

Computing & Communications Services



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A quick investigation of YouTube Direct

Google has updated their YouTube Direct tool for managing user contributed multimedia content. It could be a useful tool to manage audio and video content on University web pages.

This quick investigation defines the product, considers opportunities and issues related to using it in the University, and recommends additional development associated with its use.

A quick investigation of YouTube Direct

Request

Is *YouTube Direct* an appropriate tool for CCS? ... for the University?

Investigation

- Reviewed online literature from YouTube.
- Surveyed Blog postings, etc. for user feedback.

What is It?

YouTube Direct (YTD) is an application that permits a publisher, media outlet, etc. to manage user-submitted YouTube content. YTD creates a controlled publishing channel for the organization. The media organization solicits content through an upload function on their website. Content can be reviewed and approved/rejected with an online moderator function. Approved content is linked to the organization's website by copying URLs.

YTD uses YouTube's content store and is implemented on YouTube's Open API definition – the Eclipse Java Toolset is required. The moderation function runs in a Google App account.

The Open API permits customization of the user submission interface. For example, YTD provides no internal mechanism to support a compensation policy for citizen journalists though it could be customized by a media organization. YTD could be linked to other Access Management systems to identify and control user access.

YTD has been around since last fall and Google has just released Version 2. Additional features are expected over the next 6 month.

Opportunities and Issues

1. YTD provides a free, open, customizable, evolving toolset for managing multimedia (image, video) content.
2. YTD has a number of interesting features including caption editing (*important for AODA compliance!*) and mobile device delivery formats. Google has not discussed a roadmap but potential features in the short term are being talked about on blogs. *The produce will remain in "continuous beta"*.
3. The moderation function, while requiring some training, permits non-IT staff to review and approve content and to link it into existing web content. *It appears to be easy to implement content addition through a WCMS such as Drupal.*
4. The Google API appears to use leading standards such as JAVA EE limiting the need for additional skill sets. It is expected that the product will evolve significantly over the next few years so some effort will be required to keep in sync.
5. The moderation function, running on a Google App account makes decentralized administration of media content a little more difficult. The product, currently targeted at media organizations, assumes central moderation control. Wide use in the University may require more distributed control. *While YouTube suggests one moderation account per organization, several YTD registrations and Google accounts will likely be required for the University. Will there need to be a set of policies to set standards for how the various moderators handle and approve content?*

6. YTD continues to use YouTube as the content store and delivery. This provides a free storage and delivery service. In the long term, storing media content separate from a core WCMS (Drupal) may increase the complexity of maintaining content. *While “free” is a major driver, the expedient reliance on YouTube as a content store is a concern to many organizations.*
7. With current Google policies, retention and protection of *intellectual property (IP)* is not clear. That the content made available beyond the institution web framework restricts how the institution manages their video property. *This may be a larger concern for content from the research community where basic research and innovation, or even learning content, IP may be inappropriately exposed.* Appropriate use policies and procedures may be required to balance IP concerns against the “openness” of the tool.
8. In the commercial world, media organizations appreciate the ability to solicit and manage “citizen journalist” content and are adopting YTD. On the other hand many citizen journalists resist the request to publish through a media organization, preferring to self publish directly on YouTube and linking to blogs. YTD does not permit an organization to control what content related to the organization is published elsewhere.

Recommendations

- A. Based on the assumption that the University will continue to make use of the free content management and delivery engine of YouTube, **TYD is an appropriate tool for Web Solutions to integrate into their platform to support user-contributed pictures and video.**
- B. An unknown number of departmental/user-managed campus websites include YouTube video. **If adopted by Web Solutions for their platform, YTD should be recommended as a supported tool to other web support teams on campus.**
- C. Recognizing the contributor and providing appropriate attribution should be an important part of managing this content. **The development of a Federated Access Management link, permitting community users to be identified with local credentials, should be developed for YTD, along with a separate process for those outside the community.** Since other institutions may be the similar expectations for YTD, shared development, or community-sourcing this component may be a cost effective activity.
- D. While the University promotes open communication, protection of some IP is central to some parts of the academic mission. **A committee, with broad knowledge of institutional IP concerns, should be created to document the issues related to publishing user-generated content, especially video, and recommend whether any specific policies are requires. Communications and Public Affairs (C&PA) would be an appropriate coordinator of this review.**