

2017

More than just a lighthearted activity

Understanding Social Media Video Sharing
Behaviors and Motivations



Contents

Introduction	3
What Makes Video So Now?	3
Examining Cognition and Participatory Culture	3
How Brands Fit In	4
Understanding Video Sharing	4
The Sharing Scene	5
Video Sharing Content and Motivations	8
Demographic Segments	9
Millennials	9
Gender Differences	14
Regional Differences	16
The Role of Branded Videos	17
Implications for Brands	19
Implications for Researchers	20
The Final Scene	21
Bibliography	22



Introduction

Calibre been a way to connect on a multi-dimensional level. When we can see and hear something, the experience is more visceral. Over the past few years, video has become more present than ever in all levels of society. No longer are special “crews” required to produce and share videos... a smartphone with Wi-Fi access will do just fine. On December 12, 2012, Psy’s [Gangnam Style](#) became the first video on the internet to reach more than one billion views. This milestone symbolized the popularity and ability of video to reach consumers en masse. Today, one billion hours of video are watched on YouTube every day. And, 500 million users consume video daily on Facebook (Etherington, 2017 & Wagner, 2016).

What Makes Video So Now?

EXAMINING COGNITION AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

Video, unlike any other medium, is multi-sensory. A recent MIT study found that the brain can process entire images with as little as 13 milliseconds of exposure (Trafton, 2014). This means that videos deliver a lot of information in a matter of seconds: sadness, laughter, inspiration or even a cooking lesson packaged in a one-minute clip. Beyond the cognitive elements, we can study society and the culture around us. Specifically, the rise of participatory culture and a generation of creators and sharers.

Henry Jenkins, a professor at USC’s Annenberg School of Communications, defines participatory culture as being one where “fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content” (Jenkins, 2006). Fueled by increasingly available digital technologies and the rapid production of user generated content, participatory culture has led to a shift in the power balance between various media industries and consumers.

This trend has become even more notable with the pervasiveness of online video. Professionally produced content still performs an undisputed role. Oftentimes, it serves as the genesis for user generated content. It starts with fans watching and sharing a professionally produced video. After this point, the content can take on a life of its own. A new world can emerge around the original piece in the form of remakes and parodies. As the reach and importance of the original content continues to grow, its momentum is propelled further by user generated content. Gangnam Style was perhaps the first video to signal this trend. A more recent music video, [Despacito](#), is the undisputed hit of 2017, with over four billion views and nearly 36 million shares. This clearly illustrates how this trend has become mainstream.

Sarah Arroyo (2013) noted that “online video is becoming the prototypical experience of the internet, and the culture it cultivates is both growing and already permeating the institutions of our daily lives.” Internet videos aren’t just about online entertainment anymore. They have evolved into much more than that; infusing into business, education systems and more.



How Brands Fit In

Brands have taken notice of consumers’ appetite for video; and the projected spend on mobile video ads in 2018 is nearly \$6 billion for the US alone (eMarketer, 2016).

For any brand, a crucial component of video consumption has been video sharing. While the number of “views” count toward overall ROI, video sharing reflects deeper levels of engagement taking place. People who share are brand ambassadors who help to build its audience. Nielsen’s Global Trust report finds that 83% of consumers trust a recommendation from a family or friend; and 66% trust consumer opinions posted online (The Nielsen Company, 2015). This means that video shared by a trusted source - whether a link within an email or a shared social media post - becomes more effective in promoting a brand. Unsurprisingly, social media advertising is expected to top \$50 billion by 2019, as a result (Kharpal, 2016).

Understanding Video Sharing

Given the growing importance of video as a medium, FocusVision sought to better understand how videos are consumed and shared among today’s consumers. For the sake of simplicity, we focused on short video clips (15 minutes or less) for our investigation.

Our research approach consisted of sampling 1,000 adults across the US and UK markets through a 15-minute online survey. The survey was hosted on FocusVision’s Decipher platform, and utilized a responsive design, which was user friendly for both desktop and mobile survey-takers. The sample was balanced by gender and age to be representative of both regions.



We set out to explore:

Video Sharing Behaviors and Motivations

- Why do people share videos on social media and what motivates them?
- What kind of videos do they share and who are they sharing with?
- What platforms do they use and what kind of content do they share?

Video Sharing and Brands

- What role do brands play in video sharing?
- How do brands create successful (shared) videos?

Key Socials Segments

- Do important differences exist by age, gender or geographical region?



The Sharing Scene

Today's consumer participates in many online activities. No surprise there. But the online activity consumers most frequently engage in is social media. That is, socializing and sharing information. Shopping related activities appear next, then leisure activities, such as reading the news, listening to music and watching videos. Sharing videos was the least often mentioned activity consumers engaged in. Still, nearly a quarter of our sample reported having shared a video in the last 30 days.

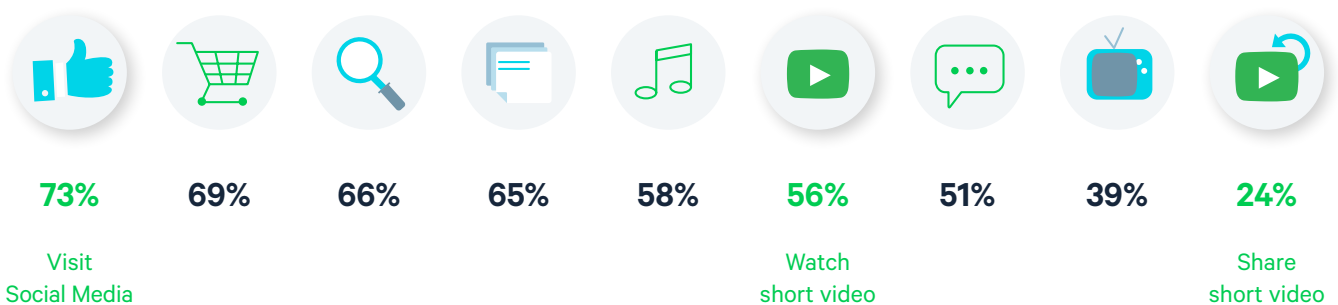
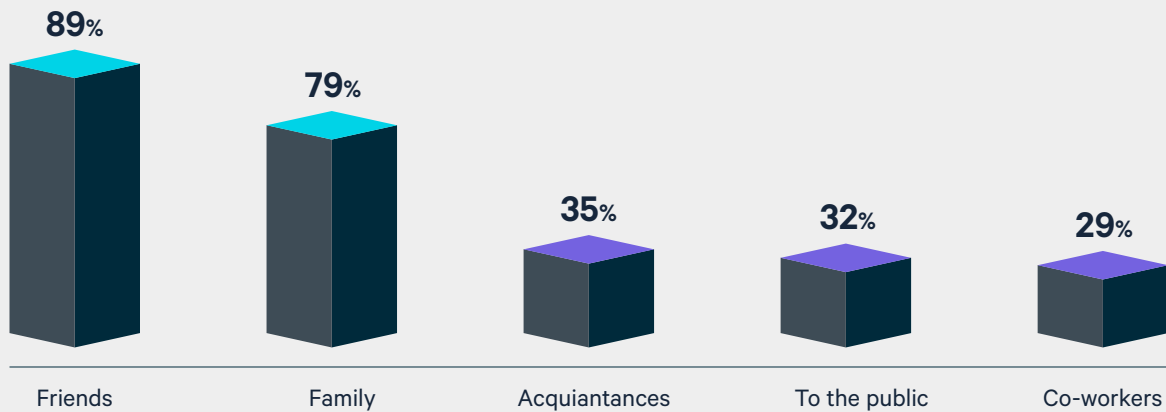


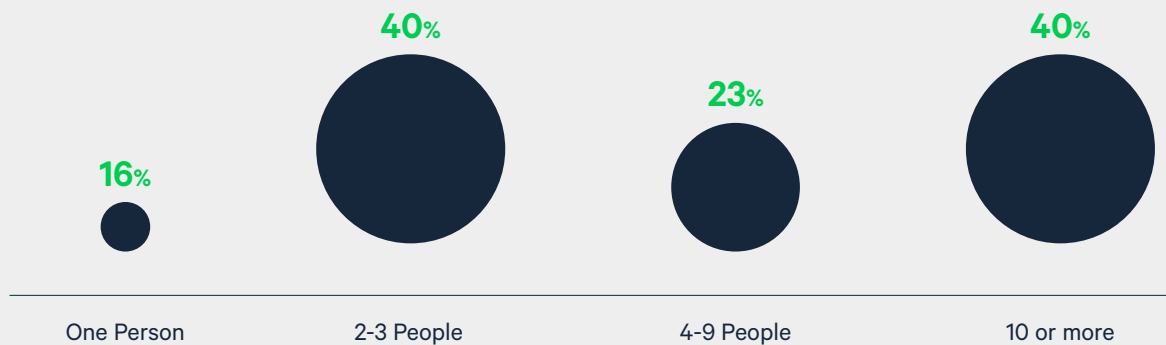
Figure 1: Online activities participated in the past month

Video sharing takes place among friends and family: sometimes a few, sometimes a lot.

Who?



How many?



A typical video sharing scenario looks like this: You are at home, at the end of the day. Maybe lounging on the sofa or perhaps already in bed, just before going to sleep. You're enjoying some quiet time on Facebook or YouTube, and come across something that you like and are motivated to share. Most often you share this via the social media channels where your community is already set up. However, sometimes you'll share more privately, perhaps via messenger or email.

Friends and family are most often the recipients of shared videos, which means a shared video is likely to be received positively. Studies show that consumer attitude towards online content is impacted more so by who shares than what it is, especially when it comes to trust and credibility of the content (American Press Insititue, 2017).

The overwhelming majority of videos are shared via YouTube or Facebook, with the latter taking the top spot. YouTube is unparalleled in terms of the breadth of its video content and is more established as a place for professional video products and amateur video bloggers. However, YouTube is still second to Facebook's billion daily active user count, making Facebook the video sharing king.

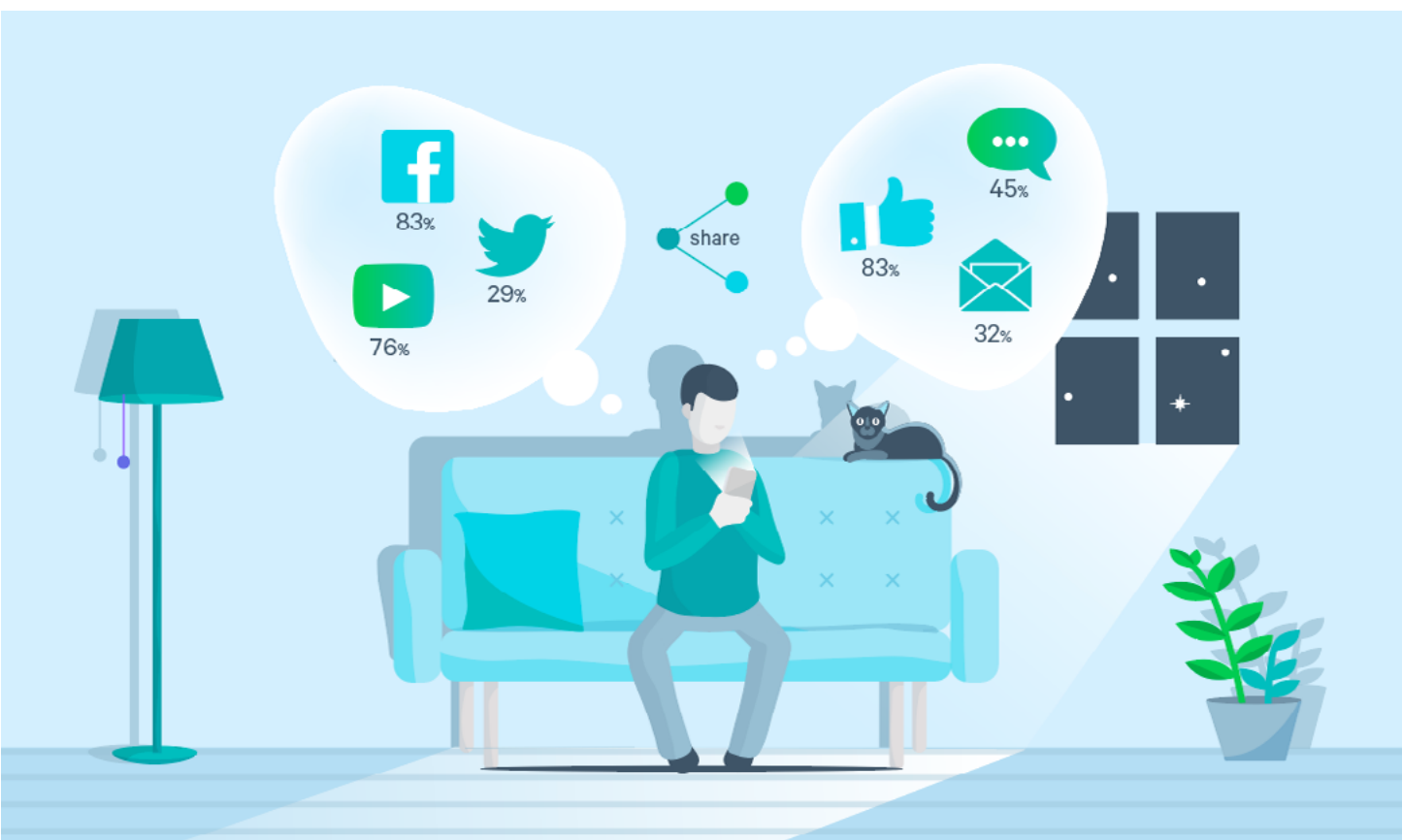
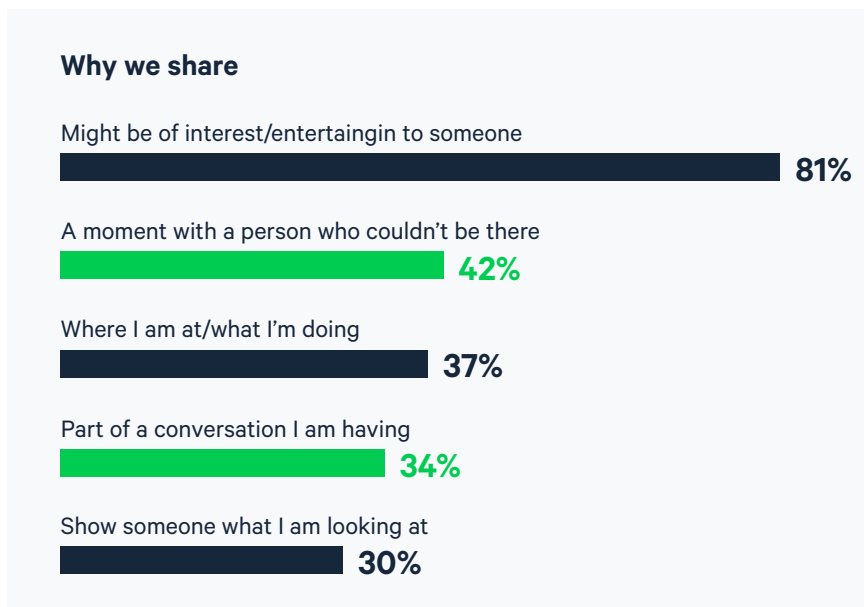


Figure 2: Video viewing and sharing is a solo activity that often happens in the home

Video Sharing Content and Motivations

What kinds of videos are consumers sharing and why? On the surface, video sharing is an entertainment activity. It's light-hearted and often "throw-away". The overwhelming majority of our respondents said that they shared a video because they thought "it might be of interest to someone." Sharing a video to record "a moment with a person that couldn't be there" or to show "where I'm at/what I'm doing" was less frequently cited (see Figure 4). Regardless of the specific reason, video sharing is a transaction rooted in personal connections between the sharer and recipient. It is not just about entertaining or enjoying a good laugh with someone else. Videos are shared because they succeed at evoking an emotional bond between two or more people.



The entertainment aspect of video sharing is apparent in the types and genres of content shared. More than 70% of shared video consists of content that falls in the "entertainment" and "funny" categories. Music videos are the most popular, followed by videos with pets or animals. The popularity of music sharing is not surprising, given that the top-25 most viewed videos on YouTube are almost all music videos. As for pets and animals, success comes from personal humor shared and evoked among loved ones, which we will elaborate on later.

Figure 4: Motivations for sharing video

Beyond being entertaining and/or funny, video sharing often carries a more purposeful tone such as seeking information or "how-to" tutorials. This includes anything from lifestyle, cooking, and home repair to product research and news headlines/ current events (see Figure 6).

As a result of all this sharing, we start to see an underlying story that goes beyond "this may be fun". Connection between individuals provides the backdrop to a shared video. A son sharing a music video with his father offers a moment of reflection back to childhood. An unexpected cat video can offer a loved one a moment of light relief and humor within their day. A video about a cake recipe shared among friends creates a group discussion and shared activity. Simply put, video sharing touches on real connections and emotions between people.

Demographic Segments

MILLENNIALS

Millennials (born roughly between 1980 and 2000) are the first generation of the digital age. Many in this group entered high school when the web became part of the public conscious and when social media (e.g. Facebook, Myspace) was born. For Millennials, being connected and partaking in online activities is the norm. According to the American Press Institute (2015), 51% of Millennials are mostly or almost always connected and online throughout the day.



Videos are...

Entertaining 72%

Funny 71%

How-To 51%

Informative 49%



Topics

Music 52%

Pets/Animals 50%

Entertainment/Celeb 44%

Lifestyle 43%

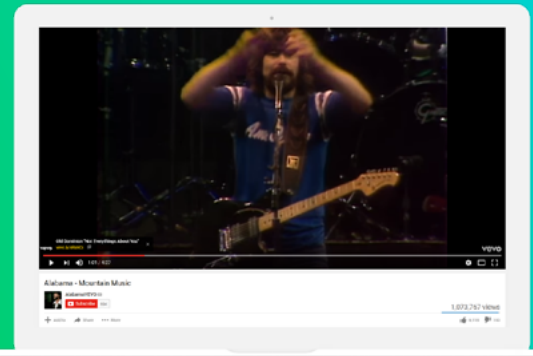
News/Headlines 41%

Figure 5: Content of shared videos

Entertaining: Music

“It was the song “Mountain Music” by Alabama. I saw it on Facebook and shared it with my dad because we used to listen to it when I was younger.”

“Mountain Music” by Alabama

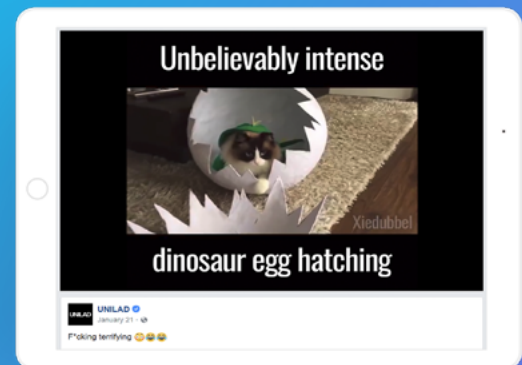


1M Views (since Nov 2013) 10K Shares

Funny: Pets/Animals

“Intense dinosaur hatching video,” but was a cat dressed as a dinosaur coming out of a cardboard egg. My fiancée loves cats and silly little videos like that ... I thought it would make him smile.”

“Dinosaur Egg Hatching” by UNILAD



15M Views (since Jan 2017) 152K Shares

How to: Lifestyle

“I saw this ‘Homemade Butter Cake’ shared by a friend on Facebook. I watched the video... It looked easy and delicious. So I shared with my friends knowing that they love to try new things as well and easy is always great.”

“Ooey Goey Butter Cake” by Tastemade



2.2M Views (since March 2016) 21K Shares

Figure 6: Video shared succeed at evoking personal connections between sharers and recipients

Not surprisingly, our data revealed online video to be more integrated with the daily habits of the younger generation compared to older generations. While Gen X and Boomers both watch videos to a high degree, it is Millennials who do the bulk of the video sharing. 42% of Millennials reported to have posted or shared an online video with someone in the past month.



Figure 7: Online activities in past month by generation

The platforms Millennials use are also wider and more varied compared to older generations. While Facebook and YouTube are the most used, Millennial video sharing also takes place on Twitter and Instagram. In fact, 41% and 38% of Millennials reported sharing videos on Instagram and Twitter, respectively.

The breadth of video sharing among Millennials can also be seen among the categories of video content they share. They have a higher propensity to share across the entire spectrum of content, including technology, health/fitness, parenting and finance.



We also found that video sharing among Millennials tends to be more intimate. As a rule, video from the younger generation tends to be shared with fewer people. This may have much to do with how Millennials integrate their online and offline worlds. If they are sharing videos of all sorts of topics, such as technology and parenting, perhaps that's because those topics intersect with their personal lives and their close social circles.

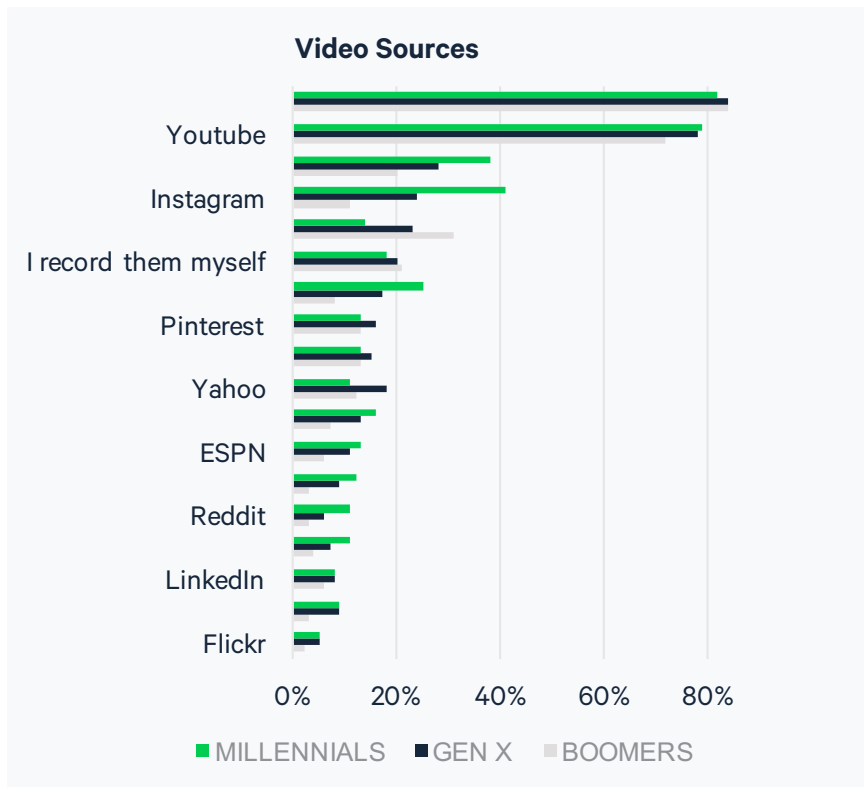
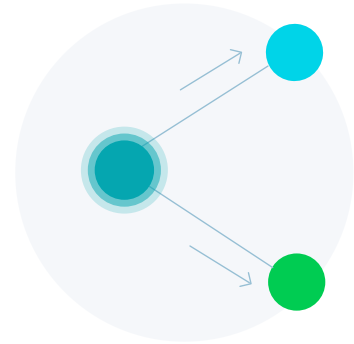


Figure 8: Video sources by generation

Millennials also report a much higher propensity than older generations to share a video because it is “part of a conversation” or they wanted to “share what they were doing”. This contrasts with Boomers, whom instead showed a greater likelihood to share a video simply because they “thought it would be of interest to someone”.

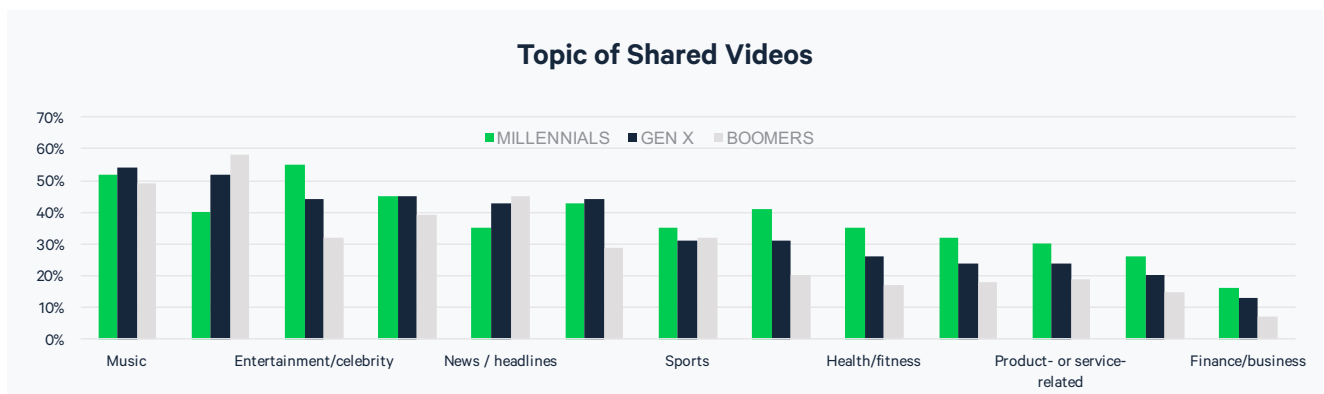


Figure 9: Shared video topics by generation

The distinction of Millennials to integrate online video with their offline world is perhaps best illustrated by a pair of direct respondent quotes. In one, a person wants to share a personal moment of inspiration:

“...it was during my morning running session along the canal, when I saw beautiful fish enjoying the sunshine. I had to share that...”

In another example, video sharing is an exchange leading to an outcome:

“... it was the trailer for Baby Driver, and I shared it with my friends to see if they wanted to go and watch it at the cinema.”

For Millennials then, online videos aren't just about sharing funny cat images or passing along useful information (although there is a lot of that). More than any other generation, they've turned videos into a form of communication.

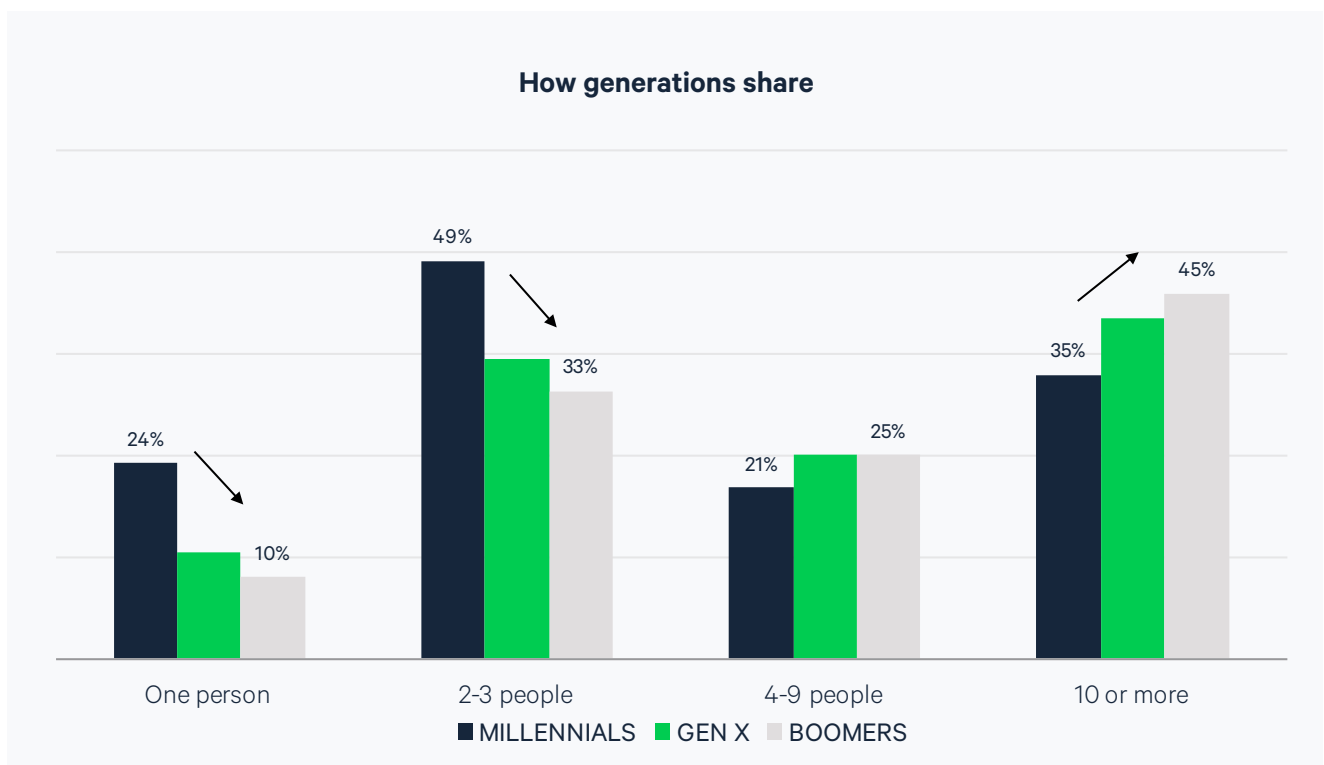
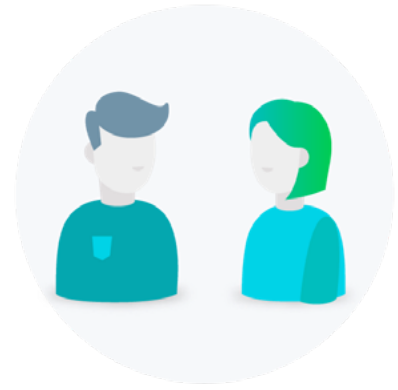


Figure 10: How generations share

Gender Differences

Online habits conform to some gender stereotypes, with females displaying a greater propensity than males to shop online and engage in online social activities (e.g. social media, messaging). On the other hand, consumption of online music as well as videos skews male. Even though males consume more videos, females-perhaps because of their higher social media presence-show the same incidence of sharing videos.



Males also report sourcing shared videos from a variety of platforms. Females show a higher tendency to share videos they received from someone, and even record their own videos for sharing.

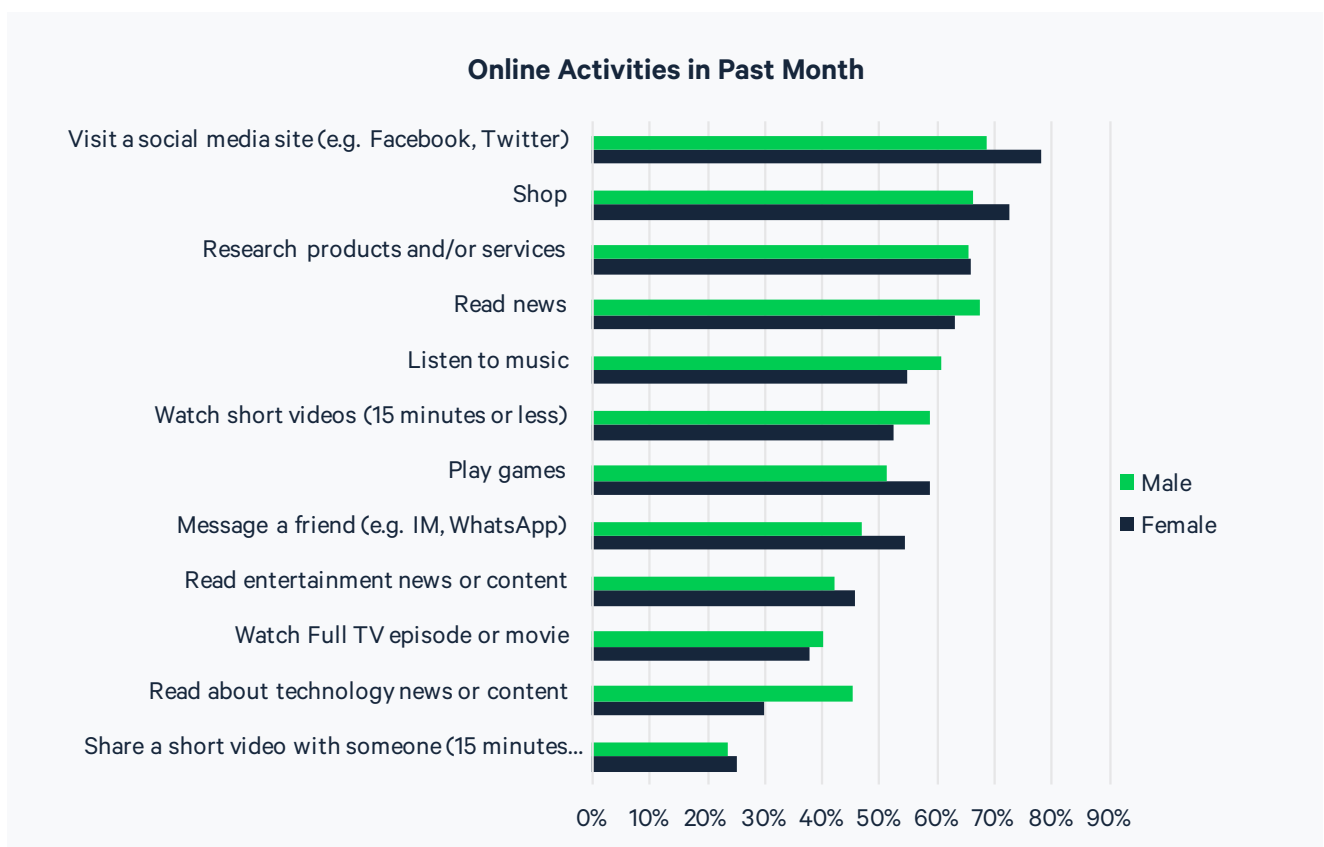


Figure 11: Online activities in past month by gender

Our results coincide with other studies reporting differences in online usage between the sexes. It's well-known that Facebook usage predominantly skews female, while YouTube sees a higher incidence of male usage. Women are more likely to use social media to connect with friends and family; to share personal information and learn from others people's lives (Vermeren, 2015). However, according to a Facebook study (Wang, et al., 2013), males lean towards gathering general information about things (e.g. sports, politics, news, product reviews) and have shown greater overall internet usage than females (Pew Research Center, 2017). So, perhaps it isn't all that surprising that video sharing from males should come from a greater variety of platforms.

We also looked at how the genders differ by the topics of the videos shared on social media. Again, the results follow common stereotypes. Where males are predominantly sharing sports and technology videos; Females are more likely than males to share videos about lifestyle, pets and animals, parenting, or education.

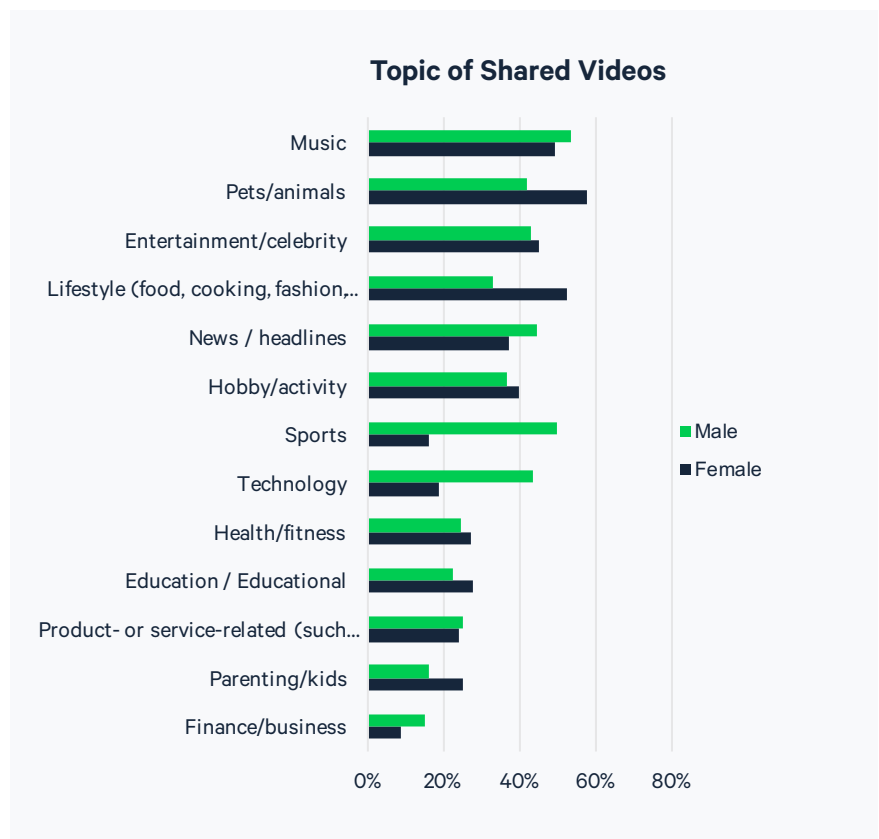


Figure 12: Video sources and topics shared by gender

Regional Differences

Next we reviewed video sharing usage by region. We found that by and large, the US reported a greater propensity for online entertainment than the UK. US preferences included listening to music, playing games, watching videos, and by extension sharing videos. So, it wasn't surprising to find that respondents from the US sourced videos from a greater variety of platforms and topics. Interestingly however, usage of a messenger app or Twitter to share videos showed a UK skew.

Video viewing and sharing are more a way of life in the US compared to UK. As such, sharing on topics such as lifestyle, hobbies or health is more likely to take place in the US than UK. Consequently, deeper engagement with branded videos also happens in the US. For example, 57% of respondents in the US reported having visited a product website after watching a branded video, compared to 49% in the UK.

Beyond the increased online usage and propensity for online internet entertainment in the US, our study did not reveal other regional differences between the US and UK.

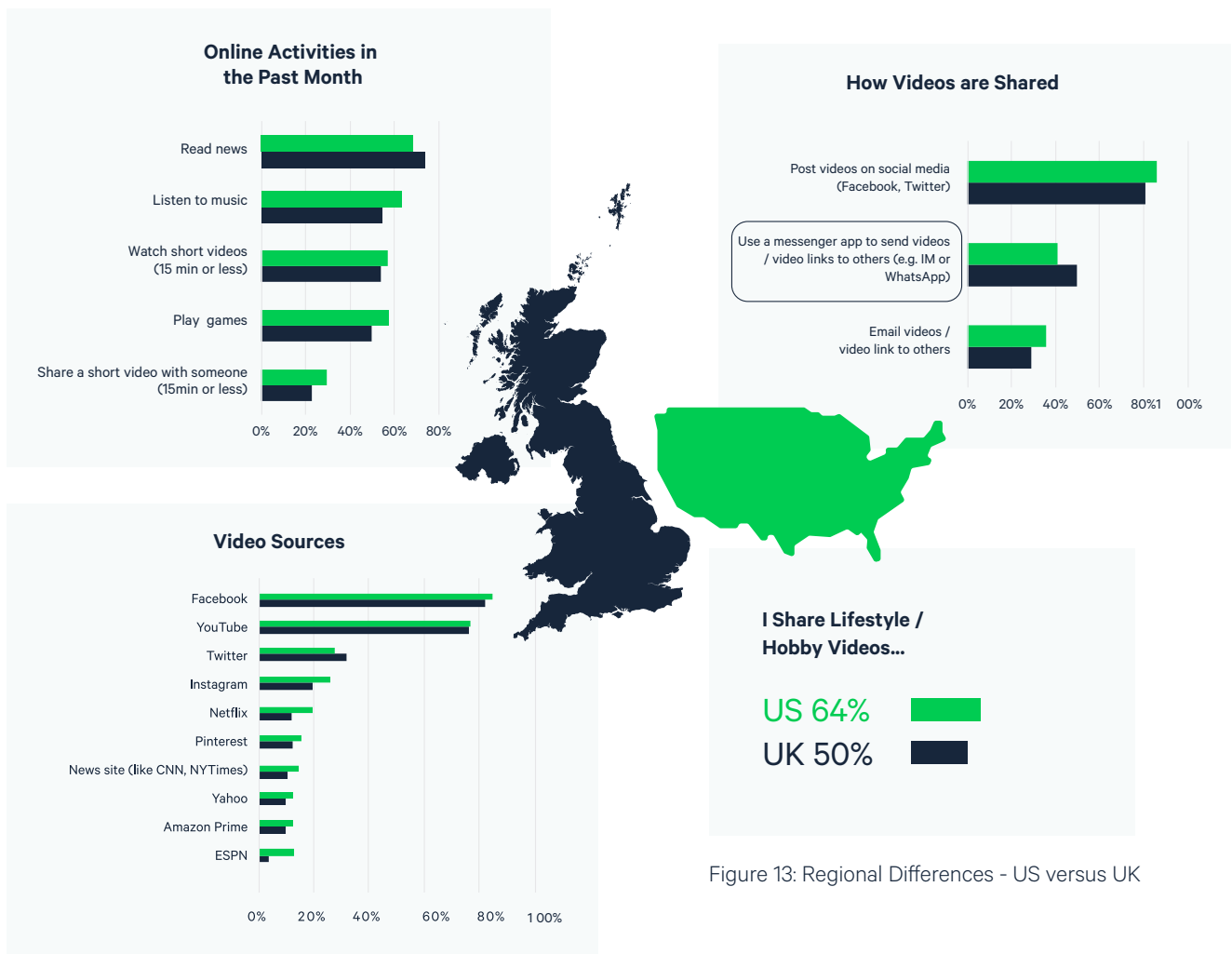


Figure 13: Regional Differences - US versus UK

The Role of Branded Videos

Next, we asked survey respondents to share their experiences with branded videos. We considered branded videos as those where the entire content of the video was an advertisement or promotion.

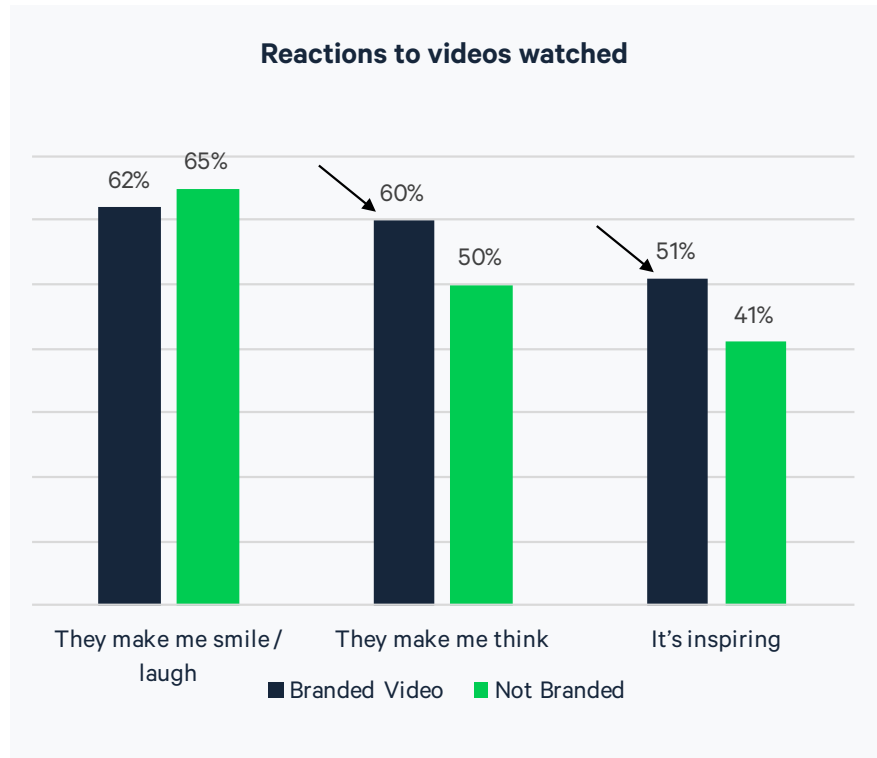


Figure 14: Reactions to videos – branded versus non-branded

Like non-branded videos, branded videos watched by consumers were most often cited as being “informative” and “entertaining”. We also saw branded videos excel at being thought provoking, and even a source of inspiration. Shared branded videos compared to shared non-branded videos were much more likely to be described as “makes me think” (60% vs 50%) and “inspiring” (51% vs 41%).

“I found a particular ‘skate section’ from a skateboarding company featuring an individual skater that I had not seen. After watching it and enjoying it, I decided that a skateboarding group on Facebook that I am subscribed to might not have seen it & might enjoy/be inspired by it.”

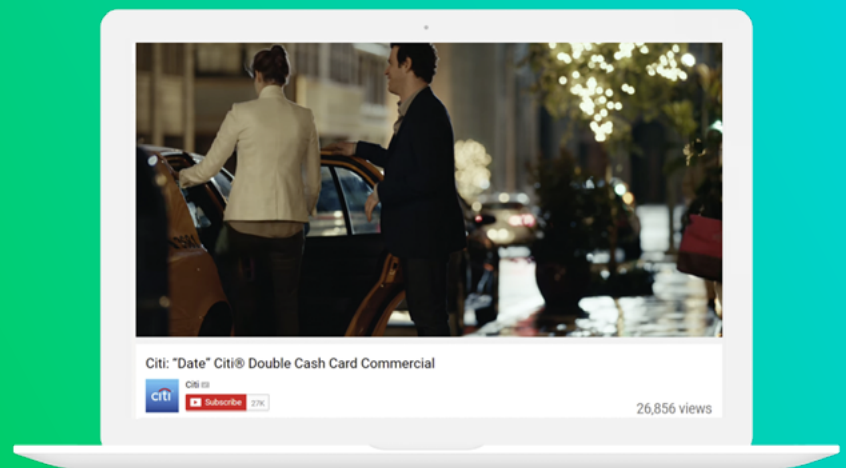
We’ve seen how videos and video sharing can engage and connect individuals. Branded videos have the potential to play into this space as well. Figure 16 cites the various actions taken after watching or

sharing a branded video. Almost a third reported having purchased a product; more than half visited a website; and over 40% reported having had an in-person discussion after watching or sharing a brand video. And not surprisingly, sharing branded videos coincides with deeper engagement than simply watching. That's because more discussion, online commenting and friend tagging occurs with shared branded videos than those merely watched.

Successful branded videos inform and entertain

“It was about Citi cards, and it was a very funny one, about a couple on a date being absurdly honest with each other, that was hilarious”

Commercial “Date” by Citi



26K Views

Types of branded videos watched

Informative 60%

Entertaining 55%

Funny 46%

Figure 15: Branded videos are...

Implications for Brands

To summarise, on the surface, video sharing is often considered a light-hearted or “throw-away” activity. A funny video or useful “how-to” information can be passed along to someone you know. But in many cases, video sharing fulfills a deeper purpose, serving as another form of connection between the sharer and recipient. It touches on real experiences or emotions.

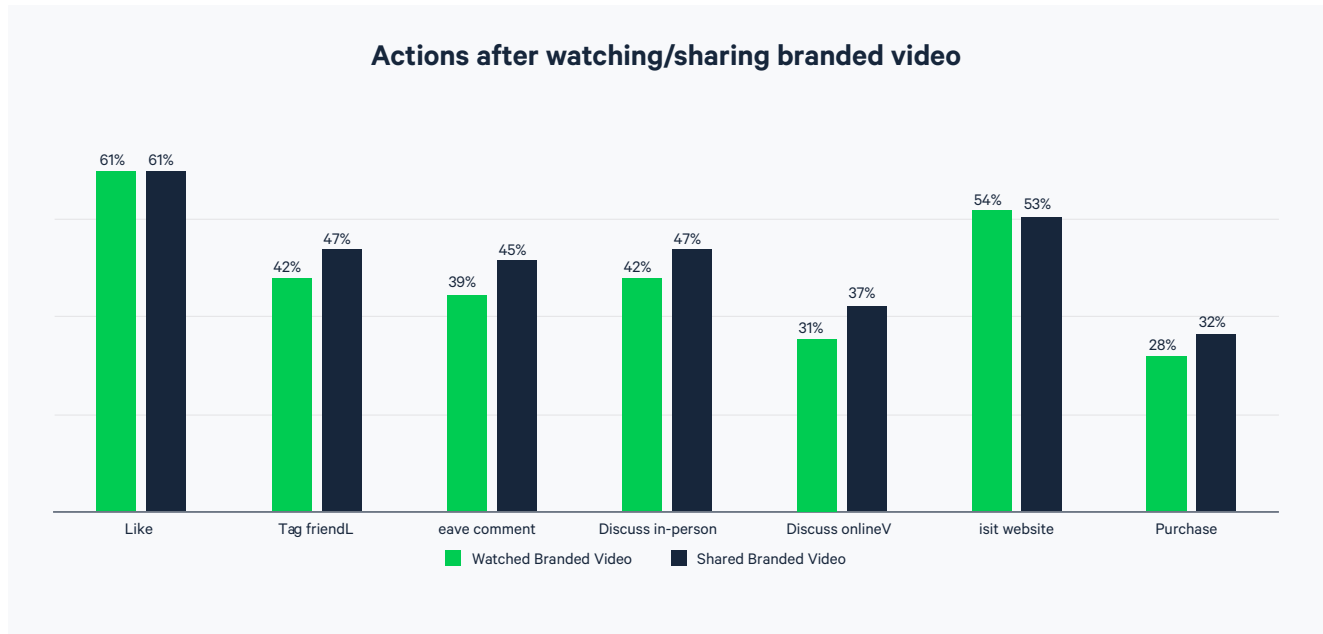


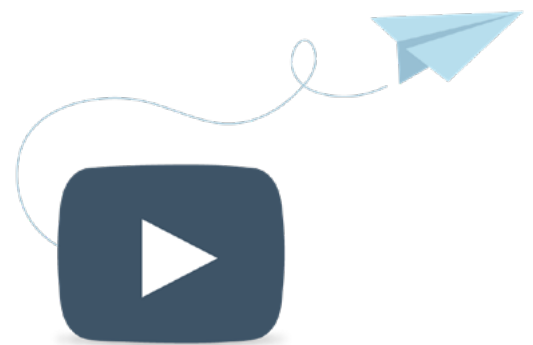
Figure 16: Actions taken – watching versus sharing

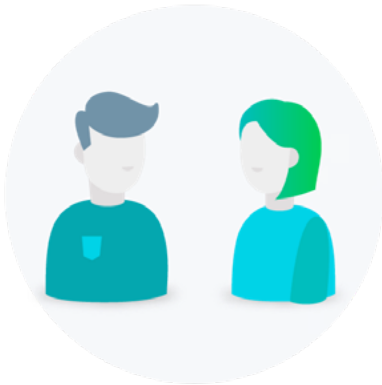
Millennials most frequently and effortlessly integrate their online and offline worlds. Gender differences also exist in terms of how and what the sexes share. A video may be used to make a lifestyle choice or be shared with a friend to help make a decision. In general, consumers increasingly rely on videos to influence their behaviors and communications.

Branded videos are very much part of this world. Here are few key guidelines for brands:

Go beyond advertising – inform, entertain and inspire.

How you inform can take a number of approaches and goes beyond simply providing information about your product or service. It could be a hack to keep things working while waiting for a replacement part, unconventional uses for your product, education around subject matter and much more. It is important to resonate with your audience; touch on real experiences or emotions.





Know your target.

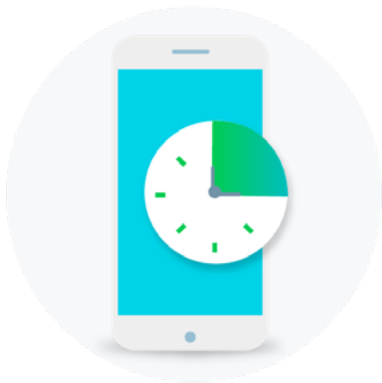
Optimize video content to match key differences between your audiences, as this will ensure the best levels of consumption and engagement. Create and post content in ways that will resonate and touch on experiences or emotions. For example, Millennials share content in very specific and targeted ways. Use this to your advantage.

Use the time wisely.

Impactful digital video isn't constrained by the 30-second spot TV standard. Be creative. While you don't want to use time unnecessarily, there's no need to cut things short either. However, it is worth noting that videos under 2 minutes are more frequently shared.

Encourage follow-up behavior.

Make it easy for people watching your videos to learn more. As Mary Meeker (2017) notes, the lines between ads/content/products and transactions are blurring fast.



Implications for Researchers

As insights professionals, we need to be in tune with the cultures surrounding the people who purchase and use our brands, products and services. Shifts in participatory culture infuse their (our) lives, and importantly, the ways in which information is consumed.

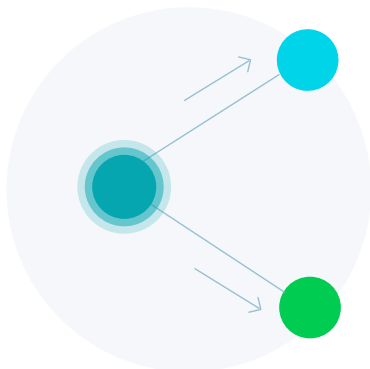
Beyond this, embracing video and participatory culture within our research methods provides a way to more deeply understand participants and provide research topics with richer context. Here are a few approaches to consider:

Exploit mobile ethnography to the fullest.

While we already ask participants to record and share snippets of their daily lives, we can now go further. We can task them with creating their own mini-documentary or advertisement of the activities, behaviors or opinions we are interested in. This will provide a true lens into their world.

Solicit participant-generated covers.

Mimicking the extreme side of participatory culture, we could task people with creating their own video covers or parodies of researcher or brand-created video stimuli. The stimulus could be anything from a finished commercial to a rough-cut vignette of a specific scenario. Finished videos could be presented as an activity within an online community or in an in-person focus group setting. Participants could be tasked with creating their own video versions, which would be shared with others to view, like and comment upon. This fun and engaging task would provide rich, multi-layered information for researchers.



Video first, PowerPoint second.

Video is also an increasingly important learning and engagement mechanism for the final stages of the research project, when insights are shared and business decisions are made. Returning to the cognitive benefits of video, it is unrivaled in conveying a substantial amount of information in a short period of time. Furthermore, video messaging is compelling and humanizing, in ways that open a window into people's lives. As such, video data should be included wherever possible when delivering research findings.

Co-create video reports.

There's nothing more powerful than "doing", and engaging stakeholders in video report creation is perhaps the ultimate way to drive impact and action from research outcomes.

The Final Scene

In the end, a participatory culture is all about creativity and expression... two things that drive how people relate to one another, and drive the best insights. Regardless of the arenas and industries we cover, researchers must embrace this and take our cues from the culture that surrounds us... both in the data we collect and the insights we deliver.



Bibliography

American Press Insitutie, 2015.

Digital lives of Millennials. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/digital-lives-of-millennials/> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

American Press Insitutie, 2017.

'Who shared it?': How Americans decide what news to trust on social media. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/trust-social-media/> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Arroyo, S., 2013.

Participatory Composition: Video Culture, Writing, and Electracy. 1st ed. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

eMarketer, 2016.

Mobile Spearheads Digital Video Advertising's Growth.

[Online]

Available at: <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Mobile-Spearheads-Digital-Video-Advertisings-Growth/1013611> [Accessed 20 October 2017].

Etherington, D., 2017.

People now watch 1 billion hours of YouTube per day. [Online]

Available at: <https://techcrunch.com/2017/02/28/people-now-watch-1-billion-hours-of-youtube-per-day/> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Jenkins, H., 2006.

Convergence culture: where old and new media collide. 1st ed. New York: New York University Press.

Kharpal, A., 2016.

Social media advertising spend set to overtake newspapers by 2020: Research. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2016/12/05/social-media-advertising-spend-set-to-overtake-newspapers-by-2020-research.html> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Meeker, M., 2017.

Internet Trends 2017 - Code Conference. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.kpcb.com/internet-trends> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Pew Research Center, 2017.

Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/internet-broadband> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

The Nielsen Company, 2015.

Global Trust in Advertising: winning strategies for an evolving media landscape. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/niensglobal/apac/docs/reports/2015/nielsen-global-trust-in-advertising-report-september-2015.pdf> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Trafton, A., 2014.

In the blink of an eye. [Online]

Available at: <http://news.mit.edu/2014/in-the-blink-of-an-eye-0116> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Vermeren, I., 2015.

Men vs. Women: Who Is More Active on Social Media?. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/men-vs-women-active-social-media/> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Wagner, K., 2016.

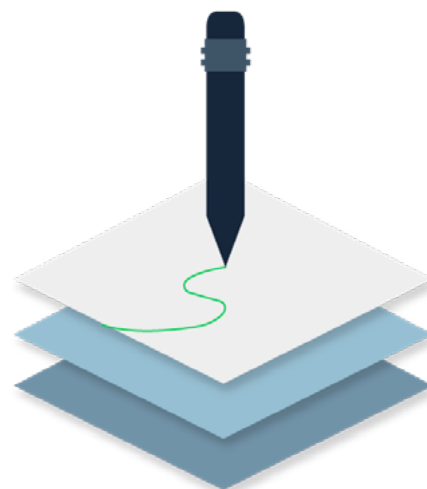
Facebook Says Video Is Huge -- 100-Million-Hours-Per-Day Huge. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.recode.net/2016/1/27/11589140/facebook-says-video-is-huge-100-million-hours-per-day-huge> [Accessed 13 October 2017].

Wang, Y.-C., Burke, M. & Kraut, R., 2013.

Gender, Topic, and Audience Response: An Analysis of User-Generated Content on Facebook. [Online]

Available at: <https://research.fb.com/publications/gender-topic-and-audience-response-an-analysis-of-user-generated-content-on-facebook> [Accessed 13 October 2017].





**To learn more about FocusVision
research solutions**

visit focusvision.com or
email sales@focusvision.com