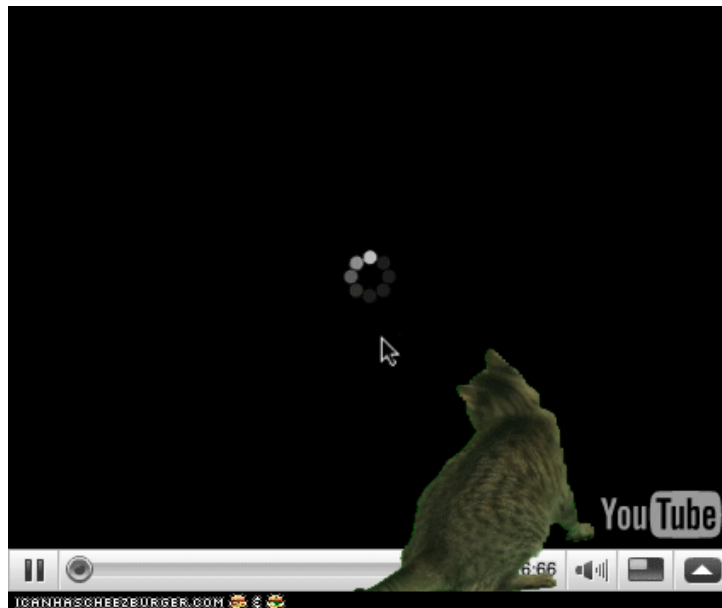


# Performing YouTube Video Optimization

**Execution Time:** 20 minutes/video



**Goal:** Optimizing video content on YouTube, so that users find it easier when searching for the type of information you provide.

**Ideal Outcome:** Your YouTube videos will be watched by a large number of people - ergo, your business' visibility will increase as well.

**Prerequisites or requirements:** A Gmail/YouTube account, quality video content to upload on your YouTube channel.

**Why this is important:** Video content is increasingly popular among Internet users - so much so that YouTube gathers no less than 30 million *unique* views every single day. Imagine capturing the attention of 0.01% of all these viewers and how much it could mean for your business!

**Where this is done:** Mostly on your YouTube channel.

**When this is done:** Whenever you upload a new video.

**Who does this:** You, your VA, your SEO specialist, or the digital marketing agency you've hired.

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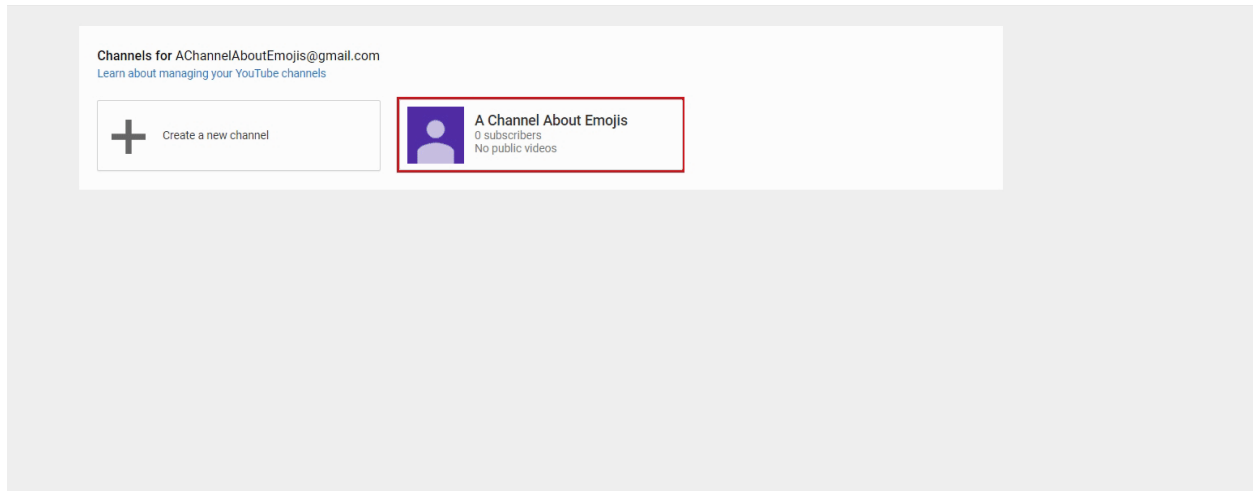
## □ Environment setup

### 1. Set up a YouTube account.

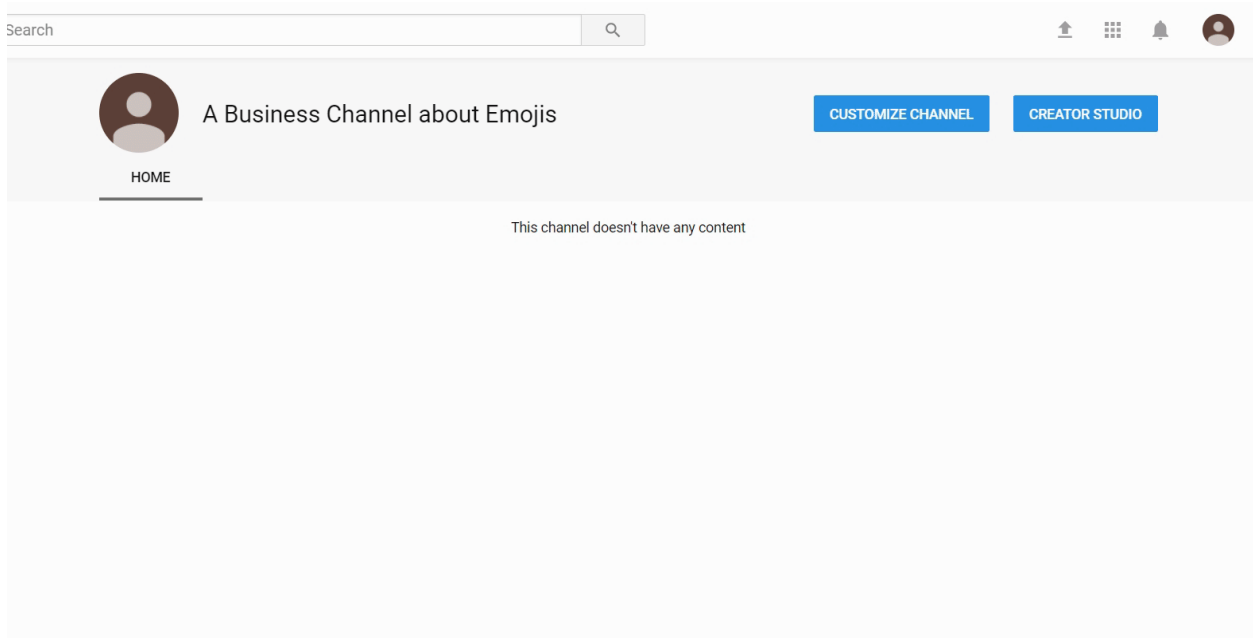
- If you want to set up a personal YouTube account, you can easily do it by following these steps:
  - a. Sign in to YouTube with your Gmail account.
  - b. Upload your video by clicking on the upload icon in the top right side of the screen.
  - c. If your YouTube channel is not set up yet, you will be asked to fill in a form to create it. For the purpose of this example, we created “A Channel about Emojis”.

The screenshot shows the YouTube homepage interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, the "Trending" section is displayed, featuring five video thumbnails with their respective titles, channel names, and view counts. The first video is "Smiley - Vals (Official video)" by Smiley, with 3.6M views. The second is "Lora – Ramas bun (Official Video)" by Lora Official, with 6.9M views. The third is "Las Fierbinti 16 Noiembrie 2017 - Sezonul 12 Episodul" by Las Fierbinti Sezonul 12, with 206K views. The fourth is "Luis Fonsi, Demi Lovato - Échame La Culpa" by LuisFonsiVEVO, with 24M views. The fifth is "Ed Sheeran - Perfect (Off Music Video)" by Ed Sheeran, with 62M views. Below the trending section, there is a "Trailers by Movies - Topic" section, also featuring five video thumbnails. The first is "X-MEN: THE NEW MUTANTS Official Trailer (2018) NEW" by 9 Media, with 11M views. The second is "Fast And The Furious 9 Trailer HD" by Technical wol, with 4.9M views. The third is "Politisti versati 2017 Film online subtitrat" by rosa tv, with 57K views. The fourth is "KENAU / RO - Întregul film" by POLMEDIA OFFICIAL, with 42K views. The fifth is "Wolfhound 2006 (+16 language subtitles)" by Terra Cordis, with 838K views.

- If you want to set up a separate branded business YouTube account, you should follow these steps:
  - a. Go through the steps described above to create a personal YouTube channel.
  - b. Go to YouTube’s [Channel Switcher](#).
  - c. Click on “Create New Channel”.
  - d. Enter the name you want for your business YouTube channel.

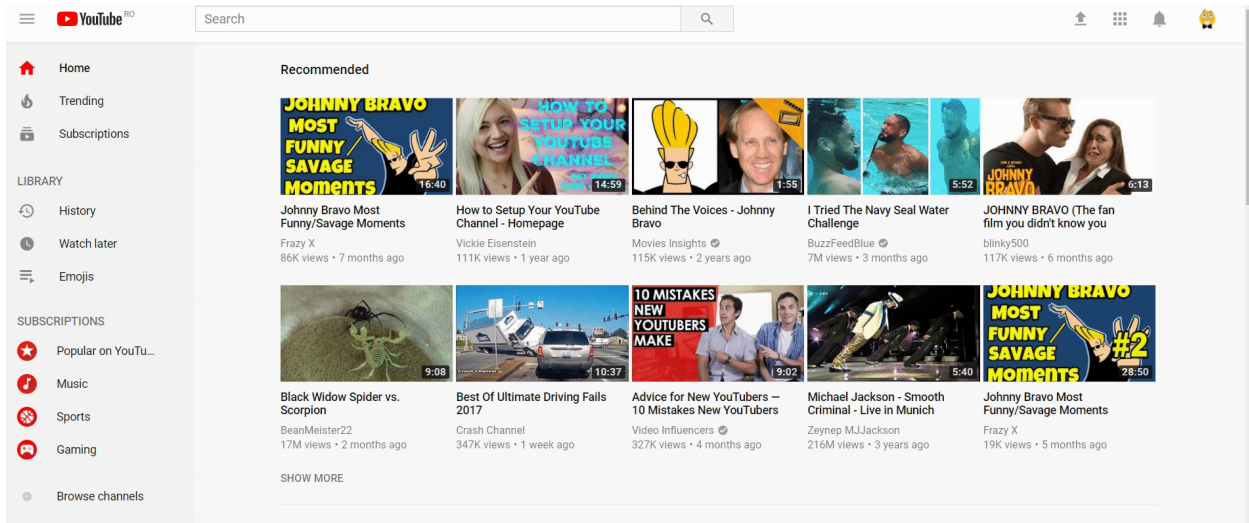


- e. To switch between the personal and business channels, go to the icon on the top right side of the screen → Switch Account → Select the account you want to use.

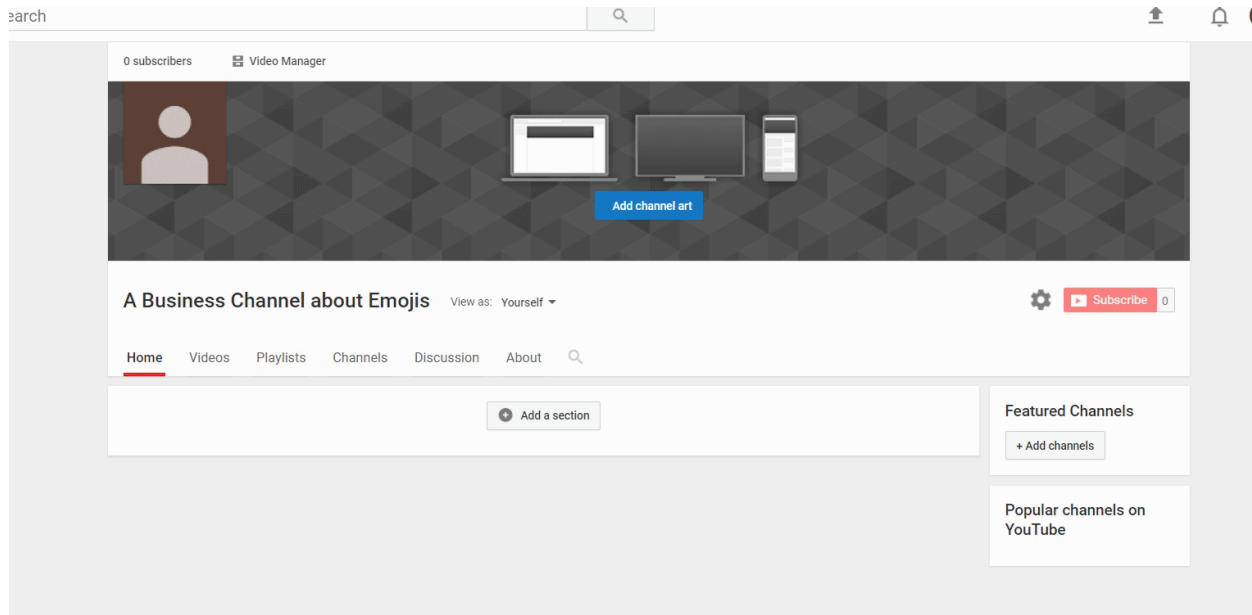


2. Add a custom Welcome Video to your channel.
  - a. Go to the YouTube Homepage.
  - b. Click on the avatar on the top right side of the screen.
  - c. Click on "My Channel".
  - d. Click on "Customize Channel".
  - e. Click on "For new visitors".
  - f. Click on "+ Channel trailer".

g. Select the video you want to use as a channel trailer/ Welcome Video

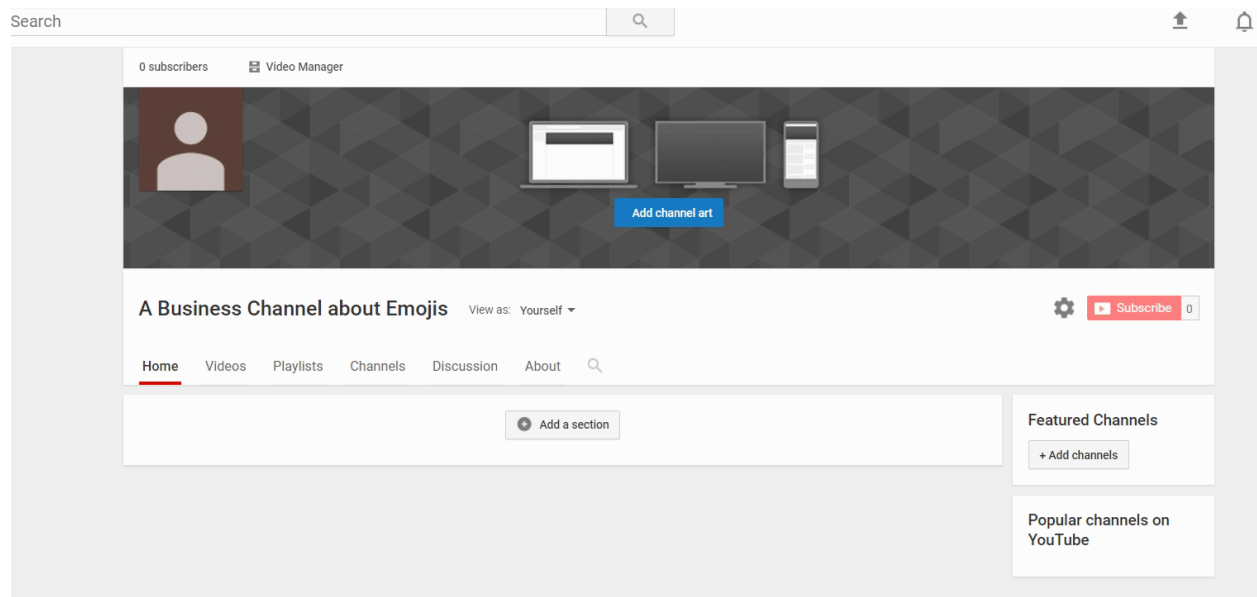


h. To add an avatar, click on the small pencil icon on the top right side of the avatar. YouTube will redirect you to your Branded Account page, where you can upload your picture. Your Branded Account avatar will coordinate with your YouTube channel avatar, but keep in mind that it might take a few minutes until they line up.



i. To add a custom YouTube channel header, click on the “Add channel art” button. Upload your preferred picture (make sure it’s at least 2048 x 1152 pixels in size).

- Once you upload your picture, YouTube will display the way your header will be seen on multiple types of screen (PC, smartphone, etc.).
- If you want to, you can adjust the positioning of the picture in the header by clicking on the “Adjust” button under the aforementioned previews.
- Good graphics are very important, so make sure to invest in this. For example, [Canva](#) is a design tool offers a lot of free and low-priced options for small businesses - they have tons of layouts (including for YouTube headers) and the entire tool is extremely easy to use by anyone, including people who have zero experience in web design.



## Produce quality videos

The first step towards optimizing your YouTube videos is making sure the content you upload is always top-notch. Here are some of the characteristics your videos should have if you want to reap all the benefits YouTube video marketing has to offer:

- Start your video production process by performing a thorough keyword research. You can do this following the steps described in [SOP 011 \(SEO Keyword Research and Mapping\)](#). For YouTube, we recommend you use [YT Cockpit](#) or [Keyword Tool](#) to run your research, instead of KWFinder.
- Try to create longer videos. According to the latest quality content guidelines, longer videos are more likely to rank higher in YouTube search results pages.

- Try to mention the keyword in the video. YouTube has grown a lot and their crawler can now identify whether or not a video is actually focused on the topic described in the title by simply checking the automated captions offered by the same platform. Therefore, mentioning the keyword in the video will help YouTube display your video when someone is searching for it.
- Always tell people to subscribe, comment, and like your videos. You'd be surprised, but this tends to have an amazing effect on viewers!
- Try to reduce the bounce rate. If your viewers only watch only a few seconds of your videos, YouTube will associate your video with lower quality content - and thus, it will display it lower in the search results pages.
  - To reduce the bounce rate, always make your videos dynamic. Add transition effects, add unexpected changes, and make sure your graphics are entertaining. You need to keep people's attention - otherwise, they'll just click on the next interesting video.
  - Also, always remember to explain the value proposition in the first 10 seconds. This will keep your viewers more attentive - and thus, more likely to actually finish watching your video.

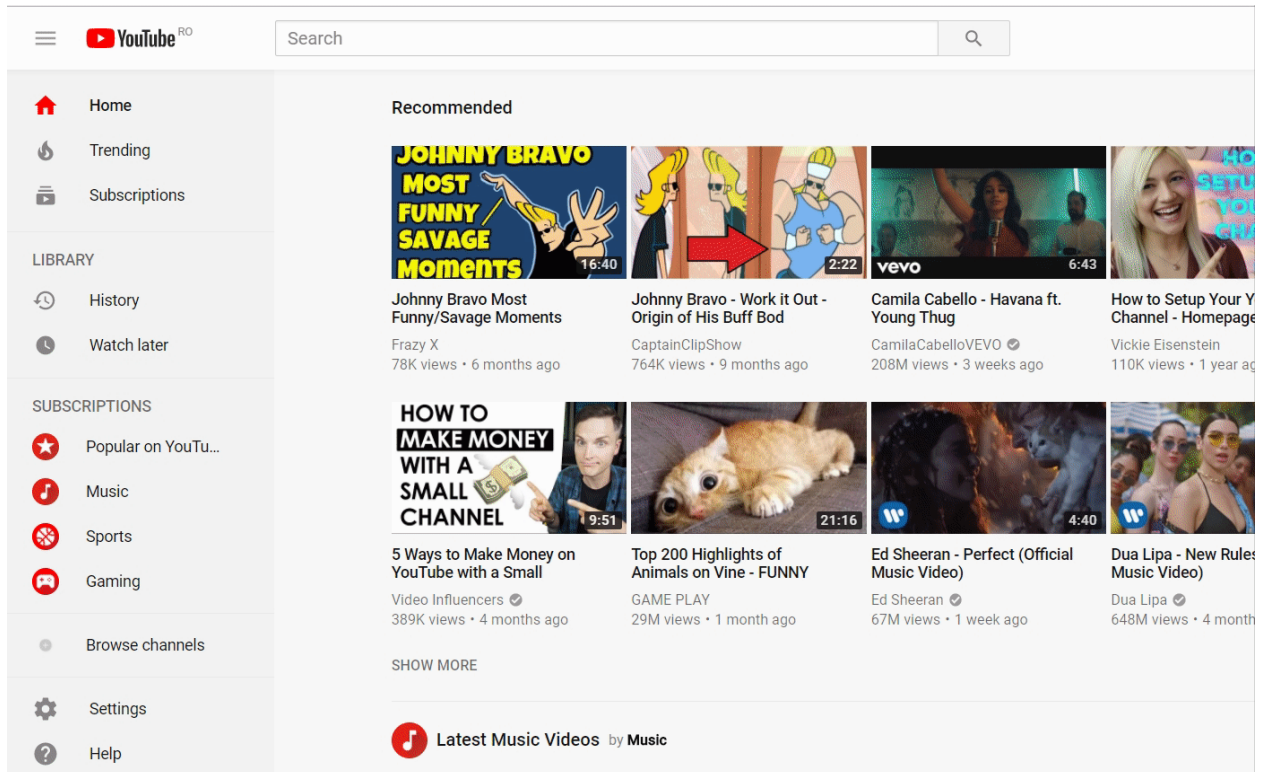
## Monetize your channel

Although this SOP's main purpose is showing you how to optimize your videos for SEO, monetization is an integral part of the process—particularly because it will allow you to add custom thumbnails to your videos (as you will see it described below, under the “Optimize according to the ranking signals” step.)

Keep in mind, though: at this point you are only monetizing your channel to add extra features to your videos. However, in general, business videos on YouTube should be kept demonetized because it will increase your viewers' credibility in your brand.

To monetize your channel, follow these steps:

1. Go to the YouTube homepage → Settings (lower left side of the screen) → View additional features → Monetization.
  - a. If you haven't selected a country location when you created the channel, you might have to first select a country location before you can enable the Monetization feature. Click on the “Choose your country location” link on the “Monetization” button to this.
  - b. You will be redirected to a page where you can select the location of your channel. Do this, then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the “Save” button.



2. Go back to your YouTube homepage → Settings (lower left side of the screen) → View additional features → Monetization. As you will see, there are four main steps you need to take to enable Monetization on your channel:
  - a. YouTube Partner Program:
    - i. You can easily enable this by following the steps on screen (but *do* make sure you read the Terms and Conditions you will be shown, so that you know what you are agreeing with).
  - b. Sign Up for AdSense (again, you can follow the on-screen instructions to do this).
  - c. Set monetization preferences (according to the on-screen instructions).
  - d. Get reviewed after you have reached 10,000 views.

At this point, you only need it to be able to add a custom thumbnail, so you might want to manually demonetize all videos you have already upload and will upload (and this is especially important if you have a business channel - the more ads your channel allows on it, the less credible you will appear as a business for your viewers.)

- To manually demonetize the videos, follow these steps:
  1. Go to your icon in the top right side of the screen → Creator Studio → Video Manager.
  2. Select all of the videos by clicking on the box right next to the “Actions” drop-down menu.

3. Click on the “Actions” drop-down menu and select the “Demonetize” option.

Monetizing your YouTube channel is a complex process - but it is more than worth going through it if you want to add custom thumbnails to your videos (and you should - they play a huge role in making people want to click on your video).

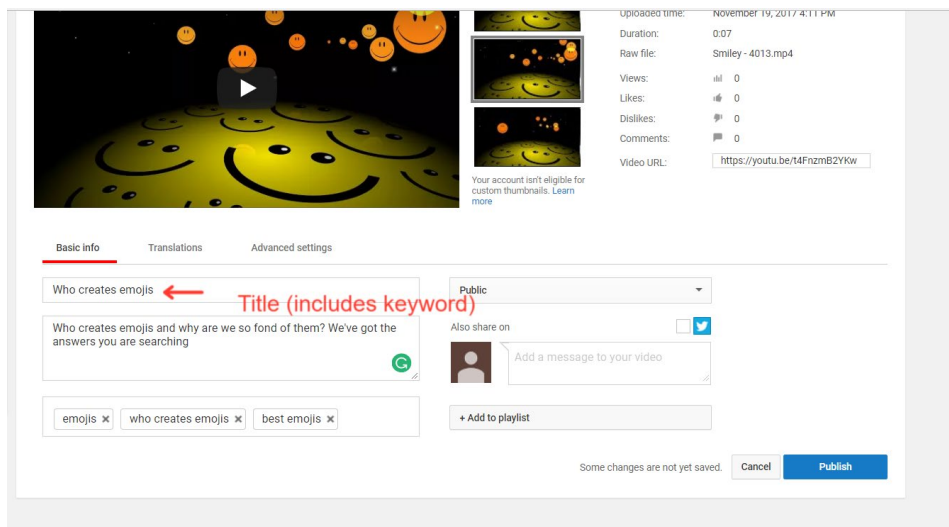
Remember, though, you won't be able to monetize your channel (and, consequently, add a thumbnail) until you reach 10,000 views and get reviewed by YouTube (this being the last step in the monetization process). Therefore, you should first and foremost make sure you work hard enough to reach this milestone - after that, views and engagement should reach a point of steady growth (especially with the new unlocked features).

## Optimize for YouTube's ranking signals

YouTube's main ranking signal is the viewer's watch time on a video. Aside from that, though, there are also a few elements you should optimize to make sure your video will rank as high as possible.

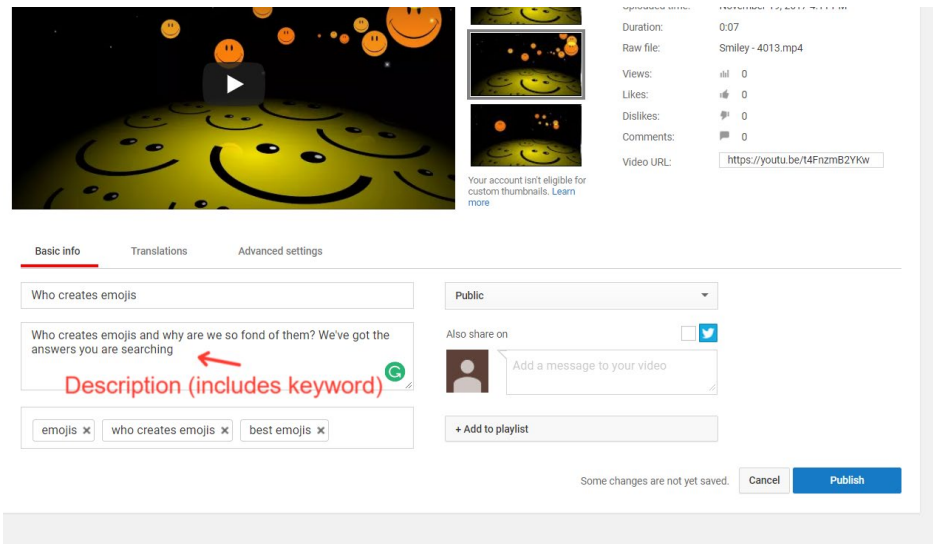
### 1. Optimize your video title.

- When you click the upload button in YouTube and upload a video, you will be automatically prompted to add a title.
- Include your keyword in the video title, but be sure to keep it entirely relevant as well. As mentioned before, YouTube has gotten (a lot!) better at capturing the essence of a video's content and they will definitely push yours towards the last results in the search pages if your video title is not relevant.



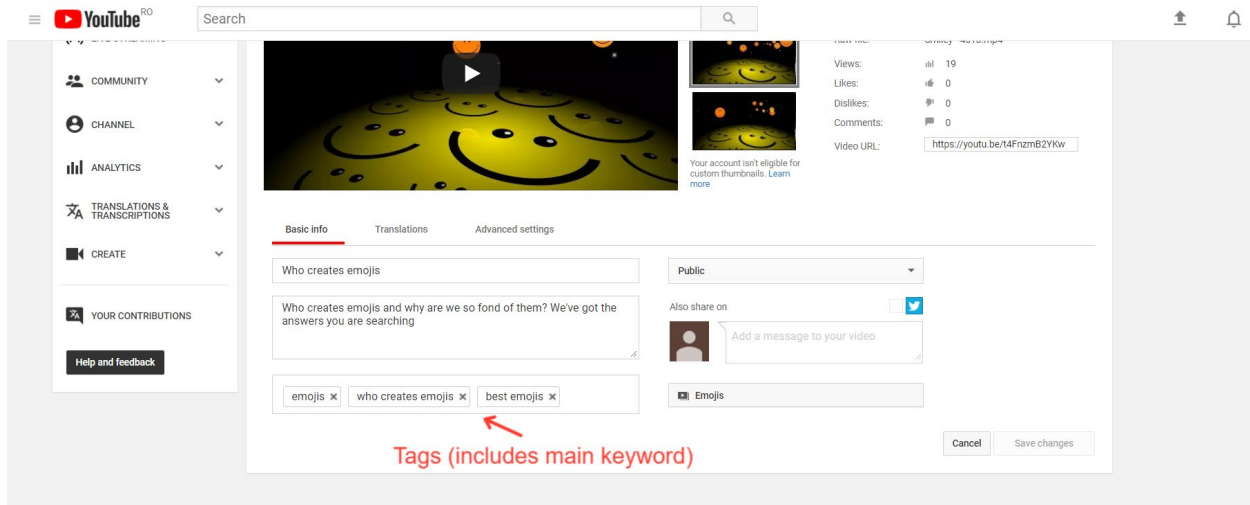
## 2. Optimize your video description

- The same page that will prompt you to add a video title will also prompt you to add a video description.
- Same as with the title, it is more than recommended to keep your description compelling and attractive - but also to use your keyword as well.



## 3. Optimize your YouTube video tags.

- Video tags are nothing but keywords - so use a few of them to let YouTube know what your video is about. Same as the optimizing the video title and the video description, adding these tags will also help YouTube determine what your video is about.
- You can add your YouTube video tags when you upload a video, on the same page that prompts you to add a title and a description.
- To add tags, click on the “Tag” box and enter your keywords. Split them with a comma and press the “Enter” key after each one.
- You don’t need more than 2-3 keywords for this, but make sure they are relevant.



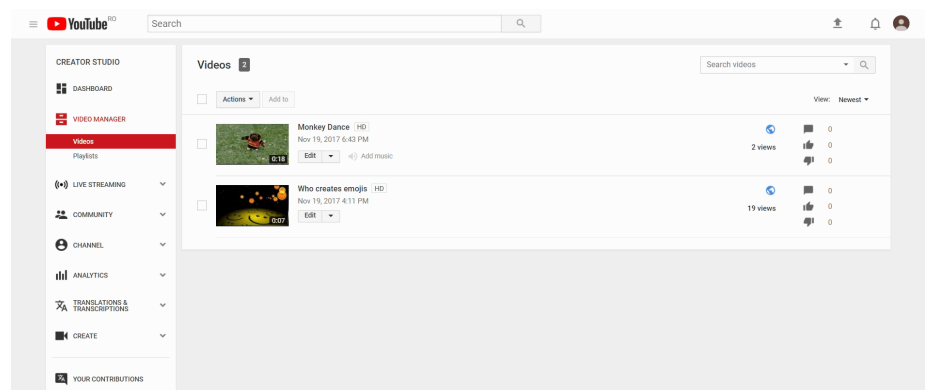
#### 4. Include an attractive custom thumbnail.

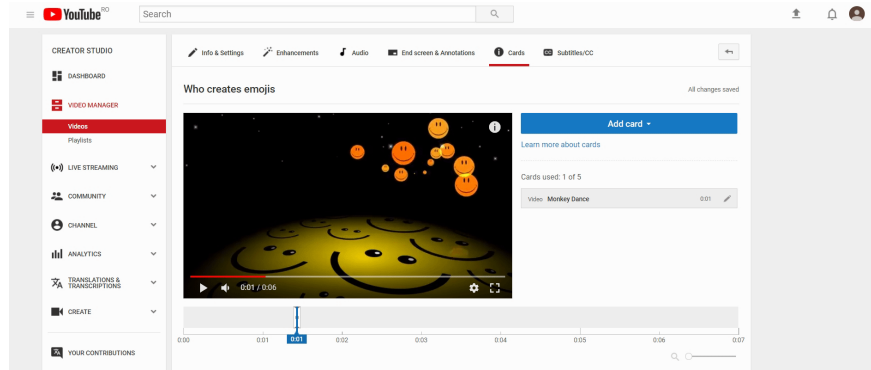
- The same page that allows you to add a title and a description will also allow you to add a thumbnail from the screenshots captured automatically by YouTube.
- You *can* choose one of these, but it is more advantageous for you to upload a custom thumbnail because it will make your entire video more attractive once people stumble upon it in the search results or recommended videos section.
- Keep in mind: you can only add a custom thumbnail once you've monetized your channel (including reaching the 10,000 views milestone).
  - Once your channel is monetized, you can add a custom thumbnail to your videos by following these steps:
    - a. Go to your YouTube homepage.
    - b. Click on Creator Studio.
    - c. Go to Video Manager.
    - d. Click on the Edit button next to the video (on the right of the video).
    - e. Click the "Custom thumbnail" button.
    - f. Upload your custom thumbnail.
    - g. Click on "Save changes" (upper right side of the screen).

Remember, **all of these elements can be edited after you have uploaded the video as well.** To do it, you will have to go to your account icon (top right side of the screen) → Creator Studio → Video Manager → Select the video you want to edit → Click on the "Edit" button, then edit the element you want to optimize (e.g. title, description, tags, thumbnails, etc.).

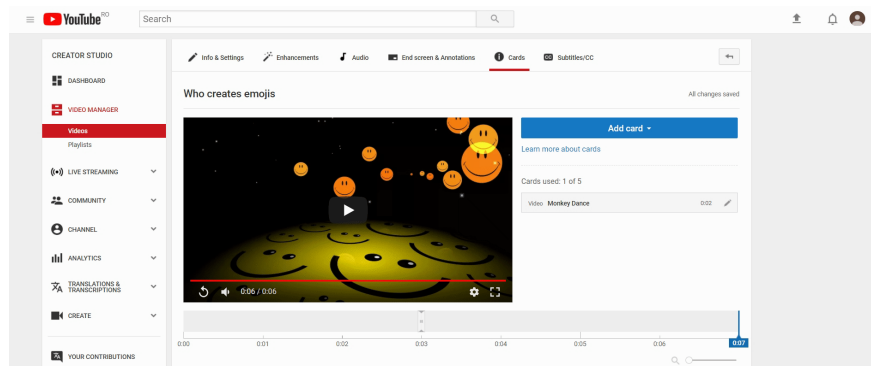
5. Include one or more cards to increase watch time.

- Put simply, a YouTube card is an on-screen clickable piece of information that allows you to create a more interactive and comprehensive experience for your viewers.
- There are five types of cards you can add to a video: Video or Playlist, Channel, Donation, Poll, and Link.
- To add any of these, follow these steps:
  - a. From your YouTube homepage, go to the icon in the top right side of the screen → Creators Studio → Video Manager.
  - b. In the list of uploaded videos, click on the arrow right next to the “Edit” button on each video and select “Cards” from the drop-down menu.
  - c. Click “Add Cards”.
  - d. Select the type of card you want to add.
  - e. To add a Video or Playlist card, click on this option in the drop-down menu and follow these steps:
    - i. Select one of the videos you have uploaded, or paste the video link you want to add as a card in the “Or enter a YouTube video or playlist URL box”.
    - ii. Click on “Customize the teaser text and/or add a custom message”.
    - iii. Add your teaser text and your custom message.
    - iv. If you want to make sure your Video or Playlist card will pop up at the right moment, move the timeline indicator wherever you want it to appear.





- f. To add a Channel card, click on this option in the drop-down menu and follow these steps:
  - i. Paste the link of the channel you want to share through the video card.
  - ii. Add a custom message in the designated box.
  - iii. Add a teaser text in the designated box.
  - iv. Click on “Create card”.
  - v. If you want to make sure your Channel card will pop up at the right moment, move the timeline indicator wherever you want it to appear.

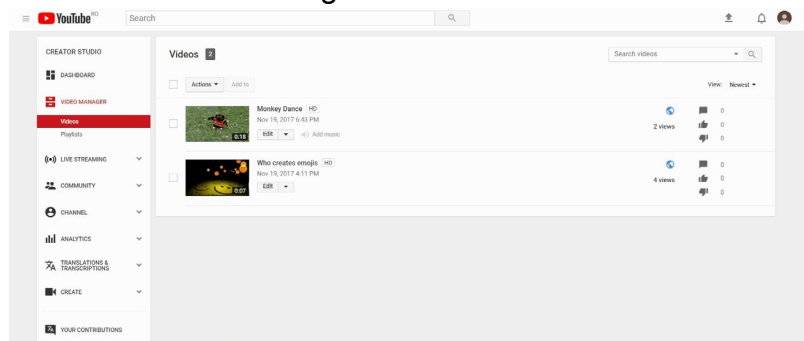


6. Upload a video transcript.
  - a. This step is entirely optional. However, there are two main reasons you should still go through it.
    - i. It will make your videos more accessible (including for people with hearing impairments, for example).
    - ii. Allowing both YouTube and Google to actually know the text that is spoken in your video (which will consequently allow search engines to crawl and categorize your video accordingly).
  - b. To add a transcript, follow these steps:
    - i. Go to your Video Manager.

- ii. Go to the video you want to add a transcript to. Click on the arrow right next to the “Edit” button. Select “Subtitles/CC”.
- iii. Click “Add new subtitles or CC”.
- iv. If your channel is in multiple languages, select the language you want your transcript to be in.

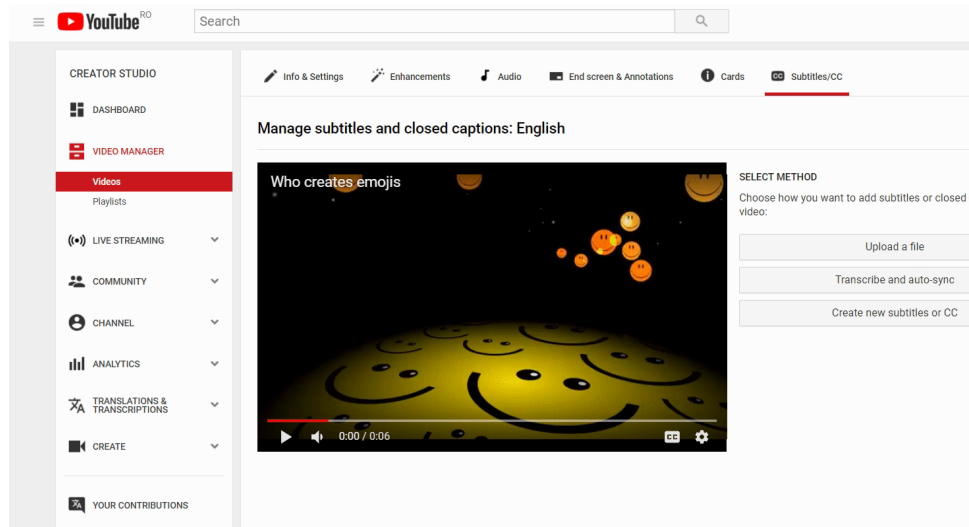
1. Upload a file:

- a. Select the option.
- b. Select the type of file you want to upload (transcript or subtitles).
- c. Upload your file (make sure it’s a .txt file!)
- d. Click on the “Set timings” button.



2. Transcribe and auto-sync:

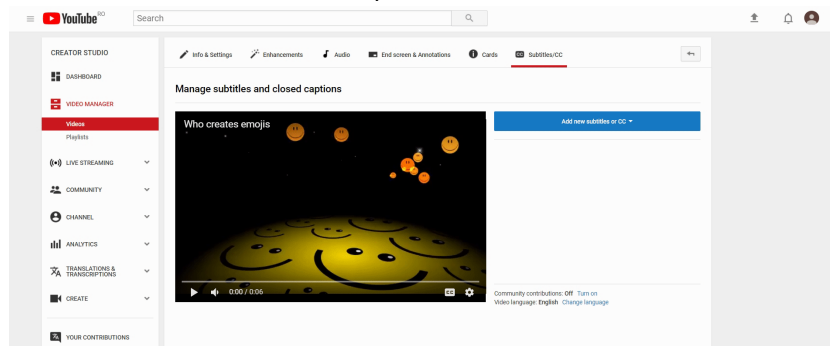
- a. Select the option.
- b. Type or paste your transcript.



d. Create new subtitles or CC:

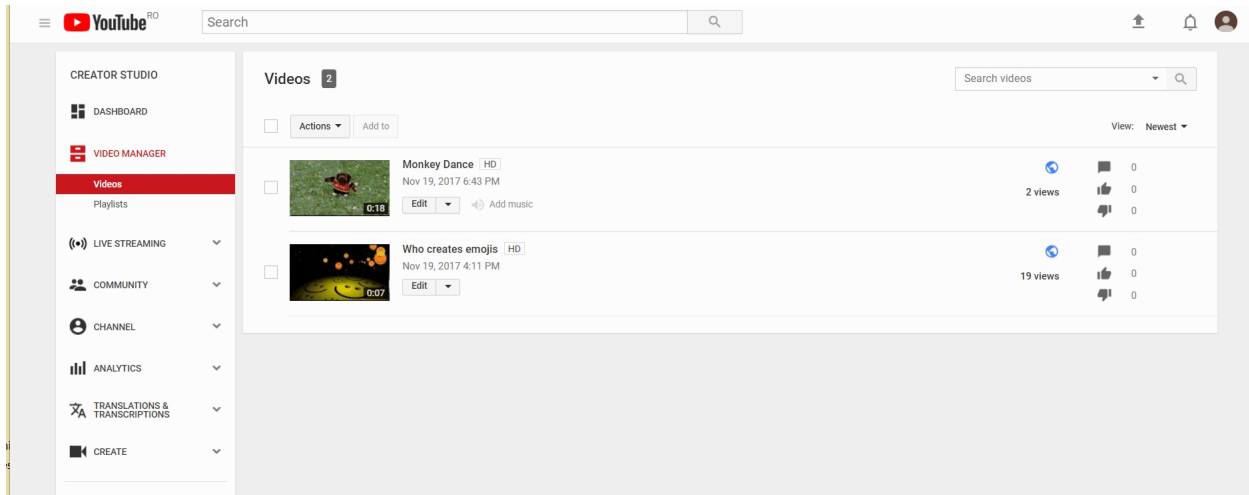
- i. Select the option.

- ii. Type or paste the first line that is spoken in the video.
- iii. Click on the “+” button.
- iv. Adjust the timing of the caption manually (by selecting the start/end time and entering the correct time you want this caption to show on screen).
- v. Repeat for all captions.
- vi. Click on the blue “Publish” button (top right side of this window).



## 7. Add video to a playlist.

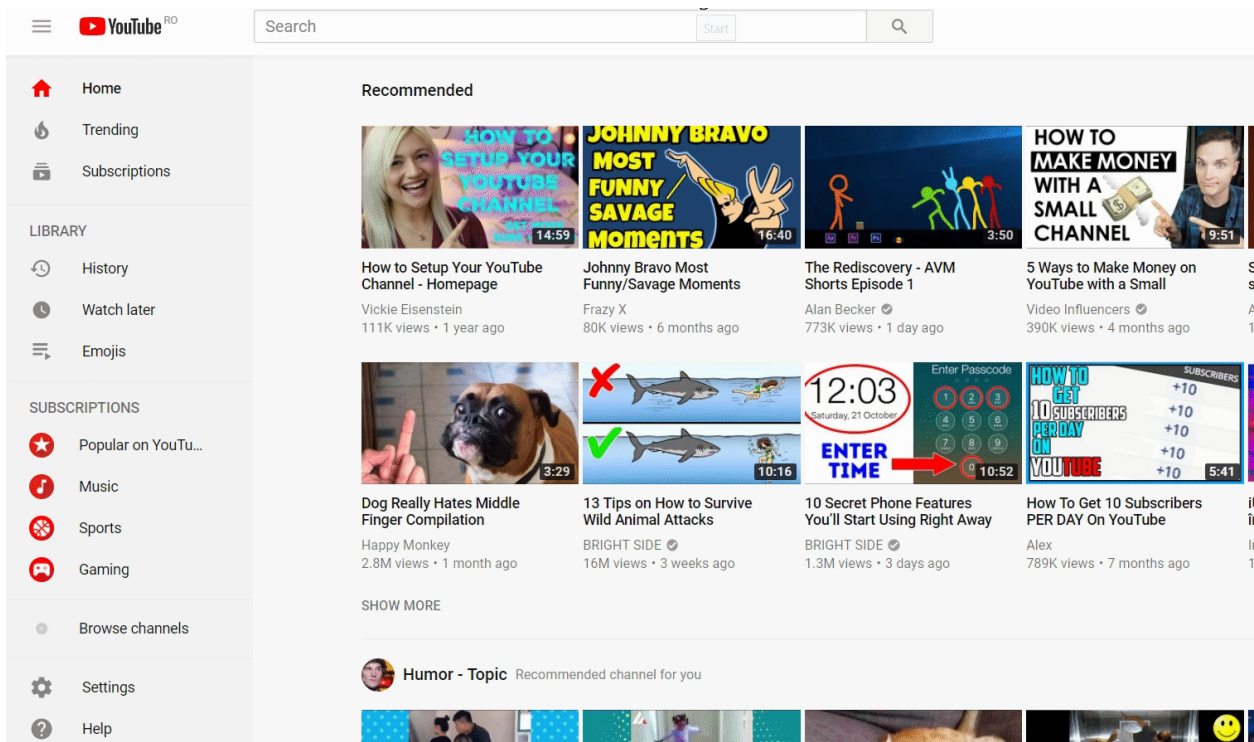
- Adding your video to a playlist is also an optional step, but you should do it because playlists automatically play the next video—thus helping you to increase your viewers’ watch time.
- To add your video to a playlist, follow these steps:
  - a. Go to Video Manager.
  - b. Tick the box next to the video you want to add to a playlist.
  - c. Click on “Add to” (at the top of the uploaded video list).
  - d. Click on “Create new playlist”.
  - e. Name your new playlist.
  - f. Click “Create”.
  - g. Tick the box next to the playlist you have just created to add your video to it.



## ☐ What to do after publishing

Once your video is published and optimized, it is up to you to make the most of it. Here are some tips you should keep in mind with regards to this:

- Reply to all new comments in the first 48 hours. Make sure you will be notified for each comment by adjusting your account settings accordingly:
  - a. Go to your YouTube homepage → Settings → Notifications.
  - b. Under “Comments and Activity”, make sure the “Activity on my videos or channel” button is ticked.



- Increase your video's visibility by embedding it in blog posts (yours or guest posts you may publish on other websites). To embed a YouTube video in a Wordpress blog post, simply copy the URL of the video and paste it as a line of its own in the blog post.
- Promote your video. Share your video on your social media pages, send it via email to your collaborators, partners, clients, friends, as well as forums like Quora (but make sure you do this only on relevant topics).
- Be consistent. It is far better to post a lot of videos over a larger amount of time, rather than posting more videos at once.

YouTube can be a new realm for many of you - but with the increasing use of video marketing, posting and optimizing useful YouTube videos has grown to be more than just an option. These days, you simply cannot avoid it if you want to reap all the benefits digital marketing has to offer!