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Mastering the YouTube Clock

## Timing Your Content for Success

Are you a YouTuber? Or and avid follower of a YouTube channel? Ever wondered why your favorite channel posts their video on a certain time of the week? - Don't be surprised if I say it's based on user (your) behavior.

This was the case with Victor, a charismatic culinary wizard who's cooked up a storm on YouTube! With a sprinkle of creativity and a dash of flair, he's been whipping up delectable dishes in front of the camera. However, despite his sizzling passion and mouthwatering recipes, it wasn't always the same. His views and subscriber count were like ingredients that just wouldn't come together in the perfect recipe for success, until an year ago.

Well, what changed you might ask? Curiosity got our best and I had a chance to interview him about it.

Although his videos used to perform below his expectations, Victor did not lose hope and started to dig deeper into the reasons and stumbled upon a blog discussing the behavior of people over the internet and their usage statistics. This got Victor interested and decided to do some research on recent trending videos on the platform. He was surprised to see a behavior contrary to his belief and was genuinely shocked. Trending videos often received more views when they were uploaded at specific times. In particular, videos published around 5 AM in the morning and between 1 PM to 6 PM in the afternoon seemed to have the highest potential for success. As some of you might know, Victor used to post with a weekly schedule of 11am on a Sunday, to target audience who he thought were free on a weekend and about to cook something.
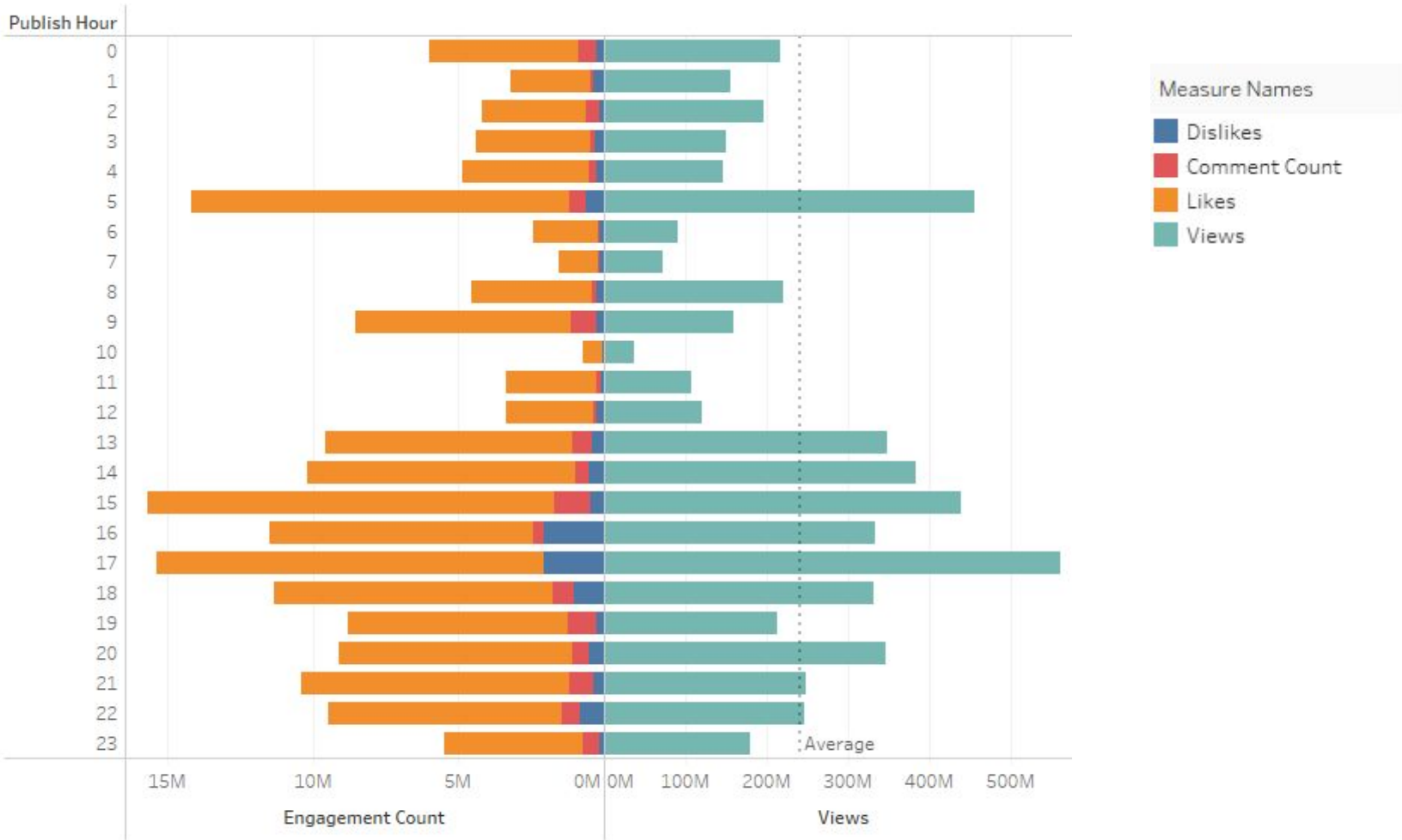
Graph showing the hourly views of trending videos over a day.
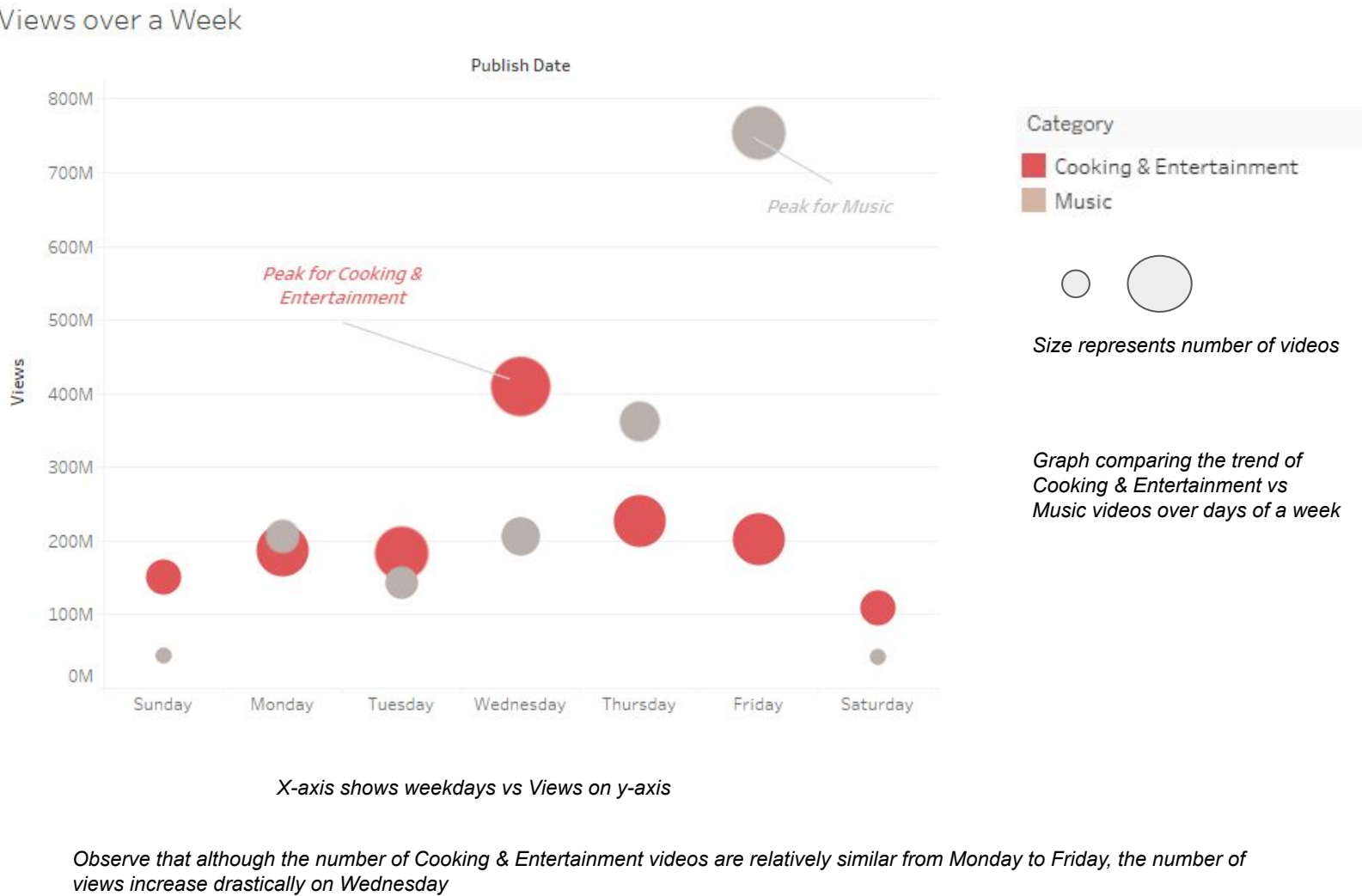*X- axis shows view count vs 24 hours of a day on y-axis*

Using the above visual and comparing with the average views as shown by the line we can see how the hourly performance stacks up to the daily average. Although it might be surprising to see a spike at 5am in the morning, it can be attributed to the fact that Europe is on an average 5 hrs behind American time and people catch up just before their daily schedule or commute.

See the concentration of views around 3pm - 5pm in the afternoon, why do you think it's the case? Take a step back and see if your daily behavior fits with it, not surprising now right?

This might look strange at first glance, but think about it. People like to quickly catch up on their favorite videos in their breaks, espcially after a day of work. Also, most students have their classes ending by 4pm in the afternoon.

Armed with this knowledge, Victor decided to put it to the test. He had a fantastic recipe for homemade cinnamon rolls that he believed could attract a wide audience. Instead of uploading it at his usual time in the morning, he released the video at 2 PM in the afternoon on a Sunday.

Although the video performed well it was still below his expectations. Feeling confused he dig deeper into the statistics and found out that contrary to general belief, less people watch YouTube on weekends as compared to weekdays. Segregating the data and focusing on cooking videos revealed an interesting fact. He found out that most cooking & entertainment videos receive higher views from Wednesday to Friday as compared to weekends like a Sunday.

Views over a Week

X-axis shows weekdays vs Views on y-axis

Observe that although the number of Cooking & Entertainment videos are relatively similar from Monday to Friday, the number of views increase drastically on Wednesday

Note that the trend isn't same for all categories, it differs widely as you can see the graph for cooking & entertainment and music videos. So keep in mind to analyse the trends based on your interests, if music videos is your expertise then Friday is a better day than Wednesday.

So for his next video Victor publishes it on a Wednesday evening and to no surprise, the video performed well. Who would have thought! From that day on Victor mentions he used to analyze user behavior from time to time and adapt to the changes so his content could reach to most of his audience and stay on top of his game.

Understanding when the target audience was most active on the platform made a world of difference. From that point on, he adjusted his content schedule to align with these peak times, leading to more of his videos trending and a substantial part of his YouTube success. But experimenting can also be a good way to tap into outlying opportunities as Victor mentioned, he even tried publishing a couple of videos at 5am in the morning and received quite a lot of views. He recalls, it made sense to target European audiences for some of his videos and made use of it.

User analytics is now-a-days considered one of the most sought out resource as it can maximize the efficiency of any piece of content, be it a cooking video on a platform, an advertisement or even your favorite celebrity social media post. It's all about using data to your specific scenario and advantage instead of relying on the general recommendation like *"People spend more time watching YouTube on a Sunday compared to any other day".* Why not take it into your own hands instead?

# Visualization 1: Views, Viewer engagement by Hour in a day
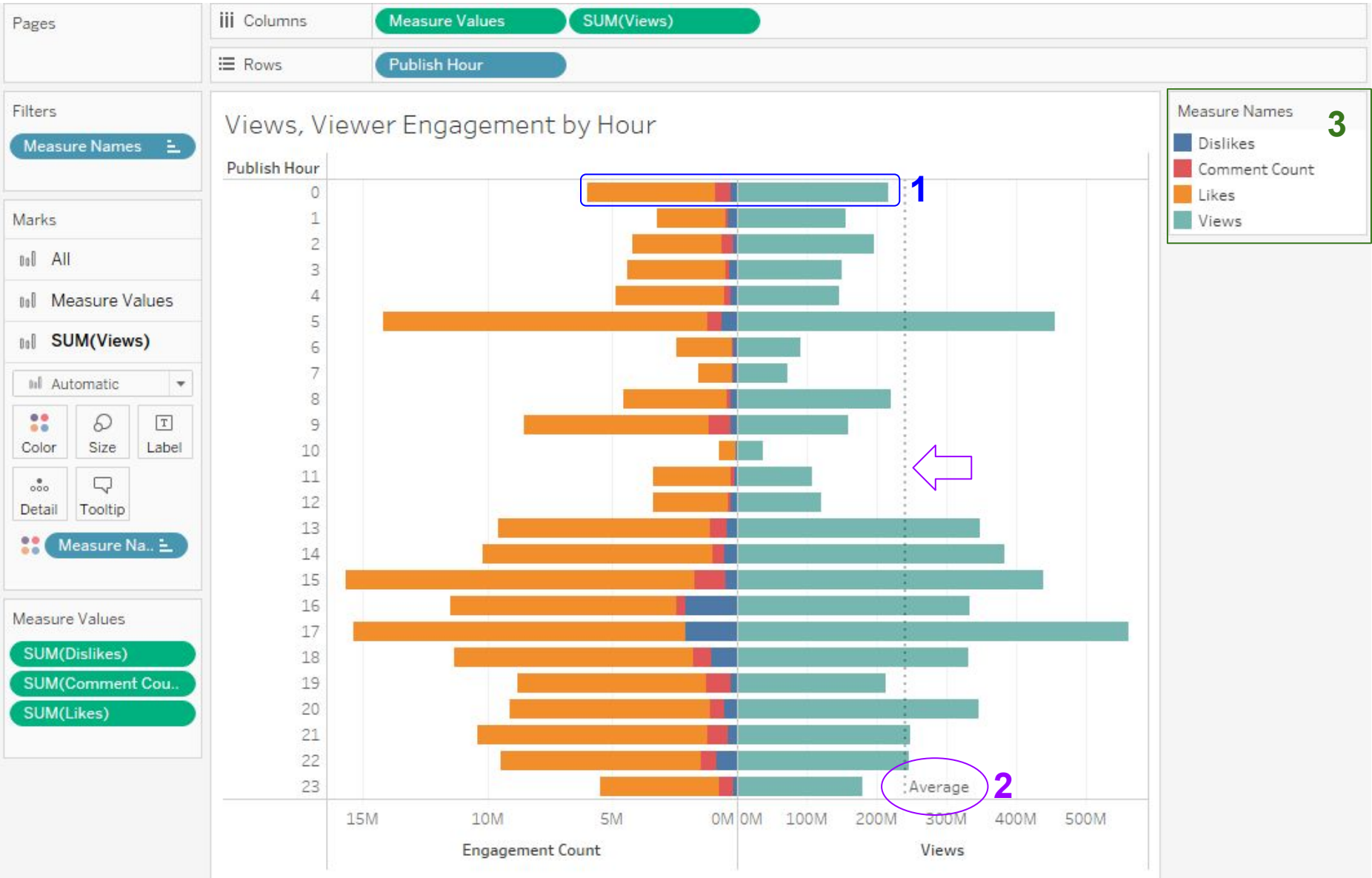
Notable Features:

This graph shows the distribution of views and viewer engagement (likes, comments and dislikes) over the 24 hours in a day. It helps to analyse the peak times in a day

1. Stacked chart helps us view multiple measures at a single glance

2. Reference line showing average views for an hour

3. Colors to differentiate the measures

Visualization 2: Views by days of Week
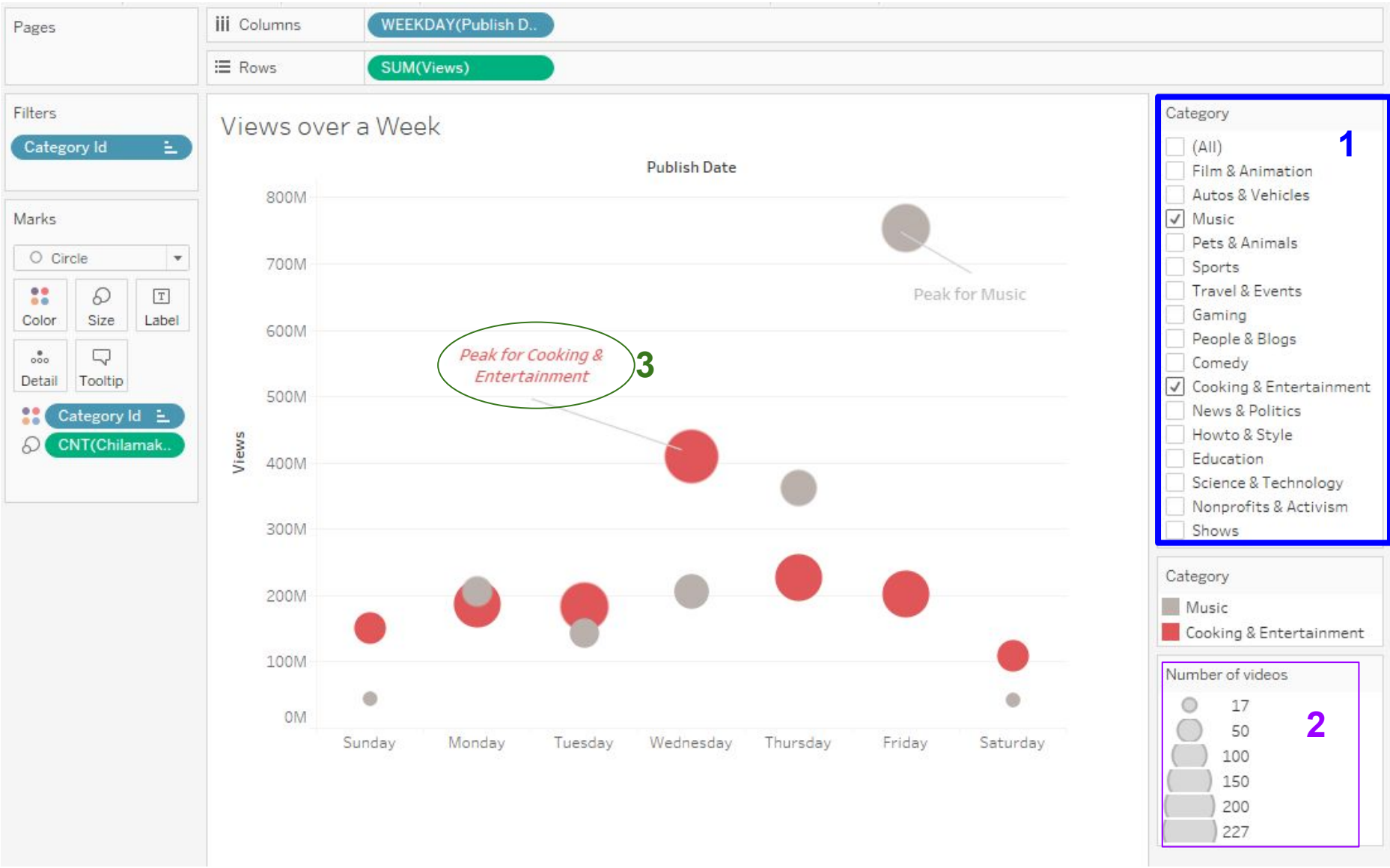
Notable Features:

Bubble chart showing number of views per day of a week, filtered by category to identify which days are the most popular for a category of YouTube videos

1. Filter on Category

2. Size represents number of videos

3. Markers to quickly identify peak of a category