

LEARNING MADE EASY



3rd Edition

YouTube[®] Channels

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Film and edit
high-quality videos

Grow your channel and
build an audience

Monetize and promote
your content

Rob Ciampa
Matt Ciampa
Rich Murphy
Jackie Swansburg Paulino

YouTube® Channels

**for
dummies®**
A Wiley Brand



YouTube[®] Channels

3rd Edition

**by Rob Ciampa, Matt Ciampa,
Rich Murphy, and
Jackie Swansburg Paulino**

**for
dummies[®]**
A Wiley Brand

YouTube® Channels For Dummies®, 3rd Edition

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Introduction

Maybe you're looking to become a YouTube sensation with your next video or simply want to share your insights or expertise with the world. Perhaps you'd even like to use YouTube and video to help your business, which could be a local coffee shop or a Fortune 500 company. Maybe YouTube can actually be your business. No matter how you plan to use your video-making skills, YouTube has made sharing the results of those skills easy. And with the tips and techniques included in this edition of *YouTube Channels For Dummies*, you'll be ready to take full advantage of YouTube's user-friendly platform when creating your very own YouTube channel.

YouTube started off years ago as a simple video sharing site, ultimately going on to change the entertainment business and so much more. In many ways, it democratized creators and viewers, ultimately influencing how products were marketed, sold, and used. YouTube globalized the viewing experience, reinventing how people experience video content. Any viewer who wants to see any video anywhere in the world only has to type `www.youtube.com` into their favorite browser or bring up the YouTube app on their mobile phone.

Let's not forget that YouTube became one of the largest search engines in the world as well. Businesses started using videos to launch and support products all while bring a human face to the company. We also witnessed the rise of YouTube influencers, savvy participants who were often better connected to a company's audience than the business itself. They set the tone.

As easy as it is for a viewer to take full advantage of YouTube, it's almost as easy for a contributor to become part of the YouTube mix. After setting up an account, it's a snap to start uploading videos. And, if the videos you're uploading take off, you could become famous and even earn a good chunk of change from your YouTube exploits.

Notice that we said, "if the videos you're uploading take off." That can be a very big *if*. Not just any video will do. The truth of the matter is that the low-quality, badly shot videos that were popular some years ago no longer cut the mustard. Viewers expect higher quality these days, which is why you need to step up your game and produce the best possible content. This book can help show you the way.

About This Book

In some ways, reading a book to find out all about YouTube channels seems a bit odd. Isn't YouTube the place that specializes in videos designed to teach you about any topic on Earth? Why not just stick with the YouTube videos that are all about YouTube?

First off, it's a bit self-referential and insular to get all your information about YouTube channels from YouTube videos. Second, that video purporting to tell you how to strike it rich on YouTube may have been shot and edited by the neighbor kid down the street who has never made a dime from YouTube and who may never move out of Mom and Dad's basement. In other words, just as you shouldn't believe everything you read on the Internet, you shouldn't believe everything you see on YouTube. Sometimes it pays to listen to the true experts (like us) who have a track record in advising folks how to put their best foot forward on YouTube.

We also know that there are only so many hours in a day and that everyone's schedules seem to be getting more hectic each day. That's why this book that doesn't beat around the bush — it gets straight to the point so that you can get in and get out with the information you need. In that sense, *YouTube Channels For Dummies* is the exact opposite of all those wordy instructional manuals that spell out a hundred ways to do something. No matter if you're looking to set up a channel, create an effective header, or figure out ways to maximize your monetization potential, we show you the quickest, most effective way to get the job done.

Preparing the third edition of *YouTube Channels For Dummies* required us to examine several significant advancements inside and beyond YouTube. Since the first and second editions, we've seen the rise of *Shorts*, concise video segments often captured, edited, and uploaded from a mobile device. We are also seeing the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is greatly impacting how content is programmed and produced. Finally, YouTube has made big changes in YouTube Studio, the YouTube Partner Program (YPP), and the tools to help creators and businesses understand their audiences and make money.

You'll also learn about the relationship and differences between YouTube Ads and Google Ads. Since publishing the first edition nearly ten years ago, YouTube and its ecosystem have grown by leaps and bounds. In this edition, we distill all the richness and complexity down so you can understand how everything works while getting up to speed and building an engaged audience.

Foolish Assumptions

Whether you're experienced or have just started your channel, you should treat YouTube with an open mind. Just because it's easy to make a video and upload it to YouTube doesn't mean that you won't hit the occasional bump in the road, so don't fool yourself into thinking you don't need help from time to time. Imagine whether you can see yourself in one of these categories:

» **Newbies:** You shoot lots of videos but have never uploaded one to YouTube. But then the feeling overtook you to upload your best ones and share them with the world. No problem: This book can answer some of your most basic questions.

You want your videos to look really cool so that you can post them on YouTube and all your other favorite social media haunts, and if you use this book to answer your most basic questions, trust us — your movies will be awesome.

This book doesn't require your fluency in technospeak. Instead, it's written using a down-to-earth tone. Through clearly written explanations, lists, illustrations, and tips, you'll find out how to best use your equipment, set up video shoots, and navigate the YouTube upload process.

» **Creators:** There's never been a better place for independent creators to build their brands. It doesn't matter if you're a budding fashion and beauty expert or a seasoned small-engine repair technician — YouTube is where you can showcase your expertise and connect with people who care about what you do. Even if you've been doing this for some time, you'll find that there are now more capabilities. Maybe you'll become the next Mark Rober, the ingenious former NASA engineer with some pretty cool science and gadget videos. With nearly 60 million subscribers, he clearly got people interested.

» **Students:** If making videos is what you do and you're interested in sharing your work, this book can get you started by helping you set up your own YouTube channel. Since you already understand the fundamentals of making a video, you can concentrate on the creation and maintenance of your channel. Before long, you'll be uploading videos, building a following, and maybe even transforming your channel into the next Khan Academy.

» **Videographers:** You're already comfortable with making movies, you know all about effective editing practices, and you're ready to share your professional work with the world. You'll find tons of info in this book to help set up your channel and grow your audience so that you can transform your video page into a moneymaking endeavor. Ripe with tips, this guide puts you in the easy chair, filling in the blanks with the best ways to showcase your videos and effectively monetize your content.

- » **Business professionals:** YouTube is great for business because it can help drive awareness and increase sales. These days, consumers turn to YouTube to learn more about the products or services they're considering. YouTube creators have become trusted advisors for viewers and more frequently collaborate with many of the world's most famous brands to give buyers (or potential buyers) all the information they need to enhance their product choices.
- » **Entrepreneurs:** You may already have a moderate following on YouTube, whereas others are new to the game. Regardless of your level of success, you share the same goal, and that's to use YouTube as a business tool. Whether you're looking for the best ways to earn money with your channel or looking at the bigger picture for promoting your business or service, this book has much to offer for finding the most effective strategy.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into five sections, with each section detailing the various phases of setting up and mastering your channel. If you see a particular area that concerns you, you should feel free to skip those chapters. Think of it as a smorgasbord of information.

- » **Part 1: Getting Started with YouTube:** This section provides a swift overview of the YouTube ecosystem and how all the pieces fit together. You'll be up and running quickly, no matter if you're a beginner looking to share videos with a global audience, a working video professional looking to take advantage of monetization, a business owner looking to close the distance, or anyone in between.
- » **Part 2: Making Great YouTube Videos:** The chapters in this part cover modern video production and cinematography. You'll learn managing programming and content, navigating shoots and sound, and using the right software tools for excellent results. You'll also learn about the ever-growing role of AI and how and when it can be leveraged most effectively during the production process.
- » **Part 3: Growing, Knowing, and Engaging Your Audience:** The chapters in this part help you develop a content strategy that builds a subscriber base either using Shorts or long-form content. You'll learn about what aspects of YouTube Studio you can use to understand your channel's performance. This part helps you determine which video format and publishing schedule works

best with your audience. Finally, you'll learn about first-party (1P) data, which is information about your subscribers, visitors, and customers.

- » **Part 4: YouTube Channels Are Serious Business:** This part covers what you need to get started with the business side of YouTube. You'll learn about how to make money on YouTube and understand how to become part of the YouTube Partner Program (YPP). You'll also learn about Multi-Channel Networks (MCNs), independent organizations that offer a range of administration, monetization, and other services to creators. Finally, this part goes deeper into the application of AI beyond production and into content planning and channel strategy.
- » **Part 5: The Part of Tens:** This part provides insight into improving your YouTube search results so that viewers are better able to track down your masterpiece. You'll also find out ten things everyone should know about copyright so that you can keep the lawyers off your back.

Icons Used in This Book

What's a *For Dummies* book without icons pointing you in the direction of truly helpful information that's sure to help you along your way? In this section, we briefly describe each icon used in this book.



TIP

This icon points out helpful suggestions and useful nuggets of information.



REMEMBER

This icon marks a generally interesting and useful fact — something you might want to remember for later use.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

When you see this icon, you know that there's techie stuff nearby. If you're not feeling techie, feel free to skip it.



WARNING

The Warning icon highlights lurking danger. With this icon, we're telling you to pay attention and proceed with caution.

Beyond the Book

This book isn't the end of your experience with YouTube channels — it's just the beginning. You remember using SparkNotes in school to get a better mark on a test, don't you? You do? Well, our cheat sheets are sort of like that. They provide you with some special notes about YouTube-related tasks that not every other person knows. To access them, go to www.dummies.com and type **YouTube Channels For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the search box.

1

Getting Started with YouTube

IN THIS PART . . .

Understanding the YouTube ecosystem and where you and your channel can fit in

Mastering the YouTube basics

Seeing what's involved in building your own YouTube channel

- » Understanding the importance of being on YouTube
- » Becoming a viral video star
- » Making your channel unique
- » Producing video for fun and profit

Chapter 1

Understanding the YouTube Ecosystem

For its first decade, YouTube was the new business-and-entertainment frontier, which meant there was as much excitement and creativity associated with creating and managing a YouTube channel these days as was the case during the early days of television, when the sky seemed the limit. YouTube — like television before it — was caught up in the same adventure that comes from defining its target audience as well as finding out what audiences are willing to watch.

At this point, YouTube has grown into something even bigger than TV itself, with global reach and ever-expanding content types, from live television, to music, to gaming, and much more. But one important thing hasn't changed: YouTube remains open 24x7 to anyone who wants to create content and establish their own channel to promote it. And that's what this book is about: helping you establish your own distinct place in what we call the *YouTube ecosystem*.

On the surface, the YouTube ecosystem seems to consist of little beyond content creators and an audience looking to be educated or entertained. But there's so much more that you, as a YouTube channel creator or viewer, need to understand even if your expectations are modest: monetization, MCNs (*Multi-Channel Networks*), subscriptions, and so on.

It doesn't matter whether you're a proud do-it-yourselfer working on your house, a fashion and beauty influencer commenting on the upcoming *Fashion Week* lineup, a consumer brand launching a new product, or a Fortune 500 company providing instructions on industrial equipment. We've got you covered in this book. For all of you creating your own YouTube channel, it's much more about meeting the diverse interests and needs of an audience that attracts more than a billion people from all over the planet.

The YouTube Creator Phenomenon: Why You Need to Be on YouTube

Having more than 2.5 billion monthly active users — that's not a typo — can make getting noticed on your channel feel like searching for a virtual needle in an online haystack. Yet, regardless of the steep increase in competition, the intention has always been the same — get people to watch your channel. But it's not all bad news: You also have an advantage over your counterpart in the 1940s. Back then, it took a great deal of capital to get started on television. Today? Not so much. In fact, if you just want a platform for presenting some of your video work, YouTube can make that possible without your having to fork over one thin dime.

Knowing that YouTube is free to use should reduce some of your worries — at least from a financial perspective. Couple that with the size and diversity of the YouTube audience — and the endless number of topics that interest them — and it's easy to believe that you have a fair chance of success for your channel. That's true, up to a point — if the point is you want your channel to thrive, you need to provide your viewers with compelling content.

Saying that your channel needs to host solid content that people actually want to see seems as glaringly obvious as saying a hamburger joint must make a good burger in order to survive. But content merely makes up the first part of the equation. The rest depends on how you bring viewers to that content: While YouTube is free, video production certainly is not. Unless you want to shell out money from your own pocket, you need to generate some funds to produce high-quality content for your channel. In the world of YouTube, one major way to generate such funds is with advertising revenue — and it should come as no surprise that the more viewers you can attract, the greater your potential to generate advertising revenue. How much depends on your needs and ambitions, but increased revenue can lead to better production values, which brings it all back to more revenue.

But before you start worrying about all that money you're going to make, let's take a look at what it takes for you and your business to get started on a YouTube channel.

Gaining Success on YouTube

Like snowflakes on a winter day, or science with Mark Rober, YouTube has more topics that viewers can appreciate than any human can count. And because you already love making videos and most likely exhibit some expertise or viewpoint to share with the world, YouTube may be your best creative outlet.

On the downside, you're not the only one hoping to get noticed on YouTube. Many others with the very same intention are looking to build an audience for their YouTube channels, too. ("How many?" you may ask. The number exceeds the number of those preapproved credit card applications that plague your mailbox, so we're talking *lots*.)

Your journey on YouTube begins with knowing your strengths. Some users relish documenting the quirks of their existence to the gentle amusement of others. Others have some type of expertise to share. Then you have performers who regard the video hosting site as their personal stage — the list goes on and on. Even businesses realize it's a great place to inform consumers about their products or provide a great level of customer service. Regardless of your passion, a potential audience is waiting for you.

Audience, audience, audience

Have you ever noticed the repetitive way people describe the most important aspect of a piece of real estate? Yes, we know it's all about location, so much so that real estate agents, among others, feel compelled to say it three times, as though saying it once doesn't get the point across.

Maybe that need for the special emphasis that comes with repetition is justified because, when it comes to success on your YouTube channel, we're of the opinion that saying the word *audience* just once doesn't do justice to its importance. In paying homage to our real estate buddies, we can agree that success for your YouTube channel depends on [drum roll, please] audience, audience, audience!

What's a YouTube audience actually like? You'll find people from all walks of life, and you'll soon discover that they can spend a great deal of time meandering through YouTube's seemingly endless virtual walls, sometimes just entertaining themselves, sometimes educating themselves, sometimes engaging quite passionately with what they see, sometimes letting it all just wash over them. Given the amount of time folks spend on the site, there's a good chance that someone ends up seeing your video. Not a great chance, of course, given that the site has so much content and only so many viewers to watch that content — but still a good chance.

So, how do you move from “good chance” to “great chance”? First and foremost, your success depends on the strength of your content. Right behind strong content, though, you’ll find that you need to be a virtual wrangler, capable of bringing to your channel people who may not know anything about you. To do that, you need to know what excites your viewers, what they’re looking for in video content, and how they consume what they like. With that information in hand, you can fine-tune your content to better serve your (current or potential) audience.



REMEMBER

Gathering information on the viewing habits of your audience is a crucial first step in determining what they want to see and how long they’re willing to watch your videos. YouTube makes it easy to gather lots of information about your viewers — YouTube Analytics, covered in Chapter 10, is a big help here — but consulting friends and family about their viewing preferences is sometimes a good place to start.

Incorporating YouTube into your business and marketing plans

Just like cool sheets on a summer evening, YouTube goes perfectly with social media when it comes to your business and marketing needs. Why not? You already know that your presence on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or X keeps you connected with all the right people. Guess what? YouTube can help raise your social media profile as well. (See Figure 1-1.)

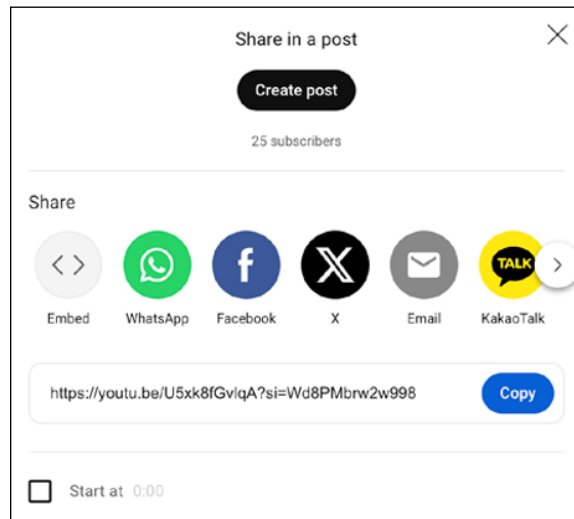


FIGURE 1-1: Using social media can let people not on YouTube know there’s something for them to check out.

By integrating your video content with social media, you can drive interested parties to your channel; your channel, in turn, can point them back to your social media platforms and your contact information. This synergy helps build a strong following, because you can inform potential customers about your business via multiple avenues.



REMEMBER

Video is the perfect partner when it comes to showing products, giving demonstrations, providing tutorials, or showcasing other features designed to increase awareness of your brand. And YouTube is the perfect partner to host your videos.

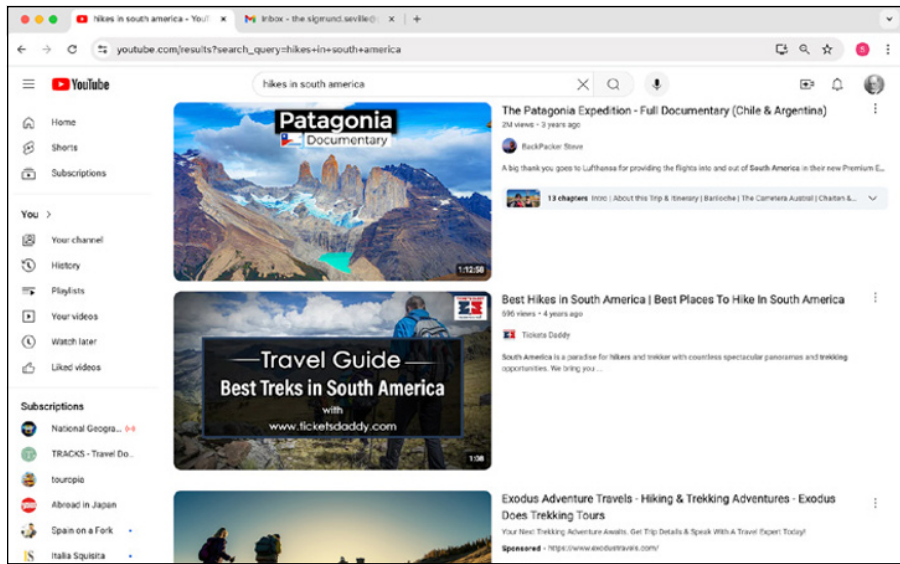
When coming up with a plan to incorporate your YouTube-based video content into your business and marketing plans, here are some areas to consider:

- » **Give your videos effective titles.** Your video should have clear and succinct titles. The titles should get to the point about your product or service so that people can easily find your video.
- » **Create eye-catching thumbnails.** Make your videos stand out from the crowd. Thumbnails are a great way to catch viewers' attention and compel them to click through.
- » **Add more metadata.** On YouTube, metadata is comprised of the title, video tags, and description of your videos. Coming up with a strong title is a good place to start, but it doesn't end there. You should also add a detailed description of the video, as shown in Figure 1-2, and use the appropriate *keywords* — specific words that are representative of your video's subject matter — that fit the content. The more information that's included with each video, the easier it is for viewers to find exactly what you have to offer in a Google search.
- » **Include your contact info on the video.** Always add your business or personal information to the video and its description fields, such as email address and social media sites.
- » **Think shorts too.** Even if you've made some awesome long-form video with your super-duper digital camera, don't run away from some vertical video content shot from your phone. Just make sure it aligns with or complements your overall channel objectives.

Becoming a star!

Are you ready for your close-up? Or maybe framing a close-up is your thing. It doesn't matter, because YouTube gives you a platform right up there with radio, film, and television as yet another means of achieving stardom. By doing so, YouTube has created a dedicated community that offers one more way for the world to notice you.

FIGURE 1-2:
The strong metadata of these videos allow them to show up on the first page of the search results for popular travel topics.



The thought of stardom often leans toward actors and musicians — and the creators behind them. Many have found great success after being discovered on YouTube. (Can you say “Justin Bieber” or “The Weeknd”?) The rock band Journey found its current lead singer on YouTube. You may not get a spot on *American Idol* or an audition with a music label, but you can get on YouTube. Our job here is to help you get noticed.

Actors have also found work by showcasing their clip reels, performances, and auditions. YouTube has made many stars of its own — personalities offering everything from rap parodies to lip-synching to video game analysis and commentary have made a name for themselves on YouTube. Mark Rober, to take one example, has been watched by millions of viewers. (See Figure 1-3.)

So, proof positive that YouTube can provide a stage big enough to start, and perhaps sustain, a career.

Going viral

If you’re a millennial or someone who remembers the world before the turn of the century, the phrase “going viral” could have two different meanings. So, in addition to meaning the spread of a virus, which is a bad thing, the term refers to the rapid spread of a video, and that’s a great thing.