

# YOUTUBE TAKES THE STAGE



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YouTube changed how we make and consume digital video. Now, can it conquer the events world? Access presses play on this new global trend

About 18 months ago, I noticed that my husband was spending an unusual amount of time watching a very American man on YouTube. When I say American, I don't mean Southern, or portly, or inclined to voting against his own interests, but just — loudly optimistic.

The man turned out to be Casey Neistat, the wildly successful NYC-based 'vlogger' who has reached the dizzying digital heights of six million-plus subscribers, over one billion views and a platform so influential that CNN bought him and his team in late 2016 for an estimated US\$25m (approx. £20m).

(I should note here that my husband insists he was not a bandwagon viewer. "I was there at 250k subscribers," he tells me. "It's my claim to fame.")

The funny thing about watching Neistat's videos is that, while his constant and consistent optimism did often grate, his daily videos became strangely addictive, watching them just as much a part of my daily routine as brushing my teeth or drinking three cups of coffee every morning.

This is the phenomenon of vlogging. While it's certainly not a new medium, the level of celebrity that the top echelon of YouTubers has catapulted to definitely is.

Think PewDiePie (52.3m subscribers), Zoella (11.5m), Tanya Burr (3.6m), Jenna Marbles (16.7m), AmazingPhil (3.9m), Danisnotonfire (6.2m) and Neistat (6.2m).

Not only are these self-described 'creators' raking in six-figure salaries from their vlogs (video blogs), but they have tapped into and engaged with a frankly mind-boggling audience that ranges from eight-year-old girls to middle-aged men.

This is the gold star of audience demographics. These people don't just watch Zoella and Tanya Burr show them how to create the perfect smoky eye — they note the products used and actually go out and buy them. AmazingPhil and Danisnotonfire parlayed their subscriber numbers into a prime spot on BBC Radio 1, because what they say matters to their audience.

And that level of influence, of audience engagement, has predictably caught the attention of the events industry. 