



Communicating To Generation Y: Dietetic Interns Dissect YouTube Videos To Define What Is Necessary to Use It As A Communication Medium

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Learning Outcome: To illustrate the potential of YouTube web-based videos as an effective nutrition communication medium.

The University of Maryland College Park dietetic internship includes an information technology emphasis and is a cooperative project between the International Food Information Council (IFIC), National Agricultural Library (NAL), Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC), Food Safety Information Center (FSIC) and the University of Maryland Department of Nutrition and Food Science.



Abstract

Generation Y increasingly utilizes the Internet as its source of information for "experts". To reach this population, dietitians must understand and be comfortable with the media this age group views. "YouTube" remains the most popular site for users to upload, share and view videos. Dietetic interns extensively studied YouTube videos during one nutrition communication supervised practice rotation. Based upon extensive research a report describing YouTube use, appeal, effective/non-effective formats, and approaches to consider when using this media to provide health information was generated. Fifty percent of YouTube users are under 20 years of age, most being between 12 and 17. Website review for health and nutrition-related videos found a range from personal testimonials, to news clips and to education messages from non-profit agencies. Common characteristics in videos with the highest number of views included those with humor, videos less than three minutes in length, and those with short simple messages. Competing videos included music videos by popular artists or movie stars. Organizations can link YouTube videos through their website, market products through professional events and publications, and can create a YouTube profile page with links to other credible resources. Effective use of YouTube can be utilized to position the registered dietitian as the nutrition expert to this new generation. YouTube remains a highly effective avenue for nutrition communication if done correctly and marketed effectively.

What is YouTube?

"A video sharing website where users can upload, view, and share video clips. YouTube was created in mid February 2005 by three former PayPal employees." (Wikipedia) Characteristics of YouTube include:

- It uses adobe flash program.
- Users view, movie clips, TV clips, music videos, and original videos.
- Users also view personal testimonials, media and news clips of "hot topics", and documentary clips.
- Anyone can post and view videos.
- Some posted information is credible, some is not.
- Users can personalize their YouTube experience.
- Posting information is simple and intuitive.
- Registered users can create their own channels to upload videos.
- Users develop descriptions and keyword tags (e.g. food safety, nutrition) so others can find channels.
- Viewers can comment on video, rate it, subscribe, and request to be added as a "friend".

Why YouTube?

- Fourth most visited Web site in the United States
- More than 57 million viewers
- Free to users
- Broad audience, prepubescent to adult



Effectively Communicating Nutrition Information on YouTube

- Emphasize your organization as as a credible source for nutrition.
- Link to your video through organization's website for increased visibility.
- Take advantage of partnerships and encourage these organizations to advertise videos.
- Post a variety of videos.
- Keep length short (YouTube only allows videos less than 10 minutes long).
- Larger files will take longer to upload. This can be a problem depending on the user's modem connection.

Make YouTube Work for You

- YouTube is a free option for posting content over which the organization will have complete control. This can be especially important for organizations. A user can add graphics, a banner and create a style which reflects your organization.
- Designate your nonprofit in the nonprofit channel and nonprofit and activism category to make it easier to find for viewers.
- The YouTube site has a social interaction component which can be defined. Your organization can limit your page's interactive elements, choosing whether or not users can post comments.
- Use appropriate meta-tags to pull in viewers and grab attention. Viewers can look for videos that match search terms called meta-tags. Make sure you use as many accurately descriptive tags as possible, so that people looking for your content can be directed to your page.
- Embed material. Embedding options make your content available throughout the Web, not just on YouTube. This makes the content searchable and so people using search engines can also be directed to your site.



Conclusion

- Every organization can have a spot on YouTube
- Use YouTube to position the registered dietitian as the nutrition expert to this new generation.

