

# Social Media & the "Science" of Virality



What does it mean when  
you say that something  
has "gone viral"?



Some examples of viral videos...

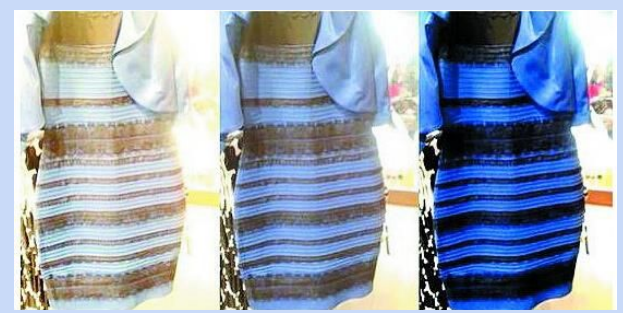
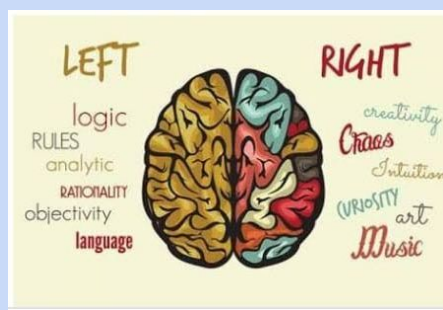


Nearly 2 billion views!



78+ million views

Some examples of viral social media content...



If you see the shoe color as pink, you are supposedly right brained and if you see it as green, you are said to be left brained.

Have you ever seen one of these images?

They've circulated around the internet and the "discussion" revolves around what colors you see and what that says about how your brain works.



Grumpy Cat was "discovered" & went viral in 2012 when her owner posted a video of the now famous feline. Grumpy Cat built a multi-million \$ empire made up of fees from ads, appearances, merchandising, a book deal, etc.



**Sesame Street**   
@sesamestreet 

Thank you, Grumpy Cat, for understanding @OscarTheGrouch like no one else can. ❤️ [m.sesame.org/2JNCtkC](https://m.sesame.org/2JNCtkC)

👍 4,728 9:58 AM - May 17, 2019

💬 1,105 people are talking about this >



**shitty watercolour**   
@SWatercolour 

goodbye grumpy cat

👍 154K 7:08 AM - May 17, 2019

💬 41.4K people are talking about this >



**Greeshma Megha M.S**  
@GreeshmaMegha 

Replying to @RealGrumpyCat

Hope they meet in heaven #RIPGrumpyCat 🥺💔

👍 46.3K 6:17 AM - May 17, 2019

💬 7,015 people are talking about this >

Much of  
social media  
is built  
around  
sharing viral  
videos - that  
was the  
whole  
premise of  
vine!



# YouTube

- Since its start in 2005, YouTube has grown from a site devoted to amateur videos to the world's most popular online video site, with users watching 4 billion hours worth of video each month, and uploading 72 hours worth of video every minute.



**Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin**

# What did YouTube look like at its start?



Founded Feb. 14, 2005 by former PayPal employees Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim.

They had no content at the start so it was basically like an empty closet!



# What was the first YouTube video?

On April 23, 2005, YouTube co-founder Jawed Karim posted the very first video to YouTube, entitled "Me at the Zoo."



The idea for YouTube was inspired by 2 highly talked about events in 2004:

### #1 A devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean

- A powerful undersea earthquake registering 9.1 on the Richter scale struck the coast of Indonesia, which set off a tsunami. Within 20 min. of the earthquake, 100+ foot waves hit the coastline killing 100,000 people. Waves continued on to Thailand, India, and Sri Lanka, killing tens of thousands more. Nearly 230,000 people were killed.

### #2 Janet Jackson's much talked about wardrobe malfunction during the Super Bowl halftime show.

- The FCC received 500,000 complaints for the show, CBS was fined \$550,000 and the NFL was asked to refund the \$10 million they were given by the halftime show sponsor.

#1 Tsunami



#2 wardrobe malfunction



Wait for it...

Since its first video "Me at the Zoo," YouTube has grown into a site for sharing videos, reposting content from network tv, screening advertisements and today, influencers streaming original content to broad audiences.

Nike was one of the first major companies to embrace YouTube's advertising potential.



In September 2005, YouTube got its first one million-hit video (a Nike ad of Brazilian soccer player Ronaldinho receiving his pair of Golden Boots.)



Released last year and shared widely on social media, Nike's "Dream Crazy" ad led to a huge boost in sales and

For once,  
Don't Do It.

Released last week  
and shared widely  
on social media,  
Nike's latest ad was  
even shared by one  
of their biggest  
competitors, Adidas.

In 2007 YouTube launched a program to let people get paid for their viral content.

- Made it possible for regular people to turn their hobbies into a business. Within a year, the most successful users were earning six-figure incomes from YouTube



First posted in 2007, Charlie & his brother are now 14 & 16 and have earned over \$1.3 million in royalties. They have nearly a billion hits on YouTube for this accidentally shared home video



In April 2009, Usher introduced the world to Justin Bieber via a video on YouTube



Daniel Lara and Joshua Holz, 2 high school students, reached Internet fame after their video, an edited collection of Snapchat videos, became popular on YouTube and Facebook.

A growing market, beauty related content brings in more than 169 billion views/year (2018) on YouTube.



Wengie ✓

14.1M subscribers



jeffreestar ✓

18.2M subscribers

Some of the MOST subscribed YouTube channels today are music, gaming & childrens' content.



PewDiePie ✓

105M subscribers

PewDiePie was among the top earners in 2019 at \$13 million. He was topped by Ryan from Ryan's World whose parents set up his channel for him in 2015.



Ryan's World ✓

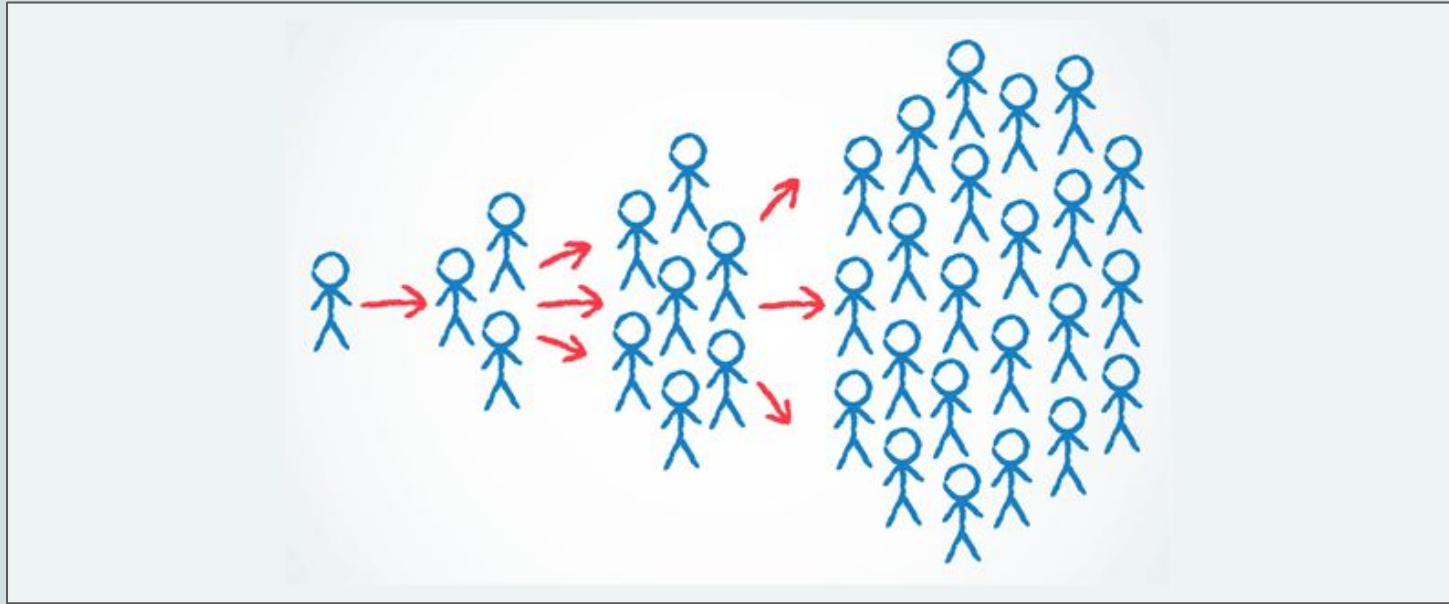
25.3M subscribers



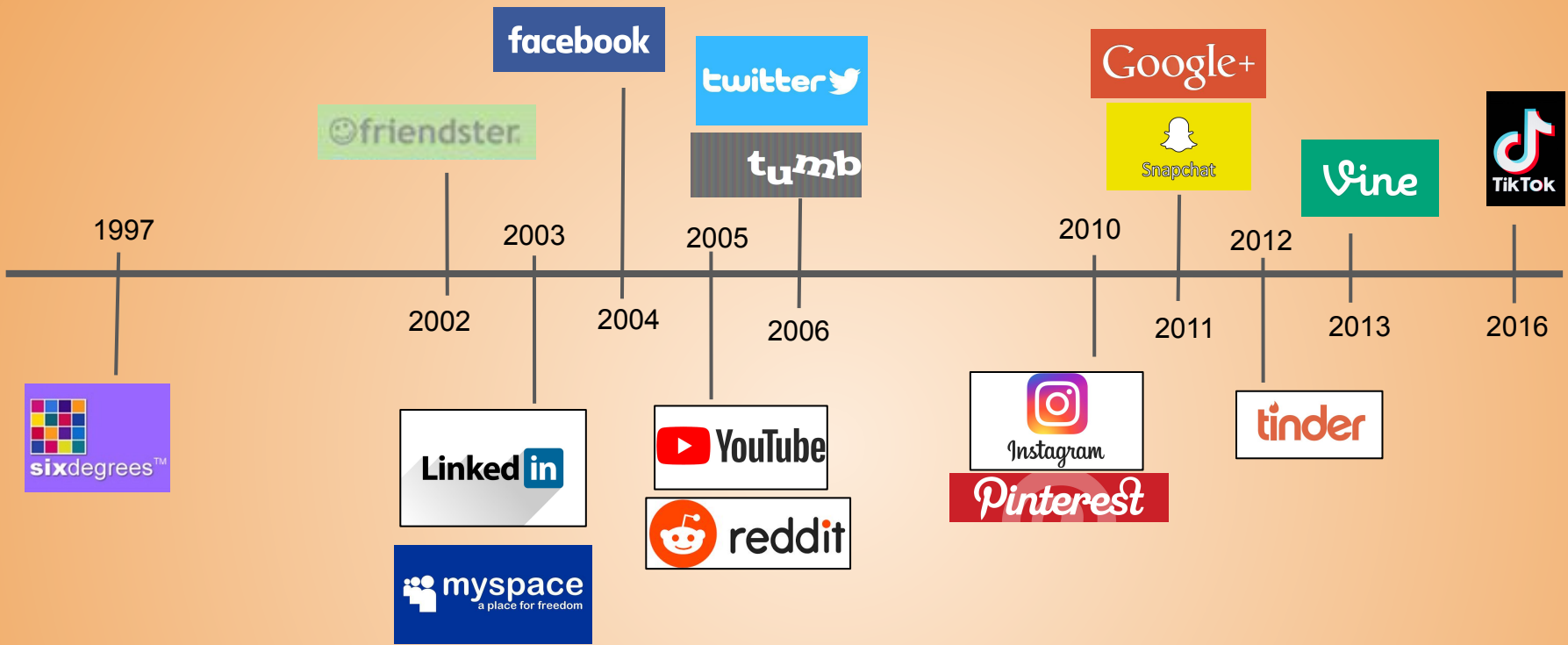
Why  
videos  
go viral



# Virality defined



The tendency of an image, video or piece of information to be spread rapidly and widely from one internet user to another.



Social Media Timeline - all of these sites, in their own way, are based around the premise of connecting with others, sharing information and building community.

# Why do people choose to participate in social media & share content online?

Research has found that people share videos/content for 5 main reasons:

- To be social
- To express how they are feeling about a particular topic
- To show off
- To prove they were the first ones to find something
- To make friends & colleagues laugh

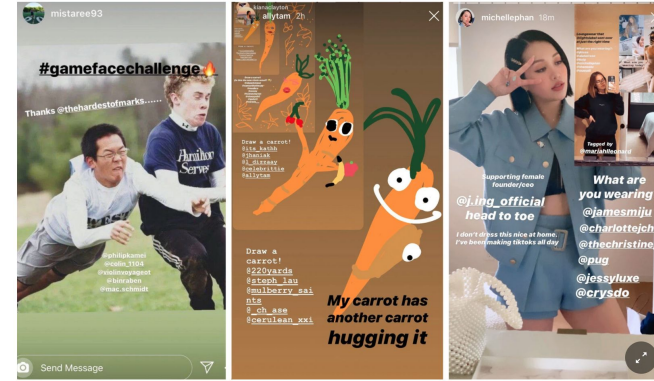
We all want to be part of a community and to identify with other people = the content we share/pass along to friends stems from a desire to connect

# Consider the entertainment role that social media has played as during this pandemic...

- Social media is a way to participate and connect with other people
- Consider all of the challenges circulating on social media in the past 3 months. These challenges are a way for people to interact with their friends and stay entertained while at home.

- Push-up or planking challenge
- Couples challenge
- See a pup, send a pup
- Toilet paper challenge

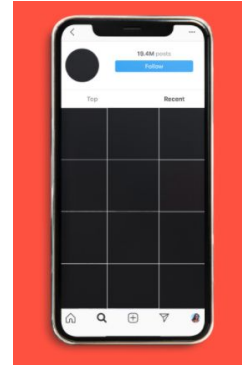
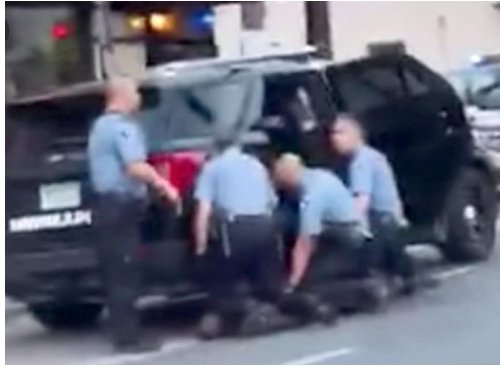
30-DAY SONG CHALLENGE					
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
A song you love to dance to	A song you like to listen to	A song that reminds you of someone	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time	A song that reminds you of a person
DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12
A song you like to listen to	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time	A song that reminds you of a person	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time
DAY 13	DAY 14	DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18
A song you like to listen to	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time	A song that reminds you of a person	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time
DAY 19	DAY 20	DAY 21	DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24
A song you like to listen to	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time	A song that reminds you of a person	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time
DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28	DAY 29	DAY 30
A song you like to listen to	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time	A song that reminds you of a person	A song that reminds you of a place	A song that reminds you of a time



Screen grabs of various challenges on Instagram. via Zebra IQ



Consider the role that social media has played in spreading information, organizing and mobilizing support for different causes.



K-pop fans, maestros of social media, bring their powers to bear on #BlackLivesMatter activism

Just look at the role social media has played in amplifying voices in support of the Black Lives Matter movement over the past 2 months...



What kind of content do you enjoy watching and/or sharing on your own social media?

