



MediaMemo

Short Attention Span Theater: Web Video Watchers Bail Fast

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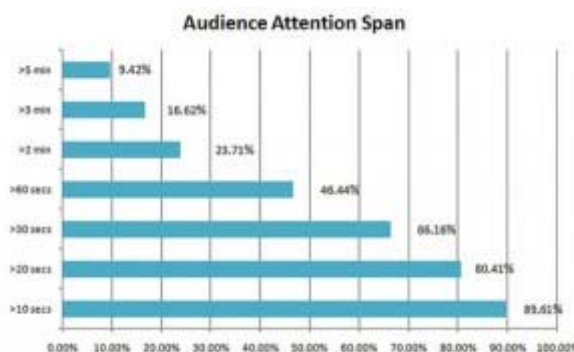
Everyone knows Web video watchers are watching a lot of video. That's why YouTube is one of the biggest Web sites in the world. But Web video watchers don't actually watch that much video footage.

Confused? Don't be. It's a straightforward explanation: Web video watchers have even twitchier fingers than couch potatoes flipping through 500 channels. Which means that the longer any particular video runs, the less likely they are to watch the whole thing.



Common sense, really. But the folks at video-tracking service [TubeMogul](#) are now offering a statistical backstop: A study of how long the average Web video watcher stays with any given clip (click chart below to enlarge).

Answer: Less than one minute. Ten seconds into an average clip, more than 10 percent of viewers have moved on, TubeMogul says. And by 60 seconds, more than half of viewers have bailed out. Anything more than five minutes is heroic: More than 91 percent of viewers are gone by then.



That's one of the reasons many Web video publishers and advertisers are sticking with "pre-roll" ads that run before any actual content shows up—even Google's (GOOG) YouTube, which had previously disdained pre-rolls, is now contemplating using them in order to goose revenue. (And yes, this site uses them as well).

That's a shame. In an ideal world, video sites would give people a good reason to keep watching a clip as soon as they hit play. And they would find a way to get an ad in front of viewers once they're already engrossed.

Easier said than done, admittedly. But while Web video's big brains go to work on this problem, let me invite you to stick all the way through the six-minute, 48-second clip below: Stevie Wonder singing "Superstition" on Sesame Street in 1973. If you get all the way through and aren't satisfied, let me know. I'll get you your money back.



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