

Chapter 1

Everything You Wanted to Know about YouTube

In This Chapter

- ▶ Creating accounts
 - ▶ Touring YouTube
 - ▶ Searching for and creating videos
 - ▶ Setting YouTube preferences
 - ▶ Joining the YouTube community
 - ▶ Promoting a business on YouTube
 - ▶ Molding YouTube for you and your kids
-

YouTube is: A: an appliance; B: an ergonomic chair; C: the coolest video site on the Internet? If you answered A or B, you really need this book. But the fact that you own this book or are skimming through these pages at your favorite bookseller means you probably answered correctly, but need to know more about YouTube, which is great because these pages are written by a couple of card-carrying geeks who love video and think YouTube is the coolest thing since one-terabyte hard drives.

We cover a lot of ground in this book. In this chapter, we give you an overview of *what* we cover and *how* we cover it.

Charting YouTube

YouTube popped out of the woodwork when three PayPal employees brainstormed to start a video sharing service. They were at a party, and people were shooting digital photos and capturing videos. After the party, they tried to share the videos via e-mail but ran into difficulties due to differences in file formats and codecs. That's when the lads came up with the idea to start an online video sharing service. Their idea was probably one of those blinding flashes of inspiration, like the kind that wakes you from a sound sleep; the

modern day equivalent to getting hit on the head with an apple and deciding that gravity is a really cool concept. However, getting a great idea without acting on it is like inspiration with no perspiration. Most people never make it past the inspiration phase. Then, a few months after you dismiss the idea, you find someone else is marketing it, and you kick yourself squarely on whatever part of your body you can comfortably reach for not acting on your idea. Fortunately for Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim (the founders of YouTube) and those of us who like posting videos that can be shared with a worldwide audience, they acted on their inspiration. Their first brainstorming sessions took place in Chad Hurley's garage, where they mapped out a strategy to simplify the process of sharing video with friends, family, and the world. The initial site design incubated from a tiny germ of an idea, and an Internet giant was born.

Free video, how cool a concept is that? Well, that's exactly what Chad and Steve (Jawed left the company to further his education) supplied from their office in San Mateo, California. Development of the YouTube site commenced in February 2005, and the beta was launched in May 2005. YouTube was officially launched in December 2005. The goal was simple: Get as much traffic as possible and build a loyal following. You know, the old build-it-and-they-will-come mentality. After a short period of time, the YouTube site had more traffic than some of the most popular existing video and short film Web sites, including Atom Films (www.atomfilms.com). In the final days of their beta phase, *Tubers* (this book's official term for people who use the YouTube site) viewed a staggering three million video clips a day and uploaded close to eight million clips a day. Can you imagine the bandwidth YouTube consumed? And the founders weren't getting paid for their efforts, but they were getting a lot of press. A solid influx of cash had to be on their timeline in the very near future.

YouTube gained momentum and then they got cash — \$3.5 million greenbacks of venture capital to be exact. And then YouTube gained more momentum, and Google bought them for \$1.65 Billion; however, YouTube is still a private entity calling its own shots. The history of YouTube is still being written and might change considerably while we're writing this book. Lots of interesting tidbits about the history of YouTube haven't even been mentioned yet. Figure 1-1 shows the YouTube Web site, playing a video of the staff's last day in their San Mateo office.

There are no free lunches. You have to give to get. You can surf the *Tube* (our slang for the YouTube Web site — a new entry in our unabashed dictionary of YouTube terms) as often as you like in perfect anonymity. However, when you want to do something interesting, like interact with other Tubers, create playlists, subscribe to channels, and upload your own videos, you have to create an account. But rest easy, the account is free, and YouTube doesn't pester you for a lot of information, like a credit card number, the title to your '57 Chevy, or anything like that. All you have to do is agree to their terms of service and supply some simple information. We show you all the subtle intricacies involved in creating a YouTube account in Chapter 2.

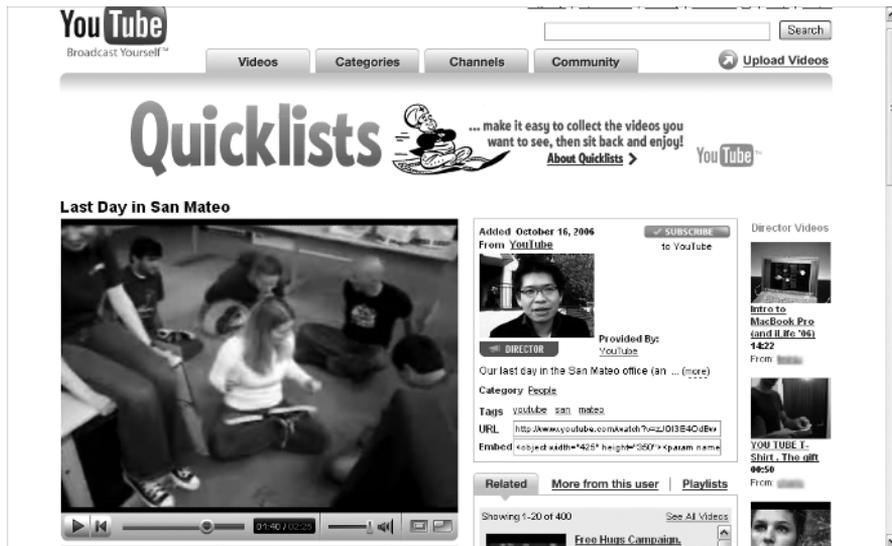


Figure 1-1:
The YouTube
staff celebrat-
ing their
last day in
their original
office.



You can maintain multiple personalities on YouTube. It's as easy as creating multiple accounts. You use one username when you want to upload your Dr. Jekyll videos, and log in under another username when you want to upload your Mr. Hyde videos.

Touring the Tube

When you visit YouTube for the first time, you might be wondering what all the hubbub is about. YouTube isn't a particularly cool-looking site, which in a way is a good thing. After all, the coolness is in the *content*, not the *interface*. Nevertheless, you have to be able to find what you want quickly, which is the hallmark of any good Web design. The YouTube Web site looks inviting enough. Figure 1-2 shows the site as it appears to someone who hasn't set up an account. You're greeted with little icons that have a plus sign in the lower-left corner. We won't tell you what that icon's used for — at least not now.

Viewing videos on YouTube is easy. Just click an icon and then the page changes, the video is served up — *danger Will Robinson, video is loading* — and begins playing in a little window. Viewing a video is just that simple. Each video comes complete with a controller that lets you pause the video when you have to take care of some annoying task, like answering the phone or responding to your boss's e-mail. You can also control the volume of the video. When the video finishes playing, you can replay the video, share it with a friend, look for another video, or do something really boring — like your day job.

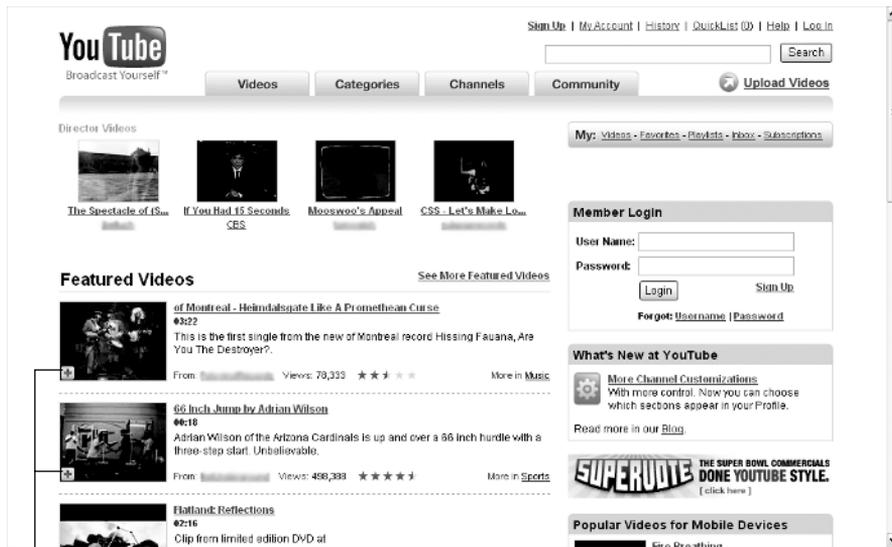


Figure 1-2:
YouTube
welcomes
you with
featured
videos.

Plus signs

After you view a couple videos, you can get adventurous and click one of the blue buttons (actually the buttons are a gradient from white to a lovely shade of blue) and gain access to all the videos in the YouTube vault. You can browse the Videos section of the site, check out videos in the Categories section of the site, reach for your remote in the Channels section of the site, or smile on your brother in the Community section of the site. No matter where you go in the vast YouTube universe, you get to watch an animated ad on the right side of the site. After all, someone's got to pay for the terabytes of bandwidth that YouTube consumes every month. Here's a question to ponder: If YouTube removed half the videos and advertisements from their vast Web site, would it be half-vast?

YouTube invites you to upload videos on every page of the site. If you're a registered user and click the Upload Video button, you can upload a video — a task that we simplify in Chapter 7. However, if you don't have a YouTube account and click the button, you're presented with a simple form to fill out, which makes you an official Tuber. After you're an official Tuber, you get to enjoy all the benefits of the YouTube Web site and become a part of the YouTube community. After you sign in, the site welcomes you with your username and statistics, as shown in Figure 1-3.

Tubers get to upload videos as often as they want, and the price is zip, zilch, nada. Tubers who like videos provided by a specific user can subscribe to that user's channel. Subscribing to a channel is as simple as clicking a button. When you subscribe to a channel, an icon of the channel appears on your Subscriptions list, which is part of your Channel. Click the *Channel icon* — the

Tuber's equivalent of a remote control — and you're transported to that channel. Another benefit of subscribing to a channel is that you see a thumbnail of the most recent uploaded video from each of the channels you subscribe to when you log in to the Tube (see Figure 1-4).

Figure 1-3:
Hello, hello. I don't know why you say goodbye, YouTube says hello.

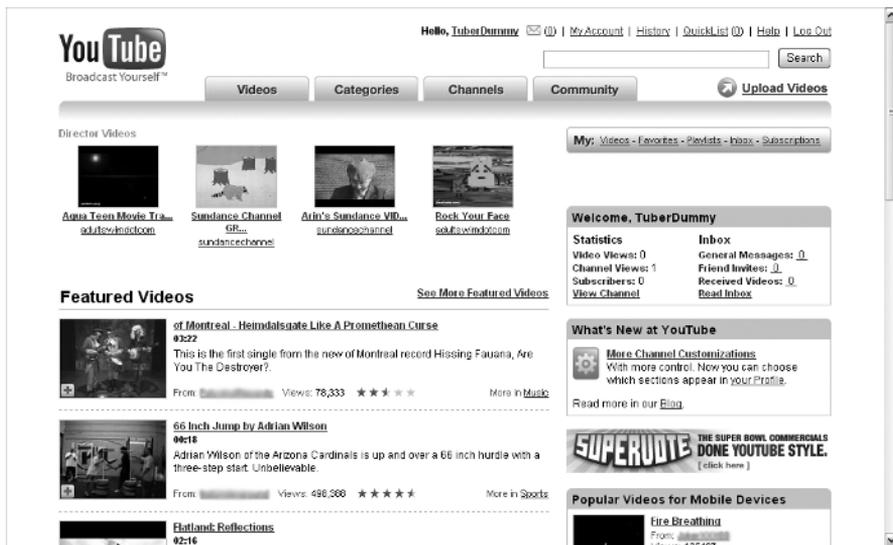
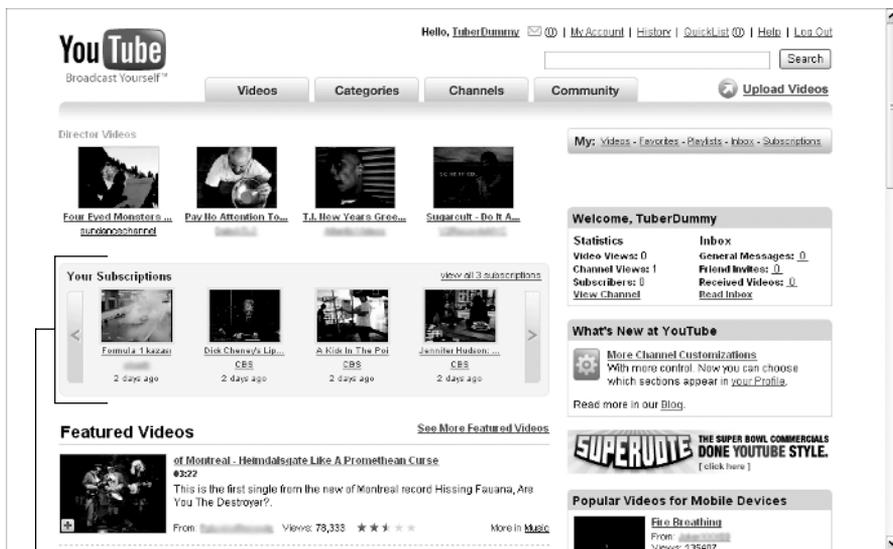


Figure 1-4:
Get free subscriptions with no strings attached.



Subscriptions

When you start uploading your own videos and other Tubers take notice, you'll probably get some subscribers to your channel. You may also get requests to be added to other Tuber's Friends list. If you're really lucky, you may get some Tuber groupies. Just don't let your significant other know.

But if you want to do some really cool stuff, like look for some videos you actually want to view, you need to know how to get from Point A to Point B to Point C. The YouTube designers have made that task relatively simple. You get reminders when new stuff is available or when new features are added. You can take the point-and-click approach to finding out what YouTube has to offer or follow our road map in Chapter 3.



If you're watching a YouTube video at work and you hear the unmistakable stiletto click of your supervisor's high heels rushing toward your cubicle, mute the sound and dim your monitor so that the video isn't visible. When your supervisor arrives, slap the side of the monitor and frown. If you're lucky, your supervisor will think you're experiencing a technical malfunction, not watching a YouTube video.



The previous tip doesn't work if you're employed by the IT department of your company.

Finding the Perfect Video

YouTube has videos. Lots of videos. Finding a video you actually want to view is like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack. You can randomly sift through each portal of the YouTube Empire until you find what you want. However, that could take years.

Instead of randomly tip-toeing through the YouTube video collection, you can get scientific and search YouTube. You can do a wild-guess search, or really get down to brass tacks and use YouTube features to search the vault and find what you deem the perfect video. You can search through all videos or refine your search by perusing channels, groups, or playlists. You can also sort search results. You view each video in turn, or compile a Quicklist, which can be viewed at your leisure. We show you how to do all this and more in Chapter 4. Figure 1-5 shows the results of a category search.



If you find yourself frequently opening your favorite Web browser and typing **www.youtube.com** in the address bar, you may be a Tubeaholic. Advanced symptoms of the disease include keeping the YouTube Web site open in a minimized browser so that you can maximize it when none of your fellow employees or supervisors are nearby. Fortunately, the disease isn't harmful to your health, but it can pose problems when it's time for an employee review. Unfortunately, little help is available for this problem. Tubeaholics Anonymous hasn't been invented yet.



Figure 1-5:
Searching
the Tube for
a way-cool
video is
easy.

Changing Your YouTube Preferences

When you first set up a YouTube account, you have a giant clean slate. But that can change quickly if you use even just a fraction of what YouTube offers. When you create a YouTube account, you get a channel with your username, as shown in Figure 1-6. As you can see, a new account has a squeaky clean channel. Think of a channel as a place for your stuff, such as favorite videos, subscribers, uploaded videos, and so on. The channel has placeholders for all these things (see Figure 1-6). Your mission as a virgin Tuber is to get some stuff to fill in the blanks. You can put in the stuff that matters to you in your channel. You can save videos in your channel, create playlists, look at comments posted by other viewers, and so on.

The *channel* is your home base on the Tube. That's where you and other Tubers go to find your videos, view your playlists, and so on. You can change the way your channel looks by changing the channel design. Your channel features an *icon*, which by default is a frame from the last video you uploaded, or you can choose an icon from your favorite video. Figure 1-7 shows a user channel that's tricked out 27 ways to Sunday. We show you how to customize your channel and fine-tune your YouTube experience in Chapter 5.

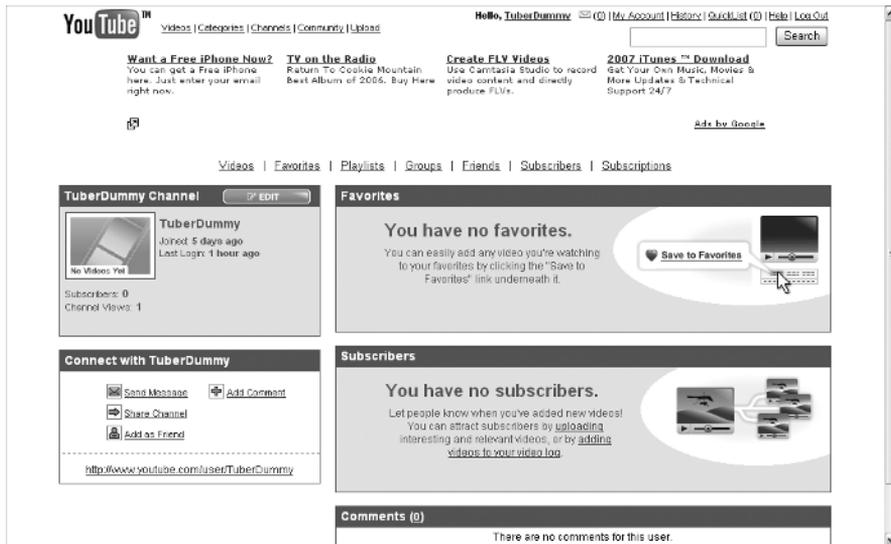


Figure 1-6:
Tune in to
my channel.

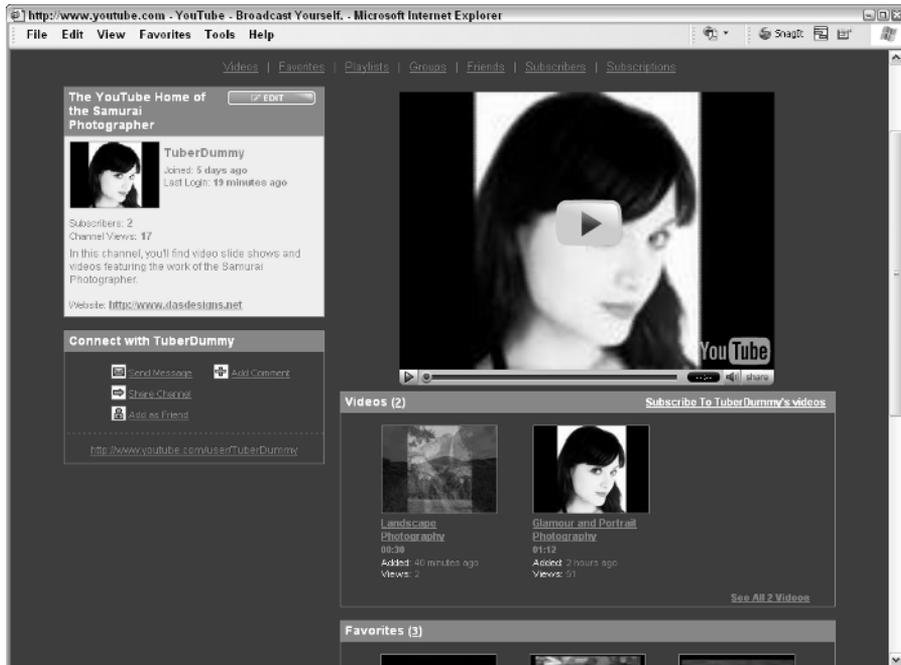


Figure 1-7:
Having it
your way
with a
custom
channel.

Getting to Know Other Tubers

YouTube is a huge community. Next time you surf the Tube, take a look at the different usernames associated with the videos; then take a look at the number of groups and you start to get the idea. It's kind of like a video commune. You can be totally anonymous even if you have a YouTube account. But if you post some really cool videos, you'll find that people leave comments on your stuff and subscribe to your channel. It's only polite to return the favor and thank your fellow Tubers for their comments.

But responding to comments is only the beginning. You can request to be a fellow Tuber's friend, join a group, subscribe to a channel, and so on. You may never meet the people you associate with on YouTube in person, but it's still fun. And let's face it, the world is a serious place. Adding some fun to your life is a good thing; it keeps you younger and relieves the stress in your life. So feel free to strike up a relationship with people who leave comments on your videos and leave comments when you watch a video you really like. You can also send messages to other Tubers. If you're not sure how to do it, we show you everything about the YouTube community in Chapter 6.

Creating the Perfect YouTube Video

Pixelated, blurry video is ugly and shouldn't be seen or heard. When you sift through the myriad of videos on YouTube, you may shake your head and ask the question: Why? We did the same, and that's why we're on a two-man crusade to stamp out ugly video. After all, if you've got something to show the world, and it has your username attached, it ought to be the best it can be.

Digital video is fun. However, many people who own camcorders don't even know how to get the video into their computers. Face it, if you can't get the video into your computer, you'll never get it on YouTube. But there's a lot more than getting the video into your computer. You need to render your video in a format supported by YouTube, and you need to do some editing. Let's face it, nobody except family members and a few close friends want to see the video where you forgot to stop recording after taping a scene and captured an additional two minutes of your shuffling feet.

In Chapter 7, we give you some tips on recording good video and how to get that video into your computer.

Let's say you want to kick your videos up a notch or two. Editing video isn't rocket science. You can easily add transitions between scenes or titles and credits with an application, like Windows Movie Maker or Apple iPhoto. Figure 1-8 shows a video being christened with an appropriate title credit in Movie Maker.

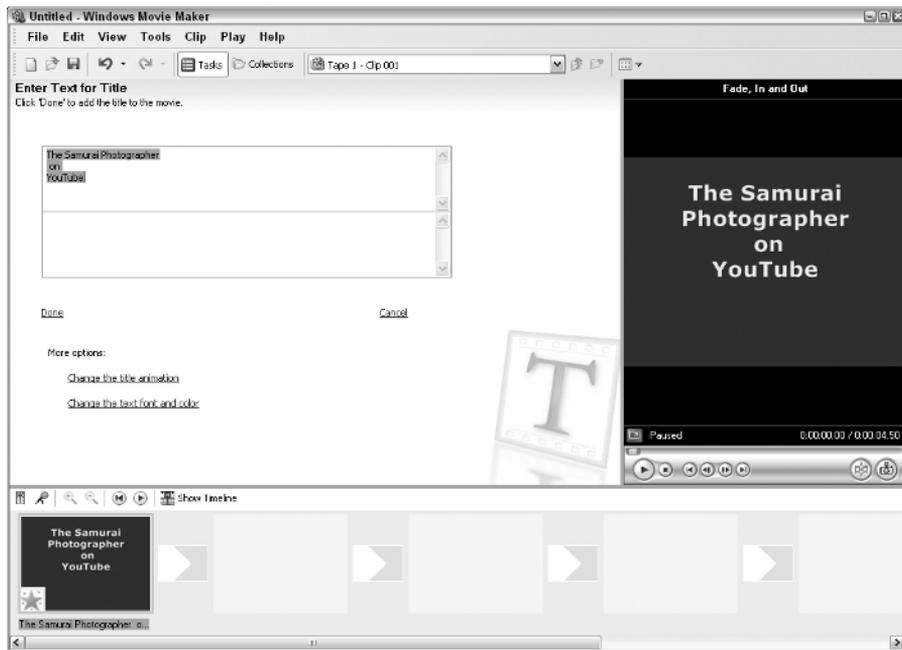


Figure 1-8: Give yourself credit when you create videos for the Tube.

Creating Specialty Accounts

Are you a musician, celebrity, celebrity-wannabe, or a reasonable facsimile thereof? If so, YouTube likes people like you. In fact, they let you create special accounts. Yes, Virginia, the special accounts are still free, and your videos appear in the appropriate channel. For example, if you sign up for a Comedians account, all of your videos are found in the Comedians channel, which makes it easy for people who need a good laugh to find your material. Talk about having your cake and eating it too. Specialty accounts come in four flavors:

- ✓ **Comedians:** The hot spot to be if you're a performing comedian or an aspiring comedian. It's also the place to visit if you want a good laugh. These guys and gals will leave you in stitches. It's their job. Figure 1-9 shows the first page of people who have Comedians accounts.
- ✓ **Directors:** The hotspot if you're a videographer, aspiring actor, or a director wannabe.
- ✓ **Gurus:** The hotspot if you're a brainiac, and you want to pass your knowledge on to other Tubers. This is also an excellent place if you're an instructor of some sort and want to drive traffic to your Web site.

✔ **Musicians:** The hotspot if you're a musician, singer, recording label owner, or are involved in music in some other way. So if you have the notion to rock the boat baby, create a Musicians account. Who knows, MTV and Virgin Records may be surfing the Tube for talent and discover you.



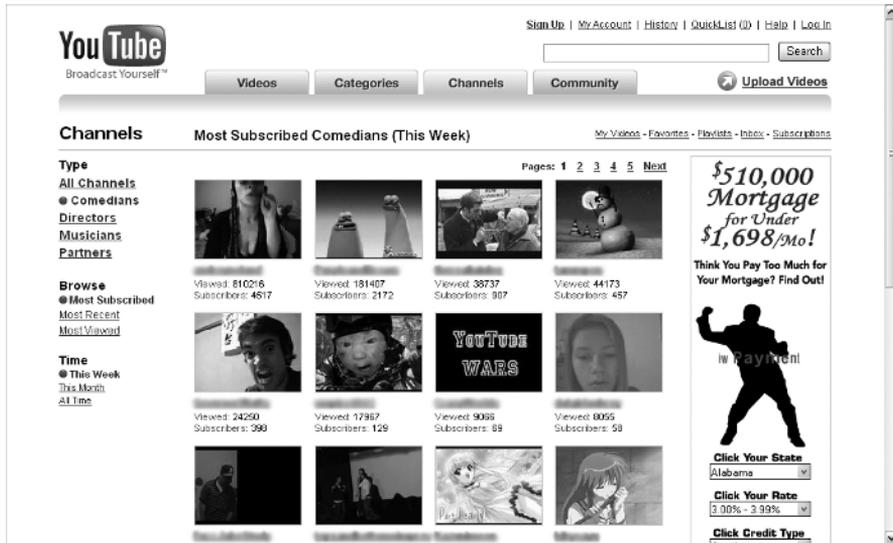
YouTube also has a Partners account. But this type of account isn't available for mere mortals and the general Tuber population. Here you'll find companies, like CBS, Capitol Records, and VH1, to name a few. The name *Partners* leads the authors to believe that a partner must cough up cold, hard cash in order to get the account. But hey, somebody has to pay the bills so we Tubers can have our fun for free. The Partners channel is also an interesting place to visit when the partners crank out some serious videos. For example, in the CBS channel, you'll find interesting video clips about current events.



YouTube created a You Choose 08 channel, which serves as another platform for politicians who have thrown their hat into the ring for the 2008 Presidential Election. Now you can surf the Tube for fun, and then figure out which politician you'd like to see as the next President of The United States.

People have been discovered through the videos they've posted on YouTube. According to the YouTube founders, at least one person who posted a music video has signed a record contract. When you set up a specialty YouTube account and post a cool video, the world is your stage. If you think you're the next Mariah Carey, Jim Carrey, or Martin Scorsese, check out Chapter 9.

Figure 1-9:
Outta the way, knuckle-head, I have a joke to tell. Soitenly!



YouTube for the Entrepreneur

Do you have a product to sell or a message to tell? If you do, get your camcorder out, take a video of the product, or tape your message and upload the video to YouTube. You might find some prospects for your product or service by surfing the Tube. When you do create video to promote a product or service, make sure you add ending credits with the URL to your Web site or to the site where Tubers can actually purchase your product or service. Figure 1-10 is a YouTube video embedded in an eBay auction that's being previewed via eBay's Turbo Lister software.

You can also embed your product video in your Web site. What a deal, Lucille; full video to promote your product or service, and your site doesn't get the bandwidth hit. If you've got a warehouse full of products to sell, you can embed a YouTube video on your site's home page that shows site visitors your facility and the awesome merchandise you have available. We show you how to use YouTube to promote yourself or your products in Chapter 10.

Do you teach people how to use software applications, like Adobe Photoshop and Dreamweaver? Well, don't limit yourself to students in seminars. You can also be a guru online. In fact, YouTube has a Guru account, which is right up your alley, Sally. Being a guru online is different than being a guru in person. Instead of using a projector to display your computer screen to the audience, you use an application to capture video of every move you make while using an application. You can record audio at the same time. We show you how to create instructional videos in Chapter 7.

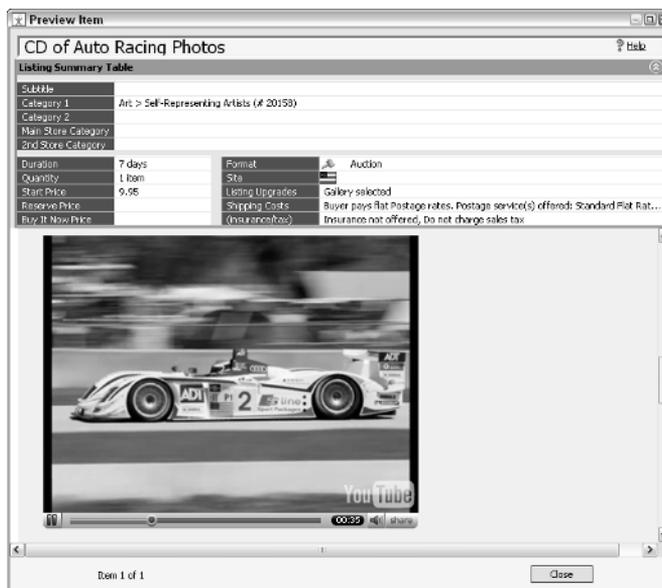


Figure 1-10:
An auction
that moves
bidders.

YouTube and the Copyright Police

Gobs of video get uploaded to YouTube every day. If you upload a video to which you don't own the copyright or haven't purchased rights to the video, you're in violation of the copyright law. YouTube does a pretty good job of policing its site. YouTube also gets feedback from users when a video isn't considered appropriate. If you upload a copyrighted video and YouTube catches you, it yanks the video and your account. YIKES! If the copyright owner of the video finds out, you could find yourself in deep water, which may require a life preserver in the form of an attorney. So be cool and respect other artist's materials. Don't upload copyrighted videos. We show you the skinny on what is and isn't cool to upload in Chapter 11.

A YouTube Parental Guide

Kids do the darndest things . . . including looking up inappropriate Web sites. If you have young children, monitor their computer usage. Even though YouTube does contain video not suitable for children, you can make YouTube a safe and enjoyable experience for your child as long as he is at least 13 years of age. In fact, you have to be 13 years of age to qualify for a YouTube account. We show you how to do this and more in Chapter 11.

Being a Model YouTube Citizen

In addition to making YouTube a safe experience for your children, we also show you how to play well with others. To be a model Tuber, you must respect the rights of your fellow video buddies. Our parents always told us not to say anything if you don't have anything nice to say. Well, we take that one step further and show you what we consider to be proper etiquette when commenting on other videos. Flaming (that is, saying nasty or derogatory things about other Tubers — or for that matter, anybody) is verboten.

If you're the shy, retiring type who likes to surf the Tube in relative anonymity, you can don the Tube veil of secrecy. You can share your videos with the world or just a few close friends and family, and either way, you can preserve your identity when you do so. And if you're interested in securing your privacy, don't forget about the content of the videos you're uploading. Sure, your YouTube contact information may be private, but what about what's in your video? We show you how to protect every aspect of your identity in Chapter 11.

Seeking the YouTube Experience

When we told our friends and relatives about this book project, we received mixed reviews. Some people thought the videos on the homepage of YouTube were the greatest thing since the release of the Xbox 360. Our older friends and relatives weren't quite as enthusiastic. But there's something for everyone on the Tube. You've just got to be an ambassador and show your friends how to find the stuff they want to see. That's what we show you in this book.

Not everyone finds all of the top-played videos interesting. In fact, you may find some of them repulsive. However, YouTube truly does have something for everyone. If you set up a YouTube account, you can have it your way. When you set up an account, follow some of our sage advice on how to search YouTube and start looking for videos that pique your curiosity. After you find something you like, you can save it as a favorite for future viewing and create video playlists. You can also leave comments for the users who upload videos you like. Chances are, they'll be your kind of people, too.

YouTube has so much more to it than meets the eye — or, for that matter, the ear. The intellectual highbrow type can find instructional videos on many topics. The artsy-fartsy kind can find video blogs from film festivals, videos from aspiring actors, and much more. The trick is to get past the home page and start surfing the categories and channels. Another place to look for your kind of video and your kind of people is in the YouTube Community section.

After you find what you like on the Tube, you can add the content to your channel. Each Tuber with an account gets his own channel, and many people like to make this space their own. When a fellow Tuber visits your channel, she sees the first page of your channel. Figure 1-11 shows the public view of a Tuber's channel. Fellow tubers can dive deeper into a channel by clicking the section links. A YouTube channel has the following sections:

- ✔ **Videos:** This section contains a list of videos the user uploads to YouTube.
- ✔ **Favorites:** This section shows thumbnails of videos the user selects as his favorites.
- ✔ **Playlists:** This section features playlists the user creates.
- ✔ **Groups:** This section shows groups that the user joins.
- ✔ **Friends:** This section shows the people the user adds as friends.
- ✔ **Subscribers:** This section shows a list of Tubers who subscribe to the user's channel.
- ✔ **Subscriptions:** This section shows a list of channels to which the user subscribes.

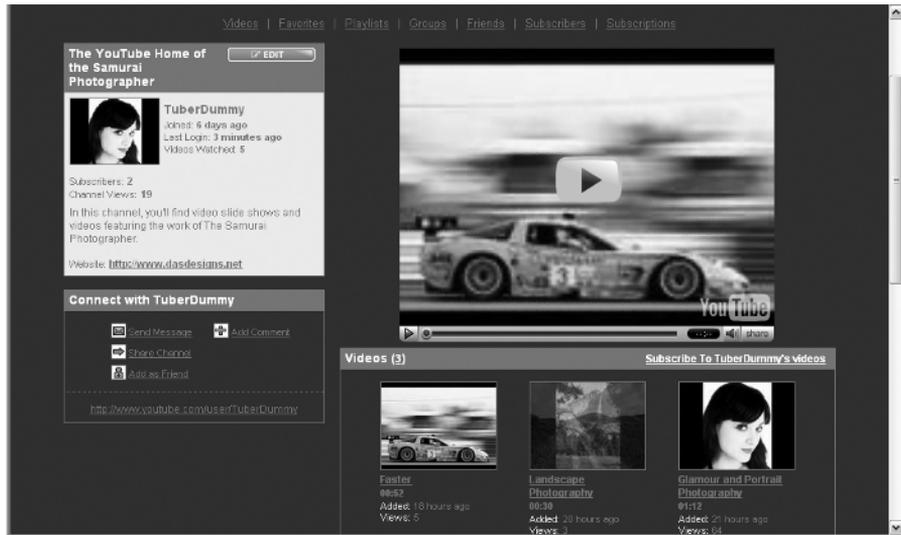


Figure 1-11:
A YouTube
channel
is a place
for your
video stuff.

The lists are comprised of thumbnail icons, which, after clicked, display the associated playlist. For example, if you click a playlist icon, you see the associated playlist.

The easiest way to make the Tube your way is to find some videos you like and then view the channel of the user who uploaded the clips. When the user's channel page is displayed in your browser, click through the sections and look at the playlists the user has created, the friends in her channel, the user's favorite videos, the videos she's uploaded, and so on. This gives you a good starting-off point. Within no time, you're subscribing to channels you like, creating playlists, and creating friends with other YouTube users. So if you're ready to start experiencing everything YouTube has to offer, keep reading.

