

Project Overview

Understanding Creator & Viewer Needs to Inform YouTube Experience Improvements

Goals

- Explore how creators and viewers experience YouTube today—without assumptions.
- Identify pain points and unmet needs that could inform future product improvements.

Approach

- Conducted generative user research with creators & viewers to understand their behaviors and frustrations.
- Let participants guide the conversation, uncovering themes organically.
- Analyzed findings to identify opportunity areas for innovation.

Research Questions

"When structuring our research, we wanted to ensure that our questions allowed users to guide the conversation rather than confirming pre-existing ideas. We designed these three broad questions to capture both creator and viewer perspectives."

1. **What do other streaming platforms have that you wish YouTube had?**
2. **As a viewer, how would you want your experience personalized with AI?**
3. **As a creator, what tools would make your job easier?**

Creator Personas

"We interviewed three creators across different content categories—Shortie Shay, a short-form comedy creator who also posts on TikTok, Comedian Carrie, a stand-up comedian who uses YouTube to promote her live shows, and Gaming Greg, a game developer who shares career advice and tutorials. Each of them had unique perspectives, but common themes emerged around what they liked about YouTube and where they faced challenges."

Shortie Shay

TikTok / YouTube Content Creator

Creates short-form comedy clips similar to TikTok.

Comedian Carrie

Live comedian & YouTube Creator

Uses YouTube to share longer-form comedy and promote live shows

Gaming Greg

Game Developer & Tech Career YouTuber

Shares game development and career advice content.

Creator Verbatims

Shortie Shay

TikTok / YouTube Content Creator

"I wish that for YouTube videos we could make edits inside the YouTube video before posting. And that it offered in-platform editing."

Comedian Carrie

Live comedian & YouTube Creator

"What would make my job easier? Recommendations for success—videos that are similar to yours, hashtags, content recommendations."

Gaming Greg

Game Developer & Tech Career YouTuber

"I'd want more in-depth analytics for A/B testing thumbnails. Right now, they only show watch time percentage. But if I'm testing two thumbnails and they both have 50% watch time, it'd be helpful to know which has a higher click-through rate."

Viewer Personas

"We spoke with four viewers, each with different habits. While they all appreciate YouTube's content variety, they had specific frustrations with discovery and personalization."

Discover Denise Watches While Getting Ready

"I want to search less and instead have it search for me—like the TikTok algo. As soon as I get on YouTube, I want videos already there so I can just click one and watch. I don't want to scroll."

Learning Lance Watches for Skill Development

"It would be cool when using YouTube for learning to see a weekly wrapped by topic—like a recap of what I've been watching, along with suggested next steps."

Category Claire Long-Watch Viewer

"I wish YouTube had more diverse recommended categories. As a viewer, I'd want my experience personalized with AI to offer more 'similar to' recommendations on the home page."

Purpose Pete Intention-Driven Viewer

"I should be able to say, 'Make a playlist of 10 videos under 10 minutes on Python for Mechanical Engineers,' and it just does it."

Key Opportunities

- **Faster, More Intuitive Editing & Uploading** – In-app tools for quick edits without re-exporting. (Shortie Shay)
- **Better Content Optimization Insights** – AI-driven recommendations for thumbnails, tags, and content strategy. (Comedian Carrie)
- **Advanced A/B Testing & Analytics** – More granular insights on click-through rates and audience engagement. (Gaming Greg)
- **AI-Driven Personalization & Discovery** – Feeds that factor in viewer interests and goals. (Discover Denise)

Recommendations

- Creators receive **AI-generated thumbnail options** that match their past designs and audience preferences.
- **Automated A/B testing** shows different thumbnails to different audience segments, tracking engagement with rich data.
- Thumbnails are **selected for viewers** based on what they care about (e.g., science, nature, fashion).

Creator Experience

Uploading a video with the new thumbnail testing/generation options

Channel content - YouTube Studio

studio.youtube.com/channel/UCzSCNz_zX4ueJ13hdNJSeg/videos/upload?d=ud&filter=%5B%5D&sort=%7B"columnType"%3A"date"%2C"sortOrder"%3A"DESCENDING"%7D

Studio

Search across your channel

A month at home

Saved as private

Details Video elements Checks Visibility

Details

Title (required) A month at home

Description Tell viewers about your video (type @ to mention a channel)

Reuse Details

Thumbnail

Set a thumbnail that stands out and draws viewers' attention. [Learn more](#)

Upload Generate

Playlists

Add your video to one or more playlists to organize your content for viewers. [Learn more](#)

Select

Audience

Is this video made for kids? (required)

Next

Views Comments Likes (vs. dislikes)

Your channel PewDiePie

Dashboard

Content

Analytics

Community

Subtitles

Copyright

Earn

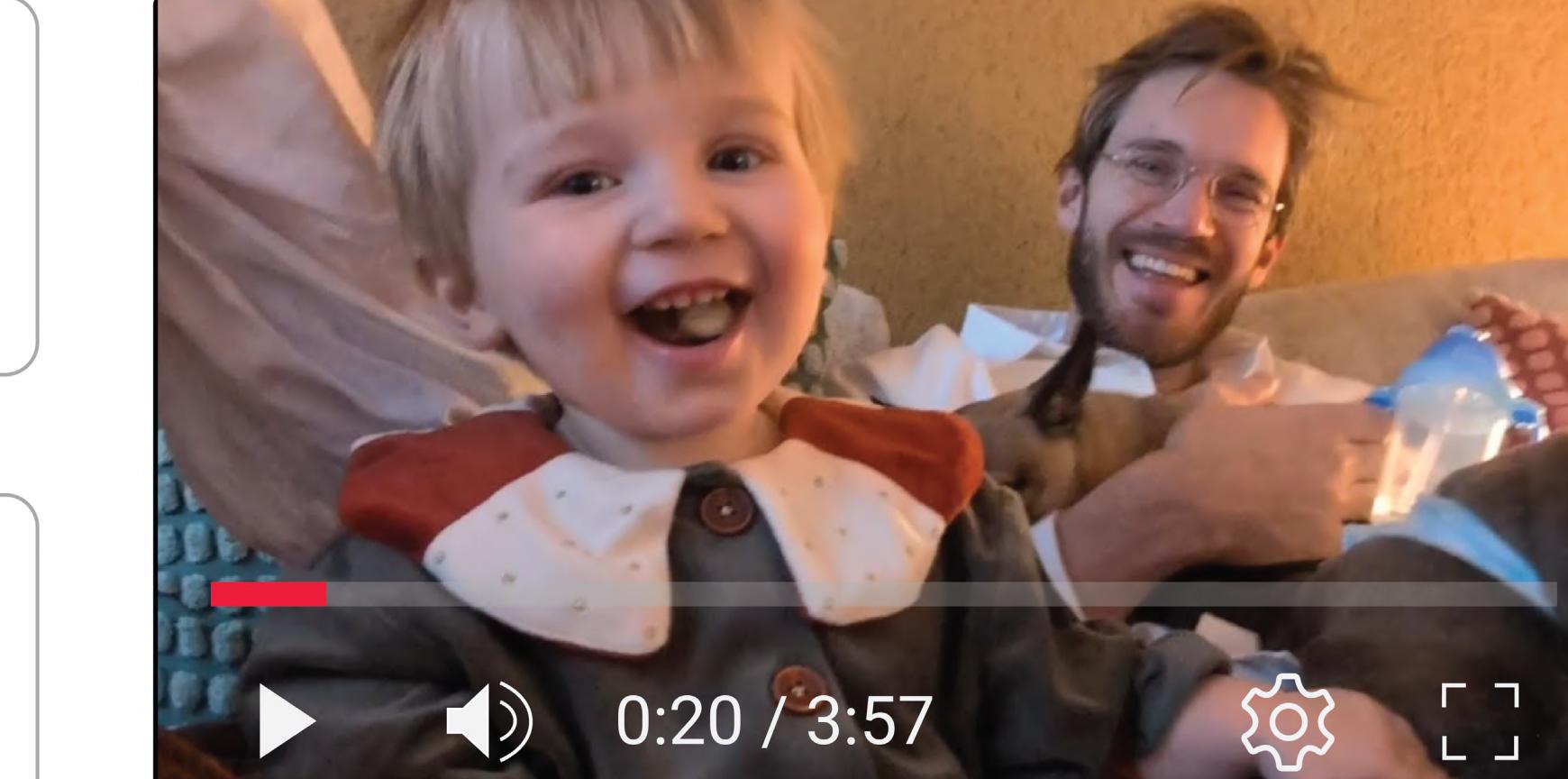
Customization

Audio library

Settings

Send feedback

Up HD ✓



Video link
<https://youtu.be/K4zzGAYuNWg>

Filename
a month at home.mp4

Channel content - YouTube Studio

studio.youtube.com/channel/UCzSCNz_zX4ueJ13hdNJSeg/videos/upload?d=ud&filter=%5B%5D&sort=%7B"columnType"%3A"date"%2C"sortOrder"%3A"DESCENDING"%7D

Studio

A month at home

Saved as private

Details Video elements Checks Visibility

Details Reuse details

Views Comments Likes (vs. dislikes)

Your channel PewDiePie

Dashboard Content Analytics Community Subtitles Copyright Earn Customization Audio library

Upload thumbnail

Test & compare different thumbnails

Upload up to 3 images to learn which one viewers prefer ?

+ + +

Done

Select

Audience

Is this video made for kids? (required)

Uploading 43% ... 3 minutes left

Next

Settings Send feedback

Channel content - YouTube Studio

studio.youtube.com/channel/UCzSCNz_zX4ueJ13hdNJXSeg/videos/upload?d=ud&filter=%5B%5D&sort=%7B"columnType"%3A"date"%2C"sortOrder"%3A"DESCENDING"%7D

Studio

Search across your channel

A month at home

Generated as private

Generate

From your video

Made with Gemini

Done

Audience

Is this video made for kids? (required)

Settings

Send feedback

Uploading 43% ... 3 minutes left

Next

Viewer Experience

How the same homepage feed would look for different viewers based on their interests

Adventure

← → ⌂ 🔒 ⚙ https://www.youtube.com



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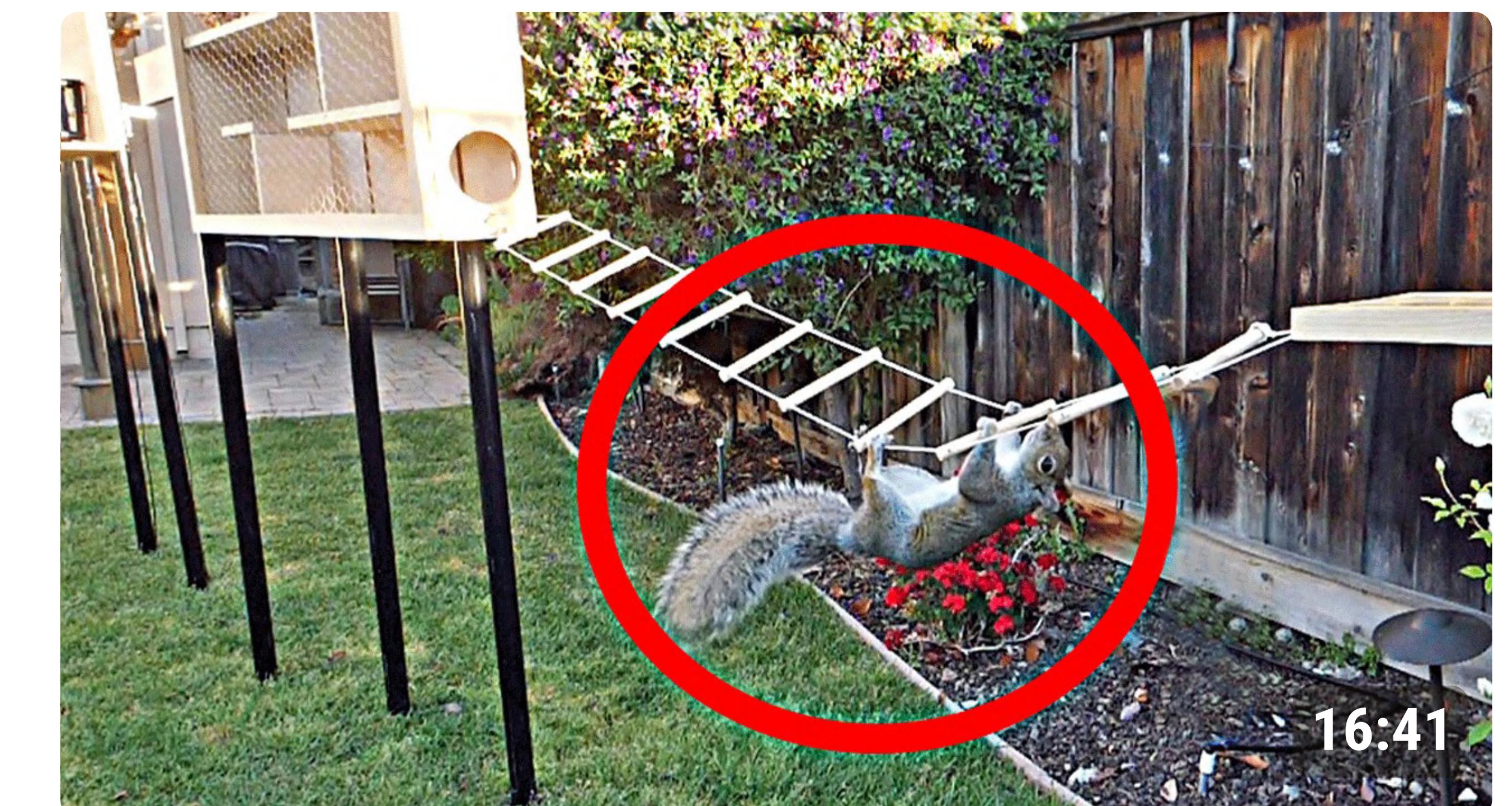
Playlists

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Liked videos

For you



Is Switzerland a real place?

PewDiePie

2.9M views • 5 months ago

Playing ukulele for the baby!

Joe Penna

8.2M views • 10 years ago

Backyard Squirrelymics

Mark Rober

108M views • 3 years ago

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Backyard Squirrelympics
Mark Rober
108M views • 3 years ago

Red arrow pointing to the squirrel in the 'Backyard Squirrelympics' thumbnail.

Shorts

Subscriptions

Thank you!