



3 Ways to Reach and Engage Football Fans with YouTube

Written by
Brad Johnsmeyer,
Deborah Powsner

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New data reveals when and why football fans tune in to YouTube for football content. Find out the best ways your brand can connect with football fans around the big game and beyond, through an entire season of opportunities.

think with **Google**

The big game is just around the corner, which means marketers and fans alike are getting ready for the most-watched television event of the year. About 110 million viewers have tuned in to the broadcast every year since 2011.¹ But, for advertisers hoping to reach football fans, the big game itself is only a few hours in an entire season of opportunities.

Thanks to online video, there are more ways than ever for fans to indulge their passion for football before, during, and after the big game. While TV is the place to catch the action live, YouTube is the place to catch it in the days, months, and years after. In fact, consumers choose YouTube as their preferred online destination for game day ads.² Why? It's the place to go deeper—to catch commentator analyses, to go behind the scenes, listen to interviews, watch highlight reels, and more. In fact, if you totaled up all the minutes of football content on YouTube, it would take more than 2,000 years to watch it all.³

But football fans don't just turn to YouTube for sports content. YouTube is the fan favorite for finding everything football-related, from the highlights of last week's game to a hilariously [bad lip reading](#) of sideline comments.

To examine how fans consume online video during the millions of [I-want-to-know](#), [I want-to-do](#), [I-want-to-buy](#), and [I-want-to-watch-what-I'm-into](#) moments that occur throughout the season, we analyzed YouTube viewing behaviors. Here are three key insights to help you reach and engage football fans.

1. Think of the big game as a season, not just one day

On TV, the big game lasts a few hours. On YouTube, viewers watch millions of hours of Super Bowl-related videos in the weeks before and after kickoff. In fact, in the first two weeks of 2015, Super Bowl ads were viewed more than 16 million times, a number that steadily rose to more

than 260 million through game day on February 1.⁴ In total, ads and previews garnered more than 7 million hours of watch time in the first six weeks of 2015.⁵

Source: Pixability
Industry Study. Super
Bowl 2015 YouTube
Ads.

Brands that published full versions online
**before Sunday's game received more views and
social shares by Monday morning** than those
brands that waited until the game to release an ad.



2.2X
more views

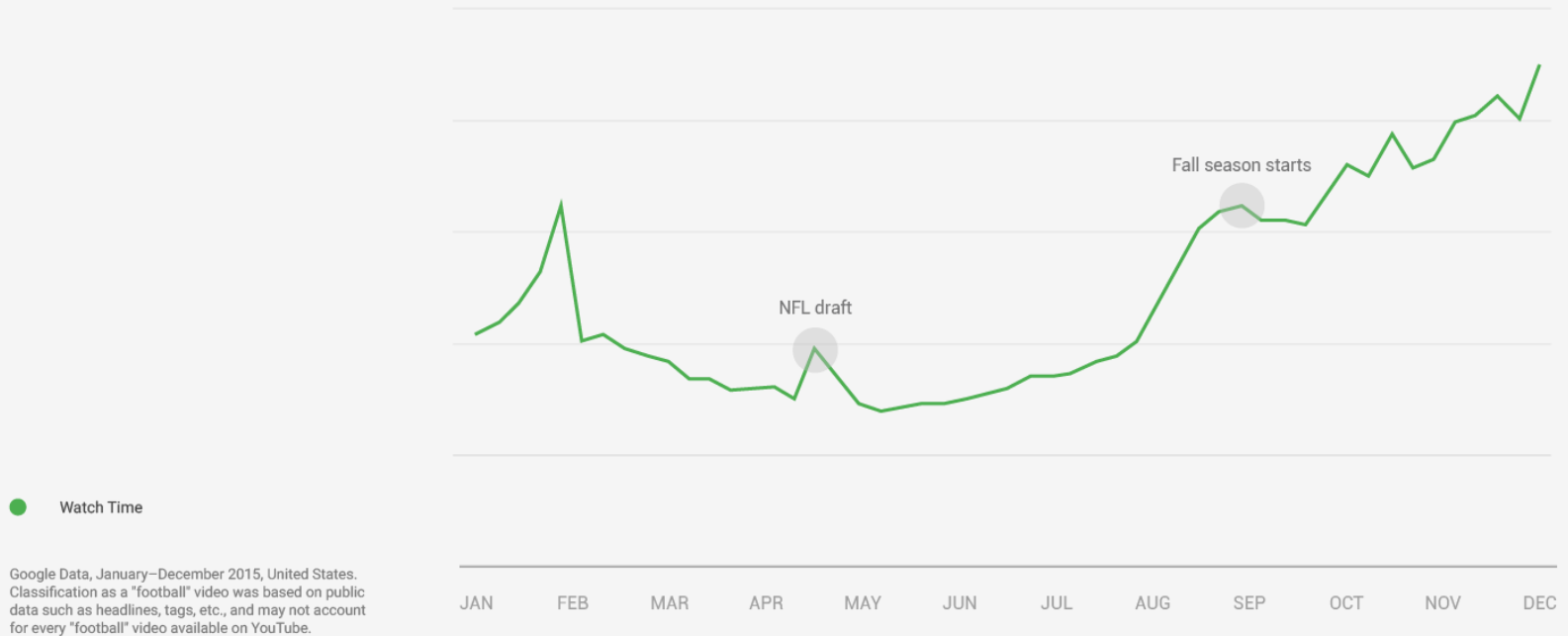


3.1X
more social shares

The best way to boost viewership of a Super Bowl ad? Post it before game day. According to an analysis by Pixability of last year's commercials, brands that published full versions on YouTube before Sunday's game received an average of 2.2X more views and 3.1X more social shares by Monday morning than those brands that waited until the game to release an ad.⁶ The year's most-watched ad in Pixability's study was [Budweiser's "Lost Dog,"](#) which was posted five days before kickoff and garnered more than 18 million views before the game.

Also consider that there are plenty of opportunities to connect with football fans all year. In fact, viewership of football content on YouTube spikes during the NFL draft in the spring as well as the start of the fall season.⁷

Watch Time of Football-Related Content over the Year (2015)



2. Expand your YouTube content strategy to include the culture around the game

It's no surprise that football fans turn to YouTube for game-day highlight reels, commentator analyses, and historic game clips. But there's also opportunity to engage football fans in their I-want-to-know, I-want-to-do, and I-want-to-watch-what-I'm-into moments less directly related to the game itself.

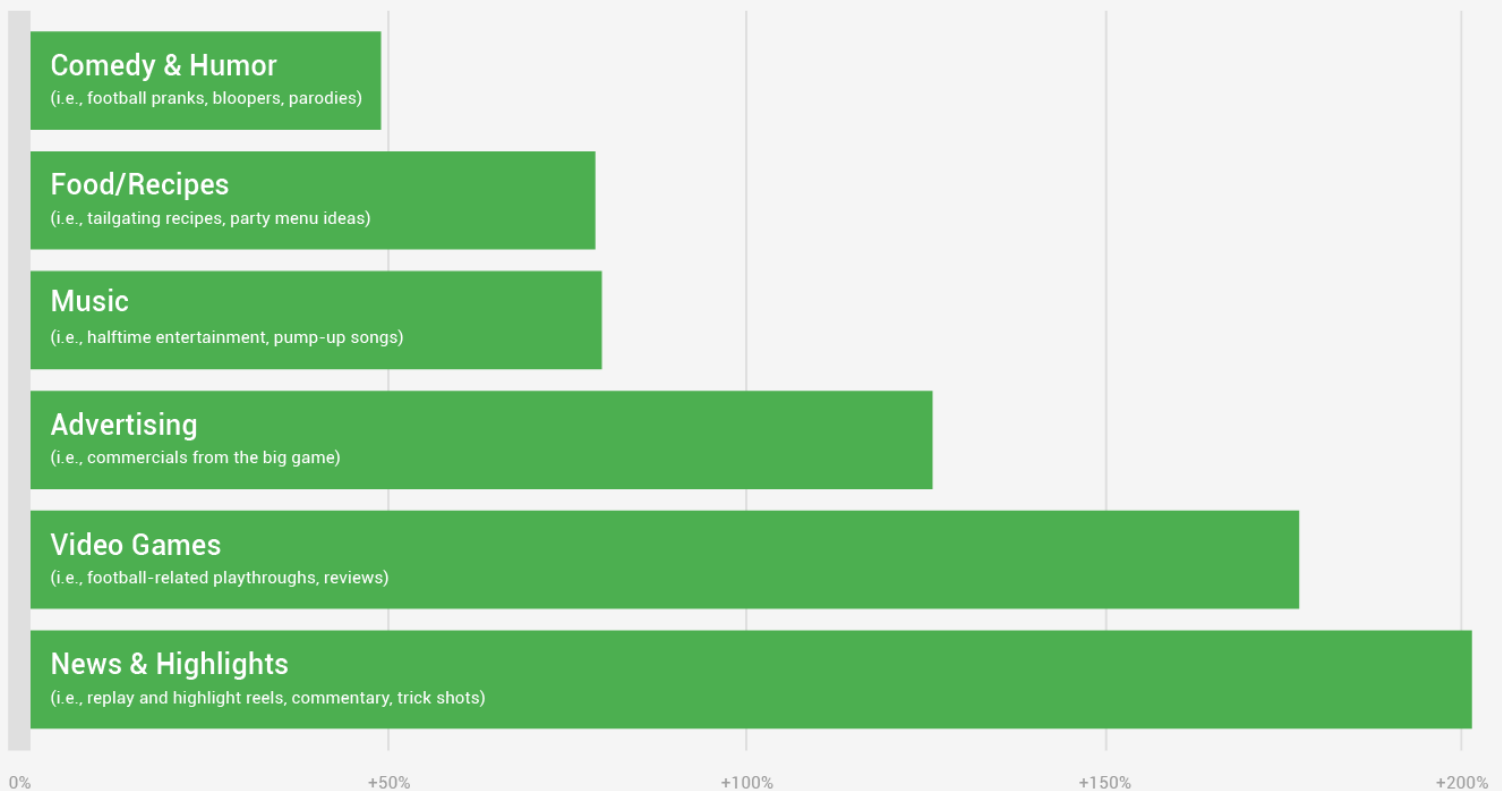
There's a vast range of videos that tie to the big game that can serve as inspiration for brands as they think about creating content that will engage football fans. From football-related tricks like [Dude Perfect's Slip 'n Slide Football Battle](#) to the [perfect football DIY treats from Rosanna](#)

[Pansino](#), there's a variety of subcategories of football-related content that are growing on YouTube.

One subcategory where we've seen growth in watch time is football-related comedy. The category, which includes videos like [Key & Peele's Super Bowl Special](#), grew almost 50% in video watch time year-over-year in 2015.⁸

And it's not just entertainment that's driving football fans to YouTube. We've also seen more evergreen, established categories, like football-related food and recipes, continue to rise, with video watch time growing 77% in the last year; top YouTube searches include fan favorites like hot wings and nachos.⁹

Year-Over-Year Growth (2014–2015) for the Big Game and Football-Related Content



Google Data, January–December 2015 vs. January–December 2014, Global. Classification as a football-related "food," "video game," "news and highlights," "comedy and humor," "advertising," or "music" video was based on public data such as headlines and tags and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.

3. Find football fans when they're not watching football content

Of course, football fans aren't only watching football (or related) content. Their interests vary and the types of content they watch on YouTube is equally diverse.

To get some insight into what football fans are watching, we looked at viewership patterns across different categories of content. Turns out, those who index high in watching football content are also interested in auto and cooking videos. Millennial fans specifically favor comedy and movie content, while fans that are fathers tend to tune in to auto and news content.¹⁰

Nissan put these lessons into practice for its [#withdad Super Bowl campaign in 2015](#). Not only did Nissan take advantage of the excitement in the lead-up to the big game on YouTube, but it also thought well beyond football-related content when it came to landing the Nissan message.

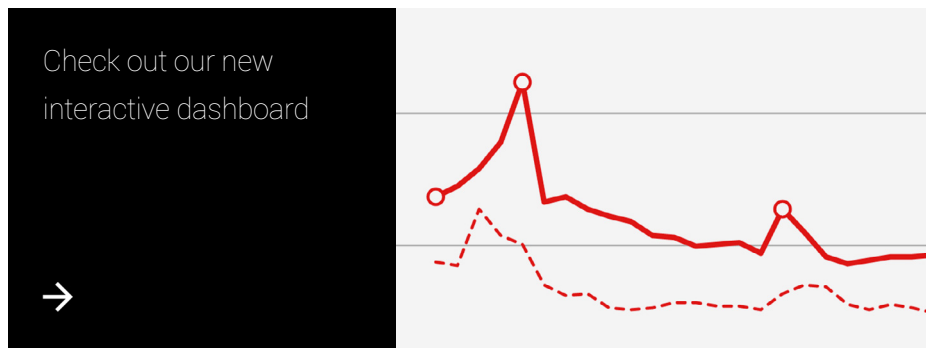
In the weeks before the Super Bowl, Nissan partnered with popular YouTube creators, asking them to create content celebrating how dads make life better for their families. By tapping into the likes of [Roman Atwood](#), [Epic Meal Time](#), and [Convos with My 2-Year-Old](#) (among others), Nissan ensured the content would be seen by a much broader audience of football fans than if it had focused on football content alone.

The videos—with more than 76 million views to date¹¹—were also a savvy way to build suspense for Nissan's first televised Super Bowl ad in nearly 20 years, which was voted the [fan favorite in YouTube's AdBlitz](#).

As the big game has evolved into the big month—and the football season into an all-year affair—the opportunity for advertisers looking to connect with football fans has expanded. By understanding what types of video content football fans turn to in their video micro-moments, brands can

find opportunities to connect, engage, and remain relevant and useful from the season's kickoff to its grand finale.

To see more data about how football fans are turning to YouTube in their micro-moments related to their love for the game, head over to our new [interactive dashboard](#).



Sources

- 1 Nielsen NNTV Program Report 2015, Nielsen historical data.
- 2 YouTube Super Bowl Report. Google / Ipsos MediaCT, Ipsos Online Omnibus, December 2015, N=2014 U.S. online respondents 18+.
- 3 Google data as of Jan 5th 2016. Global. Classification as a "American football" video was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc., and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.
- 4 Google Data, January 1, 2015–February 1, 2015. Classification as a big game ad was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc., and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.
- 5 Google Data. Global. Jan–Feb 2015. Classification as a big game ad was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc., and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.
- 6 Pixability Industry Study. Super Bowl 2015 YouTube Ads.
- 7 Google Data, January–December 2015, United States. Classification as a "football" video was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc., and may not account for every "football" video available on YouTube.
- 8 Google Data, January 2014–December 2015, vs. January–December 2014, Global. Classification as a football related "comedy and humor" video was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc., and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.

- 9 Google Data, January–February 2015, United States. Search results that drove to football related food and recipe content.
- 10 Google Data, December 2015, United States. Google-defined lifestyle, psychographic and behavioral audiences based on user browsing behavior on the Google Display Network.
- 11 Google Data. Analysis of global view counts of these videos.