



Press Release

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Video is turning social platforms into broadcast media – Warc Toolkit 2017

Worldwide advertising spend for mobile video expected to grow at 28% CAGR in the next five years

18 January 2017 – Social video, which involves the dissemination of content in audio-visual format across social media platforms and applications, is experiencing massive growth as a content marketing format, and is expected to continue in 2017. Video is transforming social media marketing and turning social platforms into broadcast media, according to Warc, the global marketing intelligence service.

With social media sites now offering a wide range of (paid-for) options for posting and distributing video, brands are finding success with approaches that prioritise quality over quantity, consider emotional and social motivations for content engagement, and focus on a three-second window of opportunity to grab a viewer's attention.

"We're seeing a growing number of brands experimenting with live video on platforms such as Twitter's Periscope and Facebook Live and this format tends to work best for content that is exclusive, newsworthy or that requires live audience involvement," comments David Tiltman, Warc's Head of Content. "But a major challenge in 2017 will be video measurement."

Key insights identified on how video is transforming social are:

1. Social video will see rapid growth in 2017:

The signs are that marketers plan to increase the amount they spend on social video advertising, with mobile the major driver of investment and the biggest growth area for video. One Forrester report predicted that worldwide advertising spend on mobile video would grow at a 28% CAGR in the next five years.

2. Live video is an untapped opportunity for exclusive or interactive content:

Live video remains an emerging format, but a wide-range of brands are experimenting with it. Early signs show that sharing and comment rates on live video are higher than for standard video. The main decision is considering which opportunities are right for live video. The guiding principles appear to be whether the video will be exclusive or newsworthy enough to attract a live audience, or whether it requires a level of interaction with viewers.

3. Facebook leads in the 'broadcast' model of social:

The rise of a 'broadcast' approach to social media means brands are choosing which platforms will best reach their chosen audience, rather than attempting to entice shares and engagement across all social channels. Facebook is the lead platform when it comes to social media audience reach and

popularity, however, platforms such as Snapchat and Twitter offer targeting and formats that may suit certain campaigns.

4. Sharing rates remain a useful measure of engagement:

As brands invest in paid distribution of social video, sharing has become less important as a means of generating reach. However sharing remains a useful indicator of engagement with a video. As social video continues to grow and mature, marketers are advised to focus on the fundamental motivations behind the sharing of content on social media in order for it to be as effective as possible.

5. Brands are advised to make fewer, better posts:

As the amount of video content on social sites increases, it is becoming harder to gain consumer attention. Some brands that have been experimenting with social video have concluded that quality (high production values) is preferable to quantity (multiple different videos).

6. Social video has a small timeframe to engage; brands must work 'with the skip':

Brands should look at both the content and context of video consumption. A Millward Brown report concludes that audiences prefer the inclusion of functional aspects that give them control, such as the ability to skip content and click-to-play options. Branded videos that are not advertising also appeal, such as tutorial and review videos, hence brands should consider broadening their strategy beyond paid online video.

7. On mobile, the 30-second ad is becoming the 3-second ad:

Brands may have only three to five seconds to grab a mobile social media user's attention. Advertisers should remember that online video is often watched with the sound turned off, so content should make sense to the viewer without sound, and possibly include captions or entice people to turn on the sound.

8. Social video metrics should be studied carefully:

In September 2016 Facebook admitted to significantly overestimating average viewing times over the last two years. The revelation was significant as such metrics are a factor in marketers and media agencies allocating digital budgets. It highlighted the lack of third-party verification on social sites – and this is likely to be an ongoing theme in 2017.

9. Influencer-focused video is effective as a complement to traditional approaches:

Online influencers, including 'vloggers', have become a focus of advertiser interest. Brands can appear more appealing and enjoyable in a vlogger setting, even if they are limited in reach. Vloggers add credibility, displaying the brand in a new way that's believable and more relevant than advertising. Vloggers are best for enhancing above-the-line communications, and at presenting the brand in a new way. Critically, they are an addition to, rather than a replacement for, traditional channels.

Social video is one of six key trends featured in Warc's Toolkit 2017. The annual report, produced in association with Deloitte Digital, brings together the best of Warc's content over the past year – the latest ideas, research and examples. The result is a guide to current thinking and the implications for marketers. For more information and insights on Toolkit 2017, visit www.warc.com

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