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# The Viral Fingerprint: A Content Analysis of Popular Viral Advertisements

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The University of Southern Mississippi

THE VIRAL FINGERPRINT:  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF POPULAR VIRAL ADVERTISEMENTS

by

Thomas Grant Broadus II

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Science

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August 2011

## ABSTRACT

### THE VIRAL FINGERPRINT:

#### A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF POPULAR VIRAL ADVERTISEMENTS

by Thomas Grant Broadus II

August 2011

This paper presents an analysis of 280 online videos that appeared on the Advertising Age weekly chart of the top ten viral videos of the week; the videos appeared on the chart from March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 to March 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. The videos were analyzed along four areas of observation including the advertiser characteristics, the formatting characteristics of the video, the messaging strategies of each video, and the level of involvement the product would require for a consumer to make a purchase. Through examining the components of each video, a thread of commonality was revealed. Cumulatively, the dominant themes and characteristics within each video provide identifying characteristics, much like a fingerprint, that when utilized together, provide the greatest potential for the marketing video to become a viral experience.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.   LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
Viral Advertising	
Message Strategies in Advertising	
Message Characteristics in Viral Advertising	
Advertiser Characteristics	
III.  RESEARCH QUESTIONS/HYPOTHESIS.....	16
IV.  METHOD.....	19
Design	
Sample	
Procedure	
Measures	
V.   RESULTS.....	25
Advertiser Characteristics	
Advertiser Formats	
Message Strategies	
VI.  DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS.....	37
Discussion	
Implications of Research	
Limitations	
APPENDIXES.....	44
REFERENCES.....	56

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1.	Inter-Coder Reliability.....	22
2.	Country of Origin.....	25
3.	Product Category.....	26
4.	Product Category - Misc. ....	26
5.	Brand Appearance.....	27
6.	Formatting Frame.....	29
7.	Product Category/Television Formatting Frame.....	30
8.	Message Strategy.....	31
9.	Advertising Appeal.....	32
10.	Advertising Appeal - Other.....	33
11.	Product Category/Advertising Appeal.....	34
12.	Advertising Appeal – Involvement.....	35
13.	Level of Involvement/Product Pricing.....	36

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figure

1. Taylor's (1999) Six-Segmented Strategy Wheel.....9
2. True Reach™ (n.d.) Ranking Method.....20

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

With the explosion of online advertising, companies and marketing firms have tried to find the golden ratio for creating advertisements that online users will watch *and* share through online and social media methods.

Research is needed to help understand the effectiveness of viral campaign because of the marketing technique's rise to prominence since the year 2000. From 2001 through 2010, the Internet Advertising Revenue Report reveals the rate of growth for Internet advertising to be over \$4 billion and reaching a new record of \$6.4 billion (Aaron, 2010). This paper will examine the top online commercial videos and deconstruct the videos through the methods the ads utilized as an appeal to the consumers.

More research is needed in the sphere of viral marketing, and specifically in viral video marketing. There are very few studies when compared to the standards of other advertising theories. Leskovec, Adamic, and Bernado produced a 2006 analysis titled *The Dynamics of Viral Marketing*. The basis of the study focused on a person-to-person network that consisted of over 4 million users, and the 16 million recommendations that network produced. This study provided a model that successfully identified communities, products and pricing categories that were positively influenced through viral marketing. Golan and Zaidner (2008) and Porter and Golan (2006) are studies focusing on specific examples of viral video marketing. Porter and Golan's 2006 study focuses on a single viral instance of the subservient chicken Burger King Campaign, while the 2008 study was based around a convenient sample of several viral videos. Continued research in the



area of applying traditional marketing techniques in the changing digital and social media environments could provide valuable insight to the digital consumer.

The purpose of the current study is to study popular advertising videos through the levels of consumer involvement, brand influence and advertising appeals to reveal a viral fingerprint from the significant factors in the most successful online videos from the last several years.

A content analysis will be conducted to examine the videos. The coding was broken into four sections; (a) technical factors, (b) messaging, (c) advertiser characteristics, and (d) involvement. The technical factors coded were title, URL, posting date, and video length. Television formatting frames were also recorded in order to discover if certain story telling methods were more predominant than others in the implementation of a viral video campaign. These formatting frames include straight announcement, presenter, the true testimonial, demonstration, musical, slice of life, lifestyle and computer graphics. The messaging factors section focused on the dominant messaging strategy by applying Taylor's six-segment wheel and by providing a list of the most common emotional and rational advertising appeals. The list of advertising appeals includes sexuality, humor, fun, informational, adventure appeals and a category of other for an instance when an advertising appeal is utilized as the dominant appeal outside the boundaries of this list. The data from the coding process will be applied to the research questions to determine the significance of these factors in the popularity of viral marketing videos. The research questions were drafted around the four main sections of the coding sheet; what are the most popular format characteristics, what messaging

strategies were most frequently utilized, what are the common advertiser characteristics and what was the level of involvement for the product featured in the video.

The general purpose of this research is to add to a larger body of work around the emerging traits, characteristics and methods associated with the term viral marketing through a statistical examination of the most commonly used elements.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Viral Advertising

Marketing firms and companies are constantly looking for new methods to reach consumers with their advertisements. The advertising industry has had to adapt from print to radio to television and now to the web in an effort to reach consumers in the media formats the consumers are utilizing. Even now as web advertising is becoming a norm, new methods focusing on geo-location and cell phones is quickly gaining ground and increasing revenue streams. The modes and methods consumers are using to share advertisements with one another are also changing in the digital age.

In 1996, the venture capital firm Draper Fisher Jurvetson defined viral marketing through their involvement with a groundbreaking free email system called Hotmail. They identified the benefits through viral marketing almost immediately in the Hotmail project.

Viral Marketing captures the essence of multi-level-marketing and applies it to all customers - the "word-of-mouth" spread of the Hotmail message is involuntary. And it's more powerful than many other marketing techniques that lack the implied endorsement from a friend. Hotmail had "Free Email" buttons on several other highly-trafficked web sites, but they generated comparatively negligible numbers of subscriptions. (Jurvetson & Draper, 1997)

From this definition sprung today's concept of viral advertising. In 2000, a standard definition of viral advertising is provided by Dr. Ralph Wilson. Wilson defines this form of advertising as "any strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's

exposure and influence” (Wilson 2000, p. 1). Kirby and Mardsen redefined the term as “viral marketing is any marketing activity that accelerates and amplifies word of mouth in the digital domain” (2005, p. 88). Viral advertising is the new word of mouth, with the difference being that in the digital age consumers are empowered with tools to allow their word of mouth message to be instantly voiced around the globe.

### Message Strategies in Advertising

This study will examine the viral video marketing through the advertising theories of elaboration likelihood model (ELM), involvement and Taylor’s (1999) six-segment wheel. In order to understand why marketers are creating viral marketing videos with such a diverse set of appeals, the informational and transformational advertising channels are examined to provide a complete platform on which the other theories are built.

The base component of “presumably every advertisement” (Puto, 1984, p. 640) is an element of information. This could be a simple mention of the product or a full informational experience revealing product brand data. Puto (1984) lists three points to for an advertisement to be judged as informational:

1. Present factual, relevant information about the brand.
2. Present information which is immediately and obviously important to the potential consumer.
3. Present data which the consumer accepts as being verifiable.

Clear examples of transformational advertising are product taglines, logos or brand mentions. These techniques are common in high involvement products such as car advertisements and low involvement products confectionary items like Juicy Fruit or Orbitz gum.

A transformational advertisement provides the consumer an experience of using or being affected by the product. Puto (1984) provides two points to classify an advertisement experience as transformational:

1. It must make the experience of using the product richer, warmer, more exciting, and/or more enjoyable, than that obtained solely from an objective description of the advertised brand.
2. It must connect the experience of the advertisement so tightly with the experience of using the brand that consumers cannot remember the brand without recalling the experience generated by the advertisement.

An example of a transformation advertisement is the recent Old Spice campaign. The consumer is shown how using Old Spice will make you more worldly and appealing to women, while closely connecting the traditional brand image with new slogans, “hello ladies” and a new product representative in The Old Spice Guy.

Pricing is another traditional advertising factor that is facing a change in digital advertising. Low involvement products such as potato chips are now spending as much as \$3 million per 30-second advertising spot during the Super Bowl™. In 2011 Doritos placed five ads during the Super Bowl™ for a total of \$15 million in advertising dollars spent. Iyer, Soberman, and Villas-Boas (2005) studied the phenomenon of high advertising dollars on low level advertising, “When advertising is expensive, the inability to target advertising leads firms to choose low levels of advertising” (p. 462). The cost of advertising through digital media is not yet on par with television ad buys, so the digital realm is still open to experimentation without the waste of budget dollars that would be applied on network and cable advertising.

ELM was defined by Petty and Cacioppo (1981) as model of two routes of persuasion; central and peripheral. The peripheral route occurs when a viewer decides to agree with the message due to elements other than the facts or ideas within the message. In viral marketing the peripheral view could be affected by factors such as the method the video was shared, and especially who shared the video. In 2009, the blog for The Neilson Company revealed the results of a study in the degree of trust in following forms of advertising. The study measured marketing influencers such as online banner ads, online video ads, TV, consumer opinions posted online and recommendations from people known. The most trusted source was overwhelmingly found to be recommendations from people known with 90% of respondents selecting the option. "Ninety percent of consumers surveyed noted that they trust recommendations from people they know, while 70 percent trusted consumer opinions posted online" ("Global Advertising: Consumers," 2009, n.p.). Online video and banner ads were near the bottom with less than 40% selecting these methods as trusted sources.

The central route of the ELM model consists of the viewer making a thoughtful decision based on the components of the advertisement. These are the facts, arguments and messages sent by the advertisements to the consumers. In online video marketing without a 30 or 60-second time constraint the central route may have more of an opportunity to convince the viewer to make a decision based off of the content.

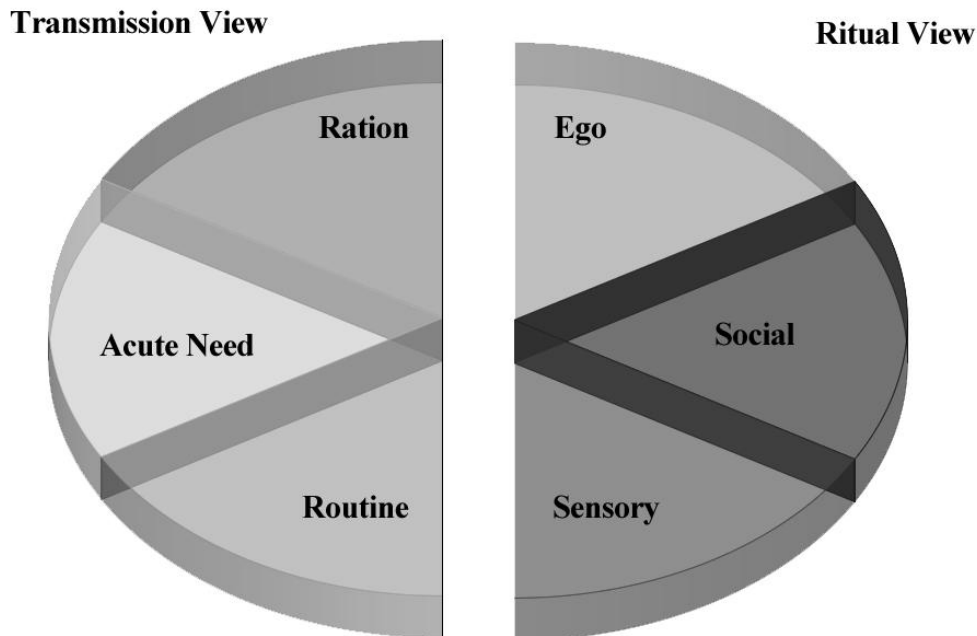
The level of involvement needed by a consumer to be drawn to a product advertisement has shifted as the popular modes of transmission have changed through technology. From word of mouth, to print, to radio, to television and to online consumers marketers we constantly looking for the next way to grab the consumer's attention.

The consumer involvement model is used to measure the degree in which the consumer is involved with the advertised product. The level of involvement is measured in four categories; emotional and rational high involvement along with emotional and rational low involvement. According to Laurent & Kapferer (1985), “depending on their level of involvement, individual consumers differ in the extent of their decision process and their search for information. Depending on the level of involvement required, consumers may be passive or active when they receive advertising communication and limit or extend their processing of this communication” (p. 41).

In a 1991 article discussing the role of consumer involvement in advertising, authors Laura Buchholz and Robert Smith noticed the growing gap between radio and television advertising methods. Buchholz and Smith recognized how “two types of broadcast media-radio and TV-have obvious differences that could seriously affect the way consumers process persuasive messages” (1991, p. 4). The authors continue by explaining the needs of more research on the specific formats and how few models distinguished between radio and TV messaging. With the expansion of advertising from TV to online media, more research needs to be completed to study the change in advertising consumption by online audiences.

In 1999, Ronald Taylor released an article in the *Journal of Advertising Research* that formed the basis for a six-segmented message strategy wheel. This wheel was built around the principle that there was not a single dominant fashion in which advertising caused consumers to react to the ads. “Advertising managers generally accept that there is not one single way in which advertising works” (Taylor, 1999, p. 7). The six-segment wheel is comprised of two main views that are broken down into further subsets. The

transmission view is constructed by ration, acute need and routine. The ritual view is constructed of the Ego, social need, and sensory effects (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Taylor's (1999 p.12) Six-Segmented Strategy Wheel

The six-segmented message strategy while similar to Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) ELM model differs through an expanded scope of measurement properties through the ritual side of the wheel:

At first glance it appears that the left-hand, transmission side of the model would be "central route" and the right-hand side would be "peripheral route." However, further consideration suggests that ELM deals with two levels of informational cues. Therefore, Segment 6 corresponds to the traditional, "merits of the arguments" approach of the central route. Segment 4 and 5 are informational based but made up primarily of what Petty and Cacioppo label peripheral cues"—celebrity spokespersons, hyperbole, emphasis on brand names. Therefore, it is



arguable that ELM is easily subsumed under the transmission side of the strategy wheel. (pp.12-13)

Examining the viral videos through Taylor's six-segmented model more detail can be provided than just a cursory examination of viral marketing utilizing the ELM method.

Golan and Zaidner (2008) applied the six-segmented method to study a convenient sample of online videos. The method was found to be applicable to a study of viral marketing "based on the highly creative strategies on which all viral advertising strategies are based" (p. 960).

This thesis will utilize the research methods from elaboration likelihood model, consumer involvement model and the six-segment messaging strategy to study the most effective methods and emotions utilized in creating viral advertisements. Identifying the common factors in these ads will help advertisers and marketers to understand the methods and emotions that are important triggers in engaging consumers to share videos with their friends, families and social networks. This is important as Neilson reminds companies the most trusted source of advertising is someone the consumer knows.

#### Message Characteristics in Viral Advertising

The realm of viral marketing is constantly evolving and shifting. From the idea of word-of-mouth advertising to groundbreaking geographic location advertising through smart portable devices, marketers are steadily making changes to continue to explore new methods to empower their audiences to spread messages about a certain product, idea or service. Popular viral marketing techniques include; *incentivized viral*, where in return for sharing or talking about a specific product you are rewarded with something related to the product, idea or service; *pass-along*, where a website or a piece of digital media

specifically asks the user to pass-along the content to their friends and personal networks; and *undercover*, a form of viral advertising that tries to conceal the fact of being an advertisement ("What is Viral," 2011).

With this new method of word of mouth advertising, marketers began to explore new techniques to create a buzz around their particular brands. In April 2004, the marketing firm CP+B joined with Burger King to launch an experiment in viral marketing with an ad titled *Subservient Chicken*. "SubservientChicken.com attracted 14 million unique users in just under a year, and sales of the BK TenderCrisp sandwich reportedly increased 9 percent a week" (Porter & Golan 2006, p. 28). The humble *Subservient Chicken* ushered in an era of marketing with the viral campaign by being one of the first major viral success stories. The website subservientchicken.com is still a functioning website though it now redirects the user to the web address <http://www.bk.com/en/us/campaigns/subservient-chicken.html>.

One of the constraints that advertisers could leave behind when utilizing online advertising is the element of length. Advertisements for television generally need to be structured around 30 or 60 seconds in length. Online, advertisements are unbound by time constraints and can use lengthier stories to capture the online consumer's attention. The ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi LA created a hip-hop video for the Toyota Sienna titled *Swagger Wagon*. The commercial has over 8 million views and has a length of 2 minutes and 36 seconds, well beyond the traditional television time allowed. BBH, London created an online advertisement for whiskey maker Johnnie Walker that tells the entire history of the company, the history of the Walker family and the story of the whiskey in a video that runs for over 6 minutes. *Johnnie Walker - The Man Who Walked Around The*

*World* exposed over a million online consumers to the rich history of Johnnie Walker in a way that would never be possible through traditional media. A study of length of viral advertisements does not provide a clear mark in the viral fingerprint of successful viral campaigns.

The Old Spice campaign *Responses* is a collection of 183 videos that run in length of less than 15 seconds and greater than 60 seconds. This campaign was unique through the use of social media in a real-time environment. It was aimed at social media users on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and several other websites with elements of social sharing. The campaign generated over 122 million views across the 183 videos. The landmark campaign created a blueprint strategy for moving from a single viral video into a lasting and purposeful social media advertising campaign. For its work on the project the ad firm Weiden + Kennedy was recognized by Ad Age as the agency of the year.

Television formatting frames are also prominent message characteristics that are utilized by marketers to influence consumers to purchase a product.

Framing has been used as a paradigm for understanding and investigating communication and related behavior in a wide range of disciplines. These include psychology, speech communication (especially discourse analysis and negotiation), organizational decision making, economics, health, communication, media studies, and political communication. (Hallahan, 1999, p. 205)

A selection of formatting frames was utilized to investigate the selected viral videos to reveal the dominant frames within the sample.

The formatting frames utilized are straight announcement, presenter, the true testimonial, demonstration, musical, slice of life, lifestyle and computer graphics. A

category of other was also included if a video was viewed and it contained a frame other than the frames listed. Straight announcement frames are those that portray the advertisement as a product announcement either on camera or via a voice over. The presenter frame utilizes an actor to discuss the subject of the advertisement while the true testimonial includes a personality to discuss an actual event or experience with the featured product from the advertisement. Musical frames utilize a song or a jingle as the main element of the video just as the computer graphics frames will use an element of animation as the dominant aspect of the advertisement. Slice of life framing features a dramatization of real-life situation or problem to which the advertisement provides a solution. Finally, the lifestyle frame features the user of the product rather than the product or the product features.

The final messaging category analyzed is the role of product pricing within the viral marketing videos. This is measured to analyze the importance of pricing in the videos when later compared to the levels of involvement.

Through this collection of characteristics alone, there isn't a clear set of characteristics that provide a correlation to creating a successful viral marketing campaign. *Subservient Chicken* bordered on the absurd with users spending hours on the site trying to see how many actions the chicken could follow. *Swagger Wagon* utilized humor in a music video to appeal to families, *The Man Who Walked Around The World* focused on the history and entrepreneurship of a famous whisky, and *Responses* directly targeted online audiences through appeals to their ego. This study will look to find the factors that share commonalities between the message strategies in popular viral advertisements.

### Advertiser Characteristics

While the medium of internet advertising is a relatively recent phenomenon, traditional advertising characteristics still play a role by providing proven factors in other advertising mediums. One of the important advertiser characteristics is the brand name and the imagery associated with that specific brand name. “Typically marketers think of products being composed of components or attributes. An important attribute is brand name. Advertising is usually intended to increase consumers' affinity for a specific brand. All portals use their brand names to try to extend users' positive feelings for the brand to other products and to companies that are partners” (Montgomery, 2001, pp. 95-96).

The country of origin is also researched to examine the viral video phenomena on a global basis as online commercials are no longer bound to regions, or countries. The move from television to online has allowed advertisers to reach wider audiences than ever before.

The most significant advertiser characteristic is the product category. As advertisers promote their products, researching this characteristic will provide links between the type of product such as a piece of technology or a soda, and the methods of marketing and popularity of certain products in viral advertisements. The product category also influences the consumer based on the consumer's attitude toward a specific product. Mitchell and Olson (1981) opened their research into product attributes with the idea of product attitude as an “Attitude, defined here as an individual's internal evaluation of an object such as a branded product, has been an important concept in marketing research for the past 20 years” (p. 318). A measure of the breadth of the varying product categories will reveal if viral marketing is a niche marketing practice focusing particular

products or if viral marketing has spread as a technique more generally accepted as a new standard in advertising.

Other characteristics to be examined are the brand mentions, and brand exposure within viral marketing videos. In some cases like subservient chicken the brand wasn't immediately identifiable. Ray-Ban had a viral success through the Sunglass Catch video on YouTube. The premise of the video was two guys performing amazing and seemingly impossible stunts where guy1 throws a pair of sunglasses at guy2 and guy2 will catch them on his face. The video has nearly 5 million views, and never mentions Ray-Ban by name; however the pair of sunglasses thrown throughout the video is a pair of Ray-Bans.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS/HYPOTHESIS

The literature review led to the following research questions. The first portion of questions and its components investigate the advertiser characteristics within each video from the sample.

RQ1: What were the advertiser characteristics in the popular viral advertisements that were analyzed?

- RQ1a: What was the country-of-origin in popular viral advertisements?
- RQ1b: What were the most frequent product categories from the sampled viral advertisements?
- RQ1c: When did the brand appear in the sampled viral advertisements? (first third, middle third, last third, or not at all)

The second set of questions investigates the format elements within the viral marketing videos to discover length, music and if computer graphics were used in the videos.

RQ2: What elements were most frequently used in popular viral advertisements studied?

- RQ2a: What was the typical length of the sampled viral advertisements?
- RQ2b: Which television formatting frame was used in creating the video? Straight announcement (on camera or voice-over), Presenter, The true testimonial, Demonstration, Musical commercial (or jingle), Slice of life (dramatization of a real-life situation problem - solution), Lifestyle (user rather than the product), Computer graphics, Other

- RQ2c: Do product categories play a role in the format framing used in the sampled viral advertisements?

The third set of research questions investigates the messaging strategies utilized within the videos, the appeals and the level of involvement each product featured requires from the consumer.

RQ3: What message strategies were most frequently used in the popular viral advertisements that were analyzed?

- RQ3a: What is the dominant messaging strategy based on the six-segment message wheel used in popular viral advertisements? (Ration, acute need, routine, ego, social needs and sensory)
- RQ3b: What was the dominant appeal, informational or transformational, used in the viral advertisement?
- RQ3c: Do product categories play a role in the messaging strategies used in the sampled viral advertisements?

The final set of research questions focus on the type of involvement the product, concept, brand or idea featured in the sample.

- RQ4a: What level of involvement does the product feature require in the viral advertisements that were surveyed? (High involvement | rational, High involvement | emotional, Low involvement | rational, Low involvement | emotional)
- RQ4b: Is product pricing a significant factor in the level of involvement needed for a product in popular viral advertisements?



Along with the research questions, a hypothesis was formed on the assumption of the importance of transformational appeals.

H1: Transformational appeals will be utilized more often than informational appeals in the viral videos analyzed in this study.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHOD

#### Design

This project was executed utilizing a content analysis as the method of research. A content analysis will allow for a thorough evaluation of the viral videos and through inter-coder reliability a standard can be measured to ensure acceptable results. This will be important as this is a quantitative analysis to measure key characteristics utilized in ads that marketers use to evoke emotions and appeal to personal interests. The inter-coder reliability will detect if proper instructions have been given to those asked to watch the viral advertisements and code the data from a code book. Due to the small sample size of 280 videos, two coders were utilized including the author and a person familiar with the website YouTube, where the majority of the sample viral advertisements are found.

A content analysis was chosen over a survey as the study hopes to provide a more quantitative tangible data set to link dominant factors within the viral videos. Surveys might have also be skewed by respondents who are biased towards particular brands or marketing firms.

#### Sample

The top videos in this study were compiled by Visible Measures and published on a weekly top 10 list through Advertising Age. The videos were weighted through three factors; video placements, video views and sentiment analysis. Video placements include seeded placements and viral placements. Viral placements collect instances of all the videos that are connected to the original content. This measure provides an accounting

for duplicates of the original video links and derivative and/or spoof links. Video views are the number of times a particular online video was viewed, not to be confused with the number of unique viewers that have watched the video. Sentiment analysis is determined by online response the audience posts to or about the online video advertisements. These combined factors are the influencers determining the popular ads throughout this paper.

The videos are ranked weekly from March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 to March 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. A total of 180 unique videos were ranked on the chart from a 101-week period. Several of the videos appeared on the charts more than once, but were only coded once. The rankings provide an accounting of several factors in determining the validity of the polls (Figure 2).

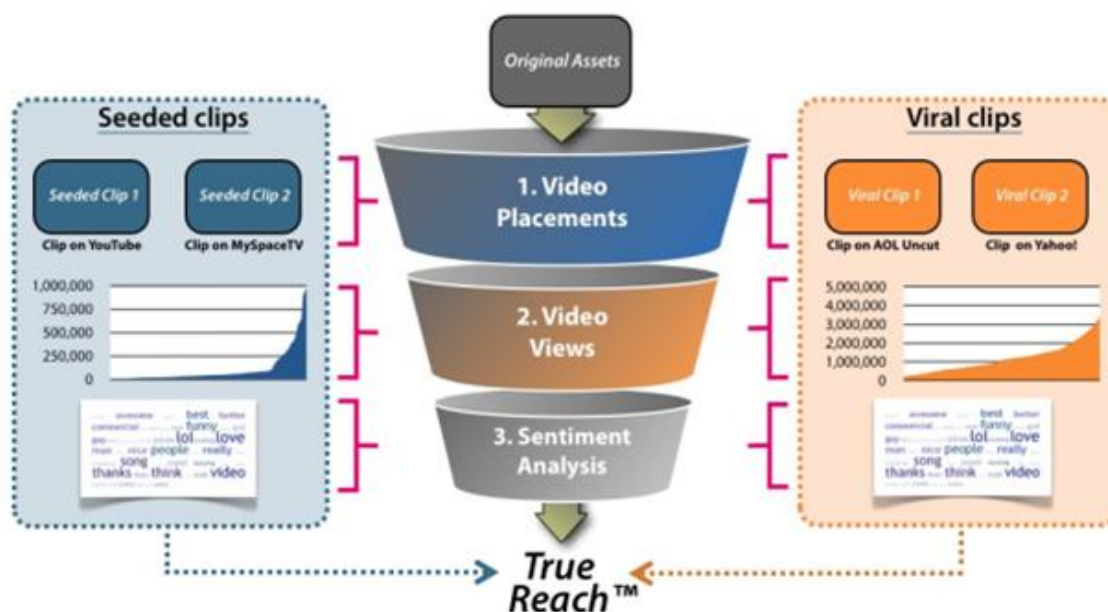


Figure 2. True Reach™ (n.d.) Ranking Method

The results were weighted and released as the True Reach™ of the viral video. This provided a stronger resulting system than just the number of videos the original source video has acquired. “True Reach measurement – including community-driven video copies and derivative works – shows the actual brand impact of an Internet video

campaign. By looking beyond the brand-driven seeded placements and views, our clients have seen increases in campaign reach of more than 300%, all driven by community interaction and responses” (“True Reach™”, n.d., n.p.).

The sample ranking included videos that may have appeared on the chart on a weekly basis due to consistent trending or viewing from online audiences. Videos that appeared more than once on the chart were still only viewed and coded once. The sample also indicates new videos that appear in the weekly rankings and the past rankings of videos that have risen or fallen from previous placement. The complete list of the viral videos being examined for this study is available through the Visible Measures website [http://www.visiblemeasures.com/chart\\_types/archive#AdAgeChart](http://www.visiblemeasures.com/chart_types/archive#AdAgeChart).

#### Procedure

The coding period included coder training and the coding process. The coding process utilized two coders analyzing a sample list of videos outside of the original project sample. A code book was created with clear definitions of every point along the coding sheet and provided to the coders. The coding was entered via an online database that assigns each coder a unique user id. The test sample consisted of 26 viral marketing ads outside of the original sample and was coded and tested for inter-coder reliability using Holsti’s method. If the Holsti score was not at an acceptable level, the testing procedure was redone. If the score is determined to be unacceptable for the testing sample, the code sheet and code book was revised and the sample was re-coded and the Holsti score was measured again. This process was repeated until an acceptable Holsti score was achieved. For this study an acceptable Holsti’s score will be in the  $>.85$  range.

The majority of the scores were in the acceptable range on the first session of testing the sample, with the exception being the question regarding the level of involvement and the question concerning the categories of the dominant messaging strategies. The level of involvement scored at .73 and the messaging strategies scored at .68. After the retraining period all of the coding categories were within the acceptable range of >.85.

Table 1

*Inter-Coder Reliability*

Category	Holtsi's Score
TV Formatting Frame	.95
Messaging Strategy	.89
Advertising Appeals	1.0
Pricing Product	1.0
Country of Origin	1.0
Product Category	1.0
Brand Appearance	1.0
Level of Involvement	.86

## Measures

While analyzing the content from the sample of viral marketing videos utilized through this study, four areas were selected for measurement. The technical factors from each video, the messaging contained within each video, the advertiser characteristics

within each video and the levels of involvement for the products featured within each viral marketing video.

The technical factors measured were selected in a fashion to provide an overview of commonalities the online videos would share from the common nature of online videos. The title of the video, the URL of the video, the date the video was posted, the length of the video and the television formatting frame were recorded to examine the technical factors of the videos. Other factors were also recorded to determine if any other commonalities existed between the viral marketing videos. These include straight announcement, the presenter, the true testimonial, demonstration, musical commercial, slice of life, lifestyle, if the ad included computer graphics or if the frame was something other than these.

The next area examined for the study was the messaging contained within each of the viral marketing videos. There are three areas of interest to the messaging section of the analysis; the dominant messaging strategy, the advertising appeals and the use of product pricing. The dominant messaging strategy is categorized from Taylor's six-segment wheel and asks the coder to evaluate the ad based on if the dominant messaging strategy is the rational need, the acute need, the consumer routine, the consumer ego appeals, the social needs or the sensory appeals. This question focuses on the dominant messaging strategy as more than one of the strategies may be featured in the viral marketing video. The next question focused on the advertising appeals of sex appeal, humor, fun, informational, emotional action and adventure to measure which appeals were most often utilized within the viral marketing videos.

The final messaging category was the role of product pricing within the viral marketing videos. This was measured to analyze the importance of pricing in the videos when later compared to the levels of involvement.

Section three of the coding measures focused on the advertiser characteristics. These characteristics were based around the core of the content used to create the videos. The marketing firm or ad agency that created the spot, the brand itself, the country of origin for the video, the product type, the time the brand was featured and/or mentioned in the video, or if the brand was featured/mentioned at all. These categories were selected to help identify common factors such as which firms have the best track record of creating viral marketing videos and the common techniques utilized by these agencies. Determining the dominant characteristics allows for those creating new campaigns to have a case study of previous success to review. This research will measure the product categories and the number of times each product category appeared within the sample of viral videos. The relationship between the product categories and the level of involvement were compared to determine the significance of their relationship, as was the relationship between product categories and the advertising appeals.

The final section for measurement was the level of product involvement. This category featured one question, what level of involvement does the product featured require from the consumer? The coder must select one of the following options, high involvement | rational, high involvement | emotional, low involvement | rational, and low involvement | emotional. The code book and coding sheet are available in the appendix section.

## CHAPTER V

## RESULTS

Although many companies created videos that were reviewed through this study, many different combinations of elements were utilized with varying results. The research did reveal a pattern emerging from many videos that provide an insight to which products may have the most success through an attempted viral campaign.

## Advertiser Characteristics

The first research question investigated the advertiser characteristics within each video including the country-of-origin, product categories and brand placement through time.

In relation to RQ1a, concerning the country of origin of the viral video the research revealed the overwhelming majority of these videos were created in the United States. The United Kingdom with the other category mainly comprised of Australia and New Zealand with only a handful of videos not spoken in English.

Table 2

*Country of Origin*

Country	# of Instances	Percentage
United States	218	79.3%
United Kingdom	34	12.3%
Other	23	8.4%

Investigating the dominant product categories in question RQ1b reveals videos featuring technology were the most prevalent category with more than twice the number



of entries as the next highest entry, clothing. The fact that technology was the most frequent entry supports the idea of brand managers, campaign managers and marketing firms targeting early adopters through a medium that these early adopters are more adept and understanding and utilizing.

Table 3

*Product Category*

Category	# of Instances	Percentage
Technology (Tech)	79	28.83%
Clothing	33	12.04%
Vehicle	25	9.12%
Health/Beauty	24	8.76%
Beverage (Drink)	23	8.40%
Food	23	8.40%
Misc.*	67	24.45%

\*The misc. category was then separated into the most repetitive entries.

Table 4

*Product Category - Misc.*

Category	# of Instances	Percentage
Financial (Fin)	12	4.38%
Non-Profit (Non-p)	12	4.38%
Sports	11	4.01%
Other*	32	11.68%

\*The other category had no individual entries with a frequency rate over three entries

The question of brand appearance, RQ1c, was important to determine if the significance of branding in viral marketing was as important as it is in traditional advertising of television, magazine and radio marketing. What was discovered is the majority of the videos presented the brand in the first third of the video. Marketers using this timing method are presenting the viewer with the product and the brand at the earliest opportunity within the video. The next largest segment is the number of videos that feature branding in the final third of the video. Finally, a small percentage of advertisers featured their branding in the middle of the videos and an even smaller percentage don't reference or featuring branding in any way. This study does not reveal the relationship between when the brand appeared and the length of the video. A study of this relationship could research if between branding in the final third of a video is more common during longer commercials in an effort to entertain the viewer and leave them with the branding impression as a last thought.

Table 5

*Brand Appearance*

Period of Appearance	# of Instances	Percentage
First Third	169	62.80%
Second Third	10	3.70%
Final Third	85	31.6%
Not at All	5	1.9%

By investigating the advertiser characteristics within the videos a pattern emerged for the majority of these popular videos. The videos were produced for American

audiences around a wide range of products that featured the brand early in the video experience.

### Advertising Formats

The second research question and its components investigated the common format elements for the viral marketing videos to discover the video length and to identify the dominant formatting frame used in the majority of the videos.

The RQ2a reveals the total amount of seconds viewed through the entire body of the research was 16,602. The total number of videos in the sample was 280, with five of these unrecorded due to the videos being either removed or made private. The total seconds watched (16,602) divided by total number of videos watched (275) = 60.37 seconds as an average length. This reveals an interesting fact that as varied as the length in time was between the videos, the average time equaled just over one minute. The shortest videos recorded were 16 seconds in length and the longest being nearly 8 minutes in length.

The second question concerning format elements, RQ2b, asked which television formatting frame was used in creating the video? The categories for the formatting frame were straight announcement (S.A.), presenter, true testimonial (T.T.), demonstration (Demo), musical commercial (M.C.), Slice of life (S.o.L.), lifestyle (user rather than the product), computer graphics (C.G.), and other. The most used framing formats were those that invoked transformational appeals. Slice of life, demonstration, musical and lifestyle framing accounted for over 60% of the frames used, far outweighed information methods such as straight announcement, the presenter and true testimonials.

Table 6

*Formatting Frames*

Type of Frame Utilized	# of Instances	Percentage
Slice of Life (S.o.L.)	65	24.07%
Demonstration (Demo)	58	21.48%
Musical Commercial (M.C.)	47	17.41%
Lifestyle	43	15.93%
True Testimonial (T.T.)	20	7.41%
Straight Announcer (S.A.)	16	5.93%
Presenter	11	4.07%
Computer Graphics (C.G.)	8	2.96%
Other	2	0.74%

The most used framing formats were those that invoked transformational appeals. Slice of life, demonstration, musical and lifestyle framing far outweighed information methods such as straight announcement, the presenter and true testimonials.

To address the roll of product category in the formatting frame used within the sampled viral videos, there was not a significant finding that product categories were connected to specific formatting frames. A chi-square comparison revealed a p value marginally outside of the acceptable range for significance; ( $\chi^2 = 88.52$ ,  $df = 72$ ,  $p = .09$ ). This means that the formatting frames such as slice of life, demonstration and lifestyle representation didn't have a pattern of reliability of frequency with certain product categories such as technology, clothing or health and beauty products.

Table 7

*Product Category/Television Formatting Frame*

Product Category	Which Formatting Frame was the most predominant?*								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9   Total
1. Technology	0	0	2	1	5	6	6	2	1   23
2. Clothing	6	4	5	29	10	14	6	2	1   77
3. Food	2	1	1	1	6	10	2	1	0   24
4. Vehicle	3	1	0	7	2	4	5	2	0   24
5. Health/Beauty	1	0	2	6	1	5	9	0	0   24
6. Beverage	0	1	2	0	2	3	1	1	0   10
7. Financial	0	1	3	6	8	8	7	0	0   33
8. Non-Profit	2	0	2	1	2	2	2	0	0   11
9. Sports	0	0	1	2	2	5	2	0	0   12
99. Other	2	3	2	5	9	8	3	0	0   32
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2   270</b>

\*Key for the Formatting Frames

1. Straight Announcer
2. Presenter
3. True Testimonial
4. Demonstration
5. Musical Commercial
6. Slice of Life
7. Lifestyle
8. Computer Graphics
9. Other

From RQ2 and analyzing the common characteristics and formatting used in the video sample, it was revealed that the average video length was 60.3 seconds, the most common framing for the products were slice of life and demonstration, which combined

for nearly half of the framing for the body of videos, and there wasn't a significant relationship between the formatting frames and the product categories.

### Message Strategies

The third research question and its components investigated the messaging strategies utilized within the videos, the appeals and the level of involvement each product featured requires from the consumer.

RQ3: What message strategies were most frequently used in the popular viral advertisements that were analyzed?

Appeals identified through Taylor's six-wheeled messaging wheel in RQ3a revealed the dominance of transformational appeals as routine and sensory appeals were the most common appeals used with ego appeal not far behind. The marketers were clearly using videos that showed more about how the products may impact your life and image rather than the facts of what the products were and how they worked.

Table 8

#### *Messaging Strategy*

Strategy Category	# of Instances	Percentage
Routine	86	31.97%
Sensory Appeals	82	30.48%
Ego	60	22.3%
Rational	22	8.18%
Social Needs	16	5.95%
Acute Needs	3	1.12%

To determine if the dominant appeal used in the viral advertisement was informational or transformational in nature for RQ3b, advertising appeals were coded and then identified as either a transformational or informational.

The first step was recalling the difference between informational and transformational appeals. Informational appeals represent factual relevant information and transformational appeals focus on the experience of using the product. The appeals that appear with the most frequency are overwhelmingly transformational appeals, specifically through the use of sex and humor.

Table 9

*Advertising Appeal*

Appeals	# of Instances	Percentage
Humor	168	62.45%
Sex Appeal	30	11.15%
Other	71	26.39%

\*The other category was then separated into the most common repeat entries

Table 10

*Advertising Appeals – Other*

Appeals	# of Instances	Percentage
Informational	22	8.25%
Fun	21	7.78%
Emotional	9	3.33%
Action	4	1.48%
Adventure	4	1.48%

A total of nine additional categories were also entered but had only two or fewer entries totaling 4.44% of the advertising appeals category. The research continues to support the use and success of transformation over informational appeals just as it did through Taylor's six-segment wheel of appeals.

Examining the product categories influence on the advertising appeals used in RQ3c revealed a significant relationship between the product categories and advertising appeals with a p value less than .001; ( $\chi^2 = 61.723$ ,  $df = 27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The advertising appeal of humor was utilized as the dominant appeal across every category other than the sports category. Interestingly, sex appeal was utilized more in the viral videos identified as promoting financial services than any other category with 11 of the 33 videos in the category utilizing sex appeal.



Table 11

*Product Category/Advertising Appeal*

Product Category	Which advertising appeal was the most predominant?			Total
	1. Sex Appeal	2. Humor	3. Other	
1. Technology	0	19	3	22
2. Clothing	3	47	27	77
3. Food	4	18	2	24
4. Vehicle	1	14	9	24
5. Health/Beauty	3	19	2	24
6. Beverage	0	9	1	10
7. Financial	11	14	8	33
8. Non-Profit	1	6	4	11
9. Sports	1	4	7	12
99. Other	6	18	9	33
Total	30	168	72	270

In closing out the analysis for RQ3 that focused on messaging strategies and the dominant appeals used within the video sample, the research reveals the dominance of transformational appeals, including those from Taylor's six-wheeled strategy wheel and the appeals identified within the videos through the research process. The relationship between product category and the messaging strategy used was also proven to be significant,  $p < 0.01$ . This exposed the marketers as overwhelmingly focusing on the idea of how the products may impact our lives and social standings as opposed to the facts and

details of why a specific product would be a better purchase than one of that product's competitors.

The last set of research questions focus on the level of involvement the product within each popular viral video needed for consumers to make a purchase of the product.

RQ4a focuses on the type of involvement the product, concept, brand or idea featured in the VMV utilizes.

Table 12

*Advertising Appeal - Involvement*

Appeals	# of Instances	Percentage
Low Involvement Emotional	117	43.01%
High Involvement Rational	81	29.78%
Low Involvement Rational	57	20.96%
High Involvement Emotional	17	6.25%

Low involvement, emotional was the dominant level of involvement from the sample. This shows the majority of items between March of 2009 and March 2011 that were featured on the Advertising Age list of top ten videos featured products that generally didn't need a significant amount of thought towards their purchase and were generally part of a routine buying habit. The research leads to an assumption that popular viral videos from the sample period were created to have an emotional impact on the buyer and to influence those generally thoughtless and routine decisions by connecting the consumer to thoughts of the viral videos and the experiences they provided.

RQ4b provided an analysis of the significance in the level of involvement and the informational advertising technique of product pricing.

Table 13

*Level of Involvement/Product Pricing*

	Was Product Pricing Utilized		Total
	1. Yes	2. No	
Level of Involvement			
1. High Involvement Rational	3	78	81
2. High Involvement Emotional	0	17	17
3. Low Involvement Rational	5	51	56
4. Low Involvement Emotional	8	109	117
Total	16	255	271

The relationship between product pricing was proven to be not significant;

( $\chi^2 = 2.878$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .411$ ). The overwhelming majority of the popular viral videos did not utilize the informational appeal of product pricing; however of the 16 videos within the study that utilized the product pricing strategy, 13 were for low involvement products.

A hypothesis was posed stating transformational appeals will be utilized more often than informational appeals in the viral videos analyzed in this study. The results of the study reveal this hypothesis is supported. The use of transformational appeals was utilized significantly more than informational appeals, and when compared to the majority of the videos having been identified as low involvement products, a pattern emerges of products that are inexpensive, don't require much thought and are marketed focusing on the experience the product may provide rather than the facts about a particular product.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

#### Discussion

Analyzing the most dominant characteristics within the sample viral videos from March 2009 to March 2011 revealed a viral fingerprint that uniquely identifies the most common path used by marketers to create a viral video. The average length of the video is approximately 60 seconds. This is a length commonly used in television marketing, which provides a consumer base that is predisposed to spending at least this amount of time watching commercial breaks on network television. The next point in the viral fingerprint is the dominant product category of technology. This category includes items such as software, websites, mobile phones and other electronic devices including laptops and tablet computers. The study also revealed the brand appears overwhelmingly in the first portion of the video. This supports the idea of the marketers wanting the viewer's first impression of the video to be associated with the featured product. The advertisers generally choose formatting frames designed to show how the product could impact your life and your social standing through slice of life and demonstration framing, but no direct correlation was identified between the advertising characteristics and the dominant formatting frames. Yet there was a significant relationship between the advertising characteristics and the messaging strategies implemented within the viral marketing videos. Transformational appeals were overwhelmingly the dominant appeals implemented by the advertisers on the consumers. Injecting the product into the consumer's routine or appealing to the senses while using humor was the most popular formula throughout the body of the sample of videos. Finally the level of involvement

the consumer needed to purchase the products advertised in the study was classified as low involvement with emotional connections, meaning products with little thought and generally low cost pricing were the most featured products in the popular viral videos.

By combining the dominant characteristics the complete viral fingerprint is revealed as a 60-second ad featuring a technology-based product with the brand mentioned in the first-third of the video, utilizing the format frame of slice of life to showing a dramatization of a real life problem with the product featuring a solution that applies to the viewer's daily routine while using humor as the dominant appeal to the consumer.

The coding process also revealed the other characteristics contained within the viral videos. The originating marketing firm of the each video was record and revealed several firms were hired across a wide breadth of products and brands to create viral experiences for companies, while several companies had great success developing these ads in-house. The marketing firm Weiden + Kennedy was involved in the creation of 19 of the sample videos across the world wide brands of Nike, Old Spice, Target, Chrysler, Heineken and Nokia. For their remarkable work Weiden + Kennedy was honored as the Advertising Age Agency of the Year for 2011. Weiden + Kennedy did have to overcome many challenges on their path to success, namely they had fallen behind their competitors in the realm of digital marketing. "A pivotal moment for the agency, the story notes, came in 2007 when Nike moved its running business to the agency CP+B because that agency was perceived to be more attuned with digital media. The same year, a Wieden +Kennedy staff member says, Wieden told his staff he wanted Wieden + Kennedy to be Digital Agency of the Year by 2010" (Brettman, 2011, n.p.).

Not every company on the list needed a high powered firm to aid in their goal of viral marketing. The Shake Weight® is a product sold as a home fitness item and was designed to sell through infomercials and an online website. The ads for the product were designed internally and two of the ads were selected through the video sample used in this research. In August of 2010, The Shake Weight® reached the milestone sales mark of “\$40 million in revenue” (Rovell, 2010, n.p.) as reported by CNBC and the two viral videos combined for over 4 million views on YouTube.com.

The multi-billion dollar company PepsiCo that produces the carbonated soda Pepsi used a mixed approach for its online video campaigns. The company produced one video in-house and another through the marketing firm Goodby Silverstein & Partners and this firm was featured seven times in the viral sample featuring ads for the brands Pepsi, Chevrolet, Doritos, Dickies and the NBA. Of the two videos for Pepsi that were included in the sample, the video created by Goodby Silverstein & Partners has a running time of 30 seconds. This ad was also one of the Pepsi commercials featured during the 2011 Superbowl® as were three other ads created by the firm. The in-house created ad featured a running time of 2 minutes and 30 seconds, well outside the tradition television commercial window and with Superbowl® ad rates going for an average of “\$2.5 million to \$2.8 million” (Fredrix, 2010, n.p.) per 30-second commercial, this would have cost PepsiCo at least \$12.5 million dollars to air.

#### Implications of Research

This research revealed a pattern of commonalities that can be used in the future to identify products that may benefit from an attempted viral marketing campaign. Though the process may seem repetitive and easy to reproduce, several of the companies that

produced successful viral campaigns also produced failed viral marketing campaigns. The brands General Motors, Motrin and Sony have all experienced backlash from experimenting with viral marketing. In 2006, General Motor's created a campaign where visitors to their website could create their own advertisement for the new Tahoe SUV. The issue was most of the advertisements were negative discussing the size and poor gas mileage of the new model SUV. Later in that same year Sony was outed by savvy Internet investigators that were skeptical of their *I Want a PSP for Christmas* campaign. Sony tried to create a viral experience based on a video of what seemed to be a person that wrote raps and uploaded the videos on Youtube.com. It was soon revealed the rapper was a paid actor by Sony and the backlash was immediate. Sony issued an apology and ended the campaign. A few years later, in 2008, Motrin created a viral video that created such a negative reaction on the social sharing website Twitter.com that Motrin removed the video and issues an apology to their consumers. Through closely examining successful campaigns marketers looking to create a viral experience will have access to research on a collection of the characteristics of viral videos from a two year cycle.

#### Limitations

While this study focuses on the components and make-up of popular viral videos, it doesn't take into account the networks utilized to spread these videos. Just as a virus has the potential to spread to other people, in order to spread the virus needs a mode of transportation through a sneeze, cough, or some other contact to spread and infect a larger population. In the same manner viral campaigns need to have a mode of transportation to spread across the World Wide Web. Generally this social sharing is carried out through

popular websites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and social link sharing sites similar to reddit.com, digg.com and fark.com. Research into the uses and users of these networks may reveal certain sites are better suited to particular components of viral videos providing for a higher rate of visibility.

The influence of the communal nature though sharing viral videos should be studied in future research. Thomas Valente writes in a 1996 article discussing social networks that “two possible external sources of influence on adoption of innovations are cosmopolitan actions and communication media” (p.74). Valente defines a cosmopolitan action as a time or the moment when someone relates their local social system to a larger environment by providing links to outside information. In the 1996 article, Valente was not referencing online social networks, but this research finds the correlations are very similar and impactful in the context of online media. A survey of online users that are familiar with sharing viral videos may provide insight to social and economic data to reinforce Valente’s findings as they are juxtaposed with online social networks.

Another limitation was a small number of the videos from the sample were unavailable due to either being removed or being made private. In total 10 videos from the sample of 280 were unavailable. Some data recorded during the coding process for the 10 unavailable videos, but a complete record of these 10 videos was not obtained.

Other considerations towards marketing practices such as astroturfing are not discussed as the detection of these techniques would require access to site server logs to determine single users posting under multiple accounts in order to bolster the web traffic to their videos. Some companies will even go to the lengths of hiring a firm that specializes in posting good reviews for a product, inflate views for a particular website,



or increase the number of views on a video. A Google search for the term “pay for views on youtube” reveals a link with one offer for paying “\$1.50 for 5000 video views” (Chan, 2008 p. 1). The date from the forum entry reveals the astroturfing technique was well underway during the time period from the video sample.

The most glaring limitation any study will have when studying the creation and implementation of viral videos is that while we can identify the common and dominant characteristics of viral marketing videos, there is no guarantee of how the public will perceive the video, and if people will share it. The single greatest hope a marketer can have when tasked with creating a viral campaign, is to not in fact create a video with the hope of going viral, but rather to create content that people will share with one another. In 2010, the educational television program Sesame Street produced a video spoof of the Old Spice *The Man Your Man Could Smell Like* campaign featuring the popular muppet character Grover. The website mashable.com interviewed Miles Ludwig, Vice President and Executive Producer of Digital Media at Sesame Street Production after the video became a viral success story. “If you’re looking for clear advice on how to make your own YouTube campaign go viral, you won’t find it here though.” Ludwig believes there’s “no secret formula for a guaranteed viral hit,” and that the Sesame Workshop was “fortunate that the online community has responded to this video” (Axon, 2010, n.p.).

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a popular image began to circulate around the Internet and it was shared with me through the website Twitter.com by @shawnz as a retweet of a post by @pinterest. The image states with a simple elegance what the creative process of creating a viral marketing video should be, and the mindset and expectations the creators should have towards their content. The knowledge of viewing habits, marketing

techniques and appeals is important in the process but these are only a few factors in the process of understanding the world-of-mouth advertising consumers are immersed in on a daily basis. The image says simply “Don’t plan to be viral. Plan to be awesome.”

## APPENDIX

## CODE BOOK, CODE SHEET, AND VIDEO SAMPLES

**I. Code Book****Section I. Technical Factors**

Title of Video: Record the title of the video being analyzed

URL of Video: Record the web address of the video being analyzed

Date of Original Video: Record the date the video was originally posted

Length of Video Response: Record the length of the video

Television Formatting Frame: identify which television formatting frame was the dominant frame used for the video

1. Straight announcement (on camera or voice-over)
2. Presenter
3. The true testimonial
4. Demonstration
5. Musical commercial (or jingle)
6. Slice of life (dramatization of a real-life situation problem - solution)
7. Lifestyle (user rather than the product)
8. Computer graphics
9. Other – please list the formatting frame used if it is not one of the choices provided through options 1-8.

**Section II. Messaging**

Messaging Strategy: Identify the ad's main messaging strategy through Taylor's 6-wheeled messaging strategy

1. Rational – based on the consumer's need of information
2. Acute Needs – based on the consumer's immediate need
3. Routine – stresses on the role of a product in a consumer's routine
4. Ego - product appeals to individual's perceptions of who they are (or who they want to be)
5. Social Needs - This advertising strategy introduces another person into the purchasing decision
6. Sensory Appeal - advertisers appeal to consumers' senses of smell, touch, hearing, taste, or sight.

Advertising Appeals: Record any of the advertising appeals portrayed in the video

1. Sex Appeal
2. Humor
3. Other – but please provide the appeal if other than sex appeal and humor

Product Pricing: Record if product pricing was featured in the video

### Section III. Advertiser Characteristics

Marketing Firm or Advertising Agency responsible for video: Record the name of the firm that created the video

Brand Being Advertised: Record the brand that is the focus of the video

What is the country of origin for the video?: Record the video's country of origin.

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. Other – if the country of origin is not the United States or from the United Kingdom, please list

What was the product category?: Record the type of product being analyzed.

Was the brand mentioned in the video?: Record if the brand name was mentioned in the video. If the brand was mentioned in the video, also record the time at which the brand was mentioned.

1. First third of the video
2. Second third of the video
3. Last third of the video
4. Not at all

Level of Involvement: Record the level involvement for purchasing required by the product being featured.

1. High involvement | rational - On the consumer side, high involvement / rational purchases tend to be linked to high cost.
2. High involvement | emotional - high involvement / emotional purchases can include jewelry, weddings, and holiday travel plans.
3. Low Involvement | rational - things we buy out of habit, without much thought.
4. Low Involvement | emotional – things we don't spend much time thinking about the purchase

## II. Code Sheet

### Section I. Technical Factors

Title of Video

URL of Video

Date of Original Video

Length of Video Response (format as m:ss, example :39 or 1:02)

Which television formatting frame was the most predominant used in creating the video?

1. Straight announcement
2. Presenter
3. The true testimonial
4. Demonstration
5. Musical commercial
6. Slice of Life
7. Lifestyle
8. Computer graphics
9. Other

If other please list

### Section II. Messaging

What is the dominant messaging strategy in the video?

1. Rational
2. Acute needs
3. Routine
4. Ego
5. Social needs
6. Sensory Appeal

Advertising Appeals

1. Sex appeal
2. Humor
3. Other

If Advertising Appeals are Other please list

Was product pricing featured in the video?

1. Yes
2. No

### **Section III. Advertiser Characteristics**

Marketing Firm or Advertising Agency responsible for video  
Brand Being Advertised

What is the country of origin for the video?

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. Other

What was the product category?

1. Beverage
2. Technology
3. Food
4. Vehicle
5. Health/beauty
6. Financial
7. Clothing
8. Sports
9. Non-profit
99. Other

If product category is other, please list

When did the brand first appear in the video?

1. First third of the video
2. Second third of the video
3. Last third of the video
4. Not at all

### **Section IV. Involvement**

What level of involvement does the product featured require?

1. High Involvement | Rational
2. High Involvement | Emotional
3. Low Involvement | Rational
4. Low Involvement | Emotional

### III. Video Sample

<u>Title of Video</u>	<u>URL of Video</u>
The Butterfinger Defense League	<a href="http://dai.ly/hsCg3r">http://dai.ly/hsCg3r</a>
MoveOn Political Action - Protect Insurance Companies	<a href="http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/041b5acaf5/protect-insurance-companies-psa">http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/041b5acaf5/protect-insurance-companies-psa</a>
Best Of US Challenge	<a href="http://www.sportpost.com/video/view/Rafael+Nadal++Tennis+Ball+Pick+Up+Challenge">http://www.sportpost.com/video/view/Rafael+Nadal++Tennis+Ball+Pick+Up+Challenge</a>
For Good Clean Getaways	<a href="http://www.streetfire.net/video/Yaris-Clean-Getaways_725221.htm">http://www.streetfire.net/video/Yaris-Clean-Getaways_725221.htm</a>
Get More G's	<a href="http://youtu.be/_ACK09MLgaY">http://youtu.be/_ACK09MLgaY</a>
Live Young	<a href="http://youtu.be/_PHnRIn74Ag">http://youtu.be/_PHnRIn74Ag</a>
Food Fight	<a href="http://youtu.be/0736QlhQIAc">http://youtu.be/0736QlhQIAc</a>
Meet the Parents	<a href="http://youtu.be/0DUPQbz-F_M">http://youtu.be/0DUPQbz-F_M</a>
The Chromium OS Project	<a href="http://youtu.be/0QRO3gKj3qw">http://youtu.be/0QRO3gKj3qw</a>
School Band Rap	<a href="http://youtu.be/1CTDEteVMIA">http://youtu.be/1CTDEteVMIA</a>
Windows 7 Launch Party	<a href="http://youtu.be/1cX4t5-YpHQ">http://youtu.be/1cX4t5-YpHQ</a>
Shaving Tips From Gillette	<a href="http://youtu.be/1TiJNewpCnY">http://youtu.be/1TiJNewpCnY</a>
Tweet Race	<a href="http://youtu.be/2AiEy3eD8VU">http://youtu.be/2AiEy3eD8VU</a>
Dickies 874 vs 1850cc	<a href="http://youtu.be/2e_m9T1nqBY">http://youtu.be/2e_m9T1nqBY</a>
Really Save	<a href="http://youtu.be/2fXsfAeqimY">http://youtu.be/2fXsfAeqimY</a>
The Porno Guy	<a href="http://youtu.be/2HWEXUzzmDY">http://youtu.be/2HWEXUzzmDY</a>
Star Wars Voices	<a href="http://youtu.be/2ljFfL-mL70">http://youtu.be/2ljFfL-mL70</a>
The Fun Theory	<a href="http://youtu.be/2lXh2n0aPyw">http://youtu.be/2lXh2n0aPyw</a>
Cow Gives Birth To A Dude	<a href="http://youtu.be/3E-pHMN4DyA">http://youtu.be/3E-pHMN4DyA</a>
Zune - Portable Perfection	<a href="http://youtu.be/3psd0AFAquU">http://youtu.be/3psd0AFAquU</a>
Odor Blocker	<a href="http://youtu.be/3tI4CbCniBI">http://youtu.be/3tI4CbCniBI</a>
Adidas - Star Wars Cantina 2010 FIFA World Cup	<a href="http://youtu.be/3Zd_khk6zXo">http://youtu.be/3Zd_khk6zXo</a>
Hunter Shoots a Bear	<a href="http://youtu.be/4ba1BqJ4S2M">http://youtu.be/4ba1BqJ4S2M</a>
The Entrance	<a href="http://youtu.be/4mOHGWM3hmw">http://youtu.be/4mOHGWM3hmw</a>
Snow Globes	<a href="http://youtu.be/4TMwBfK2qHI">http://youtu.be/4TMwBfK2qHI</a>
Google Chrome - Chrome Shorts	<a href="http://youtu.be/5535Ts-iOP0">http://youtu.be/5535Ts-iOP0</a>
Earl and Tiger	<a href="http://youtu.be/5NTRvIrP2NU">http://youtu.be/5NTRvIrP2NU</a>
Spring Break It Down	<a href="http://youtu.be/6aMK8x3fZrc">http://youtu.be/6aMK8x3fZrc</a>
Talking Filet Of Fish	<a href="http://youtu.be/6bJOIqVAD-s">http://youtu.be/6bJOIqVAD-s</a>
Train De Nuit	<a href="http://youtu.be/6ljQDJ4EILc">http://youtu.be/6ljQDJ4EILc</a>
Love Project	<a href="http://youtu.be/7JHAXqwrGoI">http://youtu.be/7JHAXqwrGoI</a>
Epic Rap Battle	<a href="http://youtu.be/7ov1DDjHt8c">http://youtu.be/7ov1DDjHt8c</a>
Vat19.com - World's Largest Gummy Worm	<a href="http://youtu.be/7RXmNRr8x7I">http://youtu.be/7RXmNRr8x7I</a>
Compact Conspiracy	<a href="http://youtu.be/8gPhEnPqNf8">http://youtu.be/8gPhEnPqNf8</a>
Black Beetle	<a href="http://youtu.be/8ulbjaKmKG0">http://youtu.be/8ulbjaKmKG0</a>
Kelly: The Prequel	<a href="http://youtu.be/9_YvesLycys">http://youtu.be/9_YvesLycys</a>
Megan Fox	<a href="http://youtu.be/9D2VLMcPTbQ">http://youtu.be/9D2VLMcPTbQ</a>
Back To School For Pennies	<a href="http://youtu.be/AcD9Yz3pMnc">http://youtu.be/AcD9Yz3pMnc</a>
Super Sexy CPR	<a href="http://youtu.be/ADE3t7uB3AM">http://youtu.be/ADE3t7uB3AM</a>
Avril Lavigne Perfume - Black Star	<a href="http://youtu.be/amtzsm498CY">http://youtu.be/amtzsm498CY</a>

Never Knowingly Undersold  
 iPod Touch All Kinds of Fun  
 Clever Hamsters  
 The Fixers  
 Demo Slam  
 Novak Djokovic  
 Playoff Proposal  
 LeBron Rise  
 United Health & Susan G. Komen For The  
 Cure- Team Ra-Ras Kicks Breast Cancer  
 Twilight Football  
 Get A Mac - Surgery  
 Way Back Home  
 Nike Skateboarding - Today Was A Good  
 Day  
 Welcome to Planet Power  
 Crash The Super Bowl 2010  
 BoobyBall  
 The Sanitary Solution  
 Cisco SIO iPhone App  
 Roger Federer Trick Shot  
 Extreme Sheep LED Art  
 Booty Pop  
 Opera Unite  
 Write the Future  
 Experience The Unexpected  
 Google TV  
 Homestyle Macaroni and Cheese  
 GMC Pickup Games  
 Droid Does  
 Bridgestone - Carma  
 There's A Map For That  
 Get It On  
 Windows Phone 7  
 Nothing To Hide  
 Gymkhana Three  
 Nexus One Vloggers  
 Don't Drink Yourself Fat  
 Where Amazing Happens - Post Season  
 Tony Hawk Ride  
 Workout  
 All Day Mobility  
 Lewis Hamilton and the RC Office Grand  
 Prix  
 iPhone Coming to Verizon  
 Master of Business Card Throwing

<http://youtu.be/asfhGQz0oYc>  
<http://youtu.be/av4RXjZHDqE>  
<http://youtu.be/AxBJlx3NAQ>  
[http://youtu.be/B\\_Hzd6sbbIg](http://youtu.be/B_Hzd6sbbIg)  
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<http://youtu.be/FiLoANg6nNY>  
<http://youtu.be/FIN3BgsV1nc>  
<http://youtu.be/FVq0HdiM-Ok>



Teriyaki Burger (Audrina)  
 Plane Stupid - Polar Bears  
 Sexy Pilgrim  
 Brick Thief  
 Choose Your Side  
 The Digital Story of the Nativity  
 Windows 7 Was My Idea  
 Browse Better  
 Word Lens  
 Embrace Life  
 It's A Kindle  
 Bud Light Super Bowl 2010  
 Munch Better Contest  
 NFL Best Fans Ever  
 It's The Gecko  
 Cream  
 Crash the Super Bowl 2011  
 Gymkhana Two  
 A New Way To Roll 2009  
 Hockey Rules  
 Most Valuable Puppets  
 Clown  
 Happiness Truck  
 Canned Confessions  
 The Woman You'd Love Your Woman to Be  
 Like  
 Xbox Project Natal  
 Rocket Car  
 T-Shirt War  
 Jay-Z Music Without Limits  
 Focus Group  
 One Gift. A Thousand Fantasies.  
 Dokken vs Chicken: Norton Antivirus  
 Firewall - Don Dokken | Norton  
 NEW Uncensored E\*TRADE Baby  
 Go World  
 Samsung- YouTube HD Camera Trick  
 Challenge  
 Grab A Seat  
 Mow The Lawn  
 DropTheWeapons.org - A Different Ending  
 Temperature Rising  
 Bridgestone Super Bowl 2010  
 Winkers  
 HardChorus  
 Armchair Viewing Refined

[http://youtu.be/fw\\_fd5T7IaQ](http://youtu.be/fw_fd5T7IaQ)  
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[http://youtu.be/k6PSbUl\\_68k](http://youtu.be/k6PSbUl_68k)

E\*TRADE Singing Baby  
 What Drives Edward  
 Camaro Super Bowl 2011  
 2010 Nobel Peace Prize  
 Oh Africa  
 America's Favorite  
 YouTube Symphony Orchestra 2011  
 E\*TRADE Super Bowl 2010  
 Most Valuable Puppets Christmas  
 Make The Most Of Now  
 Cute Girl Has A Catchy Dance  
 Megawoosh (Make It Possible)  
 AllOver Body Deodorant  
 Hack Job  
 Carousel  
 Laptop Hunters  
 Happiness Machine  
 World's Manliest Rituals  
 Mayhem Is Coming  
 Walk Across America  
 The PEN Story  
 Kobe Bryant is, "The Black Mamba".  
 Directed by Robert Rodriguez. Official  
 Trailer 1  
 Perfect Length  
 Clean Your Balls  
 Ready For Holiday Cheer  
 Clean It Up  
 Alton Towers / Test Drive Bras  
 Welcome Back  
 Chrome Speed Tests  
 Summer  
 Goodbye 1984: Super Bowl Ad Teaser  
 Rise Wake Up Calls  
 Mattress Dominoes World Record Attempt  
 How To Eat A Burger  
 Responses  
 Seriously Strong Cheddar  
 Fishing  
 Smule - I Am T-Pain  
 Lizard Ballad: All For You  
 Double Pits To Chesty  
 Parisian Love  
 Purina Beyond  
 Fearless WEB  
 Rear View Girls  
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[http://youtu.be/Nwlb\\_OkUY9E](http://youtu.be/Nwlb_OkUY9E)  
<http://youtu.be/nYVT4176ONc>

Fast Don't Lie	<a href="http://youtu.be/O-a9lx3pOC4">http://youtu.be/O-a9lx3pOC4</a>
Liquid Mountaineering	<a href="http://youtu.be/Oe3St1GgoHQ">http://youtu.be/Oe3St1GgoHQ</a>
Acrobuttocks	<a href="http://youtu.be/oiNaadVOQEM">http://youtu.be/oiNaadVOQEM</a>
LEGO CL!CK	<a href="http://youtu.be/OinrOnjzH_A">http://youtu.be/OinrOnjzH_A</a>
Beyonce 100 Single Ladies Flash-Dance	
Piccadilly Circus, London	<a href="http://youtu.be/OLj5zphusLw">http://youtu.be/OLj5zphusLw</a>
Brisk Machete	<a href="http://youtu.be/onZy29z3jso">http://youtu.be/onZy29z3jso</a>
Sing-a-long in Trafalgar Square	<a href="http://youtu.be/orukqxeWmM0">http://youtu.be/orukqxeWmM0</a>
The Man Your Man Could Smell Like	<a href="http://youtu.be/owGykVbfgUE">http://youtu.be/owGykVbfgUE</a>
Product Testing Institute	<a href="http://youtu.be/p2AP3VMakpA">http://youtu.be/p2AP3VMakpA</a>
Make It Great	<a href="http://youtu.be/P8Coy-YZBt4">http://youtu.be/P8Coy-YZBt4</a>
10:10 mini-movie - No Pressure	<a href="http://youtu.be/PDXQsnkuBCM">http://youtu.be/PDXQsnkuBCM</a>
Tag Your Green	<a href="http://youtu.be/Peq1DTd4wpg">http://youtu.be/Peq1DTd4wpg</a>
EMC 20% Guarantee	<a href="http://youtu.be/pfBNWnvQGPw">http://youtu.be/pfBNWnvQGPw</a>
Nannerpus	<a href="http://youtu.be/pkp1k4TNJNA">http://youtu.be/pkp1k4TNJNA</a>
Make Your Money Multiply With Us	<a href="http://youtu.be/pm7BEQM9Yys">http://youtu.be/pm7BEQM9Yys</a>
Best Buy Super Bowl 2011	<a href="http://youtu.be/pS9sUm5Y0sg">http://youtu.be/pS9sUm5Y0sg</a>
The Cup Size Choir	<a href="http://youtu.be/Q5wNafq4v-E">http://youtu.be/Q5wNafq4v-E</a>
HP Can Do That	<a href="http://youtu.be/Q8R57kVqCEQ">http://youtu.be/Q8R57kVqCEQ</a>
Clothing Drive	<a href="http://youtu.be/QDMquUQE0aU">http://youtu.be/QDMquUQE0aU</a>
Misunderstanding   Chevy Cruze   Super Bowl Ads	<a href="http://youtu.be/qFFWGT_GzYo">http://youtu.be/qFFWGT_GzYo</a>
Be Stupid (Spring/Summer 2010 Collection)	<a href="http://youtu.be/QmmmZUS4JBA">http://youtu.be/QmmmZUS4JBA</a>
Kia Soul Who's Next? Competition - Episode #1	
Sugar Streak	<a href="http://youtu.be/qmN03J3IARI">http://youtu.be/qmN03J3IARI</a>
Old Spice Man is Back	<a href="http://youtu.be/QNDfCeePRCE">http://youtu.be/QNDfCeePRCE</a>
Greatest Smell in the NFL	<a href="http://youtu.be/qt6iEGzLPjg">http://youtu.be/qt6iEGzLPjg</a>
Legendary Stories of Duramax and Allison	<a href="http://youtu.be/qYONjCr26KY">http://youtu.be/qYONjCr26KY</a>
iPhone 4 Face Time	<a href="http://youtu.be/R1wbQdVezio">http://youtu.be/R1wbQdVezio</a>
Symphonia	<a href="http://youtu.be/R3nSoEhY8SM">http://youtu.be/R3nSoEhY8SM</a>
The Force	<a href="http://youtu.be/R55e-uHQna0">http://youtu.be/R55e-uHQna0</a>
Music Experiment	<a href="http://youtu.be/RAgyDhWk5tE">http://youtu.be/RAgyDhWk5tE</a>
Discover What's New In Your World	<a href="http://youtu.be/rIpD7hfffQo">http://youtu.be/rIpD7hfffQo</a>
A Mayne & His Razor	<a href="http://youtu.be/ROqtIIRfJ14">http://youtu.be/ROqtIIRfJ14</a>
Sunday Driver	<a href="http://youtu.be/rSMQM4ASGRg">http://youtu.be/rSMQM4ASGRg</a>
Know The Signs	<a href="http://youtu.be/RTJ8uhT6dDY">http://youtu.be/RTJ8uhT6dDY</a>
Where Freshness Smells From	<a href="http://youtu.be/s1l4wRt7TJ8">http://youtu.be/s1l4wRt7TJ8</a>
Come As You Are	<a href="http://youtu.be/SBUKuA9nHsw">http://youtu.be/SBUKuA9nHsw</a>
7 Billion	<a href="http://youtu.be/sc4HxPxNrZ0">http://youtu.be/sc4HxPxNrZ0</a>
Imported From Detroit	<a href="http://youtu.be/SKL254Y_jtc">http://youtu.be/SKL254Y_jtc</a>
A Woman's World	<a href="http://youtu.be/sUUbzJ3LjK0">http://youtu.be/sUUbzJ3LjK0</a>
Bikini Cinema	<a href="http://youtu.be/t4d7qptGDfA">http://youtu.be/t4d7qptGDfA</a>
I'm On A Mac	<a href="http://youtu.be/T8FnACj25xM">http://youtu.be/T8FnACj25xM</a>
Cranberry Apple Walnut Chicken Salad (Kim Kardashian)	<a href="http://youtu.be/T9U0JmdMjsM">http://youtu.be/T9U0JmdMjsM</a>

Weezer Snuggie  
 YouTube Turns 5  
 Microsoft Store Flash Dance  
 John & Kylie's Roadtrip  
 Eyebrow Dance  
 Young Guns  
 Tony Stewart  
 Cyber Shot DSC TX 7  
 The Return of The Man Your Man Could  
 Smell Like  
 Slow Motion  
 Two is Better Than One  
 DieHard Torture Labs  
 Mountain Dew Fast Food Folk Song (at the  
 Taco Bell Drive-Thru)  
 A New Way To Nano  
 'The Situation' and Bristol Palin Talk Sex  
 Go Fans 2010 FIFA World Cup  
 Start Building 2010  
 2-Day Sale 2010  
 DieHard Batteries - Diehard Batteries vs.  
 So Not What Mom Would Wear  
 T-Mobile Dance  
 Microsoft Office 2010: The Movie Teaser  
 Kevin Butler "Moves" from the FUTURE  
 Driven By Fun  
 Never Hide Face Tattoo  
 Miley & Max  
 Conan O'Brien  
 Western Bacon Cheeseburger (Padma)  
 Green Police  
 Cosmopolitan, Nivea - Bikini Bash  
 The Tip  
 You're Not You When You're Hungry  
 Give It A Ponder  
 The Shake Weight For Men  
 Square Butts  
 Life In A Day  
 Xbox Kinect Debut  
 SNICKERS - "Logging"  
 Tebow  
 Super, Natural British Columbia  
 Get A Shake Weight Now  
 ProSeries  
 I've got Chic in My Pants  
 Meet iPad  
<http://youtu.be/tAoWEPwLsms>  
<http://youtu.be/Tlmho7SY-ic>  
<http://youtu.be/TSAXEVXvNz8>  
<http://youtu.be/TTP7Rm7sj6E>  
<http://youtu.be/TVblWq3tDwY>  
<http://youtu.be/twNAZq5uPq8>  
<http://youtu.be/uDqOd-ZDmL8>  
<http://youtu.be/uhHMWLjL77U>  
  
<http://youtu.be/uLTIowBF0kE>  
<http://youtu.be/uNd2wyEmmfU>  
<http://youtu.be/uTnIO-QnKkE>  
<http://youtu.be/UUNg9LYqUwQ>  
  
<http://youtu.be/-uwY3sjqYX0>  
<http://youtu.be/UXUNGfL4ZAw>  
<http://youtu.be/UyWkLxNAh30>  
[http://youtu.be/-vbHW\\_hf7gg](http://youtu.be/-vbHW_hf7gg)  
<http://youtu.be/Vd6tC-1YoWE>  
<http://youtu.be/VFBsxwKHT14>  
<http://youtu.be/vktqUM0VDtU>  
<http://youtu.be/VMxyZQfMmM4>  
<http://youtu.be/VQ3d3KigPQM>  
[http://youtu.be/-vU9Up\\_2644](http://youtu.be/-vU9Up_2644)  
<http://youtu.be/w0puP8nrIU8>  
<http://youtu.be/W4o0ZVeixYU>  
<http://youtu.be/wH1tTlq5-Qk>  
<http://youtu.be/wIOWAllaPTk>  
<http://youtu.be/wIZCtDjFPw>  
<http://youtu.be/wNaB35-1x9M>  
[http://youtu.be/Wq58zS4\\_jvM](http://youtu.be/Wq58zS4_jvM)  
<http://youtu.be/wUz0g2yJ7Mw>  
<http://youtu.be/x1ALjzoNLvE>  
[http://youtu.be/X1Sv\\_z9jm8A](http://youtu.be/X1Sv_z9jm8A)  
<http://youtu.be/x8H4CB6ok4E>  
<http://youtu.be/xbsSeVr5NSI>  
<http://youtu.be/xDJP6yUdNsw>  
<http://youtu.be/XMxuocCN1O0>  
<http://youtu.be/XnNZapttFZE>  
[http://youtu.be/XO\\_uJVL8KkA](http://youtu.be/XO_uJVL8KkA)  
<http://youtu.be/xqReTDJSdhE>  
<http://youtu.be/xwSCHRQCIBY>  
<http://youtu.be/xXHUdvvHTkw>  
<http://youtu.be/y9UBPsYgu2s>  
<http://youtu.be/ydWMY8cYPUU>  
<http://youtu.be/yIFiFntb4lo>

Odor Shield Jumbotron	<a href="http://youtu.be/yo_-vjUEHV_s">http://youtu.be/yo_-vjUEHV_s</a>
Will it Blend?	<a href="http://youtu.be/YwXX2aqHRME">http://youtu.be/YwXX2aqHRME</a>
Danny MacAskill April 2009	<a href="http://youtu.be/Z19zFIPah-o">http://youtu.be/Z19zFIPah-o</a>
Transport Accident Commission (Australia) - Everybody Hurts	<a href="http://youtu.be/Z2mf8DtWWd8">http://youtu.be/Z2mf8DtWWd8</a>
Happy Inside	<a href="http://youtu.be/Z7vXP3tHzhA">http://youtu.be/Z7vXP3tHzhA</a>
World Record Speed Test	<a href="http://youtu.be/zaT7thTxyq8">http://youtu.be/zaT7thTxyq8</a>
Think About It	<a href="http://youtu.be/ZFdILFQj1cA">http://youtu.be/ZFdILFQj1cA</a>
You On You	<a href="http://youtu.be/ZJKqWkW1qgY">http://youtu.be/ZJKqWkW1qgY</a>
Made of Meaner Stuff	<a href="http://youtu.be/zjlZp8VrNf4">http://youtu.be/zjlZp8VrNf4</a>
The Chase	<a href="http://youtu.be/ZM0ptMqNhso">http://youtu.be/ZM0ptMqNhso</a>
Star Wars Collection	<a href="http://youtu.be/ZooYDKIDOaQ">http://youtu.be/ZooYDKIDOaQ</a>
It's What You Do With It	<a href="http://youtu.be/zULDfSS7h20">http://youtu.be/zULDfSS7h20</a>
Love Hurts	<a href="http://youtu.be/ZVQrH0aHGAc">http://youtu.be/ZVQrH0aHGAc</a>
Uncut	<a href="http://youtu.be/zWnhQSHjMDI">http://youtu.be/zWnhQSHjMDI</a>
Moment of Truth	unavailable
Mom Squad	unavailable
PlayBook	unavailable
Who is the Butterfinger Bar-glar?!	unavailable
A New Way to Roll 2010	unavailable
What is iPad?	unavailable
Ivan Brothers	unavailable
Viralocity	unavailable
Sports Challenge	unavailable
Spam And Virus Blocker	unavailable

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

# The Viral Fingerprint

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