

YouTube

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(Redirected from Youtube)

YouTube is a video-sharing website, created by three former PayPal employees in February 2005, on which users can upload, view and share videos.^[3] The company is based in San Bruno, California, and uses Adobe Flash Video and HTML5 technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos.

Most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals, although media corporations including CBS, the BBC, VEVO, Hulu, and other organizations offer some of their material via the site, as part of the YouTube partnership program.^[4] Unregistered users can watch videos, while registered users can upload an unlimited number of videos. Videos considered to contain potentially offensive content are available only to registered users at least 18 years old. In November 2006, YouTube, LLC was bought by Google for US\$1.65 billion, and now operates as a subsidiary of Google.

YouTube, LLC



Type	Subsidiary of Google, limited liability company
Founded	February 14, 2005
Headquarters	901 Cherry Ave, San Bruno, California, United States
Area served	Worldwide
Founder(s)	Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim
Key people	Salar Kamangar (CEO) Chad Hurley (Advisor)
Industry	Internet
Parent	Independent (2005–2006) Google (2006–present)
Slogan	Broadcast Yourself
Website	YouTube.com (https://www.youtube.com/) (see list of localized domain names)
Alexa rank	— 3 (August 2012) ^[1]
Type of site	Video hosting service
Advertising	Google AdSense
Registration	Optional (Only required for certain tasks such as viewing flagged videos, viewing flagged comments and uploading videos)
Available in	54 language versions available through user interface ^[2]
Launched	February 14, 2005
Current status	Active

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Company history

Main article: History of YouTube

YouTube was founded by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, who were all early employees of PayPal.^[5] Hurley had studied design at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, while Chen and Karim studied computer science together at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.^[6]

According to a story that has often been repeated in the media, Hurley and Chen developed the idea for YouTube during the early months of 2005, after they had experienced difficulty sharing videos that had been shot at a dinner party at Chen's apartment in San Francisco. Karim did not attend the party and denied that it had occurred, while Chen commented that the idea that YouTube was founded after a dinner party "was probably very strengthened by marketing ideas around creating a story that was very digestible".^[7]

YouTube began as a venture-funded technology startup, primarily from a \$11.5 million investment by Sequoia Capital between November 2005 and April 2006.^[8] YouTube's early headquarters were situated above a pizzeria and Japanese restaurant in San Mateo, California.^[9] The domain name `www.youtube.com` was activated on February 14, 2005, and the website was developed over the subsequent months.^[10]

The first YouTube video was entitled *Me at the zoo*, and shows co-founder Jawed Karim at the San Diego Zoo.^[11] The video was uploaded on April 23, 2005, and can still be viewed on the site.^[12]

YouTube offered the public a beta test of the site in May 2005, six months before the official launch in November 2005. The site grew rapidly, and in July 2006 the company announced that more than 65,000 new videos were being uploaded every day, and that the site was receiving 100 million video views per day.^[13] According to data published by market research company comScore, YouTube is the dominant provider of online video in the United States, with a market share of around 43 percent and more than 14 billion videos viewed in May 2010.^[14] YouTube says that roughly 60 hours of new videos are uploaded to the site every minute, and that around three quarters of the material comes from outside the U.S.^{[15][16][17]} The site has eight hundred million unique users a month.^[18] It is estimated that in 2007 YouTube consumed as much bandwidth as the entire Internet in 2000.^[19] Alexa ranks YouTube as the third most visited website on the Internet, behind Google and Facebook.^[20]

The choice of the name `www.youtube.com` led to problems for a similarly named website, `www.utube.com`. The owner of the site, Universal Tube & Rollform Equipment, filed a lawsuit against YouTube in November 2006 after being overloaded on a regular basis by people looking for YouTube. Universal Tube has since changed the name of its website to `www.utubeonline.com`.^{[21][22]} In October 2006, Google Inc. announced that it had

Screenshot



Screenshot of YouTube's homepage



From left to right: Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim

acquired YouTube for \$1.65 billion in Google stock, and the deal was finalized on November 13, 2006.^[23] Google does not provide detailed figures for YouTube's running costs, and YouTube's revenues in 2007 were noted as "not material" in a regulatory filing.^[24] In June 2008, a *Forbes* magazine article projected the 2008 revenue at \$200 million, noting progress in advertising sales.^[25] Visitors to YouTube spend an average of fifteen minutes a day on the site, in contrast to the four or five hours a day spent by a typical U.S. citizen watching television.^[18]

YouTube entered into a marketing and advertising partnership with NBC in June 2006.^[26] In November 2008, YouTube reached an agreement with MGM, Lions Gate Entertainment, and CBS, allowing the companies to post full-length films and television episodes on the site, accompanied by advertisements in a section for US viewers called "Shows". The move was intended to create competition with websites such as Hulu, which features material from NBC, Fox, and Disney.^{[27][28]} In November 2009, YouTube launched a version of "Shows" available to UK viewers, offering around 4,000 full-length shows from more than 60 partners.^[29] In January 2010, YouTube introduced an online film rentals service,^[30] which is currently available only to users in the US, Canada and the UK.^{[31][32]} The service offers over 6,000 films.^[33]



YouTube's current headquarters in San Bruno, California

In March 2010, YouTube began free streaming of certain content, including 60 cricket matches of the Indian Premier League. According to YouTube, this was the first worldwide free online broadcast of a major sporting event.^[34]

On March 31, 2010, the YouTube website launched a new design, with the aim of simplifying the interface and increasing the time users spend on the site. Google product manager Shiva Rajaraman commented: "We really felt like we needed to step back and remove the clutter."^[35] In May 2010, it was reported that YouTube was serving more than two billion videos a day, which it described as "nearly double the prime-time audience of all three major US television networks combined".^[36] In

May 2011, YouTube reported in its company blog that the site was receiving more than three billion views per day.^[16] In January 2012, YouTube stated that the figure had increased to four billion videos streamed per day.^[15]

In October 2010, Hurley announced that he would be stepping down as chief executive officer of YouTube to take an advisory role, and that Salar Kamangar would take over as head of the company.^[37]

In April 2011, James Zern, a YouTube software engineer, revealed that 30 percent of videos accounted for 99 percent of views on the site.^[38]

In November 2011, the Google+ social networking site was integrated directly with YouTube and the Chrome web browser, allowing YouTube videos to be viewed from within the Google+ interface.^[39] In December 2011, YouTube launched a new version of the site interface, with the video channels displayed in a central column on the home page, similar to the news feeds of social networking sites.^[40] At the same time, a new version of the YouTube logo was introduced with a darker shade of red, the first change in design since October 2006.^[41]

Features

Video technology

Playback

Viewing YouTube videos on a personal computer requires the Adobe Flash Player plug-in to be installed on the browser. The Adobe Flash Player plug-in is one of the most common pieces of software installed on personal computers and accounts for almost 75% of online video material.^[42]

In January 2010, YouTube launched an experimental version of the site that uses the built-in multimedia capabilities of web browsers supporting the HTML5 standard.^[43] This allows videos to be viewed without requiring Adobe Flash Player or any other plug-in to be installed.^{[44][45]} The YouTube site has a page that allows supported browsers to opt in to the HTML5 trial. Only browsers that support HTML5 Video using the H.264 or WebM formats can play the videos, and not all videos on the site are available.^{[46][47]}

Uploading

All YouTube users can upload videos up to 15 minutes each in duration. Users who have a good track record of complying with the site's Community Guidelines may be offered the ability to upload videos up to 12 hours in length, which requires verifying the account, normally through a mobile phone.^[48] When YouTube was launched in 2005, it was possible to upload long videos, but a ten-minute limit was introduced in March 2006 after YouTube found that the majority of videos exceeding this length were unauthorized uploads of television shows and films.^{[49][50]} The 10-minute limit was increased to 15 minutes in July 2010.^[51] File size is limited to 2 GB for uploads from the YouTube web page, or 20 GB if up-to-date browser versions are used.^[52]

YouTube accepts videos uploaded in most container formats, including .AVI, .MKV, .MOV, .MP4, DivX, .FLV, and .ogg and .ogv. These include video formats such as MPEG-4, MPEG, VOB, and .WMV. It also supports 3GP, allowing videos to be uploaded from mobile phones.^[53] Videos with progressive scanning or interlaced scanning can be uploaded, but for the best video quality, YouTube suggests interlaced videos are deinterlaced prior to uploading. All the video formats on YouTube use progressive scanning.^[54]

Quality and codecs

YouTube originally offered videos at only one quality level, displayed at a resolution of 320x240 pixels using the Sorenson Spark codec (a variant of H.263),^{[55][56]} with mono MP3 audio.^[57] In June 2007, YouTube added an option to watch videos in 3GP format on mobile phones.^[58] In March 2008, a high quality mode was added, which increased the resolution to 480x360 pixels^[59] In November 2008, 720p HD support was added. At the time of the 720p launch, the YouTube player was changed from a 4:3 aspect ratio to a widescreen 16:9.^[60] With this new feature, YouTube began a switchover to H.264/MPEG-4 AVC as its default video compression format. In November 2009, 1080p HD support was added. In July 2010, YouTube announced that it had launched a range of videos in 4K format, which allows a resolution of up to 4096x3072 pixels.^{[61][62]}

YouTube videos are available in a range of quality levels. The former names of standard quality (SQ), high quality (HQ) and high definition (HD) have been replaced by numerical values representing the vertical resolution of the video. The default video stream is encoded in H.264/MPEG-4 AVC format, with stereo AAC audio.^[63]

Comparison of YouTube media encoding options

itag value ^[1]	Default container	Video resolution	Video encoding	Video profile	Video bitrate	Audio encoding	Audio bitrate

					(Mbit/s) [2]		(kbit/s) [2]
5	FLV	240p	Sorenson H.263	N/A	0.25	MP3	64
6	FLV	270p	Sorenson H.263	N/A	0.8	MP3	64
13	3GP	N/A	MPEG-4 Visual	N/A	0.5	AAC	N/A
17	3GP	144p	MPEG-4 Visual	Simple	0.05	AAC	24
18	MP4	360p	H.264	Baseline	0.5	AAC	96
22	MP4	720p	H.264	High	2-2.9	AAC	152
34	FLV	360p	H.264	Main	0.5	AAC	128
35	FLV	480p	H.264	Main	0.8-1	AAC	128
36	3GP	240p	MPEG-4 Visual	Simple	0.17	AAC	38
37	MP4	1080p	H.264	High	3-4.3	AAC	152
38	MP4	3072p	H.264	High	3.5-5	AAC	152
43	WebM	360p	VP8	N/A	0.5	Vorbis	128
44	WebM	480p	VP8	N/A	1	Vorbis	128
45	WebM	720p	VP8	N/A	2	Vorbis	192
46	WebM	1080p	VP8	N/A	N/A	Vorbis	192
82	MP4	360p	H.264	3D	0.5	AAC	96
83	MP4	240p	H.264	3D	0.5	AAC	96
84	MP4	720p	H.264	3D	2-2.9	AAC	152
85	MP4	520p	H.264	3D	2-2.9	AAC	152
100	WebM	360p	VP8	3D	N/A	Vorbis	128
101	WebM	360p	VP8	3D	N/A	Vorbis	192
102	WebM	720p	VP8	3D	N/A	Vorbis	192

[^] 1 *itag* is an undocumented parameter used internally by YouTube to differentiate between quality profiles. Until December 2010, there was also a URL parameter known as *fmt* that allowed a user to force a profile using *itag* codes.

[^] 2 Approximate values based on statistical data; actual bitrate can be higher or lower due to variable encoding rate.^{[64][65][66][67]}

3D videos

In a video posted on July 21, 2009,^[68] YouTube software engineer Peter Bradshaw announced that YouTube users can now upload 3D videos. The videos can be viewed in several different ways, including the common anaglyph (cyan/red lens) method which utilizes glasses worn by the viewer to achieve the 3D effect.^{[69][70][71]} The YouTube Flash player can display stereoscopic content interleaved in rows, columns or a checkerboard pattern, side-by-side or anaglyph using a red/cyan, green/magenta or blue/yellow combination. In May 2011, an

HTML5 version of the YouTube player began supporting side-by-side 3D footage that is compatible with Nvidia 3D Vision.^[72]

Content accessibility

YouTube offers users the ability to view its videos on web pages outside their website. Each YouTube video is accompanied by a piece of HTML, which can be used to embed it on any page on the Web. This functionality is often used to embed YouTube videos in social networking pages and blogs.^[73] Embedding, as well as ranking and commenting, can be disabled by the video owner.

YouTube does not usually offer a download link for its videos, and intends for them to be viewed through its website interface.^[74] A small number of videos, such as the weekly addresses by President Barack Obama, can be downloaded as MP4 files.^[75] Numerous third-party web sites, applications and browser plug-ins allow users to download YouTube videos.^[76] In February 2009, YouTube announced a test service, allowing some partners to offer video downloads for free or for a fee paid through Google Checkout.^[77]

Platforms

Some smartphones are capable of accessing YouTube videos, dependent on the provider and the data plan. YouTube Mobile was launched in June 2007, using RTSP streaming for the video.^[78] Not all of YouTube's videos are available on the mobile version of the site.^[79]

Since June 2007, YouTube's videos have been available for viewing on a range of Apple products. This required YouTube's content to be transcoded into Apple's preferred video standard, H.264, a process that took several months. YouTube videos can be viewed on devices including Apple TV, iPod Touch and the iPhone.^[80] In July 2010, the mobile version of the site was relaunched based on HTML5, avoiding the need to use Adobe Flash Player and optimized for use with touch screen controls.^[81] The mobile version is also available as an app for the Android platform.^{[82][83]}

A TiVo service update in July 2008 allowed the system to search and play YouTube videos.^[84] In January 2009, YouTube launched "YouTube for TV", a version of the website tailored for set-top boxes and other TV-based media devices with web browsers, initially allowing its videos to be viewed on the PlayStation 3 and Wii video game consoles.^{[85][86]} In June 2009, YouTube XL was introduced, which has a simplified interface designed for viewing on a standard television screen.^[87] YouTube is also available for the Xbox Live.^[88]

Localization

On June 19, 2007, Google CEO Eric Schmidt was in Paris to launch the new localization system.^[89] The interface of the website is available with localized versions in 42 countries, one territory (Hong Kong) and a worldwide version.^{[90][91]}

Country	Language	Launch date
 USA (and worldwide launch)	English (American)	February 15, 2005 ^[89]
 Brazil	Portuguese (Brazil)	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 France	French	June 19, 2007 ^[89]

Country	Language	Launch date
 Ireland	English (Ireland)	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 Italy	Italian	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 Japan	Japanese	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 Netherlands	Dutch	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 Poland	Polish	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 Spain	Spanish and Catalan	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 United Kingdom	English (United Kingdom)	June 19, 2007 ^[89]
 Mexico	Spanish (Mexico)	October 11, 2007 ^[92]
 Hong Kong	English and Chinese (Traditional)	October 17, 2007 ^[93]
 Taiwan	Chinese (Traditional)	October 18, 2007 ^[94]
 Australia	English (Australia)	October 22, 2007 ^[95]
 New Zealand	English (New Zealand)	October 22, 2007 ^[95]
 Canada	English (Canada) and French (Canada)	November 6, 2007 ^[96]
 Germany	German	November 8, 2007 ^[97]
 Russia	Russian	November 13, 2007 ^[98]
 Korea, South	Korean	January 23, 2008 ^[99]
 Israel	Hebrew	September 16, 2008
 India	English (India) and Hindi	May 7, 2008 ^[100]
 Czech Republic	Czech	October 9, 2008 ^[101]
 Sweden	Swedish	October 22, 2008
 South Africa	English (South African)	May 17, 2010 ^[89]
 Argentina	Spanish (Argentina)	September 8, 2010 ^[90]
 Algeria	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Egypt	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Saudi Arabia	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Tunisia	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Jordan	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Morocco	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Yemen	Arabic	March 9, 2011 ^[102]
 Kenya	English (Kenya) and Swahili	October 5, 2011 ^[103]
 Philippines	English (official) and Filipino	October 13, 2011 ^[104]

Country	Language	Launch date
 Singapore	English (Singapore)	October 20, 2011 ^[105]
 Belgium	French (Belgian), and Dutch (Belgian)	November 16, 2011
 Colombia	Spanish (Colombia)	November 30, 2011 ^[106]
 Uganda	English (Ugandan)	December 2, 2011 ^[107]
 Nigeria	English (Nigerian)	December 7, 2011 ^[108]
 Chile	Spanish (Chile)	January 20, 2012 ^[109]
 Hungary	Hungarian	February 29, 2012 ^[110]
 Malaysia	English (Malaysian) and Malay	March 22, 2012 ^[111]
 Peru	Spanish (Peru)	March 25, 2012 ^[112]
 United Arab Emirates	Arabic and English (UAE)	March 29, 2012 ^[102]
 Indonesia	English (Indonesian) and Indonesian	June 14, 2012 ^[113]
 Ghana	English (Ghanaian)	June 21, 2012 ^[114]
 Senegal	English (Senegalese)	July 12, 2012 ^[115]

The YouTube interface suggests which local version should be chosen on the basis of the IP address of the user. In some cases, the message "This video is not available in your country" may appear because of copyright restrictions or inappropriate content.^[116]

The interface of the YouTube website is available in 51 different language versions, including Catalan, Danish, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Norwegian and Slovene, which do not have local channel versions.^[2]

Plans for YouTube to create a local version in Turkey have run into problems, since the Turkish authorities asked YouTube to set up an office in Turkey, which would be subject to Turkish law. YouTube says that it has no intention of doing this, and that its videos are not subject to Turkish law. Turkish authorities have expressed concerns that YouTube has been used to post videos insulting to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and some material offensive to Muslims.^{[117][118]}

In March 2009, a dispute between YouTube and the British royalty collection agency PRS for Music led to premium music videos being blocked for YouTube users in the United Kingdom. The removal of videos posted by the major record companies occurred after failure to reach agreement on a licensing deal. The dispute was resolved in September 2009.^[119] In April 2009, a similar dispute led to the removal of premium music videos for users in Germany.^[120]

April Fools

YouTube has featured an April Fools prank on the site on April 1 of every year since 2008:

- **2008:** All the links to the videos on the main page were redirected to Rick Astley's music video "Never Gonna Give You Up", a prank known as "Rickrolling".^{[121][122]}
- **2009:** When clicking on a video on the main page, the whole page turned upside down. YouTube claimed that this was a new layout.^[123]

- **2010:** YouTube temporarily released a "TEXTp" mode, which translated the colors in the videos to random upper case letters. YouTube claimed in a message that this was done in order to reduce bandwidth costs by \$1 per second.^[124]
- **2011:** The site celebrated its "100th anniversary" with a "1911 button" and a range of sepia-toned silent, early 1900s-style films, including "Flugelhorn Feline", a parody of Keyboard Cat.^[125]
- **2012:** Clicking on the image of a DVD next to the site logo led to a video about "The YouTube Collection", an option to order every YouTube video for home delivery on DVD. The spoof promotional video promised "It's the complete YouTube experience completely offline."^[126]

Censorship and filtering

Main article: Censorship of YouTube

Several countries have blocked access to YouTube, including:

- YouTube has been blocked in China.^{[127][128]}
- Morocco shut down access to YouTube in 2008.^[129]
- Thailand blocked YouTube between 2006 and 2007 due to offensive videos relating to King Bhumibol Adulyadej.^{[130][131]}
- Turkey blocked access to YouTube between 2008 and 2010 after controversy over videos deemed insulting to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.^{[132][133][134]} The block was lifted briefly but reimposed in November 2010.^[135]
- On December 3, 2006, Iran temporarily blocked access to YouTube, along with several other sites, after declaring them as violating social and moral codes of conduct. The YouTube block came after a video was posted online that appeared to show an Iranian soap opera star having sex.^[136] The block was later lifted and then reinstated after Iran's 2009 presidential election.^[137]
- On February 23, 2008, Pakistan blocked YouTube because of "offensive material" towards the Islamic faith, including display of the Danish cartoons of the prophet Muhammad.^[138] This led to a near global blackout of the YouTube site for around two hours, as the Pakistani block was inadvertently transferred to other countries. Pakistan lifted its block on February 26, 2008.^[139] Many Pakistanis circumvented the three-day block by using virtual private network software.^[140] In May 2010, following the Everybody Draw Mohammed Day, Pakistan again blocked access to YouTube, citing "growing sacrilegious content".^[141]
- On January 24, 2010, Libya blocked access to YouTube after it featured videos of demonstrations in the Libyan city of Benghazi by families of detainees who were killed in Abu Salim prison in 1996, and videos of family members of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi at parties. The blocking was criticized by Human Rights Watch.^[142]

Education authorities in some regions have blocked student access to YouTube, with some state education departments in Australia citing the inability to determine what sort of video material might be accessed.^[143]

YouTube was awarded a 2008 Peabody Award and cited for being "a 'Speakers' Corner' that both embodies and promotes democracy".^{[144][145]}

Social impact

Main article: Social impact of YouTube

While other video hosting websites had been launched before YouTube in 2005 (including Metacafe in 2003 and Vimeo in 2004), YouTube was conceived to be, in the words of Jawed Karim, a video version of the rating site Hot or Not. Karim commented that Hot or Not was a site "where anyone could upload content that everyone else could view. That was a new concept because up until that point, it was always the people who owned the website who would provide the content." In December 2006, *Time* magazine wrote: "YouTube is to video browsing what a Wal-Mart Supercenter is to shopping: everything is there, and all you have to do is walk in the door."^[7]



Charlie Bit My Finger is YouTube's most-viewed user-generated video, as of 2012

An early example of the social impact of YouTube was the success of The Bus Uncle video in 2006. It shows a heated conversation between a youth and an older man on a bus in Hong Kong, and was discussed widely in the mainstream media.^[146] Another YouTube video to receive extensive coverage is *guitar*,^[147] which features a performance of Pachelbel's Canon on an electric guitar. The name of the performer is not given in the video. After it received millions of views *The New York Times* revealed the identity of the guitarist as Lim Jeong-hyun, a 23-year-old from South Korea who had recorded the track in his bedroom.^[148] This video has since been removed from YouTube.^[149]

Charlie Bit My Finger, which was uploaded on May 22, 2007, is a viral video that has received the most views of any user-generated YouTube video, with over 450 million views.^{[150][151][152]} The clip features two English brothers, with one-year-old Charlie biting the finger of his brother Harry, aged three.^[153] In *Time*'s list of YouTube's 50 greatest viral videos of all time, "Charlie Bit My Finger" was ranked at number one.^[154]

Entertainment Weekly placed YouTube on its end-of-the-decade "best-of" list, describing it as: "Providing a safe home for piano-playing cats, celeb goof-ups, and overzealous lip-synchers since 2005."^[155]

Community policy

YouTube has a set of community guidelines aimed to reduce abuse of the site's features. Generally prohibited material includes sexually explicit content, videos of animal abuse, shock videos, content uploaded without the copyright holder's consent, hate speech, spam, and predatory behaviour.^[156] Despite the guidelines, YouTube has faced criticism from news sources for content in violation of these guidelines.

Copyrighted material

At the time of uploading a video, YouTube users are shown a screen with the message "Do not upload any TV shows, music videos, music concerts or advertisements without permission, unless they consist entirely of content that you created yourself".^[157] Despite this advice, there are still many unauthorized clips of copyrighted material on YouTube. YouTube does not view videos before they are posted online, and it is left to copyright holders to issue a takedown notice pursuant to the terms of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Three successful complaints for copyright infringement against a user account will result in the account and all of its uploaded videos being deleted.^{[158][159]}

Organizations including Viacom, Mediaset, and the English Premier League have filed lawsuits against YouTube, claiming that it has done too little to prevent the uploading of copyrighted material.^{[160][161][162]} Viacom, demanding \$1 billion in damages, said that it had found more than 150,000 unauthorized clips of its material on

YouTube that had been viewed "an astounding 1.5 billion times". YouTube responded by stating that it "goes far beyond its legal obligations in assisting content owners to protect their works".^[163] During the same court battle, Viacom won a court ruling requiring YouTube to hand over 12 terabytes of data detailing the viewing habits of every user who has watched videos on the site. The decision was criticized by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which called the court ruling "a setback to privacy rights".^{[164][165]} In June 2010, Viacom's lawsuit against Google was rejected in a summary judgment, with U.S. federal Judge Louis L. Stanton stating that Google was protected by provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Viacom announced its intention to appeal the ruling.^[166]

On April 5, 2012, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit reinstated the case, allowing Viacom's lawsuit against Google to be heard in court again.^[167]

In August 2008, a US court ruled in *Lenz v. Universal Music Corp.* that copyright holders cannot order the removal of an online file without first determining whether the posting reflected fair use of the material. The case involved Stephanie Lenz from Gallitzin, Pennsylvania, who had made a home video of her 13-month-old son dancing to Prince's song "Let's Go Crazy", and posted the 29-second video on YouTube.^[168]

In the case of *Smith v. Summit Entertainment LLC*, Matt Smith sued Summit Entertainment for the wrongful use of copyright takedown notice on YouTube. He asserted seven causes of action, and four were ruled in Smith's favor.^[169]

In April 2012, a court in Hamburg ruled that YouTube could be held responsible for copyrighted material posted by its users. The performance rights organization GEMA argued that YouTube had not done enough to prevent the uploading of German copyrighted music. YouTube responded by stating: "We remain committed to finding a solution to the music licensing issue in Germany that will benefit artists, composers, authors, publishers and record labels, as well as the wider YouTube community".^[170]

Content ID

In June 2007, YouTube began trials of a system for automatic detection of uploaded videos that infringe copyright. The system was regarded by Google CEO Eric Schmidt as necessary for resolving lawsuits such as the one from Viacom, which alleged that YouTube profited from pirated content.^[171] The system, which became known as Content ID, creates a ID File for copyrighted audio and video material, and stores it in a database. When a video is uploaded, it is checked against the database, and flags the video as a copyright violation if a match is found. When this occurs, the content owner has the choice of blocking the video to make it unviewable, tracking the viewing statistics of the video, or adding advertisements to the video. YouTube describes Content ID as "very accurate in finding uploads that look similar to reference files that are of sufficient length and quality to generate an effective ID File".^[172] Content ID accounts for over a third of the monetized views on YouTube.^[173]

An independent test in 2009 uploaded multiple versions of the same song to YouTube, and concluded that while the system was "surprisingly resilient" in finding copyright violations in the audio tracks of videos, it was not infallible.^[174] The use of Content ID to remove material automatically has led to controversy in some cases, as the videos have not been checked by a human for fair use.^[175] If a YouTube user disagrees with a decision by Content ID, it is possible to fill in a form disputing the decision.^[176] YouTube has cited the effectiveness of Content ID as one of the reasons why the site's rules were modified in December 2010 to allow some users to upload videos of unlimited length.^[177]

Controversial content

YouTube has also faced criticism over the offensive content in some of its videos. The uploading of videos containing defamation, pornography, and material encouraging criminal conduct is prohibited by YouTube's terms of service.^[156] Controversial areas have included Holocaust denial and the Hillsborough disaster, in which 96 football fans from Liverpool were crushed to death in 1989.^{[178][179]}

YouTube relies on its users to flag the content of videos as inappropriate, and a YouTube employee will view a flagged video to determine whether it violates the site's terms of service.^[156] In July 2008, the Culture and Media Committee of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom stated that it was "unimpressed" with YouTube's system for policing its videos, and argued that "proactive review of content should be standard practice for sites hosting user-generated content". YouTube responded by stating:

We have strict rules on what's allowed, and a system that enables anyone who sees inappropriate content to report it to our 24/7 review team and have it dealt with promptly. We educate our community on the rules and include a direct link from every YouTube page to make this process as easy as possible for our users. Given the volume of content uploaded on our site, we think this is by far the most effective way to make sure that the tiny minority of videos that break the rules come down quickly.^[180]

In October 2010, U.S. Congressman Anthony Weiner urged YouTube to take down from its website videos of imam Anwar al-Awlaki, saying that by hosting al-Awlaki's messages, "We are facilitating the recruitment of homegrown terror".^[181] British security minister Pauline Neville-Jones commented: "These Web sites would categorically not be allowed in the U.K. They incite cold-blooded murder, and as such are surely contrary to the public good." In November 2010, YouTube removed from its site some of the hundreds of videos featuring al-Awlaki's calls to *jihād*. It stated that it had removed videos that violated the site's guidelines prohibiting "dangerous or illegal activities such as bomb-making, hate speech and incitement to commit violent acts", or came from accounts "registered by a member of a designated foreign terrorist organization".^[182] In December 2010, YouTube added "promotes terrorism" to the list of reasons that users can give when flagging a video as inappropriate.^[183]

User comments

Most videos enable users to leave comments, and these have attracted attention for the negative aspects of both their form and content. When *Time* in 2006 praised Web 2.0 for enabling "community and collaboration on a scale never seen before", it added that YouTube "harnesses the stupidity of crowds as well as its wisdom. Some of the comments on YouTube make you weep for the future of humanity just for the spelling alone, never mind the obscenity and the naked hatred".^[184] *The Guardian* in 2009 described users' comments on YouTube as follows:

Juvenile, aggressive, misspelled, sexist, homophobic, swinging from raging at the contents of a video to providing a pointlessly detailed description followed by a LOL, YouTube comments are a hotbed of infantile debate and unashamed ignorance – with the occasional burst of wit shining through.^[185]

In September 2008, *The Daily Telegraph* commented that YouTube was "notorious" for "some of the most confrontational and ill-formed comment exchanges on the internet", and reported on YouTube Comment Snob, "a new piece of software that blocks rude and illiterate posts".^[186] *The Huffington Post* noted in April 2012 that

finding comments on YouTube that appear "offensive, stupid and crass" to the "vast majority" of the people is hardly difficult.^[187]

See also

- Alternative media
- CNN-YouTube presidential debates
- Comparison of video hosting services
- List of Internet phenomena
- List of video hosting services
- List of YouTube personalities
- *Viacom International Inc. v. YouTube, Inc.*
- YouTube Awards
- YouTube Instant
- YouTube Live
- YouTube Symphony Orchestra
- *Ouellette v. Viacom International Inc.*

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- Official website (<http://www.youtube.com/>)
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