

The declining attention span of social media users and how to engage them

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6 Jul 2016

As marketers search for innovative ways to engage audiences, it's important to recognise that the attention span of online audiences is quickly declining.

Social media, online games, streaming, and mobile campaigns have left people with extremely short attention spans. Apparently just eight seconds, which is now shorter than that of a goldfish!



Image credit: © AllThingsD.com

What to do? Quite simply, we need to adapt.

Trends show people are reading less and watching more. So goodbye text-heavy posts and hello easy-to-digest videos.

A successful adapter is the New York-based media start-up's cooking channel, Tasty. Their videos regularly get millions of views and their Facebook page boasts over 61M Likes. That's more people than the population of South Africa!

The good news for content marketers and producers is that these popular short form videos are both effective and don't break the bank. Check out this 'Tasty' video:

The reason for their popularity is due to their length – in today's world, people would rather spend 60 seconds than 60 minutes watching a video.

Another brand to successfully adopt this trend is e-cigarette company, [Twisp](#). Their social media agency, [Stretch Marketing](#), produce digestible 'how to' style videos for them. This is one of them, which is understandable with or without audio:

Stretch promoted this video via Facebook and Instagram on a modest budget and generated over 50,000 views!

And remember, low-cost video content doesn't have to look low-cost. [Miran Media](#) produces excellent short-form videos that look like they came from a BBC production office. This was released via MasterCard's social channels and quickly generated over 300,000 views:

Here are some tweetable reasons why videos should be included in content strategies:

- .@forrester, "If a picture paints a 1000 words, then one minute of video is worth 1.8-million words."
- By 2019, @Cisco predicts video will account for 80% of global traffic. That's nearly 1 million minutes of video shared every second.
- "Facebook's algorithm favours anything that keeps people on Facebook longer, rather than sending them to another site" @FortuneMagazine.
- #VIDEO is no longer an "up-and-coming" #marketing tactic -- it's here, and it's a really effective way to communicate a brand's story.

So, interested in jumping on the short form video bandwagon? Here are some tips for success:

Make sure your videos are:

- Short (90 seconds or less)
- Attention grabbing
- Understandable without sound*

*Facebook auto plays without sound, so it's important that content can tell the story without audio (visuals, including subtitles and motion graphics can help with this).

With online videos quickly becoming a crucial way for people to satisfy their information and entertainment needs, brands that fail to include them in their digital marketing strategy do so at their peril.

Imagine a few years into the future – would you be reading this article or would you be watching it?

ABOUT JULIA RHODES

She is most known for skillfully marrying viral capacity video content with social media ads to generate mass amounts of reach...

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