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As a business with an online presence, youâ€™ve no doubt heard of the power of online video when it comes to promoting your products or services. Youâ€™ve also no doubt thought about utilizing this power and have done some research into the subject. You may even have created and uploaded video content about your company or business to a video sharing website such as YouTube, MetaCafe or Daily Motion.

Wherever you are in this online video utilization process, you should give some thought to how your video content is managed and viewed. Simply uploading content to a video sharing website is not enough to harness the power of online video as a potent marketing tool.

Marketing using online video as your primary vehicle requires a hosting strategy, one that leverages the power of your video content and gives you a return on your investment. In this post I will discuss the use of a â€˜hybridâ€™ hosting strategy which exploits the strengths of both self hosting and third party hosting services.

Choosing a Hosting Platform

When it comes to online video, you have two options:

1. Self hosting

2. Use a third party hosting platform

Your choice of hosting will very much depend on what you want to achieve with your online video content. Letâ€™s look at some of the advantages of both options.

Advantages of Self Hosting:

1. You retain control over content

2. No third party watermarking of your video

3. Easier to monetize content â€“ place ads within your video

4. Excellent back linking bait

The disadvantages of Self Hosting:

1. Knowledge of FLV technology is required

2. Soaks up bandwidth

3. Time consuming

At first glance, the third party option may appear a better route to follow for the small to medium sized business. But, as with everything in this life, there are advantages and disadvantages to using a third party hosting service that need to be fully considered before you take the plunge. Here are some of those advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of Third Party Hosting

1. Easy to upload your video

2. No bandwidth charges

3. Lots of traffic for greater exposure

4. Easy to embed and share your video

Disadvantage of Third Party Hosting

1. No control over what happens to your video â€“ your hosting service can pull your video at anytime and for any reason

2. No control over monetization â€“ your third party hosting service will watermark your video with advertising

3. No link juice

4. Poorer quality

5. Video length limitations

Defining Your Strategy Online Video Strategy

The questions you need to ask yourself when it comes to choosing the best hosting option for your video content are: what do I want to achieve with my video? Do I want greater exposure for my business or do I want to generate more sales? And do I post, host or both?

If you are looking to generate more sales, then I would suggest that you do both. But I wouldnâ€™t recommend posting duplicate content to your site and your third party hosting service. First, because search engines use filters to filter out duplicate content. Second, you want visitors to link to your website, not to YouTube, MetaCafe or Daily Motion. And third, the purpose of your online video content is to make your website visible to search engines.

Third party platforms are great for getting exposure and expanding your reach. For this reason I would recommend that you post mini videos to a third party hosting service while hosting the bulk of your video content on your website.

Your website is the place where you convert visitors into paying customers, so it is only logical that the bulk of your video content is hosted where you can manage the conversion process. The mini videos simply act as a teaser driving visitors to your website. Once there, visitors will be able to view the extended version of your video content and, hopefully, buy into its message.

The hybrid mix of posting and hosting is a powerful strategy because:

1. It gives you control over how your video content is used

2. Expands your reach through third party hosting

3. Creates a funnel for driving visitors to your website

4. Enhances your websites search engine visibility

5. Increases your websiteâ€™s page rank

However, if all you are looking for is to garner greater exposure for your business, and you donâ€™t mind what happens to your video content, then the option of a third party hosting service is the best route to follow.

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