



Making Video Accountable

## Introduction

This white paper will discuss the growing demand for online video for marketing purposes and the different ways, both good and bad that this demand is currently being addressed. The question is raised whether video as a marketing medium can be expected to bring along its own ROI model or whether it should continue to exist on all kinds of websites as an unregulated extra.

## Demand For Video

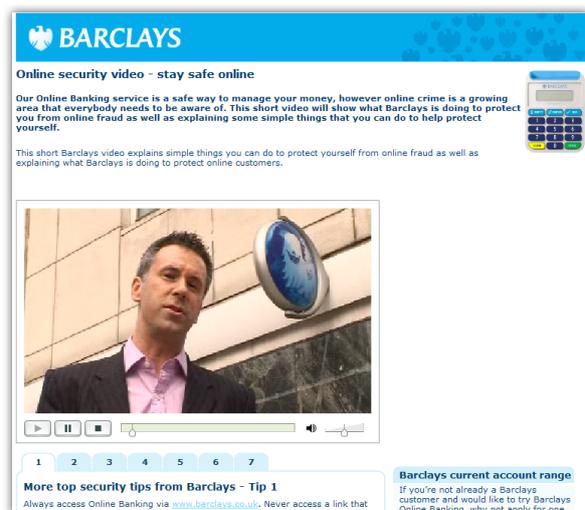
The demand for video from consumers has long been identified and early adopters in the e-tailing segment, such as [Zappos, have publicly announced](#) their intention to provide video alongside tens of thousands of product offerings in the coming year.

There is a developing consensus that video is an important medium for highlighting the features of retail products and overcoming customer hesitation on an online product page. For the most part, in 2010, the consensus exists anecdotally with very little live data to support it. Video, unusually for modern marketing departments, is a phenomenon that appears to have been widely adopted without the rigorous testing such trends demand.

Beyond e-tailing, video is being used by increasing numbers of consumer-facing service providers who may be more concerned with not seeming old-fashioned than investigating too closely the efficacy of their investment.

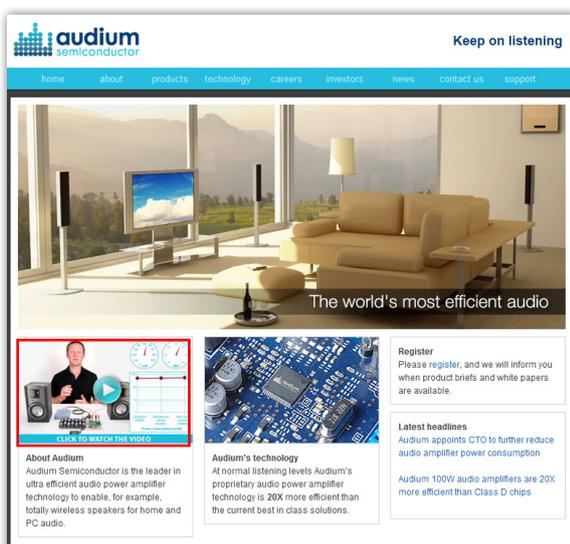
Financial institutions, gaming operators, software providers, dating sites and medical professionals are all looking to video to generate leads, establish brand loyalty and boost conversions. The image on the right shows one of a set of short videos that were commissioned by a bank in the UK with branches across the country. The videos were discovered through searching and are harder to find navigating from the site's homepage. It is unclear what purpose they serve or how many people have watched them. The videos appear to have been professionally produced and edited but they contain no identifiable call to action or suggested follow-up.

It is perhaps more surprising to see similar video presentations appearing on B2B websites where



such companies are traditionally more resistant to marketing fads. In these instances video is used to demonstrate complex business ideas or product functionality in an accessible and engaging way.

The image on the left shows a semiconductor company that has devoted space on its homepage to linking to a video explanation. Once you click on the video launch trigger, the video takes up the entire page to demonstrate the strengths and features of the product in question. It remains unclear how the company would measure a return on their investment in this video.



## Video is Everywhere

1. On e-Commerce sites
2. On B2C performance-oriented sites
3. On B2B company sites

Despite this move towards video as the medium of choice for messaging there are too few ways for measuring the impact of video on your site's turnover. This is in marked contrast to the granular scrutiny exercised over every other page element.

## Increased Conversion Means Increased Revenue

Websites today exist for one important reason and that is to generate income for their owners. Information is nice, presence is great, but revenue is king.

Site optimization is a fact of life for any serious site owner. Every homepage or landing page element is tested and tweaked to ensure maximum throughput for the sales funnel. Sites today are finely tuned conversion machines driving users towards a clear conversion goal. There is no time for "nice to haves" or internet fads... except when it comes to online video.

For most sites, online video is the last holdout against accountability. Online video is not a fashion accessory, it's a "must-have", "can't-wait", "want-it-now" object of desire for every commercial website. And yet while sites fall over themselves scrambling to put video on their homepages and landing pages, very few are placing the same demands on video that they do on pictures, forms and text.

The problem is that most sites have no tools for measuring the effectiveness of video and that leads to one of two possible video solutions - The **No-Budget Solution** and the **Write-Off Solution**.

## The No-Budget Solution

The internet is overflowing with blog posts about how to minimize the costs of posting a video on your site. There are tips and tricks about lighting your office and getting in-house staff (or immediate family) to appear on camera talking about your products. You can find advice about choosing the right microphone, investing in a cheap tripod and how to set up a simple shot. Many of the articles will claim that a rehearsed script is not as important as the sincere delivery of your value proposition.

The No-Budget solution spends little or no energy discussing the presentation of the video. It is simply uploaded to YouTube or a similar video-sharing site that allows video embedding and then the code is

placed on your site. It doesn't matter if the video sits in a player that is designed to draw traffic away from your site. It doesn't matter if you look pasty and under-prepared. All that matters is that you have a video.

The No-Budget Solution is an admission that you have no idea how to monetize your video. With little or no analytics, minimal engagement statistics and no way of testing alternatives, it is as if you have given up all together. The only way to justify this lack of analysis is to ensure that it does not cost more than a few pennies. But if you do it yourself, you have only yourself to blame.



No-Budget Video

## The Write-Off Solution

The Write-Off Solution tackles the lack of fiscal transparency in online video from the opposite angle. If you don't know the value of video then there's no point worrying about it. You want video, so you pay for video. Five thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand - whatever it costs, as long as it looks good when it plays on the page.



Write-Off Video

With the write-off solution, video becomes simply another marketing line item, like sponsoring a little league team or making a loud donation to charity. If there is no way to measure a return, then there can be no expectation of a return. You write off the investment and bask in the glory of a great video.

Neither of these solutions should be acceptable to a marketing department with a clear alternative. There is an alternative but it requires you to abandon the assumption that so many site owners make - that there is no way to measure the effectiveness of video. Video can and must be accountable as a key element in the sales funnel.

## The Third Way - Accountable Video

If you are going to add video to your site, you must determine whether it is more or less effective at driving site visitors to your conversion goal. The most efficient way to do this is by testing it just as you would for a new picture or call-to-action. You must find a video solution that allows you to run the video against a control group and measure whether or not there has been an upturn in the conversion rate of the page.

Video is not the end of your performance optimization, only the beginning. Once you decide you want video, you need to understand everything you can about your traffic in order to anticipate where your next conversion gains will come from. With deeper insight into your traffic and a refined understanding of your conversion goal, you can begin to build an optimization test array that will lead to optimal performance.

EyeView ([www.eyeviedigital.com](http://www.eyeviedigital.com)) was founded in 2007 to establish a link between video and improved website performance. In the past few years, EyeView has run hundreds of tests on live traffic for over one hundred customers across the world all aimed at optimizing the conversion rate of a homepage or landing page. Tests usually begin with a baseline "video vs. no video" scenario to establish the first improvement.

In almost every instance that we have run this test at EyeView, we found that the conversion rate for our clients increased upon the introduction of a carefully considered video compared to the same page without video. In some cases the boost in conversion was over 80% and the client was able to enjoy a return on his investment in video within the first week of the video going live. But this initial improvement is only the start of the optimization process.

## Example 1 - eToro landing page

eToro is a foreign exchange trading platform. We used eToro's existing page as the control and tested it against the same page with the new video embedded in it. Fifty percent of new users went to the original page while the remaining 50 percent were directed to the new version.



Original page without video



Page with embedded video

Once the test reached statistical significance it demonstrated that the conversion rate for Group B who received the page with the video was almost 32 percent higher than the conversion rate for Group A.

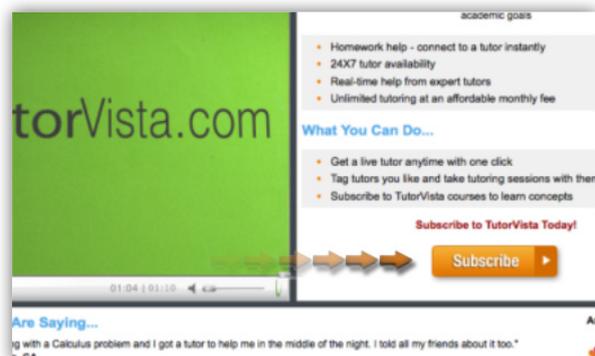
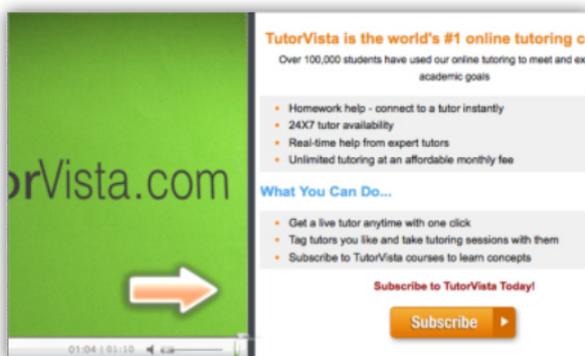
The results of this baseline test have been seen over and over again as site visitors respond to the additional engagement that video provides.

## Example 2 - TutorVista Homepage

TutorVista is an online tutoring service. We used TutorVista's existing landing page as the baseline and tested it against the same page with the video autoplaying once for first-time visitors. Fifty percent of new users went to the original page while the remaining 50 percent were directed to the new version with the video.

The initial baseline test showed an increase in conversion, but it was only as subsequent testing iterations were performed that the video solution was optimized. EyeView tested a variety of launch mechanisms and playback types including autoplay and autoplay without audio. EyeView also experimented with post-roll animation to encourage the viewer further to commit to the conversion goal.

After several rounds of testing, EyeView delivered a statistically significant improvement in conversion of over 86 percent relative to the original landing page.



Testing the impact of post-roll animations on conversion

## After Video, Comes Optimization

Putting video on your site is the first and most basic thing you can do to improve conversion. But it is not enough to upload any kind of video and then retire. This is the kind of simplistic thinking which would never be applied to other page elements. The initial boost from video is just that, an initial boost. There are a number of variables which will enable you to further improve performance.

Before considering the content or duration of the video, we need to consider a number of other parameters. The location of the video on the page brings with it a set of expectations. If the video occupies the top left of the page then it mimics the positioning of video players on most video sharing sites such as [YouTube](#), [Metacafe](#) and [Veoh](#). This position brings with it an expectation of entertainment and or information. Placed elsewhere, the video may appear to be more of an ad unit which may impact the expectations of the viewer, but you won't know for sure unless you test it.

In deciding on the optimum content of your video, it's impossible not to consider its length. For all your good intentions about clear messaging, viewing statistics suggest that most of your audience will not stick around for more than minute of video. In order to maximize this tantalizingly brief opportunity, you must build your video's content in a modular fashion. This means scripting and creating a number of sections or chapters and then testing different versions and durations of the video to determine which is the most effective.

Once you have an inviting intro and a convincing outro, you can populate the middle part of your video with a number of different elements. Should you talk about your secure transactions, or should you explain your first-user promotion? Should you point out the benefits of loyalty or the unparalleled originality of your offering? The answer, of course, is that you should prepare as many of these elements as you can and then test them with real traffic and measure their comparative impact on your page's conversion rate.

## Targeting

The final piece of the optimization puzzle is audience segmentation and targeting. By investigating the segments of a site's visitors that are most responsive to the video solution, it is possible to isolate the over-achievers and under-performers and target them with additional test iterations. In this way we are no longer reliant on an average increase to represent the improvement from video. With careful tracking and targeting you can reach more precise optimization for the largest proportion of your traffic.

## Conclusion

If you are a veteran of site optimization efforts, then many of these suggestions will seem obvious. But they are too rarely applied to video. Between the No-Budgets and the Write-Offs there has been a conspicuous lack of optimization analysis around video. If your in-house or outsourced video provider is unable to establish the link between video and increased conversion then it's time to look elsewhere.

When you decide to add video to your site, you need measurable ROI which can only come from increased and optimized conversion. Video can and must pay its own way on your site.

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## About EyeView

Founded in 2007, [EyeView](#) is the leading provider of video solutions for performance advertisers with offices in Boston and Tel Aviv. The company has assembled a dedicated team with a wealth of experience from leading companies, such as Google, YouTube, 888.com and HP. Among [EyeView's Customers](#) are eBay, Yahoo!, LendingTree and many more around the world.