What is Social Video Advertising?

Unruly FAQs
An increasing number of brands are investing in social video advertising, a format that actively engages audiences, starts genuine conversations and creates massive opportunities for earned media. With over 4 billion consumers connected to the internet globally, social video advertising can capture the attention of an international audience to build brand advocacy, target specific consumers and drive purchases or data capture. But what exactly is social video advertising and why should brands care?

Simply put, social video is content that starts conversations: online video content that gets people talking, either with other consumers or with the brand itself. With the rise of Facebook, Twitter and other social networks, it is easier than ever before for friends to share pictures, articles and videos.

Sharing of videos is especially popular; over 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter alone every minute. One person can share a video with everyone they know online, who can in turn send it on to hundreds more, meaning social videos have the potential to reach millions of people around the world.

Social video advertising is a way of using social video to reach your target audience. It’s a paid distribution model that works on a cost-per-click basis, with advertisers paying each time someone watches their video. Social video advertising is a user-initiated format, in contrast with forced pre-roll views, every view of a social video ad represents an engaged user who has chosen to watch the video.

In 2011, the industry body responsible for regulating online advertising, the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB), defined social video advertising as the following:

A non-interruptive, user-initiated video format sold on a cost-per-view basis. The social video format launches only when the viewer actively chooses to watch the content. For this reason, one of the defining characteristics of the format is its ability to serve video of any length (typically 30-120 secs and sometimes as long as 5-10 mins). The content is delivered within a fully functional video player, giving the user total control of the viewing experience, including the ability to comment, share, re-post, pause and replay. Plays can be delivered across a range of media (in-page, in-stream, in-text, in-game, in-app) and on multiple devices (smart phones, tablets, PCs, connected TVs).

IAB, 2011
The number of online video shares is rocketing. Shares of branded content across social networks and the blogosphere rose from 27.4 million in August 2010 to 1.15 billion in March 2012, reflecting the growing number of brands that are using social video to promote their business and build stronger relationships with their customers.

Online video was also the fastest growing category of advertising category in 2011, with global spending expected to hit $10 billion by 2015. With Zuckerberg’s ‘Law of Social Sharing’ finding that an individual’s sharing activity doubles every year, social video advertising is here to stay.

Is Social Video Advertising just a fad?

The potential for video sharing sounds huge, so I just need to stick a video on YouTube and wait for people to send it to their friends?

Not quite. YouTube is undoubtedly a major force in the world of online video, but bear in mind there are over 72 hours of content uploaded to YouTube every minute. If a brand merely posts a video on the site and expects viewers to flock to it without any kind of promotion they are unlikely to gather many views at all. A 2009 study conducted by Professor Caroline Wiertz at the Cass Business School found that 90% of YouTube videos generated fewer than 500 views. With so much content being released, much of it will never be seen, let alone become a global hit.

But my brand has millions of fans on Facebook. Can’t I just post the video there and wait for the views to pour in?

Facebook’s EdgeRank algorithm aggressively limits which posts reach fans’ newsfeeds. Some estimates suggest that posts reach only 17% of fans and some marketers have claimed that changes to the algorithm made in September 2012 have resulted in brands losing the ability to reach up to 50% of their fans (source: Business Insider).

It’s also important to remember that posts only ‘live’ for an average of three hours on the newsfeed, so even if a post makes it into the feed, not everyone will see it. And that’s before you take into account the number of people who see the post but choose not to watch the video.

The engagement rate for content on Facebook is extremely low. Data from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute states that engagement rates on brand pages currently stand at just 1.4% (source: Adage).
‘Viral video’ is a term often used to describe all video content that’s uploaded to the web. However, it is more correct to define ‘viral video’ as online content that has reached a critical mass of people within a short space of time. Viewers share the content with friends, who in turn share it with their friends, creating a ‘viral cascade’, which is triggered by high levels of viewing and sharing within a very short space of time. This in turn drives more views as people want to see the latest, newest video trend that everyone is talking about.

With so much video content being produced by brands, entertainment companies and amateur video makers, there is a wealth of choice and a poverty of attention, meaning that advertisers have to work hard to ensure their video content is not lost in the crowd.

Social video advertising helps brands to create a ‘viral cascade’, using paid media to guarantee engaged views and optimize for sharing activity in order to give branded content the best possible chance of delivering earned media. It’s worth remembering that only a tiny percentage of online videos go viral. But don’t panic! Brands can still optimize their video content for social sharing, without striving to be the next ‘viral hit’.

**When should I use social video advertising, not pre-roll?**

- **Use social video advertising when you want to seek the user’s permission, rather than forcing an ad view**
  Pre-roll automatically plays ads before the viewer is allowed to watch the content that they’ve actually clicked to view, forcing them to sit through content that doesn’t necessarily interest them. This is frustrating for viewers. In fact, YouTube reports that up to 80% of pre-roll ads are skipped, and if you’re trying to create a ‘viral cascade’ or drive earned media, pre-rolls can be counter-productive, alienating users frustrated by such interruptive techniques. Social video ads, on the other hand, are ‘user initiated’, which means the views are from users who’ve actively chosen to watch the content. Completion rates (i.e. the number of people who watched the ad until the end) are routinely over 80%, even when the content is more than 5 minutes long!

- **Use social video advertising when you want to drive sharing**
  Pre-roll limits the potential for earned media as viewers are forced to watch content that doesn’t necessarily interest them. Because the social video format is user-initiated, viewers are far more likely to share and engage with your video.

- **Use social video advertising when you have long-form content**
  Since pre-roll runs before the main video, there are limitations on length (usually 30 seconds). It means advertisers can’t use the format to promote long-form content, limiting the messages you are able to communicate to your audience.

- **Use social video advertising when you want to increase brand recall and intent to purchase**
  Social video viewers are also more likely to remember an advertiser’s message than pre-roll viewers. For example, Unruly recently ran a campaign for a well-known electronics brand in which 86% of the social video audience were able to recall the key messages of the ad, while only 78% of viewers who saw the same ad in a pre-roll format could remember the same messages. A higher percentage of the social video viewers said they were also more likely to buy the product or share the video with their social networks.
How does social video help to guarantee earned media (free views as a result of sharing activity)?

Social video advertising uses paid distribution to ensure that content is visible and easily sharable on social networks, blogs, established websites, social hubs and mobile apps. In other words, native content environments, where people are already discovering, watching and sharing video content. This means the right content can find its target audience in environments where viewers are more engaged. For example, a campaign for a new baby food can reach its target audience through food blogs and via ‘mummy bloggers’, with the audience sharing the video among their peers and social networks. Social media users may also choose to share it on their profiles. Any views delivered as a result of sharing activity are not paid for and are defined as ‘earned media’. So as well as your guaranteed views, social video advertising can massively increase your potential for earned media.

Social video advertising can be extremely cost-efficient. At Unruly we only charge for paid views; all earned views that occur as a result of sharing are free of charge, maximizing the return on investment. We regularly see the cost-per-view reduce by 10-30% as a result of earned views.

What’s the point of getting earned views?

Peer-to-peer recommendation of videos not only helps disseminate the content, it helps to improve brand perception. When a viewer watches an ad that has been recommended to them by a friend that viewer is more likely to remember the brand and see it in a more favourable light.

A recent study, carried out by Unruly in association with research firm Decipher, found that:

- Brand recall and brand association rose 7 percent among viewers who had been recommended the videos versus viewers who found it by browsing;
- 73 percent of respondents who viewed a recommended video recalled the brand when prompted versus 68 percent of viewers who had browsed to the video directly;
- There was a 14 percent increase in the number of people who enjoyed the video following a recommendation versus those who had discovered it by browsing;
- People who enjoyed a video were 97 percent more likely to purchase the product featured in the video.

Old Spice, The Man Your Man Could Smell Like, 2010
107% increase of body wash sales within 30 days
Do I have to use YouTube for social video advertising?

That will depend on your target territories, brand attributes and campaign goals. YouTube is a great way to reach video addicts in many territories but if YouTube is not the right environment for your brand, you might want to use a custom video player or a platform native to your target audience, such as Dailymotion for French campaigns or Vimeo for higher quality, cinematic content.

When should I use social video advertising to complement paid delivery on YouTube?

- **When you want to reach consumers in their native environments**
  If YouTube is your campaign hub, think of social video advertising as the spokes of the distribution wheel, a way of reaching car enthusiasts on gearhead blogs, movie-goers on film review sites, die-hard gamers in-game.

  Join the dots between YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, while engaging your audience and amplifying your brand across multiple social platforms and consumption devices.

- **When you have a video that you want to be watched, tracked and shared**
  Creating a video without investing in social video advertising is like creating a new website and not driving any traffic to it through search, social media or PR. Over 62% of the online population are actively choosing to watch and share social video ads, so a social video campaign can increase views, drive awareness of your brand and messaging on YouTube and native environments.

- **When you want incremental reach for your campaigns**
  It’s important to remember that not everyone regularly visits YouTube. Social video advertising allows you to reach out to your audience in their native environments while the views are still included in the YouTube view count.

- **When you want to increase engagement on your site**
  Social video ads can also support interactive plugins at no extra cost, allowing campaigns to support data capture, run competitions, link to brand pages and even support a live Twitter stream, engaging viewers at all points of the purchase funnel.

T-Mobile, Royal Wedding, 2011
£1.6m worth of earned media
When should I use social video advertising to complement my TV advertising?

- **When you want to reach digital natives**
  Generation Y (13 to 32-year-olds) are 30% less likely to be watching live prime-time TV than they were four years ago. The media consumption habits of Generation X (33 to 46-year-olds) are also shifting, bringing about a 15% drop in live viewing over the last four years, according to GfK research.

  Both demographics are watching shows on ‘streams’, where programming is hosted on websites, or recording shows on smart TV devices, watching what they like when they like and fast-forwarding through interruptive ads.

- **When you want to target a niche group**
  Whereas TV advertising reaches a mass audience, social video advertising can target extremely niche audiences, across thousands of micro-publishers, with more tailored brand messages.

- **When you want to amplify and augment your TV advertising**
  Social video advertising uses the audience to spread the message. This is effective because consumers trust word-of-mouth more than they trust brands; 92% of people trust word-of-mouth recommendations compared with just 47% who trust television commercials, according to **Nielsen**.

- **When you want to supplement the TV spot with additional or long-form content**
  Online versions of the ad can include content which isn’t instantly accessible on a TV at that moment, such as “Making of” videos or “What happened next?” payoffs.

- **When you want to activate your TV content online**
  Social video advertising makes it easy for TV viewers to discover, watch and share your content online, as well as providing interactive experiences. Social video advertising can link an audience straight to a website or a social network page, choose-your-own-adventure videos, social polls and coupon downloads.

- **What if I have multiple videos?**
  You can make use of multi-video functionality to distribute several videos within one unit and extend the time spent with your brand. You can use dynamic creative optimization to make sure the best performing video is run on the sites that will deliver the best results for your KPIs.

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P&G, Best Job, 2012
45% sales increase in 2012
Absolutely not – be proud of your brand! Unruly worked with the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science to put this piece of received wisdom to the test.

The Ehrenberg-Bass study found that brand prevalence (how prominently an advertiser’s logo or branding appears in the content) does not affect how likely a viewer is to share a video (Nelson-Field). This is reflected in the Unruly Viral Video Chart, which ranks branded videos by the number of shares they attract. The third most popular ad of all time is Ken Block’s Gymkhana 3, for DC Shoes. This clip, which features stunts performed in a car that is covered in logos for multiple brands on a course adorned with DC logos, has earned a staggering 3 million views. The most popular ad of all time, The Force, is clearly branded for Volkswagen and features a Passat in a leading role.

If a video makes a strong emotional connection with a viewer, they’re much more likely to share the content with their friends. The fact that it may be an ad doesn’t influence this decision at all.

Having said that, content can often be driven by a bit of intrigue – is the content an ad or is it user-generated content? Is it real or special effects? A classic example is Ray Ban’s Sunglass Catch, where viewers were unsure whether or not it was an ad for the brand (it was). The ambiguity of the content helped to generate conversation.

What if I want to run a guerrilla campaign?

Make sure you are aware of the legislation before you launch a campaign that doesn’t disclose your brand. The Office of Fair Trading and the European Union outlaws the use of commercial content which isn’t clearly disclosed as such. You can learn more about this legislation on the Industry Standards page of Unruly’s website, www.unrulymedia.com/industry-standards.

Evian, Roller Babies, 2009
2010 sales increased by 5.3%
OK, so social video makes people like my brand. What else can it do?

A video can deliver against a number of brand advertising KPIs. We've worked with the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) to formulate and promote their '4 As' measurement for social media campaigns. Campaigns can be measured by four key KPIs:

**Awareness**
A campaign optimized for awareness reaches as many users as possible within a target audience, driving views, posts and shares of the video.

**Advocacy & Appreciation**
A campaign optimized for advocacy and appreciation builds 'brand champions', users who share, like, tweet and leave comments to show their enjoyment of the content.

**Action**
A campaign optimized for action drives the audience to interact directly with the brand, whether it is clicking through to an online shop, applying for a test drive, requesting a product sample or buying cinema tickets.

**Attention**
A campaign optimized for attention increases time spent watching the video and the number of interactions with the player. Altogether, across 2,000 campaigns, viewers have watched over 431 years of video on the Unruly player.

How long should my video be?

That depends on the KPIs of your campaign. Across the top 50 most shared ads of all time, the average length is 181 seconds. But if your campaign KPI is clickthroughs or data capture, a far shorter piece of content can be more effective.
Why Unruly?

Unruly’s Media Engagement & Measurement Engine (MEME) is the most powerful distribution and tracking platform in the industry and has been developed specifically for running social video campaigns and helping brands take advantage of this transformative communications model to engage consumers and grow market share. We also own the Unruly Viral Video Chart, which is the definitive source for video sharing data around the globe and holds the largest historical data set of sharing behaviour over the social web.

Thanks to this best-in-class technology, Unruly can reach 917 million users around the world, including those using tablet and mobile devices. Combined with native, multi-lingual outreach for international campaigns, Unruly can reach and engage consumers, wherever they are discovering and watching video content, with a company mission to deliver the most awesome social video campaigns on the planet.

Unruly has delivered, tracked and audited 1.65 billion video views, across 2,000+ successful social video campaigns, for over 400 brands, including some on the Fortune 100, since 2007. Milestone campaigns include T-Mobile’s Life’s For Sharing series, Evian’s global Roller Babies hit, Old Spice’s Man Your Man Could Smell Like campaign and Coca-Cola’s Happiness series.

Within the social video advertising sector, Unruly sets industry standards and leads development of best practices and performance metrics. In 2011 we worked closely with the IAB to define social video as an accredited ad spend category. The IAB Social Media Framework sets the standard for campaign accountability, using an Unruly campaign for Infiniti as the standard of excellence.

The Unruly Social Video Lab – the first of its kind in the industry - helps advertisers to fully understand and leverage the power of their social video content. Partnering with international research partners, including leading academic institutions, Unruly is at the forefront of social video insight and is using the findings to optimize clients’ campaigns.

**Volkswagen, The Force, 2011**

116% sales uplift in 2011
Invisible Children, Kony, 2012
2 million visitors to donations page

Kia, Soul Hamster, 2011
45% increase in sales of Kia Soul

To see how Unruly works with big brands and their agencies, check out some of the campaigns we’ve run:
www.unrulymedia.com/wall-fame

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With a global audience of 917 million monthly unique visitors, Unruly has a worldwide reach of 62.1% (ComScore, Media Metrix, April 2012). The Unruly player has been specifically developed to function across all mobile and tablet devices, enabling brands to engage customers wherever they are and whatever device they’re using, across social environments including niche passion blogs, Facebook applications and video discovery platforms.

Unruly serves Fortune 100 brands and their agencies with social video advertising campaigns, exclusive proprietary data and consumer insight.

In January 2012, Unruly announced a $25m Series A investment from Amadeus Capital Partners, Van den Ende & Deitmers and the Business Growth Fund - the largest ever for a private company in the social video space.

The company has won over 15 awards including “Best Content Distribution Service” at the Braves Awards; “Digital Innovator Of the Year” at The Sunday Times Hiscox Tech Track 100 and ranking #14 on the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 EMEA 2012.

To find out more visit www.unrulymedia.com

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