



YouTube Algorithm Cheat Sheet

In this lesson, you will learn about

- ★ History of the YouTube Algorithm
- ★ How the YouTube algorithm works in 2021
- ★ Summary of the different Algorithms on YouTube
- ★ How YouTube determines the algorithm
- ★ How YouTube determines its homepage algorithm
- ★ How YouTube determines its suggested video algorithm
- ★ How YouTube determines its search algorithm

History of the YouTube Algorithm

- ★ 2005 – 2011: YouTube was optimising for clicks & views
- ★ 2012: YouTube was optimising for watch time
- ★ 2015-2016: YouTube was optimising for satisfaction
- ★ 2016-present: YouTube is optimising demonetisation (removing revenue earned from videos which breach YouTube guidelines, for example which include banned words - e.g. gay, lesbian), reducing dangerous content and improving brand safety (ensuring adverts are placed on suitable content which aligns with the brand).

How the YouTube algorithm works in 2021

- ★ The YouTube algorithm chooses videos for viewers with two goals: finding the most appropriate video for that specific viewer, and then to encourage them to keep watching it.
- ★ “The algorithm” is actually three different discovery systems:
 - one finds videos for the YouTube homepage
 - one which ranks results for any search performed
 - one which finds appropriate suggested videos for viewers to watch next
- ★ YouTube states in 2021, homepage and suggested videos are usually the top sources of traffic for most channels. Except for ‘How to’ or instructional videos, which often gain the most traffic from search

Summary of the different Algorithms on YouTube

- ★ There are three algorithms within YouTube:
 - Homepage algorithm
 - Suggested video algorithm
 - Search algorithm



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How YouTube determines the algorithm

- ★ The factors which affect your video's views include:
 - performance (the video's success)
 - personalisation (the viewer's history and preferences)
 - external factors (the overall audience or market)

How YouTube determines its Homepage Algorithm

- ★ When a viewer goes to YouTube, the homepage algorithm offers a range of videos that it thinks that person might enjoy
- ★ This selection is often quite wide ranging because the Homepage Algorithm hasn't been given enough data yet to narrow it down
- ★ Videos get selected for the homepage based on two types of ranking signal:
 - **Performance:** These metrics include likes, dislikes, click-through rate, average view duration, average percentage viewed, and viewer surveys. After you upload your video the algorithm pushes it out to a few viewers on the homepage, and if it gains traction (and the performance metric look promising) then they will offer it to even more viewers on their homepages.
 - **Personalisation:** YouTube offers videos to viewers that it deems to be relevant based on their interests which it knows from their past behaviour (watch history)

How YouTube determines its Suggested Video Algorithm

- ★ When a viewer has watched a few videos, the algorithm has more of an idea about what a person is interested in specifically on that day, so it shows them some options on the right side of the screen which might interest them
- ★ As well as performance and personalisation, the Suggested Video Algorithm is most likely to recommend:
 - Videos with related topics
 - Videos the viewer has watched in the past
 - Videos that have been watched together by other viewers
- ★ **Tip #1:** Use YouTube Analytics to check out what other videos your audience has watched, this can help you narrow down which broader or related topics/interests your audience has
- ★ **Tip #2:** Creating a sequel to your most successful video is a well used technique.

How YouTube determines its Search Algorithm

- ★ YouTube is actually the world's second largest search engine. This means SEO is important here!



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How to get your video to rank near the top of search?

- ★ **Keywords:** The search algorithm relies on keywords. You will use these keywords in your video's metadata to tell YouTube what the video is about. If you want your video to show to viewers who search 'holidays in Spain' then you will include that keyword phrase in your title, description and tags
- ★ **Performance:** When the algorithm has decided what your video is about, it tests that hypothesis by showing it to viewers in search results. Then if people engage and the performance metrics increase, YouTube will show it to more people and it will become higher in the rankings

Key Takeaways

- ★ There are three algorithms at work on YouTube; Homepage Algorithm, Suggested Videos Algorithm and Search Algorithm
- ★ Generally the algorithms use Performance and Personalisation to suggest the content
- ★ YouTube is the world's second largest search engine, owned by the largest! (Google!)
- ★ SEO is very important on YouTube