

VIDEO CONTENT CONSUMERS AND CREATORS: REACHING CZECH GENERATION Z THROUGH YOUTUBE

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Abstract:

Youtube, the biggest internet server for video sharing, is becoming the fastest growing media within the last ten years. Since the most common viewers of Youtube are representatives of so-called generation Z, who uses the traditional media such as TV, radio or classic newspapers very little, Youtube also becomes a kind of mainstream medium. This paper aims to present generation Z's relationship to the old and new media, as well as to present most highlighting cases of new media authors, respectively Youtube content creators. In an effort to meet the paper objectives, quantitative research (survey) aiming at representatives of the generation Z was conducted ($n=455$). Also, two case studies were taken into account in order to have a better understanding of the sender-receiver environment in sense of marketing communication possibilities. The first case study is a channel of a boy, a member of the Z generation, who has built his reputation mainly on hate videos. The second case study uncovers the progress of the channel ViralBrothers that shot prank videos with target advertisement and now is transforming to new channels with different content.

Key words:

Youtube, New Media, Generation Z, targeting, Marketing Communication.

JEL: M39, L82

1 Introduction

Youtube is the biggest internet server for video sharing. It is a place where everyone can upload, share, watch and also comment on originally created videos. On Youtube, ordinary people can, virtually without need of any investment, compete with big media companies and corporations not only in terms of viewer ratings but also in terms of the amount of loyal followers. Youtube is also the place, where the people of generation Z spend significant amount of time not only during their free time, but also while eating meals, doing other activities etc.

Youtube channel is an open platform, allowing anybody to upload any content he or she desires. Therefore, there are many unprofessional videos of lower quality. For many, it serves as a starting point of the journey to becoming famous. These people are called Youtubers and their main job is to upload videos about their life, hobbies or whatever they think might be nice to watch. Youtubers are stars of a new age. They are supported by their followers. Followers are people, who watch Youtube videos of their preferred Youtuber regularly and click the button "Follow". Most of them are young people between the age of 10-16 as can be observed in audience of conferences, which are held for Youtube fans, not only in the Czech Republic, but also abroad (i.e. 4fans, CineTube, Utubering, CraftCon).

Hence, there are several channels connecting the audience with YouTubers. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter are the ones most common in the Czech Republic. The sense of togetherness with the YouTuber on one hand and the participation of the audience on videos on the

other create an illusion, which deludes the authors as well as the audience into thinking that they are a collective community, often referred to as a family [5].

Youtubers also work as Streamers. Streamer is person, who broadcasts live online, usually using the platform called Twitch.tv. Records of live broadcasting are often used to make Youtube videos. The target audience, generation Z, deems important that the accessibility is enhanced by the fact that these Youtubers hold video chats or online discussions with fans – something, that television or radio do not offer very often.

Youtubers can realize income from their viewership. There are several possible methods - advertisement in the videos placed by Google, promotion of products of various companies or selling their own brand products such as T-shirts (merchandising). The advertisement can have various forms: textual, graphical or audiovisual, depending on demands of the paying company. The author of the video receives 55% of money paid by the advertiser for every thousand views of the advertisement, which is placed before the author's video [2]. The remaining 45% goes to Google. The actual amount of remuneration for a given number of views depends on factors like type of the video, quality of the content or its presentation in an appropriate form. The author or more precisely the number of regular followers of his or her channel is a very important factor too. In the Czech Republic, having at least 100,000 followers is currently the turning point when Youtubering becomes more than just a small extra income [2]. The figure quoted above cannot be, however, confirmed by a reliable source, since Google does not publish the amount of remuneration given for placing advertisements in videos.

Youtubers could be distinguished based on what they specialize in: beauty Youtubers (mostly female Youtubers), Lets Players (mainly male Youtubers, who film themselves while playing games) and vlogs (diaries, which are updated regularly and share personal information from Youtuber's life). Moreover, there are popular videos with so called "tags". Tags label the topic, or a list of questions prepared beforehand, which the Youtuber answers. Some of tags relate to other people - mum, dad, brother, best friend - other can be challenges (i.e. with food), some might relate to favorite books, movies, etc.

Youtube gave birth to new opportunity for marketing communication. Since each Youtuber has their audience based on what he or she shoots, it is easy to focus on the target group. For example, beauty Youtubers promote cosmetics products, which cosmetics companies send them for free as samples. Other Youtubers can have a contract with mineral waters companies, and are drinking their products in videos etc. According to the law, they must clearly mark the video with a symbol, which means the video contains paid promotion and advertising. Similarly, the symbol PP is used for product placement in movies in television or cinema. Another possibility of legal activity is that Youtuber is paid for providing an objective review. In this case, the Youtuber is not paid for product promotion; therefore, this is not a case of product placement and does not have to be indicated by the symbol.

From the marketing communication point of view, there is a strong need for advertisers to understand the target audience of the medium chosen. According to the results of adMeter, research conducted by MEDIAN agency from the March 2018, 83% of young people (15-24) visit YouTube every week and 56% of young people visit YouTube every day. Concerning the same group of young people, YouTube has 98% monthly and 83% weekly reach. In comparison with the other groups of viewers, young people from age 15-24 represent the main viewing base. Since the Youtube audience is composed of young people, the relationship of these people to the media, as well as their behavior towards the new and old media, would be worth to explore. Speaking about "young people," respectively people aged from 15 to 24 years, more precise categorization, as well as a generalization, is needed. For the purposes of this paper, classification concept based on Strauss–Howe generational theory [11] have been used. Following this concept, the above mentioned "young people" are classified as the Generations Z.

The generation Z consists of people, who were born from 1991 [6] or 1996 [4] to 2010. It outnumbers the 60 million people in millennial generation by one million [12]. People of this generation were raised with Internet, mobile phones, MP3 players and live their life online through social and other

new age media. Their parents are older, the cultural mix around them is more diverse, they are slightly wealthier socioeconomically, their family size is smaller, and their life expectancy is longer [13]. Generation Z has never known a world without smartphones and social media, so it's even more ingrained in them than in millennials. They devour information quickly, are overloaded by them and are always ready to move on [15]. This is also the generation that is less using the traditional media such as television, radio or classic newspapers.

Generation Z traits are the main reason why targeting these people through marketing communication must make use of new channels. Youtube, as it is described above, is a specific medium could be able to meet the criteria required by those "young people." This paper aims to get closer to the area of video content consumers and creators from the marketing communication potential point of view. In other words, authors want to present generation Z's relationship to the old and new media as well as to present most highlighting cases of new media authors, respectively Youtube content creators.

2 Methods

In order to meet the objective of the paper, various methods were used. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the present state of the issue. The author introduced the basic status of individual agents and factors within the given environment. The resulting deeper understanding of some Youtube parts made it feasible to understand the issues of videos and their impact on the possibility of targeting Generation Z.

There were some data, which were impossible to obtain from secondary sources. Therefore, it was necessary to carry out further data acquisition. These data were obtained through quantitative research, represented by a questionnaire survey. A survey, called "Media in the life of students," was a questionnaire conducted in 2016. It was focused on Generation Z relationship with different kinds of media, including Youtube.

In order to meet the goal of the paper, it was necessary to reach out the representative of the generation Z. Therefore, the university students were asked to fill out the questionnaire first. The questionnaire was distributed electronically as a link to the Google Forms document. As a distribution method, the Snowball sampling was used. Snowball is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. In this respect, the link was first given to eighty students of Faculty of Arts, Palacky University Olomouc. Then, the students were asked to distribute the link among up to ten friends of theirs. Another reason for using the Snowball method was an effort to avoid any possible distortion of the gathered data. Since college students are considered by some authors [12] as an inappropriate research sample because of their difference from the "non-student" population, it was also necessary to reach out to the non-student respondents.

After the period of one month, 750 questionnaires were filled out. As the main research criterium was to examine the Generation Z members, it was necessary to exclude those answers, whose respondents didn't meet the age criteria. So, only answers from the respondents born in the years 1994 to 2001 were taken into an account. For further data processing, answers from the research sample consisting of 455 respondents ($n=455$) were used.

Besides the data obtained from the user of Youtube, respectively from its potential audience, also case studies were taken into account in order to have a better understanding of the sender-receiver environment in sense of marketing communication possibilities. Therefore, there are two case reports observing the development of particular Czech channels. These two channels belonged, on the date of the evaluation of the research (Spring of 2017), to the top 10 Youtube channels in the Czech Republic.

There are many methods how to measure success level of Youtube channels. Although there are a number of ways to determine and measure the success level of Youtube channels, one of them is

predominant since it includes many other criteria. In this respect, the profitability of the channel was used as the most significant criterion with the biggest weight.

The overview of the profitability of the Youtubers and their channels is available on American websites SocialBlade. The authors of the sites offer information certified directly by Google [1]. Moreover, it is possible to find out which Youtube channels and networks are the most important in the country by following several criteria, such as number of subscribers, viewership and SB scores. SB score is an indicator, which is the result of further assessment of several criteria available on Social Blade. The SB score is similar to the economic rating of the countries. The score measures a channel's influence based on a variety of metrics including average view counts and amount of other channel widgets listed in. Moreover, it states generally estimated figure for monthly, respectively annual profit of the channel. If a channel has A+, A or A- rank, then it can be considered very influential on Youtube. The data from the SocialBlades project were used to select two prominent Youtubers in the Czech Republic.

The two case studies described below were selected as an example of channels, which are followed by Youtube audience and what the progress the development of these channels has. The first case study concerns a channel of a boy, member of generation Z, whose reputation has been built based mainly on hate videos. The second case study uncovers the progress of the channel called ViralBrothers that provides shot prank videos with target advertisement, and now is being transformed to new channels with sketches featuring comic books characters. While videos in the first case study do not contain advertisement, videos in the second case study usually focus on advertising of some product.

3 Results

As it was stated within the methodology, for the further data processing, 455 answers were used. Age of respondents was limited by setting, where only respondents born from 1994 to 2001 have been used. Since there could be almost fifteen years difference between the youngest and oldest member of Generation Z, to increase reliability and validity of the research, it was necessary to determine the most frequently occurring year of birth of the respondents. Thus, the mode was calculated with the result pointing to the year 1994. Therefore, the prevailing age group is necessary to take into account before any attempt of generalization. Absolute numbers and percentage contribution of respondents belonging to the specific year are shown in the table below.

Table 1 – Profile of respondents [n=455]

Year of birth	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<i>No. of respondents</i>	212	167	43	20	8	3	1	1
%	46,59%	36,70%	9,45%	4,40%	1,76%	0,66%	0,22%	0,22%
Gender	Male				Female			
<i>No. of respondents</i>	138				317			
%	30,33%				69,67%			

Source: Own processing based on questionnaire information

The research results can be divided into two groups — one that includes questions related to the relationship of the Generation Z members towards the so-called old media (newspaper, radio, TV) and the other, which deals with the approach of Generation Z to the new media, respectively Youtube. Regardless of the relationship toward the specific media, respondents were asked how often they watch (listen, read) the news. Most of the respondents watch the news on daily basis (41%), 34% of

respondents watch them 2 to 4 times a week and 21% watch them at least several times a month. Only 4% of young people are not interested in the news at all.

As the newspaper were considered as a main source of information for older generations, it's not the case for Generation Z members. Only 1,5% of respondents read the newspaper every day, while almost 48% do not read them at all. Such a tepid interest in the newspaper could indicate a shift from the classical media and their content.

Concerning the Youtube, the comparison of the competing old medium - TV, is important to describe. While Youtube is watched every day by 48% of respondents, only 15% of respondents watch the TV every day. Similar and the biggest groups of respondents watch TV 2 to 4 times a week (31%), respectively several times a month (36%). 18% of young people do not watch the TV at all. In this regard, then 91% of students consider Internet to be the most important medium in future. With regard to future, only 3% of respondents deem television important and only 2% deem printed media important. 27% of respondents do not read printed media at all.

The results of questionnaire also show, that Youtube is one of the most important media for young people, with regard to gathering information. According to respondents, the information obtained from Youtube is as relevant as the information obtained from radio.

From the point of view of entertainment, Youtube also plays a significant role. But in this direction results show interesting exception which could be given by the prevailing number of older members of Generation Z. Anyhow, one-third of respondents of this questionnaire (36%) claimed not to watch Youtubers at all. The rest of respondents said that they watch them out of boredom (14%) or because they are interested in new trends (14%) or in the life of Youtubers (7%); only 9% of respondents watch Youtubers instead of television. Regarding the frequency of watching Youtube, 45% of respondents said that they watch Youtube videos occasionally, 5% watch videos every day, 4% watch a new video every time the Youtuber they like publishes it. Only 1% of respondents said that they have their own videoblog, while 5% write their own blog.

Fragmented perception of information is characteristic for the internet. People do not usually focus on only one activity, which is, in this case, represented by watching a video. Respondents stated that they often eat (33%), watch other things on the internet (23%), study or read (12%) and do shopping (4%) while watching videos. Shopping online while watching a Youtuber may thus easily lead to buying items the Youtuber promotes. Only 8% of respondents stated that they watch the video without being engaged in any other activity. The respondents do not distinguish a Youtuber from a Streamer; more than 60% of respondents could not explain these two terms.

From the marketing point of view, it was very interesting to discover that 14% of respondents have already bought some item because it was recommended by a Youtuber. Applied only to respondents who watch Youtubers, the ratio rises to 27%.

If video content recipients have been described, it is - in accordance with the aim of the paper - necessary to describe also the other side of the Youtube broadcasting process - the content creators. According to statistics of SocialBlades, the most followed (subscribed) Youtubers in the Czech Republic are ViralBrothers (2,7 million), GoGoManTV (1,5 million), MenT (880K), JirkaKral (790K) and among top 10 also Misha and his channel called Mishovysilenosti (604K). These numbers do, by no means represent small amount of audience, as the Czech Republic has 10 mil inhabitants in total.

3.1 Case study I: *Mishovysilenosti*

Misha with his English channel "Mishovysilenosti" has 608 thousand followers and 115 million video views at the moment. This channel belongs to the top 10 channels in the Czech Republic and is given a rating B. The Czech version of his channel has only 50 thousand followers. The channel in English gains on average 500 new followers daily. Misha has about 25 videos on each channel and his estimated monthly income is 1,7K - 26,8K USD [14].

In the beginning of the path to success of Michal Florian, (who is currently 10 years old), was one song about a computer game called Minecraft. Misha, who was seven years old at the time, sings in Czech about his love for this game. The song was written by his brother and became a meme quickly, mainly because of easy tune and words. At the moment, this song has passed 3 million views.

Misha started his first Czech channel, when he was 5 years old. At the time, he had 40 followers. Today, the older videos are hidden and his channels started from scratch. At first, Misha started his channel as a letsplayer. One of his early videos was “Letsplayer Misha” and he only recorded his screen when he played popular computer games (the video is not available at the moment).

At the moment, there are two of his channels - one in English with English subtitles and one in Czech. He is addressing topics such as computer games, elections (the election of Donald Trump as the president of USA), Christmas, popular trends (vegan meals), girls etc. He always starts his videos with a sentence “I am here again”. His videos are partly created by various screams that are typical for pre-pubertal children. The videos often contain vulgarisms (“I’m vegan, death to all meat-eaters.” etc.). The singles he uses are written by his older brother. He stated that his audience is mostly based in the USA. Misha publishes most of his videos during the school year – the period, when are the viral videos shared at the fastest rate.

Misha is not the only creator of this channel. His family, (mainly his brother Oldrich, so called Metadon, 21 years old student of law) also contributes to the script. Both parents and his older brother have their own channel (called “I am dad” and “I am mum”), but none of them is so famous. His father films informative videos about brewing, while his mother instructs about painting abstract images. All are, however dedicated to Misha’s channel at the moment, because it represents the largest earnings.

Table 1 – List of Misha’s most famous videos

<i>Name of video</i>	<i>Views in thousands</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Duration</i>
School report	1429	School	1:03
My girlfriend tag	3827	Girlfriend	2:18
Pokemon go song	48458	Games, songs	1:16
Youtube button	2432	Vlog	2:47
Cyber bully channels	9414	Song	1:37
Song for haters	10800	Song	1:46
I’m vegan	5070	Song	1:41
The best League of legends song	2755	Games, songs	1:22
Hillary vs. Trump	2544	Politics, songs	1:42
It’s Christmas	1414	Christmas, songs	2:08
I want to kill Santa Claus	868	Christmas	2:03

Source: Youtube, Mishovysilenosti

Nevertheless, people are sometimes leaving hateful messages in comments below the videos. They mock Misha’s noticeable overbite and his young age, often address him using vulgarisms, and some people even wrote that they wished he was dead. Misha’s videos have also many reaction videos from other Youtubers. Some of them are supportive (i.e. Hoggy, AtiShow), but more of them are not (i.e. Beasty, Matthias, Fatty Pillow, Peeetaa TV).

There are other activities connected to Misha’s Youtube channel, for example MishaCon. Misha’s parents planned to organize this conference in order for Misha’s fans to meet him. This event was supposed to take place in Brno (Czech Republic) in September 2016 [8]. Conference was supposed to be supported by 4 companies – game company, style shop, cloud hosting company (cloud solutions) and company specialized in merchandising products. In the end, the conference did not take place due to other foreign activities Misha was engaged in.

3.2 Case study II: *ViralBrothers*

ViralBrothers channel has 2,7 million followers and 550 million video views as of now. Therefore, it belongs to the top 3 channels in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, it is not updated any more nor does add new videos at the moment. The channel loses followers daily. ViralBrothers are given a rank B and their estimated monthly income is 1,1K - 17,8K USD [14].

Erik Meldik and Cenek Styblo originally wanted to work in television. The video form, which helped them to become famous, is based on the American concept of short Youtube videos "Shit people say" that they themselves have translated as "Moronic crap". Almost every young person knows their "Shit people say" videos, which make fun of stereotypes about different groups of people.

Table 2 – List of main *ViralBrothers*'s videos

<i>Group of videos</i>	<i>Number of videos</i>	<i>Views in thousands</i>
ViralBrothers vs. Girlfriends prank war	32	1889
All revenge pranks!	15	8513
All public and other pranks	9	1211
10.000.000+ views!	11	329
Daily vlogs	612	456
Mini pranks and challenges and comedy!	352	808

Source: Youtube, ViralBrothers

In 2011 they implemented viral advertising in their videos. The advertising message was spread in their humorous, sometimes shocking videos via social networks. For example, the book "Fifty Shades of Gray" appeared in video "Shit mothers say" in various scenes. In "Shit people say in the bathroom" the whole video was shot in the showroom of one trader. In the end of the video they gave links to the company's website.

Currently, ViralBrothers channel was divided into separate units – ViralBrother Erik (292K subscribers) and ViralBrotherCenek (444K subscribers). While Erik started a family and his videos are in the form of daily vlogs, Cenek continues with funny videos. The difference in the number of subscribers is easy to spot. Evidently, the pranks have more views.

Their other common Youtube project is called "SuperHero VS SuperHero" (1.235K followers, 925 million views). This channel is making fun of comic books characters. Their favorite characters are Spiderman, Venom, Batman, Ironman, Hulk, Captain America or Superman.

4 Discussions and Conclusion

From the examples and analysis above, it may seem that the generation Z is wasting a lot of time watching Youtube. The media have transformed from television or radio to online forms and the producers are more amateur. The top rated Youtuber could live next-door or be one of your relatives. Also, many people are trying to make living as a Youtuber. But the Czech scene is overcrowded at the moment.

The Youtube platform seems to have no rules. There are hateful and vulgar videos, but all of them passed through the Youtube Code of Ethics, which altogether respects the freedom of speech. Ethical problems can arise when people watch hidden promotion in videos, which officially claim to show only products testing.

For the purpose of this paper, the focus is on evaluation of Youtube as a marketing communication tool. The Youtube environment has become an important new market. Its domestic growth potential could be predicted by processing the results of its North American model. There is still completely open space for the use of Youtube as a medium and there are many different types of video as means of marketing communication. Youtubers have a great chance to reach groups of young

people who, according to the surveys mentioned above, diverge from the old media including the classic television. Youtube videos represent a promising tool for targeting these audiences.

The importance of YouTube as a marketing channel is also evident with those groups of audiences who do not belong to its direct target group. The results of the conducted research show that current undergraduates, known as Generation Y, consider Youtube to be one of the most important media for gathering information. Nevertheless, when compared to uncritical receiving of information from Youtube by generation Z, who is the target audience of many channels; representatives of the older generation Y doubt the credibility of the media. This fact does not, however, stop them from buying products which were recommended to them by Youtubers.

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