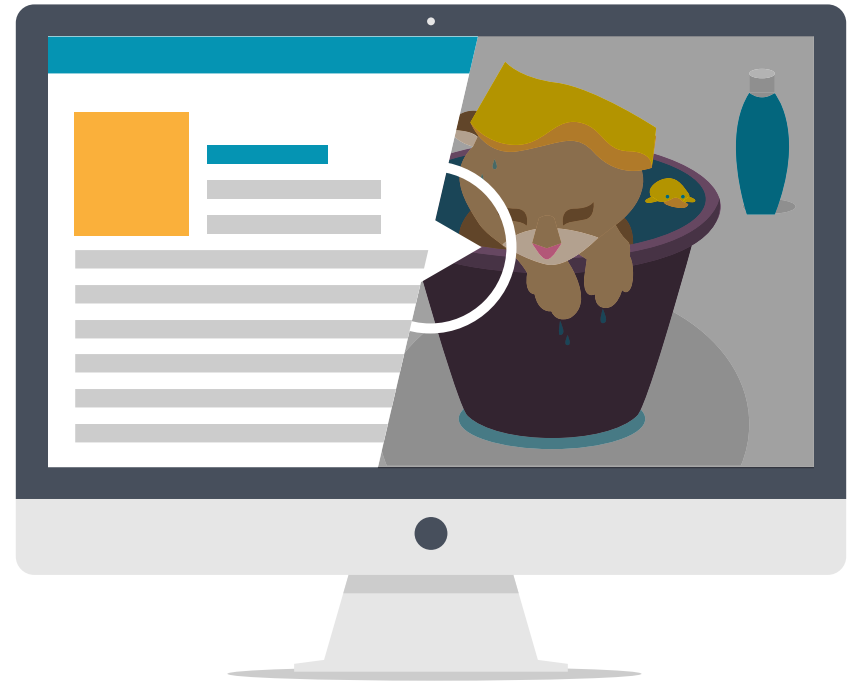


VIDEO THE SEDUCER & TEXT THE EDUCATOR

How to choose the best format
for your marketing content

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INTRODUCTION

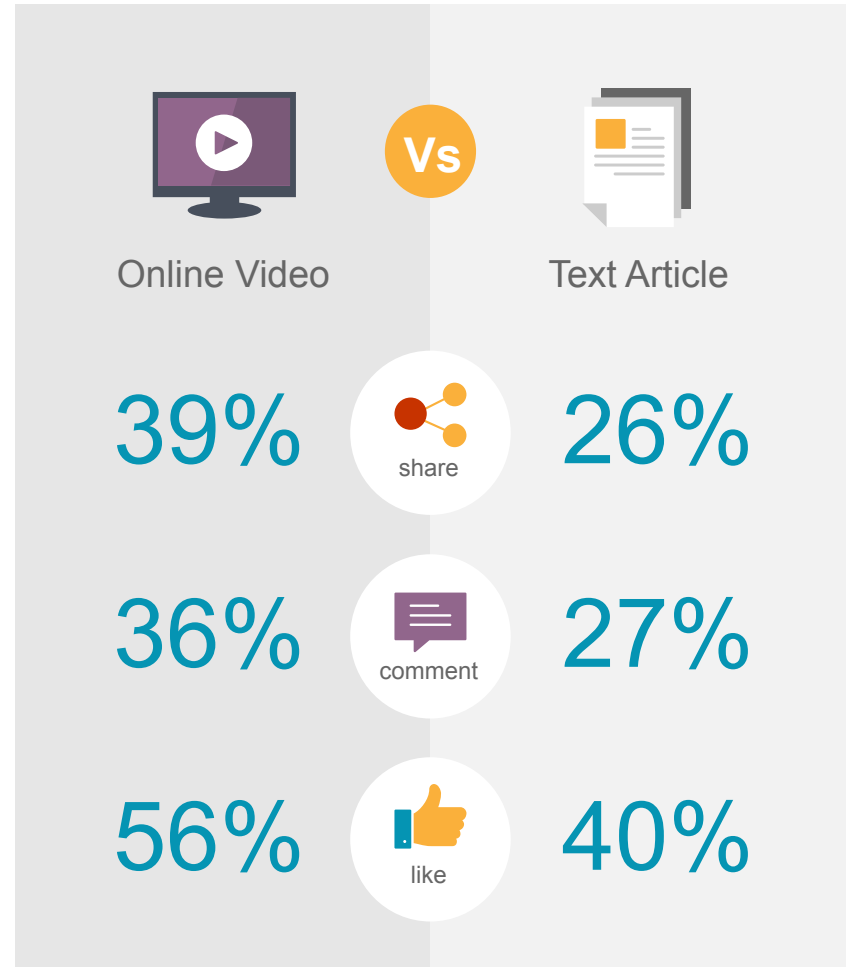
Businesses spend a lot of time and money on content creation. *Forbes* noted in “Top 7 Content Marketing Trends That Will Dominate 2015” that 58% of B2B marketers plan on increasing their content marketing budgets in 2015.¹ However, in many cases, the effectiveness of this investment and efforts are not obvious. In a study conducted by the Content Marketing Institute on “B2C Content Marketing 2015: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America,” only 8% of the companies rated the effectiveness of their organization’s use of content marketing as “very effective.”²



¹ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/12/01/the-top-7-content-marketing-trends-that-will-dominate-2015/4/>

² http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2015_B2C_Research.pdf

Video has been crowned as marketing's "Prince Charming;" promising high engagement, and as such, is considered by many businesses as the new platform of choice. A 2014 report on *Video Commerce Benchmarks*³ conducted by [Invodo](http://www.invodo.com) found that 52% of marketing professionals worldwide named video as the type of content with the best ROI and 93% of marketers used video for online marketing, sales or communications. A study conducted by [Usury](http://www.usury.com) found that 39% of consumers are more likely to share an online video compared to 26% who would share a text article, 36% more likely to comment on a video compared to 27%, and 56% would 'like' an online video compared to 40% on a text article.⁴

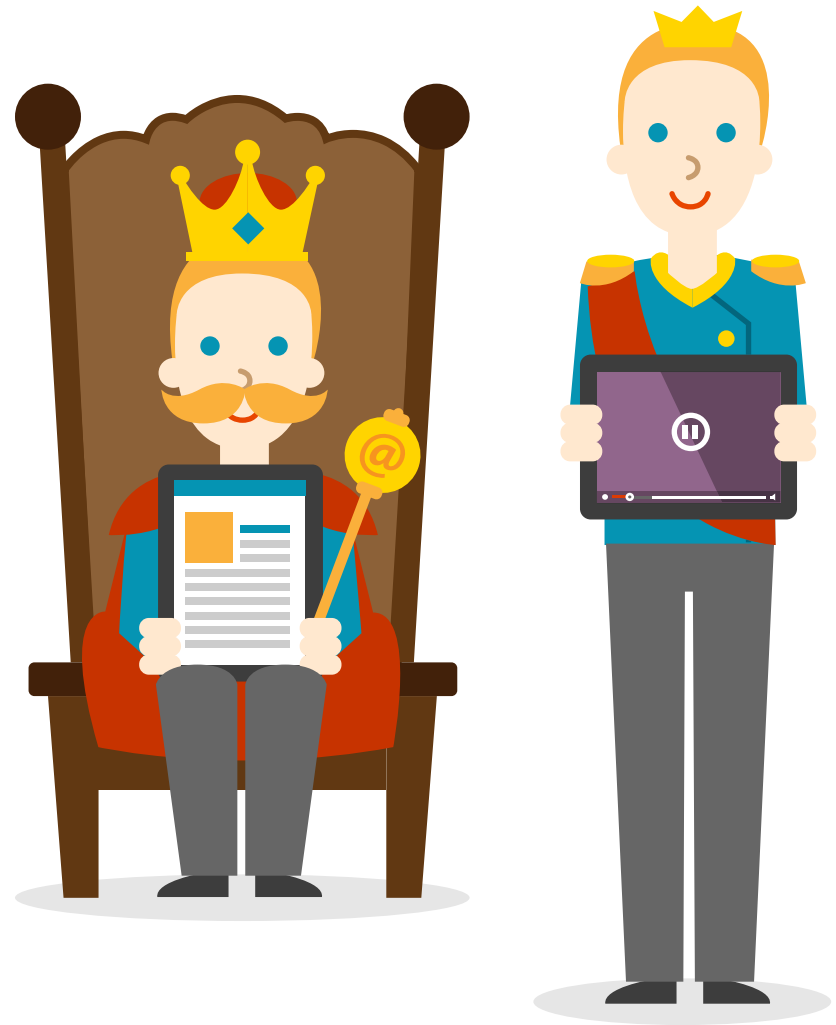


³ <http://www.invodo.com/reports/video-commerce-benchmarks-report-2014/>

⁴ http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/intelligence/2013/04/online_videos_drive_deeper_engagement_than_text_articles.php

However, creating video content is more expensive and time consuming than text and once you have invested a lot of resources in this trendy platform, you might find that video doesn't meet your expectations. Text is not to be ignored or pushed aside just because video is - literally - eye-catching. Text continues to be a powerful platform that drives engagement and increases conversion rates. So how can you strike the right balance between video and text?

In this whitepaper you will learn how to be effective in spending your time and money when choosing between video and text. ClickTale insights, derived from analyzing customer behavior on thousands of websites in various verticals, and Taboola data, derived from millions of content pieces distributed to billions of users monthly, will reveal the contextual and psychological aspects that are at play when people watch video and read text. These insights will help you successfully match the content format to your visitors' needs, optimizing your website's engagement and conversion potential.



UNDERSTANDING THE COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES IN WATCHING VS. READING CONTENT

To get a better understanding of why and when people choose to watch videos or read articles, we first need to clarify how our brain works and what happens in our minds when we consume content.

Active and Passive Content Consumption

According to ClickTale's in-house psychologist, Dr. Liraz Margalit, watching a video and reading an article require different cognitive tasks and are attributed to different brain processes.

Reading requires a more active visitor interaction. When we read an article, we actively engage with the task, creating thoughts about the content by activating mental structures. Reading involves the production of an "inner voice" that is intended to enhance attention, suggesting that careful reading is not an automatic process, but occurs when we attentively process what we are reading.

Watching videos is considered to be more automatic and passive. It does not demand the same degree of careful attention as reading. Since visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text, it is cognitively easier to consume them.

The cognitive process of reading text gives the brain a much better 'workout' than watching a video because it demands a longer attention span, involving more cognitive efforts in the process. In general, we have an inherent tendency towards cognitive ease. This means that we will try to invest the minimal amount of mental effort required when we deal with a cognitive task, such as gathering information, and as a result, prefer to choose information that is easier to process.

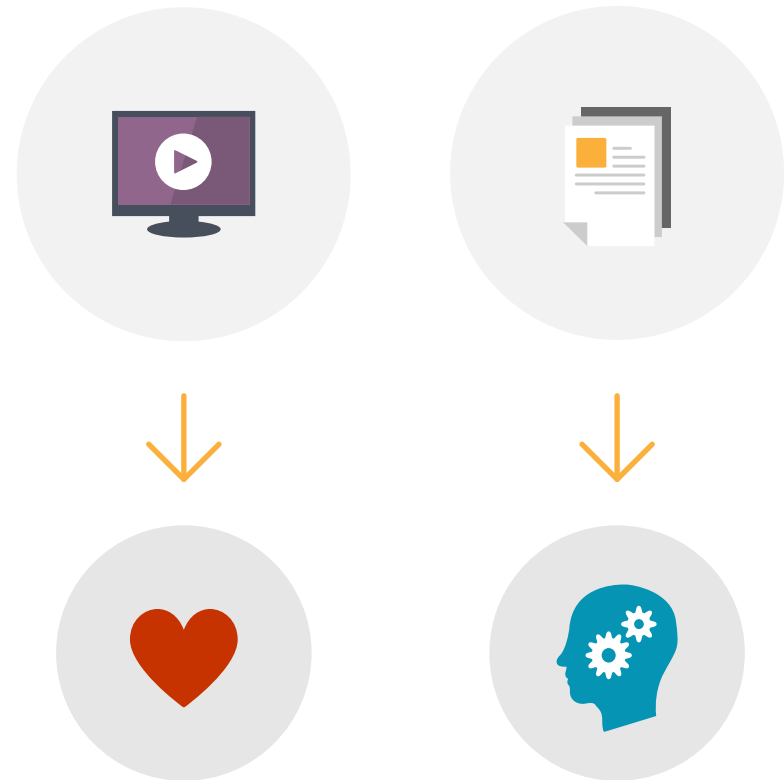
Feel It or Think About It

“While reading is all about creating thoughts from the content and visually imagining the scene, bringing it to life in our mind, video is all about feeling,” says Dr. Margalit. Studies have revealed that when we watch a video, we create an empathetic connection with the on-screen content and experience higher levels of emotional involvement.

This happens because we experience an automatic physiological reaction through the *mirror neuron mechanism*. This neuron “mirrors” the behavior of the other, as if we were acting in the video. According to Gallese and colleagues⁵, the mirror neuron is activated when we act and when we observe the same action performed by another (observation both in real life and on-screen) because the brain is indifferent to the form of action.

We feel what the other person is feeling or what the

character is doing on screen because the same thing is happening “in” us. This research suggests that we could actually be experiencing (in minor but significant ways) the pain (and supposedly also the pleasure) of those we witness on screen. This neurological activity makes the spectator much more emotionally involved.



⁵ <http://old.unipr.it/arpa/mirror/pubs/pdf/Gallese/Gallese-Goldman%201998.pdf>

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS: USER SEGMENTATION

The next step in achieving the right balance between video and text for your audience requires understanding who visits your website and when it mostly takes place. The following segmentation criteria merge insights and data derived from ClickTale's tools, analyses of ClickTale's customer experience consultants and comprehensive research performed by ClickTale's in-house psychologist, together with data from Taboola.

By applying these practical insights when segmenting your audience, you can provide your target audience with an optimized experience, tailored to their needs, resulting in better engagement and higher conversions. In this whitepaper, a conversion refers to engaging with the content for media consumption purposes or for purchasing a product, subscription, membership or service.

State of Mind: Goal Oriented vs. Unintentional

A ClickTale analysis revealed that when people visit a website they are either in goal-oriented or unintentional browsing mode. Our minds are trained to automatically change the route by which we process information – from strenuous mental effort to passive absorption of our surroundings. This automatic modification occurs subconsciously. Dr. Margalit notes that it can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo⁶, which describes two routes of processing information: central and peripheral. The central route is taken when the visitor is motivated to generate thoughts in response to substantive content (e.g. a shopper who wants to compare the prices of similar

⁶ http://www.cios.org/encyclopedia/persuasion/Elaboration_1likelihood.htm

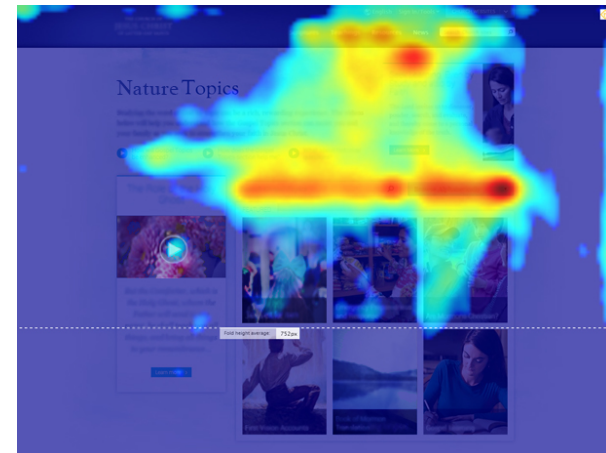
products) and has the ability to do so (is not mentally tired). The peripheral route is taken when the visitor is unable or unwilling to execute the cognitive assignment (e.g. when the shopper wants to delve into the details of a specific product but is just too tired mentally to do so).

This theoretical model is supported by the noticeable differences revealed with ClickTale, comparing between visitors who arrived intentionally at a sub-section of a website by using the website's primary navigation elements, and visitors who arrived at that sub-section by being automatically redirected there after watching a video on the homepage. The goal-oriented visitors completely ignored the page's featured elements and went directly to the navigational elements, such as the 'Search' box and the "Browse Alphabetically" menu that showcased the website's assets. The visitors who were redirected to the page showed interest in colorful and captivating images, basically ignoring the informative text and demonstrating no interest in the Search box.

ClickTale's analysis of the online behavioral patterns showed that unintentional visitors engaged with the page three times longer than the intentional visitors. Unintentional visitors scrolled all the way down the page; goal oriented visitors focused only on their area of interest.



Unintentional visitors showed typical 'F-pattern' mouse movement of visitors who are examining content on a page.



Goal oriented visitors hovered only over the navigational elements.

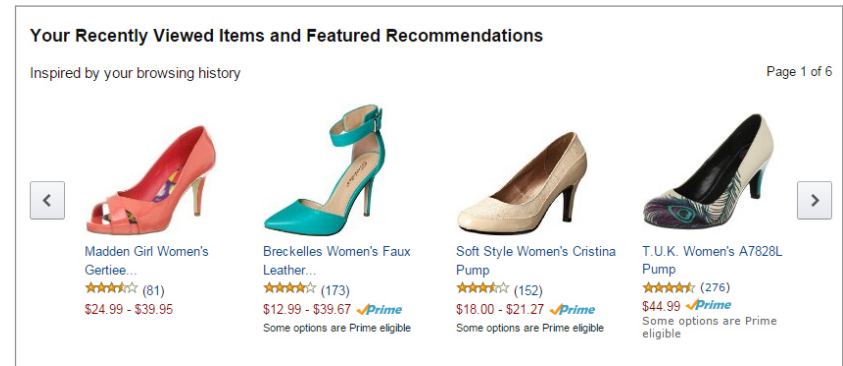
Unintentional visitors were intrigued by suggestive keywords such as “temptation,” “adultery” and “shocking” while goal-oriented visitors were less susceptible to sensational language. They viewed an average of eight webpages while goal-oriented visitors viewed far fewer pages and spent much less time on the site. Furthermore, unintentional visitors mostly clicked through to the featured content while goal-oriented visitors continued to pages based on their search results.

As can be seen from this case, goal-oriented visitors show a higher level of motivation to use the necessary cognitive resources and higher attention levels to dive deeply into the information. As a result, they are likely to prefer text (e.g. customer reviews) and focus on searching for additional text via the ‘search’ option while ignoring distractions such as advertisements and featured elements.

Visitors in browse-mode (the unintentional visitors) tend to process information based on their emotions and as such, will pay more attention to video and colorful images. In terms of textual elements, they will focus on attractive headlines and catchy slogans. Furthermore, in the absence of a defined goal, they will tend towards associative linkage, directing them by associations that link one idea to another. They will go from one article of

interest to the next, greatly increasing their engagement time.

In this respect, ecommerce sites such as [Amazon](#) and [half.com](#) use associative linking-style mechanisms such as “Similar items” sections and “Recommended for you” pages that take into account not only the customer’s purchase history but also recent browsing activity. Publisher sites perform very much in the same way by offering personalized content recommendations to visitors based on a myriad of signals, according to Taboola.



Although a single user can apply each of the cognitive routes alternately and even shift routes during the same visit, the factors that influence which route will be activated are motivation (a desire to process the message) and ability (available cognitive resources). As such, it is crucial that you address both modes on your website by providing sufficient levels of stimulation to engage unintentional visitors and elements, such as navigation tools and search abilities to help goal-oriented users take the minimum steps necessary to reach their goal, and rely on as much information as they can retrieve.

Taboola's content discovery platform offers "widgets" – associative items that appear as links to articles and videos that "you might also like", which promote browsing. Their data shows that, on average, the click-through rates on Taboola widgets that are displayed after videos is 26% higher than when they are displayed after text. This demonstrates that visitors who consume video tend to be in unintentional mode and continue to other pages and websites that meet their interests.



Visitor Traffic Source

Traffic referral sources are another important aspect you need to factor in your assessment of whether to choose between video and text.

According to Taboola, goal-oriented visitors tend to come from Direct and Search traffic. They are more likely to focus on text to engage with the content and complete the purpose they have in mind. In contrast, visitors in unintentional mode will arrive on the website from

other avenues such as content discovery platforms that “suggest” suitable content or from social media channels where people share or recommend content.

Recent studies have shown that videos seem to receive higher “shares” on social media,⁷ with videos on Facebook surpassing videos on YouTube according to Mixpo⁸ and Vox Media⁹. Therefore, carefully crafted content on the suitable platform that is tailored to the suitable audience and works in synergy with the suitable distribution channel will boost the success of the content campaign.

Personality & Sense of Control

When we watch a video, we unconsciously let go of our (perception of) control in our environment because videos facilitate the experience of mental escapism and detachment from our surroundings. Some people prefer to maintain the feeling of control when they interact with a website. Such people will prefer text because it allows

them to skim over portions that interest them less, move back to re-read sections that interest them and, overall, let them to set the pace of their interaction.

Furthermore, according to Taboola and ClickTale analyses, when visitors come across list formats and articles that state the average reading time, click-through rates are higher because people feel that they know what to expect post-click and don’t need to spend a lot of cognitive resources.

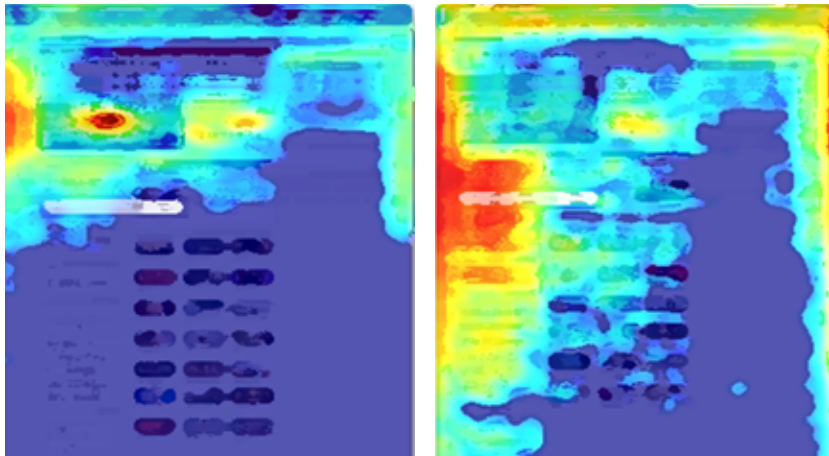
Many people shift in their need for control and for letting go. Dr. Margalit found that people will be consistent in consuming the same form of content that they have chosen for the specific “session” or website they are visiting. A ClickTale analysis of one of the world’s popular news websites showed that if a visitor chooses video in the first place, it is more likely that he or she will keep watching videos rather than shift to reading an article and vice versa.

⁷ http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/intelligence/2013/04/online_videos_drive_deeper_engagement_than_text_articles.php

⁸ <http://marketing.mixpo.com/acton/fs/blocks/showLandingPage/a/2062/p/p-00b1/t/page/fm/0>

⁹ <http://marketing.voxmedia.com/2015/3/23/8208013/vox-dot-com-facebook-case-study-2015>

The heatmaps show that visitors who watched the video were less likely to read throughout the entire article.



Clicked on Play

Didn't click on Play

Time of the Day and Week

The concepts we discussed about the different degrees of cognitive effort, sense of control and need for escapism lead to the next point you need to consider, especially when determining the ROI from investing in each platform: When do your website visitors visit your website? Does most of your traffic come in the early morning when people are commuting to work and want to be updated on the latest events and buzz? Is it during business hours when people are looking for information? Is it at around

noon when people catch up on their personal errands during their lunch break? Or is it mostly at the end of the day or on weekends when people want to relax and be entertained?

According to Taboola, pages-per-session of users engaging with video content is 4% higher during weekends than on weekdays.

Type of Product

A crucial question to ask before deciding how to deliver your content is: What is the product that you are offering?

When website visitors need to make an important decision, such as purchasing insurance or financial products, they get into a more rational, detail-oriented mode and want to feel in control. As such, text fulfills their needs more accurately than video. Similarly, if your product requires a high level of knowledge and concentration - such as product specs or an editorial - text will be more effective.

If you would like to excite or entertain your audience, video is the format of choice. This becomes clear when you compare content choices for different brands. For

example: Luxury hotel chain [Kempinsky](#) has an emotion-driven, visually-laden website full of embedded videos. In contrast, [Metlife](#) - an insurance company - has a very text-focused site.

According to Taboola, health and fitness products tend to perform better by using video content, whereas insurance and financial products drive more sales with articles.

Additionally, Taboola's data shows that video is promoted 85% more by brands than by performance advertisers. Since the objective of brands is to drive awareness and a broader connection with visitors, it is done more effectively with video. Performance advertisers target a more focused user who is ready to take action, making video less effective for their purpose.

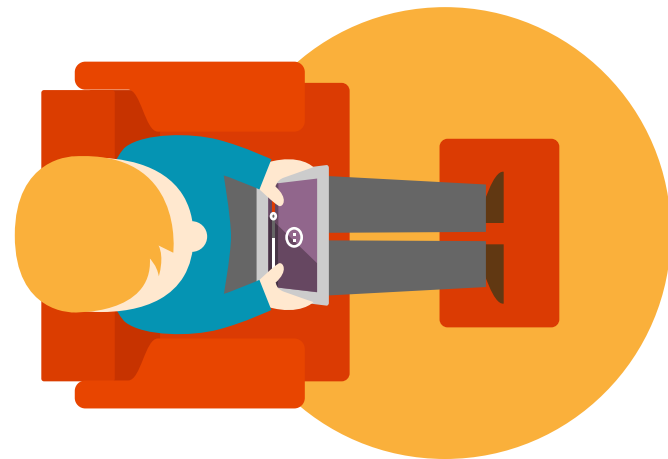
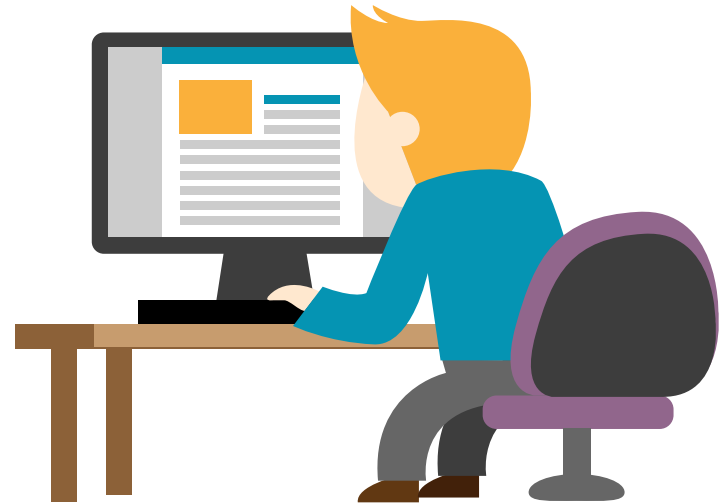


CONCLUSION

To be effective in your content marketing, don't buy into the hype: video is not a one-platform-fits-all for all contexts. When visitors select a form of content, several factors come into play to unconsciously influence their decision-making process, leading them to prefer one form of content over the other to best serve their momentary needs. By creating synergy between your content delivery form and your visitors' psychological processes, you can achieve better website interaction and higher ROI.

Personalize to Optimize

Using segmentation and taking all the factors mentioned in this whitepaper into consideration, you will have a clearer understanding of your audience and will be able to personalize your website accordingly. For example, if a user visits your website at night, using a tablet, show more video content than text. If a visitor arrives on your site from a search engine, show text, but if the source was a social network, show video. The practical application of these insights will help you pass the tough initial hurdle of deciding on what to spend your resources; and lead to forging a better fit between your content and your audience, increasing engagement and profitability.



THE NUTS & BOLTS OF CHOOSING BETWEEN VIDEO & TEXT

Having learned about the psychological processes that occur when website visitors engage with content in video and in text, these checklists will help you determine which format is more suitable for your content and purpose:

Video:

- ✓ Visitors come to my website to be entertained.
- ✓ I offer entertainment content, products or services that are not too complex to understand and I want my audience to browse and “drift away”.
- ✓ My website has links to other pages and external websites.
- ✓ Many of my website visitors arrive on my website via content discovery platforms or social networks.
- ✓ My content is highly visual and I want my visitors to stay and be entertained on my website.
- ✓ Many of my visitors check my website at night and over the weekend.
- ✓ I want to evoke strong emotions in my visitors.

Text:

- ✓ Visitors come to my website with a goal in mind, such as purchasing a service or product.
- ✓ Many of my website visitors arrive on my website via search and direct traffic.
- ✓ My website offers a clear conversion funnel, such as completing a form, subscribing to a service or purchasing a product.
- ✓ My website gets high volumes of traffic during the day.
- ✓ My product or service is sophisticated and requires attention to detail.
- ✓ My product or service requires logic-based decision making.
- ✓ I want to inform or educate visitors about my product, service or industry.



About ClickTale

ClickTale®, the enterprise leader in Digital Customer Experience, enables businesses to maximize revenues by optimizing the way people experience the Web and Mobile. ClickTale's comprehensive solution features the industry's most innovative heatmap technology, playback of individual-user browsing sessions and Customer Experience Consultants dedicated to your success. A subscription-based SaaS solution, ClickTale effortlessly integrates with web analytics, testing tools and any infrastructure to reveal how users really interact with your site. ClickTale creates revenue-winning customer experiences for over 100,000 businesses worldwide, including a large number of Fortune 500 companies. We are committed to making the digital world more enjoyable for people and more lucrative for businesses. Learn more at www.clicktale.com or email us at: info@clicktale.com



About Taboola

Taboola is the leading discovery platform, serving over 200 billion recommendations to over 550 million unique visitors every month on some of the Web's most innovative publisher sites, including USA TODAY, Business Insider, Chicago Tribune, and The Weather Channel. Headquartered in New York City, Taboola also has offices in Pasadena, London, Tel Aviv, New Delhi, and Bangkok. Publishers, marketers, and agencies leverage Taboola to retain users on their sites, monetize their traffic, and distribute their content to drive high-quality audiences. Learn more at www.taboola.com and follow @taboola on Twitter.