user-generated content, the dominance of celebrity fanbases, as well as the conundrum of what makes for a successful online video, is at the front of their minds. Especially at a time when all the viewing surveys plot declining audiences for linear TV and consumers—especially younger age groups—glued to mobile phone screens.

Video is becoming more and more important for the tech giants. Video drives usage, usage drives engagement and increases advertising revenue.

In Facebook's Q4 2018 conference call, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said that 400 million people use its Facebook Watch feature every month, and said he expects 2019 to be the year it becomes 'more mainstream'. Twitter said that video accounted for more than half of its advertising revenue last year and is its fastest-growing category. Google reported that the number of YouTube channels with more than one million subscribers nearly doubled in 2018, while the number of creators earning five or six figures grew by more than 40% on the year before.

Online video advertising revenue (\$bn)



Source: IHS Markit

1 – Introduction

Despite the continuing importance of a new generation of creators and influencers online, the online groups are keen to increase the quality of content, and to raise production standards and enhance brand safety. Initiatives date back to the YouTube Original Channels initiative in 2012, when the video streaming website offered seed funding to a range of companies active in the online space in the US, France, Germany and the UK. Traditional media companies started to invest heavily in digital production: Walt Disney Co bought Maker Studios, RTL Group invested in Stylehaul and Broadband TV, ProSiebenSat1 started up Studio71 and All3Media backed a start-up Little Dot Studios.

Victor Ljungberg, formerly at Endemol Shine, joined start-up Splay Networks, which was the first multi-channel network (MCN) in the Nordics around this time. Initially, Splay focused on managing and aggregating talent, but has now, he says, moved into what he called an 'audience-first' company. The move has required a complete rethink about the production model.

'In traditional TV, the assumption is that you make content and you will get some ratings. In online, you have to earn your views,' he says. 'As a producer/distributor you have to be agile and flexible.'

Facebook - most viewed videos Q1 2019

Video Title	Creator	30-day views (millions)
Slippery Ice Fails	Still Laughing	172
This woman gave birth to a 10lb baby in the CAR!	Daily Mail Australia	119
8 unusual beauty hacks with food!	Blossom	111
Dancing with school principal	South China Morning Post	103
These fancy caramel decorations bring the heat!	So Yummy	99
Be a smart cookie with these 12 cookie decorating hacks	So Yummy	98
Man Born Without Arms And Legs Lives Life Without Limits	Born Different	93
Lost Voice Guy's HILARIOUS one-of-a-kind audition	Comedians Got Talent	81
This Bike Was Built Like A Car To Handle Different Terrains	Making Mad	80
What...did I just watch?	Daily Mail Australia	78

Source: Tubular Labs

YouTube - most viewed videos Q1 2019

Video Title	Creator	30-day views (millions)
Step Up: High Water YouTube Originals	Step Up: High Water	576
Kia Motors India Magical Inspirations Stunning Designs	Kia Motors India	171
Car Wash Song CoCoMelon Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs	Cocomelon - Nursery Rhymes	109
Marvel Studios' Avengers: Endgame - Official Trailer	Marvel Entertainment	89
Galaxy S10 Official TVC: The Next Generation Galaxy	SamsungIndia	86
The Soccer Song (Football Song) CoCoMelon Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs	Cocomelon - Nursery Rhymes	80
First Day of School + More Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs - CoCoMelon	Cocomelon - Nursery Rhymes	78
This Is the Way CoCoMelon Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs	Cocomelon - Nursery Rhymes	73
Tata Sky #NoCompromise with Cable Ep 1	Tata Sky	66
Vanguards Style, Creativity and Skateboarding Their Own Way VANS	Vans	65

Source: Tubular Labs

1 – Introduction

To understand better just what new skills producers of online content have to learn and put into practice, IHS Markit interviewed a wide range of companies on both the production and platform side of the business. We highlight seven lessons for producers and look in more depth at some examples of online productions. ■

Instagram - most viewed videos Q1 2019

Video Title	Creator	30-day views (millions)
Messi doing his thing...	LaLiga	22
Young but ready... @viniciusjunior!	LaLiga	21
7 Essential Wax Hacks	Beauty Studio	21
Ain't no question #SherriHill FALL19 is a blessing #NYFW #SherriHillCouture	Sherri Hill	20
Show them what crazy dreams can do. #justdoit	Nike	19
Billie Eilish is here Monday, April 1st. And believe me when I tell you, it's an event. @wherearetheavocados	Ellen	19
Zidane was back, @iscoalarcon scored!	LaLiga	17
8 Baking Soda Hacks You Never Knew	Beauty Studio	17
It only takes a little ice to turn a driveway into a slide.	Ellen	17
@antogriezmann like a child!	LaLiga	16

Source: Tubular Labs

Online video timeline

	Launch	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Facebook	2004						Facebook Watch	
YouTube	2005	Original Channels			YouTube Red (rebranded as YouTube Premium in 2018)	YouTube Kids		
Twitter	2006					Live streaming of US Conventions and NFL		
Instagram	2010					Instagram Stories		IGTV
Snapchat	2011				Discover			SNAP Originals

Source: IHS Markit

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

1 • Don't expect upfront commissions: revenue share is the online funding model

The basic business model for linear TV production is based on producers gaining funding for production from a broadcaster—a 'commission'. The producer is paid whatever happens and the broadcaster carries the risk.

In the short-form online world the business model is very different. The producer is expected to bear the upfront cost of production and then recoup their investment, usually from a share of the advertising revenue from the online platform.

In this model the producer carries the investment risk, and many try other avenues for funding. For example, a producer may seek investment from advertisers for branded entertainment—where the brand fully funds content that aligns with its marketing aims. Online advertising revenue share deals vary from deal-to-deal and by platform. **Theo Luke, Twitter's Senior Director of Global Content Partnerships**, outlined its approach as a 'three-way partnership between Twitter, the publisher [the producer] and the advertiser'.

'100% of the advertiser spend is media spend. Twitter then revenue shares this advertiser spend with the publisher. For the publisher, they see their content pushed and promoted to users' timeline

in addition to getting the revenue share, so there is a double benefit.'

Jon Gisby, Managing Director of kids content specialist and MCN WildBrain, says there is 'little to no commercial risk' for the partner on a revenue-share deal compared with deals with a fee structure or some other kind of mixed model. 'Any deal that involves a mixed or fee-based model means there is uncertainty as to where the channel's priorities are.' However, WildBrain is also establishing other revenue streams: licensing, merchandising and e-commerce for its portfolio of kids brands. 'If you have IP and fans you get revenue... this has always been the case in the entertainment business and WildBrain is just re-inventing this business model in the kids' digital space'.



Jon Gisby

'You don't want to be a one-trick pony in online when it comes to revenues' adds **Brendan Yam, General Manager, Viacom Digital Studios International (VDSI)**. Events is increasingly a key part of VDSI's revenue mix, with the acquisition last year of VidCon (the world's biggest conference dedicated to YouTube and online video) boosting them further. VDSI is also adding distribution revenues for its digital-first content, trialling subscription as part of its UK mobile-first MTV Play service. Yam adds that VDSI currently has 20 mobile-only digital distribution deals internationally.

There are exceptions to the revenue-share model, of course. It's well documented that paid online services are investing heavily upfront to secure original content, Netflix to the tune of \$12 billion cash last year. Disney is going to make original movie and TV series commissions a key element of its Disney+ service launching later this year. NENT Group has shifted most of its original programming from its Viafree ad-funded platform to Viaplay: original content is vital to the subscription value proposition.

Even in the ad-funded space, seed investment is not uncommon. Facebook announced it was investing \$1 billion in original video for Facebook Watch last year. In October 2018, Snap launched its first original video series. However, the funding model (according to producers interviewed) var-

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

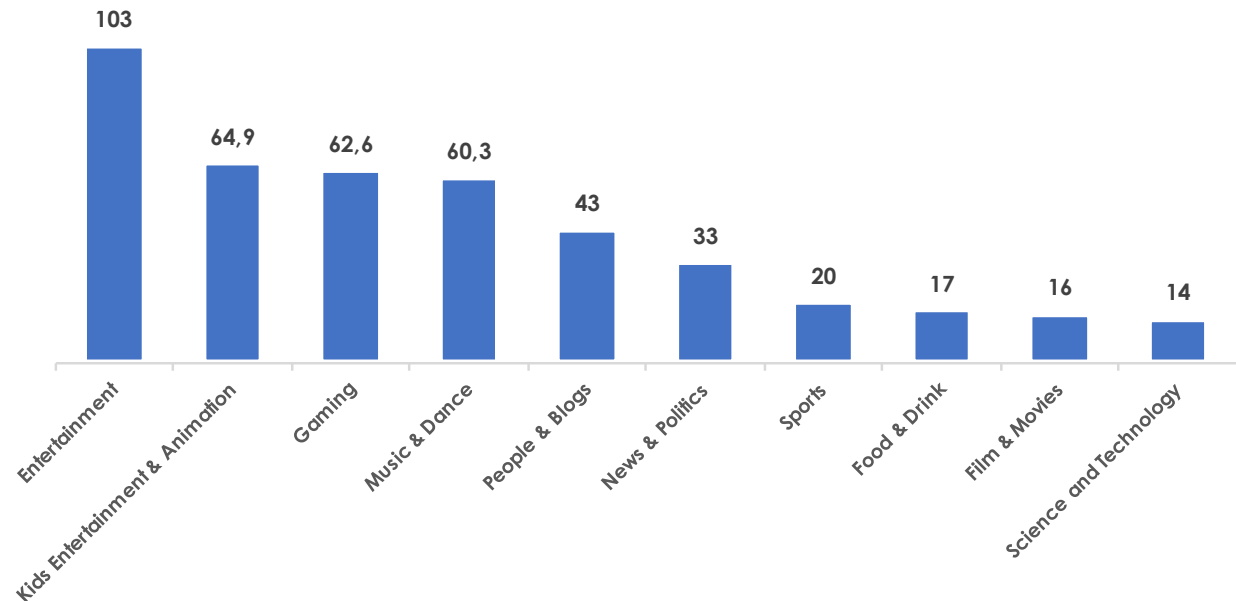
ies by territory. In the US, Snap Originals are likely to be funded on a commission basis; whereas in Europe, Snap Originals deals are more likely to be on a revenue share basis.

In the online sector, business models are more fluid, as **Jody Smith, Creative Director of Studio71 UK** comments. 'Producers have to get used to the business models and deals changing all the time—certainly over a two-year period. In traditional TV the change is much slower and so the business model is more steady'. ●



Jod Smith

YouTube views by genre in Q1 (billions)



Note: These only include views for videos with over 1000 views, and if totalled does not make up the total number of views on YouTube in Q1.

Source: Tubular Labs

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

2 • Partnerships with the new generation of content creators and influencers are crucial

Within the traditional TV space, producers and broadcasters have a vital role as the intermediary between the creative talent and the audience. TV producers in linear TV acted as the gatekeeper of who (and what content) was presented to the mass audience.

In the online era, anything goes. Anyone can have access to the technology to produce, upload and distribute content to a global audience. Of course, the vast majority will reach only a very small, niche audience, but some will aggregate huge numbers of followers and subscribers. For example, Irish gamer Jacksepticeye has over 22 million YouTube subscribers and reportedly



Victor Ljungberg

earned over \$16 million last year. Mexican beauty vlogger Yuya has over 23.7 million YouTube subscribers plus 12.7 million Facebook followers and 10.7 million Twitter followers. Neither were celebrities or had any online profile before they started their social media careers.

Several of the producers interviewed revealed that they adapted to this fundamental change in their role through partnerships with this new generation of creators.

SplayOne's CEO Victor Ljungberg reflects that when Splay Networks (the YouTube multichannel network that was a precursor to SplayOne) started in 2013, 'multichannel networks created a space for new talent, so we started by working with YouTube creators and built our business from there.'

Studio71, owned by global production group Red Arrow Studios, has followed a similar path to SplayOne. The company currently operates over 1,300 YouTube creator channels globally and works with each creator to operate and manage the channel and connect creators with brands for additional branded entertainment projects and influencer marketing deals. Jody Smith of Studio71 UK comments: 'if you look at YouTube, there is a real trend away from vloggers and towards content that looks more like a film or TV show and has a story. There is more 'production value' and



Fashion Conscious, Sam Rockman for Studio71 UK

scale and complexity. Some YouTube creators are now hiring editors and a camera operator.'

Studio71 works with around 100 creators in the UK and has also established the Moxie talent agency to deepen the relationship. Moxie currently has 30 creators and influencers on its books. Additionally, Studio71 has adapted its UK production business to focus on working with online talent to produce series for a commission from TV broadcasters and their online platforms. Jody Smith of Studio 71 adds, 'What YouTube talent offers is experts and storytellers from a new generation.' Studio71 is currently working with this new generation to produce series for BBC3 (a UK digital online channel operated by the BBC) including sustainable fashion series *Fashion Conscious* with vlogger Grace Mandeville.

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

They've also taken 19-year-old blacksmith and YouTube personality Alec Steele to the UK TV channel History for the *Forged with Steele* series.

Some platforms are also working with creators using partnerships. In 2015 Twitter acquired the social marketing agency Niche, which specialises in connecting Twitter creators with brands. At the time of acquisition, Niche worked with a community of over 6,000 creators. Brands interested in hiring video talent for content on Twitter (and other social platforms) would approach Niche who would connect them with suitable creators. In 2018 Twitter has also launched an original content initiative via Niche (called Creators Originals) and one its first projects, *Wolf It Down*, is featured in the case studies section. ●

3 • There is more freedom to work with brands online, but there are dangers

With large audiences and the ability for online platforms to target specific audience profiles, advertisers are significantly increasing their advertising spend on online video. The 2017 IAB Adex Benchmark Report—produced in association with IHS Markit—reveals that Europe's digital video advertising spend was €5.3 billion in 2017, compared to €3.9 billion in 2016.

Additionally, as there is very little regulation compared to linear TV, there is much more opportunity for branded content online. The short-form online video market is very different to the linear TV market as brands have two interactions with the content: funding its production and advertising around it.

Major online producers such as SplayOne and Studio71 have taken their relationships with creators into the branded space. Indeed, Victor Ljungberg of SplayOne says that its main focus is now 'brands and branded content for social platforms'. However, it is not always an easy space for brands and producers to navigate. **Wayne Davison, Managing Director Content Acquisition & Distribution, Little Dot Studios**, says: 'Content-wise, it is key to think about the audience you're trying to reach and engage, rather than what the brand



Wayne Davison

wants to say or express. Why is the audience going to watch this content? That's the primary concern, and brands need to understand this.'

Davison also notes that brand expenditure on content cannot be limited to funding the content if the brand wants online success. 'For brands, on top of the spend on the content, there will also be a significant marketing budget to promote the content online and ensure the audience is there.'

Advertisers also have a tricky relationship when advertising around online content—with regular issues involving inappropriate content. For example, in February 2019 major advertiser AT&T pulled its advertisements from YouTube after reports that the company's advertising was displayed next to inappropriate video. The company had only a month earlier resumed advertising on YouTube after it had withdrawn its ads along after reports that they were appearing beside content featuring hate speech and other inappropriate material.

Platforms are also removing advertising from certain channels. In 2016, some YouTube personalities found that their videos were being 'demonetised': a term used when YouTube algorithms remove advertising from a video and the creators therefore losing the revenue stream. This has also been referred to as the 'adpocalypse'. In January 2019 YouTube issued new guidelines

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

for creators on what to avoid in order to evade demonetisation. This includes sections covering profanity, sexually suggestive content, violence or graphic content and 'sensitive current events and controversial issues'.

For producers, it is now more important than ever not to think of online as a place where 'anything goes' if you want to receive advertising revenue. In a market where competition for advertising revenues is the core of many online producer businesses, there is an obvious business case to produce brand safe content that engages the target audience but also and satisfies advertiser requirements. ●



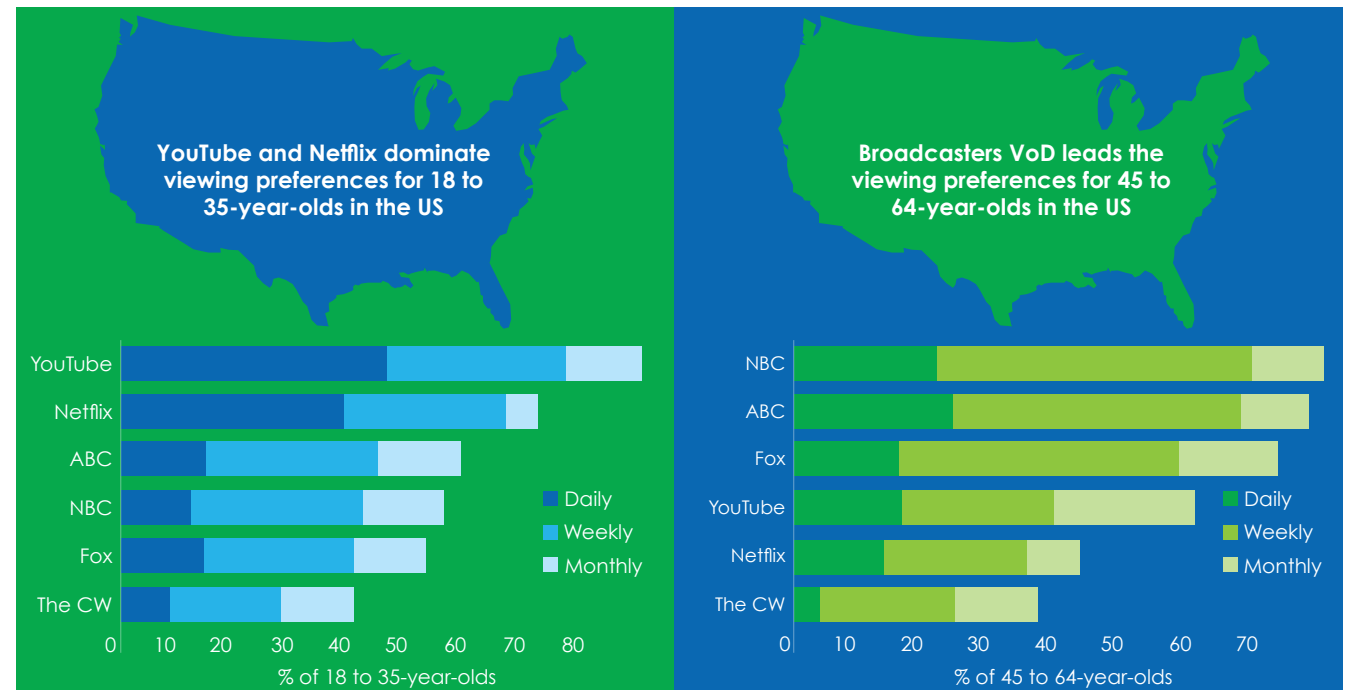
Shelley Zimmerman

4 • Remember that online is interactive and responsive

A key lesson is that audience behaviour is fundamentally different. It is not as passive as the traditional television audience: successful online content needs to generate a response or interaction from viewers. Victor Ljungberg reflects that 'in online, the content is a dialogue' between the producer and the audience. Viewer responses and interactions are key data points for platform

algorithms; these algorithms push response-rich content higher up user newsfeeds and timelines. Increased advertising revenues follow on from the increase in views.

Shelley Zimmerman, co-head of AwesomenessTV observed at MIP TV in 2019 that the GenZ audience is interactive. 'They're an incredibly unique generation because they've grown up in the digital age where they have access to so much information and are very used to being content creators them-



Video platforms: frequency of use, US (18 to 35 and 45 to 64-year-old demographics).

Source: IHS Markit Consumer Research - Devices, Media & Usage Intelligence Service.

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

selves. They want to be part of that dialogue, they want to be engaged: they want to hear their voice.'

It's not just comments, likes, shares and retweets that producers need to generate. There is also the need to avoid viewers skipping to the next video. As Zimmerman notes for content targeting Gen Z audience: '...it has to feel premium and important in those two minutes or they will just start swiping.'

Viewers are also posting their own content and interacting with it in different ways on each platform. This also establishes new trends and approaches to content that producers need to be ready to adapt. For example, the Instagram platform allows users to 'storify': a sequence of short videos (often with text and graphic enhancements) which develop a simple theme or narrative. SplayOne's Ljungberg thinks that this a major development in the social video space: 'storifying on Snap and Instagram is as revolutionary as when Facebook's newsfeed was introduced'.

Storification is a noted trend with users, influencers, creators on Instagram and Snap. Elements of storification can be seen in Snap Original's scripted series *The Dead Girls Detective Agency* (see case study on page 16). Studio71 UK's upcoming short-form series *Countdown To I Do* (currently in production for the UK's TLC channel and on TLC's YouTube channel in late 2019) is a new twist on the wedding

format. The series is taking the Generation Z trend of couples storifying their wedding day. ●

5 • Don't think of online video as one category; each platform is unique and requires bespoke content.

Content tailored to each online platform, and a target audience, is a vital ingredient of producing successful professional online video. Producers interviewed agreed that this goes far beyond purely repurposing with a simple re-edit and reframing. It is much closer to a content brand producing bespoke content for each platform and the target audience within that platform.

Audiences on each platform are different and their behaviours while viewing the content are also distinct. 'On Facebook, you have the follow the trend for video to have meaningful engagement and comments' adds Viacom's Brendan Yam. The takeaway from the producers interviewed is that successful video on Facebook is more social than YouTube: the video content should aim to encourage interaction with a community and also have point of view or opinion which then generates a response (such as a comment or share) from the Facebook user. YouTube is increasingly treated as an entertainment destination by its audience: they are pre-

pared to sit and watch for increased time periods. Ljungberg notes that the Instagram platform is '...much more time-wasting, passive watching. Videos are also very short with users adding text, audio, graphic overlays.'

Differences in the audiences and viewing behaviour means that producers need to tailor content to each platform. Video duration is one key difference between platforms. **Yannick Ferrero, Group Director, Commercial Operations and Digital at Endemol Shine** provides a current rule of thumb as that YouTube clips should be five minutes duration or upwards, Instagram video should be a maximum of one minute and Facebook video should aim between to one and five minutes.



Yannick Ferrero

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

There is also the framing of the video: square frames for Snap and Instagram as the device viewing for these platforms is predominantly on mobile devices (which are held vertically, hence square frame video). Languages are also important: Brendan Yam comments that VDSI delivers content in up to 15 different languages, with an average of seven languages for digital-first series.

However, identifying a target audience is only part of the challenge, according to Wayne Davison of Little Dot Studios. 'Content needs to be revised so it can continue to reach the target audience as the algorithm and audience evolves.' Using data, producers such as Little Dot can continually optimise their content to ensure it is delivered to the targeted audiences. The ability to achieve this, Davison adds, is one of the online producer's biggest selling points. ●

6 • Online video requires producers to completely rethink the development and production process

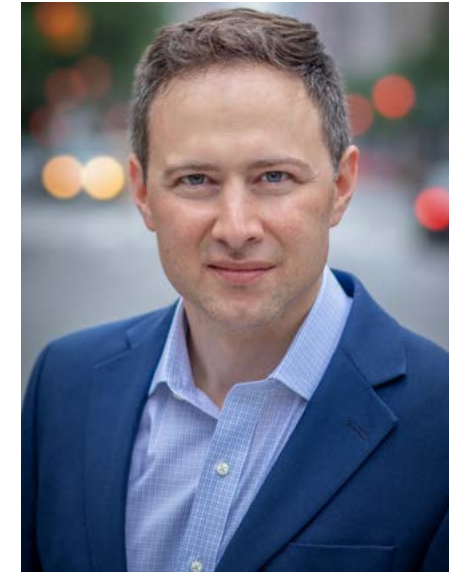
Major production groups moving into online have typically either established digital production units or acquired online production companies (or often both). One explanation for this strategy is the recognition that it is too difficult to adapt linear TV working methods to online. The require-



Comedians Solve World Problems, Viacom Digital Studios International

ments for success are too different: for example, online producers interviewed for this white paper indicated that between five and eight percent of staff work exclusively on data and analytics. This is very different to a linear TV producer, where the use of data is much less of a focus.

Victor Ljungberg of SplayOne also highlights the need for his company be 'agile'. In a constantly evolving market a key to success (or at least surviving) is the ability to respond rapidly and adopt this mindset. SplayOne does not have specialist producers for each of the major social platforms: the production teams are expected to apply their



Brendan Yam

skills to each platform's requirements and constantly adapt as the platforms and audiences evolve.

On a global scale, this agility is a considerable challenge but that is the new reality for producers. **VDSI's Brendan Yam** highlights its digital-first series *Comedians Solve World Problems*. This is now a global brand with ten local versions, each with local comic talent, currently in production at the same time. VDSI is able to look at the online viewing data, in real time, from each version of show and feed through insights to best practice to all ten production teams around the globe. This data informs many aspects of the production

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video

including scripting ideas, set layout, graphics and shooting style. Regular video conferencing between its teams is used to help keep the flow of updates on track.

Christopher Keenan, senior vice president of Content Creation at Mattel adds that although the toy company has produced online content on YouTube for many years, it has not settled on a set of production methodologies for YouTube. 'The audience and the platform is constantly changing and evolving' he notes, 'this can be an issue with animation as this production style has long lead times'.



Christopher Keenan

Even with animation there can be agility and responsiveness to audience behaviours. An example is Mattel's *Barbie Dreamtopia* content on YouTube. Mattel found that the *Dreamtopia* audience was switching between videos and not completing viewing. Mattel's analysis found that because *Dreamtopia* videos each had prologues and epilogues this delayed the audience getting straight to the main part of the video: the audience started viewing but then became dis-engaged and switched elsewhere. Mattel took these learnings and rapidly re-edited to remove prologues and epilogues and found there was greatly improved viewing of the entire video. ●

7 – Producers need their own data team as algorithms and audiences are constantly evolving.

All the producers interviewed stressed the importance of data within their business. WildBrain has a dedicated team of six (out of approximately 100 staff) analysing the data it receives from its multi-channel network and other platforms. Little Dot Studios has a data team of ten as part of its 180 staff.

SplayOne in the Nordics have taken the use of data to another level, CEO Victor Ljungberg explains: the company culture is to make everybody think about data and to be 'data-ena-

bled'. SplayOne works with digital natives as staff and not 'analogue people' (who tend to be older, but that's not an absolute rule). 'Younger people tend to be more interested in metrics, engagement and KPIs. It comes naturally to them as they've grown up with this data.'

Little Dot Studios currently has over four billion views a month on YouTube and this scale of data is a huge resource. However, for Little Dot Studios a key issue to remember that even once the data team understand the data and the algorithms, the algorithm will have changed and audience behaviours will have altered. Davison explains: 'YouTube and Facebook [and other platforms] have its own teams of data engineers constantly working on its algorithms. They are trying to engineer algorithms to work for the platform and its advertising partners.'

The platforms are not only using the data for the benefits of advertising partners. Platforms analyse user data to inform its original content, **As Sean Mills, Head of Original Content, Snap Inc.** notes: 'We know, for example, that our community is especially interested in sneaker culture. With that we developed our new scripted comedy, *Sneakerheads*, which premieres Summer 2019 and follows the misadventures of three college freshmen as they navigate the crazy, shady, mercurial world of Los Angeles sneaker culture.'

2 – Seven lessons for TV producers moving into short-form and social video



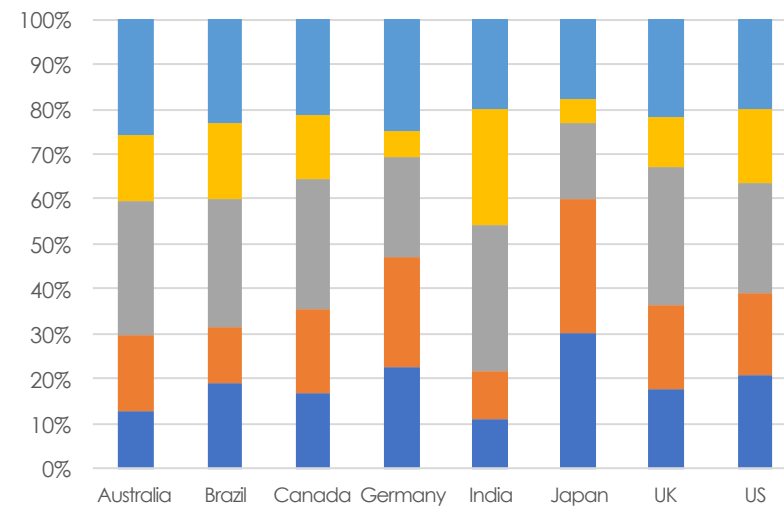
Sean Mills

The data gathered for digital content is not only feeding digital production reveals Endemol Shine's Yannick Ferrero. Audience data for digital content also feeds back to the creative teams across its global network of linear television production labels. These insights give the TV teams extra understanding of the latest digital trends to inform the development of new TV creative: much of this new TV content will become new digital output for Endemol Shine in the future.

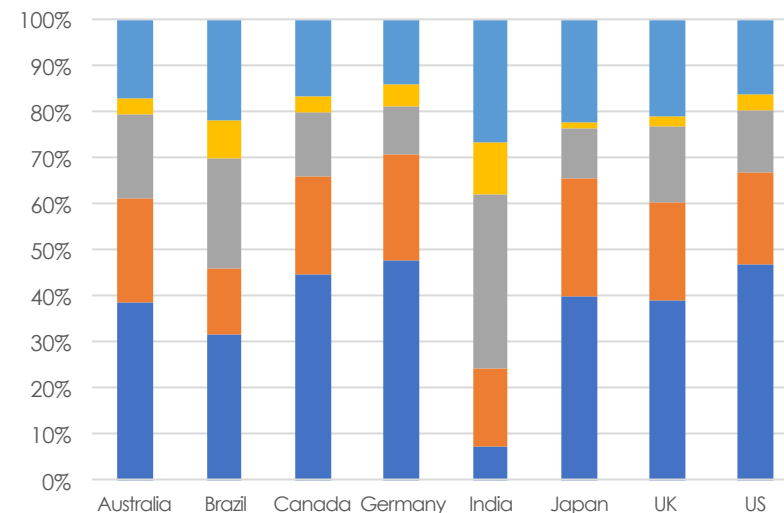
However, Jon Gisby of WildBrain also observes that producers still need strong content to succeed: 'The data, the technology and advantages of scale mean nothing without great IP and creative'. ■

Consumer usage, watching video clips regularly on social media

18-24 age demographic



55-64 age demographic



Survey question:
'I watch video clips regularly on social media sites'

- Neither disagree nor agree
- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

Source: IHS Markit Consumer Research - Devices, Media & Usage Intelligence Service

3 – Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1: THE DEAD GIRLS DETECTIVE AGENCY

The Dead Girls Detective Agency (DGDA) is a paranormal short-form scripted drama for Snap Originals. It is based on a series of young adult novels by Suzy Cox. Seasons one and two (a total of 15 episodes, each of five minutes duration) aired on Snap in the autumn of 2018.

The Dead Girls Detective Agency is tailored to Snap's platform requirements. As Sean Mills, Head of Snap Originals, explains: 'Our shows have always been vertical and highly visual, with narratives paced the way we know Snapchatters like to watch. Episodes grab the viewer in the first few seconds and visual techniques, like split screens and on-screen graphics, storytelling via text and the phone interface, all feel organic to watching on mobile.'

Creating the series for Snap provided a number of challenges and possibilities for producers. Lauren Anderson, Chief Content Officer, Indigo (one of the production partners alongside Keshet International and Insurrection Media), said in a trade press inter-

view that the more intimate mobile viewing experience informed the way the show was made. 'In DGDA and other shows we do, we operate in much more close-up.'

The response to the first season of *The Dead Girls Detective Agency* has been impressive, claims Snap. 'Over 40% of the users that completed the first episode went on to watch the entire first season,' says Mills. Seasons three and four have been ordered (20 five-minute episodes in total) and will air on Snap later in 2019.



The Dead Girls Detective Agency,
Keshet Studios & Insurrection Media

3 – Case Studies

CASE STUDY 2: WOLF IT DOWN

Wolf It Down is presented by chef Tyler Florence (@TylerFlorence). Each 10-minute episode of this cooking meets travelogue docuseries sees Florence 'on behind-the-scenes tours of different food and lifestyle-related activities'. There are currently 13 episodes available on Twitter, each posted to @TylerFlorence.

Florence is a self-described 'Chef, Restaurateur, Tech Enthusiast, Film Maker' who has a Twitter following of 684,000. He is also currently presenter of *Bite Club* on the Food Network in the US.

Wolf It Down is one of eight branded content projects launched by Twitter in 2018. It was developed as part of Twitter's new Creators Originals program which is an initiative of Twitter-owned company Niche.

Niche, founded in 2013, is a social marketing and content agency that was acquired by Twitter in 2015. Within Twitter the company works with creators and connects them to brands to develop new content for distribution on Twitter.

For branded content the return on investment for the brand is key and this impacts on where these projects can be funded. Theo Luke, Senior Director Global Content Partnerships, explains: 'One key factor in international rollout is the availability to fund originals in

other markets. The US is a very large advertising market and has the scale to allow the funding of more bespoke content projects... with bespoke content there are certain revenue expectations for the creator and that is hard to achieve in many markets. The US market has the scale to match expectations.'



Tyler Florence



Theo Luke

3 – Case Studies

CASE STUDY 3: MR BEAN

Endemol Shine's *Mr Bean* is 'one of our flagship brands', confirms Yannick Ferrero, Group Director, Commercial Operations and Digital. Starting as a TV series in the 1990s on ITV in the UK, *Mr Bean* developed into an ongoing animation series (season five started transmission in April 2019) and two feature films. The character has world-wide appeal with the original TV series broadcast in over 200 countries. Online, the character has attracted 13 million subscribers on YouTube and in 2018 the *Mr Bean* Facebook page became the 12th biggest page globally with 82 million followers.

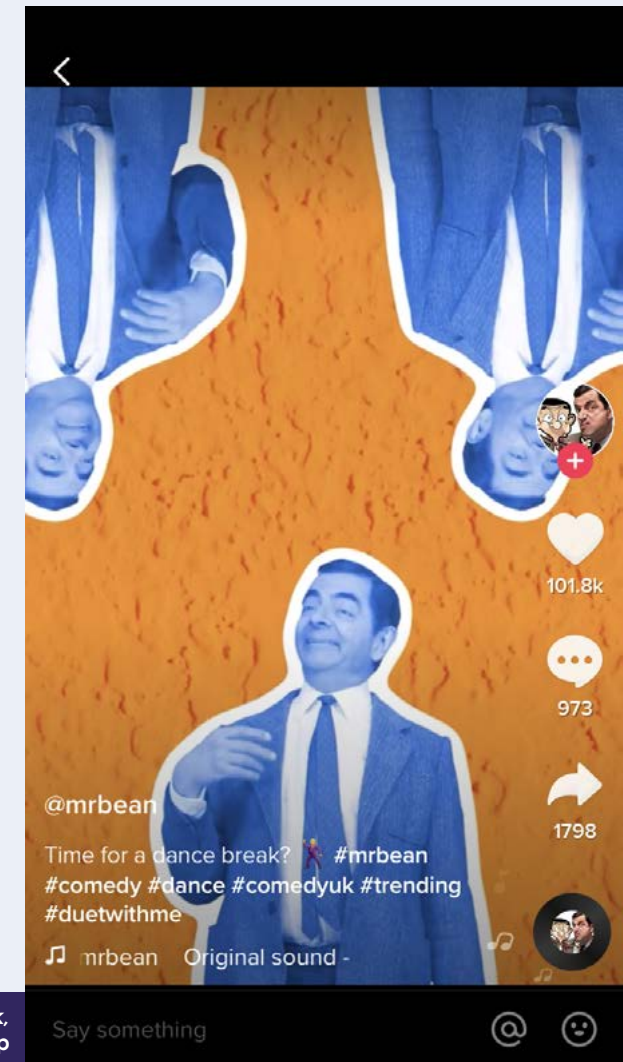
Part of Endemol Shine's strategy online is to constantly develop brands on new platforms: 80% of its online production effort is on established online platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Amazon Video Direct and now Snap. However, Ferrero explains that the company also looks at emerging platforms with around 20% of his team's online effort focused on content for newer platforms such as TikTok.

TikTok is a mobile video and photo app that originated in China in 2016 (where it is called

Douyin). The app's owners, ByteDance, launched the service outside China as TikTok in 2017. The platform is focused on short video clips and pictures that draws comparison with Instagram and Snap. The company reported in June 2018 that TikTok had grown to 500 million monthly active users.

Taking Mr Bean's visual comedy to TikTok in 2019 has proved a great success with the character going viral. Mr Bean has one million followers on TikTok and the #TheMrBean dance hashtag challenge generated over 67 million views and 30,000 video creations (where TikTok users film their own Mr Bean style dance and post it to TikTok). As this stage, Ferrero says that Mr Bean on TikTok is not monetised but it has huge promotional value and keeps the Bean brand fresh.

Mr Bean, TikTok,
Endemol Shine Group



3 – Case Studies

CASE STUDY 4: COMEDIANS SOLVE WORLD PROBLEMS

Viacom's digital-first comedy show features two comedians sitting across a table and trying to solve topical and moral issues such as racism, sexism, and overpopulation.

Originally a Comedy Central UK digital first-series it is now being produced for a further ten territories: the US, France, Spain, Benelux, South

Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Asia, MENA and Germany. There will be up to 20 comics featured in each territory—depending on the number of episodes produced.

Viacom revealed that, as of March 2019, the first season of *Comedians Solve World Problems* (eight episodes) had generated over five mil-

lion total views to date across all platforms (the first release was in August 2017). Each episode ran between 1-3 minutes and, although produced in the UK, it was available across territories in Europe, Middle East and Africa, Latin America and Asia Pacific.

The new localised versions began to be released in March 2019 on digital platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat. The Asian version will also be available on the Viacom-owned Comedy Central linear TV channel.

Brendan Yam, General Manager, Viacom Digital Studios International (VDSI) says that shows such as *Comedians Solve World Problems* are a central part of what he's trying to achieve: 'I'm looking to build global IP.' With VDSI's global footprint, the company is able to rapidly roll-out new formats and also use real-time data in the production process. VDSI is analysing online viewing data from each localised version, and its central team can feed through insights and production updates to each of the production teams around the world. Regular video conferencing is one tool used to help keep the workflow and updates on track.



Comedians Solve World Problems,
Viacom Digital Studios International

3 – Case Studies

CASE STUDY 5: MATTEL

Mattel says it is in the process of transforming itself 'from a toy manufacturing company into an intellectual property-driven, high-performing toy company'. The California-based group is increasingly involved in creating content to support its portfolio of properties, buying preschool producer HIT Entertainment in 2011 and setting up in-house Mattel Studios five years after that.

While linear TV is still very much part of the Mattel media plan, the group has been 'very proactive' on digital since launching the *Monster High* brand on YouTube in 2012, according to Christopher Keenan, senior vice president of Content Creation.

Mattel followed up with *Ever After High*, which debuted online and was picked up by Netflix as one of its first original children's shows, exec produced four *American Girl* specials with Amazon and has made multiple YouTube series for *Thomas the Tank Engine* and *Hot Wheels*. 'So many of our well-known brands already have an active fanbase online.'

For Barbie – despite celebrating her 60th birthday this year – digital is a 'major, major outlet', says

Keenan. *Barbie Dreamtopia*, a younger-skewing 2D animated series, has launched exclusively on YouTube and spawned a TV movie which aired on networks including Super RTL, Pop and



Barbie Vlogger, Mattel

Cartoon Network Latin America. *Barbie Dreamhouse Adventures*, a 3D Netflix series, has developed the property further, while *Barbie Vlogger*, a short-form series filmed with motion capture, is now in its fifth season on YouTube.

In *Barbie Vlogger*, Barbie is 'a 15-year-old girl living in Malibu with her parents,' says Keenan. 'She is talking directly to girls about the issues they are facing... bullying, apologising too much... Now we've found moms are talking about Barbie as a role model.' Keenan acknowledges the interactive nature of online – as well as the sheer volume of alternatives available on platforms like YouTube – has made it necessary to learn lessons about online production rapidly.

'We're constantly changing the way we develop and evolve the production – it's a challenge,' says Keenan. 'The biggest difference is the rapid iteration. So much of what we are doing has much more immediacy. With *Barbie Vlogger*, if something's happening in the world, we can respond. If you're taking a year to develop and produce a series, you can't do that.'

3 – Case Studies

CASE STUDY 6: STORY OF YANXI PALACE

Story of Yanxi Palace is a co-production between iQIYI and Huanyu Entertainment and is exclusively available on iQIYI. The 70-episode scripted drama made its debut on the iQIYI platform on 19 July 2018 and concluded on 26 August 2018. According to iQIYI, the series has been streamed more than 15 billion times on its platform and had accumulated over a million views per episode on international streaming platforms while this report was being written.

iQIYI is a leading video streaming platform in China, owned by the country's largest search engine, Baidu. Launched in 2010, the company reported revenues of \$3.6 billion in 2018, up 44% on the year before. Its content distribution revenues grew 81% to \$315 million and this has encouraged the online video platform to further invest in programming, whereby content cost grew 67% to \$3 billion in 2018.

After its debut, *Story of Yanxi Palace* has been distributed to pay TV channels in Asia and North America. With a short broadcast window of 18 days after iQiyi, it was broadcast on pay TV channels in Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia,

Singapore and Brunei. The 70-episode drama runs 45 minutes each and is considered a high budget production.



iQIYI attributed the success of the series to the innovative storyline and character setting, and the elaborated costumes, make-up and attention to details, as well as the platform's application of AI technology in its production to determine the optimal time and pace of releasing new episodes.

Interviews with local sources reveal that period drama is a popular choice for local producers because of the high demand (inside and outside of China), and it is relatively easy to make with existing formulas and resources such as talent and costumes. However, there was a crackdown on period drama on broadcast television in March this year which saw some titles scrutinised for portraying false Chinese cultural values and history such as time traveling and extravagant court lifestyles. Earlier in 2015, the country's media watchdog set a 15% limit on period drama (by number of episodes over all broadcast dramas) allowed on satellite TV entertainment channels during prime time. So far, there has not been any regulation for online platforms.



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