

Google Explains How YouTube Search Works via @MattGSouthern

As part of a larger effort to explain how YouTube works, Google published a new resource to answer commonly asked questions about YouTube search results.

Google created a whole new website, called How YouTube Works, which offers an in-depth look at all components of the YouTube platform.

Here are some highlights from different sections related to search and discovery.

YouTube Search

YouTube's search ranking system sorts through over 500 hours of content uploaded every minute to find the most relevant results for a query.

YouTube Search prioritizes these three main elements when ranking its search results:

- Relevance
- Engagement

- Quality

Here's more detail about each of these elements.

Relevance

YouTube's ranking algorithm looks at many factors when determining relevance.

Without getting too specific, YouTube points out factors such as the title, tags, description, and video content itself.

Engagement

YouTube's search algorithm incorporates aggregate engagement signals from users, such as the watch time of a particular video for a particular query.

The company notes that engagement signals are a valuable way to determine relevance as well.

Quality

To determine quality, YouTube uses signals that should be very familiar to search marketers.

"Finally, for quality, our systems are designed to identify signals that can help determine which channels demonstrate expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness on a given topic."

Expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness is also known amongst search marketers as EAT.

It should be familiar because Google emphasizes the importance of these signals for its search results as well.

See: Surprising Facts About E-A-T

Other Factor: Personalization

In addition to the above three main factors, YouTube also tries to determine relevancy for each user by taking into account a user's search and watch history.

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It's not uncommon for search results to differ from one user to another for the same query.

"For example, if you watch a lot of sports videos and search for "cricket," we might recommend videos featuring the sport cricket rather than nature videos with crickets in them."

YouTube search and watch history can be cleared at any time, in which case YouTube's search results will not take these signals into account.

Raising authoritative sources

YouTube makes a point of mentioning that it prioritizes content from authoritative sources when it's appropriate to do so.

This can include categories of content such as news, politics, and medical or scientific information.

In those areas, credibility is key.

In other areas, such as music or entertainment, YouTube is

more likely to look at signals like relevance, freshness, or popularity.

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YouTube Recommendations

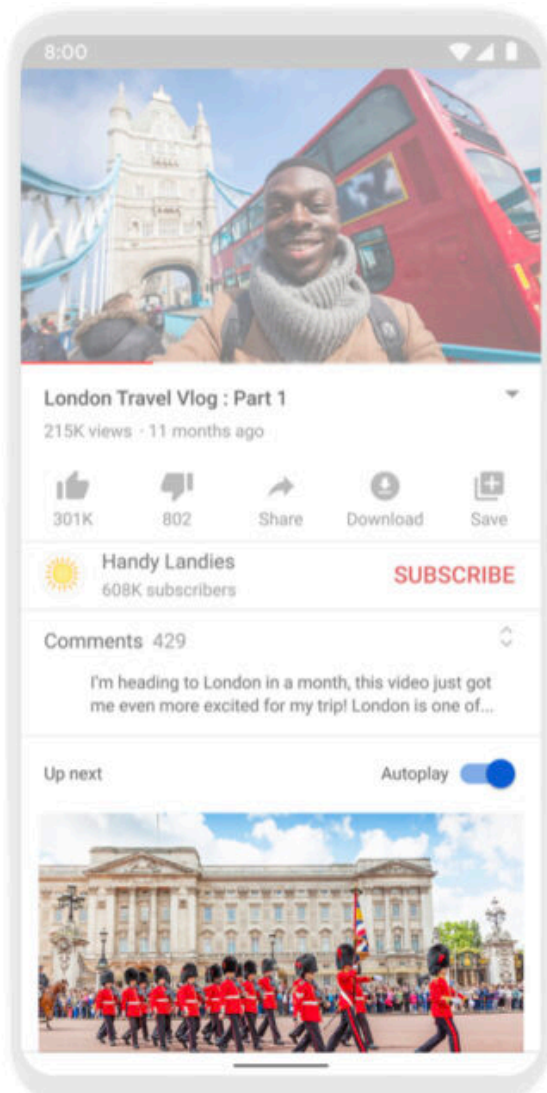
Another opportunity for content creators to get discovered on YouTube is through recommendations.

YouTube shares recommendations on its homepage and in the “Up Next” section as a suggestion of what to watch next.

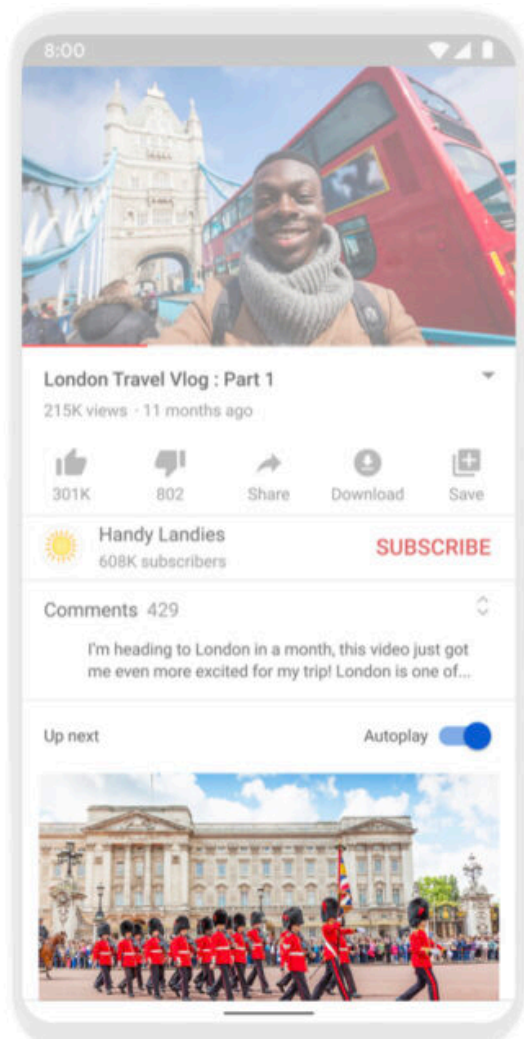
Many signals are taken into account when determining which videos to recommend, such as:

- Watch & search history
- Channels subscribed to
- Location
- Time of day
- How many people watched a video to completion
- Direct feedback from users via random surveys

Users can fine tune their recommendations by clicking on the “not interested” button, which will tell YouTube not to recommend similar videos in the future.



Recommendations as a suggestion of what to watch next when you're watching a video



Recommendations as a suggestion of what to watch next when you're watching a video

For more information about the inner workings of YouTube, visit the new How YouTube Works site [here](#).

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