

# Web Video: What You Need to Know

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts – Data Services

## THE VIDEO LANDSCAPE

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Web video continues to grow in popularity year after year. The following statistics may help you think through your plans for creating Web video.

- 70% of adult Internet users watch online video. Adults 18-29 are the heaviest consumers.
- Since 2007, viewership of humorous videos rose from 31% to 50% of adult Internet users. Viewership of educational videos rose 16%; movies and TV shows viewers doubled to 32%; and political video viewers also doubled to 30%.
- 8% of online video watchers have connected their computers to their televisions in order to watch online video, and 10% of online video watchers have paid to watch or download a video.
- Users are more interested in streaming movies and TV shows from sites like Netflix or Hulu than they are in downloading a video file to their computers. Over 60% of Internet users watch TV shows and movies from streaming sites, whereas only 23% download videos.
- 14% of Internet users have uploaded a video to YouTube or a similar site.
- The number of videos watched daily on YouTube is more than 100,000,000.
- The average length of a video on YouTube is 2:46.
- **The average amount of time a user will watch your video is 60 seconds.** Viewer abandonment tends to be 20% in the first 10 seconds, and continues to drop through the end of the video.

## PREPARATION

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There are many practical aspects to consider when preparing to put video on the Web. The following guidelines should help to get you thinking in the right direction about your upcoming project.

1. You must present a clear business case for creating a video in order to get your project approved. Video concepts must be signed off on by your manager, by a creative director in Data Services and by Exec before any planning or production may begin.
2. You and/or your team will be working closely with Data Services to produce your video project. Decide who on your team will “own” this project and follow it through to completion. A content-area expert or someone with project management skills might be a good choice.

3. You will work in conjunction with Data Services to create a script or plan for your video. While we respect that you have many great ideas, we hope to bring our expertise to best execute those, and the script and storyboards are the basis for a good, clean shoot.
4. Videos should be no more than 2-3 minutes in length. As mentioned above, average viewer time is 60 seconds, so you want to make sure your video is well thought-out and dives straight into the subject matter. Boil down the essence of the message and convey that in the shortest possible timeframe. A tutorial video may be longer – average viewer retention can be in the 5-minute range. If your video must be longer than five minutes, you might want to consider breaking your topic into “chapters” and presenting it in individual chunks. **The maximum length for a video is 10 minutes – anything over 10 minutes will need to be broken into parts.**
5. Quality is important. While you can, if needed, throw together a slapdash article, you really can’t create a slapdash video without the lack of quality being painfully obvious. While many videos may seem “simple,” production can be complicated and dependent on a number of variables like talent, locations, sound, lighting or legal issues (just to name a few!). Understand that a video project is an undertaking that requires careful planning and execution, and that there’s really no shortcut to get to the finish line.
6. Content should be demonstrative, not descriptive. As they say in journalism, “Show, don’t tell.” Video projects really shine when there is opportunity to tell a story through the combination of strong content matter, strong footage relating to the subject, and a story that is best told through a combination of elements – story, visuals, sound, on-screen titles, images, music. If your video focuses on a Q&A or “talking head” interview, it’s likely the information is more easily and effectively presented as an article or interactive slideshow.
7. You will need legal releases for your talent or interview subjects. This clears us legally to use the footage as we wish both now and in the future. If our standard release forms will not be adequate, you will be responsible for working with the legal department to ensure that all releases are complete and airtight.
8. Likewise, you will need legal clearance to use music, photos or video footage not created by the Data Services team. You will consult with your video producer about these elements early in the project. If legal clearances will be required, you will be responsible for working this out with the legal department in the necessary timeframe. If clearances cannot be obtained, the elements in question cannot launch as part of your video.
9. Locations for your video may need to be cleared, or they may require film permits. If you want to film in a state agency building, you will need to clear all shoot dates with that agency’s administrative contact. In the City of Austin, there are requirements for closing a street, sidewalk or alleyway or using a city park, but no “permits” are required to shoot within city limits. Any location on private property should be cleared through the property owner. Locations outside Austin should be cleared through the property owner, and film

permit requirements should be verified with that city's film commission or police department.

10. There may be costs associated with creating your video that cannot be covered by Data Services. These may include:
  - Extra or specialized video gear rental
  - Memory cards or hard drives
  - Payment for crew
  - Permit/location fees
  - Music/photo/footage licensing fees
  - Talent fees
  - Catering
  - Insurance
  - Travel
  - Parking
  - Accommodations for crew/talent

If any additional charges will be incurred for your shoot, your producer will address this with you early in the project planning stage.

## **PUTTING VIDEO ON THE WEB**

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1. Generally, all videos will be hosted on YouTube, due to our own server space constraints. This means there is a hard limit of 10 minutes for every video. Please consider this time constraint when planning your script. In rare instances, video will be served in-house – however, this is the exception rather than the rule, due to difficulties securing server space through IT without extremely long lead times.
2. Every video should have a launch date and a kill date – during the planning stage, please consider how long your video should be online. You won't need to handle removing video from the Web – it will be added to the master schedule and your producer will notify you when your video has expired and been removed.
3. If you need statistics on the number of views your videos are receiving, please let your video producer know this prior to project launch so we can ensure the necessary code is in place.
4. Your video must be Section 508 compliant. This means it must be captioned on-screen or include a downloadable transcript. Data Services cannot be accountable for captioning, though we can help with the technology – your department must do the actual typing and route for approvals. We recommend you have a second person copy edit transcripts for typos and grammatical errors.